

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## *Cal Poly College of Architecture & Environmental Design Appoints Interim Landscape Architecture Department Chair*

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly's College of Architecture & Environmental Design named Associate Professor David J. Watts interim chair of its Landscape Architecture Department.

Watts came to Cal Poly in 2007, teaching a variety of classes, including the senior capstone series, design theory, and implementation strategies. He also served as one of the university's first service learning fellows and received the President's Community Service Award in 2014.

His area of research is children's play environments, their impact on child development, and their role in reconnecting children to nature. He contributed that expertise to help redesign the Child Development Preschool Laboratory playground at Cal Poly.

His interest in social justice and accessibility within the landscape has influenced his professional practice and teaching. As part of a service learning class, Watts led a class to South Africa, where the students designed and constructed playgrounds and vegetable gardens for underprivileged children. The students also worked at AIDS orphanages in urban townships and rural public schools.

Watts also received the ASLA Award of Merit for organizing a group of professionals who designed and installed a playground at an impoverished school in South Africa.

"David's wealth of academic and professional experience will benefit our students," said Christine Theodoropoulos, CAED dean.

Watts earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is a registered landscape architect and member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). He works in his family's design build firm as a principal, and he is a founding partner of Ecomagine Landscape Architects.

Watts has studied, taught and worked in Germany, France and South Africa. His interests include enjoying the outdoors, travel and the arts.

Watts will begin as interim department chair Sept. 15.

### **About Cal Poly's Landscape Architecture Department**

Cal Poly's Landscape Architecture Department is ranked fourth in the nation and first in the western region in the DesignIntelligence survey of undergraduate landscape architecture programs. The rankings were based on a survey conducted on behalf of the Design Futures Council and published in the 2014 edition of America's Best Architecture & Design Schools.



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