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Cal Poly and California Strawberry Commission Announce Multidisciplinary Partnership

\$1 Million Dollar Gift will create new Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Focused on educating future leaders in the area of sustainability, growth and the success of the California strawberry industry, Cal Poly and the California Strawberry Commission announced today they have signed an agreement to create the first of its kind Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center.



Applied research and innovation across multiple disciplines, coupled with access to real-world issues will enable Cal Poly and the California Strawberry Commission to achieve their shared vision of establishing a world-class center focused on the sustainability of California strawberry farming.

“This partnership will enrich our Learn by Doing approach by providing our students, faculty and staff the opportunity to work alongside experts in the strawberry industry on real-world challenges,” said Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong at a signing event in Sacramento Feb. 19. “This partnership is an important step forward in our desire to strengthen ties with key California industries so that our students can learn, do and succeed. Faculty and undergraduate students from every corner of campus, including hydrologists, entomologists, plant scientists, engineers, packaging scientists and marketers, to name a few, will each have a hand in this important work for one of the nation’s leading industries.”

“Locally-produced foods are important to Californians, and we have created this unique partnership to address challenges facing farmers in the 21st century,” said Mark Murai, president of the California Strawberry Commission. “We are committed to a robust partnership focused on innovation and applied research intended to help keep strawberry farming viable in California.”

The newly created Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center is a one-of-a-kind concept rooted in the hands-on learning model that defines Cal Poly. The center will focus on applied research that incorporates both teaching and learning experiences for Cal Poly students, faculty, and California strawberry farmers.

David Wehner, dean of Cal Poly’s College of Agriculture, Food & Environmental Sciences, added, “By forming the Strawberry Sustainability Research and Education Center, we will enable some of the nation’s brightest students to work hand-in-hand with talented and dedicated faculty across disciplines -- whether it’s in agriculture, engineering or business -- to provide practical solutions to the strawberry industry. Applying classroom learning to real-world problems is what Cal Poly is all about.”

About Cal Poly:

Founded in 1901 and part of the renowned California State University system since 1960, Cal Poly is a nationally ranked, four-year, comprehensive polytechnic public university located in San Luis Obispo, Calif. Known for its small class sizes and open access to expert faculty, Cal Poly is a distinctive learning community of nearly 19,000 students, offering academically motivated students unsurpassed hands-on educational experiences that prepares them for today’s scientific and technical world.

About the California Strawberry Commission:

The California Strawberry Commission is a state government agency representing all of California’s strawberry shippers, processors and farmers. With an emphasis on food safety education, commission activities focus on production and nutrition research, trade relations, public policy, marketing and communications. California produces more than 85 percent of all strawberries grown in the United States. For more information, go to www.californiastrawberries.com.

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