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CAL POLY WELCOMES ITS NEW LEADER, JEFFREY D. ARMSTRONG

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FOR OUR SPRING EDITION, WE APPROPRIATELY CELEBRATE A NEW BEGINNING AT CAL POLY BY WELCOMING NEW PRESIDENT JEFFREY D. ARMSTRONG. ARMSTRONG BRINGS A DEEP BACKGROUND IN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION AND AGRICULTURE FROM HIS PREVIOUS POSTS IN MICHIGAN AND NORTH CAROLINA — AND HE HAS A KEEN APPRECIATION FOR HANDS-ON LEARNING THAT DATES TO HIS UPBRINGING ON A KENTUCKY FARM.

AS WE WENT TO PRESS, ARMSTRONG HAD JUST COMPLETED HIS FIRST MONTH ON THE JOB — WITH A WHIRLWIND OF MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS, ALUMNI, FACULTY AND STAFF. AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS: THE MUSTANG BAND'S SEASONAL PRESENTATION AND THE NEW CENTER FOR INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

AND AS ONE WOULD EXPECT, CAL POLY ALUMNI CONTINUE THIS SPIRIT OF INNOVATION IN THEIR PROFESSIONS. FOR EXAMPLES, SEE THE FEATURES ON SEVERAL ALUMNI ENGAGED IN CUTTING-EDGE EFFORTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE NEXT TWO ISSUES.

SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS SCORES NATIONAL AWARDS

CAL POLY SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS (SWE) IS A PERENNIAL WINNER AT THE ORGANIZATION'S NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND DID NOT DISAPPEAR AT THIS YEAR'S EVENT NOV 4-6 IN ORLANDO, FLA.

THE GROUP CAME HOME WITH FIRST-PLACE AWARDS FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM TECH DESIGN CONTEST, OUTREACH FOR A LARGE SECTION, AND MEMBERSHIP RETENTION FOR A LARGER SECTION. IN ADDITION, CURRENT CAL POLY SWE PRESIDENT STEPHANIE SMITH WROTE THE AWARD FOR SCHOLARSHIP WHILE PAST PRESIDENT LESLEY TALLFORD AND RECENT GRADUATE KATHERINE GAGE WERE TWO OF FIVE NATIONAL OUTSTANDING COLLEGIATE MEMBER AWARD WINNERS.

THE WINNING TEAM TECH PROJECT INVOLVED DESIGNING A SMALL-SCALE MOBILE PATIENT MONITORING SYSTEM THAT SENDS DIRECT WIRELESS ALERTS TO THE EMERGENCY TEAM WHEN A PATIENT GOES INTO CARDIAC ARREST OR OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATION. DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL PROTOTYPE REQUIRED THAT THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM OF 12 STUDENTS FOCUS ON ELECTRONICS, COMPUTER-AIDED DRAFTING AND BIOENGINEERING.

CAL POLY RETAINS TOP 50 RANKING ON KIPLINGER'S BEST VALUE LIST

WASHINGTON, D.C.-BASED BUSINESS PUBLICATION KIPLINGER'S PERSONAL FINANCE AGAIN NAMED CAL POLY AS ONE OF THE 100 BEST VALUES IN PUBLIC COLLEGES 2010-11.

CAL POLY RETAINED ITS SPOT AT NO. 30 ON THE LIST OF 100 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES FROM AROUND THE U.S. FOR IN-STATE STUDENTS AND MOVES UP 14 SPOTS TO NO. 33 FOR OUT-OF-STATE STUDENTS.

IT JOINS SEVEN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA CAMPUSES (SAN DIEGO, UC, BERKELEY, IRVINE, SANTA BARBARA, DAVIS AND SANTA CRUZ) AS WELL AS CAL STATE LONG BEACH AND SAN DIEGO STATE FROM THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM.

KIPLINGER'S DEVELOPS ITS LIST ON A COMBINATION OF ACADEMIC AND AFFORDABILITY THROUGH ITS OWN REPORTING AND EXISTING DATA ON MORE THAN 500 PUBLIC, FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION PROFESSOR TEACHES IN RUSSIA AND THE UKRAINE

CAL POLY GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION PROFESSOR KEN MACRO RECENTLY COMPLETED A SEMESTER IN RUSSIA AND THE UKRAINE, TEACHING AT MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY OF PRINTING ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN AND THE KIEV POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE IN UKRAINE. MACRO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY REGIS DELMONTAGE, FORMERLY CEO OF THE WASHINGTON, D.C.-BASED ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPLIERS OF PRINTING, PUBLISHING AND CONVERTING TECHNOLOGIES. THE TWO PROVIDED AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY ON CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN THE PRINTING SECTOR (BOTH DOMESTIC AND ABROAD), AND CURRENT TRENDS IN MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRODUCTION CONTROL METHODS FOR PRINT AND DIGITAL PRODUCERS, PRODUCTS TO STUDENTS AND FACULTY AT THE THREE UNIVERSITIES.

CAL POLY JOURNALISM PROFESSOR TAKES SKILLS TO THAILAND

BRADY TUEFTL, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF JOURNALISM AT CAL POLY, ACCOMPANIED THE UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT CHAPTER OF ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS TO THE VILLAGE OF HUA SAI NAM KHUN, THAILAND, IN DECEMBER.

THE TRIP WAS PART OF THE FINAL PHASE OF A FIVE-YEAR ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS EFFORT WORKING WITH THE RESIDENTS OF SIX REMOTE MOUNTAIN VILLAGES ON SUSTAINABLE WATER FILTERATION SYSTEMS. THE VILLAGES — WITH A TOTAL POPULATION OF 5,540 — REPRESENT THE ONLY SETTLEMENT OF KHASI PEOPLE IN THAILAND.

TUEFTL WAS INVITED TO ACCOMPANY THE TEAM TO ASSIST IN DOCUMENTING THE EXPERIENCE THROUGH MULTIMEDIA STORYTELLING, WHICH HE TEACHES IN CAL POLY'S JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT. TUEFTL ALSO TEACHES COURSES IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION, MULTIMEDIA REPORTING, PHOTOJOURNALISM AND WRITING FOR THE WEB, AND HE IS THE ADVISOR FOR MUSTANG DAILY — CAL POLY'S STUDENT-OPERATED NEWSPAPER.

"AS PART OF MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE TEAM," TUEFTL SAID, "I PLAN ON APPLYING THE TECHNIQUES THAT I TEACH IN MY JOURNALISM CLASSES TO ACCURATELY CAPTURING THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMUNITY, ITS PEOPLE, THE PROJECT, AND THE CAL POLY TEAM'S ONGOING EFFORTS."
CAL POLY TO HELP BUILD ENVIRONMENT RESOURCE CENTER IN HAITI

CAL POLY’S COLLEGE of Architecture and Environmental Design will join several national organizations to help the State University of Haiti construct a new Haiti Built Environment Resource Center, to provide educational courses related to constructing safer buildings (particularly schools), and disaster resilient communities for Haitian officials and builders.

The US National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) will lead a team in charge of creating the center. NIBS and the Advanced Research Institute of Virginia Tech invited Cal Poly to join the group because of the university’s hands-on learning approach, as well as faculty expertise in seismic safety and planning for disaster-resilient communities.

William Sierchio, a professor in Cal Poly’s City and Regional Planning Department, will coordinate the college’s effort during the current academic year. Faculty member James Mowani, a certified disaster safety officer, is also part of the team.

‘OUR STUDENTS WILL GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE THROUGH COURSEWORK AND FIELD TRIPS.”

Sierchio expects student to be involved in the project following the construction of the Haiti Built Environment Resource Center. “Our students will get hands-on experience with the project through coursework and field trips,” he said.

ART AND DESIGN STUDENTS PRODUCE NEW UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE SYMBOLS

ART AND DESIGN STUDENTS, advised by assistant professor Kathryn McCormick, will have their work featured in various hospitals and health care facilities across the country.

The Society for Environmental Graphic Design and Habitat for Humanity, an organization that develops solutions to language barriers in health care, recently unveiled new Universal Symbols in Health Care, many of which were designed by College of Liberal Arts’ Art and Design students.

KENNEDY WAS NAMED THE PRESIDENT OF CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE IN 1967 AND RETIRED FEB. 1, 1979, AS PRESIDENT OF CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY.

ROBERT E. KENNEDY, PRESIDENT EMERITUS

CAL POLY PRESIDENT EMERITUS Robert E. Kennedy, who led the university for more than 32 years and who remained engaged with Cal Poly for decades after his retirement, died Christmas Day 2010 at age 95.

Kennedy was named the president of California State Polytechnic College in 1967 and retired Feb. 1, 1979, as president of California Polytechnic State University. At the institution’s seventh presidency, he oversaw a period of significant, concentrated growth.

Kennedy led the campus through a key period of transformation, when it became a university and significantly expanded both its physical campus and its academic offerings.

Kennedy became head of Cal Poly’s Journalism Department in 1946. Three years later, he also took on the role of the school’s public relations director. He served as assistant to President Julius McPhee from 1950 to 1957, dean of the Arts and Sciences Division from 1957 to 1959, and vice president of Cal Poly from 1959 to 1967, before his 12-year tenure as the campus’ leader.

In recognition of his dedicated service and profound influence on Cal Poly, the California State University trustees voted upon his retirement to name the campus’ then-new library building the Robert E. Kennedy Library.

THE WORD “MENTOR” might summon thoughts of a long-time, trusted confidant providing sage advice and motivation in a relationship built over years.

While the Cal Poly Alumni Association’s Mustang Mentoring Day seeks to plant the seeds for such lasting connections, it also shows students and grads alike that meaningful mentoring can be accomplished in much smaller bites — sometimes as little as five minutes.

At the third Mustang Mentoring Day in February, nearly 200 Cal Poly students and alumni volunteers from the College of Engineering and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design participated in the day-long mentoring program, which included team building, speed mentoring sessions, and in-depth one-on-one sessions between students and mentors.

During the “speed mentoring” sessions — think “speed dating,” only aimed at finding connections through shared college or career interests — students gained confidence in presenting themselves professionally and met up to 10 potential mentors. After lunch, students were given more one-on-one time with alumni they connected with during the earlier sessions.

Throughout the day, mentors shared their professional and personal experiences with students. An engineering alumna explained how “Cal Poly’s Learn By Doing approach is applied everyday to develop products in my field.” And an architect alumna told students, “Cal Poly teaches you to think, and that has clearly stood out to me in working with colleagues from other universities.”

After the event, students were responsible for following up with alumni they connected with and identified as potential mentors. One student said he immediately began corresponding via e-mail with four alumni he met. And he realized that, “regardless of whether the alumni are in my industry of interest, they are more than willing to share their Cal Poly network and community to help students succeed.”

THE NEXT GENERATION

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI CONVERGE FOR THE SPRING MUSTANG MENTORING DAY
<p>By Teresa Mariani Hendrix</p>

And they were bright elementary school girls in northern Afghanistan when the Taliban came to power in the 1990s and shut down their schools. But the two never gave up on their dreams: a college education.

Now, thanks to a unique coalition of faculty, administrators, a U.S. Congresswoman and private donations from Cal Poly supporters who also didn’t want to give up on that dream, the two have earned Cal Poly agriculture degrees.

Albsar and Baitor are the first graduates from Cal Poly’s Afghan Educational Outreach Program and Fund — though administrators past and present hope they won’t be the last.

"If every university in the United States reached out to engage its community to foster the education of two Afghan women," said President Emeritus Warren J. Baker, "Imagine the impact these women would have upon returning to Afghanistan."

The story of how Albasar and Baitor made their way from Kabul to the December commencement in Mott Gym has touched a growing circle of Cal Poly supporters.

The pair studied at home between the time the Taliban shut down their elementary schools and U.S. forces arrived and re-opened education to girls and women. By summer 2005, the 19-year-olds were among dozens of young women sitting on the floor in a bullet-pocked Kabul University classroom where Cal Poly Social Sciences Professor Malita Zulficar was teaching. (Zulficar, an Afghan native and former Kabul University professor, has returned to Kabul to teach most summers since the entry of U.S. troops.)

Kabul University still had no running water, only sporadic electricity, and no womens' restrooms. Armed security guards and walls kept students and faculty relatively safe on campus. But Taliban guerrillas were kidnapping female college students off the streets, trying to intimidate young women and the families sending them to school.

Still, Albasar and Baitor were determined to get a college education. Zulficar said they stood out in her classroom. Albasar and Baitor would follow me to talk to me after class," she said. "They were hungry for learning!"

Zulficar promised that if she could find a way, she would help them continue their studies. A meeting with then-President Baker and Afghan government officials solidified a plan that proved the chance. "Jawed asked Baker about the potential for a partnership between Cal Poly and Afghanistan; Baker and Zulficar suggested bringing Albasar and Baitor to Cal Poly as a pilot program."

U.S. Representative Lois Capps and her office jumped in to arrange student visas. Cal Poly set up the Afghan University Outreach Program and Fund and found private support.

On July 1, 2006, Albasar arrived to stay in Zulficar’s home on Christmas Day 2005. With her help, they enrolled as students nearby at Cuesta College, where they completed CSU general education requirements to transfer to Cal Poly.

When Zulficar was named to serve as Afghanistan’s ambassador to Germany from 2006 to 2009, Baitor and Albasar went to live with the family of longtime Cal Poly administrator Dan Howard Greene. His wife, Paula, who holds a Cal Poly teaching credential, tutored Albasar and Baitor in math and English while they attended Cuesta. The two young women arrived on campus as transfer students in 2008.

Now, bachelor’s degrees in hand, Albasar and Baitor want to share what they learned with developing nations. They’re looking for work with non-government aid agencies (NGOs) serving undeveloped countries in Eurasia and Africa. Albasar, who minored in water and irrigation technology and interned with Capps’ office in summer 2010, has already returned to Kabul to look for work.

"I cannot give up hope on my country," she said before leaving. "I want to help the farmers by creating some kind of international market for the unique fresh fruits and dry fruits grown in Afghanistan. I also want to work with the government to help provide our people with clean drinking water and make use of rain, snow and well water for agricultural products."

Baitor minored in food science and nutrition. Last summer, she started a fellow Cal Poly agriculture grad. Now they hope to find work together with international aid agencies, to bring U.S. agriculture techniques to developing countries, including Afghanistan.

"I want to go back to Afghanistan — it is my home and my family is there," Albasar said. "But I also want to continue my education and work and live in many places around the world."

Education of a Lost Generation
Cal Poly Afghan Outreach Program graduates its first two students

"If every university in the United States reached out to engage its community to foster the education of two Afghan women, imagine the impact these women would have upon returning to Afghanistan."

— President Emeritus Warren J. Baker
NEED QUICK, INEXPENSIVE REPAIRS for a cracked iPhone screen? Want a bicycle brake that prevents head-over-handlebar crashes? Looking for a device that will cool your drinks in a matter of minutes?

The new Cal Poly Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship has you covered. These are just a few of the novel business and product ideas Cal Poly students are developing through the center.

Launched last fall, the center is Cal Poly’s first comprehensive assembly of resources to encourage students from across the university to innovate, arm them with the tools they need to turn their ideas into companies, and connect them with alumni, community and on-campus resources.

The center is the brainchild of Lou Tornatzky and Jonathan York of the Orfalea College of Business. York, Cal Poly’s first professor of entrepreneurship, believes the center will play a critical role in student success in the years to come.

“Today, college grads enter a world that’s much different from the one their parents faced,” he said. “Their success may depend on whether they can create their own opportunities.”

On a campus where Learn by Doing is a way of life, Cal Poly students hone their problem-solving abilities, develop critical thinking skills and then unleash their creativity. The university has always nurtured entrepreneurial potential; indeed many grads have gone on to develop breakthrough products and establish their own companies.

Now, though, the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship offers a comprehensive program for entrepreneurial activities.

BRINGING VISIONARIES TOGETHER

The center’s year-round activities include mentoring, internships with start-up companies, lectures by visiting entrepreneurs and alumni, and assistance in preparing for funding opportunities such as the “no strings attached” contest for Cal Poly students sponsored by Innovation Quest each spring.

Tornatzky and York also established a home for some of these activities – called the “Entrepreneurial Ideation Lab,” a room filled with white boards, flexible seating and other equipment students need to brainstorm.

Events sponsored by the center are as spirited as they are educational. Several months during the academic year, the organization hosts Entrepreneurship Forums. Students, faculty, alumni and community members come to network, share ideas and learn about tools for success.

A key goal of the center is to bring visionaries together. Classes and activities introduce students, faculty and alumni from across the university to each other and to members of the business community. Young entrepreneurs learn to develop the contacts they need to take their ideas to market.

Diversity of skill sets and experiences is a key strength of the BevCool team, a group of six engineering and business students who joined forces to design a device that chills beverages in two minutes.

In just a few months, the team has created a product plan, built a prototype and earned seed money by winning the Elevator Pitch Competition. “We’re taking advantage of all the center has to offer in bringing BevCool to market,” said team leader Matt Slette, a Mechanical Engineering student.

To read more about the center, visit www.calpolyentrepreneurship.com.
MEET THE PRESIDENT

CAL POLY WELCOMES ITS NEW LEADER: JEFFREY D. ARMSTRONG

BY MATT LAZIER

The Morning Sun Shone bluish-white over San Luis Obispo on Feb. 1, literally and figuratively, a new day was dawning over Cal Poly as President Jeffrey Dyer Armstrong prepared for his first day on the job.

Agenda item No. 1: Meet with ASI President Sarah Storelli and the presidents of the campus’s six college student councils for breakfast at Poly Canyon Village.

“The most important person on this campus is the student. The students are why we are all here,” Armstrong said as he arrived for the gathering. “So, my first order of presidential business is to hear what these student leaders have to say.”

Selected by the CSU Board of Trustees in December as the university’s ninth permanent president, Armstrong takes the helm at a critical juncture in Cal Poly’s history. The state’s budget crisis is squeezing higher education funding, threatening the university’s polytechnic programs and diminishing Cal Poly’s ability to graduate well-prepared professionals into California’s workforce.

That may sound daunting for a new president, but Armstrong is optimistic. In an interview with Cal Poly Magazine, he acknowledged the challenges the university faces but nonetheless expressed confidence about Cal Poly’s ability not only to survive California’s current fiscal turbulence, but also to thrive in the decades to come.

Q: GIVEN THE STATE’S RETREAT FROM FUNDING THE STATE UNIVERSITIES, ISN’T YOUR OPTIMISM A BIT UNREALISTIC?

A: Someone once told me that optimists and pessimists actually have one trait in common: They both think they’re realistic. Let’s just say I prefer my brand of realism over the pessimist’s.

I’m optimistic for many reasons. We continue to attract California’s brightest, most motivated students — so many that we can only take a fraction of the demand every year. It’s no mystery why Cal Poly is in high demand. Our faculty and staff are deeply committed to helping students succeed. That kind of nurturing environment is exciting.

And because of our polytechnic focus with our Learn By Doing approach at the core, our graduates are in high demand. They enter the workforce comfortable with science and technology, and they have more hands-on experience than most of their peers. California’s key industries need employees who are ready to contribute on Day One, and Cal Poly graduates are ready to do that. Employers tell us that they save a year in training when they how a Cal Poly grad. As a result, our graduates earn at the top tier and quickly become leaders in their professions and communities.

All of that results in alumni who cherish their Cal Poly experience — and are willing to give back with their time, talent and resources. We know from nationwide research that our alumni are exceptionally loyal, and I have no doubt they will help us however they can to ensure that Cal Poly remains a distinctive and highly respected institution.

Q: BUT GIVEN CALIFORNIA’S DESPERATE BUDGET SITUATION, HOW CAN CAL POLY MOVE FORWARD WHILE THE STATE RETREATS FROM ITS COMMITMENT TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

A: We need adequate state funding to keep our polytechnic programs operating. Legislators know that these programs, undergirded by our Learn By Doing philosophy, are relatively expensive to operate. So, part of my job will be to work with the CSU to try to persuade the relevant people in Sacramento to make sure Cal Poly is funded adequately.

That said, Cal Poly needs to rethink how we collect the resources to maintain and enrich our programs.

State funding simply won’t play as large a role for Cal Poly in the future. Here’s an example of why. The funding level the governor is proposing for the CSU this year is the same as in 1999 — only the CSU has 70,000 more students now. That gap
CAL POLY’S NEWEST AMBASSADOR

SHARON ARMSTRONG LOOKS FORWARD TO REPRESENTING THE UNIVERSITY

MORRIS W. AGRICULTURAUST – all have described Sharon Armstrong in her life and career. As Cal Poly’s first lady, she now adds “ambassador” to the list. She is enthusiastic about the rich and varied opportunities before her, both on and off campus, as she works with her husband, President Jeffrey D. Armstrong. “The best way I can serve,” she said, “is to help Jeff however I can, accompanying him on campus visits and greeting Cal Poly’s friends and supporters in our home.”

She also plans to become active with local nonprofit agencies, “enjoying helping others,” she said, “and I look forward to discovering how I can best do that here.” Born in Bridgewater, N.J., Armstrong spent summers working for Augrow Seed Company, formerly a subsidiary of Lipton. Her interest in agriculture led her to Murray State University and an agriculture degree with horticulture emphasis.

After graduating and getting married, Armstrong worked two jobs – as a florist and as a seed analyst for the State of North Carolina. When the Armstongs moved to Michigan in 2001, she went to work as an analyst for the nonprofit Michigan Cup Improvement Association, which promotes the production and use of improved seed stocks.

When she and her husband moved to Purdue University in West Lafayette, she took a similar post with the State of Indiana. When the Armstongs moved to Michigan in 2001, she went to work as an analyst for the nonprofit Michigan Cup Improvement Association, which promotes the production and use of improved seed stocks and serves as Michigan’s official seed certification agency.

Her priority, while being in and out of the formal workforce, was her role as a mother to daughter Jessica, now 26, and son Zach, 21. “I thoroughly enjoyed my professional work,” she said, “but raising our children is my proudest and most satisfying accomplishment.”

Armstrong enjoys reading, gardening and hiking and has competed in distance running along with her husband. She looks forward to enjoying outdoor activities on the Central Coast.

She also said she is looking forward to living on campus in the President’s House.

“She’s such a positive vibration here,” she said, “and Jeff and I are thrilled to make our home in the midst of it all.”

On her first day as a First Lady, Armstrong said, “I’m blessed, of course, but I’m confident in saying the Cal Poly community is fortunate to have Sharon. I know am. Sharon is my trusted confidante, my life coach and my best friend.”

Q: HOW WILL WE KNOW IF CAL POLY IS DOING ITS JOB WELL?
A: My daily presidential campus is fixed on one guiding light: student success. Every decision I make as president will be based on the question “Will this help students succeed?”

The formula for success is straightforward: Put smart, motivated students together with caring and dedicated faculty and staff. How to measure success? One way is graduation rates. Cal Poly does this well already; our graduation rates are the best in the CSU, and we’ve been on an upward trend for five years. I suspect that progress in the next couple of years will be harder to come by given the probable cutbacks in state funding – but over the long haul, we will make steady progress on graduation rates.

Another marker for student success is how well our alumni perform after they leave us. Are our graduates continuing to lead good jobs? Are they moving on to prestigious graduate programs? Are they earning at the top of the pay scales? Are they quickly moving into leadership roles? If the answers are yes, then we’re doing our job.

Of course, we can always improve. I won’t be satisfied until we’re graduating every one of our students on time and sending them off to long, productive lives.

Q: WHAT AREAS OF THE PLAN DO YOU STILL NEED WORK?
A: It’s an excellent draft in so many ways. I particularly like the vision statement’s focus on our need “to help California meet future challenges in a global context.” I want to see some expansion on that point, because I believe it’s a critical part of our mission that we offer students a more global, multi-cultural experience. For our graduates to succeed in their professions, we have to enhance their awareness of the rest of the world. They need to understand different cultures if they’re going to function well in an increasingly interconnected global community. I want to be sure that we’re preparing Cal Poly students exceptionally well for a future that will change rapidly in ways not yet imagined.

Q: DOES LEARN BY DOING REMAIN CENTRAL TO A CAL POLY EDUCATION IN THE FUTURE?
A: Absolutely. Learn by Doing is the heart of Cal Poly, and no one does it better.

Before stepping into the power of hands-on learning, I grew up on a farm and had a lot of chores. My parents were good teachers, but my learning accelerated when I actually had to do the jobs, rather than just listen. I experienced this when I was in college, as well. I also believe that Learn by Doing is the key to the professional success that Cal Poly alumni enjoy. I have the sentiment I heard many times already: Employees love our graduates because they have two hands on the problem and two feet on the ground.

Q: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO IN YOUR FIRST FEW WEEKS ON THE JOB?
A: That’s easy: No matter who I talk to on campus, no one is satisfied with the status quo. Everyone believes that as great as Cal Poly is, we can make it better. That’s why I know my optimism is realistic.

Q: HOW DOES THAT PLAY INTO THE CAMPUS’ EFFORT TO UPDATE CAL POLY’S STRATEGIC PLAN?
A: We will be working to update the Strategic Plan in the next few months. We have the support of the faculty and the students, and we are excited to move forward with this important project. We are looking forward to hearing from everyone on campus about their ideas and suggestions.

Q: WHAT AREAS OF THE PLAN DO YOU STILL NEED WORK?
A: It’s a great plan, and we are already working to implement it.

Q: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO IN YOUR FIRST FEW WEEKS ON THE JOB?
A: That’s easy: No matter who I talk to on campus, no one is satisfied with the status quo. Everyone believes that as great as Cal Poly is, we can make it better. That’s why I know my optimism is realistic.

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BUTTERFLIES ON THE BRINK

STUDIES SINCE THE EARLY 1990s indicate Western U.S. populations of the monarch butterfly are headed for extinction. But occasional spikes that buck the decline leave experts hopeful these seemingly fragile beauties can rebound.

Through a project called Monarch Alert, Cal Poly students and faculty are doing their part to help that hope become reality. In the process, Monarch Alert is giving students a taste of Cal Poly's Learn by Doing approach.

Launched in 2001 by Professor Emeritus Dennis Frey and now under the direction of biology professor Franklin Villalba, Monarch Alert helps generate data needed to determine just how experts can bring about a monarch resurgence.

Preliminary data suggests that the population at monitored sites in Monterey County declined from 35,000 monarchs in 2008-09 to only 5,000 in 2009-10. So monarchs can use all the help they can get from the likes of Villalba and his students.

Villalba (B.S. Biology, 1987) said Monarch Alert's mission is two-pronged: I only do projects in which I can involve students and have some impact on the preservation of a threatened or endangered species.
The ultimate goal of the program is to help shape conservation management techniques that will stem the population decline or even boost the number of monarchs. Their research is based on the monarchs’ migratory habits. From early March to late October, monarchs are found throughout the U.S. and Canada. As each winter approaches, monarchs migrate to “overwintering” sites as many as 3,000 miles away — Western monarchs to California's coast and Eastern monarchs to Mexico’s Sierra Madre Mountains. Monarchs don't fly at temperatures below 55 degrees Fahrenheit. At night, they hang from trees, nested in clumps that look more like dried brown leaves than vibrantly colored butterflies. The clumping helps the monarchs conserve energy and heat and helps keep branches from being buffeted by wind. Led by two graduate students — program coordinator Jessica Griffiths and field coordinator Jaime George — 25 Cal Poly students count monarchs at 17 sites in Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. They use tagging to determine the number of monarchs in residence this season and, for the first time, to determine movement between overwintering sites. Insight into how the butterflies use the landscape may be critical in the management of monarch habitats. Butterflies arriving at a grove that has been diminished or destroyed may not be able to make the trip to another grove before adulthood. The consequences could be serious. An important lesson for students, Villablank said, is that “it’s not easy to study nature in nature.” Most of the counts are done in the mornings, when the butterflies are damp and unable to fly because of low body temperatures. But if the air temperature rises earlier than expected, “all 3,000 butterflies burst from the tree at the same moment,” he said, and the count is ruined. Students also learn that communication is important to conservation. “People only conserve things they are aware of and care about,” Villablank said; so students make public presentations and provide information and opportunities for people to be involved. Monarch Alert has benefited from the involvement of friends such as Helen Johnson, a retired medical technician and citizen scientist who first urged Frey to start the program, Johnson’s financial support has been the sole source of funding for student research over the last decade. The monarchs, she said, focus their life on retirement. In turn, she is helping Cal Poly students pursue important research that could positively impact their future academic and professional endeavors. Student team leaders agree: “I chose Cal Poly because it was important to me to do research that is applied, not just theoretical,” George said. And Griffiths said faculty encourage students to develop their own research projects and build skills outside of the classroom. “It’s amazing for students to be doing this kind of field work as undergrads,” she said. “There is no substitute for that kind of experience.”

To learn more about monarch butterflies and find out how you can help with the ongoing conservation efforts, go to monarchbutterfly.com.

PROTECTING THE SUBLIME ART OF HISTORY

WHEN HE OPENED HIS FIRST OFFICE in San Diego in 1976, architect Milford Wayne Donaldson (Bachelor of Architecture, ’71, Engineering, ’67) vowed to retire at 65. He missed that deadline by more than two decades, and at 67, he’s still not ready to quit.

In fact, last May, he received a new, impressive title, when President Barack Obama appointed him chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Donaldson said he couldn’t turn the offer down, even though the pay is minimal (actually, zero) and the responsibility awesome. “It took my breath away to hear President Obama had appointed me,” he said.

Donaldson is the first architect to serve on a chair in the 45-year history of the council, the nation’s lead agency on historic preservation. It is not a full-time position, so he retains his job as California's State Historic Preservation Officer, which former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger named him in 2004.

Known for his award-winning historic preservation work, Donaldson didn’t start out yearning to renovate old buildings. While an undergraduate at Uppsala University in Sweden, he got into inflatable structures and even lived in an inflatable “biocellular” one summer. Studying for a master's degree in Scotland, he focused on cutting-edge technology, working with living structures that could evolve, create food and oxygen, and take care of bio-waste.

But those years in Europe exposed Donaldson to buildings hundreds of years old. "The oldest building at Uppsala University?" Donaldson said, "was built in 1532 — 40 years after Columbus landed." Remembering that building’s marble steps, he said, "They had probably been repaired several times — but the same type of marble. That was my first unconscious awareness moving me toward preservation. It was sublime.”

Donaldson returned to the US in 1972. Six years later, he opened his own business and still practiced with infallible, But his interest in old buildings persisted. “Downtown San Diego was a mess,” he said. “After the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, things started to take off, but San Diego got a late start.”

Fearing demolition and redevelopment, Donaldson and other downtown business owners created the Historic Gaslamp Quarter to preserve San Diego’s most historic buildings. "I opened a room office and took two employees," Donaldson said. "There were 25 peer shops, three music venues, and the businesses had security gates across their entrances. This wasn’t a place I would normally open an architectural office, but it reminded me of older parts of European cities.”

There was more work in the area than he could handle, and none of the contractors he found had good working knowledge of preservation techniques. So Donaldson earned his contractor’s license and opened Sixteen Penny Construction. His reputation and company grew, with jobs ranging from renovating a 1700s adobe structure to mid-century modern, and everything in between.

In his new role with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, he has lofty goals. He wants to focus on renewable energy while also protecting the country’s historical resources and cultural landscapes. He continues to build good working relationships with the American Indians and tribal communities. And he aims to reach out to diverse communities and young Americans to engage the next generation of American preservationists.

Donaldson credits Cal Poly with changing the way he thinks about life. "I always wanted to be an architect, mostly because of the buildings I saw," he said. "Cal Poly gave me a holistic way of thinking.”

A modest man, Donaldson insists he has been blessed. "I was in the right place at the right time.”

And about that retirement? Well, I’ll just have to wait.”
TEMPERATURES OFTEN FELL BELOW ZERO in Ely, Nev., the winter Cal Poly alums Mike Enrich spent measuring air quality for the Environmental Protection Agency.

It was 1973, the height of the oil crisis, and residents were hit especially hard. Food, heating oil and other necessities were trucked in. With his Learn by Doing education in mind, Enrich (B.S., Industrial Technology, 1972) considered the implications of the oil crisis for Ely and for the country.

He noted that eastern Nevada enjoys 345 days of sun each year. "Defs, the light came on," he said. "There's a way out."

The flash of innovation launched Enrich into the world of solar power. Twenty years later, two other Cal Poly graduates — Judy Ledford Staley and Fred Sisson — rode a similar train of thought into the world of alternative energy. Today, these alumni are making major impacts in solar power and making a difference in the world.

Enrich moved back to the Central Coast and founded Solarponics in 1979. Since then, he has expanded and diversified his company. Solarponics now offer a spectrum of energy efficiency solutions: solar electric systems (including do-it-yourself kits); solar water heating systems; radiant heating systems; and wind energy solutions for Central Coast homes and businesses.

Solarponics is the longest continuously owned and operated solar company in California, with more than 3,000 customers.

Experiential learning remains a core value for Enrich. "You're not learning if you're not trying new things," he said — even if occasionally that means you "learn by failing." Enrich urges his employees to experiment, he said. And he has set up a demonstration center in Atascadero to encourage customers to see and touch solar equipment and learn about energy options.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

In 1997, Staley and Sisson felt the solar power market was ready to take off. Photovoltaic (PV) systems that convert solar energy into electricity were approaching general affordability, the utility industry was about to deregulate, and the California Energy Commission was preparing to offer rebates on solar system purchases.

Staley, an environmental engineer, and Sisson, a mechanical engineer, combined their skills and founded REC Solar in San Luis Obispo, aiming to make PV systems commonplace.

Staley's passion for solar drew her to figure out how to start a company from scratch. "Cal Poly taught me how to solve problems," she said. "I felt I could apply critical thinking principles to any challenge I encountered — like teaching myself accounting. Learn by doing gives you the confidence you can solve almost any problem."

The solar industry appealed to Sisson as a place to make a difference in the world by leveraging his interest in all things new and creative. That's just what the industry needed, he said. They set out to change the market's perception that solar technology was unreliable and risky. They developed standardized engineering practices, worked on bringing solar components to a cost-effective price point, and provided pre- and post-installation support.

As their company grew, Staley and Sisson hired other Cal Poly grads. Cal Poly students come in a step ahead of grads from most other universities, Sisson said. "Learn by Doing encourages you to play around with things, but in a real way," he said. "It creates technical common sense."

Today, the California Energy Commission rates REC Solar one of the leading installation firms in California. The company does business in five other states as well and employs more than 500 people. Its partnership with Costco is testament to Staley and Sisson's vision: REC Solar equipment is now on the rooftops of 25 Costco stores. 

GREEN GRADS USE THEIR LEARN BY DOING EXPERIENCE TO MAKE THEIR MARK IN THE SOLAR INDUSTRY
MARINE SCIENTIST MATTHEW OLIVER WINS MAJOR RESEARCH AWARD, THEN LAUNCHES A SATELLITE-BASED OCEAN ECOSYSTEM STUDY IN ANTARCTICA

BY TOM NUGENT

TWO MONTHS AFTER HE WON a coveted $100,000 research grant and shook President Barack Obama’s hand, oceanographer Matthew Oliver (B.S., Ecology and Systematic Biology; M.S., Biology, ’01) decided it was time to pack up and get to work.

It would be a very long commute. The 35-year-old University of Delaware assistant professor traveled more than 7,000 miles to settle down in his new office—a laboratory at a National Science Foundation weather station on Antarctica’s west coast.

With his trusty laptop computer and a couple of digital cameras, the former Mustangs football standout launched a three-year oceanographic project through the NASA Biodiversity research program.

His mission: Chase a crew of hungry penguins back and forth across the Antarctic waters and analyze the ecological implications of their movements with the help of environmental data from half a dozen orbiting U.S. satellites.

For Oliver, a cutting-edge oceanographer fresh off a prestigious Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) in November, that meant spending January monitoring vast quantities of NASA satellite data from the howling ocean waters surrounding his outpost.

By attempting to relate the information contained in his satellite data stream to the movements of several electronically tagged Adélie penguins as they foraged for food, Oliver hoped to gain a better understanding of how ecosystem factors (such as ocean temperature, color and changes in currents) affect the birds’ foraging habits.

“In many ways, this kind of three-dimensional study of the penguin ocean habitat has never been attempted before,” Oliver said from Antarctica’s Palmer Station weather outpost.

“We hope to open a window on how penguin habitats are affected by changes in things like temperature and salinity.”

“One of the most exciting things about this project is that it seems likely to help us see a better understanding of how climate change actually affects these Antarctic ecosystems. That could prove to be very important, scientifically, because it could help us to better prepare for the impact of climate change on all the oceans.”

The work presents a challenge, but one right in line with the passion that brought Oliver to Cal Poly in the first place: marine science.

“The challenge we face in studying these seascapes is that they aren’t landscapes, and so they’re always moving on you,” said the Southern California native, who earned an oceanography degree from Rutgers University in 2006 after leaving Cal Poly. “To understand what that means, imagine trying to study a forest that drifts for miles each day, so that every time you look at it, the ecological dynamics have changed completely.”

That means Oliver must carefully track the vast data streams that flood continuously from the satellites and underwater gliders into his computers.

continued on next page...
A group of the Adélie penguins Oliver and his group studied in Antarctica. (Photo courtesy Matthew Oliver)

Poly. Under the guidance of “inspiring mentors” Tom Richards and Mark Moline (A 2001 Pegasus winner now studying the Antarctic penguins with Oliver—see sidebar) Oliver said he was “happily motivated” by a Cal Poly research voyage he took across the Pacific.

“Dr. Richards got me hooked up with the ‘Golden Bear’ training ship (now part of the Cal Poly at Sea program). We sailed from San Francisco to Hawaii and Australia and Japan,” Oliver said, “I remember approaching Alaska on the way home, and our ship was getting crowded by these monster waves. I looked at them and thought, ‘Man, I love this stuff! This is where I want to spend my career.’”

After nailing down his doctorate, Oliver launched a series of studies on ocean currents along the East Coast. Last fall, his highly regarded research landed him a visit to the White House—where Barack Obama shook his hand and urged him to use the Pegasus award (the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on young professionals in the early stages of their independent research careers) to help improve the U.S. fishing industry, among other scientific goals.

Cal Poly Professor Mark Moline also studies Antarctic Penguins

MATTHEW OLIVER’S ANTARCTICA RESEARCH brings him in direct contact with Cal Poly and in collaboration with one of his mentors, Cal Poly Biological Sciences Professor Mark Moline.

Moline received a two-year, $500,000 National Science Foundation grant in 2010 to research the foraging environment of Adélie penguins in the Antarctic Peninsula.

“We are collaborating, with different agencies,” Oliver said of his former professor. “My project is through NASA Bio-Beacon, while Moline’s is through the NSF Office of Polar Programs. We shared our resources to enhance both projects.”

Moline’s work, like Oliver’s, is addressing the impact of global warming and how it affects the penguins’ foraging environment.

“The species is declining because of the increasing water temperature, which has warmed up by one to two degrees in the last 15 years,” Moline said. “As a result, the ice is melting and their food sources are changing.”

Moline and fellow researchers traveled to Antarctica in January with an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV), they used to conduct daily surveys of the penguins’ foraging locations. The penguins were tagged, allowing the AUV to track them via satellite and transmit data to create a 3-D image of their foraging environment. What’s remarkable about the team’s particular model of AUV—about 2 meters in length—is that it matches the penguins’ abilities for diving and duration. This research will help demonstrate the feasibility of robotic vehicles in a cold water environment, with water temperatures averaging 34 degrees,” Moline said.

The NSF grant was one of two Moline received last year. The other, a four-year, $550,000 grant, will support a collaborative effort with UC Santa Barbara to examine wind and water flows off California’s Central Coast. That project will also use robotic submarines developed at Cal Poly.

ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

THE ICEMAN CALLS IT QUITE AFTER 12 YEARS IN UFC

CHUCK LIDDIE (B.S., Business Administration, 1995) has retired after a long and successful Ultimate Fighting Championship career that included a nearly two-year reign as light heavyweight champion. This 41-year-old Idaho, nicknamed “The Iceman,” will remain involved with UFC as the company’s executive vice president for business development.

AS BUSINESS GRAD SUCCESSFULLY GROWS EXOTIC CROP IN CALIFORNIA: COFFEE

COFFEE HAS PROVEN all but impossible to grow commercially in California. But don’t tell Jay Ruskey (B.S., Agricultural Business, 1997), who’s pulling it off at his ranch in Geyserville. While coffee growers and experts from around the world visit his operation to see how it’s being done, Ruskey is selling his locally grown coffee at farmers market in Santa Barbara.

FORMER FOOTBALLER SCORES ON “GLEE”

JON HALL (B.A., Music, 2009) appeared on Fox’s hit TV show “Glee,” playing a member of a team singing in a show choir competition. Hall, who ran for 1,100 yards and scored 11 touchdowns during his college football career, also sang backup during the national anthem on national television during Major League Baseball’s All-Star Game.

ALUMNUS APPOINTED SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

BRETT MORGAN (B.S., Social Sciences, 1985) has been appointed to the San Joaquin County Superior Court bench by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Morgan has worked as chief of staff for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, as well as chief deputy for the Office of the Inspector General, a government agency charged with watchdogging California prisons for waste, fraud and abuse.

SPACESHIP1 DESIGNER RUTAN TO RETIRE IN 2011

BURT RUTAN (B.S., Aerospace Engineering, 1965) founder and chief technical officer of Scaled Composites in Mojave, Calif., plans to retire in April. The EAA plans to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Rutan’s Voyager aircraft around-the-world flight while hosting a “Salute to Burt Rutan” at AirVenture Oshkosh 2011 event.

TWINS TAKE THE CAL POLY APPROACH

NICK DAVIS (B.S., Wine & Viticulture, 2008) and Brian Davis (Agricultural economics and Wine & Viticulture, 2008) built their business, Twin Perspective, on Cal Poly’s Lawn by Doing Things. The company’s wine is now in 70 locations across California, and the brothers serve as their own distributors and operate without a traditional tasting room.

GRAD NAMED CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER FOR AMN HEALTHCARE SERVICES

BRIAN M. SCOTT (B.S., Business Administration, 1993) has been named chief financial officer for AMN Healthcare Services. Scott joined AMN in 2003 and has been senior vice president of operations finance and business development.
Making Your Dollars Make Sense
Where There’s a Will There’s a Way

By Mary McNally

Before there was such a thing as women’s athletics programs at Cal Poly, Evelyn Pellaton championed women in sports, first as a PE teacher at Cal Poly and ultimately as the director of women’s athletics.

Now retired, Pellaton continues to support student athletics programs. After a recent change to her will, that support will continue into perpetuity.

“When she started here in the 1960s, women’s teams didn’t have official games or league competition; they just had ‘play dates.’ She had virtually no budget for her programs and little support, but she never let that interfere with the chance to participate. When the ladies needed uniforms to play in a national tournament, Pellaton repurposed men’s track suits from the prior year and took her team to Oregon.”

Women’s sports enjoy much greater support at Cal Poly these days, which only serves to fuel Pellaton’s enthusiasm. Recently, she turned to Cal Poly alumni and estate planning attorney John Renca (B.S. Business Administration, 1975) to update her will, pledging part of her estate to an endowment that will benefit the field that defined her career.

Renca said being an estate planning attorney is satisfying because he can help his clients in obvious ways: avoiding court, minimizing taxes and helping people take care of their families. But there are more subtle ways, as well, he said. “Many of my clients are the history of Cal Poly,” he said. “They’ve done so much, but they’re so modest and they’re not going to be around forever. If you don’t ask them about their story, you’ll miss it.”

“I’ve also seen the power create relationships that help donors renew their involvement with the campus,” Renca added. When considering her options, Pellaton kept asking herself, “What can I do?” Ultimately, she worked with Cal Poly’s Planned Giving Office to develop an agreement that stipulated her bequest would be used to support student scholars.

While Pellaton is quite cheerful about the obstacles she overcame, and the personal and professional experiences that ensued, she hopes her gift will mean that others don’t have to face the same hurdles. With this provision in her will, she’s giving something back and paying it forward.

If you are considering a charitable bequest like Pellaton’s, here are a few things to consider:

- Working with the Planned Giving Office helps the university develop guidelines for how your gift will be used.
- It can also help you incorporate provisions that allow for changes in university programs. For instance, after the Home Economics major was absorbed by another department, it took the courts several years to determine an acceptable substitute for bequests made to that major.
- Some people leave a percentage of their estate to charity, rather than a fixed dollar amount. “That provides an element of protection if the estate increases or decreases in value,” Renca said. After that, he said, “You can basically forget about it.”
- An endowment may be established in which the principle must remain intact into perpetuity or for a defined period of time.
- If your situation or interests change, you can change your will at any time during your lifetime.

For additional information about charitable bequests or other planned giving to Cal Poly, contact the Planned Giving office at 805-560-6556 or visit www.giving.calpoly.edu/plannedgiving.

Our Friend Art Rosen Passed Away in 2009

This year he is buying state-of-the-art equipment for the physics lab

For more than 30 years, physics professor Art Rosen practically lived in the lab, transforming the lives of thousands of students through education. Thanks to a bequest made with a simple direction in his will, his generous and supportive spirit lives on in those same classrooms and labs. Remembering Cal Poly in your estate planning is an effective way to support Learn by Doing, the cornerstone of a Cal Poly education.

Our planned giving experts can help friends and alumni like you leave a lasting legacy that will support the next generation of innovative leaders and resourceful professionals.

For sample bequest language you can share with your estate planning advisor, visit www.plannedgiving.calpoly.edu or contact Cal Poly’s Planned Giving Office.

PHONE: 805-756-7125 | TOLL-FREE: 800-549-2666 | EMAIL: plannedgiving@calpoly.edu
Cal Poly’s 2011 Rose Float became yet another in a long list of award winners, capturing two trophies at the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., on Jan. 1.

The float, “Galactic Expedition,” created by students at Cal Poly and the university’s sister campus in Pomona — captured the “Fantasy Trophy” during pre-parade judging as well as taking the “Viewer’s Choice” award for the third straight year. The honor was created in 2009, and Cal Poly has won it all three years it has been awarded.

“Galactic Expedition” depicted seven childhood friends building the rocket ship of their dreams and taking their imagination to soaring heights. An operatic crane, a spinning planet, moving child workers and a full complement of tools and toys were all situated on an airy cloud high above the earth’s surface. The float was decorated with more than 12,000 roses, 8,500 mums and approximately 9,500 carnations. (Photo courtesy Cal Poly Pomona)