



The LAES Frontier

September 2026

A monthly newsletter keeping the Liberal Arts and Engineering Studies program connected and informed.

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Welcome Back!

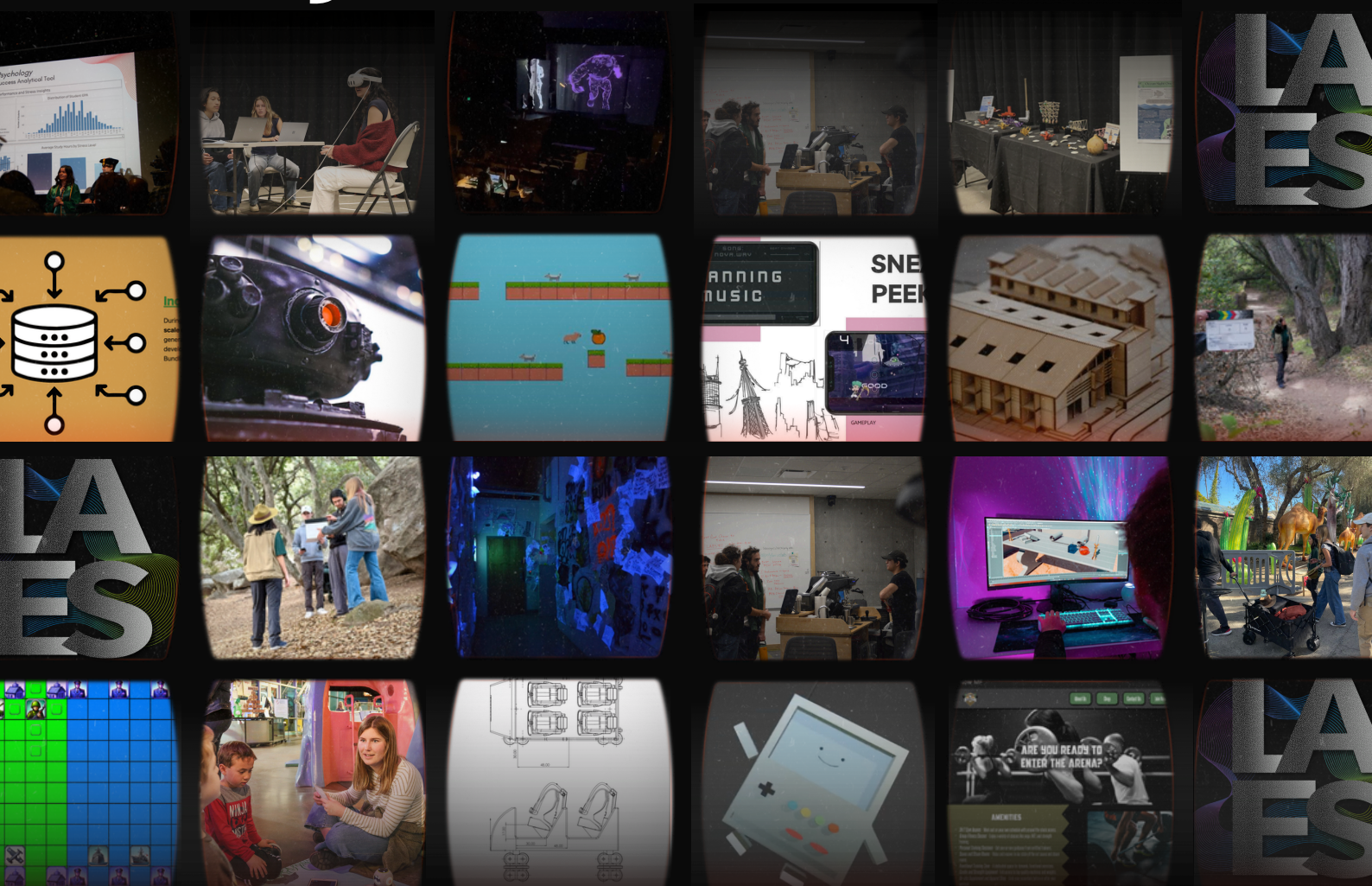
LAES in Semesters

LAES has a whole new look in semesters! Our new class numbers are LAES 4301/4302 for Capstone I/II and LAES 4461/4462 for Senior Project I/II.

Your favorite projects are also back from summer break. Click on each project to learn a little more about them from our website.

- [VR Space Mission for Aerospace Museum of CA](#)
- [FRIDA Animatronic Droid](#)
- [Expressive Technology Studios Immersive Demo](#)
- [Ocean Site One VR Mini Games ~ Can Gameplay Affect Environmental Empathy?](#)





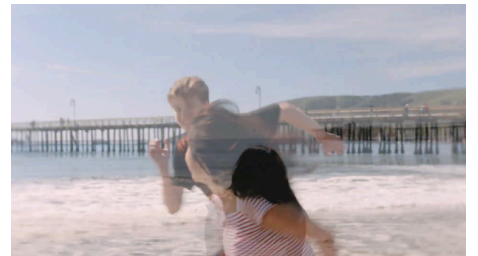


SQUARES (2026)

Before graduating in Spring 2026, LAES student **Maddie Morelos (Computer Graphics and Animation Implementation)** participated in Cal Poly Short Cuts at the SLO International Film Festival as an editor on the short film “Squares.” Students in ISLA 341 (now ISLA 3341) have only a few weeks to cast, plan, film, and edit short films using original screenplays from ISLA 240 (now ISLA 3340).

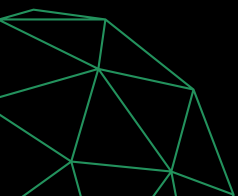
“Squares,” prominently featuring Louisa’s Cafe in downtown SLO, is a heartwarming and comedic story about unexpected connection.

Watch “Squares” on YouTube [HERE](#)



cal poly short cuts presents

SQUARES



Alumni Spotlight

Trevor Marsano

Senior Game Designer at Blizzard Entertainment

LAES Class of 2019, Digital Art and Computer Science



- **About:** I recently took on the role of Class Designer on Diablo. I design and implement player classes, skills, mechanics, and systems, while also working on combat feel across the game. Previously, I spent several years as a Technical Designer, where I worked at the intersection of design and engineering to prototype and build gameplay systems and features. That technical background still plays a big role in how I approach design today.

- Reach out to Trevor via his **LinkedIn** to ask more!

- Read more about Trevor on the next page...

Being comfortable with both technical and creative problems has been one of the biggest advantages I've had throughout my career.



Alumni Spotlight

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- **Career Path**: After graduating, I worked in software engineering and testing before my move into Technical Design at Blizzard. That role was a great fit because it combined programming and problem solving with the creative side of game development. Over time, I took on more ownership of gameplay features and systems, which eventually led me to my current role.
- **LAES Influence**: LAES taught me how valuable it is to be comfortable working across disciplines. Game development is extremely collaborative. On any given day I might work with engineers, artists, animators, designers, producers, or UI/UX developers. Understanding how different disciplines approach a problem—and communicating effectively between them—is invaluable. LAES also encouraged me to think beyond a single specialization. The most interesting opportunities in my career came from being willing to step outside of my formal role, learn something new, and solve a problem that didn't fit neatly into one discipline.



Upcoming Events



Weekly, Wednesdays 5-6:50pm

LAES Club Meetings

- Frost LAES Lab (181-101)
- Get involved with hands-on projects, make friends, watch movies, network, gain skills, and more!
- **THIS WEEK (9/2): Pizza and design/build activity**
- Check the club instagram for regular updates (@calpolylaesclub)



September 3rd, 11am-12:30pm

Disney Imaginations Competition Info Session

- Berg Gallery (bldg. 05, rm. 105)
- Learn the design prompt and all the steps to compete in this incredible competition- also connect with past Cal Poly winners!



October 2nd, 1-3pm

Mustang Family Weekend Expressive Technology Studios Open House

- Frost Center Expressive Technology Studios (181-104)
- Rotating tours; A showcase of the studio and the LAES program for anyone interested

Email Alessandra Gardner at agardn03@calpoly.edu with any event questions.

Mission Control

Stand by for final transmission...

New Administrative Support and Program Coordinator

Welcome, Rebekah!

Rebekah Swigger is excited to be joining the LAES program as Administrative Support Coordinator (ASC). She has been a Cal Poly employee since 2017, working as the ASC in the Philosophy department for the past nine years. Recently, she earned her Master of Science in Psychology at Cal Poly and is finishing her clinical hours at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Campus Health & Wellbeing here on campus. She is working for us part-time, and you can generally find her Tuesdays through Thursdays in the LAES Program Office (181-220). Feel free to pop by the office to say "hi" or connect via email: laes@calpoly.edu

Read This if You Are a LAES Grad

Help us build our LAES community

LAES Alumni, we need your help! Please [Complete this brief form](#) so we can spotlight you in the next newsletter. Thank you for your time and support of the program.

Opportunities

Find your next portfolio-builder!

- **Paid Digital Storytelling Research Opportunity**
 - Learn more [HERE](#)
- **Build a Haunted House at Cal Poly**
 - Collaboration between Student Stage and CP Amusement Park Engineers and Designers club
 - Follow their instagram to learn more ([@capedhauntedhouse](#))

End of transmission.