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Cal Poly Concrete Canoe Tips Over the Competition Again

SAN LUIS OBISPO – For the 14th time in 17 years, Cal Poly civil engineering students will represent the ASCE Pacific Southwest Conference (PSWC) at the national level. The university's concrete canoe and steel bridge teams led Cal Poly to a fourth consecutive regional title at the conference, which was held April 4-6 at USC and Loyola Marymount University.

The Cal Poly concrete canoe team dominated the regional competition, placing first overall. The team won all three academic categories – design paper, oral presentation and final product – and took first in all four races in which it participated.

In the upcoming National Concrete Canoe Competition, Cal Poly's three-in-a-row national championship team is hoping to cement another win. The team and its canoe, the Sentinel, will hit the waters of the 26th annual competition to be held June 20-22 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Ill.

Project Manager Alicia Welling explained that the canoe is named after Sentinel Rock, guardian of Yosemite Valley.

"In tribute, the walls of the canoe feature 3D representations of rock formations found within Yosemite Valley," she said. "It's intended to honor the spirit of Native America and naturalists like John Muir and Ansel Adams who are so closely associated with Yosemite."

In addition to Welling, the concrete canoe team includes Jason Armes, Heather Baessler, Brett Biemer, Jason Cui, Marc Saar, Katrina Watkins and Thomas Wong.

The steel bridge team placed second overall at the PSWC, scoring high in the category of construction speed, "which we hope to make even faster by the national competition," said project manager Kari Johnson. The National Student Steel Bridge Competition is set for May 31-June 1 at the University of Washington.

The steel bridge team is led by senior captains Johnson, who is project manager; Brent Clavin, design and analysis; and Trent Casillas, fabrication. Assistant captains include senior Jose Ascencio and third-year students Alan Blevins, Shauna Kean, Demi Pacifuentes, Andrew Ricker, Alex Vlosky and Joseph Wild.

The PSWC is ASCE's annual student chapter competition that tests skills related to the civil engineering profession. Participants included teams of civil engineering students from all major colleges and universities in Southern California, Nevada, Arizona and Hawaii.

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