

These 21 Cal Poly students will be recognized for their awards and other accomplishments by state lawmakers on the floors of the Assembly and Senate in Sacramento on Monday, Feb. 1.

**Christina Barton** is studying graphic communication with a concentration in design reproduction technology and a minor in photography in the College of Liberal Arts. Her hometown is **Kansas City, Mo.** She placed second in the 2015 Gravure Education Foundation/Flint Group Technical Writing Competition. Barton received \$1,000 for her essay, “Gravure and the Packaging Market: How Gravure Continues to Compete in the Packaging Sector.” On campus, she is involved with New Student and Transitions Programs, serving as an orientation leader for new students. Her career goal is to work in a marketing environment where she can combine her love of design and photography.

**Seth Borges** is an agribusiness major in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. His hometown is **Visalia, Calif.** He was a member of Cal Poly’s National Agricultural Marketing Association Team that won the 2015 National Agri-Marketing Association student marketing competition in Kansas City, Mo. The team created a marketing plan for a subscription-based refrigerated dog food product called Nature’s Roots. “The NAMA competition is an incredible Learn by Doing experience for students. In preparing for the competition, students develop their marketing skills and knowledge, along with their critical-thinking skills, communication skills, and teamwork,” said Professor Lindsey Higgins, who coached the team. “I’m so proud of the work that this team put into the project and how well they represented Cal Poly.” Cal Poly has won the competition 11 times in the past 38 years — more than any other university.

**Kevin Carstens** is pursuing master’s degrees in civil and environmental engineering, with a concentration in transportation engineering, in the College of Engineering, and business administration in the Orfalea College of Business. His hometown is **Rocklin, Calif.** He was president of Cal Poly ITE, a student chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers that was named the institute’s 2015 international chapter of the year. Carstens was also part of the foursome that won the title and \$2,000 in the ITE Collegiate Traffic Bowl Grand Championships, which was open to teams from throughout Canada and the U.S. In internships with Reinard Brandley Airport Consulting, San Luis Obispo County’s Public Works Department, and Fehr & Peers, his duties ranged from drafting and editing, to guiding lost tourists through the remote Carrizo Plain. Carstens also develops transit analysis apps for Bishop Peak Technology, and assists Cal Poly professors with their research. His career goal is to work for a transportation engineering firm.

**Paul Carvalho** is a graduate student studying biological sciences in the College of Science and Mathematics. His hometown is **Torrance, Calif.** He was awarded a National Science Foundation graduate research fellowship that will pay for three years of master’s and doctoral studies and allow him to continue researching fisheries — work he started as an undergraduate at Cal Poly. “The NSF fellowship really opens doors because I can connect with people who are interested in fisheries modeling,” he said. “It will also allow

me to focus on research without having to worry about outside funding sources.” Professor Crow White, Carvalho’s research advisor, said, “This is the most-coveted award for a graduate student in the sciences. It opens the door to getting into the most competitive doctoral programs.”

**A.J. Chamorro** is a construction management major in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. His hometown is **Emerald Hills, Calif.** He was among the eight Cal Poly construction management students who earned top honors in the mechanical division at the Associated Schools of Construction competition held last February in Reno, Nev. “The ASC competitions are invaluable to students’ career development. There’s nothing in the country that compares with it,” said Al Hauck, head of the Construction Management Department. In addition, last August, Chamorro received the Don Batz Special Scholarship Award as the top-scoring scholarship recipient among 61 winners at the Northern California Mechanical Contractors Association’s 2015 Kent Morrill Scholarship Reception in Oakland. His scholarship was valued at nearly \$2,400. He is president of the Northern California MCA Student Chapter.

**Elaine Cohen** is studying business administration in the Orfalea College of Business. Her hometown is **Paso Robles, Calif.** She was part of a four-member team that took second at the 2015 Institute of Packaging Professionals AmeriStar Packaging Awards Competition for an all-in-one contact lens case and solution bottle. “Congratulations to all the student AmeriStar award winners,” said Jane Chase, IOPP chair. “Your work is truly inspiring to our student community of future packaging professionals.”

**Benjy Egel** is a journalism major in the College of Liberal Arts. His hometown is **Davis, Calif.** He received the \$8,000 Earl “Squire” Behrens Scholarship from the Sacramento Press Club. Egel, a senior, started his journalism career at age 15, covering sports for his hometown paper, The Davis Enterprise. By the time he was a high school senior, he was writing about professional and Division I collegiate sports in Davis and Sacramento. He might have pursued becoming a sports reporter, but his coverage of Cal Poly student government elections and an unconstitutional ban on candidates speaking to the media attracted national attention. Last summer, he interned at the Sacramento Bee. “I pride myself on delivering thorough content through pressing interviews, dutiful research and a clear, direct writing style,” wrote Egel, who is one of the managing editors of Mustang News, the campus media group.

**Mario Espinoza** is a comparative ethnic studies senior in the College of Liberal Arts. His hometown is **Modesto, Calif.** He received the 2015 California State University Trustees’ Award for Outstanding Achievement. The awards are presented annually to one student from each CSU Campus, to recognize their superior academic performance, personal accomplishments, community service and financial need. Espinoza, a first-generation college student, also received a \$6,000 scholarship. Since transferring to Cal Poly from Cuesta College in fall 2014, he has been active on campus as a peer counselor for the LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex and Allies) group, co-chair of the cultural club Movimiento Estudiantil Xicano de Aztlán, and volunteer at the Cal Poly Pride Center and MultiCultural Center. In the community,

Espinoza is a volunteer event coordinator with the AIDS Support Network. "Mario is one of the most talented young scholars I have seen come through my many courses at Cal Poly," said ethnic studies Professor Jenell Navarro. "He is incredibly insightful, driven and humble." Last spring, Espinoza was selected as a UC Santa Barbara Academic Research Consortium Scholar. In preparation for graduate school, he'll conduct research that will serve as the foundation for a future outreach program to interest underrepresented youth in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). He plans to earn a doctorate in Chicano/a studies or comparative ethnic studies and pursue a career in higher education.

**Preston Fernandes** is a dairy science major in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. His hometown is **Tulare, Calif.** He was among a team of Cal Poly students who took first place at the 2015 North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge held in Liverpool, N.Y. Some 274 students from 38 colleges were challenged over two days to evaluate an operational New York dairy and develop a farm analysis that included a list of recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing and financial management. The Cal Poly foursome ranked first among eight competing teams that evaluated the same dairy.

**Leah Horner** is studying broadcast journalism in the College of Liberal Arts. Her hometown is **Sacramento, Calif.** She received the Sacramento Press Club's \$4,000 Jerry Gillam Scholarship. Horner, a junior, is the news producer for Cal Poly's student-run Mustang News TV. She interned at WBOC-TV, a FOX affiliate in Salisbury, M.D., last summer, and in the fall studied in Brighton, England, to learn the British approach to broadcast journalism. "Reporting is my passion," she wrote in a letter to the Sacramento Press Club. "I can't wait to get into the real word and begin my career."

**Kenna Lewis** is an agricultural communication major in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. Her hometown is **San Luis Obispo, Calif.** She claimed the title of 2015 California Champion at the California Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Collegiate Discussion Meet held last spring and advanced to the national competition in Kansas City, Mo. She and her Cal Poly teammates delivered a stellar performance and ultimately earned the Outstanding Team award at the California competition. Lewis has been an associate editor at Cal Poly's Brock Center for Agricultural Communication. In addition, she has honed her communications skills at San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, the American Farm Bureau Federation, San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce and in the office of U.S. Sen. Bob Casey Jr. from Pennsylvania.

**Joyce Lin** is majoring in civil and environmental engineering in the College of Engineering. Her hometown is **Kirkland, Wash.** She was a member of Cal Poly's Concrete Canoe team that won the Innovation Award and earned second place overall with their 2015 entry, Jumanji, at the National Concrete Canoe Competition, held in Clemson, S.C., last June. It was the 10th consecutive year that Cal Poly placed in the top five at the annual competition referred to as the "America's Cup of Civil Engineering." Students gain hands-on, practical experience in project management and working with

concrete mix designs in the competition. This was Cal Poly's 16th trip to the nationals, including back-to-back national titles from 2010 to 2012. Lin is project manager for the 2015-16 team, oversing fundraising, finances, scheduling and material procurement. She also organizes Open Shed Fridays and Casting Days to increase student interest on campus.

**Morgan Montalvo** is a mechanical engineering major in the College of Engineering. Her hometown is **Woodland Hills, Calif.** She was Cal Poly Rose Float construction chair for the award-winning 2016 float, "Sweet Shenanigans." Montalvo, who drove the 55-foot vehicle, had an unusual perspective of the parade with its 700,000 spectators and a TV audience estimated at 100 million. For the fifth consecutive year, the float earned the California Grown designation from the California Cut Flower Commission, which recognizes an entry decorated with at least 85 percent of cut flowers and plant materials from the Golden State. "I think it is important to us to be California Grown, because we are a California float at heart," she said. "Cal Poly universities, especially in this parade, help to represent the state." This was the second straight year the entry received the Lathrop K. Leishman Trophy for the most beautiful non-commercial entry. Working on the float team seemed a natural evolution for Montalvo, who has been designing and building robots since the sixth grade. She received a four-year, \$70,000 family scholarship — her mother is an engineer — from the SME Education Foundation. "She was a force to be reckoned with from day one," one teacher wrote in recommending her for the scholarship. "In a class that was filled with mostly boys, Morgan was never intimidated by the boys."

**Alyssa Parr** is an architecture major and solar energy enthusiast in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. Her hometown is **Clarksville, Md.** She was one of two project managers for a team of about 100 Cal Poly students who took third for INhouse, a 1,000-square-foot, net zero, solar home that wowed judges and spectators in the U.S. Department of Energy's 2015 Solar Decathlon last fall. It was only the second time that Cal Poly entered the nationwide contest that began in 2002. "It has brought awareness of challenges in our current curriculum and has stimulated a buzz and excitement around campus to prepare for a more-sustainable future," she said. The team helped raise more than \$600,000 for the project that took two years to design, plan and build. Faculty advisor Sandy Stannard said the project was life changing for the team. "This experience will probably change the course of their professional careers," she said.

**Jimmy Phung** is a business administration major in the Orfalea College of Business. His hometown is **Westminster, Calif.** He was one of five Cal Poly students to receive a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship for the 2015-16 academic year. Phung will study in China. He speaks Cantonese and Mandarin and has proficiency in Spanish. The scholarship program aims to diversify the kinds of students studying and interning abroad, and the countries where they go. It is a nationally competitive scholarship, congressionally funded and sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. State Department and administered by the Institute of International Education. On campus, Phung served for two years on the Inter Housing Council, a student

government group that works to enhance the experience of students who live in on-campus residence halls.

**Rachel SantaOlalla** is a landscape architecture major in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. Her hometown is **Ventura, Calif.** She was one of three students across the nation to receive the \$4,000 American Society of Landscape Architects Council of Fellows Scholarship. In November 2014, she was a team leader of a project that received a national award for a 5,000-square-foot playground Cal Poly students designed and built in South Africa. It was one of only three awards of excellence given out in ASLA's annual competition that attracted more than 500 entries from 77 universities across the U.S. "My career goals after graduation are to continue learning about landscape architecture as a professional; to reach out to the community I live in through ASLA; and to eventually become the principle of a firm," she said. "The project types I am interested in are mitigation, restoration, conservation and preservation. My favorite topics include natural systems, culture, history, social justice and recreation."

**Tanner Shelton** is a city and regional planning major in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. His hometown is **Santa Paula, Calif.** He was a member of a multidisciplinary team of Cal Poly students who partnered with People's Self-Help Housing to develop plans for Vestri Vita, a 30-unit affordable housing complex for at-risk and homeless veterans proposed for Atascadero, Calif. The design won an award at the 2015 Bank of America Merrill Lynch Low-Income Housing Challenge. Vestri Vita (Latin for "your life") complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and includes a counseling center, first-aid resources, and a "maker space," a facility with resources geared to helping veterans reintegrate into the community. The project also features solar panels, a gray-water system and drought-tolerant landscaping. People's Self-Help Housing can continue to pursue the project. Shelton is also a student ambassador for the college and a member of its Student Council.

**Ryan Smith** is a graduate student studying structural engineering in the College of Engineering. He earned a bachelor's in civil engineering from Cal Poly in 2015. His hometown is **Carlsbad, Calif.** He was president of the Cal Poly Society of Civil Engineers when it received the 2015 American Society of Civil Engineers' Robert Ridgway Award, which recognizes the most outstanding chapter of 323 student groups in 16 countries. Cal Poly's group was selected after a rigorous review based on an annual report prepared by student officers. "This distinction is the civil engineering equivalent of the Academy Award," said college Dean Debra Larson. "It only goes to the best of the best, and it reflects our Cal Poly chapter's extraordinary efforts, achievements and leadership." Among the chapter's competitive teams, the Cal Poly Steel Bridge team placed second in the National Student Steel Bridge Competition, and the chapter's concrete canoe team finished second in the Concrete Canoe National Competition. "These achievements go to the roots of Learn by Doing," said Smith, who served 14 months as president. "We have such a large group — and long history — of devoted student members who invest their time, interest and energies on extracurricular activities like SCE." He has also served as SCE chapter treasurer and social director.

**Patrick Steffanic** is a junior majoring in physics and mathematics in the College of Science and Mathematics. His hometown is **Portola, Calif.** Last summer, he traveled to the European Organization for Nuclear Research, or CERN's, laboratory in Switzerland, where he was part of the A Large Ion Collider Experiment (ALICE). The collaboration involves thousands of scientists from throughout the world. The ALICE detector is used to study a state of matter that physicists think formed just after the Big Bang. This state of matter is generated using the Large Hadron Collider — the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator — to collide two high-energy particle beams traveling at close to the speed of light. "What I work on at ALICE is trying to find out more about the collision by looking at the shrapnel," Steffanic said. He plans to earn a doctorate in experimental particle physics and continue the research at ALICE. From there, he may also pursue a position in higher education.

**Janel Takeda** is majoring in industrial technology in the Orfalea College of Business. Her hometown is **San Jose, Calif.** She was part of a team of business students who took second in the nation in the 48 Hour Re-Pack, Student Packaging Competition, that gives students just two days to redesign a consumer product's packaging. The five-member team also received \$2,000 at an awards ceremony held in Atlanta. Their task was to redesign a line of gluten-free flour called Nature's Medley. They came up with a nine-sided package featured a pour spout with removable lid that doubled as a measuring cup. The recyclable paperboard also protected its contents from pests and transportation damage. The Cal Poly team engineered the package structure, designed its labeling and produced a video showcasing the packaging benefits — all within 48 hours.

**Reese Woodard** is studying business administration in the Orfalea College of Business. His hometown is **Davis, Calif.** He was part of Cal Poly's American Marketing Association chapter that was recognized for excellence in professional development, chapter planning and membership at the 2015 AMA International Collegiate Conference held in New Orleans. The team also took second for its video contest entry promoting Be The Match, the association's national philanthropic partner. Cal Poly students created a mini-documentary that shared stories from bone marrow donors and recipients whose lives have been changed by the organization. Woodard has a passion for videography. In San Francisco, he created videos for a tech startup. After graduation, he intends to pursue employment in the startup sector. This school year, Woodard serves as director of videography for the student AMA chapter's executive board.

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