



Office of Public Affairs  
Division of University Advancement

## News Release

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### **Businessman Andrew J.C. Cherng to be Awarded Honorary Doctorate at Cal Poly Pomona College of Business Commencement**

POMONA, Calif. — June 13, 2008 — Cal Poly Pomona and The California State University will present an honorary doctorate to Andrew J.C. Cherng, founder and chairman of Panda Restaurant Group, Inc., (PRG), the parent company of Panda Inn, Panda Express and Hibachi-San.

The formal conferral will take place at 9 a.m. on Saturday, June 14, during the 2008 commencement exercises for Cal Poly Pomona's College of Business Administration.

"Cal Poly College of Business and Panda Restaurant Group share similar values in teaching and community involvement. I am humbled to receive this honorary doctorate from such a distinguished learning institution for which I have so much respect," said Cherng.

With a focus on developing relationships with his consumers, staff and community, Cherng and his family turned one storefront into the nationwide leader in Asian foodservice.

"We are so pleased to honor Andrew Cherng for his accomplishments," said university President Michael Ortiz. "He is truly an inspiration for our students. He developed his family business into an industry model, and all the while, he has maintained a commitment to bettering the lives of those in Panda Restaurant Group and the entire community."

PRG began in 1973 when Andrew and his father Master Chef Ming Tsai Cherng combined their talents to open Panda Inn, one of the first Chinese restaurants in Pasadena, Calif. The menu is a cutting edge blend of styles from both Mandarin and Szechwan traditions that has introduced an array of new flavors to Southern California cuisine.

Cherng broke new ground in the restaurant industry by providing gourmet recipes in a quick service environment with the launch of Panda Express in 1983. Panda Express restaurants now include over 1,000 locations throughout 36 states including Puerto Rico.

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Cherng believes that each new restaurant opening is another opportunity to impact the lives of both the associates and the community they serve. PRG currently employs over 18,000 associates and exceeded \$1 billion in sales in 2007.

Never taking success for granted, Cherng's inside-out approach started before PRG gained its prominence as the world's leader in Asian quick-service. Not knowing whether the company he started would be as successful as it is today, Cherng applied his philosophy at every level of the company from the onset. He encouraged people to challenge their way of thinking. Whether it is improving the front-of-store experience or creating career paths for his associates, Cherng is challenged by how to encourage and inspire people to learn and better themselves, personally and professionally. What started as a passion for food has evolved into a passion for life, learning and people.

Cherng's commitment to the betterment of his associates extends to the community they serve. With his wife, Peggy, Andrew established Panda Cares and the Panda Charitable Foundation, which provides support to children's organizations with monetary and food donations as well as volunteer support. Andrew and Peggy Cherng represent PRG on the board of directors at Methodist Hospital of Southern California, Children's Hospital Los Angeles and are proud partners with the Children's Miracle Network.

For his achievements, Andrew Cherng has been recognized with numerous awards including Entrepreneur of the Year by the Asia Society of Southern California in 2007. In 2008, the Los Angeles Business Journal named the Cherngs Business Persons of the year and inducted them into its Business Hall of Fame.

Under Andrew Cherng's leadership, PRG was ranked No. 1 by QSR Magazine in the Asian quick-service category for seven consecutive years. In 2004, Panda Restaurant Group was named among the top five minority-owned businesses in Los Angeles by the Los Angeles Business Journal and was also recognized by the publication as one of the Best Places to Work in Los Angeles in 2007. Moreover, in 2005, the Cherngs were inducted into the California Restaurant Association's Hall of Fame.

Andrew Cherng becomes the 14th person to be honored with an honorary doctorate at Cal Poly Pomona, joining Stuart Sperber (2007), Jack Dangermond (2005), Julia Child (2000), W.K. Kellogg (1998), Charles Oliver (1996), Charles Voorhis (1995), Norman Williamson (1995), W. Keith Kellogg (1994), Michi Nishiura Weglyn (1993), James Collins (1992), Bill Cosby (1992), Russell Mawby (1989) and Emory Morris (1969).