



California Agricultural Irrigation Association Scholars 2025-2026



AVIDWATER AND YARDNEY WATER FILTRATION SYSTEMS. **Tatiana Avila** is a 3rd year BioResource and Agricultural Engineering major at Cal Poly. She has worked for the Irrigation Training & Research Center since spring quarter of her freshman year as a shop and irrigation technician. This summer, Tatiana was part of the San Joaquin Valley irrigation evaluation team and gained invaluable experience assessing drip and micro irrigation systems. She is also a part of the Cal Poly Agricultural Engineering Society. She hopes to make an impact on agricultural and ranching communities by pursuing a career in irrigation engineering. In her free time, Tatiana enjoys outdoor and hands-on activities such as running, backpacking, mountain biking, and wood working.

SUPERIOR. **Iris Benoit** is a 4th year BioResource and Agricultural Engineering student. She worked for the ITRC starting in the fall of 2023. She spent a summer performing irrigation system evaluations along the central coast. She has successfully completed 4 irrigation related classes while at Cal Poly and plans to pursue a career in water resources engineering after she graduates in the spring.





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YARDNEY. James Casper is a fourth-year student at Cal Poly SLO majoring in BioResource and Agricultural Engineering. This past year, he had the opportunity to work at the Irrigation Training and Research Center where he conducted irrigation evaluations on drip and micro spray systems, maintained facilities, and helped prepare short courses. He is also involved in other activities outside of agriculture including Army ROTC, new student orientation, and being a resident advisor. He hopes to use both his technical and leadership experience in irrigation engineering to create a positive impact in California. He is grateful for this scholarship and for the opportunity to study at Cal Poly.

YARDNEY. Gracie Chavez is a fourth year Agricultural Systems Management major at Cal Poly, and plans on obtaining an MBA after graduation. This will be her third year working for the Irrigation Training and Research Center and she aspires to be a part of the water industry in district management. The past few summers, she gained very valuable experience by being able to work for Del Puerto Water District, Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District, as well as the ITRC. She grew up in the Central Valley and sees the importance agriculture has on her community, and wants to do her part in giving back to and making an impact on the same community that shaped her. In her free time, she enjoys being with her friends and deepening her knowledge in this industry. She is grateful for the opportunity to receive this scholarship.





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LAUREL AG. Melanie Orozco Gonzales is a third year BioResource and Agricultural Engineering major at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and originally hails from Holtville, CA. Some of her campus involvement includes serving as the 24-25 Agricultural Engineering Society Communication Chair, and as an officer for the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) CA/NV Section. Currently, she serves as the Agricultural Engineering Society Vice President and has worked at the Irrigation Training and Research Center (ITRC) for almost a year. Growing up around the agricultural industry exposed her to the many water issues agriculturalists face every day. Her career path will allow her to make a positive change in this industry while incorporating technological advances and engineering principles. She is thankful for the opportunity to continue my education with your support.

SUPERIOR. Abraham Jauregui is from Madera Ranchos, California, and is a fourth-year student at Cal Poly studying BioResource and Agricultural Engineering. Since his sophomore year, he has worked at the Irrigation Training and Research Center, gaining over two years of experience. During this time, he has contributed to farm evaluations, conducted sprinkler catch can uniformity tests, and assisted in testing flow rates to help evaluate and improve farm irrigation systems. Abraham is grateful to receive this scholarship, which supports his continued growth as an agricultural engineer.



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YARDNEY. Jade Meichtry is a senior transfer student at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, majoring in BioResource and Agricultural Engineering. She has been working at the Irrigation Training and Research Center since January 2025, contributing to field evaluations, marketing materials, and community irrigation classes. Jade is also involved with the Agricultural Engineering Society and Cal Poly Band, along with Grow Crew, Water Works and serving on the board of the Students with Dependents at Cal Poly and is currently working on a USDA-funded fellowship with Dr. Kuwahara researching ultrafine bubbles for agricultural innovation. She hopes to pursue a career in water and irrigation engineering to make a positive impact on agricultural communities.

In her free time, Jade enjoys backpacking, hiking, mountain biking, water skiing, and spending time outdoors with her 5 kids. She is grateful and honored to be a recipient of the CAIA Scholarship.

YARDNEY. Erin Psaila is a third-year BioResource and Agricultural Engineering major at Cal Poly. Since January, she has worked with the Cal Poly Irrigation Training and Research Center, where this summer she completed numerous irrigation system evaluations along California's coast. Working with the team, they measured the distribution uniformity of various drip systems to identify opportunities for system improvements. She is also an ambassador for the Engineering for One Planet program and is extremely passionate about sustainability, particularly as it relates to water resources. In the future, she is motivated to continue her education in water engineering and hopes to work specifically in irrigation. During her free time, she enjoys backpacking, hiking, cooking, and caring for my plants. She deeply appreciates this opportunity and can't wait to continue learning about irrigation!



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FRESNO VALVES AND YARDNEY.

CurtLynn Wendt transferred from College of the Sequoias into BioResource and Agricultural Engineering at Cal Poly and is now a senior. This is her first summer of working for the Irrigation Training and Research Center. She has primarily worked in the irrigation systems and evaluations team traveling up and down the coast and visiting several farms each week. She is also a member of the tractor pull team and Agricultural Engineering Society. She hopes to be able to support farmers and helping them find better ways to farm that can optimize their investments and yield. Growing up surrounded by agriculture, she came to love being around it and hopes to pursue a career that continues to surround her with

it. During her free time, she loves to be outside hanging out or being active, including playing sports such as tennis. She is also very involved in her church's activities throughout the week. She is very appreciative to be receiving these scholarships and hopes to be able to use them to give back to the community eventually.