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Cal Poly ARCE Students Win National Competition With New Concept for Architectural Engineering Profession

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Putting together buildings is a challenge. Taking them apart and easily reusing the material for other buildings is a revolutionary new profession, according to Cal Poly Architectural Engineering graduates Keith Cullum and Paul Sargent.

The duo entered their concept of “Deconstruction Engineer” in the national “Lifecycle Building Challenge” as their senior project last June, and they were recently awarded first place in a student category. Their winning entry secures them an opportunity to present their idea at the West Coast Green Conference and Expo held Sept. 20-22 in San Francisco. In addition, Cullum and Sargent will share the $2,500 prize.

The Lifecycle Building Challenge required students to develop a concept having to do with deconstructability of buildings. There were three categories: building, component and service. The submission requirement was a one page summary of an idea and a supporting poster. Their concept of a new profession called a deconstruction engineer won first place in the service category.

Also known as design for disassembly and design for deconstruction, the emerging concept encompasses the idea of creating buildings that are stocks of resources for future buildings. By creating building components that can be easily recovered and reused, materials are kept at their highest value, which reduces energy and resource consumption.

The Lifecycle Building Challenge was developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the American Institute of Architects, West Coast Green and the Building Materials Reuse Association.

The national competition was sponsored by GreenBuildingBlocks.com, BMRA and AIA.

Al Estes served as the students’ faculty advisor on the project.

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