A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since its launch in 2003, the Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Fresno State has become a hub for the development and implementation of cutting-edge entrepreneurial education. The elaborate ecosystem produced by the Lyles Center supports an impactful transfer of knowledge to every age group, influencing the Central Valley community and creating the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs.

In an unprecedented partnership with the Fresno Unified School District, our Kids Invent! program was implemented in every fifth-grade classroom in Fresno during the 2014-15 academic year. In one year, more than 5,800 students created innovative solutions to problems of design and functionality by engaging in teamwork, observation and experimentation.

In March of 2015, we held the inaugural Community College Entrepreneur Pathway (CCEP) Instructor Workshop. Through this program, community college faculty members are trained to implement 18 customized entrepreneurial lessons. The scope of CCEP will expand in 2016 as the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship partners to present the workshop in multiple states across America.

As we embark on our 10th annual Central Valley Venture Forum, an event which brings together venture capitalists, angel investors and community leaders to discuss the economic future of the Central Valley, it is clear our system is revolutionary in the academic field. By transmitting knowledge through trainings, collaborative programs and networking events, the Lyles Center has become a habitat where entrepreneurial dreams are conceived and nurtured to become a reality.

Many people deserve recognition when it comes to the success of the Lyles Center. Our programs and their impacts would not be possible without partnerships with community organizations, corporate sponsors, businesses and individuals. These all-encompassing efforts allow us to realize our mission of fostering innovative and entrepreneurial behaviors throughout the Central Valley.

I would like to personally thank the staff members of the Lyles Center for their tireless efforts in advancing the Center and making it a truly wonderful place to work.

Our annual report captures some of our major accomplishments for the 2014-15 year. What follows is a quick summary of several outstanding programs we are proud to bring to our community.

DR. TIMOTHY M. STEARNS
Lyles Center Executive Director,
Coleman Foundation Chairholder in Entrepreneurial Studies
FUSD FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS BUILD HANDICOPTERS AS PART OF KIDS INVENT!
LYLES CENTER STAFF CELEBRATE AFTER THE SUCCESS OF KIDS INVENT! INNOVATION DAY 2015
The Laval Entrepreneur Mentor Program (EMP) provides students from all disciplines the opportunity to build impactful relationships with Central Valley business leaders. Through weekly forums, EMP students have access to lessons and insights of successful, local entrepreneurs. Students gain professional experience and networking know-how through business visits, social gatherings and skill-development opportunities throughout the program.

“Empower our students through a comprehensive program that fosters entrepreneurship and business acumen.”

“The Laval Entrepreneur Mentor Program (EMP) encourages an entrepreneurial mindset and pushes students to think beyond what they imagined could be accomplished,” said Marisela Hoom, Laval EMP coordinator. “Our mentors have an authentic interest in cultivating a life-long bond with their mentee and the sense of community created by the program allows students to seek insights and answers from mentors without judgment.”
Each student is matched one-on-one with the mentor who best suits their area of interest. However, every student has access to all mentors in the program, a distinctive facet of the program. Many students receive mentoring even after they graduate, revisiting their mentor as their professional life advances. In the 10 years EMP has been offered, more than 200 students have received invaluable professional and personal guidance. The program requires a two-year commitment from each student, which includes a rigorous schedule of projects, events and mentor meetings.

At the start of the program, students completed the DiSC Profile Assessment to provide insights into their unique strengths and weaknesses, information critical for developing entrepreneurial and professional skills. Presentations this year covered a great deal of business-related topics, including funding entrepreneurial ventures and the importance of dining etiquette when making contacts at social functions.

Each year EMP students receive behind-the-scenes tours of a few of the Central Valley’s most successful businesses. Through this process, students gain exposure to the process of building a viable company in the community and an unprecedented opportunity to ask questions of the experts. This year, EMP received tours of Betts Spring Co., The Grand, Hilmar Cheese, Blue Diamond Almonds and 5.11 Tactical.

Nemat Inc. and Starving Artists Bistro (co-owned by Nycole Sullivan, a 2005 graduate of the program) held mixers during the 2014-15 year. Mixers provide a rare, social setting for networking and discussion to occur between students, mentors and program supporters.

‘Shark Tank’ presentations highlighted the spring semester, with each student developing a food product based on the Central Valley’s agriculture. Products, as well as accompanying packaging, were pitched to a panel of judges, which included Jennifer Barney of Barney Butter and Craig Scharton of Peeve’s Public House and Local Market. Aubrey Lim developed the winning product – beef heart jerky.

In 2014, the program received a generous donation from Claude and Betty Lou Laval to fund the program for the next five years. Funds dedicated in memory of Betty Lou established a scholarship in her honor, covering tuition expenses for three outstanding EMP students each year. Aubrey Lim, Aaron Cook and Shervin Zoghi received the inaugural Betty Lou Laval Scholarship.
Founded in 2005, Fresno State’s Coleman Fellows Program is the flagship of a nationwide network of entrepreneurship-minded faculty members. What began on our campus through the vision of Dr. Stearns, in collaboration with the Chicago-based Coleman Foundation, has grown to include participation from close to two dozen universities and more than 150 faculty members nationwide.

“The Coleman Fellows at Fresno State started a movement that is making a difference,” said Betsy Hays, associate director of the Fresno State Coleman Fellows. “One in five students who took my Fellow-sponsored class (Public Relations Entrepreneurship) are currently running their own communications companies. None of these students were business majors, which showcases the incredible value of this program.”
The Coleman Fellows Program catalyzes cross-campus entrepreneurship by finding non-business faculty who are passionate about incorporating entrepreneurship values in their field of study. Once accepted into the Fellows Program, professors infuse entrepreneurial education into either an existing course or create brand-new one with an entrepreneurship focus. There are currently 21 Coleman Fellows at Fresno State representing 13 academic departments.

In addition to classroom work, Coleman Fellows meet regularly to share ideas and learn about local, regional and national entrepreneurship, including the people and resources available to augment their instruction.

Once a month, the cohort participated in the ‘Coleman Coffee Cup’ web conference, allowing Fellows from across the country to collaborate on ideas, pedagogy, and research models and sample assignments. Monthly gatherings included field trips to local entrepreneurship hubs such as Bitwise Industries, Peeve’s Public House and Local Market, Engelmann Cellars and Flower Child (a company founded by a Fresno State fashion merchandising student). Other gatherings included tours of Fresno State departments and resources, such as the campus TV studio, radio station and newspaper office.

The Fellows also act as the ‘stars’ of the Coleman Fellows Workshop series, which debuted during the spring semester. More than 40 workshops were open to the campus community, as well as the public and featured business-based topics such as Facebook Ads, Managing Your Inboxes and the Work-Life Balance Myth.

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“Being a Coleman Fellow has been truly transformational. It has enabled us to vertically integrate entrepreneurial concepts within all six Lyles College of Engineering programs, educating the next generation of engineers and construction managers to address the 21st century’s grand challenges.”

Manoochehr Zoghi, Ph.D.
Lyles College of Engineering Professor,
Director of Construction Management Program

FRESNO STATE COLEMAN FELLOWS

Florence Cassel · Mohan Dangi · Lizhu Y. Davis
Henry Delcore · Hongwei Dong · A. Sameh El Kharbawy
Lynn Forsythe · Dave Goorahoo · Betsy Hays
James Mullooly · The M. Nguyen · Raeisi Reza
Craig Scharton · Fariborz M. Tehrani · Jes Therkelsen
Richard Wanjema · Corey Whitehead · Tomasz Wellicki
Wei Wu · Manoochehr Zoghi
KIDS INVENT

FUELED BY THE LYLES CENTER

Kids Invent! stimulates the creativity of students by presenting them with science, math, engineering and English fundamentals in innovative ways. Each week students work in teams to explore solutions to practical problems through teamwork, observation and experimentation. Through this curriculum, students learn to successfully use supplies, manage time efficiently and develop social skills through collaboration.

“It was a first-class learning experience for all of the children. It was the highlight of the week, and provided a challenge for each student to think outside the box. The idea of solving a problem and working in a team to solve a challenge cannot be measured.”

-Timothy Carlo, Figarden Elementary teacher
In 2014, the Lyles Center partnered with the Fresno Unified School District to incorporate Kids Invent! into fifth-grade classrooms throughout Fresno Unified. Fifth-grade teachers at Fresno Unified and Agape Charter Schools were trained on the pedagogy and application of Kids Invent! by Dr. Ed Sobey, co-creator of the program. Teachers also received access to videoed curricula manuals to ensure lessons were effectively communicated to students.

Monthly shipments tailored to each lesson were sent to 245 classrooms throughout the 2014-15 academic year, allowing each class to successfully conduct the weekly activities which ranged from building a straw tower to designing a solar-powered boat.

The program culminated in spring 2015 with a district-wide Innovation Day. More than 35 elementary schools competed in a never-before-seen Kids Invent! challenge. One team from each of Fresno Unified’s seven regions was awarded with a specialized Innovation Day trophy and medals for each team member. More than 5,800 students participated in the program and received a certificate of completion from the Lyles Center.

In fall of 2015, the Lyles Center will implement the program to fifth-grade classrooms throughout the Madera Unified School District and Kepler Neighborhood School.

Due to the overwhelming success of the fifth-grade lesson plan, the Lyles Center, in collaboration with Dr. Sobey and the Fresno County Office of Education, is developing a project-based, sixth-grade curriculum. The program will be implemented in October 2015 to all sixth-grade classrooms in Fresno Unified.

"Kids Invent! helps you learn how to work together, communicate and make friends."
-Nellie, FUSD Student
MORE THAN 150 FIFTH GRADERS FROM 39 FUSD SCHOOLS ATTENDED KIDS INVENT! INNOVATION DAY 2015.
The Community College Entrepreneur Pathway (CCEP) fosters entrepreneurial education and development among community colleges. Through CCEP, faculty members are trained in hands-on curricula, as well as classroom resources and tools to engage learners. The Pathway acts as a community to support collaboration and networking among its members, aiding in the delivery of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to community college students. Membership in CCEP is obtained by attending the three-day CCEP Instructor Workshop.
A customized set of entrepreneurial-based curricula was developed by Dr. Stearns in collaboration with Reedley College Entrepreneurship Center Director Eric Nasalroad and Clovis Community College Business Instructor Matthew Alanis. Three major topics – “Who is the Entrepreneur?”, “How do Entrepreneurs Capture Opportunity?” and “How Do Entrepreneurs Build Wealth?” – were explored through 18 lessons designed to support faculty in classroom delivery of consistent entrepreneurship methods.

Thirty-one faculty members from 20 community colleges attended the inaugural CCEP Instructor Workshop at the Lyles Center in March of 2015. Each participant received a complete set of curricula, comprised of extensive teaching notes, lesson-specific exercises, specialized projects and web resources. Over the course of the three-day session attendees obtained in-depth insights into effectively teaching the subject matter from Stearns, Nasalroad and Alanis.

Sponsorship of the workshop was provided by The Coleman Foundation and Doing What MATTERS for Jobs and the Economy totaling more than $45,000. These funds provided first-come, first-served partial scholarships for attendees. At the close of the workshop, CCEP membership was comprised of 23 community colleges throughout California.

CCEP has partnered with the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE) to take the Instructor Workshop nationwide in 2016. This partnership will bring the CCEP Instructor Workshop to three states across the country, increasing the reach of the Pathway and its proven curricula. An Instructor Workshop will also take place March 3-5, 2016 on the campus of Fresno State.

“The most important two takeaways for me are that we must espouse action and that I now have the great potential to build an excellent network of amazing colleagues,” said Jose Nava, an accounting and business professor at Foothill College who attended the 2015 CCEP Instructor Workshop. “My experience in this program has provided me with an excellent starting point to accomplish that goal.”
The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) program provides entrepreneurial education to high school students with the goal of enhancing their economic productivity and improving their business, academic and life skills. The Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is the NFTE partner in the Central Valley region. The Lyles Center engages community partners to teach the NFTE program, judge competitions and volunteer in the classroom. These efforts work to cultivate future leaders by providing a successful educational and training program to students throughout the Central Valley.

“I’m grateful for the opportunity to work with the Lyles Center in providing the NFTE program,” said Juan Garza, superintendent of Kings Canyon Unified School District. “It demonstrates that when you provide opportunities for students they get motivated, excel and become champions.”
In 2015 two local NFTE representatives received national recognition. Kelsey Hershey, a student at Roosevelt High School and member of the NFTE program, was honored as the Global Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Hershey created Poppy’s Jam, an organic, all-natural product made from Central Valley produce. The Global Young Entrepreneur Award is an opportunity for NFTE to recognize students across the globe for demonstrating excellence in learning and dedication to their entrepreneurial pursuits. Linda Jean Voth, a Roosevelt High School teacher, was recognized as the NFTE Teacher of the Year. Presented to one teacher within each NFTE region, this award recognizes the invaluable inspiration and insight NFTE teachers provide the program, allowing many students to succeed.

Throughout the Central Valley, 11 high schools (Bullard High School, the Center for Advanced Research and Technology, Central West High School, Duncan Polytechnical High School, Fresno High School, McLane High School, Orange Cove High School, Reedley High School, Roosevelt High School, W.E.B Dubois Public Charter School and Carter G. Woodson Public Charter School) have partnered with the Lyles Center to implement this program. Each high school partner is committed to entrepreneurial education and the transformational impact this experience has on the lives of NFTE students.

As part of the NFTE program, students develop complex business plans over the course of an academic year and present them to a panel of local business leaders. In May of 2015, the top two in-class competition winners from each school participated in a regional competition at Fresno State. Students presented their finalized business plans to local professionals and business owners who volunteered their time and experience to select two Central Valley representatives for the national competition in New York. The first and second place winners will compete against students from across the nation in October 2015 for the chance to win the $25,000 grand prize.
Innovate Fresno State is a new program dedicated to increasing chances of commercialization success for Central Valley ventures. The program provides inventors and entrepreneurs with the tools needed to make their idea profitable, such as access to coaches, business consultants, project specialists and technical assistance. With the support of the Innovate Fresno State team, improved ventures are moved to the marketplace.

“The University has a strong interest in the quality of life around us. Inventors are the backbone of any economy and they often create jobs, leading to more wealth within the community. It makes sense for us to support them.”

– Dr. Timothy Stearns, Executive Director of the Lyles Center, Coleman Foundation Chairholder in Entrepreneurial Studies
Dr. Ming Li, assistant professor of computer science at Fresno State, was chosen as an inaugural participant. Li developed software which allows students to create customized academic plans. As most students have unique curriculum requirements, Li hopes the software will make life easier for students in a multitude of fields.

The second prototype team, Current Culture H2O, is an agriculture-technology company whose innovative hydroponic systems and nutrients are used in a wide variety of agricultural applications. Through Innovate Fresno State, the company plans to expand their product line to gain a broader audience in the near future.

Launched on June 1, 2015, the program aims to assist Central Valley entrepreneurs through the initial struggles of commercialization, invigorating the community in the process. In its first year, the Innovate Fresno State team will guide three participants through the program, focusing on improving the marketability of their products or services with the goal of moving them toward profitability. Currently, Innovate Fresno State has two participants and is looking for a third.

“The program is really a big help for anybody like me who needs to know how to approach users and think about marketing. That’s entirely new for me.”

— Dr. Ming Li
Innovate Fresno State participant
Launched in 2003, the Lyles Center has developed a reputation for delivering high-quality, impactful programs to residents throughout the Central Valley. Our programs are customized to ensure innovators and entrepreneurs of all ages succeed with their dreams.

The Central Valley Venture Forum brings together venture capitalists, investment bankers, angel investors and startups to discuss economic and financial opportunities relating to the Central Valley. The 10th annual event will be held in November 2015 and focuses on building partnerships among investors and entrepreneurs to bring economic success to our community.

CEO Fresno is a network of young, talented, like-minded college students working together to create a better future. The goal of the chapter is to promote entrepreneurial behaviors and the development of student-run ventures. Over a dozen members attended the National Collegiate Entrepreneurship Organization conference in October of 2014.

Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) is a community of students seeking to implement creative solutions to the world’s challenges. Fresno State is one of over 70 university members. Three Fresno State students, Alexis Jackson, Cindy Arredondo and Manuel Marin, were invited to attend the eighth annual CGI U Meeting at the University of Miami in March 2015.

As the Lyles Center’s Entrepreneur in Residence, a prominent entrepreneur is selected to supervise the Student Hatchery, lecture in Fresno State classes, conduct seminars and act as the link between the Lyles Center and entrepreneurial leaders of the Central Valley. Nelson Sebra has served as Entrepreneur in Residence for the Lyles Center for the last six years.

Idea2Venture is a 10-day, hands-on program where students work with leaders in creativity, product commercialization, entrepreneurship coaching and business model development. In 2014 the Lyles Center welcomed 25 students from India as part of the program, guiding them on an entrepreneurial journey from start to finish, in just two weeks.

The Student Hatchery provides students support and office space to work on their business while attending Fresno State. Students receive access to mentoring resources, physical office space and other professional facilities. Students currently residing in the Student Hatchery include: Roe Borunda - ROETOGRAPHY, Michael Price - Price Right Productions, Nico De Young - Tripsidize.com, Quentin Sanford - Broadway Motion Design, Shervin Zoghi - International Organization for Developmental Entrepreneurship, Sebastian Stafford - 3D Imagery Studio and Marisela Flores-Hamm - Casa de Flores Catering.

The Technology Commercialization Program (TCP) offers feasibility studies, business plan development and commercialization services to inventors, entrepreneurs and organizations from Fresno State and the Central Valley community at large. TCP advised more than 75 clients in the 2014-15 academic year, helping them receive more than $4,000,000 in funding.

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