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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CSU Secures Continued Federal Funding
for Cal Poly Agricultural Research Grant Program

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Federal legislators have approved continued funding for highly-regarded California State University agricultural research program -- in which Cal Poly professors have received the lion's share of research funding.

The U.S. House of Representatives has approved a new earmark for a highly regarded California State University agricultural initiative, marking the latest in a series of positive developments coming out of the CSU's Office of Federal Relations in Washington D.C.

HR 2744, the House agriculture appropriations bill for FY 2006, earmarks $550,000 in new funding for the CSU's Agricultural Research Initiative (ARI) to conduct applied agricultural and environmental research. ARI is centered at the CSU's four agricultural colleges: Cal Poly, Chico, Fresno and Pomona. It is a top priority in the CSU system's federal agenda for 2005. (Click here to find out more about Cal Poly ARI projects.)

The funding was supported by a bipartisan group of California legislators, and any dollars ultimately received would complement the $4 million annual investment the state currently provides.

"This kind of funding is a great example of how, with the help of Congress, we can develop strong programs for our students, faculty, and state," said CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed. "Every dollar that ARI receives from the government is matched by private industry investment and used to support competitive, peer-reviewed research. Talented CSU faculty get needed resources for research, CSU students get a hands-on opportunity to work on real problems and develop job-ready skills, and California's agricultural industry gets answers to some of the tough problems it faces."

Building congressional support for CSU priorities like ARI is a top goal of the CSU's Office of Federal Relations, a three-person outpost of the Chancellor's Office. The OFR serves as a resource to Washington-based policymakers, including the California congressional delegation, as well as to D.C.-based educational associations and the media. Additionally, it keeps CSU constituents in California informed through its web site and electronic newsletter.

Each fall, the OFR works with all 23 campuses, the Chancellor's Office, and the Board of Trustees to develop a federal agenda - a list of policy and project priorities - for the coming legislative year. Policy priorities focus on the Higher Education Act, many aspects of which significantly impact the CSU and is now due to be rewritten for a five-year period.

For example, in 2003/04, CSU students and their families benefited from $1.15 billion in federal financial assistance through Pell Grant awards, Work Study funds, and student loans. Accordingly, the CSU has prioritized increasing Pell Grants and making them available year-round, expanding early intervention programs like GEAR UP and TRIO, and adding a graduate component to federal programs that support federally designated Hispanic Serving
"The CSU can play an important role in reauthorization," said Jim Gelb, assistant vice chancellor for federal relations. "California has the nation's largest congressional delegation, with key leaders in education positions on both sides of the aisle who want to help us. What's more, we're very lucky to have a chancellor who is so highly respected here that he was asked by both the House and Senate reauthorization committees to come out and give his views on the subject."

Besides ARI, this year's project priorities include renewed funding for the system's Center for Integrative Coastal Observation, Research and Education (CICORE), through which Cal Poly and seven other CSU campuses from Humboldt to San Diego State research the state's coastal waters. (Click here for more about Cal Poly's participation in CICORE).

Also a priority is funding to prepare students for the state's biotech workforce through the CSU Program for Education and Research in Biotechnology (CSUPERB); support for broadening the system's community service efforts in the areas of food and nutrition, health care, and small business development; and allowing a consortium of campuses to compete for resources devoted to enhancing port security. The OFR also assists individual campuses with local projects.

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