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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly Psychology Professor Receives \$100,000 STEM Research Grant

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly psychology Professor Julie Garcia received a \$100,000 grant for the project "Identity Threats in Higher Education: Implications for College Outcomes of Under-Represented Students of Color."

The Russell Sage Foundation grant will allow the San Luis Obispo resident to continue collaborating on the project with Sabrina Zirkel from Mills College and Mary Murphy from Indiana University.

The team is investigating reasons behind the lack of black and Latino/a students pursuing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, despite recent college enrollment data showing an increase in numbers of students of color.

Research has shown graduation rates for students of color are still significantly lower than their Caucasian peers. Building on theories of stereotypes, Garcia and her colleagues will further explore how situational cues in college classes affect minority students' interests, aspirations, persistence and performance in STEM fields. Instructor perceptions of learning and intelligence expectations will also be considered.

Garcia, Zirkel and Murphy are primarily focused on investigating two aspects of the issue: how stereotype threat cues affect the performance of black and Latino/a college students; and how much student perception shifts depending on the instructors' beliefs about intelligence and identity in the college classroom.

Garcia has been a member of Cal Poly's Psychology & Child Development Department since 2007. She earned a doctorate in social psychology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University.

The Russell Sage Foundation was founded in 1907 in an effort to improve the social and living conditions in the U.S. Currently, the foundation is dedicated to fostering the social sciences and their ability to improve upon social issues.

Links

- Cal Poly Psychology & Child Development Department: <http://psyacd.calpoly.edu>
- Cal Poly College of Liberal Arts: cla.calpoly.edu
- Russell Sage Foundation: <http://www.russellsage.org>

About the Cal Poly Psychology & Child Development Department

The Cal Poly Psychology & Child Development Department is dedicated to enhancing the health of individuals, families and communities through scientific understanding and the application of psychology and child development to real-world issues. Students are provided with a range of research opportunities with hands-on application at the department's Pre-School Learning Lab, Community Counseling Clinic, and other off-campus internships.

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