

CAL POLY COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

impact

LEARN / LEAD / LIVE / FALL 2022

INSIDE:

SLO Counseling Service expands access to mental health care / Meet recent liberal arts and engineering studies program graduates / Alumnus Andy Paiko brings modern glassblowing practices to Italy



Destination Peru

Students enjoy liberal arts education *sin fronteras* as part of Cal Poly's first study abroad trip since the start of the pandemic



CAL POLY

Message From the Dean

Despite having to navigate the ongoing pandemic, this past year Cal Poly and the College of Liberal Arts returned to in-person operations and face-to-face classes, so important to our Learn by Doing experience. The return of our students last fall brought a new energy and dynamism to campus that had been missing for over a year. For me personally, it was a year of



"firsts," as I was able to experience my first in-person Open House and Student Awards Ceremony since starting as dean in fall 2019.

Throughout the pandemic the college has continued to

make progress in realizing its vision of a liberal arts education *sin fronteras*: without borders, boundaries or barriers. Our spring 2022 Global Program: Cal Poly in Peru, was the first Cal Poly study abroad program to send students abroad since the start of the pandemic. CLA faculty are developing a number of new study abroad programs as we expand international educational opportunities for our students. This past summer, we were able to grow our Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) to support 15 CLA students' participation in faculty-led scholarship. And we successfully recruited 10 new faculty members with teaching and scholarly expertise in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as part of the college's third DEI-focused cluster hire.

Every day I'm impressed by the extraordinary achievements of our faculty, staff and students, and the generous support of our alumni and friends. Our collective passion and commitment to our students will ensure our continued success this coming year and beyond.

Best regards,
Philip Williams
Dean, College of Liberal Arts



CAL POLY
College of Liberal Arts

impact

Fall 2022

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On the cover:

Students in the spring 2022 Cal Poly in Peru program, the first study abroad trip since the start of the pandemic.



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Honored alumnus Christopher Acebo.

TWO CLA FACULTY MEMBERS PURSUE FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS IN POLAND



History Lecturer Gregory Domber and English Associate Professor Mira Rosenthal are pursuing U.S. Fulbright Scholarships in Poland for the 2022-23 academic year. Domber is teaching and conducting research at the Jagiellonian University Institute for American Studies and the Polish Diaspora, while Rosenthal is teaching and conducting research at the Center for Translation Studies, also housed within the Jagiellonian University Institute in Krakow, Poland. The now-married couple first met in Poland as graduate students in 2003 while pursuing Student Fulbright Scholarships.



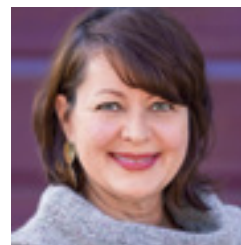
Ethnic Studies Department Chair Jenell Navarro Speaks at Indigenous Center Opening



Ethnic Studies Department Chair Jenell Navarro spoke at the opening celebration for the new Cal Poly Native American and Indigenous Cultural Center (NAICC) during a campus gathering on Oct. 14, 2021.

English Student Avi McManus Helps Lead 2021-22 Cal Poly Rose Float Team to Victory

English student Avi McManus played a key role in leading the 2021-22 Cal Poly Rose Float team to victory during the 2022 Rose Parade in Pasadena, acting as the San Luis Obispo team's vice president. The team's hard work and dedication paid off in the end, as Cal Poly secured the animation award.



Lecturer Honored for Promoting Family-Friendly Work Policies

Women's, Gender and Queer Studies Department Lecturer Christina Lefevre Latner was named First 5 San Luis Obispo County's January "Hands-on Hero @Work" for her role as workforce development manager with the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce. Lefevre Latner received the distinction in recognition of her work spearheading the Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program, which provides resources and supports SLO County businesses in fostering a strong workforce through family-friendly policies such as flexible scheduling, telecommuting and child care support. Within the next three years, she hopes to have 100 local businesses incorporate at least one family-friendly policy.

ISLA Department Accepting First-Year Applicants

The Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts (ISLA) Department is now accepting first-year applicants into its program. Students can select one of seven emphases and learn about the interconnections of themes ranging from film and social justice to health and climate challenges. The program, led by Professor and Department Chair David Kirby, aims to provide students with a truly interdisciplinary educational experience that is driven by each student's unique interests, questions and professional goals.

Music Department Says Goodbye to One Chair and Welcomes Another

Professor India D'Avignon has retired after an impressive career, including a three-year tenure as the Music Department's chair, where she brought music safely back to in-person performances. D'Avignon was instrumental in moving the Davidson Music Center's renovation and expansion back on the CSU's schedule and has also been involved with two national accreditation reviews of the department. Professor Alicia Doyle has been tapped as the new chair of the Music Department, coming from CSU Long Beach. Doyle specializes in medieval liturgical music, 20th-century Latin American popular and art music, and music appreciation. Thank you for your leadership, India and welcome, Alicia!



Spanish Language Debate Team Wins Civic Debate

In 2019, the Cal Poly Spanish Language Debate Team established the first Spanish-language civic debate in the United States, in which Spanish-speaking students from all majors debate contemporary issues affecting California. This year, Cal Poly's Austin Grassbaugh and Klara Perkins placed first at the Legados 2022, co-hosted by Cal Poly and Centro de Enseñanza Técnica y Superior (CETYS), a private university in Mexicali, Mexico.



Ethnic Studies Alumna Cheryl Flores Is Helping Preserve Indigenous Food and Language

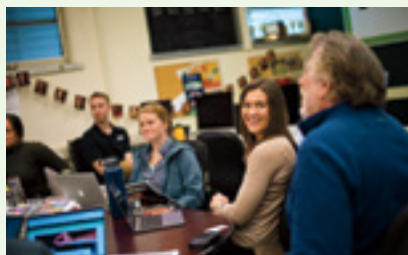
As part of her senior project, Cheryl Flores (Ethnic Studies, '22) focused her advocacy and research on Indigenous language and food, using her own family in a case study on assimilation. Flores' project, titled "Erased: Growing Up Brown in the United States," focuses on the process of acculturation and its effect on families, including lost aspects of their culture. Flores is a passionate advocate and has presented at college-level events like the College of Liberal Arts' 2022 Teach In. After graduating, Flores became the coordinator of Cal Poly's Native American and Indigenous Cultural Center and is pursuing a master's in the Educational Leadership and Administration program with the goal of helping other students who may not see their identities reflected around them.

Using Artificial Intelligence in Wildfire Recovery

Social sciences Assistant Professor Andrew Fricker, computer science Assistant Professor Jonathan Ventura and a team of students have used artificial intelligence to train a computer to quickly assess wildfire damage — potentially improving response time for wildfire recovery efforts. The team's project, DamageMap, involved training a computer to identify wildfire damage from aerial photos. When tested on images from California's Camp and Carr fires, DamageMap produced results that were over 90% accurate compared with official damage reports. Fricker used funding from a Cal Poly Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities grant to gather data, hire student research assistants and attend Google's Geo for Good conference.



JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT GRANTED FULL ACCREDITATION



of eight journalism programs in the California State University system to be fully accredited by ACEJMC.

The Cal Poly Journalism Department has received full accreditation, joining 117 other programs around the world to receive such validation. The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) voted 18-0 in favor of the decision. Cal Poly is now one



GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION STUDENTS' SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING DESIGN WINS FIRST PLACE IN NATIONAL COMPETITION

Seven graphic communication students won first place in a national college-level printing competition, designing new sustainable packaging and labels for a San Luis Obispo-based gourmet cupcake and dessert business, SeaBreeze Cupcakes & Sweet Treats. The team spent the 2020-21 academic year brainstorming, researching market trends and developing their design plan for the 2022 Phoenix Challenge with guidance from Professor Xiaoying Rong.

2011 CLA Honored Alumnus Completes His Degree After Nearly 40 Years

Following a whirlwind career that took him around the world, 2011 CLA Honored Alumnus Mike Griffith officially graduated from Cal Poly at the 2022 spring commencement — a feat 40 years in the making. Griffith had nearly graduated in 1983 when a “perfect” job opportunity fell into his lap. He later became a top executive at preeminent lighting company Electronic Theatre Controls Inc. Since retiring in 2015, he has been “wrapping up loose ends,” including taking his final Cal Poly class online (which was only made possible by the shift to remote learning) and organizing a concert for his senior project.



History Student Selected for Prestigious Panetta Institute Internship

Ethan Gutterman, a third-year history major and ethics, public policy, science and technology minor, is representing Cal Poly in the Panetta Institute Congressional Internship Program as the 2022 awardee. After a two-week training period at the Panetta Institute at CSU Monterey Bay, Gutterman began work in the Capitol office of a California congressional representative in Washington, D.C. this fall. After earning his degree from Cal Poly, he hopes to work in local government with a focus on housing and transit policy.

ISLA Hosts Inaugural Social Justice Film Festival

The Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts (ISLA) Department hosted its first Social Justice Film Festival in April 2022 at local brewery SLO Brew Rock. The festival included screenings of “Black Panther” and “The Farewell,” followed by a keynote address from activist Ayana Jamieson and a panel discussion with local guest speakers, respectively. ISLA Associate Professor Emily Ryalls spearheaded the event as a contribution to social justice efforts on Cal Poly’s campus.



PHILOSOPHY FACULTY AWARDED INAUGURAL GRANT TO STUDY OUTER SPACE CYBERSECURITY

The Ethics + Emerging Sciences Group, in partnership with computer science and aerospace engineering faculty, has won the United States National Science Foundation's first-ever grant to study outer space cybersecurity. The project will research and anticipate a myriad of cyberattack scenarios to help inform national and international policies, as well as identify and address the ethical and legal gaps that might enable conflicts. The two-year program is funded for \$300,000 and will be led by principal investigator and philosophy Professor Patrick Lin.

Cal Poly Alumnus and Actor Granted Posthumous Award

Dean Williams presented a posthumous award to Pedro Armendáriz at the 2022 San Luis Obispo International Film Festival's screening of "La Perla," an iconic Mexican American film



in which he starred. Armendáriz was a Mexican actor who attended Cal Poly from 1928 to 1932 before starring in numerous films from Mexico's Golden Age of Cinema. As a student, he explored many subjects including mechanics and journalism, was involved with the Press Club and El Rodeo yearbook, and performed in student theater productions. Partly due to the Immigration Act of 1924, Armendáriz faced discrimination as one of only two Latinx students at Cal Poly. Now, he is being honored with this award and

a resolution delivered to his family by the head consul for the Mexican Consulate in Oxnard.



Mustang Band Rings in the New Year in San Francisco

The Cal Poly Mustang Band helped celebrate the Year of the Tiger at the Alaska Airlines Chinese New Year Parade in San Francisco. The Feb. 19 performance marked the marching band's seventh time participating in the Lunar New Year celebration. More than 200 musicians representing several academic disciplines took to the 1.3-mile parade route, spreading Mustang cheer from Union Square through Chinatown.

Political Science Professor Gives Expert Witness Testimony in Ohio Supreme Court Case



Political science Associate Professor Michael Latner played a key role in the redistricting of Ohio. As an

expert witness with the Brennan Center of Justice, he analyzed several redistricting maps and determined whether they favored one political party over another. Latner has also co-authored two books on congressional and state legislative gerrymandering and served as an expert witness for prior redistricting cases.



Child Development Student Offers Counseling at Black Academic Excellence Center

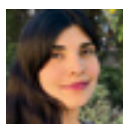
Kianah Corey enrolled at Cal Poly as a liberal studies major before switching to child development and changing her career goal from teacher to therapist. This change was triggered by a racist incident in which Corey was called a racial slur twice on her third day of school, motivating her to create a space where students like her could find the care and support they need. She founded Kiki's Corner, a nonclinical, peer-counseling resource housed in the Black Academic Excellence Center. There, Corey provides Black students with one-on-one or group counseling sessions in a confidential space. This resource will extend beyond her time at Cal Poly, allowing her to leave a legacy that supports other Black students.

CLASS ACTS

Get to know
these
DEI-focused
cluster hires.

“Since our first cohort in 2017, the CLA’s DEI-focused cluster hires have allowed us to introduce our students to more cutting-edge, field-specific expertise related to diversity, equity and inclusion across the different majors. This allows students to see different concepts from new perspectives and to experience more equity-minded teaching practices in their classes as well. We are excited to welcome our third and most diverse cohort this year!”

— JENNIFER TERAMOTO PEDROTTI, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR DIVERSITY AND CURRICULUM



Alexia Arani /
Women’s, Gender and Queer
Studies Department
Research Interests: disability justice,
queer/trans of color critique, social movements,
state violence, prison abolition and care work



Leanne Giordono /
Political Science Department
Research Interests: public policy with
a special interest in communities that
experience barriers to inclusion and prosperity
(poverty, disability, education, age, race, etc.)



Darrian Carroll / Communication
Studies Department
Research Interests: race, rhetoric,
world-making



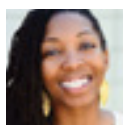
Susana A. López / Psychology
and Child Development
Department
Research Interests: racial trauma
and healing, stress and resilience, immigration,
acculturation, mental health disparities in
underserved communities



Alison Cheung / Communication
Studies Department
Research Interests: rhetorical
criticism, rhetorics of race, critical
media studies, Asian American cultural production



Jorge E. Moraga /
Ethnic Studies Department
Research Interests: Latinx studies;
sociology of sport; race, class, gender in
popular culture and media



Ashley Clemons /
English Department
Research Interests: African American
literature, contemporary American
literature, Detroit’s Black cultural and literary
studies, Afrofuturism



John Paul Paniagua /
History Department
Research Interests: Indigenous
Americas, Colonial Atlantic World



Nikhil Deb /
Social Sciences Department
Research Interests: political economy,
development and environment, Global
South



Gabriel Soldatenko /
Ethnic Studies Department
Research Interests: Latinx studies,
urbanism, critical social theory

Learn more about
these faculty
members at
[cla.calpoly.edu/
class-acts-2022](http://cla.calpoly.edu/class-acts-2022).



HANDS-ON LEARNING

Left to right: Lisa Sweatt, Aaron Estrada,
Holland Boege and Michele Leong
collaborate at SLO Counseling Service.

LEZZY PASCUA

HOW THE PSYCHOLOGY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT'S SLO COUNSELING SERVICE ENHANCED ITS COMMUNITY SUPPORT AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the spring of 2020, as the nation hastily adjusted to the COVID-19 pandemic's "new normal," SLO Counseling Service needed to adapt from fully in-person to fully virtual operations in less than two weeks. While the change felt disruptive at the time, offering virtual counseling significantly increased accessibility and allowed the clinic to help more clients than ever before.

Not to be confused with Cal Poly's Campus Health and Wellbeing counseling services, SLO Counseling Service is a training clinic for graduate students in the Psychology and Child Development Department's Master of Science program, offering counseling to both Cal Poly students and San Luis Obispo County residents. Student clinicians work toward their Marriage and Family Therapy license with supervision from licensed faculty, while gaining Learn by Doing experience with assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning and counseling with their clients.

Aaron Estrada, director of training for the Master of Science in Psychology program, noted how the switch to virtual services removed barriers for potential clients.

"We saw our demand increase rather remarkably, no doubt due to desire and need for support dealing with the stress, safety concerns and unknowns of the pandemic, but also because the virtual offering of therapy expanded our access to clients who might not otherwise have been able to reach us or see us in person," Estrada said.

"When in person, our limited space can reduce the number of people we might be able to see to three. This was not a problem when we held sessions in a virtual office space. Second, the issue of finding and paying for parking was eliminated in a virtual meeting space," he added. "While parking may be 'only' a few dollars, that

THROUGH ACCESSIBLE

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

HANDS-ON LEARNING THROUGH ACCESSIBLE MENTAL HEALTH CARE

few dollars can mean the difference of someone coming or not coming to therapy. Many of the low-income, underserved community members we serve may not have the expendable income to cover the cost of parking or other transportation.”

Lisa Sweatt, program director for the Master of Science in Psychology program, works closely with the cohorts of exceptional students.

“Entrance into our program is highly desirable and competitive — we have received close to 200 applications in the past two years for 18 spots in our program. Over the past couple of years, I have been particularly impressed with our students’ flexibility, adaptability, creativity, and enormous empathy and compassion,” Sweatt said.

The clinic is operational year-round. Cohorts of eight graduate students work as clinicians for two quarters at a time, seeing about five clients per week and providing feedback for their peers’ therapy sessions, on top of a full course load. All sessions are recorded and evaluated by both licensed faculty and student peers to ensure the clients receive the best possible care.

Michele Leong (M.S., Psychology, ’22) recently completed her final quarter working as both a trainee clinician and a scheduling assistant in the clinic.

“Some people can be put off by us being a training clinic, but it’s actually a benefit because our clinicians have a fresh heart to care and a fresh brain to do everything that they possibly can,” Leong said. “The students’ clients are their sole focus for their education and clinical experience. We live and breathe for our clients. When we’re in class, we’re thinking about how what we’re learning applies to them, and we have hours of feedback on how we can improve. I think we offer very high-quality therapy because we have so much intention about how we can help our clients.”

While the program’s workload is very demanding, students have a close-knit support network with their peers and faculty mentors. Recent alumna Holland Boege (M.S., Psychology, ’22) recalled, “As my needs and my environment were constantly changing, I had to continue to check on my self-care and how it needed to adapt to the present moment. The support of the faculty and colleagues reassuring us about how challenging our experience was gave me the courage to keep going even in difficult times.”



Left to right: Michele Leong, Aaron Estrada, Lisa Sweatt and Holland Boege.

Having been operational for over 40 years, SLO Counseling Service remains one of few county resources providing low-cost and free mental health services. Before the pandemic, services were on a sliding scale from \$3 to \$15 per session, but since the switch to virtual sessions, all counseling services have been offered to the public for free.

In addition to the increased physical and financial accessibility, Leong noticed that her student clients

“SOME PEOPLE CAN BE PUT OFF BY US BEING A TRAINING CLINIC, BUT IT’S ACTUALLY A BENEFIT BECAUSE OUR CLINICIANS HAVE A FRESH HEART TO CARE AND A FRESH BRAIN TO DO EVERYTHING THAT THEY POSSIBLY CAN.”

—MICHELE LEONG



seemed more emotionally ready to share their personal experiences during virtual sessions.

“Students felt more comfortable talking about their lives from the comfort of their own space. There can be a stigma if you see someone you know when walking to the clinic and they know where and what it is,” Leong said.

Graduate students’ experience providing virtual services will also make them competitive job candidates in the future. “Pre-pandemic, our students had very high post-graduation placement for their associateships (the next level of pre-licensure training). Our student cohorts over the past couple of years have now had the unplanned benefit of providing mental health services via telehealth — literally, Learn by Doing!” Sweatt said.

“The reputation of Cal Poly has already given me other career opportunities even before graduating,” Boege said. “I have found that mental health clinics are very familiar with Cal Poly’s program and often are seeking us out more than the other way around.”

SLO Counseling Service is retaining the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and now offers a hybrid model of virtual and in-person services, which will also provide a wider range of experience to student clinicians.

“Some of our students who entered the program during the pandemic have only had the experience of counseling virtually. Now that we are in a different phase of the pandemic and students

in their traineeship are beginning to do in-person work, I believe the skills they have developed and experiences they have had will only improve their post-graduation employment and career prospects,” Sweatt said.

Over the past few years, SLO Counseling Service has served about 170 clients, roughly half of them students and half residents. The program runs with a very limited budget and currently has no financial support for the graduate students who often cannot work a paying job in addition to the long hours seeing clients and completing schoolwork.

“[Our clinic] accomplishes remarkable things while operating on a shoestring budget. With greater resources, funding and operational support, we only expect that our training experience for students and our positive impact in the community would expand and improve,” Sweatt said. “We are serving people who would have never been able to access mental health services either because of inability to afford them or because there are not enough mental health providers in the community to meet the increased demand over the past two years. Our clinic has filled and continues to fill a critical void in mental health services in this county.”

LIBERAL ARTS SIN FRONTERAS

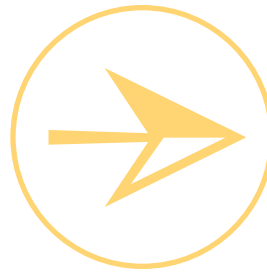
A GROUP OF 15 STUDENTS
TRAVELED TO PERU FOR
CAL POLY'S FIRST STUDY
ABROAD TRIP IN MORE
THAN TWO YEARS



BENJAMIN F. TIMMS



The group poses in front of the Sacsayhuamán Incan ruins above Cuzco, Peru.



IN March 2022, roughly two years after the COVID-19 pandemic shut down international travel, Social Sciences Department Chair Benjamin F. Timms and 15 student travelers boarded a plane headed for Cuzco, Peru. The Cal Poly in Peru program — one of few global spring quarter trips offered by the university’s International Center — was the first Cal Poly study abroad program to resume travel.

“Leaving was really nerve-wracking because we didn’t know how things were going to go,” Timms said. “Peru was just opening up, so we were among the first groups going there, and they were really happy to have us since tourism is a major factor for their economy.”

During the eight-week trip, students took Spanish classes offered by local professors from Centro Bartolome de las Casas in Cuzco, as well as two courses taught by Timms: ISLA 315: Critical Issues in Latin American Studies and WLC 310: Humanities in World Cultures. The student cohort represented four of Cal Poly’s six colleges with majors including anthropology and geography, kinesiology, computer engineering, and environmental management and protection.

In the spirit of Cal Poly’s mission to provide a liberal arts education *sin fronteras* — without borders, boundaries or barriers — Timms led the interdisciplinary group on several field excursion adventures around the country.

“One of the classes I taught was about the environment in the developing Americas, specifically in Peru, and we got to go down the Amazon Basin and do all kinds of tours, forest hikes and learn about their ecotourism,” Timms said. “We also went to Lake Titicaca on the border of Bolivia and stayed on an island, so we got to experience the kind of community-based tourism there. And at the end, of course, we went to Machu Picchu as a program grand finale, if you will. We hiked in and spent three days at Machu Picchu learning about archaeology.”

“WE GOT TO GO DOWN THE AMAZON BASIN AND DO ALL KINDS OF TOURS, FOREST HIKES AND LEARN ABOUT [PERU’S] ECOTOURISM.” —BENJAMIN TIMMS

From left: Students John Vilarino and Peter Marsh on the first day of a volunteer project building clean-burning stoves in a local community near Cuzco, Peru; a student takes a break on a mountain ledge to enjoy the view of Machu Picchu.



While memorable trips are often a key factor for students choosing to study abroad, anthropology and geography student Amanda Arendt said that, for her, the most underrated part of the trip was the camaraderie between the 15 students.

“There are all these big things we did that are obviously standout memories. But I do think that some of my favorite parts were the small things like gathering at our office as a group or for our movie night together,” Arendt said. “You’re going through two months with 15 people that are not from your peer group and you are kind of forced to be friends. I think that honestly is the part that I really loved because I never would have met these people otherwise.”

Alongside the extracurricular activities, Timms led the group on two two-day volunteer trips to a remote village about an hour outside of Cuzco, organized by the nonprofit Pro Peru. Together, the group built more than 40 clean-burning stoves with chimneys for local community members. The students used ceramic tiles and adobe to construct the stoves, replacing the traditional wood-burning

stoves with no ventilation that were the cause of several health problems for the community.

Anthropology and geography student John Vilarino said he enjoyed meeting members of the Indigenous community and learning more about their culture.

“When we first got there, [the community] had laid out this beautiful mural of flower petals that said, ‘Welcome Cal Poly,’ and they had flower crowns for us,” Vilarino said. “Every single member of the community introduced themselves and told us a little bit about themselves.”

When the students weren’t exploring the Amazon, visiting historical sites or volunteering with the local community, Arendt said they used their free weekends

“STUDYING ABROAD WAS ONE OF THE BEST THINGS THAT I’VE EVER DONE, AND I FEEL LIKE I’VE CHANGED SO MUCH BECAUSE OF IT. I’M A BETTER STUDENT BECAUSE OF IT, A MORE WELL-ROUNDED PERSON AND I’M MORE CULTURALLY CONSCIOUS.” —JOHN VILARINO

LIBERAL ARTS SIN FRONTERAS IN PERU

for sightseeing, ATV riding, horseback riding, ziplining and even jungle treks. Vilarino also called the free weekends one of his favorite parts of the trip.

“I feel like I learned the most during those experiences because it’s very unstructured,” Vilarino said. “We got to talk to local people who were tour guides, and they shared with us their unique perspectives, cultural traditions and stories.”

Throughout the trip, the group followed all Peruvian COVID-19 restrictions, which included wearing masks and using hand sanitizer. Timms noted that no one in their study abroad cohort tested positive for COVID-19.

The trip provided students with a well-rounded international experience, one that many agree was once in a lifetime.

“Studying abroad was one of the best things that I’ve ever done, and I feel like I’ve changed so much because of it,” Vilarino said. “I’m a better student because of it, a more well-rounded person and I’m more culturally conscious.”

In the end, Timms says the trip was a success and encourages students to apply to study abroad programs to enhance both their educational and personal growth.

“Studying abroad is a life-changing event,” Timms said. “It opens your eyes to other parts of the world and other cultures and peoples, which is valuable as a life experience but also in terms of employment. This is Learn by Doing in action. I’m a geography professor, so though we talk about other parts of the world, actually going there is a much different and better experience.”

Learn more about the upcoming spring 2023 program at abroad.calpoly.edu and see a student-created video montage recapping the 2022 program at youtu.be/LUc4B7mLYQE.



Right: John Vilarino at Pachacámac, an archaeological site near Lima, Peru.



Top: Students spent three days at Machu Picchu, renowned for its ancient Inca ruins and a designated UNESCO World Heritage site.



Left: The group during a visit to the Sacred Valley of the Incas.

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE, CREATE AND TRAVEL

MEET SOME OF THE 2022 LIBERAL ARTS AND ENGINEERING STUDIES PROGRAM GRADUATES AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR SENIOR PROJECTS

Since its inception in 2007, the liberal arts and engineering studies (LAES) program has forged its own path in novel interdisciplinary study as one of the few Cal Poly programs created and housed within two colleges. Students essentially create their own majors by combining two concentrations, one from each college, and study abroad/global perspectives courses.

Faculty co-directors David Gillette (English) and Michael Haungs (Computer Science) spearhead the program from the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Engineering, respectively, with invaluable support from Program Coordinator Luna Larsen. Gillette says LAES alumni have gone on to work for Apple, Disney, Microsoft, Sony and Tesla as well as various companies abroad.

"The LAES program now has many graduates successfully pursuing master's degrees with some of the best graduate programs in the country, researching advanced system design, computer science, psychology, community development and environmental studies, along with a few currently completing their Ph.D. studies," Gillette said.

"Our students are very passionate about their education and choose LAES to gain the flexibility they need to build a curriculum that is laser focused on the careers they want to have. While our students choose widely varying careers, such as user experience [UX] designer, product manager, game designer or audio engineer, they all require knowledge and experience that comes from blending engineering and the arts," Haungs said.



▶ LORENZO 'ENZO' SISON

Enzo Sison leveraged his LAES education and his passions for surfing, the environment and people to create an app for his senior project, "Memory Surf."

"The goal of the project is to deploy technology to make surfing a more enriching experience, encourage people to surf more often, and to build and share cherished memories," Sison said.

Sison can't go into too much detail on the app just yet as he is currently developing his project into a business — a pursuit with which he is very familiar.

In middle school, Sison started a YouTube channel where he recorded himself playing video games, receiving 5.6 million views and earning more than 25,000 subscribers. Sison credits his channel with fostering his interest in building brands through the intersection of liberal arts, engineering and business.

"When I was looking for schools, they specifically needed to meet those criteria of art, business and engineering," Sison said. "It was really hard to find schools that had a mixture of those, and Cal Poly did. I think that Cal Poly really hit the nail on the head with this major."



▶ ALESSANDRA GARDNER

Alessandra Gardner's experience with the LAES program began with a fortuitous trip to South Africa as part of the alternative breaks program. There, she met co-director David Gillette and participated in an eye-opening "collaborative, storytelling project" that sealed LAES as her perfect major.

For her senior project, she combined her childhood interests of science, art and movies into an educational storytelling project, making full use of her minors in sustainability engineering and interactive communication with a cinematic focus. Gardner, alongside two other students, worked on the LAES Seeds in Stem program to present an interactive, virtual STEM workshop to elementary and middle school students in Santa Maria, California.

Gardner's role in the project included research into the community, the creation of the alien character "Airam," and ideating the story concept the students would follow throughout the workshop.

Post-graduation, Gardner took her multidisciplinary skills and applied them as a production assistant on local commercial sets. She now has her sights set on finally combining her childhood passions into one job: working for a science media company.

▶ JONATHAN FISHER

With a background in both mechanical and software engineering, Jonathan Fisher enrolled in the LAES program so he could "have one foot in engineering yet exercise [my] creative freedom."

To flex his creative side, Fisher joined a senior project team of seven other multidisciplinary students to develop a wine inventory management system for restaurants called "Bottleship."

"Inventory management for wines in the restaurant setting is very complex and wasteful. A lot of times restaurants have hundreds of thousands of dollars tied up in wine just sitting in storage and not being used," Fisher said.

Fisher's role in the project was to develop the digital wine menu and scanning App Clip Code, which allows patrons to download a menu, click into the available wines and learn more about them, including their ideal food pairings.

Post-graduation, Fisher is taking his user experience/user interface skill set with him to Massachusetts to pursue the medical technology industry.





GLASS TO THE

ALUMNUS ANDY PAIKO IS BRINGING MODERN GLASSBLOWING PRACTICES TO THE ISLAND OF MURANO, COMBINING TRADITION WITH INNOVATION

The island of Murano, located in Italy's Venice Lagoon, is world renowned for its glassblowing tradition dating back to the Middle Ages. However, the industry is facing increasing threats from traditional glassblowing's high costs and the impact of climate change upon the region. Many of Murano's glass studios have been forced to shut down as the rising prices of fossil fuels, used to maintain 2,400°F furnace temperatures, have made operational costs prohibitively expensive.

Andy Paiko (Art and Design, '02), a professional glassblower normally based in Portland, Oregon, recently moved to Murano to partner with local glass studios and environmental conservation nonprofits for a year. He hopes that sharing his knowledge of more environmentally sustainable glassblowing methods will help "build a bridge" between Murano's time-honored craftsmanship and emerging innovative methods.

"As a glassmaker, I am very concerned with the sustainable future of the centuries-old glassmaking tradition in the region, and its relatively heavy footprint from an ecological standpoint," Paiko said. "The Venice Lagoon is a case study in biodiversity, historical mismanagement and dire future prospects, not just for the city's existential future but also for the tradition of glassmaking."

When Paiko began studying glassblowing with Cal Poly's Art and Design Department, the hands-on ethos empowered him to combine his love for artistic

COURTESY OF ANDY PAIKO

FUTURE

expression with the engineering skills needed to build his own furnaces. “A lot of the work that I’ve done in the past with friends has involved mechanical engineering. At Cal Poly, I built several furnaces that we blew glass out of, and that was an experience you don’t get somewhere else.” He credits George Jercich, his faculty mentor in the glass shop and the studio art program, for the ability to build equipment with his hands. “Those skills led to designing electric furnaces with the friends I’ve made here in Portland and overseas, using new technology and more efficient ways of melting glass. What George was doing was essential,” Paiko said.

Opposite page: Glassblower Andy Paiko’s 2020 piece, “Le Pavillon Chandelier NYC.” **Bottom:** Paiko incorporates new technology and energy-efficient techniques in his work.

At a time when the College of Liberal Arts had less direct support for interdisciplinary scholarship, Paiko found a way to forge his own future. His success speaks to the importance of CLA’s newer programs for students whose interests don’t neatly fit into one discipline (see story on the liberal arts and engineering studies program on Page 16). “I remember going to my advisor twice,” Paiko said. “They just threw up their hands and said ‘Well, what do you want to do?’ I said I didn’t know, and things still turned out OK for me, but having more input would have been extremely helpful. My path probably would have been a little straighter.”

Paiko went on to build a successful California-based glass studio with partners including Ken Peterson (Mechanical Engineering, ’02), which he eventually sold to Evan Chambers (English, ’05) before settling in Portland. His work has been commissioned and distributed internationally, including a glass spinning wheel in the permanent collection at the Smithsonian Museum’s Renwick Gallery of American Craft and pieces in shows at the Stanza Del Vetro in Venice, Italy; the Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas; and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Paiko’s elaborate chandelier for New



GLASS TO THE FUTURE

York City's Le Pavillion restaurant has been featured in numerous media outlets, including The New Yorker, and in 2015 he won a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award in recognition of his work emphasizing how intricate glasswork can serve practical functions.

Over the years, Paiko has partnered several times with the Pilchuck Glass School, a center for artistic innovation and resource development for glassworking, furnace building and large-scale glass exhibitions. In 2017, Paiko won a scholarship through Pilchuck to travel to Venice, where he befriended Marcantonio Brandolini d'Adda, president and creative director at Laguna-B, a Murano-based glassblowing studio committed to reducing its environmental impact through innovation.

"As a young person born in Venice, he [Brandolini d'Adda] wants to create a bridge between local tradition and Pilchuck's modern glasswork, and to create a more sustainable future for the islands both artistically and environmentally," Paiko said. Upon returning to Murano this year, Paiko hopes to be a part of the island's first electric furnaces at Laguna-B in an effort to mitigate costs and increase efficiency. If all goes well, new practical furnace models may help other glass studios to remain operational.

Together, Brandolini d'Adda and Paiko are associated with We Are Here Venice (WahV), a conservation



Top: Paiko's piece "Spinning Wheel." Below, from left: Marcantonio Brandolini D'adda, Alice De Santillana, Aya Oki, Gianni Seguso, Andy Paiko and Alvise Maria De Mezzo work with Seguso factory production team members.



organization working with local government and industry to implement practical ecological solutions for wetland and water resource management. "I've been blowing glass for 25 years and this seems to be a natural progression from naively making vases and driving all over California selling them out of the back of my truck, which is what I did at Cal Poly," Paiko said. "It may also be possible to connect two distant-but-similar regions — the Venice Lagoon and the California Delta. I grew up in the Delta region and want to see it thrive. I want to help Venice in any way I can."

Between his efforts in the glass industry and outreach, Paiko is helping shift the conversation toward forward-thinking practices and policy. By choosing to work in Venice, he hopes to garner more attention and encourage other communities to follow suit. "Since Venice is central on the world stage for its historical and cultural value, the opportunity to play a part there could help set an example for future similar projects globally."

Learn more about Paiko's work at andypaiko.com and see updates from his travels on Instagram [@andypaikoglass](https://www.instagram.com/andypaikoglass).

Enabling Excellence

Annual gifts from donors and alumni enable the College of Liberal Arts and its departments to provide timely support for Learn by Doing projects and extracurricular programs, and the CLA endowment generates lasting income. Together, these funds allow the college to sustain the margin of excellence that Cal Poly students and alumni expect and deserve.



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2021-22 Giving Statistics

A numerical look at donations to the College of Liberal Arts

➤ The College of Liberal Arts is impacted by new commitments **\$1,506,737**

➤ Every gift counts! **24%** is from gifts under **\$5,000**

➤ **385 LOYAL DONORS** gave for 10 or more years consecutively, including 122 who have given more than 25 years

The College of Liberal Arts' total endowment:

\$10,910,610

Paid out from endowment to the College of Liberal Arts:

\$394,944

Thank you to the 2021-22 members of the Dean's Advisory Council, who have provided invaluable guidance and support to the College of Liberal Arts.

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- **Ernie Chapa**
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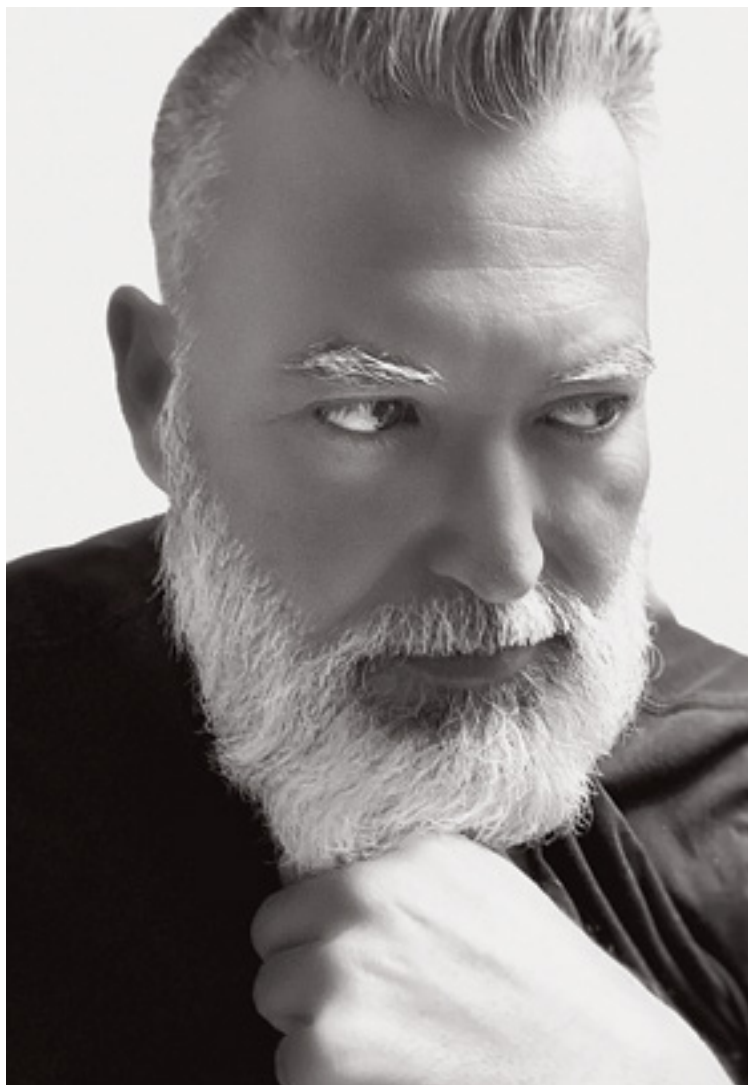
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“As a kid who’s Mexican American, who came from a very poor community, I recognized that for my success to happen, I had to push that part down. As I grew older, I realized that I brought more value by bringing that part up in myself.”

— CHRISTOPHER ACEBO

LATINX STORIES TAKE CENTER STAGE

Christopher Acebo (Political Science, '92) received the College of Liberal Arts' 2021 Honored Alumni Award for his impact amplifying underrepresented voices in theater and film.

When Acebo began studying political science at Cal Poly, he had no intention of pursuing a career in theater. However, while taking a chance detour through the Harold P. Davidson Music Center one day, he encountered students from the theatre arts program preparing for a new show. With his curiosity and interest sparked, Acebo decided to audition and was cast in his first Cal Poly production. After adding a theatre arts minor, Acebo found his strength in set design, which ultimately led to his successful career in production design.

Acebo is the founding CEO of Broken English Productions, a production company centering Latinx stories as told by Latinx filmmakers. Previously, he served as associate art director for 13 years at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where he initiated and curated the Latinx Play Project. Acebo commissioned 39 new plays, creating a platform where Latinx theater could flourish. One such play, “All the Way,” won the 2014 Tony Award for best play and made Acebo one of the first Mexican Americans to design on Broadway. He was a tenure track assistant professor in the Theatre and Dance Department at Cal State LA from 2002 to 2007 and has also taught master classes in design at the University of California San Diego.

Acebo's advocacy for Latinx artists and stories has garnered him many awards, but he was motivated by the realization that his personal identities strengthen his artistic endeavors and that he can help others realize their potential.

“As a young person at Cal Poly, you’re trying to figure out your own life; how do you make your way through it? And as a kid who’s Mexican American, who came from a very poor community, I recognized that for my success to happen, I had to push that part down. As I grew older, I realized that I brought more value by bringing that part up in myself, and by giving that opportunity to other Mexican Americans, people of color or LGBTQ people,” Acebo said.

1980s

Laura Diaz (English, '80) is a Southern California news anchor at Fox 11 KTTV and KCOP who has won numerous awards including 14 Emmy Awards, three Imagen Awards and two Golden Mikes. At Cal Poly's 2022 commencement ceremony, she was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters.

1990s

Teresa Rodriguez-Johnes (Social Sciences, '91) retired in 2018 after a storied, two-decade career supporting at-risk children and families in her community. During her career, she worked with many state-run teams improving resources and aid.

2000s

Kirsten Grind (Journalism, '02) co-authored a book, "Happy at Any Cost: The Revolutionary Vision and Fatal Quest of Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh." The book uncovers aspects of the noted entrepreneur's personal life and the truth behind his mysterious death.

Erin Partridge (Art and Design, '06) published her book, "Getting On in the Creative Arts Therapies: A Hands-On Guide to Personal and Professional Development." A registered, board-certified art therapist, Partridge works as a researcher and educator, focusing on older adults, technology and art-based research.

2010s

Katie Kays (Communication Studies, '11) married her college

sweetheart, Nathan Helenihi (Computer Engineering, '11). In 2021, the pair welcomed their first child, a girl named Liliana.

William Mitchell (Psychology, '11) is a San Diego-based licensed marriage and family therapist and business owner.

Diane Eykholt (Liberal Arts and Engineering Studies, '15) became a senior product manager for Chewy after a nearly seven-year tenure at Microsoft, where she incorporates aspects of UX research, design, software engineering and business into her projects.

Corey Hable (Music, '17) was one of three winners of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition's San Diego district auditions.

Lela Welch (Art and Design, '18) created artwork showcased in the city of San Luis Obispo's 2021 Plaza Pop-Up series. Six of her sculptures, "Untitled VI," were displayed in Mission Plaza throughout August 2021.

Winston Chang (Psychology, '19) works as a marriage and family therapist trainee and splits his time between clients at the Brea Resource Center in Los Angeles and working with students through California State

University, Fullerton's Male Success Initiative.

2020s

Lou Ibe (Comparative Ethnic Studies, '20) works as a multicultural and inclusion coordinator for Columbia College Hollywood. He runs diversity, equity and inclusion programming for a campus of about 200 students, including dialogue groups and workshops focused on topics like identity, cultural appropriation and privilege.

Chloe Heinz (Graphic Communication, '21) was on the cross-disciplinary student team that collaborated with local health officials to create the Naloxone Now app, which helps users find the nearest location to obtain naloxone — an opioid overdose reversal medicine.

Matia Mathes (Communication Studies, '21) presented her senior project at the International Communication Association Conference in Paris. Mathes now works as a social media director and project manager for the education company Emergency Medicine: Reviews and Perspectives.

CLASS NOTES

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