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Entrepreneur students earn No. 1 national acclaim

Fresno State's [Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization](#) (CEO) won the Campus E-Diffusion Award at the organization's national conference in Chicago, besting 250 university teams for first place.

The Fresno State club earned the acclaim at the [National Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization](#) Conference in November for their campaign of “entrepreneurship diffusion” throughout the campus, engaging students from other disciplines while promoting networking skills.

They were recognized for such projects as hosting Fresno State’s annual campus-wide [Elevator Pitch Competition](#) in October, where students have about 90 seconds — an elevator ride — to pitch their business ideas to judges. It included a workshop designed to help non-business major students with their elevator pitches. Student winners of that local event were able to advance to the 2013 [CEO National Elevator Pitch Competition](#), also held at the Chicago event.

Based in the [Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#), CEO Fresno State promotes entrepreneurship and the development of student-run enterprises. The 30-member student organization is dedicated to the development and retention of entrepreneurial skills, innovation and culture, said Connor Alstrom, president of CEO Fresno State who is a sophomore entrepreneurship major from Fresno.

In addition to the local elevator competition, the national award recognized CEO Fresno State for starting an [Entrepreneurship Ambassador Program](#), its ClosedEvents networking project and the creation of a student entrepreneurship lounge.

The ambassador program recruits six students from diverse majors other than Business to serve as entrepreneurial ambassadors and generate an entrepreneurship contagion in their respective disciplines.

ClosedEvents provides interdisciplinary opportunities for students from other academic majors to develop networking skills that are important for entrepreneurs.

The lounge, located in the Lyles Center at Shaw and Woodrow avenues (second floor of the Student Recreation Center building) was launched in January after members raised funds to purchase paint, furniture and equipment and is now used by more than 1,000 students.

Alstrom said the national recognition is a satisfying reward for the many efforts CEO Fresno State invested to diffuse entrepreneurship throughout the campus.

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"These projects that won us the top national award have allowed us go beyond the classroom and reach out to other majors across campus to help spark the entrepreneurial spirit," Alstrom said. "It is great to be recognized nationally."

For more information, contact Alstrom at 559.577.4778 or calstrom@mail.fresnostate.edu, or Eric Liguori at 727.460.7036 or eliguori@csufresno.edu.

University Communications news intern Ashlie Day and Lyles Center PR specialist Sarina Hernandez contributed to this report.

Related Links:

- Fresno State [Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization \(CEO\)](#)
- [Fresno State CEO Facebook](#)
- [CEO National Elevator Pitch Competition](#)
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- [Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#)
- Fresno State CEO [Entrepreneurship Ambassador Program](#)

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CONTACT US

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
FRESNO
5241 N. Maple Ave.
Fresno, CA 93740
P: 559.278.4240

Email Us

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