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## News

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# *Cal Poly to Dedicate a Campus Veterans Success Center With Rep. Lois Capps, a Color Guard and Ribbon Cutting on April 2*

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Congresswoman Lois Capps will help dedicate Cal Poly's new Veterans Success Center at the campus University Union Plaza on April 2.

The ceremony, which includes additional dignitaries, a color guard and Scott Andrews of the SLO Jazz Festival performing the national anthem, starts at 2:30 p.m. A ribbon cutting is scheduled at 3 p.m. at the new facility's office in Room E4 of Building No. 52, just a short walk from the event.

Joining Rep. Capps, D-Santa Barbara, on the dais will be university President Jeffrey D. Armstrong and Don Morris, a retired U.S. Navy commander with long ties to the university. The Cal Poly graduate, emeritus professor and former director of student housing will acknowledge past student veterans.

The Veterans Success Center will provide additional services to a unique cohort of students.

"We're providing a one-stop shop for our veterans and dependents at Cal Poly, helping them to be successful students and move into their careers," said Everette Brooks, the center's coordinator. "The center is also an acknowledgement of Cal Poly's rich military history, while at the same time helping as many veterans come to Cal Poly as possible."

Also attending the event will be Patrick O'Rourke, director of Veterans Affairs Services at the California State University Chancellor's Office, which has been urging all 23 campuses to dedicate space for veterans.

"The CSU system remains a leader in higher education for student veteran best practices," O'Rourke said. "In the coming year, our military forces will potentially experience the most severe drawdown, forcing thousands of G.I. Bill-eligible military out of military service. There is no better time to be ready to serve veterans than now."

Cal Poly's new center will serve a growing number of vets and their dependents. This includes nearly 80 former active duty veterans from the five branches of the military: the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy.

The student veteran population is far from homogenous, Brooks said. At Cal Poly, returning vets typically range from transfer students in their early 20s to married graduate students in their mid-30s, he said. Dependents are traditional freshmen, right out of high school.

The number of vets and their dependents is on the rise. In the school year ending in June 2013, 264 Cal Poly students received a Cal Vet Fee Waiver. That number increased to 296 in the 2013-14 academic year and to 305 this school year.

The new center respects and honors veterans’ experience and service, while easing their transition into university life and providing support mechanisms that create a welcoming campus environment, Brooks said.

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