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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cal Poly Logging Team Takes First Place at Forestry Conclave

Cal Poly's Logging Team took first place at the annual Association of Western Forestry Clubs Conclave April 24-27 at the University of Montana, Missoula. The Mustang Logging Team competed against 17 teams from all of the major university forestry programs in the western U.S. to win the title.

The Cal Poly Logging Team has participated in the regional competition for decades, usually placing in the top 10, said faculty advisor and Natural Resources Management Professor Doug Piirto. "The Cal Poly team usually places in the top five, but this is the first time in at least 23 years that we've taken first," Piirto said.

The 13-member Cal Poly team also won the sportsmanship award, given by the American Lumberjack Association. Team members received individual awards as well. Tom Martin, team president, won the Bull of the Woods award for top male competitor, Heather Shoener took first place in the dendrology (tree and plant identification) competition, and Brooke Akers took first place in bucking (long saws) and obstacle pole (climbing a pole to cut off a portion at the top).

The Conclave is an annual competition of logging teams from forestry departments at universities in Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and Utah. Teams compete in contests involving physical skills and technical knowledge. Individual team members earn points toward a team total in contests including compass use, tree and plant species identification, pole climbing, ax throwing, chopping, burling (in which competitors from two different teams stand on a log in water and try to dump the other in the water) and the "boom run" - a run across multiple logs in water.

"The competition gives the team members a chance to apply the technical knowledge from their classes, see how forestry is practiced, and meet other students from forestry programs across the West," Piirto

explained.

Cal Poly's 2002 champion logging team members are Thomas Martin, Than King, Jeanne Dawson, Heather Shoener, Nic Valente, Jacque Empasis, Brooke Akers, Erica Quist, Katie Forrest, Jesse Weaver, Yousif Seliskar, Melissa Williams, and Josh Burden. The team's advisors are Piirto and Natural Resources Management professors Chris Dicus, Samantha Gill and Norm Pillsbury.

Team secretary Dawson said the fact that women outnumbered men on the Cal Poly team is not unusual.

"Most of the teams had both men and women, but we're really well integrated. At Fort Missoula, of 13 competitors on the Cal Poly Logging Team, we had seven women and six men. We have women with chainsaws and axes and that's normal for us," she joked.

But the team also has strength in technical areas involving resource protection, conservation and plant identification, Dawson stressed.

"We've got some brains under our brawn."

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