

**Proposal for Cal Poly Livestock Judging Team Golf Tournament**

Gracie Nino and Megan Farley

Agricultural Education and Communication Department

Senior Project

### Introduction

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's Livestock Judging Team was founded in 1948. Since then, there had consistently been a team competing for Cal Poly until 2002. Unfortunately, the judging team was cut due to budget constraints placed on the Animal Science Department. In 2017, Mr. Lee Rincker spearheaded the reinstatement of the team, recruiting five members to compete for the season.

Intercollegiate livestock judging is a co-curricular activity where competitors apply their knowledge of animal science to determine the quality of livestock animals for use in real-world situations. Research has determined that this program develops both life and professional skills. These skills include, but are not limited to, the ability to make quick, informed decisions, understand the industry, and defend their reasoning (Rusk et. al).

It is the hope of the Animal Science Department that the University will have a team to compete for years to come. There are numerous travel and registration costs for a livestock judging team, sometimes up to \$25,000 annually, and, therefore, a significant budget is required to make competing possible (Culp, 2015). Alumni support is a beneficial and untapped funding source for the livestock judging team at Cal Poly. With their support, it is more likely that Cal Poly will continue to be able to justify a judging program for its students. In order to raise the funds and support of alumni, the first annual Cal Poly Livestock Judging Alumni Golf Tournament will be implemented in Spring of 2019.

### Background

Hosting a golf tournament was the decision of the advisor and livestock judging coach, Lee Rincker, based upon reflection of other livestock judging programs' fundraising examples. The success of those tournaments guided the planning efforts of the Cal Poly alumni tournament (University of Illinois, 2018). This golf tournament event will be targeted towards judging team alumni. Alumni are the ideal demographic for program support. They have a major stake in the program at hand because, in this project's case, they were once the students on the team, needing funding. There are numerous reasons for alumni to support their alma mater, and many include personal stakes. Alumni have family or friends interested in the program and others simply love what it has done for their own lives (Higgins, 2018). Many of the four-year colleges that compete in livestock judging say their teams are made possible by the support of alumni (Culp, 2015). Raising alumni support for this program will make major positive impacts and will open opportunities for the students involved. Once alumni support is established, financial support often continues for many years if the donor contacts are maintained.

### Methodology

Once approving the idea with Mr. Rincker, the authors reached out to alumni and local golf courses to examine potential dates and locations. Because the event is a fundraiser, the authors did their part to strategize ways to keep costs as low as possible when planning, yet still kept in mind the ideal quality of the event. This decision involved forming a flexible budget which is meant to evolve as donations and sponsorships are confirmed. Once a cohesive plan was formed, the authors and Lee Rincker approached Animal Science Department Head Dr. Jamie Noland to approve the project conceptual. Once receiving the go-ahead, Mr. Rincker and those involved in the program can begin promoting the event.

The first item the authors developed a list of judging alumni names and contact information in order to get in touch with potential participants. As a secondary effort to market

the event, the authors created a Facebook page for the Cal Poly SLO Livestock Judging Program. This page was promoted and shared by alumni to continuously reach a wide network of support. With the use of social media, particularly Facebook, the students built a strong method of information transmission to alumni and team supporters. Using strategically timed posts, the Cal Poly SLO Livestock Judging Team Facebook page gained followers and was a means of gathering alumni contact information. This, in tandem with direct alumni contact, is suggested as a means for ongoing alumni support leading up to the event.

The students initially ran into the roadblock that Facebook pages cannot be shared by administrators to those who they are not friends with on Facebook. Because the students were not personally connected to some of the alumni, this was an obstacle. To adjust to this problem, the authors took advantage of their personal Facebook networks to encourage others to share the page with friends. It is suggested continual efforts of this nature be made leading up to the event. Once an alumni network is well-established, the golf tournament will be able to gain support.

Those implementing the golf tournament should use the page to publish an event for the golf tournament. They then should create a brochure for the event and mail it to alumni and other potential participants by the date outlined by the authors. Social media updates have been created to increase awareness and to bolster enthusiasm leading up to the event.

Lastly, the authors created a sponsorship packet for the use of those implementing the event to ensure the program and the tournament are well supported. This packet includes a description of the program status, an excerpt from an article written by a 2017 team alumna, and an outline of sponsorship levels available. Many alumni are and will continue to donate or provide useful contacts to ensure the success of the tournament. This involves sponsoring holes, donating to the silent auction, aiding in promotion, and making monetary donations. All of this was done with the guidance of Mr. Rincker to make sure the event successfully represented the program. Additionally, Ms. Silcott aided in the detailed event planning in order to guarantee the success of the tournament. On the day of the tournament, a small group of students and volunteers, including the 2019 Livestock Judging Team and recent alumni, will help the event run effectively and efficiently.

#### What's Next

Continual effort will be made to broaden the reach of the Cal Poly Livestock Judging Team's social media influence with the help of scheduled posts made during the fall of 2018. Information about the 2019 team will be shared as events happen that are noteworthy such as major contests, awards and trips. Alumni information will continue to be collected, and all steps outlined in the event timeline proposal will be carried out according to schedule with flexibility allowed for any unforeseen changes. Those carrying out the event will get financial support to print already created sponsor packets that will be sent to all alumni contact information gathered. The golf tournament will be held in the spring of 2019 at an 18-hole golf course with as many teams as possible to guarantee an entertaining and financially successful fundraiser.

## Annotated Bibliography

Culp, Kyle C., (2015). "Factors Associated with Sustainability of Collegiate Livestock Judging Programs at Four Year Universities". Electronic Thesis. Ohio State University. 2015.

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Shike, Daniel W. Coach, University of Illinois Livestock Judging Team. Personal correspondence. March 2018.