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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly to Introduce Expanded Educational Program for Students with Off-Campus Violations

Program targets first-time offenders, promotes student safety and responsibility

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly will unveil an expanded Off-Campus Education program this fall that presents an educational alternative to disciplinary action for students who are first-time offenders arrested or cited for alcohol or other violations of city ordinances off campus.

The program will give those students the opportunity, in lieu of Cal Poly disciplinary action, to voluntarily take part in a 90-minute workshop and write a research paper on topics related to personal health and safety and community responsibility. (Those students who decline or fail to complete the educational program will face discipline as defined by the university's student conduct policies.)

"This new program will allow us to address issues with our students' off-campus behavior in a positive way, to help them understand how their choices and actions can impact their own wellness and color their relationship with their neighbors," said Keith Humphrey, Cal Poly's vice president for student affairs. "It's another facet of the Cal Poly education — our aim is to help our students reach their potential not only as professionals but also as leaders in their communities."

The newly expanded program will begin with the start of the fall 2013 quarter and will run through the Dean of Students' Office, part of Cal Poly's Student Affairs division. It follows a pilot program in the spring 2013 quarter that introduced the essay-writing program.

The new program will not have incentives or punishments tied to students' academic programs, such as reduction of GPAs.

"Those kinds of punishments don't help us to accomplish what we're after: student success," Humphrey said. "We want to keep our students enrolled and give them the tools they need to prosper professionally and personally."

In connection with this educational effort, Cal Poly's University Police Department is working closely with San Luis Obispo Police to collaboratively and proactively address community members' public safety and quality-of-life concerns related to student behavior issues off campus. This will include joint patrol efforts in neighborhoods adjacent to campus during specific, potentially problematic times.

"If Cal Poly students are engaging in behaviors negatively affecting our neighbors, we want to assist the San Luis Obispo department in mitigating those behaviors as much as possible," said Cal Poly Police Chief George Hughes.

Both agencies are also engaged in community and student-led committees responding to community concerns.

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