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Contact: Rachel Garrett

805-756-5138; rgarrett@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly College of Architecture & Environmental Design Appoints Interim Architecture Department Head

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly’s College of Architecture and Environmental Design has named James A. Doerfler, AIA, CSI, interim head of its Architecture Department.

Doerfler is a native of Connecticut. He earned a bachelor’s degree in art history with a concentration in architectural history from the University of Hartford and a Master of Architecture degree from Syracuse University. At Syracuse, he studied under distinguished educator Werner Seligman.

A member of the American Institute of Architects and president-elect of the Building Technology Educators Society, Doerfler has more than 25 years of international practice experience. He has maintained his own architecture practice in each of the cities he has lived. His work spans the globe including projects in Australia, China, Spain, Switzerland and the U.S. Doerfler is a registered architect in New York and New South Wales, Australia.

He has taught at Cal Poly since 2005. Doerfler is a leader in developing award-winning interdisciplinary design studios and using software to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration at Cal Poly. His work and research focus on connecting conceptual design to digital fabrication methods using digital tools to supplement the design process. He is the founding director of the college’s Digital Fabrication Laboratory, director of the Architecture Graduate Program, and coordinator of co-op programs that facilitate student placement in professional practices around the world.

"I am greatly honored to be chosen to lead at one of the finest architecture departments in the country," Doerfler said. "Being a part of the faculty here has given me great insight into how special our program is. I look forward to guiding the program with our excellent faculty to advance our strengths as we prepare students to be architects in the 21st century."

Doerfler succeeds outgoing department head Henri de Hahn, who accepted a position as provost at New School of Architecture + Design in San Diego. De Hahn’s leadership accomplishments include the development of the architecture core curriculum, advancing interdisciplinary design, and expanding off-campus programs.

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