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California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **New 'Tensile Structure,' Public Tour Mark 40 Years of Building in Poly Canyon**

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly's Design Village and its Poly Canyon home have a new "Tensile Structure" that will serve as a visitor and community center beginning with the university's upcoming 10th annual Open House.

The structure will be dedicated on Open House Saturday, April 26, at 2 p.m., and after the dedication, students and faculty members will lead visitors on the first public guided tour of Poly Canyon that anyone can remember. The event marks the 40th year of building permanent experimental structures in the scenic canyon just north of the heart of the campus.

The dedication and tour will follow judging for this year's Design Village, the annual competition that hosts students from colleges and universities across the western United States. The students build temporary structures to suit the year's theme -- "Vegas Baby!" this year -- and live in them for the three-day event.

The tour of Poly Canyon and its experimental structures will give visitors a good look at and information about the Tensile Structure as well as the Shell House, Greenhouse, Pole House, Underground House, Stick House, Bridge House, Modular House, Cantilever Structure, Geodesic Dome and the site's surroundings. Those taking the tour should bring water and wear gear appropriate for an intermediate hillside hike around an estimated one-mile loop.

Free shuttles into the area will be available April 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. from the base of Poly Canyon Road.

Made of "wire rope" (similar to cables) and PVC-coated polyester fabric pulled taut by turnbuckles, the graceful new Tensile Structure was completed in October 2002 as an interdisciplinary senior project by three students in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design: Royce Chow, architecture; Kieran Kelly-Sneed, architectural engineering; and Theresa Zaro, landscape architecture.

Kelly-Sneed, who graduated last year, said, "I saw Poly Canyon as an amazing opportunity to design and build things at full scale. Tensile Structures appeal to me because the entire shape is dictated by structural concerns, but at the same time they make very beautiful architecture. Also, no part of the structure is purely for looks; every piece is structural. Since no piece is extra for looks, it was important to make the structural pieces as beautiful as possible.

"This project has been very valuable for all three of us," Kelly-Sneed said. "It was really interesting to work in an interdisciplinary team. As an architectural engineering student, I primarily think about structure and engineering-type issues. Similarly, Royce (architecture) and Theresa (landscape architecture) primarily studied design, but are very interested in actually building, and seeing how things go together. All three of us share a passion for building."

Funding and services for the Tensile Structure project came from various donors, including Advanced Structures Inc. of Marina del Rey for design consulting, Seaman Corp. of Wooster, Ohio, for fabric and fabrication, The Crosby Group of Tulsa, Okla., for turnbuckles and hardware, Tutt Crane Service of Los Osos and a gift of \$5,000 from the Kulchin Foundation Drilling Company of Redmond, Wash., whose president, Steve Kulchin, is a 1981 landscape architecture graduate.

Faculty advisors for the Tensile Structure project were Professor Abe Lynn, interim head of the Architectural Engineering Department; Professor Paul Fratessa, former head of the Architectural Engineering Department; Architecture Professor Michael Lucas; and Landscape Architecture Professor Walt Tryon. Staff advisors were the college's interim dean, K. Richard Zweifel, Support Shop Manager Bart Alford and Architectural Engineering Technician Ray Ward.

More information on the Tensile Structure and its dedication is available at [www.caed.calpoly.edu/polycanyon/tensile.html](http://www.caed.calpoly.edu/polycanyon/tensile.html).

For an overview of Poly Canyon and its experimental structures, visit  
[www.caed.calpoly.edu/polycanyon/index.html](http://www.caed.calpoly.edu/polycanyon/index.html).

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