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Cal Poly Announces President's Diversity Award Winners

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker recognized the College of Science and Mathematics and the Career Services as the recipients of the 2005 President's Diversity Award.

The College of Science and Mathematics was honored for reaching out to underrepresented students in California's public elementary, middle and high schools. Thanks to funding from Joseph and Victoria Cotchett and the Cotchett Foundation, the college was able to send a "Chemistry Magic Show" video to about 9,000 public schools in the state this year.

The video taped the popular Chemistry Magic Show lesson by Dean Phillip Bailey and wife Christina Bailey, chair of Cal Poly's Chemistry and Biochemistry Department. The special show and lesson was taped before elementary students from Mary Buren School in Guadalupe, and Los Ranchos and Sinsheimer elementary schools in San Luis Obispo. A primer for how to make science come alive in the classroom, the video features the students and the professors changing colorful solutions, creating froth and bubbles as liquids turn to gas, and more. The Baileys have been presenting the Chemistry Magic Show for decades to students on the Central Coast.

Support from the Cotchetts for the University Center for Excellence in Science and Mathematics, has also allowed the College of Science and Mathematics to partner with the College of Education in offering in-service summer institutes for teachers from urban schools and from the Central Coast.

"The efforts of the College of Science and Mathematics have, and will continue to have, an impact on many students, teachers, and others across the state," noted President Baker in making the award.
In honoring Career Services, the president pointed out that its staff has always supported diversity initiatives at Cal Poly. "However, this year they achieved something truly extraordinary. At the Career Services 2005 Winter Job Fair, they raised $18,000 toward scholarships and programming benefiting a number of students, many from low-income settings and the first in their families to attend college," Baker said.

Career Services also sponsored a breakfast where prospective employers could interact with Cal Poly students. The breakfast was very successful, attracting about 200 students and employers.

"Along with the Diversity Awards selection committee, I would like to praise Career Services for its initiative and creativity, in partnering with employers to promote access, opportunity and support for deserving students from diverse backgrounds," Baker said.
Nominees also recognized at the June 6 awards luncheon on campus were:

- The university's Central Coast Science Project, which has provided a variety of programs targeting low performing schools in the Cal Poly service area and beyond;
- The university's Kinesiology Department, which offers an extensive service program for the university and to the local community;
- The Multiple Subject Credential Program, which the selection committee noted has a 20-year commitment to a multicultural perspective that informs all aspects of its work; and
- Professor Robert Ji-Song Ku, who played an integral role in developing a new major in Comparative Ethnic Studies at Cal Poly and in shepherding it through quick approval by the university's Academic Senate.

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*Note to editors: Photos of the honorees are available. For photos, contact Teresa Hendrix at (805) 756-7266 or thendrix@calpoly.edu.*