

CAL POLY COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

impact

LEARN / LEAD / LIVE / FALL 2023

INSIDE:

Generous alumni support new generations / Building a Safer future
/ Faculty explore the intersection of liberal arts and artificial intelligence

CONNECTION POINTS

Students create art to promote inclusion, activism and interwoven identities



CAL POLY

Message From the Dean

This past year, the College of Liberal Arts made significant strides in advancing its vision of a liberal arts education *sin fronteras*: without borders, boundaries or barriers. In January, Associate Dean Josh Machamer and I led a group of department chairs to visit partner institutions in the United Kingdom (University of Birmingham) and Germany (Hochschule der Medien)



to strengthen ties and expand exchange opportunities for students in several majors. In an effort to remove barriers to a Cal Poly degree, we developed a new initiative in partnership with Allan Hancock

College — the Cal Poly 2+2 Sociology Program. The pilot program, which is planned to launch in fall 2024, will create a new pathway for transfer students wishing to complete a Cal Poly Sociology degree at the Allan Hancock campus in Santa Maria. The program is designed with a more flexible schedule, so that nontraditional students can experience Cal Poly's Learn by Doing environment while balancing work and family responsibilities.

In May, we celebrated the opening of the James A. and Felicia M. Cashin Expressive Technology Studios in the new William and Linda Frost Center for Research and Innovation, which will provide students with access to cutting edge immersive media technology to collaborate on interdisciplinary projects at the intersection of the arts, science and technology. And finally, we continued to grow the college's Summer Undergraduate Research/Creative Activity Program (SURP), supporting the participation of 21 students in faculty-led projects this past summer.

After four years as dean, I continue to be optimistic about the future of the college and am grateful to each and every one of you for your dedication and support!

Best regards,
Philip Williams
Dean, College of Liberal Arts



CAL POLY
College of Liberal Arts

impact

Fall 2023

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Halle Fernandez

Gotico's utility box mural pays tribute to the first Filipino landing at Morro Bay.



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SEVENTH ANNUAL SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACH IN BOASTS 4,400 ATTENDEES

At the seventh annual Social Justice Teach In, 4,400 students, faculty and staff from all six colleges gathered along with community members for a day of learning. Forty-six events and presentations covered a variety of topics such as Cal Poly's path to becoming a Hispanic-Serving institution, reproductive justice and restorative justice.



Nico Viñuela Reports on National Murder Trial for Student Media Organization

Journalism student Nico Viñuela reported on the Kristin Smart murder trial for Cal Poly's student-run news organization, Mustang News. Viñuela was one of only a few student reporters who sat in the Salinas, California, courtroom. With support from journalism faculty and students, he produced 36 stories for Mustang News and 43 audio updates for Mustang Media Group's KCPR radio station, as well as five stories for KCBX, the local NPR affiliate where he was an intern and a weekend host before becoming an associate producer at Dateline NBC.

Student Playwrights Earn First-Place Awards at Regional Conference

Two theatre arts major playwrights earned first-place awards at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region 8 conference. Taylor Wendell Lozano's one-act play, "Horizons," was performed as a staged reading and earned top prize in the region's 10-minute play competition. Max Kennel performed an excerpt from his play "The Story of Jimmy Kaplingus" and won the monologue competition.

New Interdisciplinary Research Center Dedicated

The William and Linda Frost Center for Research and Innovation was officially dedicated on May 5. The new interdisciplinary center includes the James A. and Felicia M. Cashin Expressive Technology Studios, which will provide specialized equipment for Liberal Arts and Engineering Studies projects to come to life.



Music Students Sound Taps at Madonna Inn's Vietnam Memorial

Cal Poly student trumpeters and Director of Bands Christopher Woodruff sounded taps at "The Wall That Heals," a 75-foot, three-quarter scale replica of the Washington, D.C., Vietnam Veterans Memorial, at the Madonna Inn last March.



Mustang Media Groups Wins Big at Prestigious College Media Conference

Mustang Media Group, Cal Poly's student-run media organization, won over 20 awards at the 2023 Associated Collegiate Press Spring National College Media Conference. The group placed first for best newspaper in the nation, best broadcast news program, best website and best advertising special newspaper section, among other accolades.

CLA Welcomes High School Students for Two-Week Summer Program

High school students got an immersive Learn by Doing experience through the two-week Summer Springboard @ Cal Poly program. The 115 students stayed in on-campus dormitories and took courses from CLA professors ranging from graphic design to coding to judicial politics for a special collegial summer experience.

2+2 Sociology Program

A new 2+2 transfer student pathway with Allan Hancock College will allow students to complete a sociology associate degree of transfer from the community college, transfer to Cal Poly, and earn their bachelor of arts degree in another two years by taking classes at Hancock's Santa Maria campus. The program is designed with a more flexible schedule so nontraditional students can benefit from Learn by Doing while balancing other responsibilities.

Rob Moore Wins Los Gatos City Council Race

Rob Moore (Political Science, '21) was elected to the Los Gatos City Council at age 24, making him the only member of the council under 55. Moore, a former CLA Student Diversity Committee member, strives to bring a unique perspective to the council and provide a voice for those who are often underrepresented in council decisions, particularly younger people, the unhoused population and marginalized communities.



STUDENT TEAM WINS 2023 HELMUT KIPPAN CUP AT NATIONAL GRAPHIC ARTS CONFERENCE

Seven graphic communication students won and received the prestigious Helmut Kipphan Cup at the annual conference of the Technical Association of the Graphic Arts in March. The team's technical journal, Vol. 40, includes five student research articles, original illustrations, augmented reality experiences and intuitive packaging design.



The winning team poses alongside faculty advisor and graphic communication Assistant Professor Rachel Ma, right.



Student researcher
Sophia Velasquez.

STUDENT RESEARCHERS SHOWCASE LEARN BY DOING AT SECOND ANNUAL SURP+ SYMPOSIUM

Student researchers presented their findings at the second annual CLA Summer Undergraduate Research Program+ Symposium. The event included 11 hands-on projects led by faculty experts alongside 21 student researchers on topics ranging from exploring LGBT religious activism to reducing bullying to preparing an archival oral history of the Black community during and after WWII.

Ethan Gutterman Wins Second Place at CSU Research Competition

History student Ethan Gutterman took second at the 2023 CSU Research Competition for his research on the 54th Coast Artillery regiment, the U.S. Army's only all-Black, heavy artillery unit. The unit that fought during World War II had transferred to the Central Coast in the 1940s. Through oral history and written records, Gutterman's research seeks to better understand the reasons individuals would have left or stayed in the area. He was supported by his faculty advisor, history Professor Thanayi Jackson.



Collin Marfia Rides on Board Award-Winning 2023 Rose Float

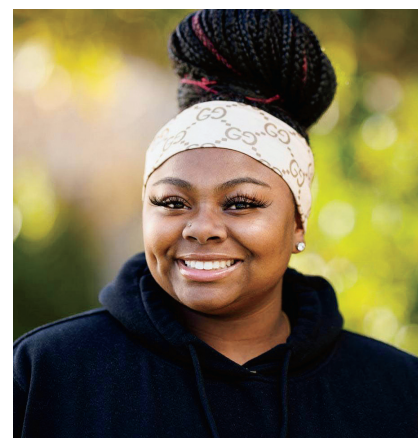
History student Collin Marfia rode sight unseen aboard the Cal Poly Universities' award-winning float, "Road to Reclamation," at the 2023 Rose Parade. Marfia served as the San Luis Obispo team's hydraulics and engine lead as well as the drive engine operator. The team's yearlong project featuring a forest floor, animated snails and colorful mushrooms received the Extraordinaire Award.



Collin Marfia, right, with Rose
Parade float team members.

Cal Poly Arts and Passport to the Arts

Cal Poly Arts' Passport to the Arts program provides free or deeply subsidized access to performing arts experiences for low-income and/or marginalized communities. Attendees who have not historically had access to high-quality, artistic programming may attend Cal Poly Arts performances, pre- and post-show events and performing arts workshops.



Nailah DuBose Co-Wins MLK Jr. Legacy

Psychology student Nailah DuBose shared the MLK Legacy Award at Cal Poly's annual MLK Jr. Legacy Event in January. DuBose is the 2023-24 president of the Black Student Union, a volunteer trainer with Cal Poly Athletics, a recipient of the Black Student Scholarship and very involved with the Black Academic Excellence Center. She accepted the award with fellow honoree Michael Witt, a biomedical engineering professor.

CLASS ACTS

These impressive ethnic studies educators are leading, planning or researching new study abroad programs to engage Cal Poly students with additional Learn by Doing opportunities *sin fronteras*.



ELVIRA PULITANO (she/her/hers)

Specialty areas: Indigenous Studies, Afro-Caribbean Studies, Theories of Race and Migration / Years at Cal Poly: 17

Q: As a native of Italy, why was it important to spearhead the first study abroad program to Palermo, Italy, this past summer?

A: Palermo has always been a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual area. As a professor of ethnic studies with a strong interest in race and ethnicity, I thought a program like this could give students a deeper understanding of how race and racial relations operate in different countries.

Q: What can you share about how students interacted with refugees and migrants from around the globe?

A: Students engaged with two nonprofit organizations I found through my research, Giocherenda and Multivolti. These organizations are run by young individuals who arrived in Palermo under insurmountable challenges. It is important to frame the narrative around migration so migrants are not seen as a problem but rather a solution.

Staff at Giocherenda engaged students in a series of storytelling and role-playing workshops to portray the experience of migration beyond stereotypes and media misinformation. The Multivolti center, a restaurant and social enterprise, is the hub of the program and a place where the students could come together. Students also connected with Multivolti members during the four-week program through activities like cooking classes.

Q: What do you say to students who feel study abroad is out of reach for them?

A: I've been adamant in telling students, especially students of color, who think that studying abroad is out of their budget, that that's not necessarily true. There are many scholarships available.

JOSÉ NAVARRO (he/him/él)

Specialty areas: Chicana/x and Latinx Studies, Latinx Popular Culture, Latinx Literature and Gender/Masculinity Studies / Years at Cal Poly: 11

Q: How did you come up with the idea for a Mexico City study abroad program?

A: My family is from Michoacán, Mexico, but it wasn't until I was an undergraduate student that I had the opportunity to visit Mexico City. It is a place where one can see the current and past presence of Indigenous peoples in Mexico, where one can see the history and impact of Spanish conquest and colonialism, and where one can easily see the history and impacts of the Mexican Revolution. Many sites in and around the city are designated UNESCO World Heritage sites, so choosing Mexico City as a site for a study abroad program was a very easy choice.

Q: What will the Summer 2024 program look like?

A: It will be a five-week summer program, and we will take trips to La Catedral, the Aztec ruins at Templo Mayor, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera's house (La Casa Azul), Xochimilco, La Basílica, El Museo Nacional (the National Museum of Anthropology), El Palacio Nacional (the Presidential Palace) and Teotihuacán (Indigenous ruins).

Q: In your opinion, why is it important for faculty in the Ethnic Studies Department to spearhead additional study abroad opportunities for Cal Poly students?

A: Ethnic studies faculty have expertise in studying the developments of race, ethnicity, culture, etc., and the attendant structures that cement these categories. Study abroad programs allow us to walk students through a global and therefore truly comparative approach to the study of race, ethnicity and culture.





RYAN BUYCO (he/him/his)

Specialty area: Asian American studies with a focus on Asian American and Pacific Islander engagements with U.S. militarism and settler colonialism in the Pacific / Years at Cal Poly: Three

Q: Did you study abroad as a student?

A: I studied abroad from 2008-2009 at Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan. It was because of this experience that I became a Japanese language and literature major in college, which led me to do graduate work at the University of Hawai'i and later Cornell University.

Q: Tell us more about your plan to develop a study abroad program in Hawai'i. What classes do you anticipate students will take?

A: One of the central goals of this program is to guide students to rethink their relationship to these islands, away from images associated with the tourism industry, and toward an understanding of how the colonial circumstances in Hawai'i shape the experiences of native Hawaiians and the diverse communities that live there today.

This program will offer two classes: ES 256: Introduction to Asian American Studies and ES 340: Cultural Production and Ethnicity: Pacific Islander Studies, which I am currently developing.

Q: What would you say to students who feel that study abroad is out of reach for them?

A: I am currently trying to make this program as accessible as possible — so please stay tuned! Right now, I am looking into scholarship opportunities that students may be able to apply for through the servicer I am working with.

DAN CASTILOW (he/him/his)

Specialty area: Cultural anthropology / Years at Cal Poly: Two

Q: What are your research/scholarly pursuits?

A: My research has broadly focused on antiblackness and racialized masculinities in the African diaspora. Specifically, I am interested in middle-class leisure culture in the Caribbean and its connections to the process of racialization.

Q: Did you study abroad as a student?

A: I did not have the opportunity to study abroad as an undergraduate, as it was cost prohibitive for me. My experience led me to think about ways to create a more cost-friendly study abroad program that may be more accessible to students who traditionally do not have the opportunity to go abroad.

Q: Tell us about your plans to develop a new study abroad program in Trinidad and Tobago.

A: My hope is to propose a program that will appeal to students across different majors at Cal Poly. The course content will focus

on cultural production from an ethnic studies perspective and introduce students to the interconnectedness of expressive cultures and ethnoracial politics.

I am proposing the course as a short winter session class or possibly as a summer course. A winter course would allow students to experience the Carnival



season, and a summer course would allow students a longer study abroad experience.

Presently, Cal Poly does not offer any faculty-led programs in the Caribbean, and I hope this course will provide an opportunity for students to learn more about this important region beyond sun and surf.

WANT TO LEARN MORE? Read the faculty members' full responses in the online version of Impact.

“My experience led me to think about ways to create a more cost-friendly study abroad program that may be more accessible to students who traditionally do not have the opportunity to go abroad.” —DAN CASTILOW

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER DESI AMERICAN (APIDA) STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE COLLEGE ARE USING ART TO BUILD INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR INTERSECTING IDENTITIES



Halle Fernandez Gotico and her utility box mural.

➔ **HALLE FERNANDEZ GOTICO** double majored in comparative ethnic studies and history ('23) with a minor in law and society. She served as co-president of the Pilipino Cultural Exchange Club and an organizer for the two-day Pilipino Cultural Night performance.

For a public history course, Gotico designed and painted a tribute to the first Filipino landing at Morro Bay through Cal Poly's campus utility box beautification project. Inspired by a Morro Bay memorial marker from the Filipino American National Historical Society, Gotico saw an opportunity to share a little-known piece of local history.

"My own personal experiences as a Filipina American inspired me to find ways to increase Filipinx representation and strengthen the APIDA community in any way I could," Gotico said. "From asking for feedback about how to honor the yak tit'u tit'u yak tilhini (ytt) Northern Chumash to inviting members of the Filipinx and APIDA communities to help in painting, I have learned how to adapt my project to better represent the people it is meant for. As someone who has always been fascinated by the intersections of the legal system, history and the education system, I'm hoping to pursue a career in law advocating for students and communities. With this being one of the largest community projects I have ever led, this process has provided me with key insight into things to consider when representing others."

➔ **EUREE HONG** (Sociology, '23) used her senior project to showcase 11 queer and BIPOC San Luis Obispo County artists by organizing an art show, "Common Ground," celebrating intersecting identities.

"'Common Ground' recognizes the necessity of shared social spaces in San Luis Obispo, specifically for the queer/BIPOC community," Hong said. "Within my college experience, I've noticed that the multiple facets of my identity and interests are fractioned into separate communities. Spaces can feel monolithic and confining when gender, racial and socioeconomic dynamics at play are not recognized or, worse, treated as nonexistent. In an effort towards equity and inclusion, 'Common Ground' was a night where our community gathered to express, receive, and bond over identity and creativity."

Hong took charge of recruiting artists, finding a venue and opening entertainment, and contacting local media outlets to garner more publicity for the featured artists. The show raised funds for local non-profit organizations (Race Matters SLO and Asian American Pacific Islanders of SLO) actively working on race-related issues.

"I feel grateful to have been able to organize a successful night filled with art, laughter and hope. I want to thank everyone who said yes along the way. I think many people who attended this event recognized the lack of designated spaces where identity, art and social justice issues merge in San Luis Obispo. Although 'Common Ground' was a one-night event, I hope this inspires continuity of this dialogue," Hong said.



Yvonne Bee, left, and Halle Fernandez Gótico.

➔ **YVONNE BEE** (English, '23, women's and gender studies minor) used art as a form of activism across a wide range of media, including curating an art gallery for OWN (Original Womxn's Narratives), writing, editing and designing graphics for Revel magazine, and editing student-run publications Intertidal and sprinkle.

"I thoroughly enjoyed bringing my WGS scholarship in conversation with my English course texts to address the inequities of feminist, queer writers and the problematic tropes written by cis-hetero white men," Bee said. "The term 'artivism' encapsulates art as a medium of self-expression and social change. Art allows artists to show their multifaceted identities while reclaiming their narratives. As a hobbyist artist, I enjoy abstract elements incorporating my Mandarin, Cantonese and English languages together for a larger impact. It's therapeutic for me, and I enjoy seeing how viewers all take away a different message of calls for social reform."

Bee cites the COVID-19 pandemic as a motivating force to keep learning and getting involved with social justice organizations, which ultimately helped her to graduate a year early. "While my time at Cal Poly included many extracurriculars, I credit my professors, mentors and work coordinators for looking into alternative approaches to my projects and more flexible workloads. I often wonder if it's possible to change some aspects of campus climate, and to an extent, I did," Bee said.



Attendees enjoy art and atmosphere at the "Common Ground" show.

Claudia Buck (Journalism, '76) and
Paul Page (Graphic Communication, '76)
met at Cal Poly.



PAYING IT FORWARD

ALUMNI CLAUDIA BUCK
AND PAUL PAGE HONOR
THEIR LOVE FOR CAL POLY,
AND EACH OTHER,
WITH A SCHOLARSHIP
ENDOWMENT FUND



Same Cal Poly building, same hallways, side-by-side majors. Yet it took a science class across campus for Claudia Buck (Journalism, '76) and Paul Page (Graphic Communication, '76) to meet by chance. During a professor's demonstration of light refraction, the pair serendipitously locked eyes in a mirror. That moment was the start of a deep friendship. Two years after graduating in 1976, they fell in love and eventually married.

The pair's love for Cal Poly has spanned a 45-year marriage, two children (one is a Cal Poly alumnus) and successful careers, culminating in a scholarship endowment fund to support the next generation of graphic communication and journalism students.

"Both of us have been forever enriched by our Cal Poly experiences, both personally and professionally," Buck said. "Giving back to a place that launched our careers — not to mention our marriage — was an easy choice. It is hugely gratifying for both of us to help pass on the gift of a Cal Poly Learn by Doing education to a future graduate."

Creating a scholarship, they note, is just one way that alumni can engage with Cal Poly. Over the years, the pair have mentored students, engaged with alumni and met with prospective students at Cal Poly events in Sacramento. Buck also served 15 years on the Cal Poly Journalism Advisory Board, including two years as chair.

The couple contribute annually to their endowment fund, expecting it will continue to sponsor students for many years to come.

"We hope [this scholarship] smooths the path for someone whose financial resources may not be substantial enough to allow them to focus on their education or even to stay in school," Buck said.

The pair, who are passionate about helping students from all backgrounds and trajectories, came to Cal Poly on vastly different journeys.

"I was a journalism nerd in high school," Buck said. "What excited me and why I chose Cal Poly was that you

could get right into journalism from the get-go. It was all part of that Learn by Doing philosophy where you were hands-on as a freshman, writing, editing, taking photos, doing TV or radio, whatever your passion was."

Page, on the other hand, had a much different college path that he describes as a "long and winding road."

He started out at UC Santa Cruz then moved on to UC Berkeley for architecture before finally settling down at Cal Poly as a junior. He initially enrolled as an architecture student before accidentally stumbling across the Graphic Communication Department.

"I saw how [the department] was teaching students to prepare art, get it on a printing press and use it for editorial or marketing purposes. I met with the department head and realized this is what I want to do. It was fortuitous," Page said.

In 1978, the two moved to Sacramento, where they married and launched 40-year careers in their respective professions.

Buck's career started at the Sacramento Bee, where she was a Capitol Bureau reporter, and later a business editor and personal finance columnist. While she and Page were in the midst of raising their two young children, she worked as a freelance writer and editor and eventually as managing editor of California Journal, the nonpartisan politics and public affairs magazine.



The couple with their children and grandchildren.

“GIVING BACK TO A PLACE THAT LAUNCHED OUR CAREERS — NOT TO MENTION OUR MARRIAGE — WAS AN EASY CHOICE. IT IS HUGEY GRATIFYING FOR BOTH OF US TO HELP PASS ON THE GIFT OF A CAL POLY LEARN BY DOING EDUCATION TO A FUTURE GRADUATE.”

—CLAUDIA BUCK

PAYING IT FORWARD

“Whether I was doing newspaper writing, magazine editing, freelancing writing or managing reporters in a newsroom, I was employing skills I learned at Cal Poly. They were the essential foundation that carried through my entire career,” Buck said.

Pursuing his passion for graphic design, Page opened his own company, Page Design Inc., in 1980. It grew into one of Sacramento’s largest graphic design studios, with 15 employees and \$2 million in annual revenue. After a 37-year career at Page Design, he retired in 2017.

“When I started my career in graphic design, virtually everything we created wound up on a printing press,” Page said. “Because Cal Poly’s graphic design program was rich in both creativity and in printing technology, I knew how to deliver creative solutions that were immediately ready for production, whether it was a bank’s annual report or a statewide marketing campaign. I was fortunate to develop strong relationships with local printing companies, most of which were owned by Cal Poly Graphic Communication graduates. There was a mutual respect because we all knew there was a Learn by Doing ethic in everything we did.”

After their retirements, and after Buck stepped down as chair of the journalism advisory board, they decided to invest in Cal Poly’s future and launch their Buck-Page scholarship endowment.

“We know what Cal Poly did for us and we know what it did for our son Cameron Page (Construction Management, ’09). We owe our careers completely to what we learned at Cal Poly. Creating the scholarship was a way to pay it forward and, in a small way, help ensure that other journalism and graphic communication students have the same opportunity for a first-class education as we did,” Buck said.

The Buck-Page Scholarship launched in 2020 and alternates between assisting journalism and graphic communication students who demonstrate financial need.



The couple during a biking trip in Loire Valley, France.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAUDIA BUCK AND PAUL PAGE



Page and Buck when they were students at Cal Poly in the 1970s.

Buck, Weird Al Yankovic and Page at the centennial celebration of the student press at Cal Poly in October of 2016. Yankovic was among the first inductees into the inaugural Mustang Media Hall of Fame.



“Graphic communication students often have heavy debt burdens, and the Buck-Page Scholarship not only helps relieve that debt, but the whole purpose of the scholarship is student success,” Graphic Communication Department Chair Colleen Twomey said. “The huge generosity of this ongoing scholarship is incredible. There is synergy between graphic communication and journalism, and the fact that this scholarship benefits both departments is delightful.”

Journalism Department Chair Brady Teufel shares Twomey’s sentiments: “The Journalism Department is honored to be a bridge between deserving students and generous supporters such as Claudia and Paul. The faculty take great care when selecting the recipients of scholarships and there’s nothing more gratifying than seeing how much of an impact they have on students’ lives.”

Jezzia Smith (Journalism, ’21) was the first scholarship recipient and used the funds to partially pay for three summer courses, as well as for housing in the Cal Poly Lofts, off-campus student housing in downtown San Luis Obispo.

Beyond the monetary award, the Pages provided additional support and guidance to Smith, ranging from career goal discussions to informal check-ins during the pandemic.

“The most significant impact of the scholarship was meeting Claudia and Paul. They were a support system when I didn’t have one,” Smith said. “They set me up with contacts to further my career goals through internships and podcasting, and even went on to help me with graduate school applications for business analytics. I’m not so sure they knew what they were getting into when they decided to meet with me, but I am grateful for them.”

Rayna Farkas was the 2023 graphic communication recipient and mirrors Smith’s sentiments about the Pages and the impact the scholarship has on students.

“I have always maintained multiple jobs throughout my college career to support myself while pursuing my degree. This scholarship gave me the freedom and flexibility to focus on my college education, allowing me to take additional courses and explore my creative passions,” Farkas said. “I am incredibly grateful to the Page family for their continuous efforts to support and uplift students within the graphic communication and journalism majors.”

The Buck-Page Scholarship Endowment is open for donations. Contact CLA Senior Director of Development Moon-ja Yunouye-Petz at 805-756-6776 or via email at mpetz@calpoly.edu to learn more about how to get involved with the College of Liberal Arts.



Safer student assistant Marisol Morales and Cheryl Flores, Native American and Indigenous Cultural Center coordinator, speak at Safer's annual "Take Back the Night" event.

BUILDING A SAFER FUTURE

CLA ALUMNI
AND STUDENTS
ARE MAKING A
DIFFERENCE ON
CAMPUS

TOGETHER

Founded in the fall of 1996 as a response to the loss of several local young women, Safer is Cal Poly's resource for support with gender- and power-based violence. A program within Student Affairs' Campus Health and Wellbeing department, Safer has expanded to both advocacy and prevention work, serving the campus with a holistic emphasis on building community support and restorative justice.

As the largest such team in the CSU, Safer initiated approximately 21,000 educational touchpoints with the community, including 36 hosted events; it also participated in other events with 33 booths during the 2022-23 academic year. Safer's five full-time staffers and 10 student assistants are positions in majority held by CLA alumni and students from programs including psychology; sociology; and women's, gender and queer studies. These alumni and students are working toward both a safer campus and careers in social services and public health.

"Why and how our program exists comes from very difficult and traumatic reasons," said Kara Samaniego, who manages the program as the assistant director of wellbeing for Campus Health and Wellbeing. "So much of what this team does involves holding pain for people on this campus. They come to us at their most difficult time of life, and they talk about their deep issues."

Samaniego has a unique perspective on the program's evolution, as she worked with Safer while earning a bachelor of science degree in psychology with a minor in women's and gender studies ('11). She would later return for her master of business administration degree at Cal Poly ('18) and become a permanent staff member at Safer before rising to her current director role.

"When I started as a student, Title IX as we know it and systemic support for

survivors wasn't happening yet," said Samaniego. "The work was very grassroots, but when I came back in 2015, we were already past the Title IX Dear Colleague letter, so the work was seen as more credible and important. We saw permanent staffing positions and a robust student team. I came back to this whole other world that I had dreamed of when I was a student."



“SO MUCH OF WHAT [THE SAFER] TEAM DOES INVOLVES HOLDING PAIN FOR PEOPLE ON THIS CAMPUS. THEY COME TO US AT THEIR MOST DIFFICULT TIME OF LIFE, AND THEY TALK ABOUT THEIR DEEP ISSUES.” —KARA SAMANIEGO



Safer student assistants Claire McCord, Kallie Kidder and Anthony Benitez work together to make a positive impact in our community.

In addition to changing public perception, Samaniego attributes Safer's successes to continued support from the university. As for her own success, she was highly impacted by faculty in both the Psychology and Child Development Department and the Women's, Gender and Queer Studies Department.

Similarly, Jennifer MacMartin (Sociology, '17, minor in women's and gender studies) learned how to address public health issues during her time as a student and applies her expertise as a prevention specialist.

"My WGQS classes taught me about community organizing, history and this work, which has situated us as a part of a legacy of activists pursuing a safer future," said MacMartin. Studying sociology was an experience in learning about what's not going well in our world and understanding the systems that don't serve us. "I have conceptualized public health as a solution, so my work with Safer has been a blend of deconstructing systems that don't

serve us and building a future where we take care of each other," she said.

As part of the addition of MacMartin's position as a prevention specialist, Safer has been recentring the conversation around their work to prevention and restorative practices.

"In our educational outreach, we rarely use 'perpetrator,' but talk about 'people who have caused harm' because they are from the same culture that we are, and that is fundamentally the issue," said Samaniego. "We need to focus on what drives people to cause harm and to address the issue from a standpoint of community care."

While creating lasting change is an uphill battle, Safer's staff work hard to build trust in order to have difficult conversations.

"There is always pushback of people not wanting to change the status quo," said MacMartin. "We're committed to pushing through that by naming harmful behavior, which requires people to be accountable for when they have caused harm. Our team has a passion for restorative education, not in spite of those experiences, but including those experiences and making sure those people feel comfortable in unlearning the status quo. Many times, people isolate when people cause harm, but being brought back into community opens the door for education."

While specific cases regarding gender-based violence, such as the 2022 Kristin Smart murder trial, have garnered more attention for their work, the staff at Safer are recentring the discussions around communities, rather than specific individuals' stories.

"We've always had strong social justice ties, but over the years we have incorporated additional frameworks, such as public health, to talk about how our work intersects with identities, privilege and access to care," said Samaniego. "When white women go missing, that is often the top headline, and we ignore other marginalized communities. Safer has shifted to center marginalized

“I HAVE CONCEPTUALIZED PUBLIC HEALTH AS A SOLUTION, SO MY WORK WITH SAFER HAS BEEN A BLEND OF DECONSTRUCTING SYSTEMS THAT DON'T SERVE US AND BUILDING A FUTURE WHERE WE TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER.” —JENNIFER MACMARTIN

communities' experiences. We also have to be sensitive to when people's individual names are being used around a topic. It can become tokenizing and, in centering that, it implies that there was something they could have done differently."

As Safer and its mission adapted over the years, the team has increased partnerships with students to expand offerings and give students valuable hands-on experience for their careers.

"From my first experience with Safer at the SLO Days Open House as an incoming first-year student, I knew I wanted to work with them because everyone was welcoming and because of the holistic approach they take to discussing gender and power-based violence," said sociology student and prevention education intern

Claire McCord. "At its core, gender- and power-based violence impacts all people and areas of life. Tackling these issues may seem like an insurmountable task, but Safer makes it approachable and inspires students to take action with creative programming that meets them where they are and curriculum that all students can see themselves reflected in."

McCord is pursuing Cal Poly's teaching credential program to become an elementary school teacher. "Working at Safer has not only prepared me to be a teacher, it *inspired* me to be a teacher," she said. "Teaching children that their voices are valued and how to respect others' boundaries is primary prevention. I hope to help generations of students recognize that they are powerful agents of change in making the world safe from violence."

For her senior project, Kallie Kidder (Psychology and Journalism double major, '23) worked with Safer to create a faculty/staff toolkit for supporting student survivors. "This project helped me to feel much more connected to the work Safer does for/with faculty and staff. My professors have told me that this is an area they lack knowledge about, and I'm so grateful Safer's professional staff emphasizes education and support for faculty," Kidder said. "Furthermore, I have found some of my closest friends through Safer. Every single Safer event, from Take Back the Night to craft circles, fosters community."

Kidder plans to pursue a master's degree in marriage and family therapy and will apply her experience as a Safer student intern to her future practice. "One day, regardless of what population I choose to work with, I know I will be supporting survivors in some capacity," she said. "Gender- and power-based violence is, unfortunately, a very prevalent issue. Safer ultimately supports survivors and upholds a trauma-informed approach, all of which I plan to take with me into my future career."

As programming continues to grow with an emphasis on prevention, staff at Safer hope to build a more robust infrastructure. While student interest has increased, more staffing will be needed to provide more students with quality mentorship and guidance. "Prevention is the future here," said Samaniego, explaining why she hopes to add another prevention specialist position. Additionally, increased private support for the program could provide more paid internships for students. Currently, half of Safer's student positions are unpaid, which can prevent lower-income students from participating.

While there is still room for growth, staff at Safer have already witnessed major shifts in the way campus community members approach these issues. "Anecdotally, the conversations with students have changed," said MacMartin. "There used to be defensiveness as if people thought they would be in trouble. Now, we've had more students than ever come to us and say that their friends or people close to them have caused harm. They want to know, 'What can we do to help?'"

WANT TO LEARN MORE? Contact Kara Samaniego at kasamani@calpoly.edu to learn how you can support this work. Refer students or faculty/staff members who may need these services to Safer at 805-756-2282 or safer@calpoly.edu.



Students participate in Safer's Denim Art Craft Circle event as part of Sexual Assault Action Month.



ASK AN EXPERT:

THE INTERSECTION OF AND ARTI



FROM SMART ASSISTANTS, LIKE SIRI AND ALEXA, TO CHATBOTS THAT WRITE ESSAYS OR COMPLEX COMPUTER CODE, NEW TECHNOLOGIES LOOK STRAIGHT OUT OF SCIENCE FICTION. OPINIONS ON THESE RANGE FROM ALARMIST TO OPTIMISTIC. WE SAT DOWN WITH FACULTY ACROSS THE COLLEGE FOR THEIR TAKE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND HOW THEY WORK WITH OR RESEARCH IT WITHIN DIFFERENT ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES.

BRANDIFF CARON

LECTURER, INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

AREA OF EXPERTISE: DEMOCRACY THEORY AND TECHNOLOGY DESIGN

My primary field of study is science and technology studies (STS). For the last 10 years, I have been working with engineers and computer scientists to develop creative ways to incorporate considerations of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion into their design processes, including artificial intelligence. Recently, I have shifted my focus from engineering design to thinking more about the role of non-engineers and non-computer scientists in the larger conversation about these technologies.

The Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts (ISLA) Department at Cal Poly offers a number of unique opportunities to teach students from across the university about these technologies. And it is in ISLA 303: Values

and Technology where my new pedagogical experiment is unfolding.

One of the most challenging aspects of thinking about ethical technology design is the difficulty in knowing what a technology is going to do prior to it becoming widely used. And once a technology has become widely adopted, it is famously difficult to “put the toothpaste back in the tube,” so to speak.

In ISLA 303, we have taken deep dives into the many social challenges created through the use of AI. Students are asked to engage in the creation of “useful fictions” and speculate as to what potential negative and positive effects on society there may be.

With these “useful fictions” in hand, students are able to go back and examine the AI technologies as they are today and can point to specific design choices that could be made in ways that address some of these consequences.

Students have enjoyed being tasked with this creative project alongside the sociology, philosophy, political science and history that make up the rest of the course. I am excited to be developing plans for a short story collection of Cal Poly students thinking about the future of AI through these useful fictions.

DEB DONIG

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ENGLISH

AREA OF EXPERTISE: ANGLOPHONE LITERATURE

I’m the founder of the Ethical Technology Initiative at Cal Poly. I teach a course on ethics and technology, and I also host the “Technically Human” podcast — a global

JANE LEHR

LIBERAL ARTS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

CLA FACULTY SHARE HOW THEY WORK WITH AND RESEARCH AI

podcast about ethics and technology. Across those three things, I spend a lot of time thinking about AI.

As an English professor, I always have to explain to people why I'm interested in ethics and technology to begin with. And what I say is that before we can build anything, we first have to imagine it. What do we want this technology to do?

The majority of problems that we really need to solve in human society are not problems of how airlines can use AI to better respond to customer service complaints — that's not a human society problem. Human society problems are how do we create better public housing for people in dense urban areas where the rents are more than two thirds of somebody's income? How do we eliminate or reduce bias in medicine?

Deb Donig



JOE JOHNSTON

These are things that AI could be solving right now. The problem is that these issues are incredibly valuable on a social level and less valuable on an economic level. And where AI is developing the quickest is not where there are vital problems that need to be solved, but rather where there is financial opportunity.

My hope is that we can spread the word and demand some sort of reform to the economic and profit structures undergirding AI production and innovation, and that we can redirect funding and mandate legislative requirements that commit or incentivize AI to solving real-world problems.

Be part of the conversation. Check out Donig's podcast "Technically Human" and learn more about ethical technology from experts in a multitude of fields at etcalpoly.org/the-technically-human-podcast.

JASON PETERS

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ENGLISH

AREA OF EXPERTISE: COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC

I coordinate the first-year English composition program, and when I heard about ChatGPT's release last winter, I really found myself scrambling to get access to it so that I could provide support to the dozens of faculty members who teach college writing courses.

I'm not an expert in writing with digital technologies like other folks in my field are, so I'm not working with ChatGPT in any research capacity, at least not yet. My role has largely consisted of putting ChatGPT into a larger context, encouraging teachers and students to think about it beyond just the concern about whether using it constitutes plagiarism, and inviting us to think in more expansive terms about what the technology means for us and how to best make use of it in the context of writing instruction.

Additionally, I would really like to ease anxiety around this topic and encourage people to remember that writing is a technology. You can't do it without tools. When I was in my first year of college, less than 30 years ago, I wrote my first

Jason Peters



college essay on an electric typewriter and corrected typos with Wite-Out. By the time I was writing my senior honors project four years later, I was using an OCR text scanner to scan my old typewritten drafts into Microsoft Word in Windows 98 and copying and pasting digitized text into my senior project. I remember copy and paste being controversial because students didn't need to type out every word of their essays by hand.

Better writing-assistive technologies enable us to devote less labor and intellectual energy to the writing process and more of that labor and energy to the rhetorical purposes underlying our writing. ChatGPT is a new development in a long line of writing-assistive technologies that, at one time or another, seemed disruptive and destabilizing to a status quo, but which we have since learned to integrate into our writing processes.

Learn more from Peters about ChatGPT's writing limitations and teaching potential at bit.ly/4505Bv3.

G. ANDREW FRICKER

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ANTHROPOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY

AREA OF EXPERTISE: GEOGRAPHY AND SPATIAL ECOLOGY

As someone who works with a lot of earth observation imagery, AI represents a major advance in extracting valuable environmental information from satellites, aerial imagery and unmanned aerial vehicle imagery. New deep learning techniques, AI methods that teach computers to process information in a way inspired by the human brain, are as effective if not more effective than human analysts. Deep learning, in particular, is a quantum leap in terms of the

precision and accuracy of geospatial imagery prediction and classification compared to traditional methods.

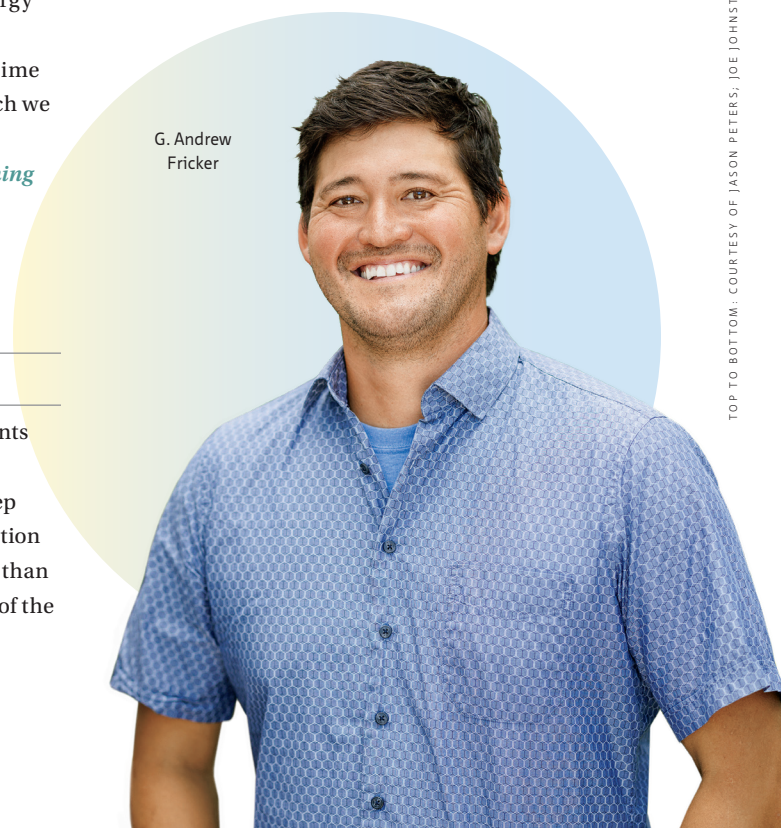
To study this, computer science Professor Jonathan Ventura and I started a research lab that focuses on using deep learning to solve geospatial environmental problems. These projects give students opportunities to work on interdisciplinary teams and with faculty geographers, biologists and computer scientists on applied research. The lab is currently working on three major projects using deep learning to:

1. Quantify eelgrass cover in the Morro Bay estuary and seaweed aquaculture in Southeast Asia.
2. Count trees and quantify tree cover in urban forests in California as part of a Cal Fire Grant.
3. Identify palm and cacao agroforestry as part of a NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory grant.

These tools seem extremely complicated to use, but that's changing rapidly. I've taught numerous students how to use deep learning models on geospatial remote sensing imagery, with no coding experience whatsoever. For students who are trying to learn to code, AI tools like ChatGPT are a really helpful resource in learning to write code.

It's an exciting time to be in the AI and remote sensing/spatial ecology field, and it's only getting easier and more accessible for the average user.

G. Andrew Fricker



Enabling Excellence

Gifts from friends and alumni enable CLA and its departments to provide high-impact Learn by Doing practices, projects and extracurricular programs. Thank you to all our supporters for helping CLA sustain the margin of excellence that Cal Poly students expect and deserve.



Scan this code with your smartphone camera to donate online. Make a one-time or recurring gift online at giving.calpoly.edu.

2022-23 Giving Statistics

A numerical look at the generosity to CLA

➤ CLA received **\$1,257,168** in new commitments

➤ Including **\$920,778** in new gifts, **\$284,890** in new pledges, and **\$51,500** in testamentary gifts from over **1,200** donors.

➤ Over **10 NEW OR RENEWED** scholarship pledges and/or endowments.



Introducing Moon-ja Yunouye-Petz, Senior Director of Development

Moon-ja (pictured at left with her family) joined the CLA in February 2023 and has been helping bridge connections with the community and campus. Contact Moon-ja at mpetz@calpoly.edu or 805-756-6776.

Thank you to the 2022-23 Dean's Advisory Council members for their time, guidance and support to CLA.

• **James W. apRoberts**
(Art and Design, '02)
CEO/Co-founder, Subplot Studio

• **Melissa S. Figueroa**
(Journalism, '02)
Chief of Strategic Communications, California High-Speed Rail Authority

• **John Hinton**
(Speech Communication, '96)
National Accounts Sales Manager, The Hartford

• **Sarah Carvalho Khan**
(English, '98)
Head of Human Resources, Vaxart Inc.

• **Howard A. Lim**
(Art and Design, '89)
President, HOW Creative

• **Daniel L. Rivoire**
(Philosophy, '07)
Executive Director - Leadership Development, SLO Chamber of Commerce

• **Christopher Trapani**
(Political Science, '90)
Founder and CEO, Christie's International Real Estate Sereno

PUTTING PASSION INTO PRACTICE

Meet Nestor Veloz-Passalacqua (Ethnic Studies, '11, Master of Public Policy, '16), the City of San Luis Obispo's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Manager

Nestor Veloz-Passalacqua began his academic career with a passion for social justice and a desire to implement practical changes. He harnessed that motivation to earn two associate degrees from Cuesta College, a bachelor's degree in comparative ethnic studies and a master's degree in public policy from Cal Poly, and a master's degree in legal studies from the University of Arizona.

"I had a strong determination to learn how using the current system's tools can help underserved communities experience the same benefits and representation in society," Veloz-Passalacqua said. "Cal Poly set that foundation and allowed me to seek a path in which my skills can be used for social justice and governmental change. The entire faculty and staff from the Ethnic Studies Department and the master of public policy program made an impact on my career and personal development. With their support, I was able to successfully marry concepts and practices key to creating change, which in turn fueled creative ways to engage and practice DEI."

Veloz-Passalacqua successfully combined his passion with practical tools once he learned how a dual degree in law and public policy would equip him to change the way the government addresses vulnerable populations' needs. After graduating, he continued his DEI work with the San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services and as DEI program manager for the SLO County Behavioral Health Department. Now as DEI manager for the city of San Luis Obispo, he partners with Cal Poly's Office of University Diversity and Inclusion and other DEI-focused organizations to create positive change in the local community.

"The work of DEI is integral for the entire community and is meant to create a healthy and thriving community for all," he said. "The entire world is more diverse and constantly changing. Transformative initiatives and strategies are needed to address social change innovatively while being conscious of the growing needs of underserved/underrepresented communities."



He encourages students with similar ideals to pursue this work. "DEI must come from a genuine desire and passion for change led by those who have been historically disenfranchised," he said. "Students should know that engaging in this work is fulfilling as it speaks directly to actual policy and community impact."

"I had a strong determination to learn how using the current system's tools can help underserved communities experience the same benefits and representation in society. Cal Poly set that foundation and allowed me to seek a path in which my skills can be used for social justice and governmental change." —NESTOR VELOZ-PASSALACQUA

1980s

Rober “Rob’t” Coltrin (Art and Design, ’86) was honored as a “Disney Legend,” the highest honor given at The Walt Disney Co., after 29 years as an Imagineer creating new attractions and lands for various Disney Parks.

1990s

Julianne Williams (Human Development, ’91) recently published a book with 19 other authors titled “You Can, You Will: True Stories of Finding Hope Through Grief and Mental Health Journeys.”

Jim Joseph (Social Sciences, ’92) was named president of UPS Airlines, one of the world’s largest cargo airlines.

Sarah Caravahlo Khan (English, ’98) was promoted to head of human resources for biotechnology company, Vaxart, Inc.

Samantha “Sami” Schneider (Speech Communication, ’98) is founder and CEO of Ampersand-People, a human resources and talent consulting firm. She was recognized as one of the top 100 most influential recruiters globally by LinkedIn.

2000s

Kristin Horowitz (M.A., English, ’06) is CEO of The Pad Climbing gym, which received the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Dream Big Woman-Owned Business of the Year award in 2022.

Daniel Rivoire (Philosophy, ’07) is the newest member of the CLA Dean’s Advisory Council. Rivoire is the executive director

for leadership development at the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce.

Jackie Duerr (Psychology, ’09) is the program manager for UC San Diego’s Transfer Student Success Program.

Jenae Nott (History, ’09) recently took a position as a secondary curriculum and instruction specialist.

2010s

Steven DeLay (Political Science and Philosophy, ’10) is the editor of “Life Above the Clouds: Philosophy in the Films of Terrence Malick,” a book about Malick’s directorial work.

Kristen Sanzari (Art and Design, ’11) is a toy designer for Mattel, where she and her teammates primarily design toys connected to Disney and Pixar movies.

Alexandra Schindler (History, ’12) is the registrar and history programs manager at New Museum Los Gatos. She is currently planning her wedding.

Stephanie Zombek (Art and Design, ’12) is the communications and marketing director for the Cal Poly Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Theresa Trenholm (English, ’14) joined law firm Snell & Wilmer’s Las Vegas office as an associate in the labor and employment practice group.

Dennis Zapata (Sociology, ’14) is an academic advisor for the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business.

Lindsay (MacLeod) Zuchelli (Journalism, ’13) and **Ed Zuchelli** (Journalism ’14) won Emmy awards for news coverage of the Alisal Fire in October 2021.

Nicole Mullikin (Modern Languages and Literatures, ’15) serves the community as an immigration attorney at her law office in San Luis Obispo.

Katy Palmer Rodgers (Anthropology and Geography, ’15) was named one of the Power 25 in Health Care in Idaho for her work as interim director at Project ECHO Idaho at the University of Idaho WWAMI Medical Education Program.

Hollie West (Journalism, ’18) is the new director of communications for the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce.

2020s

Vaughn Paul (Communication Studies, ’21) lives in San Francisco, where he works for Oracle in IT project management.

Cameron Pedretti (Sociology, ’21) finished her master’s degree in social research methods at the London School of Economics and is now a survey statistician with the U.S. Census Bureau.

Venessa Rodriguez (Interdisciplinary Studies, ’21) is the CalFresh Outreach Manager at the SLO Food Bank, promoting the CalFresh program throughout SLO County.

Leslie Torres (Communication Studies, ’22) returned to the Cal Poly campus as an alumni engagement specialist.

CLASS NOTES

Share your recent news in the next Impact magazine at cla.calpoly.edu/update.



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Enrolled Cal Poly students and alumni within one year of graduation can meet with a career counselor any time. All other alumni may make one hour-long appointment per academic year. Career Services offers both in-person and virtual career counseling appointments and virtual drop-in hours. Visit careerservices.calpoly.edu for more information.

TOP 10 CLA EMPLOYEES

- XYZ
- Deloitte
- Oracle Corp.
- Microsoft Corp.
- Stanford Health Care
- The Walt Disney Co.
- Mariposas Project
- Family Care Network Inc.
- San Luis Coastal Unified School District
- Five9 Inc.

HEAR FROM OUR ALUMNI



"I always wanted to work in the fight against climate change, but a constant source of stress for me was how I could do so without a STEM degree. However, I discovered that my writing and communication skills are strongly desired strengths in this field. Career Services gave me the opportunity to share this lesson with current students and recent graduates during a career panel in which I connected with a student and was able help him secure an internship and later a full-time job at my current company. He is now a very successful member of our team!" —CARLOS VILLACIS (POLITICAL SCIENCE, '14)



"My CLA education prepared me in many ways to enter the professional journalistic and broadcast media space. I also learned a lot from Cal Poly Career Services events and seminars with Cal Poly alumni who were able to give me insight into what a career path might look like after graduating. These factors along with my academic experiences prepared me for the rigor and quick-paced environment of my current workplace at KQED." —MARLENA JACKSON-RETONDO (ENGLISH, '22)

LOOKING TO HIRE CLA STUDENTS OR ALUMNI?

CONTACT EMPLOYER DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST TAYLOR LAW.



Taylor Law (Interdisciplinary Studies, '11, M.A., Education Leadership and Administration, '18) has more than a decade of experience with Cal Poly Career Services. In her current role, she builds and maintains relationships with employers seeking to hire College of Liberal Arts students by providing individualized solutions and plans for employers.

GET IN TOUCH WITH CAREER SERVICES

- Visit our website: careerservices.calpoly.edu
- Give us a call: 805-756-2501
- Join our exclusive mentoring platform: careerconnections.calpoly.edu