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

**Tad Miller**  
Professor of Accounting  
**SPECIALTIES:** Audit and financial accounting

**How has your field changed recently?** The American Institute of CPAs and the Financial Accounting Standards Board have totally rewritten standards that affect the profession.  
**How do you know when a student is career-ready?** When I see the number of firms that recruit our students, the number of our students they hire, and the starting salaries our students command, I know our accounting graduates are career-ready.  
**What’s your favorite thing about San Luis Obispo?** It was an absolutely wonderful place to raise our two daughters.

**Jackie Doremus**  
Assistant Professor of Economics  
**SPECIALTIES:** Principles of microeconomics and resource economics

**What industry position has made a big impact on you?** I was a monitoring and evaluation specialist at the U.S. Agency for International Development in Kinshasa in the Congo. Collecting data there helped me better understand the data generation process.  
**What has been your favorite moment from this last year of teaching?** Watching my students dig into their group work and seeing students help each other.  
**What’s your favorite thing about San Luis Obispo?** Montaña de Oro. It is the most beautiful place I’ve ever been.

**Mahdi Rastad**  
Assistant Professor of Finance  
**SPECIALTIES:** Corporate finance, corporate governance and fixed income securities

**How have you Learned by Doing personally?** I try to plug my students’ senior projects into my own research. This has been mutually beneficial to the students and to me.  
**What is your research focus at the moment?** Among other things, gender diversity of corporate boards.  
**How has your field changed recently?** There is a strong demand for classes on mergers and acquisitions given that many of our graduates find their ways into the corporate world, where they routinely evaluate acquisitions of smaller or startup companies.

**Manocher Djassemi**  
Professor of Industrial Technology and Packaging  
**SPECIALTIES:** Manufacturing processes and materials, power systems and industrial automation

**What are your favorite parts about teaching at Cal Poly?** It is a satisfying experience to see year after year how our freshmen grow through our program, gain knowledge, skills and confidence. They leave with good, high-paying job offers, many of them months before graduation.  
**What is your research focus at the moment?** Developing a computer-aided decision support expert system for manufacturing processes selection and environmental/sustainability issues in manufacturing.
**WHAT’S THE BEST ADVICE YOU’VE EVER RECEIVED?**

“DON’T TAKE ADVICE, MAKE YOUR OWN MISTAKES.”

— Leida Chen, Associate Professor of Management and Information Systems

---

**Irene Carbonell**  
Packaging Lecturer  
**SPECIALTIES:** Paper and paperboard packaging

**What are your favorite parts about teaching at Cal Poly?** The great amount of hands-on experience students earn through projects. I manage mostly labs, which is where students get to really create and test their ideas. It is amazing how much their abilities and mindset change in just one quarter.

**How do you know when a student is career-ready?** Students are career-ready when they put themselves in charge of learning. When, instead of waiting for someone to challenge them, they take the lead and challenge themselves.

---

**Tom Katona**  
Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Entrepreneurship  
**SPECIALTIES:** Senior design and entrepreneurial projects

**Why do you like teaching at Cal Poly?** Through the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship I have the opportunity to teach and work with students from the point of forming an initial idea through creating a company. It’s pretty amazing to watch the level of personal growth that occurs during that process.

**How has your field changed recently?** Additive manufacturing advances have been a game-changer for hardware development by reducing the time and cost associated with prototyping. This, combined with the dramatic cost reduction and increased capability in both computing and embedded systems, has completely changed the way we develop and monetize these technologies.

---

**Patty Dahm**  
Assistant Professor of Management  
**SPECIALTIES:** Organizational behavior

**What’s been the biggest challenge in your career?** I managed a team of 17 people through an outsourcing effort. Many employees on my team were losing their jobs.

**How has your field changed recently?** The field has focused on employee well-being or “happiness” and creating and managing a diverse workforce.

**Who is your go-to for faculty collaboration at Cal Poly?** I’m developing a study with Bruce Greenbaum, another assistant professor in the Management Area. We are interested in studying leadership — is it better to be feared or loved? Stay tuned.

---

**Leida Chen**  
Associate Professor of Management and Information Systems  
**SPECIALTIES:** Information systems and business analytics

**What has been your favorite moment from this last year of teaching?** At an Information Systems Association gathering last year, I saw many students that I had in my class before. They were all graduating and had found their dream jobs in prestigious companies. It was a proud moment.

**What industry position has made a big impact on you?** When I worked as a senior program manager at Microsoft Asia Pacific Research and Development Group, I managed a number of projects that provided “smart city” solutions by leveraging big data.

---

**Norm Borin**  
Professor of Marketing  
**SPECIALTIES:** Marketing strategy

**What has been your favorite moment from this last year of teaching?** In my Biomimicry Senior Project course, I really enjoyed seeing students uncover some really cool biological strategies and realize that we actually can learn from nature.

**How do you know when a student is career-ready?** Each quarter I meet with my teams and grill them for two hours during a management meeting. This gives me a pretty good idea of who is ready.

**How have you Learned by Doing personally?** Dancing. My wife still has a fantasy that I will be the next Fred Astaire.