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On the Cover
MBP members Francesca Ramos, Meera Patel, Abel Barerra and Darian Dudley with Program Coordinator Justin Gomez. Chris Leschinsky photo.
We are privileged to attract wicked smart students with enviable work ethics and warm personalities who, not surprisingly, become leaders at some of the world’s most important companies.

In this year’s magazine, you’ll read about the Spotlight Awards, which was started by the Dean’s Advisory Council in 2017 to recognize these outstanding alumni. Orfalea graduates have a strong affiliation for the college, reflected by the increasing amount who give their time and treasure to provide future students with an unparalleled education and experience. Like Meredith Schmidt, featured in this issue, who is an exemplary alumna in terms of career success and support of our programs.

Creating a more diverse and inclusive learning environment for students and faculty remains one of our most salient initiatives. Under the leadership of Justin Gomez, the Multicultural Business Program (MBP) has been critical in providing our students with the support and community they need for success. Recognizing the importance of this program, the Dean’s Advisory Council designated all proceeds from the 2019 Spotlight Awards to support MBP services and initiatives. In order to develop comprehensive strategies for collegewide inclusivity, we have also formed a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council that includes students, staff, faculty and industry representatives.

Nearly 40 percent of Orfalea graduates have studied abroad, and increasing the number of our students who graduate with international experience has been one of our most important goals. Employers value the cultural agility these graduates develop during their experiences. This year we formed a new exchange partnership with the Stockholm School of Economics, one of Europe’s leading business schools, and more partnerships are in progress. Funds from the Orfalea Endowment and donations from numerous alumni have been instrumental in enabling more students to study abroad, complete international internships and participate in short international field studies.

Thank you for all of the important roles you play in providing students with an exceptional educational experience. I hope you enjoy the magazine!

Scott Dawson, Dean
Orfalea College of Business
STUDENT SUCCESS

Packaging Students Take Home Top Honors in Three National Competitions

Interdisciplinary teams of Packaging and Art students placed among the nation’s best in three different 2018 competitions. All entries were conceived and developed as part of upper-level packaging courses taught by Javier de la Fuente and Irene Carbonell, in collaboration with upper-level Art and Design courses.

PAPERBOARD PACKAGING ALLIANCE STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION: Four teams received recognition for their projects, which took the form of subscription boxes. “Harvest,” a box for on-the-go snacks, placed second overall. “Terra,” a fitness subscription box, earned a spot as a runner-up. “GEM,” a box for cosmetics, and “GoVelo,” one for biking enthusiasts, received honorable mentions.


ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT CORRUGATED CONVERTERS: Student teams took first and second in the competition, which required teams to design a “survival kit” for college students. A picnic basket concept called “Wicker” took first place. Second place went to “Mo e Than Just a Box,” a package that doubles as a board game.

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

CAL POLY BUSINESS DEGREE RANKED NO.8 IN THE NATION FOR ROI

A Business degree from Cal Poly nets students the eighth best annual ROI in the nation, according to PayScale.com. Cal Poly also ranked well overall, coming in at 37 among public and private institutions.

NEW PROGRAMS

SALES MINOR OPENS FALL 2019

Beginning this fall, Orfalea College of Business students will have the option to pursue a minor in sales. Marketing Faculty Lisa Simon has been teaching sales at Cal Poly since 1998, consistently finding new ways for students to hone their selling skills. In 2005, she began taking students to sales competitions, and in 2008 she started teaching sales as a senior project. She’s been expanding these programs ever since, bringing corporate partners and alumni into the fold to help students further prepare for sales careers.

Now, students interested in this career path have an option for a more comprehensive sales education. The sales minor will include coursework in selling skills, sales technology and current marketing and sales trends. Additionally, it aims to help students develop strong presentation skills, hands-on experience with technology tools and valuable career connections contributing to internships and jobs.

Enrolled students will have additional Learn by Doing opportunities including corporate tours, internships, ride-alongs, selling projects and more.
LEARN BY DOING

Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Attends Session of U.S. Tax Court

Student and staff representatives from Cal Poly’s Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) attended the Trial Calendar Call for the U.S. Tax Court in Fresno this fall, where they provided pro bono services to unrepresented tax petitioners.

Cal Poly’s LITC is one of twelve IRS-supported clinics in California. It is the only LITC within a business college nationwide that is permitted to participate in the U.S. Tax Court’s Calendar Call Program.

Students get to participate in the entire process, from initial advising to court representation, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the tax dispute process. And they continue in their experiences by providing education and outreach services in the local community throughout the year.

Because of their exemplary efforts and recent work, Orfalea’s LITC received the top grant amount possible from the IRS’s Taxpayer Advocate Service, a total of $100,000. The funds will ensure that the LITC can continue providing exemplary community service and valuable Learn by Doing student opportunities.

For more info on the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, visit cob.calpoly.edu/litc.

NINE YEARS OF LITC

$3.5 million total liabilities reduced
396 total cases
332 participating students
9,213 community members reached
63 U.S. Tax Court cases
138 outreach events

2018-19 STATS SO FAR
59 new clients accepted
91 cases worked
$430K Approx. total client liabilities reduced
26 outreach events

FACULTY EXCELLENCE

PROFESSORS TEAM UP WITH AI PIONEER TO PUBLISH KEY RESEARCH

Entrepreneurship Professor Lynn Metcalf and communication studies Professor David Askay spent last summer on the cutting edge of artificial intelligence technology. In collaboration with AI pioneer Unanimous AI, a Silicon Valley-based technology firm that amplifies the intelligence of groups through special AI algorithms, they published research examining the effectiveness of business teams functioning as a “hive mind.”

The study showed that business teams, when connected by AI algorithms and operating as an internet-linked “swarm,” functioned with significantly higher social intelligence than individuals working alone. This innovative Swarm AI technology allowed teams, connected over the internet, to combine their individual insights in real-time to accomplish tasks and make decisions, intelligent systems modeled after swarms in nature, emulating the way birds flock, fish school and bees swarm to amplify their collective intelligence.

Metcalf, Askay and the team see many potential applications of Swarm AI technology among business teams, from making optimized decisions to more accurately forecasting how consumers will react to marketing messaging, product features or sales tactics.
Assistant Professor of Management and Human Resources Patty Dahm and two colleagues received a Scholarly Achievement Award from the Academy of Management, Human Resources Division for their paper “Why and when does the gender gap reverse? Diversity goals and the pay premium for high potential women.” The paper studies the premium unique to women in the upper echelons of organizations with regards to their perceived value to organizational diversity.

Dahm’s work adds a new and compelling dimension to the gender pay gap conversation. “Our research points out that there are many inequities in the workforce, some of them unexpected,” Dahm said. “Organizations and managers like to think they are not biased, but we all have unconscious biases that affect our decisions.”

The Academy of Management, a professional association that publishes cutting-edge research in top-tier academic journals, presents one Scholarly Achievement Award within its HR Division each year. It goes to the most significant human resources management article published in recognized journals available to its members.

Marketing Evolution Gift Funds New Student-Run Business Analytics Agency

In January, the Orfalea College of Business launched a business analytics agency on campus thanks to a partnership with Marketing Evolution Inc. and its founder Rex Briggs.

The student-run agency will give current students the opportunity to deliver innovative, analytics-based solutions to real companies around the world. It will allow for cross-disciplinary cooperation, so students can diversify their knowledge and gain expertise in high-demand subjects including data modeling, automation, artificial intelligence and more.

Marketing Professor Brennan Davis, who has worked with Briggs on analytics projects and scholarship in the past, serves as the agency’s director. He works with 20 student fellows running in-depth analytics and studying the results to provide companies with marketing strategies.

But delivering detailed analytic innovations to global companies is just part of the agency’s function. Future plans include creating an open source data lake that will be accessible to students and faculty worldwide for research projects, along with an education program to globally disseminate the latest business analytics knowledge.

Marketing Evolution provides the most powerful marketing measurement and optimization solutions that increase campaign performance, sales, and engagement for leading brands around the world. Briggs, Marketing Evolution’s founder and CEO, is a 1993 Orfalea College of Business alumnus and with his support for the agency, he’ll give current students a chance to help revolutionize the industry with him.

Cal Poly was ranked among the best in the nation in Kiplinger’s annual ranking, coming at 27th nationwide and sixth in the state among public universities. Cal Poly ranked 86th overall, rising 11 places from last year, among U.S. public and private institutions.
ORFALEA AT A GLANCE

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Enrollment October 2018</th>
<th>Fall 2018 Entering Class FR and Transfer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,071</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- Business Administration: 2,582 (92%)
- Economics: 291
- Industrial Technology & Packaging: 198
- Business Administration: 676 (92%)
- Economics: 51
- Industrial Technology & Packaging: 48

- Four-year Graduation Rate: 72.1%
- Five-year Graduation Rate: 87%

- 92% of recent graduates are employed or plan to attend graduate school after graduation (2016-17 Graduate Status Report)
- Average Starting Salary: $60K (2016-17 Graduate Status Report)

- Overall Budget FY 2018 (state funds): $17,423,225
- Funds Raised Through Philanthropy FY 2018: $5,564,673

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2018 Applications:</th>
<th>Graduate Programs</th>
<th>Fall 2018 Entering Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>286</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Career Placement: 93%
- Average Starting Salary: $71,520
A SPACE TO BELONG

How the Multicultural Business Program is building inclusive community and cultural awareness
Spend enough time around the Multicultural Business Program (MBP), and you’ll see certain words repeated. On the fliers and signage. On the documents and presentations. On the website and emails. From the front of a first-year orientation class, Program Coordinator Justin Gomez speaks them aloud: belong, matter. In some ways, these have become a special type of higher education buzzword, the kind that universities use on their websites and collateral to emphasize community without actually defining it. Words that tell students, “you’ll find a home and a purpose here,” without showing them how, and without speaking to their specific backgrounds and experiences. Words so broad they risk losing their meaning. But here, in the opening session of MBP’s orientation, full of first-year students in their first week of classes, belonging and mattering are tangible, real and they mean everything.

The words’ all-encompassing natures, in this roomful of students from underrepresented backgrounds, becomes their strength. These are students who may have arrived on campus feeling the opposite: marginalized, like they don’t belong, like this isn’t the “home away from home” they thought it might be. That’s why, from the very start, MBP presents itself as not simply an organization, or a service, or academic advising, but as a family.

At the first session of orientation, near the check-in table, a couple of young women chat nervously about their upcoming classes. Two MBP student coordinators wearing blue polos and big smiles welcome them, holding out doughnuts with blue iced letters. “Make sure to look at the icing,” they say, “those are the initials of your PALS.”

With PALS stands for Peer Assisted Learning Supporters, older students who help advise and mentor younger MBP members, offering career advice, personal guidance or just a shoulder to lean on. In the classroom, one mentor sits at each table, chatting with their mentees and making immediate connections. Gomez attributes much of MBP’s successful community-building to the PALS. “They’re an accessible resource, someone who will always be there for support. They understand what a first-year student goes through, the challenges of being from an underrepresented background. And a lot of these relationships only deepen as time goes on.”

Fourth-year member Abel Barrera Rivera credits his persistence at Cal Poly to these kinds of relationships. “A lot of my closest friends are from MBP,” he said. “We lift each other up, and they genuinely want what’s best for me. That’s the type of people I want to spend time with, to work with and to be friends with.” Relationships are fundamental to MBP, part of its DNA, starting with the very first meeting, when Gomez and Graduate Assistant Marissa Chavez show slides containing photos of their families and heritage. Right off the bat, the message is clear: We’re going to be an intimate group, and we’re going to celebrate our unique backgrounds.

Gomez and Orfalea leadership founded MBP three years ago to help students from underrepresented backgrounds connect and persist at the college. The goal: to include members in an inclusive community, with comprehensive support and resources, from their first day of classes until they graduate. Each incoming MBP cohort takes two courses together: Orientation and Business Professionalism I. This year, they will also take a third: Race, Culture and Politics of the U.S. The first-year programming facilitates intimate friendships that last for students’ entire college experience.

But if community-building is one side of the MBP coin, professional development is the other. The program’s aptly named “Feel Good Fridays” feature boxed lunches and representatives from various corporate partners. The reps speak on how their organizations create inclusive work environments.

A Thriving Community
Arly Rivas-Love and Casey Tolentino share laughs with other MBP members
DESTINY BUN

The Multicultural Business Program is the reason I’m at Cal Poly. I almost dropped out during my first year because I experienced culture shock and I felt like I didn’t have a place on campus. But after I met Justin and he told me about MBP, I wanted to get involved so that future students wouldn’t have to feel lost on campus like I did.

MBP has been like a second family for me. Whether I’ve needed to talk to a PALS mentor for personal advice or just to hang out, there’s always been someone there for me. Whenever I hang out with my MBP friends, it’s a genuinely fun time and we always feel connected. It’s because I’m hanging out with people who have the same motivation to create a better community for younger students while also getting the most out of our own college experiences.

Through MBP, I’ve gained more confidence and a better understanding of myself. I’m a shy person, but MBP has helped me break some of the barriers that prevented me from stepping out of my comfort zone. I’ve worked on my networking skills by talking to industry professionals during Feel Good Fridays. I’ve also been challenged to lead a team, which has helped me build my leadership abilities.

ABEL BARRERA RIVERA

I grew up in a very diverse part of San Jose, always seeing different groups of people, and when I came to Cal Poly, it was in some ways a culture shock. At first, I felt alone, but I knew that I would do whatever it took to succeed. My first experience with MBP, walking into that Business 100 classroom, even though I didn’t know a single person there, felt like coming home. Everyone was so inviting. They brought me in with open arms, and I knew I was in the right place.

Being a first-generation student, my parents knew nothing about college, which meant I knew nothing about college. But MBP gives you that initial push, that first step. As soon as you walk on campus, they start teaching you skills and providing resources that put you on a path to success. My parents were immigrants and I came from a low-income background, and I’ve really seen how that can impact every aspect of life and career. And this push from MBP is something that can really help students in my position compete with peers who may have always had access to more resources and support.

KHUSHBU PATEL

Coming from a pretty diverse, tight-knit background, I felt like something was lacking during my first year at Cal Poly. It wasn’t until I got involved in MBP that I realized what it was: community, a place where I felt at home and most like myself. Sometimes around campus, I found myself unintentionally pretending to be someone I wasn’t; but in MBP I didn’t. The more involved I got, the more comfortable I felt around campus, in my classes and in my personal life. MBP gave me the confidence to be myself even when surrounded by a pool of people that weren’t like me. Now that I’m into my third year, I can look back and see how Cal Poly has really influenced my friend circle, my relationships, and who I am as a student, leader and young professional.

MBP is a community that understands it’s OK to feel uncomfortable and encourages students to embrace it. I can see how that might sound counterintuitive, but actually, feeling uncomfortable and learning how to deal with it is a sign of personal growth, and that’s what MBP is all about. We live in a society where we’re told to conform to our surroundings, or that there’s a certain way we have to look and act, but MBP taught me one huge lesson: We need to embrace our differences because that’s what makes us, us.
while explaining how to overcome challenges students may face in the future.

Given recent studies that show diversity as a strong influence on corporate success, industry partners appreciate MBP’s work. “MBP is a fine effort, a tangible step in creating safe spaces for people of all backgrounds to make connections,” said Al Carrasco, director of Americas talent team for Ernst & Young. “With a greater appreciation of what makes us unique comes greater engagement and richer interactions. In our firm, this is what creates an environment for high-performing teams.”

These same corporate partners also host MBP groups for industry tours to give students an inside look at their workplace cultures. And every spring, MBP puts on a conference, open to all students, called “Leadership Beyond the Résumé,” which features speakers and workshops focused on diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

These programs are instrumental in helping MBP members develop career readiness. “As a first-generation student, MBP was my first introduction to industry,” said fourth-year Jorge Valdez. “For example, before college I had no idea what to do during an interview, but MBP helped give me those skills and provide connections to industry leaders, and I wouldn’t be where I am without that.” Valdez leveraged the professional skills he’s gained to earn a finance job at Apple which he will begin in the fall.

Community, mentoring and networking, all functioning together, create an influential framework of academic and career support. Second-year Erika Cospin notes how this framework has instilled in her not just professional skills, but self-assurance too. It’s allowed her to see herself as a business leader, and it’s given her confidence that she can thrive in a business career.

And by empowering students from underrepresented backgrounds to share their experiences with the broader community, MBP is also helping shape the campus culture. They’re showing the rest of campus how diverse backgrounds and viewpoints are essential to successful classroom and professional environments. “MBP is for everyone,” said Valdez. “It helps create awareness about issues in diversity and inclusion so that people can have the difficult conversations that we need to be having.” In doing so, MBP is helping mold a generation of more thoughtful, empathetic business leaders.

This is a prime example of how make everyone in a room, on a team, or in a company feel valued. Of how to cultivate a welcoming community where we cherish our differences and build each other up. According to Gomez, “the program is working toward a broader community where telling someone they belong is unnecessary because they already feel so welcome, where anyone can walk into any classroom or any office and immediately feel at home.” And hopefully, someday, if we follow the lead of organizations like MBP, we’ll get there.

But like most influential movements, it starts small, on a person-by-person basis. It starts with one student at a time. Embracing them, accepting them, supporting them. It starts with a room full of smiling faces, a doughnut, a warm welcome and a simple but encouraging refrain: you belong here. You matter.

“MBP IS A FINE EFFORT, A TANGIBLE STEP IN CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS TO MAKE CONNECTIONS.”

— Al Carrasco, director of Americas talent team at EY
**In Focus**

1. **WOW Week**
   Dean Scott Dawson speaks to 655 incoming freshman business students during the Week of Welcome.

2. **Colombia Trip**
   Students Khushbu Patel, left, and Meera Patel at a flower market on an International Business Tour to Colombia. On the trip, students visited flower farms and processors as they studied entrepreneurship and supply chain within the cut flower industry.

3. **Demo Day**
   Entrepreneurship student Kieran Scandrett from Clove (CEO, co-founder), one of eight startups cultivated in the SLO HotHouse this year, gives his pitch at the CIE’s Demo Day in September.

4. **AMA Tours**
   Cal Poly’s American Marketing Chapter on top of LinkedIn’s San Francisco office after a corporate tour. They also visited Salesforce and WeWork on the trip and networked with Cal Poly alumni at each company.

5. **The Quickstand**
   The Quickstand, a product designed, sourced, built and sold by 15 students in ITP 467 Applied Business Operations. The students sold out of all 164 units of this collapsible, portable table.

6. **Dreamforce**
   Finance students Benjamin Consoli, Adam Pasco and Kian Ramezani with Jim Cramer, host of CNBC’s “Mad Money,” at the Dreamforce conference, where Salesforce granted them special press access.
Men’s soccer forward Sean Goode was named to the All-Big West Conference first team. The senior with an Accounting concentration became the 12th player in program history with multiple multi-goal matches in one season.

Marketing Professor Lisa Simon and a panel of judges from corporate partners evaluate student sales pitches in the fall sales competition.

2018 Orfalea College of Business Honored Alumnus Mike Selfridge (Economics ’89), chief banking officer at First Republic, shares his wisdom with students as an Executive in Residence.

Teams work quickly to launch their startups in 54 hours during the SLO Startup Weekend, organized by Cal Poly Entrepreneurs. By the end, they had launched 11 companies.

Christian Ford, left, and Nick Tintoc from Orfalea’s Financial Management Association volunteer at San Luis Obispo Food Bank. From volunteer work to food drives, Orfalea student clubs find ways to give back each year.

Amanda Chiu, from left, Maria Shadchina and Madison Boyd take a photo break from their summer internships at Tesla’s Global Securities team.
Instead of spending her early fall traveling back to campus and arranging her course schedule, third-year Accounting student Carey Kocur spent it traveling to Italy and arranging the finances of Shake Café — a small, family-owned business in Florence. In the process, she gained valuable cultural perspective and international work experience.

SEPTEMBER 21
As I walked through the streets of Florence to meet my new boss, I had butterflies in my stomach. I was starring my internship at Shake Café, and I wanted to make a good first impression, but I didn’t know if the owners spoke English or what types of projects I would be undertaking. Fortunately, Cal Poly has shown me how to take on new challenges and get out of my comfort zone, so I felt ready. After meeting Shake Café’s owners, Fanny and Cristiano, I was thrilled. They provided me with a list of potential projects and gave me the freedom to add my own creative twist.

I just finished the second week of my internship, and I’ve already learned so much about Italian business. I work directly with the owners on a daily basis. They value health, simplicity, freshness and quickness, and they incorporate these in their business. I am very happy to be working for such a great company that shares my values.

Walk into Shake Café and you’ll instantly notice a bright, friendly environment with multiple indoor and outdoor seating areas. Sit down at a table and you can take in the beautiful green plants lining the walls and the upbeat music playing. You’ll find a strong commitment to a sustainable and health-conscious environment. They use 100 percent recyclable materials, have multiple labeled trash cans and don’t allow smoking.

Just yesterday, I finalized a thorough overview presentation on the café, detailing how they expanded from one small location in 2013 to three today, each larger than the last. Next week, I’ll start analyzing their finances dating back to 2015, including detailed general ledgers, income statements and balance sheets for each of their three locations. I’m excited to help determine where the company should allocate their money, so they can continue to expand.

OCTOBER 5
I fell in love with Florence the day I arrived, and I’m still in awe of it: the culture, the food, the fashion, the art, the people — everything. Throughout Florence, there are gelaterias and leather vendors on every street corner. It’s not
a large city, but it feels large because it’s made up of many small alleyways and side streets. And there’s so much to see! I try to visit museums, churches or new cafes whenever I have time.

One thing I’ve come to love about Florence is that there is always live music playing in the streets: violinists, guitarists, trumpet players, even drummers banging skillfully on old trash cans. One night, while walking home from dinner, I was captivated by a violinist, so much so that I stood and listened to him for over 30 minutes.

And I always love seeing the architecture here. It’s astonishing. On my daily commute, I pass by the Palazzo Vecchio, the town hall of Florence. Right outside the Palazzo Vecchio there is a replica of the Statue of David and a gallery of statues in the Loggia dei Lanzi. The Uffizi Gallery and the Gucci Museum are in the same area. I pass by the Duomo every day on my walk to work, and I’m amazed by its beauty every time.

**OCTOBER 26**

I’ve been working at Shake Café for a month and a half now, and I’ve developed a great appreciation for the company and everyone who works there. Every day when I walk in, I’m greeted by all the employees with a smile and a genuine “ciao.” On top of that, I’ve become close friends with Fanny and Cristiano. It’s a family-owned business, and I feel like I’m already part of the Shake Café family.

Their chef, Kuma, prepares each dish like a piece of art, not only delicious, but beautifully presented as well. They use fresh, all-natural ingredients to create wholesome dishes like acai bowls. Fanny gave me the privilege of sharing Kuma’s beautiful creations on social media and, while I have three years of marketing experience, I’m not quite as experienced with social media strategy, so I had to learn on the job. I played around with different strategies and enjoyed using my creative side to share Kuma’s fresh and playful dishes.

As another type of promotion, I thought it would be smart for Shake Café to sell reusable coffee mugs. Made completely from plant fibers, these mugs would not only showcase Shake Café’s commitment to sustainability, but they would also be a great way to market their brand with a logo on the mug’s silicone sleeve. I found a supplier and placed an order, which arrived within a week. This wasn’t a task I was assigned, but I took the initiative because I knew it could benefit the business.

**NOVEMBER 25**

My time abroad has allowed me to look at life through a different lens. The Italian lifestyle moves at a slower pace than what I’m used to. Something that I noticed immediately is that Italians truly love to enjoy their meals. The waiter will not dare bring the check unless you ask for it. No one is in a hurry; whether that is eating or walking, Italians take their time.

Italians do business at a slower pace than Americans too. There is no doubt that they work hard, but everything just moves a little slower. This frustrated me initially, but it also made me stop and think. Italians value spending time with family and friends, and they don’t have a “go go go” mind-set like in the U.S. I have a strong work-ethic, so it was a little hard for me to transition to a slower lifestyle, but now I have a deep respect for it. American innovation is incredible, but it is hard for us to stop and breathe sometimes. It’s important for our health, well-being and productivity to take this time out.

Throughout my time in Europe, I have gained a greater appreciation for taking time to relax and spend time with others.

Working in Italy has given me a fresh perspective on business — and on life. I’ve made such great memories here, and I’ll be sad to leave. I’ll be especially sad to leave my Shake Café family. But when I get home, I’m excited to apply the lessons I’ve learned to projects, relationships, and my future career.
FACULTY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Orfalea College of Business is full of experienced, dedicated faculty. And great faculty deserve recognition. Jourdi de Werd, a 1980 Cal Poly graduate, wanted to make sure that faculty members are rewarded for going above and beyond. Orfalea Student Ambassadors select the de Werd Faculty Award for Impact on Student Success recipients based on their exemplary contributions to student learning.

Tim Ridout

Tim Ridout is an Orfalea College of Business alumnus (Financial Management and Accounting ’93) who spent 16 years in the Silicon Valley during the dot-com boom and bust and the web 2.0 era, helping tech companies scale for rapid growth. In 2009, he returned to the Central Coast and worked as a financial and administrative executive in clean-tech, then agriculture before taking an opportunity to teach at Cal Poly in 2016. Now, he finds joy in passing on his knowledge to current Business and Accounting students.

Q: This award is presented to faculty who “significantly impact student learning.” What does “impact student learning” mean to you? First and foremost, it’s about effectively conveying the content so that students don’t just know it, but so they can use it. Content in the classes I teach is relevant for future business leaders, so the students need to learn it, not just memorize. I strive to teach students broad concepts deeply, then use real scenarios from my professional experience to show how those concepts play out. Lectures are good for general principles, but application (for me, using in-class exercises) is essential for deep comprehension. If a student can take a concept, apply it in real life, and retain it, then I’ve positively impacted that student’s learning.

Q: The de Werd Award recipients are chosen by students. How does it feel to be recognized by Orfalea students? As a Cal Poly and Orfalea alum, it’s an honor to even have the opportunity to teach here and use my career experience to give back to my university and these amazing students. The fact that students appreciate and see value in my teaching takes an already enormous honor to the next level. I’m very humbled to have been selected.

Q: How would you describe your teaching style? Definitely active. I like to keep everyone engaged. No one gets to be anonymous in my class. I like to mix things up, tell stories, tell jokes, move around the room during exercises, get them working in groups. In a two-hour class, lecture only goes so far, so I’m always thinking about how I can keep the day’s experience relevant and everyone in the room actively engaged with the material.

Q: What do you do in your free time? I mostly spend time with my wife, two young kids and our 8-year-old golden retriever. We stay pretty active, and we are very outdoorsy. Every summer we load up our RV and hit the road to explore somewhere we’ve never been for a few weeks. I’m a lifelong surfer, so I try to surf a few days a week. And I play basketball at the Rec Center, so some of my students have a chance to get back at me for the high expectations I have for them, all the homework I assign, and my lengthy, robust exams.

Q: What’s something about you that your students or colleagues might not know? I got a late start in college, at a junior college when I was 21. Then, I transferred to Cal Poly at age 23. At that time, I was wondering whether I had what it took and if I belonged, and it turns out I did. So, I always try to encourage my students, especially transfer students, that they have what it takes. If I could do it, then they can do it. But, success takes both intelligence and diligent effort. One without the other doesn’t go very far. Use plenty of both and you will be just fine.
Q: This award is presented to faculty who “significantly impact student learning.” What does “impact student learning” mean to you?
I am first and foremost an educator, so I prioritize the quality delivery of curriculum material. But while content is important, extending a student’s experience into broader social contexts is too. Whether I’m teaching finance or marketing I challenge my students to view the subject material as active societal forces. My classes typically have 60-plus students, but I try to personalize the experience for each one, often through group work, where they get intimate peer-to-peer interaction.

Q: How do you challenge your students?
I want each student to have a rich and well-rounded college experience, so I challenge them to supplement in-class learning with outside involvement. I serve on the Cal Poly Arts Advisory Board, and I’m executive director of the Opera San Luis Obispo. I emphasize to the students that, although OperaSLO is an arts organization, its success entails the application of finance, marketing, accounting, etc. And I encourage participation in artistic experiences to help them become more creative and innovative.

Q: What types of experiences would you tell students to expect in your classes?
Participation! I encourage class participation through incentive-reward structures like “Snap Bucks,” fake money they can redeem for rewards. By utilizing innovative reward structures, I make participation academically rewarding and fun. I frequently host Orfalea’s Executives in Residence to speak, and I relate each guest executive’s background to what we’re studying. Plus, I love to incorporate current events into class discussion and award “Snap Bucks” to students who can relate them to subject material.

Q: What else do you do in your free time?
Outside of my position with OperaSLO, I try to be involved in as many student organizations as possible. I’m faculty advisor for the business fraternity Delta Sigma Pi and TedxSanLuisObispo. I regularly participate in fitness classes at the Cal Poly Rec Center and encourage students to do the same. The in-class learning activities in my BUS 342 Finance class are called “Get Fiscally Fit.” I even hold extra office hours and special study groups in the Rec Center lobby for a more relaxed environment.

Q: What’s something else you’re passionate about?
Since 1996, I’ve been involved in the Cal Poly Cat Program. This dedicated group of Cal Poly faculty, staff, students and local residents manages the campus cat population. Through a campus shelter and veterinary care, we ensure that our campus cat population is controlled and healthy. These campus-dwelling cats play a vital role in rodent control. Early in their interactions with me, my students discover that I am an ardent cat lover who ‘owns’ several cats in addition to caring for the Cat Program felines. I always find cat lovers among my students, and I emphasize to them the value of participation in service learning projects like this one.

Sharon Dobson
Sharon Dobson has more than 20 years of lecturing experience in accounting, finance and marketing and still loves coming up with new ways to engage students. She’s the executive director of the Opera San Luis Obispo, she creates and facilitates the nationally-recognized company’s annual budget and marketing plan. When she’s not in class or managing the opera, she’s advising student groups, taking fitness classes or caring for the campus cat population as executive director of the Cal Poly Cat Program.
It began with a plastic bottle, a price tag and a thought: There has to be a better way. As fourth-year Industrial Technology and Packaging student at Cal Poly, Scott Edwards saw a problem. “Why are we paying so much for plastic and water that costs a fraction of a cent?” he asked himself. After a little research, he found two reasons: production and transport. His solution was Drop Water, a company set to revolutionize the bottled water industry and eliminate a whole lot of waste.

According to Edwards’ research, in 2017, more than 480 billion bottles of water were produced worldwide. Stacked end to end, that many bottles would go around the equator 2,500 times, or to the moon 250 times. But plastic waste isn’t the only problem; transporting that many bottles creates energy waste too. Edwards sees this energy inefficiency as equally harmful. “One pallet of bottled water weighs a ton and requires large, gas-guzzling trucks to deliver,” he said. “Basically, when you buy a bottle of water, you’re really paying for the ticket to get it to you.”

Drop Water’s solution is “decentralized bottling.” They ship empty, collapsible, 100 percent compostable bottles to strategically placed vending machines that are smaller than normal, yet hold over five times the number of products. These machines draw from water lines as drinking fountains do, filter it, the add the user’s choice of all-natural flavors and vitamins. The per/bio-polymer bottles cost 50 percent less energy to produce and 1/30th of the energy to transport. Edwards and the Drop Water team “want to be good ancestors to future generations. This means reducing the drastic amount of plastic waste going into our oceans and the energy wasted taking it there.”

What began as Edwards’ senior project at Cal Poly has since grown into an innovative startup, receiving national attention from venture capitalists and corporations alike. Drop Water recently installed its cutting-edge vending machines at the San Jose International Airport and took second place out of 7,800 companies nationwide in FedEx’s Small Business Grant Contest.

But even with all the recognition and growth, Edwards still maintains close relationships with fellow Cal Poly alumni. In fact, the entire four-person Drop Water team is made up of Mustangs. Ron Sloat, senior mechatronics engineer, was Edwards’ Week of Welcome leader. Marc Rauschnot, a software engineer, met Edwards in the Central Coast Wakeboarding Association, Cal Poly’s unofficial wakeboarding club. And Britni Heter, head of business operations and nutrition, has been Edwards’ partner since their time at Cal Poly.

They’ve had plenty of Learn by Doing opportunities along the way, from meticulously testing various materials to create the most sustainable packaging option, to formulating recipes in the lab they affectionately call “Flavortown,” to pitching potential investors. But just like they did in their studies, the Drop Water team has been bold in their endeavors and uncompromising in their approach. “Our mechanics, our materials, our funding have changed,” Edwards said, “but our core vision will always be the same.”
MORE FOLLOWERS, LESS WASTE

The garbage truck doesn’t need to stop at Christine Liu’s house anymore. There’s nothing to collect. That’s because since 2015, Liu has been on a journey to reduce and eliminate her household waste, and through her increasingly popular blog and social media presence, she’s inspiring others to do the same.

Liu began her career as the sustainable packaging program manager at Cisco, where she helped reduce waste through sustainable packaging design. After hours, she pursued her creative outlets as a blogger, photographer and videographer with a rapidly growing internet following; a following that has expanded so quickly it’s allowed Liu to take up blogging full time.

Liu’s passion for sustainability began at Cal Poly in her plastics and consumer packaging courses. She was appalled to learn “the sheer volume of non-biodegradable waste we produce in the U.S.” One fact that still sticks with her is that the U.S. constitutes 5 percent of the world’s population but produces 40 percent of its waste. She remembers sitting in class and thinking: “There have be steps we can take as individuals to fix this. So, she started taking action. In addition to reducing her own plastic waste, Liu co-founded Cal Poly’s Net Impact chapter, a professional organization focused on using business to serve the local community. Then, her senior year, Liu earned a fellowship with The DO School in Germany, where she created sustainable packaging solutions for H&M Group. At the same time, she cultivated a social venture called “Packageless,” which would later become her blog, simply by christine.

Take one look at Liu’s blog and it’s apparent that she’s a sustainability polymath, a Renaissance woman. Her posts range from fashion to recipes to travel. She writes with the same confident knowledge about interior design as she does about beauty routines. Each post is accompanied by beautiful photos or videos, shot and edited herself. And in every post, she gives practical, nonjudgemental tips on reducing waste — baby steps toward a more sustainable lifestyle.

She encourages her followers to “start small. Start where you can. Whenever you throw something away, think about how you can eliminate it next time.” Liu’s online community consists of people from around the world at different stages in their zero-waste journeys. She engages with them online and occasionally organizes real world meet ups. “It’s inspiring to see each person pursuing a sustainable lifestyle in their own way, in their own culture and part of the world,” she says.

In 2017, simply by christine caught the eye of a publishing industry executive who had been searching for a sustainability writer. Liu spent the next year writing her book. She drafted the content, took the photos and designed the layout. The final product was “Sustainable Home,” a beautifully rendered book full of “practical projects, tips and advice for maintaining a more eco-friendly household.”

With a book tour in the works and an ever-growing online community, Liu keeps her focus on what matters. “After going zero-waste for a year now, I’m even more motivated to continue,” she said. “If we all take little steps toward a more eco-conscious lifestyle, together we can make a huge difference.”
What do you get when you cross a class reunion with a dinner party with an awards show? Answer: The Spotlight Alumni Awards.

On Saturday, Feb. 9, Cal Poly supporters traveled from around the country to spend a night celebrating outstanding alumni and Orfalea community over dinner and drinks. Held at the Olympic Club in San Francisco, the event featured two Orfalea College of Business alumni who are leading the way in business excellence, innovation and leadership.

Joanne Smith, Delta Air Lines executive vice president and chief human resources officer, received the Gold Award for alumni more than 20 years out of Cal Poly. Bridgette Beam, Google for Startups head of global programs and operations, took home the Green Award, for alumni fewer than 20 years out.

The event allowed the college to strengthen its connections with several corporate partners, who sponsored the event and sent representatives to celebrate alongside Orfalea alumni, friends and students.

The Orfalea community was on full display: old friends reconnecting, new friends meeting, memories shared and memories made. All the while, attendees celebrated the Orfalea College of Business and its fantastic network of alumni who are changing business for the better.

All proceeds from this year’s Spotlight Awards went to the Orfalea College of Business Multicultural Business Program.
During college, Joanne Smith took to the skies, and she hasn’t looked back since. The Delta Air Lines executive got her start as flight attendant while taking classes at Cal Poly. Her college experience included global travel, sometimes hopping off a plane and going straight to class in her uniform, and learning a lot about aviation business in the process.

Since then, in various roles at Delta, Smith has constantly looked for new ways to create welcoming environments, whether in the cabin or for the entire company. As the vice president of marketing, she directed the pre-flight customer experience: the brand, communications, community outreach and more. She brought those principles into her role as senior vice president of in-flight service, where she innovated and developed a standout onboard experience for Delta’s 180 million annual passengers, managing 20,000 flight attendants and overseeing in-flight product development and catering.

In just four years as Delta’s executive vice president and chief human resources officer, Smith has built a thriving, inclusive community of more than 80,000 Delta employees. In the past two years, her efforts have yielded several workplace culture awards, including Forbes 100 Best Companies to Work For, the Best Place to Work for LGBT Equality, Best Companies for Diversity and Best Workplace for Women. Smith is leading the way in human resources and setting a shining example of how to establish an inclusive, rewarding workplace culture.

Bridgette Beam is in the business of making visions reality. She helps inspire and empower people worldwide to launch their businesses. She brings the best of Google’s resources to startups in 125 countries and leads the growth of Campus: spaces where entrepreneurs can come together to share ideas and experiences, mentor and to connect.

Beam’s passion has always been people. At Cal Poly, she sought out ways to serve international communities, studying and working abroad as much as she could, learning microfinance to help advise and support individual families. And her drive didn’t falter at Google. When she began in Ad Support, she spent her free time volunteering on a project that engaged international technology startups, and thrived so much in the role that she was promoted to a job of her own creation.

Now, she and her team are Google’s entrepreneurial ambassadors, helping businesspeople across the globe achieve their goals and overseeing programs that bring Google’s support to every corner of the world. The vision is equal access to resources across oceans and countries, so that every great idea has a chance to grow. And with more than 300,000 members receiving business education through Campus, she’s having a profound influence on the next generation of entrepreneurs.
When Women in Business (WIB) members presented to more than 600 high school students last fall, they came bearing knowledge, skills and a message: Don’t let anyone tell you what you should do or who you should be. Business is broad, flexible, full of options. Business values trailblazers.

WIB representatives worked with students at six local high schools, sharing their own experiences and expertise informed by hands-on coursework and Learn by Doing opportunities. Their workshops focused on business-centric topics — professionalism, networking, career exploration, résumé development — as well as college success topics like application processes, time management and self-care.

“A lot of students don’t get to learn how to write a résumé or how to interview in high school,” said WIB High School Coordinator Sarah Galicinao. “We’re giving them a jump-start. Simply having the time and guidance to explore your options, prepare for college, and plan your career is a huge advantage.”

Three to five women went to each school where they participated in panels and interacted with students one-on-one. They were open and honest about the college experience and what employers look for in candidates. In the networking workshop, WIB reps role-played employers from well-known companies so the students could practice making connections. In the time management session, Galicinao put her Google calendar on the projector, full of color-coded boxes identifying meetings, classes, work and study time. “Some of it shakes the students. But it’s a good shock, an honest look at college and business skills in action,” she said.

But even more than providing practical tools for success, WIB wants to empower younger students to venture out, discover their passions and break the mold.

In one session at San Luis Obispo High School, WIB members asked students to discuss where they wanted to attend college, what they wanted to study, how they wanted to get involved and, most importantly, why. It encouraged the high schoolers to think about their motivations, whether they wanted to take a certain path for themselves or because they think it’s expected or because it’s the only way they know.

“The tools we give them aren’t just for career success. They also help students gain confidence to veer from the path that media or other influences might be telling them to follow. Students have so many great options open to them, and we want to give them that awareness,” Galicinao said.

And the third-year accounting concentration knows how to make her own way better than most. She’s always followed her passions, no matter what others were doing. While many of her peers were interning at large accounting firms, she found work at Northrop Grumman, an aerospace and defense company. While others took office jobs on campus Galicinao — a lifelong basketball player — followed her passion and found work with the women’s basketball team. “It’s not that the ‘typical path’ is a bad thing,” she said. “The typical path is a great experience and works for a lot of people. But if the typical path isn’t your passion, you should shift your perspective and step out of your comfort zone. You can be successful any number of ways. That’s my message to these students.”

“EVERYONE DESERVES ACCESS TO EXPLORE THEIR OPTIONS. WE WANT EVERYONE TO HEAR THAT THEY’RE TALENTED AND THAT THEIR GOALS CAN BE A REALITY.”

— Sarah Galicinao
This breaking of stereotypes is important in the world of business, which has long been male-dominated. As they teach and encourage students, WIB representatives embody female business expertise and leadership. For female high school students, seeing women in leadership roles allows them to picture themselves in similar positions. For male students, it provides different perspectives and voices, and prepares them to be well-informed, empathetic coworkers.

Denise Conte, who teaches entrepreneurship at Paso Robles High School, said her students appreciated seeing the WIB members as “living, breathing demonstrations of the power of women,” and that “the young men in class were so impressed.” Conte has facilitated in-class discussions about women in leadership roles, but said it’s “important for the students to see positive models in action.”

In the spring of 2016, after two years of hosting high school students for their “Defining Her Future” professional conference, WIB members decided to broaden their mentorship efforts through community outreach. So WIB alumna Annie Wilson (Business Administration ’17) formed a vision for the high school workshop program and put it into action. In its inaugural year, WIB members developed and delivered professionalism workshops to local high schools. And by the spring of 2018, they had recruited 100 high school students from nine local San Luis Obispo County high schools, and awarded nine high school scholarships.

The program is only two years old, but between its first and second years, it nearly doubled in size. Last year, WIB members were making calls to high schools, pitching the program to guidance counselors and teachers. This year, high school teachers have been calling them. With three additional schools in the fold, WIB is bringing their practical wisdom to a broader, more diverse group of students at schools in San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles and Santa Maria.

Shelley Benson, a guidance counselor at SLO High School, loves to collaborate with WIB. Her students “love hearing from Cal Poly students because it gives them the perspective that attending a four-year university and helps them see business careers as a real possibility.” Benson has hosted WIB workshops on campus both years and also brings her students to the WIB “Defining Her Future” professional conference in the spring.

Her students can’t get enough. “They’re always asking me when the next workshop is going to be, when we’re going to the conference, when we can visit Cal Poly again” she said.

And WIB offers plenty of other opportunities for these students to stay engaged. This year, they will be starting “Wander With WIB,” a new program where students can come shadow members around campus, to see what day-to-day college life is like.

As WIB continues to expand its high school workshops, Galicicano says they are seeking ways to get involved with more underserved schools and communities. “It’s important for us to reach diverse populations, because we want everyone to have access to college and career success strategies. Everyone deserves access to explore their options. We want everyone to hear that they’re talented and that their goals can be a reality.”

In doing so, the WIB representatives continue to practice a pillar of good business leadership: lifting others up. In each workshop — college strategies, résumé building, networking, time management and self-care — they present both knowledge and inspiration. “Here are the skills,” they say. “You are able and talented, now go out and do it your way.”
1960s

**Terry Buttle (1967):** Retired in 2006 from his positions as Controller for Hartnell Community College and CFO for The Western Stage. Buttle and his wife, Betty, have been married for 50 years and have three married children along with five grandchildren.

**Vince Corti (1978):** Retired in 2014 following 35 years in the mutual funds business in Los Angeles. Corti now lives primarily in Washington state and spends winters at the family’s longtime home in Southern California.

**Michael Capovilla (1979):** Manages a consulting business based in Auckland, New Zealand, supplying business improvement expertise to a wide range of client industries. He recently oversaw the merger of Pacific Steel and NZ Steel, a part of the Bluescope Steel Group headquartered in Australia.

1970s

**Michael Capetti (1974):** A retired educator, Capetti now volunteers in the restoration and construction of classic wooden sailboats around California and internationally.

**Jim Boghossian (1978):** Began a journey with ExisQCI Inc. in 1989 and has since traveled to Japan more than 80 times as well as trips to China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Canada and Europe. Boghossian’s daughter Rae is a graduate of Cal Poly (Agriculture Business, ’12) and also lives in Silicon Valley.

**Michael Costa (1979):** Highridge Costa broke ground in Kapolei, Oahu, Hawaii, on Kana Hale, a class A housing development in partnership with the state of Hawaii to provide families and seniors with affordable housing. Highridge Costa Cos. have produced more than 28,000 units of affordable housing throughout the nation including Puerto Rico.

1980s

**Lisa Beach (1983):** Serves as president of the California Community College Distance Education Coordinators Organization and co-chair of the Distance Education and Educational Technology Advisory Committee.

**Craig Losee (1983):** As SVP of Central Commercial Group Inc., Losee represents local and national clients throughout Central California. Last year, he represented the buyer on the purchase of the largest winery operation, including over 1 million gallons in storage capacity, in Paso Robles.

1990s

**Christopher Shaw (1990):** Married to Jo Ann Shaw (Nutritional Science, ’90). Their son Jordan Shaw just graduated from the Orfalea College of Business in 2018 with a concentration in accounting.

**Mark Agosto (1993):** Celebrated the 15th anniversary of Pacific Quest, a wilderness therapy program for adolescents on the Big Island of Hawaii. Pacific Quest was founded by Cal Poly alumnus Michael McKinney in 2004, and is now led by Agosto.

**Michael Henry (1993):** Named CFO of the Year for a public company by the Orange County Business Journal for his work with Tilly’s Inc. Completed a $117 million secondary offering of Tilly’s stock in September 2018, benefiting the company’s original co-founders.


**Glen Aguila (1994):** Works for Global Real Estate Strategies analyzing the real estate footprint of retail and administrative locations worldwide and driving enterprise strategies.
Kyle Kelly (1996): Recently promoted to chief brokerage officer at Motif.

Dustin Ritter (1997): Has joined San Diego-based Certona, an AI-powered omnichannel personalization platform, as chief marketing officer.

Tony Togondino (1999): Started a new position with Vista Sotheby’s International Realty in Manhattan Beach, California.

2000s

Michael Larsen (2000): Following eight years in London running JPMorgan’s custody and fund services cash and liquidity business, Larsen began a new role in Hong Kong for HSBC Global Asset Management. The Larsens welcomed a new daughter, Annika, this year to join her 2-year-old brother, Ryan, in the family.

Gabe Encarnacion (2003): Serves as vice president of Bennett-Bowen & Lighthouse, a distributor of industrial safety equipment in Los Angeles. Encarnacion also serves on the board of directors for SafetyNetwork, a national cooperative between manufacturers and independent distributors. He lives in Fullerton with his wife and three sons.

Dan Kwon (2004): Kwon serves as lead UX designer for Synack Inc., a cybersecurity startup, where he heads product design. He has been splitting time between the Bay Area and the Oahu North Shore while keeping up with his 3- and 1-year-old children.

Matt Somerville (2009): After two years at PwC and six at Zynga, Somerville joined Niantic, the maker of Pokémon GO, a year ago to lead revenue accounting. Recently bought a home with his wife, Elizabeth Somerville (Journalism ’09), in Lafayette, California.

2010s


Cody Hanson (2011): Joined Singularity University to lead marketing efforts for overall user growth as well as new marketing efforts for SU Ventures, a global community of startups using exponential technologies to solve global challenges.

Philip Higgins (2011): Joined Taylor Farms in Salinas, California, as the new controller of its harvesting company. He recently completed his CPA licensing.

Amy Bothman (2012): Moved from a career in sales to the nonprofit world, managing a $2 million campaign for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, where her work will contribute to fighting and curing blood cancers.

Michael Doyen (2014): After four years at PwC in Orange County, Doyen transitioned to Deloitte in San Francisco to work in the mergers and acquisitions tax sector. He married his Cal Poly sweetheart, Chelsea Mallozzi (Accounting ’14), this year.

Joseph Guerra (2016): Transitioned from wealth management at Bank of America Merrill Lynch to a financial advisor position at Oppenheimer & Co. Inc., where he actively acquires and oversees capital investments. Guerra also provides budgeting guidance for the San Francisco nonprofit organization Clinic by the Bay.

Carlos Giron (2017): Works with Walsworth Yearbooks, helps schools of all levels develop their yearbook programs by teaching students design, marketing, sales and photography. He also does freelance photography for a menu production company.

Katie McAndrews (2017): Moved to Dallas to accept a position in human resources at Amazon, where she works on a team of 16 serving a site with 2,400 employees.

Anthony Mojica (2017): Moving into his second year in the Finance Development Program at Apple. Worked in London for three months as a part of the program and loved it.

Paige Welsh (2018): Joined Oracle’s Class of Program as a business development consultant. Moved to Santa Monica last August after joining one of its five North American Sales Hubs.
Meredith Schmidt helped Salesforce grow from just a few employees to thousands. Now, she’s using their resources to give back. As executive vice president of Salesforce Essentials and SMP, she makes the best of their resources available to small businesses, students and other community members. She’s helping direct Salesforce “back to its roots,” making user-friendly, accessible products and uplifting communities in the process.

“YOU HAVE TO STAY TRUE TO YOUR OWN VALUES.”

How does rapidly changing technology affect the way you lead?
One of the things we’ve always believed at Salesforce is that the purpose of technology is to allow increased focus on the customer. Technology should do the dirty work, so that we can be in the business of relationships. Technology has allowed me to get out and focus more on cultivating those kinds of intimate relationships with small businesses in the community.

What qualities do you look for when you’re building a team?
Diversity is really important. And that means diversity of everything from race to background to skills and opinions. You can’t have a team of people who all think the same way; it doesn’t work. I always consider how I can bring in differing perspectives that still compliment the group. Perspectives drive innovation. I want people who have the strength to express a different opinion or ask a tough question. That kind of mix is what makes a team magic.

What’s the hardest lesson you’ve had to learn?
That I’m not always right. It seems pretty basic, but it’s a tough one for a lot of people. I’ve seen the value of having an open mind and asking questions, listening to things I might disagree with at first. So many people don’t listen, they just think of what they want to say next. Listening is a skill; it includes an awareness of physical and verbal cues. And it goes hand in hand with having an open mind. Listening means making sure everyone has a voice.

How can companies act as leaders to affect positive change in their communities?
It needs to happen both at the corporate level and on the personal level. Salesforce’s “1-1-1 model”, for example, means donating 1 percent of your time, 1 percent of your equity and 1 percent of your product to the community. It’s important that a company builds philanthropy into its foundation, instead of trying to fit it in after they’ve already grown a lot. This way it’s part of the culture from Day One. Here, each employee gets seven paid days off per year to volunteer in the community, however they’d like, so it’s on a personal level too. When employees have the permission and encouragement to serve causes that they’re passionate about, they love it, and it drives that culture of giving.

How do you go about making tough decisions?
Whenever a difficult situation comes up, I try to bring it back to my three personal core values: compassion, authenticity and loyalty. I think about how these values play out in that decision, and I take the course that best follows them. You have to stay true to your own values.
TOP 10 WAYS TO CONNECT
WITH THE ORFALEA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

1. Update your contact info
   New job? Big accomplishment? Changed email address? We’d love to hear about it so we can connect with you more personally.

2. Follow us on social media
   Check out our Twitter, Instagram and Facebook for the most recent news on students, alumni and day-to-day life at the Orfalea College of Business.

3. Visit campus
   Connect with old friends and meet new ones at the Alumni Beer and Wine Garden on April 13 or at Homecoming next fall.

4. Be a mentor
   Share your wisdom while building relationships with future business leaders as a Young Alumni Mentor or Executive Partner.

5. Host an industry tour
   Show students what’s great about your workplace and give them an inside look at careers there.

6. Inspire a club
   Speak at a club meeting to help students gain awareness and get excited about their career options.

7. Give to the Orfalea College of Business
   Support Learn by Doing opportunities with a gift to the concentration or program of your choice.

8. Connect with an alumni chapter near you
   You don’t have to be near campus to be part of the Orfalea community. Attend chapter events to meet and network with alumni in your area.

9. Hire Orfalea Grads
   Our graduates get jobs. Your company gets well-rounded, career-ready employees. It’s a win-win.

10. Advance your career in a Graduate Program
    Our master’s programs will give you practical skills and hands-on experience to help your career take off.

To get involved, visit https://www.cob.calpoly.edu/alumni/
SAVE THE DATE

Third Annual
Alumni Beer and Wine Garden
April 13, 2019, at Cal Poly

Picture this: You, local wine or beer in hand, chatting with classmates after a day of celebrating Learn by Doing at Cal Poly’s annual Open House. Don’t miss this opportunity to catch up with friends and connect with the Orfalea College of Business. Tickets are available at alumni.calpoly.edu