



News

University News & Information

Admissions & Aid	Majors & Colleges	Research	Alumni Community	Campus Life	Athletics	About	»
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Cal Poly Forum to Welcome New Innovators to SLO HotHouse Summer Accelerator

SAN LUIS OBISPO — The next class of companies to enter Cal Poly's Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship's (CIE) 2014 SLO HotHouse Accelerator Program will be announced at CIE's final forum of the academic year beginning at 5 p.m. Monday, May 19, in the Performing Arts Center Pavilion at Cal Poly.

The event will also feature a panel of entrepreneurial experts discussing the various challenges of starting and building a company, from idea to execution.

"There's no way of experiencing the cliché startup roller coaster until one actually does it," said Jonathan York, faculty director for CIE and a professor in the Orfalea College of Business at Cal Poly. "These entrepreneurs have not only practiced it, they have gotten past their mistakes and turned their ideas into growing businesses. They've faced a much longer and bumpier ride than they could've imagined, but they learned and grew as individuals and as companies, just like our accelerator teams will do this summer."

The PEN (Pitches, Exhibits & Networking) portion of the evening, to be held from 5 to 6 p.m., will showcase the next batch of SLO HotHouse Accelerator companies. The accelerator program provides Cal Poly students and recent graduates the opportunity to start a business with \$7,500 in seed funding, mentorship from entrepreneurial experts, and free office space in the SLO HotHouse in downtown San Luis Obispo.

Attendees to the CIE forum will hear live pitches from each accelerator company and speak one-on-one with the teams, offering feedback, advice, questions, and business cards.

York will moderate the panel portion of the evening, which will take place from 6 to 7 p.m. Panelists include John Greathouse, partner at Rincon Venture Partners; Lili Balfour, founder and CEO of Atelier Advisors; Jessie Becker, co-founder & CEO of InPress Technologies; and Kyle Wiens, co-founder and CEO of iFixit.

CIE Forums unite the Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo entrepreneurial communities. Guests can network with local and national innovators, meet student entrepreneurs, and learn more about CIE resources and services.

The events are free and open to the public; advance registration is required. To register, visit mayforum2014.eventbrite.com.

About the Cal Poly Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship

CIE opens a world of entrepreneurial opportunity to Cal Poly students and faculty members and promotes entrepreneurial activity, scholarship and dialogue across the university and throughout San Luis Obispo County.

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