NEEL "BUBBA" MURARKA (B.S., Computer Science, 2000, M.S., Computer Science, 2003) has friends in high places – lots of them. At Cal Poly, he was the student representative on the California State University Board of Trustees and a board member for Associated Students Inc. Now, Murarka is a Business Development Manager at Facebook, the Web’s mushrooming social network with more than 400 million active users around the world.

Alumni can connect on Facebook at www.facebook.com/calpoly. Parents and current students on Facebook can connect with Cal Poly at www.facebook.com/california.polytechnic. Fan those pages and help Cal Poly top rival schools’ numbers. Alumni be sure to log in to PolyLink, as well, at www.calpolylink.com. It’s the university’s free social network, where you’ll find 50,000 alumni contacts, more than 100 alumni career mentors, and an interactive Google map of 14,000 PolyLink users (to zip code level only). If you are an alum but aren’t in PolyLink, your private first-time login code is printed on the label of this magazine next to your name.

Log in today, because you can never be too social. Ask Murarka: he has more than 500 friends and connections in multiple social networks.
Q: WHAT DO YOU DO ON THE JOB AT FACEBOOK?
A: A typical day involves meeting with key strategic partners to discuss collaboration opportunities, working with internal team members to evaluate partnership concepts and ensuring existing partnerships are running smoothly. Some of the best parts of my job involve meeting with great new startups building on Facebook Platform and working closely with Facebook’s incredible product development teams to understand their plans for the coming months.

Q: WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR JOB?
A: It is tough, but nothing is as rewarding as working through super complex product, business and customer issues to find solutions to very difficult problems. I really love working closely with the great people from Facebook and our strategic partners.

Q: WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE YOU JOINED FACEBOOK?
A: I ran my own startup, worked at a venture capital firm as an entrepreneur in residence and helped develop early versions of Bing.com for Microsoft.

Q: WHAT’S YOUR ADVICE TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT IN A SOCIAL NETWORK ON WHY THEY SHOULD JOIN ONE?
A: Try it – you’ll find you probably like and benefit from it. You can always remove your account if you don’t.

Q: YOU HAVE MORE THAN 500 PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND FRIENDS ON YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK. HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR CONNECTIONS AND FRIENDS?
A: I generally only accept connections from people I have met in person. From there I use the privacy tools that Facebook has built into the experience. They enable me to manage how I share information with my different types of connections.

Q: WHAT’S YOUR ADVICE ON USING A WEB SOCIAL NETWORK TO HELP YOUR CAREER?
A: Make sure to keep work history, personal projects and contact information up to date on your social network profile(s). Follow the golden rule and try to help people by facilitating introductions or following up with why you are not able to help. When you are looking for your next opportunity, always find a direct connection to a company you want to work for instead of relying on an online form to submit your resume. And stay connected with recruiters as a passive job seeker; you never know when the perfect opportunity might come knocking.

Q: SHOULD ALUMNI BELONG TO MORE THAN ONE SOCIAL NETWORK?
A: Facebook is designed to be a broad service, helping people connect with all those who matter in their life. When people have more specific needs — say, professional or job networking — they should also consider some of the networks designed for those specific purposes.

Q: WHAT SHOULD YOU PUT ON YOUR SOCIAL NETWORKING PROFILES?
A: What you post represents you. So the best advice I can offer is: Be thoughtful about what you say and who you are sharing it with, just like we all do in person. I tend to share interesting links I find and photos from my cell phone, and I ask for recommendations via status updates. Other folks I am connected with write long notes, share their gaming scores or write funny pithy status updates.

Q: HOW DID YOUR CAL POLY DEGREE PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR CAREER?
A: In too many ways to count, but things that jump to mind include great technical understanding, confidence to work with anyone, and a willingness to jump in head first to solve problems.

Q: WHAT WAS THE BEST CLASS YOU TOOK AT CAL POLY?
A: Operating Systems II my senior year, where I built a network MP3 player with two lab partners in lieu of taking the final. It was so much fun to do something that hands-on and complicated.

Q: WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE PROFESSOR AT CAL POLY – AND WHY?
A: I could spend days listing the names all of the professors and staff members who helped make me who I am. One person who was really impactful and who I continue to get great mentorship from is Dr. Baker. I’ll miss seeing him around campus when I visit, and I hope he enjoys his well-earned retirement.