Cal Poly Announces 2004 President’s Diversity Award Winners

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly’s Summer Institute and Director Maria Arvizu-Rodriguez are the winners of the university’s 2004 President’s Diversity Award.

The Summer Institute focuses on students from backgrounds and schools that have historically had limited success in preparing students for college.

For three weeks during summer, incoming students participate in an intensive psychology class, working on study skills and learning how to navigate the university.

University studies show that students who go through the program have better success at Cal Poly than peers who don’t.

“Under the stewardship of Maria Arvizu-Rodriguez, the Summer Institute has a proven record of helping underprivileged students succeed at Cal Poly,” said Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker in making the award. “The impact of the program’s efforts is truly meritorious and I am delighted to be able to recognize it formally.”

Receiving the award at a recent campus ceremony were Summer Institute Director Maria Arvizu-Rodriguez, Student Academic Services Director Susan Sparling, and Psychology Professor Don Ryujin. The program will receive $1,000 for the award.

Baker also recognized Harry Hellenbrand, former dean of the College of Liberal Arts, who will be leaving Cal Poly this summer to become provost of CSU Northridge, for his efforts to enhance diversity at the university. Baker praised Hellenbrand for strengthening and supporting diversity at Cal Poly, largely through extensive leadership on the University Diversity Enhancement Council, which he has chaired from 1999 until the present. Baker credited Hellenbrand and the council with securing a multi-year federal grant to support recruitment and retention of underrepresented students in polytechnic majors.

The annual President’s Diversity Award was established in 1996 to recognize college units, departments and individuals who contribute to creating a climate in which diversity is supported and celebrated.