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Cal Poly Earth Sciences Student Wins National Honor With Talk on Farmland Preservation

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- A Cal Poly student's speech on farmland preservation and the sustainability of current agricultural practices won first place at the annual meeting of earth and soil scientists from across the United States.

Ashlee Dere, an earth sciences major from San Diego, made a strong case for the preservation of farmland despite an abundant American food supply in a talk delivered at the joint meeting of the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America and Soil Science Society of America, held in Denver.

Dere, president of Cal Poly's Earth, Soil, and Water Conservation Club, was also selected by the Soil and Water Conservation Society as this year's recipient of the Soil and Water Conservation Scholarship.

At the meeting, the Cal Poly club won the third-place award for service and educational outreach activities, largely for its involvement with the MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Advancement) Agricultural Initiative, a program to encourage disadvantaged youth to learn about career opportunities in agriculture and in soil science.

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