ALUMNA
Jessie Becker

In the business of saving lives

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Throwback
Cal Poly Business magazine has kept alumni informed since the 1980s.
Since arriving at Cal Poly last year after a 14-year run as dean at Portland State University, I have been continuously amazed by the quality of our students, faculty and staff. Lately, I’ve noticed that the character and drive that radiate from our incredibly successful alumni is something truly special.

That’s what inspires the Orfalea College of Business to nurture and challenge business students who will go on to lead many of the world’s most revered companies. Our learning community is thankful for those graduates who come back to campus and give back to today’s students through Executives in Residence visits, career panels, and unique opportunities that focus on career readiness. All that hard work has culminated in recent acknowledgements from Payscale.com and Fortune that Cal Poly’s Orfalea College of Business has one of the highest returns on investment in the nation. While we’re honored, we know that preparing the next generation of students for an evolving, global economy will require innovation and hard work. The pages that follow showcase the kind of forward thinking that’s moving our students, faculty and alumni ahead. I hope you are as excited as I am about the future of the Orfalea College of Business.

Scott Dawson, Dean
Orfalea College of Business
Marketo Debuts in Cal Poly Classrooms

Cal Poly’s Marketing area is the first and only university program to teach Marketo in the classroom.

Cal Poly’s Marketing area has announced an innovative partnership with the automated software powerhouse Marketo to develop curriculum that weaves the program into an upper-division marketing course. In 2014, marketing Professor Jeff Hess began teaching Marketo in his redesigned BUS 419: Strategic Marketing Measurement, a course that could be used as a model at other universities in the future.

In Hess’ class, students learned how big data ideas are transforming marketing and redefining what is possible in a marketing campaign. They created digital communication designed to engage customers, track their online behavior, and create value-based segmentation. The partnership is an example of the college’s emphasis on data-driven technologies now impacting all facets of business. Marketing area Chair Lynn Metcalf believes this Learn by Doing experience with Marketo will give graduates a competitive edge as they transition from college to career.

Marketo is a complement to the other data software Cal Poly continues to teach, including IBM’s SPSS, Google Analytics, Cision, Qualtrix and Dialogr.
The LITC CELEBRATES its fifth anniversary!

2,881
community members have been helped by the LITC’s educational outreach, advising and providing representation in tax court.

164
student accountants have completed their senior projects through the LITC.

$1.2 MILLION
the amount Cal Poly’s LITC has saved its clients since 2010.

student success
FINANCE STUDENTS WIN LOCAL CFA CHALLENGE

A team of students from the Orfalea College of Business won the local Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute Research Challenge for the second consecutive year. Finance seniors Erin Averill, Robert Ricci, Divyan Waland, Aaron Hay and Nate Fisher represented Cal Poly at the event in Los Angeles.

The Cal Poly students competed against teams from the College of the Canyons, Claremont Graduate University, UC Santa Barbara and USC. The competitors were charged with analyzing and making buy/sell/hold recommendations for The Walt Disney Co. The Cal Poly team advanced to the Americas Regional competition in Atlanta, where it reached the semifinal round competing against universities from the U.S., Canada and Latin America. The students were advised by Finance area Chair Cyrus Ramezani, San Luis Obispo financial advisor Phillip Cohl, and finance alumni David Larsen and Scott B. Kirk.

By the Numbers

LEARN BY DOING PROJECTS

Tax Masters

Cal Poly’s Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) celebrates five years of helping community members fight back against daunting fines and fees levied by the Internal Revenue Service.

The LITC was founded as a service-learning project rooted in Cal Poly’s Learn by Doing philosophy to empower accounting students to tackle complex tax cases while working with underserved communities. The clinic has grown to become an essential local resource, assisting thousands of California clients through consultations, education and direct assistance before the IRS, California’s Franchise Tax Board, and U.S. Tax Court. Cal Poly students have helped save clients nearly $1.2 million in tax liabilities by substantiating client expenses, filing the proper tax forms, and negotiating settlements. It remains the only clinic of its kind between Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

Students have also assisted LITC attorneys, including LITC Executive Director Lisa Sperow and clinic founder Eddy Quijano, in 22 client cases handled in the U.S. Tax Court. Today, the Cal Poly LITC remains the only non-law school low-income taxpayer clinic in the country assisting unrepresented litigants as part of the U.S. Tax Court’s Calendar Call Program.

Visit www.cob.calpoly.edu/LITC to read testimonial and client stories.
“Killer Keller” Retires After 28 Years

Professor Earl Keller, a pillar of Cal Poly’s Accounting area, has taught thousands of students since 1987. Many students remember him as “Killer Keller” for commanding the discipline’s most difficult courses. During his tenure, Keller touched the life of almost every accounting student at Cal Poly, always sharing insights from his experiences as an auditor, a controller and a consultant during litigation cases for the Securities and Exchange Commission, Lehman Brothers, Fannie Mae, American International Group (AIG), and on cases involving the now-defunct Enron.

Much of Keller’s life has been devoted to inspiring students and providing guidance to policymaking agencies to promote the accounting profession. With his retirement effective this spring, Keller’s Cal Poly legacy will be honored with a student scholarship. Thanks to a founding contribution from Keller himself, the scholarship will benefit students pursuing a Master of Science degree in accounting at the Orfalea College of Business.

You can honor Keller’s legacy by supporting his scholarship. Contact Sheri Boscaro at sboscaro@calpoly.edu or give online. http://goo.gl/I3PhZ

In Brief

STUDENT SUCCESS
CAL POLY HOSTS VITA CLINICS

In 2015, more than 90 IRS-certified Cal Poly accounting students prepared taxes through Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) clinics held throughout the Central Coast. Combined, the clinics filed 779 tax returns this year for low-income residents. Cal Poly has hosted VITA clinics every year since 1992.

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS
CAL POLY PARTNERS WITH SPECRIGHT

Specright, a specification management startup based in Irvine, Calif., recently opened an office in San Luis Obispo to partner with Cal Poly’s Packaging Program. The company hired 15 industrial technology and packaging students to reverse engineer packages from its beta-testing clients. Cal Poly students then build custom specification profiles in Specright’s proprietary system.

“We have been unbelievably impressed with the maturity and professionalism of Cal Poly students and the skills they have,” said Brett Hall, Specright’s vice president of product development. “They can come in and immediately make a contribution. We’re thrilled with the partnership.”

While Cal Poly will be a source of packaging engineers for Specright, the startup in turn works with faculty to evolve curriculum and packaging best practices in a variety of industries. According to company spokesperson Adam Fugate, the company is already expanding to include more manufacturing, consumer packaged goods, and packaging commodities clients.

FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Professor Earl Keller, a pillar of Cal Poly’s Accounting area, has taught thousands of students since 1987. Many students remember him as “Killer Keller” for commanding the discipline’s most difficult courses. During his tenure, Keller touched the life of almost every accounting student at Cal Poly, always sharing insights from his experiences as an auditor, a controller and a consultant during litigation cases for the Securities and Exchange Commission, Lehman Brothers, Fannie Mae, American International Group (AIG), and on cases involving the now-defunct Enron.

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Get to know a few of the professors and lecturers who drive Cal Poly’s unique brand of experiential business education.

**Pratish Patel**  
Assistant Professor of Finance  
**specialties:** Real estate finance and investments

**Li Dang**  
Associate Professor of Accounting  
**specialties:** Financial accounting and managerial accounting

**Javier de la Fuente**  
Assistant Professor of Industrial Technology and Packaging  
**specialties:** Product and packaging design, particularly in healthcare

**Solina Lindahl**  
Economics Lecturer  
**specialties:** Micro and macro economics

**How do you challenge your students?**  
In one class, I ask students to reverse engineer the Madoff strategy. In the process, they learn the power of derivatives in a financial portfolio along with history and ethics.

**What has been your favorite moment of teaching recently?**  
When Eric Morley, who is involved with the new Apple campus, visited my class, he spoke frankly about personal integrity and ethics in local politics. I will remember that moment forever.

**Who is your go-to for faculty collaboration at Cal Poly?**  
Tad Miller. There’s a reason he’s one of our best faculty members and our students like him so much. When I need someone to help me work through a classroom issue, his wisdom and kindness always shine through.

**How has your subject changed in the last five years?**  
Design thinking is now used as a disruptive method to achieve innovation, and rapid prototyping technologies are making product development easier and cheaper.

**What’s the best advice you’ve ever received?**  
My mom always used to say that if you don’t ask, the answer is already “no.”

**How has your subject changed in the last five years?**  
The financial crisis really disrupted macroeconomics and reinvigorated the debate about the health and stability of capitalism. Breakthroughs in neuroscience are also allowing us to explore decision-making in much deeper ways.
What has been your favorite industry position? I negotiated price and contract terms and conditions for weapons missile systems at McDonnell Douglas. It was a very intense, male-dominated position, but my persistence made me a good negotiator. The frequent travel, interactions with government and time with other defense contractors taught me so much about the industry. This is where I found my research interest in pricing.

What’s the best advice you’ve ever received? Keep your chin up, and take it one step at a time!

What has your subject changed in the last five years? Federal income tax law changes all the time. Financial accounting has also shifted as the U.S. moves closer to adopting international accounting standards and recognizes new revenues in this high-tech global economy.

What is your hidden talent? Drumming. I played in band and orchestra throughout high school and briefly considered a career as a rock ‘n’ roll drummer. But I decided to pursue something a little more practical.

What did you do before teaching? I was the president of an aerospace company that designed and manufactured parts for all the major players in the industry.

What has been your favorite moment of teaching recently? Teaching IT 407: Applied Business Operations, our capstone course, in the fall. I loved seeing the students show off their products at Cal Poly and at the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market.

What is your hidden talent? I am a serial entrepreneur. I used to own a restaurant, among other businesses, and have consulted in the aerospace and hospitality industries.

How has your subject changed in the last five years? Some organizations are moving more toward self-managed teams and more entrepreneurial self-starting cultures. This puts greater responsibility on each employee to lead, motivate and understand organizational behavior and negotiation to be successful.

What has been your favorite moment of teaching recently? A student recently used his negotiation skills to ask for things in a job offer that he might not have had the courage or the foresight to ask for before. Obviously, messages like that make my job very meaningful.

What are your favorite parts about teaching at Cal Poly? I love walking into a classroom full of students who sincerely want to learn. The palm tree outside of my window isn’t bad either.

What has been your favorite moment of teaching recently? A local alumnus working for a software company tasked my class with identifying opportunities to improve the user interface of a mobile app. It was so much fun watching the students seek to improve a tangible product in a meaningful way.

“I’VE LEARNED STUDENTS WILL RISE TO THE CHALLENGE AS LONG AS THEY KNOW THE ‘BIG PICTURE’ AND AS LONG AS YOU SUPPORT THEM.”

— Pratish Patel
Orfalea College of Business alumni, faculty and students set their sights on business’ next frontier.
Businesses today have access to more data and information than during any time in history, giving companies with the know-how to interpret and use data a clear and decisive edge in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. From predicting stock trends to guiding an app’s user interface, vast amounts of quantitative and qualitative information drives businesses of all sizes and sectors. So it’s no surprise that the emerging discipline of business analytics — the expertise for gathering, mining and analyzing data to direct business decisions — is quickly becoming a much desired and in-demand career choice. More and more companies find themselves drowning in data with neither the tools nor the talent to capitalize on it.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects the data analyst job category to grow by 45 percent, from 156,000 in 2008 to 285,000 by 2018, making it one of the fastest-growing career fields. In addition, a study by the McKinsey Global Institute warns of significant shortages of workers who will be able to analyze data adequately.

A Growing Industry Demand

The need for business professionals with data analytic skills will continue to grow for the foreseeable future, says Simon Arkell, who earned his MBA at Cal Poly in 1994.

And he should know. Arkell is co-founder and CEO of Predixion Software, an Orange County-based developer of cloud-based predictive analytic tools being used by industries from health care to manufacturing to predict risk and develop data-driven solutions.

“As the trend really took off after 2000, Arkell saw a huge opportunity for businesses to capitalize in the data analytics space — something he’d like to see Orfalea College of Business students do as well. Already, Arkell’s Predixion software is being used as a business analytic training tool in several dozen universities, as educators recognize the growing need for skill development and expertise in this emerging professional area. Cal Poly’s Orfalea College of Business could be next on that list.”

Preparing for a New Profession

The critical and emerging demand for graduates strong in business analytics was not lost on the leadership at Cal Poly’s Orfalea College of Business. In the last several years, the college began hiring faculty from disciplines such as information technology, economics, finance and marketing, complementing an existing cadre of professors with data analytics expertise. These faculty became part of a core, multidisciplinary team tasked with building a new Business Analytics Program at the college.

“As the trend really took off after 2000, Arkell saw a huge opportunity for businesses to capitalize in the data analytics space — something he’d like to see Orfalea College of Business students do as well. Already, Arkell’s Predixion software is being used as a business analytic training tool in several dozen universities, as educators recognize the growing need for skill development and expertise in this emerging professional area. Cal Poly’s Orfalea College of Business could be next on that list.”

Planning for new undergraduate business analytics classes, a certificate program and a master’s program is already well underway at the Orfalea College of Business, with the goal of preparing career-ready graduates who can visualize, interpret and analyze data, as well as straddle both the business and technical aspects of data analytics. With this unique skill set, graduates will be ready to immediately function as strategic liaisons within a variety of industries and drive business strategy.

“We believe that it’s the economic and business intuition combined with data analytics that is highly desirable and vitally important,” said Associate Dean of Graduate Programs Sanjiv Jaggia.
He feels the program’s hands-on approach to analyzing and leveraging data in the context of multiple sectors will differentiate Cal Poly’s program from other universities’.

With momentum building, the college piloted its first undergraduate business analytics course during winter quarter 2014. Taught by Leida Chen, associate professor of information systems and former senior program manager at Microsoft, the course attracted students from a variety of disciplines and covered the complete cycle of business analytics — from data warehousing to extraction to data prepping and mining. Students then learned how to apply mined data to business strategies to assess past trends and predict new ones.

The new course was a hit with students. “There was lots of interest in this business analytics course because students understand that this is where the jobs are,” said Chen.

A comprehensive Master of Science degree in business analytics is on track to start in fall 2016. As planned, the program will be a one-year, interdisciplinary business degree encompassing economics, finance, accounting, marketing and information systems. The emphasis will be on serving the business side of data through improved visualization and storytelling, teaching skills that will help build the bridge between the data science and business management sides of a company.

“CAL POLY’S NEW M.S. PROGRAM IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO PROVIDE A LOCAL TALENT BASE WITH THE SKILLS TO HIT THE GROUND RUNNING.”

— Joshua Knox, Engineering Program Manager, Google Analytics

Leading the way is the college’s first Business Analytics Certificate Program, a five-course interdisciplinary degree aimed at business leaders who use data to analyze and solve fundamental business problems. The certificate program plans to launch this summer.

Silicon Valley Weighs In

From the start, the college’s business analytics program has been driven by strong input from key industry leaders. In addition to an extensive research study on the emerging field to help guide curriculum and course development, the Orfalea College of Business has also assembled a Business Analytics Advisory Board of experts from Silicon Valley’s best. Companies like Google, Oracle, Cisco, Walmart, Nest Labs and Symantec, among others, are helping shape curriculum and define the skill sets needed from new college graduates in the field.

While the initial data analytics courses being offered already use cutting-edge industry tools and systems, such as Oracle products, R programming language, SAS Enterprise Miner and Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), plans for the future include enlisting industry partners to provide real-world problems and data sets, as well as experiential learning opportunities on and off-campus.

Already this past year, students in Davis’ undergraduate Marketing Analytics class used actual data sets from on-campus business units and local-area companies in the classroom. This allowed students to apply their newly acquired data skills immediately to real-world business situations.

“Cal Poly will be a great environment for this new program, as the school really reinforces Learn by Doing,” says Arkell. It’s an approach he believes will be invaluable as the business analytics program takes off. With students quickly filling every course Cal Poly offers on the subject, it looks like the program is well on its way.
Business freshman Katie White takes the stage at the Ray Scherr pitch competition and wins the Audience Choice Award.

Finance students tour Bay Area investment banks with alumni and Finance area Chair Cyrus Ramezani.

Janice O’Dell (B.S., Accounting, 1986, MBA, 1987), the CFO of IQMS Manufacturing, speaks alongside fellow Cal Poly business alumni during a career readiness panel.


Business students Alec Toppenberg, Melanie Tsoi, Nathan Miner, Emily Wong and Kenton Assadi represent Cal Poly in the Ernst & Young Beam Abroad Case Competition in Los Angeles.

Charlie King (B.S., Economics, 1987) of King Asset Management talks to finance students about how real estate development has evolved.
Marketing Professor Joachim Scholz demonstrates examples of augmented reality to students in his social media class.

Russ Bik (B.S., Industrial Technology, 1970) talks to entrepreneurship students about leading Sun Microsystems in its early days.

Jeff Henley, vice chairman at Oracle Corp., shares his career path with Cal Poly finance students during an Executives in Residence visit.

Shari Moore (B.S., Accounting, 1989) talks with management students about her experience leading human resources in the Silicon Valley.

Google’s Finance Director Jim Marocco (B.S., Economics, 1994) talks to students about his career path as part of the Graduate Tax Speaker Series.

“LEARN BY DOING MORE.”

Quentin Lilly (B.S., Finance, 1983), president of Technicolor Home Entertainment Services, while addressing Cal Poly’s graduating class of fall 2014.

A LIFE-SAVING STARTUP

How Jessie Becker built the skills to help save new mothers around the world.
Jessie Becker was in her second year at Cal Poly when she walked into BUS 310: Introduction to Entrepreneurship, the first in a revitalized entrepreneurship program in the Orfalea College of Business. As she sat down, she contemplated switching majors, knowing the other business disciplines hadn’t inspired her as she had hoped.

At the lectern was Jonathan York, an entrepreneur and venture capitalist who left the industry to join Professor Lou Tornatzky’s effort to build a formidable entrepreneurship program at Cal Poly.

“It’s amazing to remember Jessie as a sophomore sitting in my class and to see how she’s grown into the CEO of a medical device company that’s going to change the world,” said York.

That would turn out to be the first of many projects the two would tackle together, confirming Becker’s passion for all things entrepreneurial and York’s hopes that the Cal Poly community would embrace the idea for a Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE) that could impact the careers — and lives — of students.

After her first class, Becker dove headfirst into the entrepreneurship concentration, invigorated by the business acumen she was sharpening with each hands-on project. “Cal Poly’s Learn by Doing philosophy is really something that is completely expressed in that curriculum,” she said.

But as she looked around, she felt a disconnect between the blossoming ambitions of her fellow students and the resources available to transform them into reality. So in true Becker fashion, she took up the cause and helped pioneer some of the CIE’s core student programs.

First on her list was revitalizing the student club, Cal Poly Entrepreneurs, into a thriving community that linked students and industry veterans together. Next, Becker became the first student employee of the CIE’s newly minted SLO HotHouse. The original location on Tank Farm Road offered little more than some desk space, conference rooms, and a mailing address for seedling startups, but Becker fell in love with the environment and the people who gravitated toward it.

“Just having a community of people as equally motivated and crazy as you are is great,” said Becker. “We’re all coming up against some of the same challenges, and having a community of peers around to help with that is absolutely vital to getting through those things.”

As a permanent fixture of the HotHouse community, Becker designed, coordinated and led the CIE’s first lineup of student programs, including the Ray Scherr Pitch Competition and the on-campus Hatchery. With Becker’s guidance, the CIE’s programs began to form a continuum of opportunities that students of all ages and all backgrounds could explore whether or not they had a concept for a product or business of their own.

“The entrepreneur is the one who takes the idea and enables it to become a reality,” said York. “Jessie’s solution was to find something she was passionate about, jump on board, and make it happen. That’s exactly what she did.”

“IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP, THERE IS NO RIGHT ANSWER, BUT SOME ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS. IT WAS REALLY INVIGORATING TO ME.”

— Jessie Becker
While Becker was serving as an entrepreneur in residence for the 2011 Innovation Quest competition at Cal Poly, she met Alex Norred and Davis Carlin. The two Cal Poly biomedical engineers took second place in the competition for their prototype device that could stop a potentially fatal postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) with vacuum pressure that activates the body’s natural response.

Becker was immediately inspired, seeing the need for a fast and cost-effective treatment for PPH, the leading cause of death for new mothers in developing nations. Norred and Carlin named their idea InPress Technologies and entered the inaugural HotHouse Accelerator, a three-month summer program that fosters student businesses by providing workspace, mentorship and seed funding. Becker, who ran the accelerator program, found herself naturally gravitating toward InPress.

At the conclusion of the summer, InPress was admitted into the HotHouse Incubator, a new program offering two years of low-cost workspace and access to the CIE’s growing network of resources in San Luis Obispo and beyond. It was then that Becker began moonlighting as an official member of the InPress team, using her business skillset to explore the viability of producing and marketing the product commercially.

“‘I decided to join because I cared about the mission, and I believed that I could help

InPress make an impact on the world,’” she said. “‘The impact is what drives me.’

In a stroke of luck, or fate, the InPress team met entrepreneur Nathan Bair as he was consulting with local businesses as part of the CIE’s Small Business Development Center. Bair had just moved to San Luis Obispo after 10 years launching startups and working in medical device engineering in the Midwest.

Even as inventors Carlin and Norred transitioned away from InPress to pursue other opportunities, Becker and Bair held the company together with a staunch belief in its mission. York says this kind of change is common for any new venture, but it doesn’t have to be detrimental.

“If you look at the makeup of any of the CIE companies, none of them have the same team members they started with,” he notes. “But the others stay. The resources in the CIE help these entrepreneurs weather that transition.”

May of 2013 was a turning point for InPress. The team learned it had been accepted into the Fogarty Institute for Innovation, a nonprofit organization that helps medically innovative startups. Bair and Becker hired Cal Poly biomedical engineer Amy Degenkolb and began working on InPress full time from its second office in El Camino Hospital in Mountain View, Calif.

“The wonderful thing that has allowed us to be as ambitious as we are is having

“‘I’M SO GLAD I CAME TO CAL POLY AND BUILT THE MINDSET THAT GOES ALONG WITH IT.’”

— Jessie Becker
the support of the HotHouse and CIE and Fogarty Institute at the right times,” said Becker. During its tenure in the Fogarty Institute, InPress has made significant progress, building a patent portfolio, gathering investors, and producing a commercial-ready product.

InPress’ perennial challenge is to navigate tough regulations with the Food and Drug Administration in the U.S. and CE Mark in Europe. Becker admits the learning curve is steep and the stakes are high, knowing a misstep means it could take longer for the product to reach the market.

“I’d be lying if I said there haven’t been times it’s been so difficult that I didn’t wonder what life would be like with an easier job, but I never honestly considered quitting — ever. There have been times when I’ve questioned, ‘Am I up to the task?’ But now I know that I am.”

Through it all, the InPress team has built significant momentum by treating 10 women in a successful human trial in Jakarta, Indonesia, and raising $1.7 million in seed funding in preparation for a Series A goal of $4 million. And in January, Becker was thrust into the national spotlight when she was named one of Forbes’ 30 Under 30 for healthcare.

“My parents called me one morning, and I remember my mom just yells out, ‘You’re in Forbes!’” she said with a laugh. While she is grateful for the honor, the ever-humble CEO says it’s more of a reflection on her team than herself.

Becker visits InPress’ office in the bustling SLO HotHouse regularly to check in with her growing team, visit investors, and catch up with her favorite entrepreneurs, like Professor York. The CIE and InPress have watched one another grow over several years, but neither is quick to claim victory just yet.

“I’m proud of myself, but I have so much farther to go,” said Becker. “I have so much more to learn.”

InPress isn’t the only startup making waves in CIE’s SLO HotHouse. Orfalea College of Business alumni lead new ventures in technology, retail products and professional services.

**NAME**

Josh Hirahara
(B.S., Industrial Technology, 2014)

**COMPANY**

Boost Acquisition Inc., an enterprise software company that builds a cloud-based platform to increase profits for car dealerships through effective sourcing of used vehicles from consumers.

What has it been like to innovate a product that didn’t exist before?

It’s been exciting to see our vision take form and begin to provide real value for businesses. There are always different obstacles to overcome, but that’s what makes it worth doing.

What does it mean to you to be an entrepreneur?

Being an entrepreneur is being foolish enough to believe that you can create something better than what already exists, but remaining grounded and focused enough to not stop until you’ve found a way to make it happen.
When Cal Poly student Eddy Trang ventured to China in 2013 as part of BUS 304: Establishing International Supply Chains, the experience awakened a passion for travel in him that has yet to subside. Since then, he complemented his business administration degree and management concentration with minors in history and Asian studies for a career in international business.

Trang recently earned a highly sought-after Critical Language Scholarship from the U.S. Department of State. After graduation he travels to Malang, Indonesia, for two months of immersive cultural and linguistic study. Here’s a look at what he hopes to bring along as he sets off for the next chapter of his life.

Cal Poly T-Shirts: These will be gifts for my host family and tutors. Whenever I travel, I like to bring along gifts to share part of where I come from.

Journal: To keep track of my thoughts. The more I travel, the more people I meet, the more things I see, and the more I learn — all of which are valuable and worth recording.

Passport: I’ve had a chance to travel to 13 countries as a Cal Poly student, so I can’t wait to add a few more stamps! After Indonesia, I’m going to study in China!

Smartphone: A smartphone will be key for not only navigating my way around the country, but also for translating Indonesian words and phrases.

Laptop: This has everything: music, photos, and a way to get in touch with my friends and family back home in San Jose. It’s also a way for me to keep up with news on ESPN and Sports Illustrated. I helped manage the Cal Poly Men’s Basketball team, so I can’t imagine being out of the loop for too long.

Rainbow Sandals: I wear these almost all the time at Cal Poly. Because Malang is similar to San Luis Obispo in temperature (besides the humidity), it is an item that will remind me of home.
Around a board room table in Sunnyvale, Calif., two-dozen friends and alumni from Cal Poly assembled to hear about a movement brewing at their alma mater — one that would crystallize in the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

Jeff Witous (B.S., Business Administration, 1983) called upon old classmates and fraternity brothers who had since made an impact in Silicon Valley. According to Witous, the group was as diverse as Cal Poly itself, with alumni who studied construction management, computer science, accounting, mechanical and electrical engineering, architecture, and liberal arts all in attendance.

What the group realized was that a center this different would need a different kind of support.

“That was just brilliant,” said Witous. “At the conclusion of a presentation by Dr. Jonathan York, everyone around the table pulled out their checkbook. But it wasn’t just the money. It was having a program that brought our alumni home.”

That meeting in 2010 helped shape the CIE Founders’ Circle, a league of supporters near and far who gave much more than financial assets to the center. These alumni also volunteered their expertise to guide the CIE’s growth in its early years and build student programs strategically.

“Learn by Doing resonates with all Cal Poly alumni,” Witous said. “Well, the CIE is Learn by Doing on steroids. It’s just a natural evolution of the philosophy, and it cuts across every industry.” Since then, Witous has personally helped the CIE Founders’ Circle add one quarter of its members.

But it didn’t stop there. Many alumni and entrepreneurs have also returned to campus to speak at entrepreneurship forums, guest lecture on their industry experience, counsel and mentor budding Cal Poly startups, and network with students as they transition into the working world.

“Whenever I talk to Cal Poly students, it restores my faith in the future,” Witous said. “I start my talks with something I really screwed up badly, helping students to understand how taking risks — and sometimes failing — is part of being an entrepreneur and innovator.”

Witous urges others to take action by sharing the CIE story with their former classmates, encouraging them to come home to Cal Poly and make a direct impact on the next generation of students.

“I EMBRACE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS HOW BEING ENTREPRENEURIAL DOESN’T MEAN YOU NEED TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS. LARGE CORPORATIONS SEEK INNOVATORS AND RISK TAKERS TOO.”

— Jeff Witous
In the fall of 2014, the Orfalea College of Business welcomed its first cohort of 20 freshmen from the Cal Poly Scholars program. The program provides scholarship funding, advising support, computers and academic resources to outstanding high school seniors from underrepresented communities.

It does much more than offset costs for new students, though. According to Kris McKinlay, program administrator and assistant dean of the college, the program aims to strengthen the learning community of Cal Poly business students with diverse perspectives, new ideas, and different leadership styles.

According to the scholars themselves, they still have a lot in common. “The scholarship has allowed me to be part of a community of students passionate about education,” said Jordyn-Joyce Mendoza, a business administration freshman.

Cal Poly Scholars was founded in 2012 in the College of Engineering to connect the university with students at California high schools that serve communities with large proportions of first-generation and low-income students. This is the first time the program has included business students.

The scholarship has been specially adapted for students in the Orfalea College of Business to support its goals for four-year graduation. As part of the Freshman Success Program, each of the Cal Poly Scholars majoring in business completed BUS 100: Student Orientation and College Success, which helps students navigate available resources in the college as they plan for a successful academic career. The Cal Poly Scholars can also tap into study abroad opportunities in the Orfalea College of Business if they plan to graduate on time.

Most importantly, the program has fostered a tight-knit cohort environment among students who live together in the Cerro Vista residence hall on campus. The living/learning community has been a big support outside of the classroom, complementing personalized advising resources that keep students on track.

“I have taken advantage of the added resources, including the career fair workshop and advising,” Mendoza said. “I hope to go on to pursue my MBA and eventually start my own company that works with other nations to help better and integrate their information systems.”

The college plans to continue the program into the future, welcoming new cohorts each fall from different communities throughout the state.
1. Update Your Contact Information with the Alumni Association

Tell us about your latest job and receive insider information from the Orfalea College of Business.

2. Connect with Business Alumni on LinkedIn

Find classmates, connect with your favorite professors, and explore subgroups specific to your concentration.

3. Come Back to Campus for Homecoming

Save the date for November 6 & 7, 2015, for friends, football and fun with fellow alumni.

4. Pursue a Graduate Degree or Professional Certificate

Earn a master’s degree or business certification from one of our industry-oriented programs.

5. Find Us on Social Media

Follow along on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook for a glimpse into life at the Orfalea College of Business today.

6. Mentor the Next Generation of Cal Poly Business Students

Mentor business students one-on-one through the Executive Partners Program.

7. Connect with Your Local Alumni Chapter

Enjoy exclusive events and networking with fellow Mustangs in your own backyard.

8. Speak at a Club Meeting

Visit campus and represent your company during an industry-specific club meeting with our most ambitious business students.

9. Give back to the Orfalea College of Business

Support the next generation of Learn by Doing by donating to your concentration or favorite program in the college.

10. Hire Cal Poly Business Grads

Pay it forward by giving fellow Cal Poly alumni the chance to shine at your organization.

To get involved today, visit www.cob.calpoly.edu/connect
When Lisa Hufford found herself grappling with the challenge of work-life balance, she did more than pave a new road for herself — she took a new generation of business professionals along with her.

After success at RR Donnelley and Microsoft, she founded Simplicity Consulting to provide a league of marketing experts with the opportunity to consult on everything from business strategy to communications while balancing family commitments.

Learn how Hufford moves her business forward.

What characteristics do you look for when building your team?
The most important thing I’ve learned about building a team is that everyone has to bring a great attitude and want to be a part of something bigger than themselves. It only takes one negative person to throw off the balance and detract others from building a great company.

Who do you look up to as a leader?
I am attracted to leaders who inspire others, those who are authentic, service-oriented, and committed to making the world a better place. Some leaders I admire include Seth Godin, Tony Hsieh and Oprah Winfrey.

What’s been the hardest lesson you’ve had to learn in your career?
Patience. What comes easy for me is seeing the vision of what I want to create. The hard part is building the right team to overcome the obstacles as we strive for the vision. Patience to me means understanding that it’s not about achieving the vision, it’s about the journey in pursuit of the vision.

What’s the most important question you ask in an interview?
“Why do you want to work for our company?” I need to know what someone’s real motivation is.

How do you measure your own success?
By how many people’s lives I positively impact. I live by a quote from Zig Ziglar, who said, “You can have everything you want if you help enough other people get what they want.”

Would you say you still Learn by Doing?
I’m constantly learning and experimenting with ideas that drive growth, awareness, employee engagement, business efficiency and so much more. I lead my business by doing.