Executive Partners Program

The Executive Partners Program of the Orfalea College of Business is an organization of Senior Executives and College Administrators who volunteer their time to share their business experience and expertise. The program was developed to utilize the executive and entrepreneurial talent in the San Luis Obispo area to benefit Cal Poly students. The program matches students with local professionals who will be able to mentor students on career options and give insights into the practical environment of their career choice.

Note: The Orfalea College of Business establishes mentoring relationships with current Orfalea students only.

EEP Student Board  Become a Mentor

Vicki Amon-Higa*

Vicki is a passionate and experienced catalyst and coach that partners with leaders throughout organizations to identify and drive improvements that matter to employees, customers and shareholders. She has spent more than 30 years, both as an internal...
Lawrence Benedict is an accomplished diplomat with extensive international experience in many world hot spots. He has demonstrated success in diplomacy, policy formulation, management, including crisis management, and leadership.

Santiago Brown*

After finishing his studies and having traveled the world, Santiago started a plant genetics company in Ecuador to develop novel and unique Roses for the European and North American markets. Originally from Miami, Florida, his studies in Biochemistry...
With over 25 years of experience in the telecom industry, Jeff brings extensive knowledge and leadership skills to Blue Rooster Telecom. Jeff began his career in 1983 when he joined Call America -- just as the Bell System was broken up. He began...

John Combs

John Combs is a results-driven executive with a proven track record of scaling small organizations to leaders in their industry. His career has focused in high technology industries with special emphasis in the telecommunications industry. Combs created...

Jon Comeau*

Jon Comeau is a Senior Vice President in Avidbank’s Specialty Finance Division. Jon manages a team in the bank’s San Francisco office and is leading the development of a leveraged lending platform focused on the lower middle market. Prior to Avidbank,...
Sandra G. Davis

Sandra (Sandy) received her CPA in 1985 after graduating from Fresno State University with a degree in Accounting. Sandy moved back to her native San Luis Obispo County after accepting a position with a local CPA firm and later moved on to become the...

George Dubois

George is currently the owner of his own business, Jed Delta Corporation where he does consulting work on textiles and chemicals. He is from Rhode Island and attended MIT where he got a degree in Chemistry. He was also an adjunct professor at the University...

Denise Dudley
Denise Dudley's professional career affirms the values she expresses in her numerous books, audio programs and seminars. She not only excelled in a rigorous academic discipline, earning a Ph.D. in psychology, with post-doctoral work in the areas of agoraphobia...

Gabe Encarnacion*

Gabe studied Business Administration at Cal Poly (Finance concentration, Economics minor). Two days after graduation, Gabe started his career as the principal accounting officer of an investment company, and during his 4 years there, learned to work...

Terri Furrer*

Terri is a 1991 Poly Grad (Bus Admin/Marketing) and a 27 year CPG (consumer packaged goods) veteran. She has spent the last 19 years at PepsiCo, and currently serves as Sr Manager Sales Strategy for the nation’s largest grocery retailers Kroger, Albertsons...
Dave Garth

President/CEO, San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, 39 years. Managed a non-profit association with 15 employees and 1,500 business members. Grew association from 1.5 employees and $35,000 budget to 15 employees and $1.5 million budget. Counseled business...

Brent Hansen

Brent Hansen is the Director of Sales at Morris and Garritano, a full service insurance agency based in San Luis Obispo. He oversees all aspects of the sales process for the agency’s Risk Advisors who specialize in all lines of insurance coverages....
Annie Heath

Annie Heath is the Sr. Director, Integrated Business Planning (IBP) for the Stryker Corporation. Stryker is one of the world’s leading medical device companies and together with their customers are driven to make healthcare better. Annie has worked...

Kory Holback

Kory Holback, a Cal Poly Alumn with a degree in Industrial Technology, has over 20 years experience in the technology industry with various roles in business development and operational management at companies such as Microsoft, Salesforce.com, Cisco...

Mark Landon

As Founder and Executive Director of the Nature Corps, Mark Landon has held management positions in the nonprofit sector for over 30 years. His involvement began while working with Jacques Cousteau at the Cousteau Society in 1975 where he directed film...
Tom's interest in being an Executive Partner is to help build students' capabilities in both practical business skills as well as the important area of "emotional intelligence". Experts estimate that ~50% of employment terminations are due to a lack.

Abe graduated from the Cal Poly Business school in 1992 with a concentration in Financial Management and a minor in Psychology, ready to take on the world. His journey into the world of business began with Financial Services, and over the years he worked...
Matthew Locati

As TerraCorp Financial, Inc’s President and founder, Matt Locati oversees company operations in its multifamily and commercial property management business. Matt is also President of Terrex Development Corp. and Terrex Construction Corp. Matt’s responsibilities...

Mark Lynch

During Mark’s career at Chevron, he held numerous senior Financial Management positions. Positions included; Global Compliance Manager, North America Finance Manager, Global Credit Manager, Global Audit Manager, Manager of International Financial...
Louis Marcoux

Louis spent his early years in Canada and Australia then settled down in California and chose Cal Poly for his alma mater, where he earned his B.S. in Business Administration (International Business), a minor in Economics and completed a pre-med course...

John Marinovich*

John is a lecturer for the Marketing Dept. at Cal Poly and has previously taught at Carlson School of Management in Minneapolis, MN. He spent his career as an Ad Agency marketing integrator and brand building executive with solid experience on Fortune...
As Market Insights Manager, John manages Intel's global, company-wide early market and technology sensing function that inform business unit executives, strategic planning teams, and Intel's corporate strategy office. John partners...

A Northern California native, Joe Mulhearn graduated from Cal Poly in 2004 with a degree in business administration and a concentration in marketing management. His summer internship with Gallo Winery and part-time jobs with local bars and restaurants...
Maryam Nasim (a Cal Poly graduate) is a Manager in KPMG’s Mergers and Acquisition Services practice with several years of experience across M&A strategy, and market and equity research. In her current role, Maryam serves both corporate and private...

Mike is a native Californian, where he graduated from De La Salle High School, attended Diablo Valley Junior College and then chose Cal Poly as his alma mater. Mike earned a B.S. in Industrial Technology (concentration in Quality). While at Cal Poly,...
Janice Odell

Janice is the CFO of IQMS, a software developer of a complete ERP software suite for manufacturing companies. Prior to IQMS, she was CFO for Chemlogics, a chemical company recently sold for $1.3 billion to a large international public company. A Cal Poly...

Joe Pechota

Joe Pechota has been with the Fastenal Company for 16 years with 11 of those in his current capacity as a District Manager. His responsibilities include Key Account Sales, Personnel Management, P&L Management, Training, and Recruiting. His career...

Janice Petko

With over 25 years in the telecom industry, Janice has helped Fortune 100 companies such as Verizon, Apple, and Google engineer their networks.
From an idea, she developed a product that generated $40M in annual revenue and has also project managed $100M...

SiSi Pouraghabagher

SiSi Pouraghabagher a lecturer in the Accounting area of the Orfalea College of Business, with over 20 years of industry experience in finance, operations, and executive administration. Over the course of her career, she has held leading executive positions...

Tony Rogondino*

I was born and raised in San Diego, studied International Management at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and moved to Los Angeles 15 years ago to work in the music business. While in college, I was President of the...
Michelle Roth

Michelle graduated from Cal Poly in 1997 with a degree in Finance and in 2004 earned an MBA from the University of Southern California. Michelle started her career with Deloitte Consulting as a Systems Analyst. After Deloitte Consulting, Michelle held...

Jim Seybert

Jim Seybert describes himself as a “serial encourager”. His private practice consulting firm specializes in helping companies “get better at what they already do well.” He has published 2 books on counter-intuitive management styles and numerous...

Abbey Silverstone
Abbey was an entrepreneur whose career path spanned technology companies as main-stream as Xerox, Rockwell International and Silicon Graphics and included ventures in element detection, large scale data backup systems, sewer monitors and reconfigurable...

Jordan Stankowski grew up the better part of his life in the bay area, and didn’t venture far when he decided to go to Cal Poly. After four amazing years that included joining a fraternity, becoming a student ambassador, and double concentrating in...

Cal Stevens is currently a faculty member at the Orfalea College of Business at Cal Poly. His immediate past career was his 17 years with Intel Corp as a manager, HR and Organizational Development practitioner. Stevens' operating principle has been...
Kurt Tahira is a Cal Poly alumni with a degree in Industrial Technology and concentration in Sales. Kurt has spent almost 25 years in sales, marketing, negotiating, recruiting, coaching, and management. Currently employed at Omron, a $7.5 billion...

Innovative, entrepreneurial technology executive experienced in leading start up and early stage organizations, large scale enterprise technology transformations, and as the IT executive within restaurant/hospitality companies with hands on experience...
Jim Valdez*

Jim has had over 30 years of executive business management experience. Jim started his career in the oil industry. Jim progressed from a Regional Manager with Ethyl Corporation’s Petroleum Chemicals Division to Director of the Product Engineering Division...

Heidi Williams

Heidi Williams is from Santa Monica and is a Cal Poly Alumna with both undergraduate and Masters degrees. She is President and CEO of Lawco Foods Inc., a family-owned business which manages and develops investment properties. In her current role she and...
Ward Williams

After graduating from Cal Poly with an I.T. degree, Ward went on to receive his MBA from SJSU before embarking on a successful career in both fortune 50 companies (HP, Tyco/TE Connectivity) as well as a few startups. Ward currently serves as CEO of a...

Kathy Wright

After growing up in Idaho, New York and Pennsylvania Kathy attended the Pennsylvania State University where she received a B.S. in Management and held the position of Business Manager at the school newspaper, The Daily Collegian. The leadership experience...
Stephen Yost

Stephen has more than 40 years of commercial banking experience, mostly with large regional banks (First Interstate, Mellon, Comerica) and is currently on the board of directors of two community banks (Heritage Oaks Bank...)

Ron Yukelson

Ron Yukelson is Chief Operations and Strategy Officer for Wilshire Health & Community Services, which provides home health, hospice, mediation and counseling services on the Central Coast. Prior to that Ron had more than 30 years of experience...