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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly Associate Dean Named Executive Director of CSU Agricultural Research Institute

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Mark Shelton, associate dean of the Cal Poly College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences, was recently named executive director of the California State University (CSU) Agricultural Research Institute (ARI).

ARI is a comprehensive applied agricultural and environmental research program partnering the CSU's colleges of agriculture with California's agriculture and natural resources industries and allied business communities.

“Industry and higher education have benefited tremendously from the partnership,” said David Wehner, dean of the Cal Poly College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences. “Since the program requires industry to match ARI research dollars, our faculty and students have partnered with cutting-edge companies to improve crop and livestock health, develop novel ways to prolong shelf life of fresh produce, reduce water loss in irrigation systems, and analyze regulatory costs to farmers.”

Shelton has served as Cal Poly's Campus Coordinator since ARI's inception in 1991.

“It's been rewarding to see the program benefit faculty and students,” he said. “Over the past 13 years, I've seen this program build ties between faculty at sister CSU campuses, providing critical funding, research equipment and other agriculture-related professional development. Undergraduate and graduate students throughout California have had the valuable opportunity to investigate new avenues of research and present their findings in publications and at professional meetings.

“When a research need surfaces, we can now call on literally hundreds of scientists in the CSU and industry to work together to solve pressing problems.”

As executive director, Shelton works closely with the CSU chancellor, deans, faculty and staff of each member campus, and industry and agency partners to promote and advance the collaborative research programs. He reports to the CSU ARI governing board, comprised of the presidents of each member campus, the University of California vice president for agriculture and natural resources, and four agriculture industry leaders. Shelton will continue to serve as associate dean of Graduate Programs for Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences.

About the Agricultural Research Institute:

Since its inception, the CSU ARI program has provided more than \$250 million in applied research funding, including \$58 million from the state, and more than \$195 million from federal, industry and agency matching funds. Nearly 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students have been employed on ARI projects, which have supported CSU faculty in the pursuit of research solutions to California agricultural and natural resource concerns.

CSU ARI member universities include Cal Poly; Chico; Fresno; and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. Humboldt State University and Cal State Monterey Bay also participate as associated partner campuses.

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