

[Skip to Content](#) ?[my CalPoly login](#)

News

University News & Information

[Admissions & Aid](#)[Majors & Colleges](#)[Research](#)[Alumni Community](#)[Campus Life](#)[Athletics](#)[About](#)

July 3, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Amy Hewes

805-756-6402; ahewes@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly Solar Team's Environmental Solution Takes First Place at International Competition

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly Engineering students' vision of a solar still earned the team first place at the international Environmental Design Contest held in April at New Mexico State University (NMSU) in Las Cruces, N.M.

The challenge was to develop a more efficient solar desalination unit. For their entry, a group of Cal Poly's environmental engineering students designed and built a solar still to convert brackish groundwater to fresh water for rural, low-income communities with limited access to electricity.

Led by Kyle Lee, team members included Yakov Suvorov, Shasta Billings, Cherie Du, Brian Kane, Chris Pittner, Carter Reiff, Tiffany Racz and Maddie Bouvier.

A \$2,500 prize was awarded with the first place finish. The Cal Poly team also received the Intel Environmental Innovation Award of \$2,500 and was one of four teams to earn a special renewable energy award and \$1,000 from the United States Bureau of Reclamation.

In response to the research conducted during this year's competition, NMSU's Institute for Energy and the Environment created an internship to foster selected work. Team members had to apply for the internship; selection was based on experiments the applicants suggested for their bench scale model and the potential the students identified to improve their original designs.

Pittner and Suvorov were selected for the new internship, in addition to NMSU chemical engineering student Rachel Woods.

"For a number of schools, the contest is part of a year-long design course," said Suvorov. "But, for us, it is part of a special one-unit, student-led course, with just two quarters to get everything together — from research and design to fabrication and presentation.

"We prize the opportunity to expand on our design and gain new knowledge, experience and connections to take it to the next level."

The students' research in the areas of waste management, water energy and sustainable distillation systems will take place at the Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility in Alamogordo, N.M., and at the IEE facilities at the NMSU Las Cruces campus.

IEE/WERC Design Competition

IEE/WERC (Waste-management Education and Research Consortium) is a consortium for environmental education and technology development within the NMSU Department of Chemical Engineering. The annual IEE/WERC International Environmental Design Contest brings together industry, government and academia in the search for improved environmental solutions for real-world problems.

#



[CP Home](#) | [Directory](#) | [Campus Maps & Directions](#) | [Bookstore](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Employment](#) | [Campus Policies](#) | [Contact Us](#)

CAL POLY

[Get Adobe Reader](#) | [Microsoft Viewers](#)

© 2012 California Polytechnic State University | San Luis Obispo, California 93407
Phone: 805-756-1111