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## Message from the Dean



We have wonderful new stories to share with you this Spring – stories of compassion and service, stories of celebration, stories of success, and stories about successful partnerships. I am exceptionally proud of our students and faculty who continue to demonstrate exceptional character

and commitment to the University and its community. As you read these stories, think back to your time at Chico State and how those experiences have formed the foundation for your career and shaped your future.

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Computer Science Department, celebrated with a gathering of 160 alumni, faculty, and friends in April. This was an exceptional event and an opportunity to reflect how far computing has come and how dramatically it has changed our lives from personal computers to cell phones and GPS navigation systems.

Last July, the rural mountain community of Concow, 30 miles east of Chico, was devastated by wild land fires. Over 200 residences were burned, resulting in the loss of homes for at least 600 people. Our students and faculty responded with a community service project to build storage sheds for those who had lost everything in the devastation. This is but one example of the kind of character that our students demonstrate on a daily basis.

CSU, Chico just completed a rigorous accreditation process for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. You will be pleased to know that the final report was one of the strongest possible endorsements for the campus, the faculty, the students, and our programs. The report was filled with accolades, often framed in terms of *The*

*Chico Experience* that is rapidly becoming a hallmark for this university. You should all share in the pride we feel for this success.

This year we are facing new challenges and threats due to a struggling economy. I am asking for your support for scholarships that support students who show great promise, and at the same time are in financial need. We have many, many students who meet these criteria. The economic downturn hits both communities and families, and as a consequence it is becoming harder for many of our current students to continue, and our prospective students to begin. I am therefore initiating the *ECC Foundations for Excellence* Scholarship fund. This fund will support both on-going and new scholarships for our students. I know that many of you are also impacted by the current economic climate, but I hope that you are still able to contribute. To make a donation on-line you can use the link: [http://www.csuchico.edu/advancement/make\\_a\\_gift.php](http://www.csuchico.edu/advancement/make_a_gift.php) and select the tab for the college, select “other” and designate the gift for the *ECC Foundations for Excellence* fund. Or if you prefer to send a check you can designate the gift for the *ECC Foundations for Excellence* Scholarship in the notation section of your check. I sincerely appreciate any help you can give to our future leaders.

I wish you the best in the coming months and hope that you will send us your own stories – both personal and professional - so that we may include them in future newsletters.

Sincerely,

Michael Ward, Interim Dean

College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management

## Distinguished Alum Tells His Story



**M**arty Rapozo's successful company, Abide International, has completed numerous federal contracts that are as diverse as expanding border patrol crossings to renovating the FBI west coast headquarters in San Francisco. Projects such as replacing pipe-

lines at Folsom Dam and managing a \$100 million prison construction began with the advice of a professor at Chico State.

Marty graduated from high school and began working and living on his own. "There were times when all I had to eat for dinner was toothpaste," Marty said. He soon realized something had to change.

After visiting a friend for the weekend in Chico, Marty decided he had to move to Chico and begin college. "I immediately said I am moving here, I want to live in Craig Hall and I will be a business major," Marty said.

As a first generation college student, Marty didn't know exactly what to expect. But he did know he wanted to be more than just a name on a list. He began meeting with faculty members during office hours. One faculty member in Business changed the course of his life. After a short discussion about Marty's interest in extreme sports such as sky-diving and white water rafting, the professor told him that Construction Management was a much better choice than his current finance major. "He told me where I had to go to register for classes," Marty explained. "He

made me repeat the directions to the CM office. So I went to appease him."

He quickly enrolled in the courses and immediately loved them. Though he took almost all the courses to complete a bachelor's degree in Construction Management, he never changed his major and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business in 1981. Marty enjoyed Construction Management and decided to pursue a master's degree in the field. Because Chico did not offer a master's in Construction Management, Marty worked with advisors at Chico State to create a degree program based on Stanford University's course requirements.

During the summer of 1980, Marty's father purchased a condemned house in Chico. Marty spent the summer renovating the home, starting with the deck and adding two additional bedrooms and an additional bathroom. He rented all the rooms the following fall and returned his father's money. Each summer he was in graduate school, he continued purchasing properties and renovating them until he graduated.

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## Concrete Program Surpasses \$1 Million

Excited Construction Industry Management (CIM) students crowded into the concrete lab in March to celebrate a donation that brought the total contributions to the CIM program to more than \$1 million.

Chico State President Paul Zingg welcomed the group of CIM Patrons, students and reporters to the lab.

*“This program is one of only a few of its kind nationwide.”*  
**Dr. Tanya Wattenburg Komas.**

“It is such a treat to be here today and receive this donation that will allow this program to grow beyond the \$1 million mark,” President Zingg said. “Our students are grateful for this donation and our campus thanks you for building this program.”

The CIM Patrons meet each semester to discuss the program’s opportunities for students and funding. Patrons are top industry representatives who provide the latest information on industry trends for coursework and internships. They work with faculty and students to enrich the educational experience of the growing program. The program now boasts more than 60 declared majors since it began only five years ago.

“This program is a model for others on campus,” Dean Mike Ward told the crowd. “It takes the best of industry and collaborates with our excellent faculty to create a real student oriented learning program.”

Patron funding provides \$700 scholarships per semester for each declared CIM major. The funding has also purchased equipment in the lab and provided conference opportunities for students and faculty.

“This program is one of only a few of its kind nationwide,” explained Dr. Tanya Wattenburg Komas. “We have our first cohort of graduates this Spring and they

will enter an exciting niche profession.”

The CIM Program is a model for other campuses across the nation, Komas said. It has successfully attracted students to a career that is in demand and provides an opportunity to link with several industry professionals.



## Computer Science Celebrates 40 Years



More than 160 alumni, faculty and friends of the department attended the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Computer Science in April. The day featured campus tours, lab tours, a luncheon and dinner at Sierra Nevada Brewery.

“The best thing about the day was seeing all the alumni,” Chair Moaty Fayek said. “We had a great turn-out.”

In 1960, Herb Langdon decided that offering computer courses under the Division of Applied Sciences was essential. Bill Lane, a newly appointed Electrical Engineering faculty member, was selected to purchase a system and develop curriculum for the courses. Courses began in Spring 1961. In Fall 1964, Computer Science was approved as a 128-unit option under the bachelor’s degree in applied science. In 1969, the degree in Computer Science was approved by the University and the department was formed in 1970.

Since that time, Bill Lane, Larry Wear, Orlando Madrigal, Melody (Stapleton) Callan, John Zenor, Anne Keuneke, Ralph Hilzer and Moaty Fayek have served as department chair. In that time, several changes have occurred in the program.

Beginning in the basement of an old house, the department moved several times before finding its current home in O’Connell Technology Center. The

second floor O’Connell location provided space for the department, including larger labs and updated technology in the classrooms. The department began offering a master’s degree in 1969, but remarkably also began offering distance learning on off-campus TV via a microwave link. By 1973, this link expanded to include all of the North State.

“We’ve had a lot of changes in the years,” Fayek said. “One thing that hasn’t changed is our graduates. They’re excited about Chico and connecting with others.”

Fayek said he researched graduate email addresses and established a LinkedIn page for alumni. At this time, the page has more than 300 alumni registered on the Chico State Computer Science Alumni page.

“The College and Department really want to create that Chico connection for our alumni,” Fayek said. “Alumni are great role models for our students.”

During the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, an alumni panel gave advice and encouragement to students seeking careers in the ever-changing computer science field. Student ambassadors from the program also attended the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary events.

“The connection of alumni and students is always the best,” Fayek said. “This was a successful event and I continue to hear from alumni who want to spend more time in Chico.”



# Concow Phoenix Project Unites Community



The Concow wildfires of 2008 devastated a community and posed challenges for the Chico area. Families were left without homes or possessions, the natural forest habitat was destroyed, and the community of Concow had to make difficult choices about rebuilding.

The College of ECC students and faculty saw the unmet needs of these families and decided to help. During the past two years, the faculty and staff of ECC brought more than 100 students to New Orleans to work on homes for Hurricane Katrina victims. In 2009, they decided that the Concow wildfire victims needed their assistance.

Jim O'Bannon, one of the faculty project leaders, said it was an obvious choice to work in a local community.

"We began two months of intense planning," O'Bannon explained. "It started as a Univer-

sity project, but became a university-lead, community project."

Concow community members expressed a need for storage unit buildings to house their belongings as they began to rebuild their homes. The storage buildings were a good option for the students as they did not require permits and could be manufactured rapidly.

The students and faculty were successful in attracting donations from local contractors including Slater and Sons, Web Homes, Conroy, and Modern Builders.

"They were great," O'Bannon said. "If we had a need, they covered it. We needed a forklift. A new forklift showed up at the sight at no charge. We couldn't do it without the help of our community."

More than 75 students from across campus got involved in the project and raised approximately \$30,000 plus donations of equipment and lumber.



## Outstanding Student Leader

The storage unit walls were manufactured in a few days at the University Farm. Engineering students wrote safety and construction manuals and created an organized process to manufacture the frames for each of the units.

“It was a well-organized working unit,” Dean Mike Ward said. “It was impressive.”

Students, faculty, staff and community members arrived in Concow and camped for three days while they built the storage facilities. When they arrived at the campground, they first built a hot shower that remains at the campsite today.

“Some of the families from Concow were still camping at the campsite without hot showers,” O’Bannon explained. “We wanted to make sure that they were left with a hot shower, too.”

The January rain complicated some of the work, but never dampened the spirit of the volunteers or the community.

“The students were amazing,” O’Bannon said. “They put on their rain gear and continued working on the project. They knew how important it was to this community.”

The Concow community showed their immense appreciation by cooking a dinner for the volunteers. More than 150 people attended. They shared food, music, dancing, and the community spirit of Concow.

“The students worked long, hard hours,” O’Bannon said. “These projects make such a difference. When people learn the joy of giving, they do it for the rest of their lives. Everyone who works on these projects is changed after they complete it.”

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changed.”  
Jim O’Bannon*

The College of ECC was honored to have a student win the Outstanding Student Leader Award on campus. Joel Amato’s academic achievements and community service propelled him to the top of this year’s nominees.

Joel is a quadruple major in Mechatronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Physics. He also has three minors: Math, Manufacturing and Computer Engineering. He maintains a high GPA. With so much homework, one may think that Joel has no time for other activities. He has a long list of organizations where he is an active member including serving as the chapter Vice President of the Society of Plastics Engineers, the Vice President of the Physics Students, the student advisor for the Intelligent Ground Vehicle competition, the chapter Chair of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and the Vice President of the American Institute of Mechatronic Engineers.

He worked on the Rebuild New Orleans Projects with the College and assists at the Minds In Motion day for grade school students. Off campus, he volunteers with the Boys and Girls Club where he has worked at numerous annual events. Working with CAVE has been an enlightening experience where he assists with a third grade class each week.

Joel was chosen as one of three students from California as an International Scholar Laureate. He traveled to several locations in China to visit engineering sites. When he returned, he completed a guest lecture on campus describing the process.

## Alumni Updates *Let us know what you're doing! Send updates to [eccconnections@csuchico.edu](mailto:eccconnections@csuchico.edu)*

1973, CIVL, BS– Paul Cavanaugh is a City Engineer in the Public Works Department for the City of Galt.

1998, CSCI, MS–  
**Craig McChesney** is the Director of Production Engineering at UBS/Prediction Company in Santa Fe, NM.

2002, MFGT, BS–Richard Keehn is a Manufacturing Engineer for Chatsworth Products, Inc.

2002, ME, BS– Michael Schallert is a Project Engineer at Northrop Grumman in Redondo Beach.

2003, CIVL, BS– Katherine Nixon is an Engineer II for the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

2005, MECA, BS– Andrew Sizelove is a Sr. Project Manager at Synvasive Technology, Inc. in El Dorado Hills.

2006, EE, MS– Jason Holpuch is a Sr. Electrical Engineer at RFK Aerospace, LLC in Chico.

**Making a tax-deductible donation to the College of ECC is easy!** To make a donation on-line, use the link: [http://www.csuchico.edu/advancement/make\\_a\\_gift.php](http://www.csuchico.edu/advancement/make_a_gift.php) and select the tab for the college.

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Marty's first construction management position was in Palm Springs. After working there for 1.5 years, he realized he wanted to pursue other aspects of construction management. He found his niche working for a developer who completed government contracts.

***"I had no idea I would ever be doing this***

***when I was younger.***

***It's been a great career."***

***Marty Rapozo, ECC Distinguished Alum 2009***

Marty's first project was managing a federal prison for \$100 million.

The owner of the company made him vice president within five years and promptly left. Marty was in charge of the company and soon bought out the owner. Today, he is the CEO of Abide International, a 20-employee construction management and general construction company that completes projects

for the federal government. Projects range in scope and length from a few days to multiple years.

Today Marty lives in Sonoma with his wife, a Chico State Communication Design graduate, and his son.

Dr. Clarke Steinback completed computer graphics on the PBS special "400 Years of the Telescope". The program provides a history of the telescope and vibrant visuals, several of which were created by Clarke and his team. The program celebrates the International Year of Astronomy– 2009.