

EXPERI

LEARN



# ESSENTIAL LEARNING

**HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITIES  
PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH DEEP  
UNDERSTANDING, JOB SKILLS,  
SOFT SKILLS AND MORE**

When it comes to pursuing educational prospects outside the classroom, University of the Pacific students have the good fortune to be able to choose from scores of experiential learning opportunities.

Such high-impact learning programs—including undergraduate research, internships, clinical experience, practicums, fieldwork, student teaching and study abroad, among others—allow students to put their traditional classroom education to work in the real world.

◀ *Research fellowships, such as those provided by the Stauffer Undergraduate Summer Research Endowment in Chemistry and Biochemistry, provide unparalleled research experience for Pacific students.*

University of the Pacific is committed to experiential learning as part of its mission and academic core, so much so that it was made a centerpiece of the Leading With Purpose fundraising campaign. From engineering co-ops and Nathan Scholars economic internships to hands-on directing and production opportunities in the Media X program to research opportunities through the Stauffer endowment and others, Pacific students have a competitive advantage learning skills vital for success in 21st-century careers.

Pacific's academic leaders increasingly emphasize the need for experiential education.

"There is a direct link between what is learned in the classroom and what is applied in a work environment," said Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Maria Pallavicini. "Pacific students have high rates of success after graduation because they engage in high-impact experiences that help them develop highly transferable skills—collaboration, communication, and analysis and problem-solving—that employers require."

#### **LEARN-BY-DOING JOBS BOOST GRAD DESIRABILITY**

"Gaining practical 'learn-by-doing' experience is essential in today's job market," said Tom Vecchione, associate vice president and executive director for career development. "The more students connect what they are learning in the classroom with its applications, the better prepared they will be. The same holds true for graduate and professional school programs. Employers seek well-rounded individuals who have gained experience from a multitude of endeavors."

Recent Pacific graduates who embraced experiential learning and are reaping the benefits include Marielle Cortez '18, Michelle Lacondeguy-Prince '17, and twin sisters Michaela and Milana Vachuska '18.

Cortez, a mechanical engineering major, began as an intern at Toyota and recently accepted a job offer from Toyota as an exterior body design engineer. Lacondeguy-Prince, a sociology major, interned at the San Joaquin Council, which led to a full-time position as an assistant regional planner.

The Vachuska sisters, 2018 graduates of the doctor of pharmacy program, pursued a variety of student leadership positions and community outreach opportunities that helped them solidify their career plans. In addition, their activities outside the classroom, including serving as teaching assistants and involvement in Medicare Part D Mobile Clinics, were key factors in their admission to prestigious residencies. Michaela was matched with a post-graduate year-one residency at the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center in San Diego and plans to pursue a post-graduate year-two residency in pharmacy psychology. Milana was matched with a residency at UC San Diego Health, and her long-term goal is to become a clinical pharmacist with a specialty in managing chronic diseases.

#### **BECOMING AN ARTIST IN THE MEDIA X PROGRAM**

When Ramesh Himmatbh Borad '21 learned about the new Media X program—an interdisciplinary major designed for students interested in pursuing creative combinations of coursework in subjects including graphic design, English, business, theatre arts, digital and visual art, film studies, communication, computer science and engineering and music—the TV buff and budding filmmaker was sold on attending University of the Pacific.

The high-energy, second-year student is from the state of Gujarat in the western part of India, where he began experimenting with photography in seventh grade. Upon his arrival at Pacific, Borad wasn't disappointed. In his freshman year, Media X gave him an internship with VRNACULARS, a creative agency and an immersive content and application development studio that specializes in developing immersive experiences via 360 video or images, WebVR sites or custom augmented and virtual reality content and applications.

That early internship experience—as well as opportunities to work as a cinematographer and editor on his own 360 film in the Media X program—have taught Borad more than he would have expected to learn in an average classroom.

"In the Media X program, they are producing artists and not just technical people," he said. "I learn by doing, and this program trains me to be a person who can produce art."



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**Ramesh Himmatbh Borad '21**  
Media X



“I really appreciate all the support I have received during my years as an undergrad at Pacific, and I am so proud to have achieved my dream as a design engineer in the automotive industry.”

**MARIELLE CORTEZ '18**  
Mechanical Engineering

**PACIFIC ALUMNI SUCCESSFUL AT FINDING JOBS**

**90%** of the Class of 2018 were employed, accepted to graduate or professional school, completing a post-graduate internship, or working for a service organization within six months, according to the Career Resource Center.

**ALUMNI SALARIES**

- #3** among similar-sized universities in California
- #11** among all California universities
- #31** among similar-sized universities in the U.S.

(White House College Scorecard 2017)



### **ENGINEERING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (CO-OP) PLACES STUDENTS IN THE FIELD**

The university's Engineering Cooperative Education (CO-OP) program helps students prepare for the transition to the working world, says Director Irene Camy. "As the job market tightens, employers want graduates with experience," Camy noted. "In CO-OPS the students are matched with an employer for a summer and a semester, so they work from January to mid-August." In this paid experiential internship program, School of Engineering and Computer Science students participate in a range of activities from the field to the lab to the office. Companies have come to realize that CO-OP students help build a pool of strong future professional employees. CO-OP students have been placed with such employers as Intel, HP, Toyota, Harley Davidson, National Laboratories, Edwards Life Sciences and Daimler in Germany.

"We are the only West Coast university where the engineering CO-OP is built into the curriculum," said Camy. "In other institutions, if a student wants to do a CO-OP, they have to take the semester off."

Mechanical engineering major Mackenzie Cook '19 recently finished his CO-OP period with the Delta Division of the state Department of Water Resources, where he worked on the California Aqueduct and other regional water projects.

"I'm a third-generation mechanical engineer," Cook noted.

"I've always been part of that world and looked for hands-on experiences when I transferred to the university. Nobody else requires a co-op and it's huge, what you learn. We are taught the foundation in our classes, but what you learn on the job is critical."

Computer science major Clarissa Franke '19 recently completed her CO-OP assignment with Intel, during which she worked with companies like Asus and Acer. "Whenever you are in a working environment you learn a lot more than in class," Franke said. "You work and interact with people who have much more knowledge than you do—and it's not just one professional but with several people. Being in the tech field, you learn something new every day." During her CO-OP assignment with Aruba, a part of HP, Crystal Beltran-Sanchez worked as an engineer testing hardware and de-bugging data and coding issues.

"It's great being out in the field—very different from classwork," Beltran-Sanchez notes. "You learn to be independent, and you learn teamwork. I grew a lot personally, and it helped me with my communications skills. CO-OP really prepares you for the working world," she added. "Not a lot of students have that opportunity."

## HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES PREPARE HER FOR GRAD SCHOOL

As a double major in applied mathematics and mathematical economics, Alayna Myrick '19 said she didn't want to learn facts but skills when she chose to attend Pacific. Her summer 2018 work helped prepare her for a career in economics.

"Working in Washington, D.C. for Nathan Associates has been amazing and a substantial step toward my career goals after graduation," said Myrick, who returned to campus in mid-August for her last year.

The Nathan Scholars Program was established with a generous gift from John C. Beyer '62, former chairman and CEO of Nathan Associates Inc. Offered

exclusively at Pacific, the program provides real-world experience in two student internships each summer at the Virginia-based international economics consulting firm.

"I was immediately thrown into the consulting process my first week when I began studying Expression of Interest documents, which allowed me to learn more about the company, the consulting process, and the many experienced consultants that work with Nathan in addition to the Nathan staff," Myrick said.

Myrick credited Economics Professor Sharmila King for recommending her as a freshman to the Stockton-based economic consulting firm Integrated

Development Group, which Myrick now directs. Integrated provides pro-bono economic consulting for nonprofit organizations in transition. Last year, Myrick traveled to Ghana to help create a cost plan for a hospital in the center of the country.

"I looked at a lot of different colleges," Myrick notes. "My aunt Janet Spears '86 is a Regent at Pacific; she put me in contact with Sharmila and the economics faculty and I instantly fell in love with the university's hands-on approach to experiential learning."

Myrick plans to attend graduate school in developmental economics following her graduation this spring.

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"I think some of the most important things I learned involve taking what I study in the classroom and using it to do something I care about."

**BRINNLEY BARTHELS '18**  
Chemistry

## STAUFFER CHALLENGE PROVIDES LABORATORY RESEARCH EXPERIENCE TO UNDERGRADS

The John Stauffer Charitable Trust provided a \$1M challenge gift to enhance the research opportunities for undergraduate students majoring in chemistry and biochemistry. The grant matches donations of any amount on a 1:1 basis until December 2021 to create a \$2 million John Stauffer Undergraduate Summer Research Endowment in Chemistry and Biochemistry.

Supported by the Stauffer Scholarship, Chemistry Professor Jianhua Ren says student researchers are able to go beyond classroom learning and develop the problem-solving and critical-thinking skills necessary to become scientists.

"Doing their own research opens up their minds to things they never imagined," Ren says. "The scholarship supports them and allows them to focus on their work and develop talents they will need to succeed."

One of the 2017 Stauffer Scholars went to medical school. Brinnley Barthels '18, a 2018 Stauffer Scholar, found she enjoyed managing other student scientists and is pursuing her MBA and plans to go on to dental school.

Barthels studied peptide synthesis during her fellowship. Last fall, Ren asked her to train other student researchers, and in the spring, she

started her own research projects to measure the acidity of peptides.

Perhaps most impressive, she had the opportunity to attend a chemistry conference and present her research. In addition, she developed a successful grant application to get the \$1,400 she needed for research supplies.

"I think some of the most important things I learned involve taking what I study in the classroom and using it to do something I care about," Barthels says. "I developed leadership and communications skills as I demonstrated chemistry skills and showed other students how to do it."