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Cal Poly Week of Welcome Expands Student Education Program

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly's Week of Welcome (WOW) Orientation Program announces changes to the topics that will be addressed to all incoming students for the Awareness Programming during WOW 2011, set for Sept. 14-18.

The Awareness Program aims to inform new students on their new responsibilities as a Cal Poly student. Participants will discuss topics such as stress, depression and suicide; drug and alcohol use and abuse; personal safety, respect and diversity; and positive community relations.

The Awareness series focuses on educating and informing students about these topics and helping them with their transition into college. While some students may think certain topics will not pertain to them, it is likely that students and friends will encounter a situation during their college years that involves all of the topics presented. By providing resources both on and off campus, WOW aims to help students address these issues in healthy ways.

Because of recent reports of alleged sexual assaults on campus and in the San Luis Obispo community, WOW has added a new presentation this year titled "Drunk Sex or Date Rape: Can You Tell the Difference?" The aim is to stress personal safety and smart decision-making. WOW has invited Brett Sokolow, a higher education attorney who specializes in sexual misconduct and campus security, to lead the interactive and informative presentation.

In addition to the date rape presentation, the Awareness Program will include:

* Personal Choices and Struggles, which presents consequences of drug and alcohol abuse and the seriousness of depression and suicide. The gravity of the subjects is illustrated through videos, music, images, stories and viewer participation. Large student groups gather for the program and then break into small groups to discuss what they have experienced. WOW staff worked closely with San Luis Obispo Police, University Police, County Drug and Alcohol Services, Cal Poly's Counseling Services, and Transitions Mental Health Association to develop the program.

* Campus and Community Perspectives, which introduces new students to their relationship with the community prior to SLO Bound – the event that familiarizes students with downtown San Luis Obispo and local businesses. The aim is to illustrate the importance of respecting the community and how students can get involved and benefit from their new community too.

* Respect and Diversity, an interactive workshop, emphasizes the importance of respect and diversity at Cal Poly and throughout San Luis Obispo. Personal stories are shared through video to remind students of the prevalent diversity on campus and throughout the community. The purpose is to prompt discussion and reflection throughout the WOW experience and encourage students to make the best of their time at Cal Poly.

* The Awareness Gallery: Discovery of Student Life, which integrates all WOW Awareness topics to encourage self-discovery and knowledge about student life at Cal Poly. Material will be presented in a museum format that students will experience and process with their WOW groups. Students will walk through various exhibits and interact with multiple forms of media.

Community members are invited to preview the Personal Choices and Struggles and Respect and Diversity presentations and walk through the Awareness Gallery. WOW invites viewers to attend the Personal Choices and Struggles and Respect and Diversity showing from 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 8, in the Spanos Theatre (Bldg. 44) at Cal Poly.

Those unable to attend this showing can sit in on the presentations with new students. The Personal Choices and Struggles presentation will be shown Thursday, Sept. 15 at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. in Harman Hall in the Performing Arts Center. The Respect and Diversity presentation will be shown Saturday, Sept 17, at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. in Chumash Auditorium in the University Union.

Community members may walk through The Awareness Gallery from 2 to 4 p.m. Sept. 12 and 13, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sept. 15 and 16, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 17, and 9 to 11 a.m. Sept. 18.

Visitors can provide WOW staff with feedback via email following their experience. For more information about WOW, visit <http://orientation.calpoly.edu/wow> or contact Jason Mockford, assistant coordinator of Cal Poly's Orientation Programs, at 805-756-2477 or jmockfor@calpoly.edu.

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