

Cal Poly Extended, Professional & Continuing Education

COLLABORATIVE PARTNER

SUMMER SPRINGBOARD

Energy for a Sustainable Society

New student admissions for Summer 2026 are open.

2-Week Course

This is a two-week program where you'll focus on one course for the entire duration.

Program Highlights

- Understand basic concepts of energy, sustainability, and systems thinking.
- Identify renewable energy sources and explain the role of bioenergy in sustainable systems.
- Design, build, and monitor a small-scale anaerobic digester.
- Conduct and interpret simple bioenergy experiments (biodiesel and ethanol mini-labs).
- Reflect on how individual and community actions influence energy sustainability.

2026 Dates

- Session 2: July 19 - July 31

Academic Program Overview

Hands-on summer course that explores how energy, food, and waste are interconnected in building a more sustainable future. Students will examine where energy comes from, how it is used, and how food and agricultural waste can be repurposed or transformed into renewable energy. Through engaging lessons, daily energy-awareness activities, and guided field experiences, participants will connect global sustainability challenges to personal choices and community action.

Mini-labs will introduce students to other renewable energy pathways, including ethanol fermentation and biodiesel production, providing a broad view of bioenergy systems. Students design and build a small-scale biogas bucket system that converts organic waste into usable biogas.

Excursions

Tentative excursions include

- SLO Food Bank - learn about how overstocked food is rescued and provided to the public.
- Kompogas SLO – local Anaerobic digester that produces biogas and compost from green bin waste and food waste.

Instructor

Sara Kuwuhara, Assistant Professor Cal Poly SLO

Dr. Kuwahara's research integrates environmental microbiology, bioenergy, and controlled environment systems to advance sustainable agriculture and renewable energy production. She has conducted extensive work on microalgae photobioreactors for biodiesel and on ultrafine bubble oxygenation to improve plant and microbial processes.

Course Structure

There are nine 3-hour class sessions over the two-week course. During week one, students have class from 9am-12pm, Monday - Friday. During week two, students have class from 9am-12pm Monday through Thursday. Wednesday afternoons are dedicated to additional academic time (excursions, speakers).

Tuition Information:

Residential Students

- Includes: all meals, lodging, excursions, academic course, weekend excursions
- Excludes: optional airport pickup and drop-off service (available for an additional fee)
- Price: $5,398

Commuter Students

- Includes: lunch, academic course, excursions, programming from 9am to 5pm, Monday-Friday
- Excludes: lodging, breakfast, dinner, weekend excursions
  - Weekend excursions can be added on for $125 per day
- Price: $2,998

Supplements:

- Application fee: starting at $99 (mandatory, nonrefundable)
- Tuition Protection Plan: Allows for cancellation for any reason up until the day of the program. Click here for more info.

Typical Schedule

8AM	Breakfast
9AM	Academic Course / Commuter Student Arrival
12PM	Lunch
1:30PM	Academic Excursions or Recreational Activity
3:30PM	College Readiness Workshop or True You
5PM-6:30PM	Commuter Student Departure
6PM	Dinner
7PM	Clubs
10:30PM	Night Checks

More info on Airport Transfer

More info on Unaccompanied Minor Service

Apply Now!

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