

# AGRIcolumn

**DON B. HUNTLEY COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE**



## *Meet our New Dean*

**Ethan Orr appointed to lead Huntley College**



**SPRING 2026**

# AGRIcolumn

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Cal Poly Pomona

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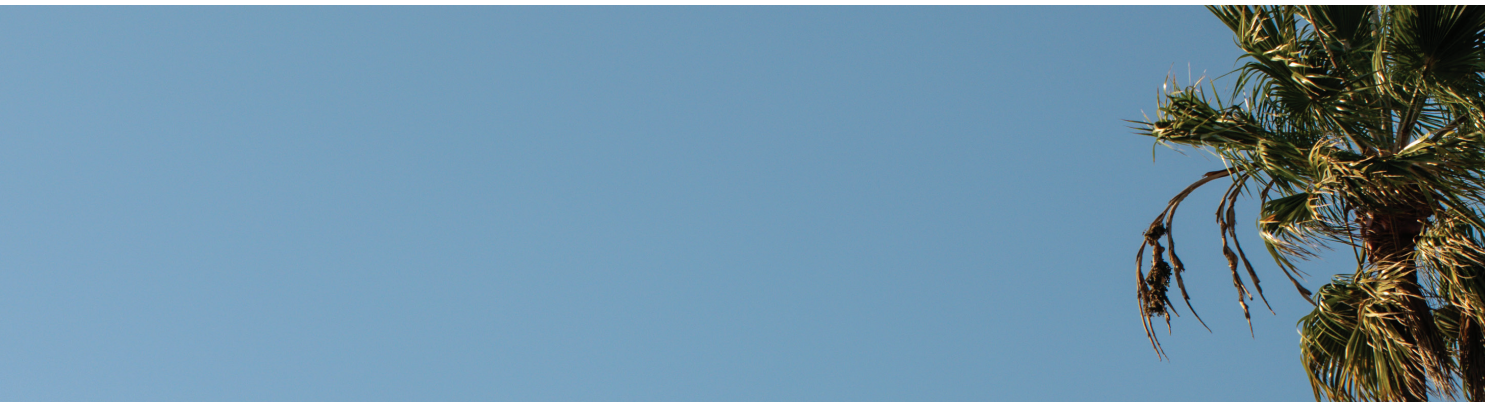
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Cover Photo: New Dean Ethan Orr at Spadra Farm with a tractor and aerial drone. (Credit: Tom Zasadzinski)



“

**Together, we can elevate the college and make it a destination for prospective students, faculty, and staff, as well as a place that industries can count on to find outstanding workers.**

”

Greetings,

I am pleased to welcome you to my first edition of AGRIColumn as Dean of the Huntley College of Agriculture.

In this issue, you'll learn more about me and my vision for the college. You'll also discover the impactful research led by our outstanding faculty, as well as important improvements to our facilities. And, of course, we celebrate the many accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff over the past year.

I am excited to join the College and support its mission of developing the next generation of leaders in the farming, fashion, & food industries.

I see tremendous opportunities for growth and look forward to working with industry partners, alumni, faculty, and staff to bring these opportunities to life for our students.

Together, we can elevate the college—making it a destination for prospective students, faculty, and staff, and a trusted source of talented professionals for industry. I hope you will join us in this effort.

In the meantime, enjoy the 2025-26 edition of AGRIColumn. I look forward to meeting you at one of our many events this year.

**Ethan Orr, PhD  
Dean**

# AWARDS.



## 1- Nutrition Graduate Students Win Awards

### Hadis Reizei

Outstanding Student in a Dietetics Program.  
California Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics 2025 Conference.

### Taneshi Noel

2nd Place, Poster Competition for her work on  
"Evaluating a Traffic Light Food Labeling System to Improve Dietary Choices  
and Address Nutritional Disparities in a Campus Food Pantry."  
California Academic of Nutrition & Dietetics 2025 Conference.

## 2- Horse Center Receives Heritage Award

The W.K. Kellogg Arabian Horse Center received the Heritage Award from the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership (SGVEP) for its century-long legacy of educational innovation, regional impact, and community engagement. Interim President Iris S. Levine accepted the honor at the annual gala. SGVEP is a coalition of businesses, elected leaders, educational institutions, and nonprofits advancing regional economic vitality and quality of life.

## 3- Pre-Vet Student Wins Scholarship

**Iris Garcia**, a senior pre-vet major, received the One Health Scholarship at the 2025 American Pre-Veterinary Medical Association (APVMA) Symposium. The award recognizes students passionate about the One Health Initiative, which links human, animal, and environmental health. APVMA is a national organization of pre-veterinary students, representing more than 85 college and university clubs and promoting interest in veterinary medicine.

## 4- Pre-Vet Student Named President's Scholar

**Chloe Alchin** was named the Albert Zoraster President's Scholar for exceptional achievement. An animal science major and cross country and track athlete, she plans to become a veterinarian and pursue a residency in sports medicine and rehabilitation to advance animal welfare and educate future generations. President's Scholars must have a 3.5 GPA, demonstrate academic and co-curricular excellence, and complete an essay and interview.

## 2025 College Awards

### Julian A. McPhee

- Camille McCurry
- Wenshin TsaoC

### John E. Andrews Student Leaders of the Year

- Alicia Valle
- Hadis Rezaei

### Staff of the Year

- Patty Mutz (AMM)

### Staff Advisor of the Year

- Henry Flores

### Faculty Advisor of the Year

- Fatheema Subhan (NFS)

### Teacher Advisor of the Year

- Julie Lee (ABM)

*pictures are in order*





### ***Pre-Vet Student Elected to APVMA***

**Michelle Vera Perez**, a senior animal science student, was elected as vice president of the American Pre-Veterinary Medical Association (APVMA) in the 2025-26 academic year.

APVMA is a national organization of pre-veterinary students that promotes and stimulates interest in the field of veterinary medicine. It consists of more than 85 college & university clubs across the nation. Perez was elected at the APVMA Symposium, which was held at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tenn., March 2025.



### ***AMM Holds Summer Fashion Tech Camp for Kids***

More than 50 children explored the world of fashion technology in summer 2025 at a camp organized by the Department of Apparel Merchandising & Management. The children, who were ages 9 and up and came from local school districts, attended one of four week-long sessions at the camp.

They worked on making tie-dyed t-shirts; friendship bracelets; custom patches printed on a direct-to-garment printer; a half-scaled pullover top; and tote bags decorated & embroidered with their initials. The children also participated in a fashion show and exhibition during the camp.



### ***Spadra Farm Hosts Agrivoltaic Research Project***

The Huntley College of Agriculture and Pitzer College are collaborating on a "agrivoltaics" research project. Agrivoltaics integrates sustainable agriculture with renewable energy creation.

By growing under photovoltaic panels, farmers can reduce thermal stress on plants and water lost to evaporation. In addition, it can improve worker safety by providing shade for farmers in hot climates.

The Huntley College and the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability at Pitzer College are growing romaine lettuce under six photovoltaic solar panels at Spadra Farm on the CPP campus. It's believed to be the first commercial agrivoltaics system in Southern California. It can generate enough power to supply four to six homes for a year, depending on usage.

The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research provided a \$1.8 million grant to Pitzer College for the project to study the environmental potential and benefits of agrivoltaics across the state.



### ***AMM Earns Accreditation***

The Department of Apparel Merchandising & Management has earned accreditation from the Textiles and Apparel Programs Accreditation Commission (TAPAC) following a rigorous three-year process. The recognition affirms the department's high-quality education and preparation of students for careers in the fashion and apparel industries. AMM is now the only TAPAC-accredited apparel program on the West Coast and one of just nine nationwide. The accreditation is valid through March 2032 and is renewable.



### ***AMM students Travel to Paris***

Hugo Boss. Yves Saint Laurent. Christian Dior. Apparel merchandising and management students learned about these brands and more during a 2025 spring break trip to Paris.

The 13 students visited the offices of Hugo Boss and Woolmark La Caserne, toured the Yves Saint Laurent Museum and La Galerie Dior, a museum dedicated to the legacy of Christian Dior, and the Galeries Lafayette and the Samaritan Mall retail centers.

The Department of Apparel Merchandising & Management offered the eight-day trip to expose the students to the global

fashion capital to meet with international fashion executives.

It was the first trip of its kind that AMM has offered during spring break, and it was the first time that some students traveled internationally.



### ***AMM Student Wins Scholarship***

Apparel Merchandising and Management student **Andrea Avalos Lujan** was selected for the 2026 Fashion Scholarship Fund award in the Merchandising category through a national case study competition.

For the \$10,000 scholarship, students addressed current industry challenges by proposing cross-industry collaborations. Lujan, a senior in the retail emphasis, envisioned a partnership between Stüssy and FIFA to create limited-edition jerseys for the 2025 World Cup using recycled polyester made from stadium waste.



### ***Pumpkin Chuckin'***

The College of Engineering & the Huntley College of Agriculture collaborated on a fun project to smash some pumpkins.

Engineering students from Lecturer Joe Velten's machine element design class and the Student Innovation Idea Lab built a trebuchet - a type of medieval catapult - to launch surplus pumpkins from the Huntley College's annual Pumpkin Festival.

Based on student input, the colleges are exploring having a pumpkin launching event after next year's Pumpkin Festival.



### ***AMM Student Wins London Internship***

Apparel Merchandising and Management student **Hilsa Feliciano** earned a two-week summer internship at a London design studio after receiving the Eden Travel International Design Internship Award—the first Cal Poly Pomona student to do so.

Applicants designed pieces using food waste to promote sustainability. Feliciano created clothing and jewelry from upcycled materials such as corn husk fibers.

The award covered travel and a daily stipend, and the internship focused on sustainable materials, ethical production, circular fashion, and business practices.



### ***NFS Students Win Awards and Scholarships***

Nutrition and food science graduate students **Jocelyne Argueta** and **Elizabeth Alcarraz** took first and second place at a Southern California Institute of Food Technologists Section (SCIFTS) event.

Two participated in the SCIFTS Three Minute Thesis Competition, which is a test of research communication skills during the SCIFTS Research Showcase in October, which Cal Poly Pomona hosted.



### ***FST Students Take 3rd at SCIFTS***

A team of Food Science and Technology students placed third in the Southern California Institute of Food Technologists product development competition.

**Dana Rodriguez, Fiona Lee, Anna Lee, Micah Dominique Millan,** and **Cameron Shimono** developed Apple Miso Fizz, a sweet and slightly savory carbonated beverage with caramel, completing a full process including proposal, presentation, and product samples.

Their research found the flavor combination is not currently on the market. The team received a \$300 award.



### ***FST Students Win Region College Bowl Again***

A team of Food Science and Technology students won first place in the Pacific Southwest College Bowl for the third consecutive year.

**Camille McCurry, Alex Mathios, Marina Hernandez, Alexander Gomez, Adan Cadenas-Arzate, Jason Soldo, Michael Daniels, Lucine Besnelian,** and **Siane Kung** competed against teams from Chapman University, Cal State Long Beach, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

The Institute of Food Technologists Student Association-sponsored competition tests knowledge of food science, processing, and law. The event was held in March 2025 at San Diego State University.

**P**eople and potential. That's what drew **Ethan Orr** to the Don B. Huntley College of Agriculture: the students, faculty, and staff, and the opportunities that come with the college's proximity to the Los Angeles megalopolis.

"The team here is amazing, and the students are absolutely incredible," Orr said. "We have rangeland, we have farmland, we have a cattle unit, we have a sheep unit, gees)

We have the ability - the potential - to do anything here."

Orr was appointed as the dean of the Huntley College in February 2025. He started his new post at the Cal Poly Pomona on April 1, 2025.

He came from the University of Arizona, where he served as an associate professor of agriculture technology; executive director of the Natural Resources Users Law & Policy Center; and associate director of agriculture and natural resources for Arizona Cooperative Extension.

In his extension capacity, he had 350 faculty and staff reporting to him. As a tenured faculty, he was the primary investigator on more than \$80 million in research grants. The Huntley College may be smaller, but it has things Arizona doesn't, Orr said.

## *The Huntley College Advantage*

"Eighty-eight percent of the jobs in agriculture are not on farms. They're post harvest. So, a traditional ag school like Arizona focuses on the 12 percent of the jobs really well," he said. "A school like Cal Poly Pomona can do the 12 percent of the jobs really well, but also can excel at the 88 percent of the jobs that are nutritional science, food logistics, and marketing."

The university's proximity to Los Angeles provides important connections to industry: California produce comes here for processing, packing and distribution, Orr added. That means opportunities for agribusiness and nutrition and food science students, he said.

Los Angeles is also global hub in the fashion industry, which provides resources for the apparel merchandising and management program, Orr said.

More importantly, innovation happens in cities anchored by strong university system, he added.

"As we face unprecedented challenges in agriculture, we need innovation," Orr said.

"This school has the opportunity to become a gateway between the needs in the field and the ranch, and the solutions in the city."

# PEOPLE & POTENTIAL.



## Orr's Background

### ***Critical Challenge***

The new dean arrived at a critical time. The Huntley College has not had a permanent dean since 2017, and colleges and universities nationwide are competing for a shrinking demographic pool of prospective students, many of whom are looking for less expensive educational alternatives to taking on student loans and debt.

Simultaneously, the state of California is experiencing budget cuts, and the university has limited funding to improve aging instructional facilities. A key priority for Orr is getting the working farm units financially stable. He's already added 27 cattle to the college's rangeland and he wants to maximize Spadra Farm's productivity.

As the farm units become more profitable, they can provide more educational opportunities for students and generate revenue to invest back into the academic side.

In addition, Orr plans to get growers and commodity boards more involved. "They want to invest in our students," he said. "They just need to have the opportunity to partner with us."

Those partnerships may include helping revive the old agriculture engineering program, focusing on skills that industry wants in prospective workers, Orr said.

"A tractor isn't a tractor anymore; it's a very sophisticated computer that has sensor and GPS technology and a lot of coding," he said. "So, I want students who can know how to fix and run that tractor."

The technological emphasis also includes a new program starting this fall to certify students to fly drones. The College of Eng. is already conducting research at Spadra to see how well drones can evaluate crop growth.

The college has always engaged the public through Pumpkin Festival and field trips, but Orr wants to provide students with even more opportunities. "We had 1.1 million people go through the Red Barn at the LA County Fair," he said. "That's an opportunity for our campus to introduce ourselves to the community at large."

### ***Non-Traditional Background***

Oddly enough, Orr didn't start out in agriculture. His doctorate is in behavioral health, and he worked in municipal government and the nonprofit sector before serving a term in the Arizona state legislature. The University of Arizona then hired him to work in governmental affairs and community partnerships.

Orr's job involved working with the cooperative extension and rural agricultural districts. It was a steep learning curve for someone who initially had no agricultural background, but his political experience helped him. He successfully lobbied for \$125 million in new state funding for Arizona's agricultural college and cooperative extension, including a new veterinary medical college.

Orr's experience in developing relationships with industry and government agencies may benefit the Huntley College. Combined with the Huntley College's potential, Orr is bullish about the future. "We can be among the best in the nation," he said.

- Ph.D., behavioral health, Arizona State
- Master's degree, public administration, University of Arizona
- Associate Vice President, University of Arizona, 2015-20
- Arizona State Representative, 2013-15
- Chief Executive Officer, Simply Clean and Green, 2014-17
- Director of Commercial Revitalization/Empowerment Zone Administrator, Tucson 2000-04
- Director of Economic and Community Development, City of South Tucson, 1996-99

# FACILITY UPGRADES.

## 1- Plant Health Lab

A new lab will provide Huntley College students with hands-on learning in plant pathology while offering diagnostic services to growers with ailing plants.

The Boswell-Huntley Lab, a portable building installed near the Fruit/Crops Unit (Building 28), will support students pursuing careers or graduate study in plant pathology. It will also serve as a valuable regional resource, as few local labs offer plant diagnostic services.

**Terry Noriega**, founder of Mariposa Landscapes and former Dean's advisory Council member donated \$54,000 toward the project. Longtime benefactor **Don Huntley** ('60 animal husbandry) donated \$700,000. **The James G. Boswell Foundation** added another \$400,000, while **John** and **Janet Kister** contributed \$60,000 toward hiring a plant pathology staff member."

## 2- Student Success Center

The Student Success Center, which provides advising and academic support for students, has a new home.

The center moved from the first floor across from the Department of Animal and Veterinary Sciences to the former college copy room on the second floor.

The room was converted into a space for the Huntley Peer Advisors, a student waiting area, three staff office spaces, and storage. About \$300,000 in university funds were allocated for the project.

The improvements have increased the center's visibility and student access. In addition, the center is reporting seeing more foot traffic for general questions, not just scheduled appointments.





### 3- EPRI Pod (Vertical Farm) Container Farm

A Cal Poly Pomona-branded freight container outside the Farm Store houses a vertical farming system using hydroponics and artificial lighting to grow herbs and vegetables. Plant science students gain hands-on experience working with the system.

Donated by the Electrical Power Research Institute and Southern California Edison, the container supports research on energy use, fertilizer needs, and crop production.

Assistant Professor **Julie Lee's** ABM 2010 class also conducted feasibility and marketing analyses of 10 crops.

Produce is sold at the Farm Store, supplied to Dining Services, or donated to the Poly Pantry.

## Container Farm Fast Facts

- Manufactured by Freight Farms
- 320 square feet
- Can grow 2 to 6 tons of produce annually (equivalent to 2 acres of farmland)
- Hydroponic system uses 5 gallons of water per day.



### 4- Greenhouse Upgrades

After about 20 years of use, the Plant Science Nursery Greenhouses are getting some much-needed renovations.

The renovations include:

- Shade curtains to diffuse direct sunlight and keep all seven greenhouses cooler in summer and warmer in winter, enhancing plant quality.
- Insect screeners for every greenhouse.
- Repairing roof vent damaged by the wind in 2024.
- Installing cloud-based controllers to allow remote control of the environment and log temperatures.
- New cooling walls.

The upgrades will enhance plant health and worker safety, while increasing greenhouse efficiency, Nursery Manager **Kelsey Swayze** said.

The improvements were funded by a special appropriation in the 2022-23 California budget, which was intended to help combat climate change effects on the agricultural and food industries.



# FACULTY RESEARCH.

“

Current certification and labeling programs emphasize nutrient density for regenerative, grass-finished products, but the reality is that none of them actually measure it.

”

## *Is That Really Grass-Fed Beef You're Eating?*

***When you see "grass-fed" on a label, how can you be sure it's accurate?***

Grass-fed beef is touted as healthier, higher quality, and better for the environment than grain-fed beef, if more expensive. However, there aren't any strong authentication methods in place to ensure standards are met.

But working with researchers at Michigan State University, Chapman University, and Utah State University, we have discovered an improved laboratory method to verify grass-fed beef and its quality.

As our paper in the April 2025 edition of Food Frontiers shows, we can use

beef metabolites and genes to set stronger authentication standards for grass-fed beef, which will benefit both producers and consumers.

Our study, which was funded by the Greenacres Foundation, explored 100 percent grass-fed, grain-fed, and grape-supplemented cattle groups. We collected ribeye samples from each group and analyzed them for gene expression, metabolomics (the study of metabolites in the tissue) and fatty acids.

Using these measures, we were able

to distinguish the grass-fed beef from the other two groups.

In addition, a machine-learning algorithm was able to identify samples from each of the groups with an overall accuracy of 90.4 percent.

Although further research is needed to validate our findings, we conclude these methods can authenticate and ensure beef quality standards.

Lucas Krusinski is an assistant professor in the Department of Animal & Veterinary Science at CPP.

# NEWS. On Faculty And Staff



## *Nutrition Professor Wins Award*

Professor **David Edens** received the Meritorious Service Award at the California Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (CAND) 2025 conference. CAND is a nonprofit organization of about 6,000 registered dietitian nutritionists, dietetic technicians, and students dedicated to advancing the profession.



## *Food Science Professor Honored with Award*

Professor **Olive Li** received the 2025 Distinguished Achievement Award from the Southern California Institute of Food Technologists (SCIFTS). The annual award honors individuals for continued and meritorious service to the food science and technology industry, particularly in the Southwest United States.



## *Lecturer Teaches as Volunteer in Africa*

Plant Science Lecturer **Naveen Hyder** ('03, horticultural science) traveled to Africa twice in the past year to teach sustainable agriculture, climate change, and soil science. Volunteering with Professors Without Borders, a UK-based nonprofit, she taught a two-week course on the soil food web at the African Rural University in Uganda and a five-day course in Zimbabwe for a farming community.



## *AVS Professor Recognized on Wall of Cool*

Animal & Veterinary Science Professor **Joanne Sohn** was part of a team recognized by Cal Poly Pomona for developing course materials supporting first-year student success. The team received the university's "Wall of COOL" honor—Celebrating Outstanding Opportunities for Learning—which recognizes innovative, technology-enhanced learning. They created the First Year Experience Faculty Repository, offering high-quality, equity-minded materials to support faculty and help first-year students navigate college with confidence.



## *Professor Emerita Honored with Lifetime Leadership Award*

Plant Science Professor **Emerita Peggy Perry** received the Lifetime Leadership Award from the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation (CALF). The award honors alumni of the California Agricultural Leadership Program for their impact on the agricultural industry, communities, and the foundation. Perry, a 1978 program participant, has since served as a longtime member of CALF's education team.

# NEW HIRES.



**Abigail Clarke** is a new assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition & Food Science. A registered dietitian, she previously served as a clinical nutrition educator at Loma Linda Medical Center.



**Dakota Discepolo** is a new assistant professor in the Department of Animal & Veterinary Science. She earned her doctorate in agriculture, with a focus in animal science, from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.



**Désirée Gellatly** is a new assistant professor in the Department of Animal & Veterinary Science.



**Anthony Stone** is the new executive director of the W.K. Kellogg Arabian Horse Center.



**Mary Rojas** is the new administrative support coordinator for the Department of Apparel Merchandising & Management.



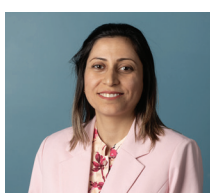
**Jinkyung Kim** is a new instructional technician in the Department of Animal & Veterinary Science.



**Lisa Christie** is the new Kellogg Ranch director overseeing the Pumpkin Festival, field trips, and educational outreach.



**Micaela Estrada** is the new administrative support coordinator in the Dept. of Nutrition and Food Science.



**Maryam Ekramzadeh** is a new assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition & Food Science. A registered dietitian, she previously served as an assistant professor and director of the dietetic internship program at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences in Iran.



**Mohammad Zarei** is a new assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition & Food Science. He previously worked as a researcher at Virginia Tech and the University of Arkansas and as an assistant professor at Universiti Teknologi MARA in Malaysia.

# PROMOTIONS.



**Eeman At-Taras**  
NFS



**Emily Kiresich**  
NFS



**Kellene Isom**  
NFS



**Fatheema Subhan**  
NFS

Tenure & Promotion to  
Associate Professor



**David Edens**  
NFS



**Ondieki Gekara**  
AVS



**Hyungchul Han**  
AVS

Promotion to  
Full Professor

# PERSONNEL UPDATES.



**Anna Soper** named the permanent chair of the Department of Plant Science after serving in an interim capacity in 2025.



**Ondieki Gekara** named interim chair of the Department of Animal & Veterinary Science.



**Gabriel Davidov-Pardo** was named the associate chair of the Department of Nutrition & Food Science.



**David Edens** named the chair of the Department of Nutrition & Food Science.



**Le'Yona Darden** named the manager of the Farm Store after the departure of Bri Cox.



**Harmit Singh** named the executive director of external relations for the Huntley College.



**Hyungchul Han** appointed interim associate dean of the Huntley College of Agriculture for 2025-26. He served as chair of the Department of Animal & Veterinary Sciences in 2024-25.



**Chitra Dabas** named the permanent chair of the Department of Apparel Merchandising & Management after serving in an interim co-chair along with Professor Jiangning Che in 2024-25.

# RETIREMENTS.



**Brenda Orozco** worked 17 years as an assistant at the Farm Store.



**Patty Mutz** worked as an administrative support coordinator for the Department of AMM.



**Tami Harshberger** worked as an administrative support coordinator for the Department of Plant Science.



**Kathleen Earle** lecturer & veterinarian worked for the Department of Animal & Veterinary Sciences.



**Patricia Tucker** worked as development director for the Huntley College of Agriculture.



**Nancy Merlino** worked as a lecturer in the Department of ABM.



**Holly Greene** lecturer and animal compliance and safety specialist at Department of Animal & Veterinary Science.



**Eileen Cullen** worked as professor in the Department of Plant Science.

# IN MEMORIAM.

## *Richard Frencer ('67, agronomy)*

Richard Frencer, a recipient of Cal Poly Pomona's distinguished alumni award and benefactor of the Huntley College of Agriculture, died on Feb. 4, 2025. He was 81.

A New Jersey native, Frencer lived with relatives in Southern California while attending college at Cal Poly Pomona. He earned his baccalaureate degree in agronomy in 1967.

Frencer spent 30 years working for Union Carbide, Rhone Poulenc Ag Co., Bayer Ag, and as an independent food production professional. He earned a reputation as an outstanding salesman & agricultural consultant, receiving numerous national awards.

Although he resided in Idaho, Frencer remained devoted to Cal Poly Pomona. He and his wife, Janis, made a generous gift to the Huntley College of Agriculture to help students explore careers and find jobs. They partnered with the Cal Poly Pomona Career Center to create an agricultural career counselor position within the college.

The career counselor would not only advise students on creating effective resumés and improving interviewing skills, but they would also work on expanding internship and employment opportunities.

Frencer was named the Huntley College's Distinguished Alumni Award recipient in 2017.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Janis; two sisters; a brother-in-law; and multiple nieces and nephews.



*Kellogg Ranch Horse Center at morning fog*

# NEWS. On Alumni

## *Alumni Help Prep Students for Careers*

Huntley College alumni, advisory board members, and industry partners shared their wisdom with students at two career prep events last spring.

Advisory board members John Resich and Janet Erickson; alumna Yvonne Rentmeester; and industry partner Herb Bowden reviewed students' résumés and elevator pitches during a March event at the Bronco Student Center.

Forty-five Huntley College students attended the event, which prepared them for the Cal Poly Pomona Career Fair.

About 70 Huntley College students heard alumni offer career advice during an April panel discussion at AGRIScapes.



## The Panelists:

- **Megan Byrnes**  
(’14, business administration, marketing with food science and technology minor), marketing manager, Gold Coast Ingredients
- **Christian Ortega**  
(’20, food science and technology; nutrition minor), quality assurance manager, Los Altos/Sigma Foods
- **Daniel Delgado**  
(’10, horticulture, agronomy, pest management), deputy director and bureau chief, Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner/Weights & Measures Office.
- **Yvonne Rentmeester**  
(’95, food marketing and agribusiness management), consultant, Huntley College of Agriculture advisory board member
- **Paige Hashimoto-Lizardo**  
(’94, animal science), veterinarian-owner of Beach Boulevard Pet Hospital
- **Sabrina Chen**  
(’20, foods and nutrition), youth educator, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

# GIVING.

*Here are just a few highlights of the amazing things our students and faculty are doing, thanks to the generosity of donors and industry partners.*

*Cal Poly Pomona Rose Garden*

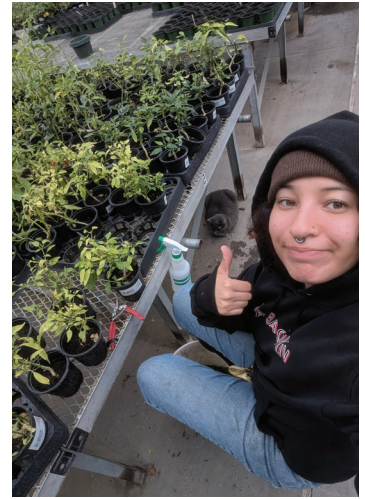
## *Alumni Help Prep Students for Careers*

Working in the nursery greenhouses, **Gabriela Gallardo** ('26, plant science) has gained hands-on experience in horticultural retail, including production, watering, transplanting, and crop management.

Her position was made possible through a donation from the Santa Barbara-based Joseph Shinoda Memorial Scholarship Foundation, which supports student employment in horticulture and floriculture.

"Being able to expand my horticultural knowledge and apply what I've learned has helped me better understand the industry," she said.

"I've also gained valuable insight and connected with industry professionals and local gardeners, creating great networking opportunities."



## *Scholarships*

**Philip Merhy** ('26, plant science), recipient of the Juice Products Association Scholarship, said the award provided essential support during the semester as work hours decreased and expenses increased.

It helped cover educational and living costs, reducing financial strain and allowing him to stay focused academically. He also set aside \$200 from the award toward his Pesticide Control Advisor certification, which he plans to pursue after graduation.



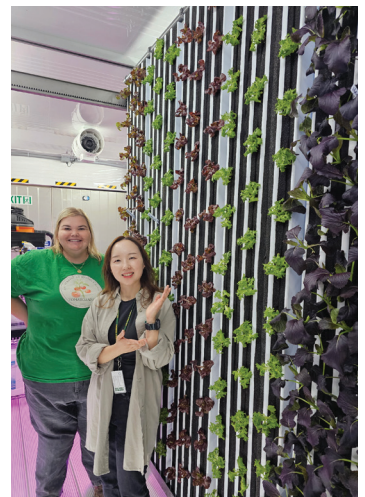
## *Facilities*

Twenty students explored cutting-edge agriculture during the Fall 25 semester, thanks to a donation from the Electrical Power Research Institute (EPRI) and Southern California Edison (SCE).

The 8-by-40-foot shipping container, converted by Freight Farms into a hydroponic vertical farm, served as a unique classroom for Assistant Professor **Julie Lee**'s Agribusiness Management Fundamentals course.

For many students, it was their first exposure to vertical farming, combining advanced production methods with real-world market analysis.

"Students were able to explore how vertical farming can command price premiums, improve resource efficiency, and contribute to California's sustainable food systems—an experience not previously available in the curriculum," Lee said.





Don B. Huntley  
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**ELECTRONIC  
RETURN REQUESTED**



**Don B. Huntley College of Agriculture Faculty and Staff 2025-2026**



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