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California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Two Cal Poly MBA Students Win First Place in Business Plan Competition**

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Two Cal Poly MBA students won first place and \$4,000 in the third annual Ray Scherr Business Plan Competition. Their business plan was designed for a Sacramento-based magazine called CenterVoice. Paul Johnson of Carmichael and Ali Torabi from La Selva Beach made the winning presentation.

In all, 14 Cal Poly students and faculty members representing five teams vied for prizes totaling \$7,000 in the competition. Scherr, who founded the Guitar Center, provided the funds for prizes in the competition, sponsored by the Orfalea College of Business. The Guitar Center, headquartered in Westlake Village, is a leading retailer of guitars and accessories.

Second prize went to a team headed by Physics Professor Tom Bensky and included mechanical engineering student Eric Brigham from Arroyo Grande, industrial engineering student Christina Ghiorso from Fair Oaks, and computer science major Aaron Peckham from Sacramento. Their plan was for Votehub, an electronic device that provides immediate, in-class feedback on student learning to teachers.

Third prize went to city and regional planning students Andrew Rubin and Jason Gavin for a plan for VirtualCity, an online city tour. Both Rubin and Gavin are from Malibu.

Additional finalists who presented plans were Mike Davis, inventor of X-Rax, an extreme-sports equipment rack, and a holiday-lighting team called Stringers, including Drake Smith, Katie Zufelt, Billy Summers, Brayn Robinson and Matthew Bergh.

The final five presentations were the culmination of a process of business plan development that began in October with 45 students and faculty members working on 15 separate business plans.

The panel of judges making the awards were King Lee, managing partner at Resource Capitalist, LLC; Paul McEnroe, president, McEnroe Associates; Mark Turk, senior vice president, Silicon Valley Bank; Abbey Silverstone, managing director, The Office of the President; Ray Johnson, president/CEO, Economic Vitality Corporation; and Jeff Buckingham, president, CallAmerica.

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*(NOTE TO EDITORS: Photos of some of the competitors and judges are online at <http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/hot/BizPlanComp>)*

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