

CAL POLY COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

# impact

LEARN / LEAD / LIVE / FALL 2020



## Inside

8: Celebrating 50 years of ethnic studies at Cal Poly / 14: Learn by Doing moves online during the pandemic / 18: Global exchange programs go virtual

**I, Robot**  
Students teach young learners programming in a STEAM workshop



CAL POLY



## Message from the Dean

The spring quarter was marked by the global pandemic and the national wave of protests in response to the killing of George Floyd. I'm extremely proud of the resilience, creativity and activism demonstrated by our faculty, staff and students. I'm happy to report that Learn by Doing is alive and well in the college, even in a virtual environment.



Despite the challenges prompted by the pandemic, the College of Liberal Arts remains committed to providing a liberal arts education without borders, boundaries or barriers: opening

doors, preparing students and ensuring opportunity. We introduced a new Virtual Exchange initiative that will incorporate international experiences in the classroom, connecting our students and faculty to peers around the world. CLA faculty and students launched the Full STEAM Ahead initiative, a community-outreach project aimed at K-12 students, their teachers and their families in Santa Maria, California. We also marked an important milestone for the college, celebrating 50 years of ethnic studies at Cal Poly. The Ethnic Studies Department has a unique history and place within the university, where students find a safe, welcoming and supportive community, as well as a curriculum that values and reaffirms their diverse identities.

As we look forward to another quarter marked by the pandemic and a looming budget crisis, I remain hopeful about the future of CLA. Our faculty and staff's singular focus on student success, combined with the generous support of our alumni and friends, will ensure that the college emerges from the crisis stronger than before.

Best regards,  
Philip Williams  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts



**CAL POLY**  
College of Liberal Arts

## impact

Fall 2020

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### Stay connected with the CLA story:



### On the cover:

Young learners get a robotics lesson at a Cal Poly student-led STEAM workshop.



Cal Poly students and faculty adjust to the new campus environment.

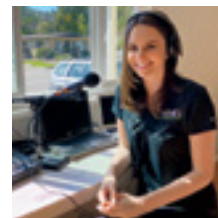
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# Cal Poly Joins Network to Help Ensure Technology Creates Public Benefit



In January, Cal Poly joined the Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN), a partnership that fosters collaboration between universities and colleges committed to building the emerging field of public interest technology and training a new generation of civic-minded technologists. In the university's first year in PIT-UN, an interdisciplinary team of Cal Poly faculty and staff will establish the groundwork to build a field called "ethical technology" — inquiry and training that bridges humanistic and technical domains to create innovation that is equitable in both process and outcomes. This team will be led by Matthew Harsh, a professor in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts Department and the director of the Center for Expressive Technologies.

"Cal Poly has made tremendous progress in building interdisciplinary opportunities for students and faculty," Harsh said. "Building upon these, we can train the next generation of technologists to think with a humanist frame of mind and the next generation of humanists to gain technological skills."

PIT-UN has a total membership of 36 colleges and universities, including UC Berkeley, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University, among other top-ranked institutions.

## New Assistant Dean for Development



Adam Jarman joined the college as assistant dean for development in March. He has been a member of Cal Poly's development team for 15 years, having served in a variety of positions. Jarman is well known on campus and brings a breadth of experience in major gift fundraising, gift planning, donor relations and volunteer management. He has a deep personal connection to the College of Liberal Arts as a two-time alumnus with a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism (minors in psychology and public

administration) and a Master of Public Policy degree. As a student, he was editor in chief of Mustang Daily. "This is an exciting homecoming for me, and I look forward to building positive relationships with college supporters to advance our priorities," he said.

## Panetta Institute Internship



Imahn Daeenabi, a third-year political science major, will serve as Cal Poly's 2020 representative to the Panetta Institute's Congressional Internship Program. Typically, the internship involves a two-week training period at the Panetta Institute at CSU Monterey Bay and then working in the Capitol office of a California congressional representative in Washington, D.C., for 11 weeks. However, this year the training program will be presented to students via online video conferencing, and the

Washington portion may have to be cancelled or delayed if congressional offices remain closed. The program is open to all academic majors and is recognized as one of the leading internship courses in the nation because of the rigorous training it provides.



### Grant Awarded

Philosophy Professor Ryan Jenkins received a grant from the National Science Foundation to study the ethics of using artificial intelligence to assist police officers in anticipating crime before it happens. Researchers from Cal Poly and the University of Florida have partnered to conduct the study. The team will analyze all the ethical dilemmas involved in predictive policing, develop equitable solutions to problems arising from its implementation, and determine best practices with regard to the design and use of the technology.

## CLA STUDENTS PLACE IN CSU MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL



Three CLA students placed at the 29th annual CSU Media Arts Festival in Los Angeles on Nov. 13, earning the top three spots in screenwriting and first place in promotional video. The festival is a film competition for students in the 23-campus CSU system. Journalism major Shanti Herzog placed first and third in the screenwriting category for two original screenplays; English major Matthew Lam placed second in screenwriting for an original screenplay; and art and design major Casey Wieber placed first in promotional video.

## Mustang Media Group Recognized by Multiple College Media Organizations

In fall 2019, Mustang Media Group (MMG), the Journalism Department's student-run media organization, won 33 national awards at the joint convention of the Associated Collegiate Press (ACP) and College Media Association in Washington, D.C. Among the awards, Mustang News won its first ACP Pacemaker Award — one of the nation's top honors for a student newspaper. MMG took home four first-place awards, 10 second-place, four third-place, and one fifth-place, plus 12 honorable mentions in journalism, broadcasting and advertising. At the College Journalism Convention on Feb. 29 in San Francisco, MMG earned additional recognition from the ACP, the California College Media Association (CCMA), and College Media Business and Advertising Managers (CMBAM). The group walked away with 23 CMBAM awards, including Best Ad Manager in the Nation, Best Designer in the Nation, Best PR/Marketing Manager in the Nation, Best Design Program in the Nation, Best PR/Marketing Program in the Nation, and second overall for Best College Media Company in the Nation. CCMA awarded MMG 10 editorial awards and one for advertising. At ACP's Best in Show, Mustang News won Best Media Kit, Best Special Section, Best Newspaper and other awards.



## MLK Legacy Award Winner

Denise Isom, professor and chair of the Ethnic Studies Department, was honored on Jan. 15 with the MLK Legacy Award in recognition of her determination and devotion to shaping a more just, equitable and diverse Cal Poly campus. Cal Poly's Cross Cultural Centers established the award last year to recognize a campus community member who upholds the legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. by leading with love and hope to create a better campus for all. Isom has also been appointed to serve as the interim vice president for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer at Cal Poly.



## STUDENTS WRITE A BILL PASSED INTO LAW

Cal Poly students drafted a bill that was signed into law by California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Oct. 4, 2019, and went into effect Jan. 1, 2020. Senate Bill 467, which was introduced by Senator Bill Monning and co-sponsored by Assemblyman Jordon Cunningham, requires the University of California and California State University systems to place cost of attendance information on their websites. The students wrote the bill in Cal Poly's California Bill Project class, which is taught by political science Professor Chris Den Hartog. In the class — which spanned three consecutive quarters — students were asked to choose a problem to address, develop a specific policy that would help, and think critically about its pros and cons. In the spring of 2019, they traveled to Sacramento to lobby for their proposed legislation. This was the second time a bill project class series was offered and the second time a Cal Poly student-drafted bill became law. The first, AB 2385, which requires textbook publishers to disclose major differences between editions, was signed into law in August 2018.



## HISTORY PROFESSOR WINS BOOK PRIZE

History Professor Molly Loberg's book, "The Struggle for the Streets of Berlin: Politics, Consumption, and Urban Space, 1914–1945," won the Hans Rosenberg Book Prize. The prize is granted by the Central European History Society for the best book in the field. Loberg accepted the award in New York City at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in January. The prize committee wrote an extensive statement praising the book. The work was also a finalist for the Waterloo Centre for German Studies Book Award, another very notable honor.

## WOMEN'S STUDIES CONFERENCE

The Women's and Gender Studies Department took 16 students and recent graduates to the annual conference of the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) in San Francisco in November 2019. This marked the first time that Cal Poly students attended the NWSA conference. Student travel was funded by a successful Spur Change crowdfunding campaign in spring 2019. The students were able to attend the conference thanks to the generosity of 102 donors.



## Professor Honored

Political science Professor Jennifer Denbow was one of 15 new awardees for the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Project Development Grants program. The ACLS grants provide \$5,000 in seed funding to support faculty whose proposed research projects have the potential to significantly advance areas of humanistic study. Denbow's project, "In the Name of Innovation: Law and the Political Economy of Reproductive Futures," examines complex bioethics issues surrounding the use of noninvasive prenatal tests and other recent biotechnologies.



## English Major Wins Modern Language Association Student Paper Contest

Senior English major Alyiah Gonzales was selected as one of five winners in the 2019 Modern Language Association Student Paper Contest. Gonzales' essay, "Disrupting White Normativity in Langston Hughes's 'I, Too,' and Toni Morrison's 'Recitatif,'" written for a literature course at Cal Poly, was chosen out of more than 200 essays submitted by college writers across the nation.

## PROFESSOR JOINS AI TASK FORCE



Artificial Intelligence Andrew Moore.

Philosophy Professor Patrick Lin has joined the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and National Security at the Center for a New American Security, a leading think tank in Washington, D.C. The task force is co-chaired by former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work and Google Cloud's Head of

## Cal Poly Students Win First Place in Packaging Design Competition

An interdisciplinary team of four Cal Poly students won first place in the Paperboard Packaging Alliance 2019 Student Design Challenge. The winning team consisted of Sam Baber (art and design), Morgan McKean (graphic communication), Vance Perkins (industrial technology and packaging) and Samantha Phan (business administration). Students were challenged to design packaging for a gaming platform that could enhance the unboxing experience and be used while playing the system.



## LAES STUDENTS FINALISTS IN BOEING INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Liberal arts and engineering studies (LAES) students Zach Cushing-Murray and Emma George and architecture student Chloe Regan traveled to Seattle in January as finalists in the nationwide Boeing Innovation Challenge, a competition that invited students to bring innovative operation and design ideas to commercial flights.

## Faculty Books



Journalism lecturer Katya Cengel's book, "From Chernobyl with Love: Reporting from the Ruins of the Soviet Union," was published.



Theatre Professor Tom Bernard's co-authored book, "Historical Pattern Archive: Women's Clothing 1837-1969," was published.





## CLASS ACTS

Get to know these faculty members outside of the classroom. These educators represent the breadth of knowledge found in the College of Liberal Arts.

To read more of their responses, visit [cla.calpoly.edu/impact-magazine](http://cla.calpoly.edu/impact-magazine).



**JENNIFER DENBOW** / Department: Political Science

Specialty Area: Law, Political Theory and Reproductive Politics / Years at Cal Poly: Five

**What is/has been your favorite class to teach?**

Civil Rights in America. I love the critical discussions that happen in that class and the opportunity to get students excited about close reading, critical thinking and social justice.

**Are there any scholars or individuals that have inspired you?**

There are too many to name, but one of my grad school advisors was especially important to my intellectual development and inspired me to be a more critical scholar. I am also continually inspired by my students and their curiosity.



**MATTHEW HARSH** / Department: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts

Specialty Area: Science, Technology and Society (STS) / Years at Cal Poly: Two

**What is your favorite class/student moment?**

It has been amazing to see students thrive in our new interdisciplinary studies (IS) major! Many of these students couldn't find their academic community in their previous majors. But in the IS program, they have gone on to win awards and get accepted to graduate school. It was such a privilege to work closely with several of these students on their senior projects last year.

**What is/are your guilty pleasure(s)?**

Taylor Swift's "Lover" album. Scotch whisky. Bad mystery novels.



**MIRA ROSENTHAL** / Department: English

Specialty Area: Creative Writing, Poetry, Literary Translation and Comparative Literature / Years at Cal Poly: Four

**Are there any scholars or individuals who have inspired you?**

The work of Polish Nobel Laureate Czesław Miłosz has been incredibly important for my own development as a poet, translator and thinker. His essays on what it's like to live under an authoritarian regime feel unsettlingly relevant today.

**Do you have a favorite getaway location?**

The Elfin Forest and Montaña de Oro! They [are great] for getting away from daily life and gaining perspective. More globally, the Langtang Valley in Nepal and Memento Park (or, as I call it, the Field of Fallen Statues) outside of Budapest.



**GRACE YEH** / Department: Ethnic Studies and Communication Studies Interim Chair

Specialty Area: Asian American Studies and Cultural Studies / Years at Cal Poly: 13

**What are your research/scholarly pursuit(s)?**

I am part of the Public Humanities Collaborative that is sharing the stories of our Black, Indigenous and people of color communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The collaborative includes faculty, students, staff and community members. We have been thinking about the power of stories and storytelling and the politics and ethics of archiving and sharing stories from racialized communities.

**What is your favorite class/student moment?**

Whenever a student teaches me something, which is all the time!



Attendees arrive at the ethnic studies 50th anniversary gala in February 2020.

COURTESY OF ETHNIC STUDIES DEPARTMENT

1950s

1954

Brown v. Board of Education (U.S. Supreme Court) unanimously held that the racial segregation of children in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

1960s

1966

First Black student union founded at San Francisco State College.

1968

The East Los Angeles Walkouts, or Chicano Blowouts, began. Students were protesting inequity in Los Angeles Unified School District high schools. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

1969

A San Francisco State College strike ended with a signed agreement and the creation of the first school of ethnic studies.





# STUDENT EFFORTS

# SPARKED CHANGE

## A look at 50 years of ethnic studies at Cal Poly

**“Y**ou might be surprised to see what ethnic studies alumni are doing out in the world today,” said Ethnic Studies Department Chair Denise Isom.

Last February, doctors, lawyers, CEOs, teachers, activists and statisticians returned to campus to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ethnic studies at Cal Poly. The three-day celebration, which included an alumni lunch, group hike, lectures and a gala, provided a chance to look back at how it all began.

The ethnic studies major has a history unlike any other on campus, full of student activism, pushback and more activism as it fought its way to becoming a recognized department. Months before the anniversary event, students began researching — sifting through Kennedy Library archives and reading old articles from Mustang Daily — to piece together the story of how the Ethnic Studies Department began at Cal Poly.

“We began when all the other CSU ethnic studies programs began: in 1969 with student protests,” Isom said.

The 1960s were a tumultuous time in the long fight for civil rights. Several student organizations at California universities were asking for greater inclusion, access and equity in educational systems.

In the spring of 1969, members of Cal Poly’s Black Student Union met with then-President Robert E. Kennedy to discuss the desire for a Black studies curriculum

The Cal Poly Black Student Union and United Mexican American Students met with college President Robert E. Kennedy to ask for greater inclusion, access and equity at the university.

Cal Poly’s MultiCultural Center opened. Based on a student’s idea, the center was the first of its kind in the CSU system and was led by student and faculty volunteers.

## 1970s

1970

The Ethnic Studies Department at Cal Poly was established in the fall as a result of student efforts.

David Sánchez was hired as full-time coordinator of the Ethnic Studies Department.

1973

The first ethnic studies courses, Introduction to Ethnic Studies and Racism in American Culture, were introduced at Cal Poly.

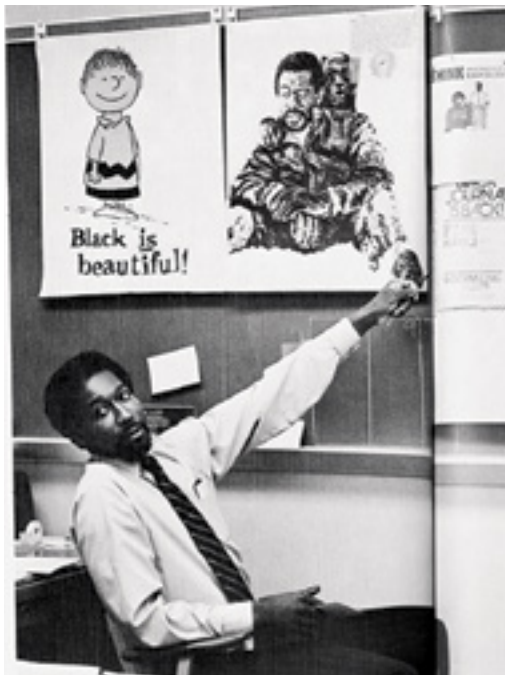
1979

## 1980s

1982

Ethnic studies was no longer listed as a program in Cal Poly’s University Catalog.

# STUDENT EFFORTS SPARKED CHANGE



and for more Black instructors and students. The United Mexican American Students organization also met with Kennedy to ask for more representation on campus committees and in leadership.

Those efforts sparked the fall 1969 creation of the Ethnic Studies Department at Cal Poly. Originally, courses were drawn from other departments on campus and looked nothing like the ethnic studies courses taught at Cal Poly today. Course titles included Educating the Culturally Deprived Child and Culture of the Brown American Preschool Child.

Criticism from students led to the hiring of a full-time department coordinator, David Sánchez, in 1970. The first department-specific courses, Introduction to Ethnic Studies and Racism in American Culture, were introduced in 1973.

Tony Dominguez (Social Sciences, '79), who served as the president of what's now known as MEXA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) when he was a student, said he fondly remembers the efforts of the students, who demanded a more diverse faculty pool and course selection.

"If it wasn't for the students, there would be no ethnic studies," Dominguez said. "Students of color were fed up. They said, 'You know what, we're tired. You don't teach our histories — the histories of Indigenous people, Black people, Latinx people. We want our children to know what our struggles were in order to get to where we are today.'"

Dominguez said he may not have gotten his degree without the support he found in his ethnic studies classes at Cal Poly.

"It gave me confidence about who I was, made me feel that I was worthwhile," he said. "When you hear about some of the things that are part of your cultural background in a four-year university, it makes you feel respected."

Unfortunately, ethnic studies as a listed program disappeared starting with the 1979–81 University Catalog, though the courses remained. However, student activism and efforts to diversify Cal Poly continued. In May 1993, students wrote letters and led protests asking to recruit more faculty, staff and students of color; to require ethnic studies courses; and to make diversity training for Associated Students Inc. members mandatory. In January 1994, Cal Poly approved an ethnic studies minor, which first appeared in

**From top:** Black students at Cal Poly voluntarily taught off-book ethnic studies classes in 1968; protesters march to then-university President Warren J. Baker's residence in May 1993.

Approximately 100 students, along with Director of Ethnic Studies Robert Gish, led a protest for greater inclusion, access and equity at the university. They marched from the University Union Plaza to then-Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker's on-campus home and later to an Academic Senate meeting.

Comparative ethnic studies became a major at Cal Poly with the Chancellor's Office approval.

## 1990s

1992

1993

1994

## 2000s

2000

2005

A Los Angeles uprising began after the police officers involved in the beating of Rodney King were acquitted.

Cal Poly approved an ethnic studies minor.

Cal Poly was reviewed by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which warned that Cal Poly needed to be more aggressive in diversifying to better represent the demographics of California.





the 1994–97 catalog. In 2005, comparative ethnic studies became a major, and the department welcomed its first majors in 2006.

Today, ethnic studies courses at Cal Poly often involve working with surrounding communities. In one ongoing project, Cal Poly students collaborate with local public school teachers to develop syllabi and assessment practices to help them teach ethnic studies subjects in their classrooms. Another project seeks to uncover San Luis Obispo’s global origins. Professor Grace Yeh created the Re/Collecting Project, an online archive formed with help from students who interviewed community members to uncover untold histories of marginalized communities on the Central Coast. The department also remains a place where cultures are studied and celebrated. For example, Professor Jenell Navarro teaches Hip-Hop, Poetics and Politics, which produces the biennial Hip Hop Symposium.

“We really designed a program to maximize the possibility of exploring other interests,” Isom said. “We expect our students to double major or add minors. I think the record number of minors is five.”

This flexibility allows students to pursue a wide range of fields and bring the important perspective of ethnic studies into their respective industries. For example, Isabella Montenegro (Ethnic Studies, ’13), a nurse who attended the anniversary lunch, said she used what she learned in her ethnic studies classes to develop an Indigenous language translation center at her hospital to help patients communicate their needs with staff members.

“Now you can see a reflection of the breadth of the field of ethnic studies, its interdisciplinary nature — from science and technology to literature,” Isom said. “We want to show students everything you can do with ethnic studies. It’s as vast as film school, medical school, law school, business and human resources. You name it, and we have a student who’s engaged in it.”

**From top:** Cal Poly students after a march in 2018; Ethnic Studies Department faculty, staff and students enjoy graduation in 2012; attendees take part in a screen-printing station during the anniversary celebration.



The Ethnic Studies Department welcomed its first majors.

Indigenous Studies in Natural Resources and the Environment minor was launched in collaboration with College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

2006

2010s

2012

2013

2019

Cal Poly’s Western Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation report found the university lacking in its diversity. It requested an interim report on the progress of initiatives to support diversity and achievement of underrepresented students.

California State Assembly Bill 1460, requiring an ethnic studies class for all CSU graduates, was introduced.

2020

Gov. Newsom signed AB 1460 on Aug. 17. Cal Poly ethnic studies professors are already part of a working group to determine how to implement the new requirement at Cal Poly.

# Full STEAM Ahead

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**Cal Poly students use storytelling to teach kids how to program robots.**

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Louisa Nickerson (Liberal Arts and Engineering Studies, '20) teaches kids robotic programming at the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum.





**O**n one rainy Saturday morning in early March, a group of middle schoolers inside a building at Cal Poly were attempting to save their hometown of Santa Maria from destruction.

The young students were playing a role in a scenario written by Cal Poly students. In the scenario, the only way for the participants to save their community was to program small robots to complete very specific tasks. The middle schoolers were given 45 minutes to learn the basic capabilities of the robots, program the robots using an iPad and then navigate them through obstacles to complete the required tasks.

This was just one session in the daylong Full STEAM Ahead Workshop that Cal Poly students organized for the Santa Maria kids. STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, arts and math (adding the A to the more-often used acronym STEM). A STEAM approach allows students to see how interconnected the arts are with STEM fields. Both can spark imagination and teach creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration.

The arts can also make the introduction of technology more memorable for young kids. For example, by using the story to teach robotics, the students were more motivated to succeed — and more likely to be interested in the technology in the future.

“Look at that!” exclaimed one participant as her team’s robot turned 180 degrees and navigated a part of the course backward. Another group programmed their robot to wear a smiley face and play a Queen song as it ran the course.

The idea is that introducing STEAM fields in a fun, exciting way and making them accessible to young, underserved students will increase the likelihood that those students see themselves working in those fields in the future. Other sessions at the workshop included computer coding run by Cal Poly’s Women Involved in Software and Hardware, building newspaper towers with the National Society of Black Engineers chapter, creating a simple electronic circuit with the Cal Poly Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, and visiting the Quality of Life Plus Lab, where participants created molds of their own thumbs.



A group of Cal Poly students pose at a workshop they planned to teach children STEAM concepts.



**Above:** A student from Santa Maria watches a robot she just programmed.

**Right:** A group of students from Santa Maria visit Cal Poly to take part in a STEAM workshop.



The workshop was a part of a wider community-outreach project aimed at underserved elementary, middle and high school students, their teachers and their families. The goals are to create community enrichment, improve access to advanced STEAM-based education, provide firsthand engagement with new creative technologies and offer career-enhancement opportunities.

The ongoing outreach involves CLA’s Center for Expressive Technology, the Liberal Arts and Engineering Studies program, Interdisciplinary Studies in the Liberal Arts Department, Santa Maria-Bonita School District, and other partners, including the Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture and the California Alliance for Arts Education.

Cal Poly’s TRIO Pre-College Programs also provides logistical and financial support for the Santa Maria students to come to Cal Poly for on-campus workshops.

The group plans to build on robotics education with the addition of motion-capture technology. They also hope to collaborate with several companies and entrepreneurs to create performance capture, virtual reality, interactive gaming and 3D animation technologies. The new Jack and Felicia Cashin Expressive Technology Studios — being built on campus right now and funded in part by the Cashins and other generous donors — will provide a new hub for similar collaborations and continued community engagement.



Music Professor David Arrivé  
making video podcasts for  
his History of the Symphony  
course last spring.

# TAKING LEARN BY DOING ONLINE

COURTESY OF DAVID ARRIVÉE



# When the coronavirus pandemic necessitated a switch to online learning, students, faculty and staff came up with creative solutions to keep Learn by Doing alive in the College of Liberal Arts.

## JOURNALISM

In the Journalism Department, radio and TV broadcasts continued, and Mustang News navigated the process of putting out news without a print product or their on-campus newsrooms. Students learned to report stories and work together remotely — an experience that mirrors that of many professional newsrooms.

In the Advanced Broadcast Practicum class, students shot video on their smartphones from a safe distance and conducted interviews via Zoom. The class also put together newscasts, in which the anchors, sportscaster and weathercaster were on Zoom, and individual reporters, working from home, introduced the stories they created.

Mustang News continued to break news online and even expanded its coverage beyond campus into the city of San Luis Obispo.

“They’ve stepped up like champs,” said Patrick Howe, a Mustang News advisor. “They will emerge from the other side of this as more flexible and adept journalists.”

To keep the radio station operating, Journalism Department Broadcast Engineer Thomas Morales set up a studio in the San Luis Obispo home of journalism junior and KCPR News Director Maya MacGregor. It served as the local, distanced control room for the radio station, which allowed a team of 16 reporters to produce a one-hour daily newscast.

The reporters sent their audio stories from their different locations, and MacGregor mixed everything for the broadcast, which went live daily at 9 a.m. Monday through Friday.

## CHOIR PERFORMANCE

On June 8, the Music Department streamed Cal Poly’s first virtual choir performance. The concert featured PolyPhonics, the University Singers and the Women’s Chorus, and included “If Ye Love Me” by Thomas Tallis, selections from Mozart’s “Requiem in D Minor,” and “Sleep” by composer Eric Whitacre. To prepare for the concert, Director of Choral Activities Scott Glysson recorded videos for the vocal parts of each song, showing himself directing each part and a lead performance by the respective choral section leader. The performers then followed the directions to record their own parts. From there, Glysson worked individually with all 110 singers to give

feedback and refine their performances to fit in with the rest of the ensemble — a vastly different process compared to a traditional choral experience. When the individual recordings were ready, adjunct music faculty members Laura Kramer and Dave Becker compiled and edited the final performance video. While it’s impossible to perfectly replicate the experience of a traditional choir performance, Glysson said that he ultimately sees the virtual performance as a win. “The only other option was to give up, and we were just not going to do that,” he said. “Whatever the challenges are, we’re just going to keep making music.”

## PRESCHOOL LEARNING LAB

The Preschool Learning Lab is a functioning preschool for children ages 3 to 5, and it is part of a lab class for child development majors. In addition to facilitating the course for Cal Poly students, the staff wanted to provide structure for the preschoolers and their families, with whom they had built relationships since the fall. Patty Clarkson, director of the Preschool Learning Lab, and the preschool’s two full-time teachers, Kari Applegate and Shondrela Braggs-Jones, came up with a plan to emulate the foundational building blocks of a typical day as much as they could. They decided on a virtual group



Preschool student Evelyn poses with artwork she made at home as part of the Preschool Learning Lab.

**Top:** Music professor and choir director Scott Glysson recorded a welcome in front of the Performing Arts Center for the virtual spring choir concert.

**Bottom:** Dancers rehearsing for the spring concert.



meeting every morning, along with music and movement time, which lasted about 30 minutes to an hour. In the afternoons, teachers would read to the class from a chapter book before rest time. They also offered the children simple “challenges” to complete between classes, which included tasks like drawing a family portrait to show everyone the next day. The child development students participated in the Zoom sessions and debriefed with staff afterward. By the end of the quarter, they were also helping to develop challenges for the children.

## DANCE CONCERT

Preparation for the annual Spring Dance Concert was in full swing at the end of winter quarter. Directors and choreographers had been selected, dancers had been cast, and plans to fill an auditorium were underway. Instead, the cast of more than 100 students helped to create 16 separate dance films to form the online concert titled “Vitalis.”

The students were disappointed they wouldn’t perform live, but they adapted — learning skills such as filming and editing in preparation for the virtual show.

To teach the dancers the choreography, some students created video tutorials and others held Zoom meetings. Each week, individual dancers submitted rehearsal videos to the choreographers, who then edited the videos together and submitted drafts for the directors and advisors.

Dance Professor Diana Stanton was impressed week after week with how the videos were overlaid to create a collective effect. She said that one unique aspect of a video format in dance is having control over what the viewer sees. For example, at an in-person performance, viewers can choose where to focus, like on a friend they may have come to watch. However, in a virtual format, the choreographer can direct the viewer’s eye.



“I knew it would be challenging,” said Alyssa Gatan, one of the student directors. “But we were ready to take it on because we knew we had to preserve something so special, which is being able to dance as a community.”

## SENIOR ART SHOW

Typically, art and design seniors see their work hung on the walls of the University Art Gallery before they graduate. Since that wasn’t possible last spring, studio art Professor Elizabeth Folk and the 2020 graduates moved the show online.

Each student took photos of their own artwork and uploaded those photos along with an artist statement to a shared folder. A subgroup of the students built the web gallery, which was launched on June 5 with a virtual opening reception. “These seniors have produced this work in the nooks and crannies of their homes, on dining room tables, in bedrooms, in corners of their garages, and on back patios,” Folk said in the introductory video to the exhibition. “They have practiced creative problem-solving. They have gone through disappointments. They have shown resilience and passion in bringing this work to you.”



The online exhibit, titled “Reconnecting...”, can be viewed at [www.calpolybfa.com](http://www.calpolybfa.com). The website includes videos of each artist talking about their work.

Folk said, “To say that I am proud of these seniors for their accomplishments this quarter during this difficult time politically and with COVID-19 is a gross understatement.”

## COMPETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

For social scientists, presenting research to other scholars is an important piece of Learn by Doing. Although travel and in-person conferences and competitions were canceled in the spring, CLA students still had the opportunity to present to their peers.

Two CLA students were selected to represent Cal Poly at the CSU Research Competition this year: Fionna Fahey and Maddie Roman, both interdisciplinary studies majors. Instead of in-person presentations, Fahey and Roman submitted their research digitally and completed Q&A sessions via video conference. Fahey won first place in the competition’s Undergraduate Humanities and Letters category for her research on the erased histories of sex workers in San Luis Obispo.

Five political science students and four communication studies students presented papers at the Social

KCPR News  
Director Maya  
MacGregor at her  
home studio in  
San Luis Obispo  
in April.



Science Research and Instructional Center’s annual Social Science Student Symposium, held via Zoom on May 7. Communication studies seniors Alayna Short and Sophia Minhas presented “The Effects of Corporate Giving Marketing on Brand Image and Purchase Intention,” which won the second-place McCall Award for Best Undergraduate Paper.

In addition to the research presentations, a team of graphic communication students presented their first-place winning Phoenix Challenge project to a national audience at the Flexographic Technical Association Virtual Forum on May 6. The Phoenix Challenge is a yearlong project in which students help a local company market its business with materials using the flexographic print process. This year, they rebranded and created packaging solutions for Tails Pet Boutique in San Luis Obispo.

## INCLUSION STARTS WITH ME TEACH ON!

The College of Liberal Arts hosted a virtual “Teach ON!” — a series of both pre-recorded and real-time virtual lectures devoted to issues of equity and justice surrounding COVID-19. The pandemic has magnified structural inequities — as well as strengths — that exist in many communities, and the Teach ON! organizers recognized the need for scholars to speak to the complexity of the coronavirus response and its intersections with issues of race, gender, class and equity.

Faculty across campus were encouraged to use the lectures along with other curated resources in their courses. Presenters covered topics such as anti-Asian racism, self and community care, global responses, health care disparities, the redeployment of survival strategies for marginalized communities, issues of equity in a pandemic, fear and privilege, the social toll of social distancing, and laboring in the time of coronavirus.

The Teach ON! was offered in the same spirit as the Teach In, said Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, CLA associate dean for diversity and curriculum. “It’s a way for faculty, staff and administrators to model how we can engage in intellectual discourse around issues of social justice, particularly in times of great social need.”

Nearly 700 attendees, including students, staff and faculty, logged in to the live events, and even more accessed the provided learning material throughout the quarter.



“Classtime,” a painting by Kelli Bonafede (Art and Design, ’20), appeared in the online BFA 2020 Exhibition.



# GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

**A new program allows CLA students to get international experiences and make digital connections with people around the world.**

In coming to Cal Poly, CLA Dean Philip Williams saw great opportunity to connect students and faculty with their peers around the globe through virtual collaboration. It is a perfect complement to Learn by Doing.

When COVID-19 eliminated the ability to travel, virtual exchange became more than an opportunity — it is now a necessity.

“We simply cannot just put global projects on hold,” Williams said.

International experiences can enhance empathy and help develop skills in communicating across different cultures. They also offer perspectives that can be eye-opening for college students, as well as faculty working with international research partners. Perhaps now more than ever, there is a need for human connection and a need to embrace global learning in order to make sense of a global crisis.

Global engagement allows CLA students to practice human connection, participate in cross-cultural dialogues, gain a deeper and more

well-rounded understanding of our global peers, and strengthen their ability to communicate and collaborate. By offering virtual exchanges, the CLA can help prepare students to contribute personally and professionally to the world they will someday lead.

In short, virtual exchanges are learning experiences enabled by technology and coordinated between partners that develop cross-disciplinary and intercultural skills.

Virtual Exchange officially launched in CLA this spring when faculty were invited to compete for Global Engagement Grants to create international experiences for students. The grants allow them to collaborate with students to develop high-impact virtual exchange components for existing courses, experiment with innovative practices, cultivate partnerships with like-minded teachers and scholars from around the world, and receive training on technology and best-practice teaching methods.





This year, program participants will study the Middle East along with peers and faculty at the American University in Kuwait; students in Spanish classes at Cal Poly will work weekly with students in English classes at Universidad Nacional de San Martin in Buenos Aires, Argentina; and another group of students will engage with a nonprofit in Palermo, Sicily, to study issues of diversity and immigration in contemporary Italy. These courses are taught and orchestrated by history Professor Farah Al-Nakib, Spanish and applied linguistics Professor Silvia Marijuan and ethnic studies Professor Elvira Pulitano, respectively.

“The dean and I were overwhelmed by the creativity of the faculty and are excited to watch how these exchanges dramatically change the Cal Poly experience,” said Josh Machamer, CLA director of international initiatives. “With 20 to 40 students in each of these classes, we are completely reimagining who can have access to a global experience.”

These digital connections offer a way for students to interact with people from different countries without having to pay the expenses of a traditional study abroad experience. This is especially important for students with lower incomes, who may not be able to afford spending a quarter or more in another country, or students whose documentation status may preclude them from traveling so easily.

Virtual exchange allows the College of Liberal Arts to continue connecting students to the world around them — and, in fact, increases the ability to do so. Projects are currently funded through annual gifts made to the Dean’s Excellence Fund. Going forward, an important fundraising initiative will be a separate International Initiatives Fund that could support virtual exchange and scholarships for students to travel internationally for either study abroad or another unique experience. Anyone interested in supporting CLA International Initiatives should contact Assistant Dean for Development Adam Jarman at 805-756-6776 or [ajarman@calpoly.edu](mailto:ajarman@calpoly.edu).

## Josh Machamer Named Director of International Initiatives

As part of Dean Philip Williams’ vision for increased international opportunities for CLA students, Josh Machamer was named the new director of international initiatives for the college. He recently led the CLA Task Force on Internationalization and has served in several other capacities related to international education. In this new role, he will provide leadership for the support, development and advancement of internationalization efforts for the college, including building capacity in emerging areas of direct and virtual exchange and increasing student engagement in international experiences. Machamer also continues to serve as chair of the Theatre and Dance Department.



## Enabling Excellence

Annual gifts from donors and alumni enable the College of Liberal Arts and its departments to provide timely support for Learn by Doing projects and extracurricular programs, and the CLA endowment generates lasting income. Together, these funds allow the college to sustain the margin of excellence that Cal Poly students and alumni expect and deserve.

Scan this code with your smartphone camera to give online.



Make a one-time or recurring gift online at [www.giving.calpoly.edu](http://www.giving.calpoly.edu).

## GIVING: BY THE NUMBERS

A numerical look at donations to the College of Liberal Arts

Annual number of donors to CLA > 1,579

Annual number of gifts > 1,102

Annual gift commitments > \$2,768,461

(Numbers based on three-year averages)

From July 2019 to June 2020, the college received

746

Gifts of \$499 or less

72

Gifts of \$500-\$999

93

Gifts of \$1,000-\$4,999

24

Gifts of \$5,000-\$24,999

11

Gifts of \$25,000-\$99,999

2

Gifts of \$100,000+

The College of Liberal Arts' endowment

\$9,959,462

Endowment payouts during fiscal year 2019-20

\$300,561





Graphic communication student Michaela Kwan prints signage to be used in buildings on campus during the coronavirus pandemic.

## Special thanks to members of the 2019-20 Dean's Advisory Council for their contributions to the College of Liberal Arts.

**James W. apRoberts** — Art and Design, '02  
CEO/Co-Founder, Subplot Studio

—

**Hiroki Asai** — Art and Design, '92  
Retired VP of Global Communication, Apple Inc.

—

**Karyn M. Azzopardi** — Child and Family Development, '83  
Vice President, American Cooling

—

**David B. Camp** — Political Science, '79  
CFO, Motion Picture Industry Pension and Health Plans

—

**Ernie Chapa** — Graphic Communication, '92  
Director, Business Development,  
Moebius Solutions Inc.

—

**Mary R. Crebassa** — Speech Communication, '79  
Vice President, Major Accounts,  
LTN Global Communications Inc.

—

**Hon. Eugenia A. Eyherabide** — Political Science, '81  
Superior Court Judge, San Diego County

—

**John Hinton** — Speech Communication, '96  
National Account Sales Manager, The Hartford

**Sarah Carvalho Khan** — English, '98  
Director, Global Talent Development + Performance,  
Align Technology Inc.

—

**Howard Lim** — Art and Design, '89  
President, HOW Creative

—

**Robert A. Mayhew, Chair** — Political Science, '82  
Principal, Community Company LLC

—

**Carl F. Meyer, F.A.I.A.**  
Principal, CF Meyer Studio

—

**Richard L. Pinckard** — Political Science, '80  
Senior Partner, Bobbitt, Pinckard and Fields APC

—

**Sarah L. Storelli** — English, '11  
Program Director, Code and Response  
Ecosystem Marketing, IBM Corp.

—

**Christopher Trapani** — Political Science, '90  
Founder/CEO, Sereno Group Real Estate

## RECOGNIZING THE 2019 CLA HONORED ALUMNUS



**From left:** Kevin Falls (Journalism, '78), pictured second from left with his family, was named the CLA Honored Alumnus for 2019; Falls shares stories and insights during the celebration.

The CLA Honored Alumnus for 2019 was **Kevin Falls**, who majored in journalism at Cal Poly. After graduation in 1978, he interned as a newspaper reporter at the Eugene Register-Guard, but quickly decided to follow his passion for storytelling into writing screenplays. After writing the script for two movies, “The Temp” and “Summer Catch,” Falls was named head writer and co-executive producer on the Aaron Sorkin TV series “Sports Night” in 1999.

“The big break was ‘Sports Night’ when it put me in the world of Aaron Sorkin,” Falls said. After Falls ran the writers’ room for “Sports Night,” Sorkin asked him to run the writers’ room for his new show “The West Wing.” Falls was nervous at first. “I was terrified because the people who worked on the ‘The West Wing’ also worked for American presidents,” he said. “I didn’t come from the world of politics, but at the end of the day, it was the kid from Cal Poly who told them when they could go to lunch.”

“The West Wing” ran from 2000–07 and was a wildly successful series. The show won Falls four Emmys for Outstanding Drama Series and Outstanding Special Class Program for his role as a co-executive producer. He is currently co-executive producer on the NBC hit series “This is Us,” now in its fifth season. Throughout his illustrious career,

Falls has been a creative force behind many series, including “Franklin and Bash,” “Journeyman,” “Pitch” and “The Resident.”

“I can’t underestimate how much Cal Poly changed the trajectory of my life,” he said. “Working on Mustang Daily, having advisors like Jim Hayes, who taught me so much about writing and being professional, and applying those lessons to screenwriting made all the difference in the world.”

Falls has stayed connected to the Journalism Department and recently participated in a live interview session on storytelling for a campuswide audience. He is eager to share his experiences in entertainment with aspiring writers and has volunteered to participate in the English Department’s speed networking sessions with current Cal Poly students.

College of Liberal Arts Dean Philip Williams said, “It’s given our students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn from Kevin about his own experiences.”



## 1990s

**Michael Daly** (Social Sciences, '92), recently retired Marin County Chief of Probation, was recognized for his 30 years of service.

**Brad Ledwith** (Communication Studies, '92) wrote a book "Suddenly Single: Helping Widows with Financial Planning After Losing Their Spouse." He specializes in individual investors and is currently in the top 2% of financial advisors nationwide.

**Carolyn Nielsen** (Journalism, '94) published her first book, "Reporting on Race in a Digital Era." Her book analyzes news coverage of contemporary racial inflection points beginning with the election of President Barack Obama and stretching through the birth and growth of the Black Lives Matter movement.

## 2000s

**Abraham Mendoza** (History, '03) is a work-based learning specialist with Eden Area ROP. For nearly five years, he has helped develop career-ready students from career and technical education pathways to fulfill regional workforce needs.

**Samantha Zupan** (Journalism, '03) was promoted to senior vice president of corporate communications at Glassdoor, leading the development and execution of the company's corporate communications strategy and overseeing a global team that includes public relations, executive and internal communications, economic research, government affairs and community relations.

**Molly Choma** (Art and Design, '08) is one of a greatly reduced number of flight attendants still reporting to work as scheduled during the COVID-19 pandemic and was featured in a New York Times article.

**Danielle Diaz** (Communication Studies, '09) was named one of Dealerscope's 40 Under 40. The program recognizes a selection of the brightest young talent in the consumer tech industry.

## 2010s

**Caitlin Bercha Risk** (English, '10) recently designed a sales training program that generated \$18 million in 12 months. She also hiked Half Dome in Yosemite.

**Sarah Storelli** (English, '11) is now program director of IBM's Call for Code.

**Wyatt Oroke** (History, '13) was named Baltimore's Teacher of the Year.

**Armando Torres Garcia** (Journalism, '13) reports for ABC Network News and covers the 2020 presidential election.

**Carol Wang** (Psychology, '15) is pursuing a doctorate in social and health psychology at the University of Houston and is a Susan G. Komen Research Fellow in Health Disparities at the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center. She was selected for a Scholar-in-Training Award and presented research at the American Association for Cancer Research Conference in September 2019.

**Sean Bird** (Journalism, '18) is the founder of Everjourney, a nonprofit organization motivated by the adventure and freedom of cycling that started as his senior project. All product sales are donated to One Bicycle Foundation and used to purchase bicycles for orphans at a Kenyan orphanage.

**Mike Frank** (Journalism, '18) co-founded Grub for Guardians to connect chefs to medical professionals throughout New York City to provide frontline workers with fresh, hot meals.

**Irebid Gilbert** (Master of Public Policy, '18) recently created and co-founded Herencia Indigena. The organization trains trilingual individuals to facilitate communication between health care providers and Indigenous communities throughout the Central Coast. In April, Herencia Indigena signed a two-year contract to provide advocates/interpreters for all Dignity Health departments.

**Steve Page** (Anthropology and Geography, '19) made a feature-length documentary film, "The Last Forests Project," which explains the importance of kelp forests to the marine food chain in Northern California. The film was inspired by a solo kayaking trip.

## 2020s

**Lauren Unger** (Anthropology and Geography, '20) was hired for a geographic information system (GIS) job with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

## CLASS NOTES

Share your recent news in the next Impact magazine at [www.cla.calpoly.edu/update](http://www.cla.calpoly.edu/update).



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# STAY CONNECTED AND BE A LIFELONG LEARNER: TAKE PART IN A CLA LEARNING CIRCLE THIS YEAR!

Join our virtual community to connect with fellow Cal Poly alumni, faculty, staff and friends and enjoy lifelong learning, entertainment and personal growth. Participation is free!

## HOW THE CLA LEARNING CIRCLE WORKS

The College of Liberal Arts has created a virtual learning circle — kind of like a book club — for Cal Poly alumni, faculty, staff and friends. The CLA Learning Circle invites participants to read the same book, watch the same documentary, listen to the same podcast, etc., and then join together to take part in a discussion about the piece led by one of our excellent CLA faculty members. Joining is completely free; you just have to get a copy of the book or digital media to enjoy.



Learn more at [www.cla.calpoly.edu/alumni/learning-circle](http://www.cla.calpoly.edu/alumni/learning-circle)