Every fall, Craig Chrisney (B.S., Business Administration, 1988) gets a phone call. He takes a few moments to talk to the Cal Poly student on the other end of the line about his work, his memories from Cal Poly, but mostly about how great San Luis Obispo is. It’s a time Chrisney looks forward to as he reconnects with his alma mater and gives back to the programs that propelled him to where he is today as a CFO in Pasadena, Calif.

“Talking to students each year is refreshing, and it’s nice to hear about growth on campus,” Chrisney notes. “When they call, I remember to make that donation.”

Chrisney has supported the Orfalea College of Business through the Cal Poly Fund nearly every year since 1990. As he moved from working at a Big Four accounting firm to leading an entrepreneurial incubator called Idea Lab, he continued growing his contributions because he felt so passionate about the stellar reputation of Cal Poly in the business world.

“I really value the education and opportunities that were afforded to me because of my education at Cal Poly. I want to give back and make sure others have the same opportunities.”

Ongoing contributions like Chrisney’s are critical to the college’s Dean’s Excellence Fund. Gifts large and small add up, giving the college flexibility to support emergent needs throughout the school year. Every year more than 900 donors give back to the college through the annual fund, which does everything from hiring new faculty to purchasing essential classroom technology.

Fellow alumni like Wendy Craig, partner at Ernst & Young, have found a way to double the impact of their annual contributions. Craig started with just a $25 contribution upon graduating in 1998. Over her 17-year career, EY has matched each donation.

“For me, I started out with a modest salary, but I knew I could still do a match,” Craig said of her first gift. “Each year, as my salary increased, it seemed like my giving to Cal Poly should increase as well.”

Her gifts make a direct impact on Cal Poly’s accounting program enabling it to host recruiting fairs, industry tours, and club events that help nearly 100 percent of accounting students secure internships and jobs long before graduation.

Craig now serves as an ambassador for EY’s gift matching program, helping fellow employees — and fellow Cal Poly alumni — double their impact on the program that gave them their start.