Cal Poly Architecture Programs Move Up in National Rankings

SAN LUIS OBISPO – A national poll of practicing architects and architecture firms has ranked Cal Poly’s undergraduate architecture program as one of the best in the United States for producing “graduates most prepared for real-world practice.” In a separate ranking by landscape architecture firms and public-sector practitioners, Cal Poly’s undergraduate landscape architecture program ranked as one of the top 10 in the United States.

The survey, conducted by the architecture and engineering journal, DesignIntelligence, rated Cal Poly’s architecture program third in the nation in a tie with Rice University and up one spot from last year, among Bachelor of Architecture degree programs. Cornell University was ranked first, followed by the University of Texas at Austin.

In other categories, the magazine polled within regions. Firms in the West chose Cal Poly’s architecture program as tops in the nation. When western firms were asked to list the “most innovative architecture programs that are growing, changing, transitioning,” Cal Poly’s undergraduate program was judged second in the West, ahead of several universities offering master’s programs. And when firms in every region considered all bachelor’s and master’s programs, the architecture program was ranked second nationally in the assessment of how construction methods and skills are taught.

A separate survey ranked landscape architecture undergraduate education. Cal Poly’s program moved up two spots over last year to be rated sixth in the nation. The University of Georgia topped the poll. In the regional survey of western firms, Cal Poly was rated as the best undergraduate landscape architecture program in the nation.

R. Thomas Jones, dean of Cal Poly’s College of Architecture and Environmental Design, said he is proud of the accolades. “Once again, we compare favorably with some of the most exclusive universities in the nation,” said Jones. “Within the constraints of state funding, we have managed to attract and retain extraordinary faculty and create valuable partnerships with outstanding professionals. Our graduates are leaders in their fields, and their success generates strong interest in our programs from bright and talented applicants.”

The rankings, included in the 2006 edition of “America’s Best Architecture & Design Schools,” published by DesignIntelligence, were the result of surveys received last summer from the partners, principals and personnel directors at more than 400 firms throughout the United States. They were asked to reflect on graduates hired during the past five years and consider how prepared they were for “real-world” jobs.

“There are many different survey methodologies that seek to identify excellence in education,” said Margarita Hill, landscape architecture department head. “This one relies on the responses sought from high-profile firms and public agencies. That our landscape architecture program ranks ‘best in the nation’ according western firms, and sixth in the nation among all firms, indicates we are successfully meeting the challenge of preparing students for state-of-the-art practice. All who support us in this effort should be commended.”

DesignIntelligence is published by the Design Futures Council, a think-tank based in Washington, D.C., that examines architecture, engineering and building technology.

Cal Poly’s five-year architecture program first awarded degrees in 1965 and has educated an estimated one in every five architects in California. The landscape architecture program, the only five-year bachelor’s degree of its kind in

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