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CGA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION AND CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN FUTURE WORK FORCE OF CALIFORNIA'S GROCERY INDUSTRY

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – September 21, 2014 – In a historic partnership to strengthen California's future grocery industry workforce, the California Grocers Association Educational Foundation has committed to provide scholarships, internship stipends and professional development opportunities to California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) Agribusiness Food Retail Management Program (CPAFRM) for the 2015-2016 academic year.

“By partnering with Cal Poly, we can provide financial assistance and infuse real-world knowledge and learning opportunities into the student experience,” said CGA President Ron Fong, “and help prepare practice-ready graduates who can step right into careers in our industry.”

The Memorandum of Understanding is a one-year commitment designed to help shape future generations of grocery industry professionals in a wide range of disciplines. CGAEF will award four (4) \$5,000 scholarships to students having completed a minimum of 8 units of CPAFRM classes with a 3.0 grade point average. Additionally, the Foundation will provide a maximum of five (5) \$1,000 stipends to help defray the costs of housing, food and transportation for students seeking an industry internship.

The MOU was announced at the CGA Strategic Conference in Palm Springs, Calif., on Sept. 21, 2014. In making the announcement, Fong said Cal Poly's commitment to the grocery industry's future workforce made it a natural partner to achieve the mutual goal of preparing graduates to make immediate and meaningful contributions to their employers and the industry as a whole.

“Hiring talented, experienced young people who enter the grocery industry with relevant experience not just in the classroom but in the workplace speeds up the orientation process, lowers costs for hiring and training, and accelerates productivity,” said Dr. Jay Noel, Department Chair, Agribusiness, Cal Poly.

The MOU represents the Foundation's first higher-education partnership in its 22-year history. It hopes to expand the funding to other agribusiness-focused campuses throughout the California State University system.

The program will also facilitate internship opportunities with CGA-member companies and foster additional learning opportunities for students and faculty. The Foundation also agreed to encourage additional philanthropy and public-private partnerships from the grocery industry to provide additional hands-on learning opportunities, infuse industry-specific expertise into the curriculum, and identify future employees.

Beginning with a single scholarship in 1992, the Foundation has grown exponentially over the last 22 years to bestow nearly 2,900 worthy college students with awards totaling more than \$3.4 million. In addition, the Foundation's Career Development Tuition Reimbursement program has surpassed the \$1 million mark in tuition reimbursement grants.

The CGA Educational Foundation was created under the direction of the California Grocers Association Board of Directors in 1992. Its mission is to provide financial assistance to advance the educational goals of CGA member company employees and their dependents and offer educational programs to advance the grocery industry. For more information, visit www.CGAEF.org.

For more information on Cal Poly's Agribusiness Department, visit www.agb.calpoly.edu.