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[News](#)

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California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More Than 100 Students Attend Cal Poly's 21st Gravure Day

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- More than 100 students attended sessions at the 21st Gravure Day at California Polytechnic State University, held Feb. 19 on campus.

Cal Poly's annual Gravure Day consisted of presentations and an industry panel devoted to the gravure printing process, which is frequently used for high-circulation magazines and catalogs, flexible packaging and labels, and specialty products such as gift wrap and vinyl flooring.

A field trip on Feb. 14 to Smurfit-Stone Container in Santa Clara, Calif., preceded the event to provide students with a closer look at the gravure industry and the opportunity to observe gravure processes in a production setting. The Smurfit-Stone facility is a high-quality folding-carton gravure printing plant.

On Gravure Day, Kelly Hughes of Quad/Graphics presented an assessment of the role of the U.S. Postal Service in delivering gravure-printed magazines and catalogs. She addressed issues related to magazine delivery in the United States, the future role of the Postal Service, and work-sharing strategies as a means of providing significant cost reductions. Hughes served as a mailing-service representative before entering sales with Quad/Graphics.

Todd Randolph, a QuebecorWorld engineer, addressed how gravure printing fits into the retail-insert market. QuebecorWorld, of Fernley, Nev., which prints retail inserts for the western United States, is 100 percent gravure. Randolph discussed the different markets of retail inserts and how economic conditions have affected each segment.

Ruth Wagner, executive director of the Gravure Education Foundation (GEF), provided a brief overview of the foundation's mission, available

scholarships, and technical writing opportunities available through the GEF. She also presented an overview of the gravure industry and its products and companies, discussed career opportunities and preparation, and summarized growth markets and technical trends in gravure.

Elizabeth Perhach, a Cal Poly senior and a GEF scholarship recipient, said, "Gravure Day was amazing because we were able to get an in-depth, firsthand view of what the industry is presently like. The knowledge that the speakers shared with us was intriguing and educational."

Todd Burham from the Flxon Co., a major supplier of doctor blades to the gravure printing industry, spoke on "What's New With Doctor Blades," covering the history of blades as well as new products being used in industry. He focused on different blades for different applications and discussed what makes a high-quality doctor blade.

Bill MacKay, vice president and general manager for WRE/ColorTech in Berkeley, one of the company's five divisions in the U.S. and Canada, addressed current practices in engraving for the packaging industry, focusing on engravings for water-based inks. He discussed the future of the sector as well as new technologies that might affect the gravure engraving business in the next couple of years. He provided the perspective of a family that has been in the business almost 50 years.

The concluding panel, made up of Hughes, Randolph, Burham and MacKay, fielded student questions on gravure markets in the United States and abroad, growth opportunities, new technologies, environmental issues and gravure's position relative to flexo and offset.

"The questions were both timely and thoughtful," said Cal Poly Professor Malcolm Keif, who organized the event and teaches gravure printing. "And the presenters provided strong answers. I was pleased with the overall quality of the event. I know everyone walked away with something."

Students were able to talk individually with the speakers after the panel and during an informal dinner.

Harvey Levenson, head of Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department, said, "Our annual Gravure Day is part Cal Poly's commitment to promote the gravure industry and emphasize its importance to our students. We are committed to having gravure education be a focus of our curriculum in web printing and to preparing future personnel for the gravure industry."

Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department has one of the largest programs of its kind in the United States. With a steady enrollment of 300 majors, it has approximately 33,000 square feet of laboratories and more than 2,500 alumni. The department has concentrations in printing and imaging management, electronic publishing and imaging, design reproduction technology, and individualized study in graphic

communication. The department and its labs are supported generously by industry through gifts, grants and endowments, and, as a Gravure Resource Center, the department receives annual funding from the Gravure Education Foundation.

- 30 -

NOTE TO EDITORS: Photos of Cal Poly's Gravure Day 2003 are available from the Public Affairs office. Call (805) 756-1511 or e-mail polynews@polymail.calpoly.edu.

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