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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 9, 2015

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Cal Poly Society of Women Engineers Wins Outstanding Chapter Award — Again

SAN LUIS OBISPO — The Cal Poly Society of Women Engineers (SWE) garnered the national Society of Women Engineers highest award for the fourth consecutive year and the 11th time since 2002.

The Outstanding Collegiate Section Gold Award is conferred on the collegiate section with the most outstanding overall program for the previous academic year. It was presented to the Cal Poly chapter at the Society of Women Engineers National Conference (WE14) in Los Angeles.

The event was highlighted by a collaboration between SWE and the International Network of Women Engineers and Sciences that drew more than 7,000 science and engineering professionals, students, industry leaders and innovators to the three-day conference.

In the Team Tech competition, Cal Poly won third place with a project for Walt Disney Imagineering. The team designed and built a navigational subsystem for amusement rides. The system increases ridership-tracking efficiency and enhances passengers' safety and enjoyment. It is the 13th consecutive year the team has finished in one of the national competition's top three spots.

"The awards are especially gratifying for what they signify," said Helene Finger, Cal Poly SWE advisor. "They reflect a sustained and growing culture of achievement at Cal Poly SWE that's measured in terms of leadership and making a difference."

With more than 500 members, the Cal Poly chapter is one of the largest collegiate sections in the country. But even more noteworthy, according to Finger, "is the exceptionally hands-on role the members take in creating an environment where current and future female engineering students can flourish.

"These members 'own it,'" said Finger. "Their passion and energy make them a positive force on campus and beyond to broaden the appeal of engineering to women."

This year, the College of Engineering saw its largest incoming group of women, totaling 26 percent of the freshman class, compared to 17 percent in 2010.

Photo SWE-gold-2014: Jessie Klemme (left), 2013-14 president of Cal Poly SWE (Society of Women Engineers), accepts Gold Award at the SWE national conference.

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