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California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Cal Poly February Speaker Series To Focus On 'The Color of Policy: The War on Drugs as Domestic Terrorism'

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Alicia Young, former staff attorney for the ACLU National Drug Policy Litigation Project, will kick off a new speaker series on Feb. 7 titled "The Color of Policy: The War on Drugs as Domestic Terrorism."

Her talk, "Jim Crow Laws in the 21st Century: The War on Drugs," will be at 2 p.m. in Philips Hall in the Christopher Cohan Center.

Young will discuss the history of the United States' "war on drugs" campaign. In her talk she will also address the collateral consequences of felony drug convictions -- such as the loss of the right to vote and the inability to attain funding for higher education -- and their impact on black and brown communities in the United States.

Young's talk is part of a series that will examine ways in which various federal, state and local policies harm communities of color. The presentations, in commemoration of Black History Month in February, are free and open to the public.

Additional presentations:

- **Feb. 11:** Divine Pryor, executive director of the Association for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment, 7 p.m., Philips Hall, Christopher Cohan Center, "The 'War on Drug (Addicts)': Harm Reduction Services as an Alternative to Imprisonment." The talk will explore whether imprisonment is a solution to drug addiction and how that strategy disproportionately affects communities of color.
- **Feb. 20:** Sandra Alvarez, director of the Colombia Human Rights Program at Global Exchange, 7 p.m., Philips Hall, Christopher Cohan Center, "Plan Colombia, the 'War on Drugs,' and U.S. Military Aid to Colombia." Alvarez will discuss the U.S. war on drugs and the impact of American foreign policy on Colombia.

- **Feb. 27:** Theryn Kigvamasud'Vashti, community organizer for Communities Against Rape and Abuse in Seattle, 7 p.m., Philips Hall, Christopher Cohan Center, "A Brief History on the Criminalization of Black People, the War on Drugs and the Assault on Black Women's Reproductive Health." The program will be an historical analysis intended to show that prisons exploit poor people and people of color. In particular, Kigvamasud'Vashti will discuss her contention that the U.S. war on drugs has its roots in race, criminalization and a "mass assault" on Black women's reproductive autonomy.

The talks are sponsored by Cal Poly's Ethnic Studies Department with additional support from the Political Science, Women's Studies, and Psychology and Child Development departments.

For more information about the speaker series, contact Charise Cheney in the Ethnic Studies Department at ccheney@calpoly.edu or Alesha Doan in the Political Science Department at adoan@calpoly.edu.

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