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California Polytechnic State University

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Bank of America Donates \$1 Million to Cal Poly for New Community Development Program

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Bank of America is donating \$1 million to Cal Poly to help establish a community development program.

The \$1 million gift to the Orfalea College of Business will allow the college to partner with the university's College of Architecture and Environmental Design to create a new community development program and add an endowed community development professorship in the future.

The new program will train students in the latest techniques to plan and develop healthy communities free from problems such as poverty, blight, crime and homelessness.

The gift was announced today (Nov. 15) at a statewide conference currently going on at the university. Titled "Community Development in the New Century," the conference is examining the latest trends and practices in community development. Cal Poly is also seeking input from conference participants on how to set up its new community development program.

Company officials said Bank of America's support for the Cal Poly initiative is based on the university's track record in business and community planning and the potential to create a program that will benefit the Central Coast as well as the entire state.

"Cal Poly and Bank of America share a vision of how innovative community development can address critically important needs in our society," said Greg Bland, the bank's market president for San Luis Obispo County.

The university has participated in the annual Bank of America Affordable Housing Challenge, in which student teams from colleges and universities across California design affordable housing projects for their communities, noted Irene Yee Riley, regional executive for the bank's California Community Development Banking Group.

Cal Poly's past teams in the Affordable Housing Challenge have consisted mainly of students and faculty advisers from the City and Regional Planning Department in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design.

"We've seen Cal Poly's strong commitment to community needs," Riley said. "This is why we're pleased to support the university's exciting community development effort. Our support is part of our unprecedented 10-year, \$350 billion commitment to community development. Bank of America is the nation's leading commercial bank in its commitment to the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods."

Cal Poly officials said the gift will enable the university to strengthen its existing education offerings in community development and aid California communities.

"This gift from Bank of America represents a significant recognition of Cal Poly's strengths as a community-oriented institution. And, it's an important opportunity for the university to increase its activities in the area of community development," said William Pendergast, dean of Cal Poly's Orfalea College of Business.

Plans call for students in the new community development program to work with local Central Coast communities and cities and towns across California on issues such as affordable housing, economic development, crime reduction, family-friendly neighborhoods and growth.

The university wants to establish a community development center where nonprofit agencies, service organizations, cities and towns would be able to work with students and faculty members on real community development issues.

"We're looking forward to setting up a community development center at Cal Poly that's fully responsive to the needs of area organizations, agencies and residents," said Martin Harms, dean of Cal Poly's College of Architecture and Environmental Design.

The new program and center "will benefit the region through help with various planning issues such as low-cost housing, social entrepreneurship and other activities that strengthen local community resources," Pendergast explained.

The center would be another facet of Cal Poly's "learn by doing" tradition, both deans stressed. Students will benefit by doing hands-on work in local communities, tackling real problems. Explained Harms, "Cal Poly students in the program will get the chance to learn about community development through direct contact with ongoing projects as part of their regular coursework."

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(Note to Editors and Reporters: For more details on the \$1 million Bank of America gift, contact Bank of America spokesman Harvy Radin at (415) 622-6320, Orfalea College of Business Dean William Pendergast at (805)

756-2705 or College of Architecture and Environmental Design Dean Martin Harms at (805) 756-1311. For more information on the Community development Conference at Cal Poly, contact Ray Ladd, CAED associate director of advancement at (805) 756-7432. For the conference schedule of events visit the conference Web site at <http://www.calpoly.edu/~crp/comdev.html>.)

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