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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 28, 2015

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## Cal Poly Students Plan Low-Income Housing Project for Veterans

*Project Earns Second-Place Award in Bank of America Merrill Lynch Regional Competition*

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif. — A multidisciplinary team of Cal Poly students has partnered with People's Self-Help Housing to develop plans for a 30-unit affordable housing complex for at-risk and homeless veterans in Atascadero, Calif. The project is named Vestri Vita, which means "your life" in Latin.

Cal Poly's team created an ADA-compliant design, including a counseling center, first aid resources, and a "maker space," a facility with resources geared to helping veterans reintegrate into the community.

The project also features plans for drought-tolerant landscaping, solar panels, and a gray-water system. With Cal Poly's plan, People's Self-Help Housing can continue to pursue the project.

Cal Poly's plans for Vestri Vita recently took second place at the Bank of America Merrill Lynch Low-Income Housing Challenge. The annual event challenges several West Coast universities to create a detailed plan to develop and finance an affordable housing project on local property with a real estate developer.

Cal Poly's team included architecture students Derik DeLonzor (San Ramon, Calif.), Jack Gamboa (Valencia, Calif.), Khristine Melendez (San Diego, Calif.) and Miranda Mills (Laguna Hills, Calif.); city and regional planning student Tanner Shelton (Santa Paula, Calif.); construction management students Holli Tripp (Auburn, Calif.) and Lauren Norwood (San Diego, Calif.); and finance student Lauren Weber (Kentfield, Calif.). Architecture Professor Kent Macdonald and finance Professor Pratish Patel advised the students throughout the five-month research and planning process.

The team advanced to the final round to compete against teams from UCLA, UC Berkley and the University of Washington. Each member of the team gave a presentation on the plan, including design, planning, construction and financing. Cal Poly was the only team of undergraduate students to compete in the final round.

"This competition embodies Cal Poly's Learn by Doing motto and really challenges us to go outside the classroom and learn what it's like to work in the industry of affordable housing development," said Weber, a senior. "It's a lot of work but definitely worth the experience."

The competition aims to provide college students with exposure to challenges associated with the development of affordable housing. Many professionals in the industry, such as lenders, bankers, nonprofit developers, tax credit investors, architects and planners, judge the competition and provide feedback. Several of the competitors in the final round received job offers within the affordable housing industry.

Cal Poly has competed in the challenge in the past, winning first place in five of the past 10 years.

To view the team's presentation video on Vestri Vita, visit [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nNF\\_KaNP-E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nNF_KaNP-E).

For more information about the CFA Institute Research Challenge, go to: <http://corp.bankofamerica.com/business/ci/landing/low-income-challenge>.

*Photo information: "GREEN-TEAM-lo-res" - Back Row: Tanner Shelton, Holli Tripp, Derik DeLonzor, Lauren Norwood. Front Row: Lauren Weber, Jack Gamboa, Kristine Melendez, Miranda Mills*

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