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Cal Poly Sweeps AIAA Design Competition

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly aerospace seniors swept first, second and third place in the 2011-12 American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Foundation (AIAA) Undergraduate Team Aircraft Design competition in early September.

The wins extended a decade of remarkable finishes at what is considered the most prestigious national collegiate aeronautical engineering design contest in the country.

Led by faculty advisors Bruce Wright and Robert McDonald, the teams won for their designs of an unmanned aerial vehicle that serves as a humanitarian response aircraft system capable of providing aid in natural disasters to the populations of both developed and underdeveloped nations worldwide.

According to Wright, Cal Poly's continued success in the AIAA contest is attributable primarily to top-notch student talent. Noting that students choose to enroll in the nine-month aircraft design course, he said, "They're in the lab three days a week, surrounded by 37 AIAA design awards won by previous Cal Poly teams since the early 1990s -- and that isn't counting the three from this year. Certainly, it's a great motivator, but it's all about the students."

"We chose to enter only the undergraduate competition this year," Wright said. "We're happy to report we swept every place that was available to us."

The Cal Poly team Halo, comprised of Saeed Aliasgarian, Dennis Boettcher, Spencer Dineen, Grant Glazebrook, Ryan Hueners, Timothy Johnson, Lacey Jones and Daniel Marx, won the first place award for their design of the "Honey Badger."

Second place went to the Cal Poly team Orange Sky Designs for the design of the "Breton and Radio Flyer." The team included Brian Barker, Kevin Condron, Austin Doupe, Eric Gray, James Koch, Jeff Massman, Terry Muy and Matt Remington. Cal Poly's Nimbus Aircraft team, which included Cameron Chan, Adam Chase, Mike Darling, Albert Liu, Brian Marchini, Stewart McDougall, Samantha Sink and Peter Sudak, finished in third place for its design of the "Guardian."

"The most meaningful aspect of the course was the teamwork and dedication that was put into a class project," said Lacey Jones, team lead for Halo. "We put so many extra hours into the project to make it a success. It was more than just a project; it felt like we were living and breathing aircraft design all of senior year."

For more information on the AIAA Undergraduate Team Aircraft Design, go to www.aiaa.org.

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