Overview of Entrepreneurship

Many people think of entrepreneurship just as “starting a business.” Some identify it only with Silicon Valley tech startups and venture capital. In fact, all of these are part of how we see entrepreneurship at Cal Poly. Entrepreneurship goes beyond that to include a broader mindset and viewpoint. Entrepreneurs (of all ages) are viewed as individuals who keep their eyes open for opportunities to innovate, to do something better—to “create value.” The entrepreneurial business person understands how to manage and grow a company through multiple stages. Entrepreneurs can be found in all industries and walks-of-life.

Entrepreneurship is the study of how businesses come about, and gives students the skills to build a company from the ground up. Entrepreneurs engage in a wide variety of activities, such as recognizing a business opportunity when it appears, and deciding how to best mobilize the resources necessary to produce the most modern goods and services. Entrepreneurs are trained in the most sophisticated ways to handle real life business scenarios, as they gain the values, mindsets, attitudes, and skills to run a functioning business in today’s competitive world.

Can you learn entrepreneurship? We take the viewpoint that entrepreneurial business growth requires the whole breadth of business activity—strategy, marketing, sales, people management, technology, finance, accounting, etc. Entrepreneurs must have a deep understanding of business management practices and also learn to surround themselves with people of experience. Then, you need to add a willingness to experiment, to learn quickly, and to manage risk. Above all, entrepreneurs need to know the “questions to ask” to understand their business operations and strategy.

Sample Job Functions and Descriptions for Entrepreneurs

- **Small Business Owners** - start and operate their own businesses. They have the satisfaction of making their own decisions and forming the company exactly as they choose. Normally there are less employees, and a smaller product volume which allows the business to remain privately owned and operated. Small businesses can be developed with a very low starting cost, and can even be part time, depending on the owner’s involvement.
- **Self Employed Professionals** - earn their living directly from their own trade or business, rather than as an employee of another. This allows significant freedom and flexibility to ensure job satisfaction.
- **Franchisor Owner/Specialist** - Franchising has become one of the most popular ways of doing business in today’s marketplace. A franchise is a right granted to an individual or group to market a company’s goods or services within a certain territory or location. As a franchise owner, you must follow certain rules and guidelines already established by
the franchise. This enables someone to start up an organization that is already well known, and therefore most of the initial marketing has already taken place.

• **Consultant/ Business Analysts** - apply the skills obtained from the entrepreneurship degree to analyze the structure and functionality of other businesses. This involves organizing, planning, and product design. Business Analysts also incorporate new technology into the workplace to improve the form and function of the business.

It is important to note the flexibility of the entrepreneurship concentration with the elective options available. This is an ideal concentration for anyone interested in pursuing their own business endeavors.

**What classes are involved?**

Below is a link provided for you by the Office of the Registrar. This link will take you to a webpage to determine Flow Charts and Curriculum Sheets for your declared major and concentration.

• The *Flow Chart* and *Curriculum* Links will provide you information about your 4-Year Academic Flowchart for Entrepreneurship along with pre-requisites needed for each course. Review [http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/advising/majors-concentrations/](http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/advising/majors-concentrations/) for more information about course requirements for the Entrepreneurship Concentration.

**Access to Entrepreneurship Concentration Flowchart and Curriculum:**


1. Input your Catalog Year
2. Input your Major
3. Input your Concentration

**Salary Information**

*Career Services’ Graduate Survey for Cal Poly recent grads:*

2014-2015 - Median Salary - $45,000
2013-2014 – Median Salary - $45,000

Access Career Services’ Graduate Status Reports:
[http://careerservices.calpoly.edu/content/student/gsr_report](http://careerservices.calpoly.edu/content/student/gsr_report) and click on Report Results

**Preparation**

• Find information about the Entrepreneurship Concentration at [http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/advising/majors-concentrations/](http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/advising/majors-concentrations/)
• More specific information on the Entrepreneurship Concentration can be found at [http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/academic/entrepreneurship/](http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/academic/entrepreneurship/)
• Check out Career Services’ Graduate Survey – lists employers, job titles, and salary information of recent Cal Poly graduates divided by major/concentration – https://www.careers.calpoly.edu/search.php

• Cal Poly Entrepreneurship Club - http://www.cpentrepreneurs.com/ - Meet people in your concentration, network with employers, and get involved to build your resume!

• Talk with Jonathan York, Faculty for Entrepreneurship. He can be reached at jlyork@calpoly.edu

Senior Project Options
• Entrepreneurship Senior Projects can be as varied as working with business and engineering students on creating a business to building a business plan for a non-profit or local start-up. Each project is different and yet all emphasize a holistic approach to business ideas.

• More information about Entrepreneurship senior projects can be located here http://www.cob.calpoly.edu/advising/graduation/senior-projects/

Career Research Resources
• www.careerservices.calpoly.edu – Cal Poly Career Services - career planning links, job listing links, career information and help

• MustangJOBS – Single click access through your portal account – find local, part-time jobs, internships, and career postings for Cal Poly students, in addition to information on employers who recruit marketing students


• www.careeroverview.com/ - More information about entrepreneurship careers