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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Cal Poly Student Nets Wine and Food Institute Scholarship, Launches Local Group Chapter

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly graduate student Jeffery Landolt has netted his second scholarship from the San Diego Chapter of the American Institute of Wine & Food.

Meanwhile, the Crop Science student recently launched a San Luis Obispo County chapter of the national institute, hoping to facilitate communication between academia and the local farm and wine industries and educate local residents about food and wine.

Landolt is one of 12 recipients of scholarships given out by the institute's San Diego chapter. He received \$5,000 for his studies in 2009, following an initial \$5,000 scholarship for 2008. The San Diego group gave a total of \$26,500 this year.

Landolt did his undergraduate studies at San Diego State University and worked for two years as vineyard manager at a San Diego-area winery before returning to school at Cal Poly for a master's degree.

He said he chose Cal Poly based on the school's academic programs and on the surrounding community and its growing wine industry. The latter led to his efforts to develop the San Luis Obispo County chapter of the American Institute of Wine and Food.

"The wine industry is the reason I came here," he said. "This is a way for me to get involved and give back - and help spread a message of education first."

The American Institute of Wine & Food is a nonprofit, educational organization founded in 1981 by celebrity chef Julia Child, noted vintner Robert Mondavi and others. The group has 26 chapters around the U.S., with more than 4,000 members.

Monterey and Santa Barbara have chapters. Landolt saw the need for one in San Luis Obispo County, where wine grapes and farming are significant segments of the economy.

"Our main goal is to bring together farmers and researchers," Landolt said. "There is often a gap between the two, and it's hard to relate. We want to demystify our research methods and get local farmers in tune with what we're studying at Cal Poly."

The local group - the institute's newest chapter - consists now of Landolt, nine fellow Cal Poly graduate students

and three professors. The group is in its infancy, he said, and is brainstorming its aims and planning its programs. It will begin recruiting soon in the community, he said, with an aim of having 50 members by mid-2009.

Landolt hopes to hold speeches and other gatherings to bring farmers and researchers together locally. He also plans to get the local chapter involved in the national group's signature Days of Taste program, which brings chefs and farmers into fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms to teach students about the importance of fresh food and how ingredients weave their way through daily life. He said his group hopes to reach out to local high schools culinary programs in addition to SLO County elementary schools.

"Jeff has inspired a good number of us wine enthusiasts to participate in this goal of reaching out and educating students at a relatively young age about the importance of food and wine in our daily and social lives," said Mark Welch, a Crop Science lecturer and member of the local AIWF chapter. "We are excited to be founding members and feel we can bring unique and innovative food and wine concepts to young people."

For more about the American Institute of Wine and Food and its local chapters, log on to [www.aiwf.org](http://www.aiwf.org) or call 800-274-AIWF (2493). For more on the new San Luis Obispo chapter, contact Landolt at 760-224-7622 or [jlandolt@hotmail.com](mailto:jlandolt@hotmail.com).

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