

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California



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Cal Poly Helps Promote Aspiring Female Computer Scientists

SAN LUIS OBISPO – The Cal Poly Computer Science Department and the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) will recognize 10 high school female students for their accomplishments and aspirations in computing and technology.

The young women will receive the NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing, created to encourage computing aspirations of young women, introduce them to leadership opportunities in the field, and generate visibility for women's participation in technology fields. Winners are selected based on their aptitude and interest in technology and computing, leadership ability, academic history, and plans for post-secondary education.

"With technology jobs projected to grow faster than all other employment sectors in the next decade, it's imperative we nurture the computing aspirations of women, who will make up half the professional workforce," said Lucy Sanders, CEO and co-founder of NCWIT. "This award allows us to recognize and encourage talent that might otherwise be overlooked."

The winners of the NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing – Central California Affiliate are from San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Fresno counties and represent diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, including Asian, Pacific Islander, and Latina.

The 2011-12 Central Coast region award winners are:

- Lindsay Burton, Newbury Park High, Newbury Park
- Diana Chiu, San Luis Obispo High, San Luis Obispo
- Ankita Devareddy, Simi Valley High, Simi Valley
- Ashley-Lynn Fastenau, Ventura High, Ventura
- Lisa Ferguson, Atascadero High, Atascadero
- Michelle Rodriguez, Edison High, Fresno
- Abbie Sandquist, Arroyo Grande High, Arroyo Grande
- Elly Shao, La Reina High School, Thousand Oaks

- Kavita Suri, Dos Pueblos Senior High, Goleta
- Emily Thurston, Templeton High, Templeton

Each winner will receive a \$200 gift card, engraved awards for the recipient and her school, and the opportunity to meet with faculty, students and industry representatives from the field of computer science. The presentations will be given at an award ceremony in April 2012.

The Central California award is sponsored by Cal Poly's Computer Science Department, Macy's Inc., Raytheon, Lockheed Martin and iFixit. Additional support is provided at the national level by Microsoft and Motorola Solutions Foundation.

About NCWIT:

The National Center for Women & Information Technology is a nonprofit coalition of more than 200 prominent corporations, academic institutions, government agencies, and nonprofits working to improve U.S. innovation, competitiveness, and workforce sustainability by increasing women's participation in information technology. NCWIT's work spans K-12 and higher education through industry and academic careers. Find out more at www.ncwit.org.

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