

Jim COLLINS

(1927-2025)



*A life of purpose,
a legacy of giving*



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR BRONCOS,

This edition of Collins carries a very profound and personal weight for our community. It is the first we have published since the passing of Jim Collins. Jim was a remarkable entrepreneur, humanitarian and the namesake of The Collins College of Hospitality Management. His life exemplified what it means to truly go “all in” on life.

Jim went beyond building restaurants. He built opportunity. He built communities. And he built a legacy.

Together with his wife, Carol, and the many he inspired along the way, he laid the very foundation on which The Collins College now stands. A foundation upon which we’ve proudly connected students to life-changing experiences made possible through mentorship, scholarship and, of course, countless opportunities to become by doing.

The results speak for themselves. The Collins College is ranked among the top hospitality programs in the nation. This ranking affirms the strength of our mission and proves the power of enduring philanthropic vision.

As Jim often said, the greatest joy was not building his business — it was giving back. That joy lives in every

Cal Poly Pomona student who learns, leads and graduates because someone believed they could.

In a time where students face increasing speculation about the value of pursuing a college education, it is more important than ever to go all in and let joy fuel our purpose to keep Jim’s vision alive.

Whether through time, treasure or talent, every gift to The Collins College creates momentum: momentum that turns promising students into promising graduates, opening doors to infinite possibilities for our future hospitality leaders to thrive.

Thank you for believing in our students — and for being part of Jim’s great story.

Sincerely,



IRIS S. LEVINE, DMA

Interim President
Cal Poly Pomona



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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU to this new edition of Collins Magazine — a celebration of the people, partnerships and possibilities shaping the next 50 years of The Collins College of Hospitality Management.

This issue comes with both joy and poignancy. The Collins family and our college community lost an extraordinary friend this year with the passing of Jim Collins — visionary restaurateur, mentor and namesake of our college. Jim was more than a donor; he was a believer. He showed up, consistently and passionately, with unmistakable pride in this institution. His generosity, leadership and faith in Cal Poly Pomona’s mission transformed a bold idea into a world-class hospitality college.

Jim often said that success was built on hard work, self-confidence and friendship. Those principles — along with his boundless energy and optimism — continue to define who we are. He didn’t just support dreams — he fueled them. His philanthropic vision continues to inspire the next generation of students, faculty and industry leaders who now carry his legacy forward.

Throughout these pages, you’ll see how industry support and philanthropy remain the catalysts for our growth. From supporting faculty and staff innovation in emerging technologies and artificial intelligence to advancing career readiness for our students, our industry partners and donors are helping Collins graduates prepare for the evolving future of work. Their generosity ensures that our students don’t just adapt to change but lead it.

As a public institution, we feel deeply the impact of giving. Philanthropy allows us to dream bigger, teach better and reach further. The Collins College has been built on encouragement, inspiration and generosity — from the visionary restaurateurs who gave us our start, to today’s dedicated board members and donors who continue to push our mission forward. Industry and education remain partners in shaping an adaptable, inspired workforce.

We are excited to be underway with the construction and design process for an expansion and modernization of two Collins College buildings — thanks to a lead gift from The Larry and Jo Shupnick Family Foundation and other major contributions from the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation and Lorelei Dopson, whose gift celebrates the legacy of her late daughter, Lea R. Dopson, former dean.

We look to the next 50 years with gratitude and anticipation. Our foundation is strong, our purpose clear and our future bright — thanks to the people who give, mentor and champion this college.

To each of you who lifts Collins higher: Thank you. May we continue to honor Jim’s legacy — not only in the buildings that bear the Collins name, but in the people our graduates become.

Go Broncos!

Cheers,



MARGIE FERREE JONES, PH.D.
Dean & James A. Collins Distinguished Chair
The Collins College of Hospitality Management
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Getting career-ready WITH ALUMNI MENTORSHIP

Visualizing the possibilities

Board member Margaret Bailey and other alumni help students succeed with micro-internships, networking and plenty of encouragement

BY LES DUNSEITH

On a warm September afternoon, two Collins undergraduates traveled with Cal Poly Pomona design students to the scenic Bonelli Bluffs RV Resort and Campground 10 minutes from campus for a practical lesson in hospitality.

They began inside a well-kept market and office space surrounded by tidy camping sites at the 2,000-acre, L.A. County-managed Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park. They ended their day four hours later a short drive up a hill at the now-abandoned Puddingstone Hot Tub Resort, where overgrown brush and graffiti hint at both challenges and opportunities for renewal.

KNOWN AS A MICRO-INTERNSHIP, this first-of-its-kind pairing of The Collins College students with a College of Environmental Design class met to discuss a months-long project for a sponsoring organization. Together, they developed job skills in a unique way, exploring how inexpensive cabins or other alternative lodging solutions — commonly known as “glamping” — might work at Bonelli Bluffs, which has about 500 spaces for tent campers and recreational vehicles.

Fourth-year Collins students Tyler Serrano and Chelsie Vasquez Salazar worked with 21 students pursuing architecture or other environmental design degrees in a studio class taught by Juintow Lin, an architect and professor.

The Collins students provided market, financial and investment analysis to guide the class in creating cabin concepts. This involved classroom assignments, weekly calls with Margaret Bailey ('86) of the Dean's Board of Advisors and the kickoff field visit to the campground. They met with representatives from the Los Angeles County Parks Department and then heard from project sponsor Warren



Meyer, CEO of Vista Recreation Management, which is the Bonelli Bluffs concessionaire.

This unique collaboration is part of a broad push to prepare Collins College undergraduates for careers through programs that involve campus supporters such as Meyer and alumni such as Bailey and Alumni Society President Néstor González Ramírez ('14). Other efforts to get students career-ready include connecting students with professional opportunities through mentoring, on-campus speaking engagements and networking efforts.

Bailey, who joined the Dean's Board of Advisors in 2023 after retiring from a career in public sector hospitality, has since devoted significant time to strengthening career pathways for students, beginning with a series of lectures she organized in an effort to familiarize students with her oft-overlooked specialty — outdoor recreation.

“My objective was: How do I expose these students to another sector of the industry that they're probably not aware of?” Bailey said.

Those lectures, presented as part of a series named for the late restaurateur and benefactor Richard N. Frank, led to a connection that produced \$60,000 in funding for the pilot micro-internship program in partnership with the College of Environmental Design class.

Both Serrano and Vasquez Salazar said the chance to collaborate with students in another Cal Poly Pomona college was unlike anything they had experienced. Serrano called it “an amazing opportunity” to hone mapping and data-analysis skills on a hospitality project, while Vasquez Salazar said she was eager to dive into marketing and finance in a way she'd never done in a work setting. Both saw the micro-internship as a chance to strengthen skills through a paid project that also provided course credit.

“

For now, it's just two Collins students, but perhaps we can get it to a point where every student has a chance to do a micro-internship.”

Margaret Bailey ('86)
Board member



For Bailey, it's a first step toward a larger goal for Collins. “For now, it's just two students, but perhaps we can grow the program to a larger student population,” she said, perhaps getting to a point where “every student has a chance to do a micro-internship.”

Bailey's involvement at Collins also extends to other initiatives, including working with staff to improve career fairs by recruiting more employers and organizing résumé review sessions. That's how she met Serrano and Vasquez Salazar.

The alumna sees her role as helping Collins students take advantage of all opportunities at Collins and Cal Poly Pomona.

“We know that [at least half] of our students are first-generation college students. And that's an amazing success story, but it can mean there's nobody in their household who understands exactly what needs to be done for academic success,” she said.

“The students need to see somebody else succeeding who looks like them, who has a background like theirs. So, they can feel like, ‘Hey, I can do that.’”

THE MODELS FOR SUCCESS can be active alumni like González. He has spent more than a decade in the wine and spirits industry, and he views mentoring as a natural extension of his own experiences as a student government leader while an undergraduate.

"I was very heavily involved with Cal Poly Pomona," he said, and he's made a point of staying active since earning his degree and acting as a role model. "I've always had mentees that, even after they graduate, I keep an eye on."

Bailey and González recently joined forces on a "Network and Connect" initiative. It's designed as a lighter alternative to formal mentoring programs, with alumni and students committing to just two career coaching meetings over a few months.

"Néstor has been super-helpful in creating connections and keeping the connections," Bailey said. "We need to expand our pool of people who want to help."

An alumni-student connection was key for Serrano and Vasquez Salazar.

"Margaret reached out to me about this internship due to my experience with outdoor hospitality," said Serrano, whose work experience began in restaurants but later gravitated toward public sector jobs with an outdoors component. "I was very interested from the get-go ... putting to use some of my prior experience in the hospitality field and newfound knowledge from my classes."

Making personal connections is a key for success, believes Vasquez Salazar, who also has worked in restaurants but has focused more recently on hotel positions. "When you think about the hospitality industry, it has all these other professionals outside of the industry involved," she said, "and that includes architects!"

Collins seniors Tyler Serrano and Chelsie Vasquez Salazar



“

You never know who's going to guide you, or where you'll go."

Néstor González Ramírez ('14)
Alumni Society president

ALUMNI CONTRIBUTIONS ADD UP to a stronger future for students, Bailey said. Any Collins College graduate can find a way to pitch in, whether it's through mentoring, giving time or making financial donations.

"We give scholarships far exceeding many other colleges. Alumni are giving in many different ways," she said, "and I'm just one piece of that puzzle who happens to have a lot of time available."

Although The Collins College is highly regarded and has the largest hospitality program in California, it's part of a public university, which means financial resources can run thin. It takes extra effort sometimes, Bailey said, "but we can really help prepare our students to find that first job out of college."

Innovative career preparedness programs like micro-internships can benefit the many Cal Poly Pomona students who are working their way through school.

"Changing jobs in the summer for an internship is not something that typically happens," Bailey said. She thinks paid micro-internships — they can range from 5 to 40 total hours — help a sponsoring company fill a need while providing important work experience that can fit around students' work and academic obligations.

Looking ahead, Bailey sees the glamping micro-internship as a prototype for additional career preparedness opportunities.

"My goal is to pilot this concept so that I can then go back to the Board of Advisors, and I can say, 'Hey, Board of Advisors, can you resource \$5,000 and small project you need some assistance on.' We have 43 Board members, which would provide us a chance to grow the program. We could get a whole bunch of students going," she said.

González frames alumni involvement as the power of relationships. For example, he is nurturing recent graduates to take leadership roles in the Collins Alumni Society. Then, like him, they will foster current students to take on similar roles.

"That's the importance of networking," he said. "I tell students ... our campus is so big. You never know who's going to guide you, or where you'll go."

Project sponsor Warren Meyer led students as they kicked off their field work with a trip to Bonelli Bluffs.



BACK AT BONELLI BLUFFS, businessman Meyer discussed his hopes for creating a lodging solution that is practical, affordable and realistic for public park settings.

One potential location is a place where customers once enjoyed outdoor hot tubs while admiring lovely views toward lush valleys and a sparkling lake framed by mountains in the distance. Meyer told the students to look past the overgrown brush, faded fencing and a pile of trash to see a place with strong potential to be reinvigorated for community use — not just by current hikers and campers but generations to come.

He urged the students to imagine bringing their own children and grandchildren to a future Bonelli Bluffs, a place with alternative lodging options that make it easy to enjoy the outdoors together. "And you could tell your future families how you helped make it happen."



STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Collins College of Hospitality Management prides itself on offering its students the chance to meet with alumni, industry representatives and other thought leaders who can help them launch their careers. With on-campus Industry Weeks that explore lodging, event planning, and food and beverage, students get exposure to the wide variety of fields open to them after graduation.

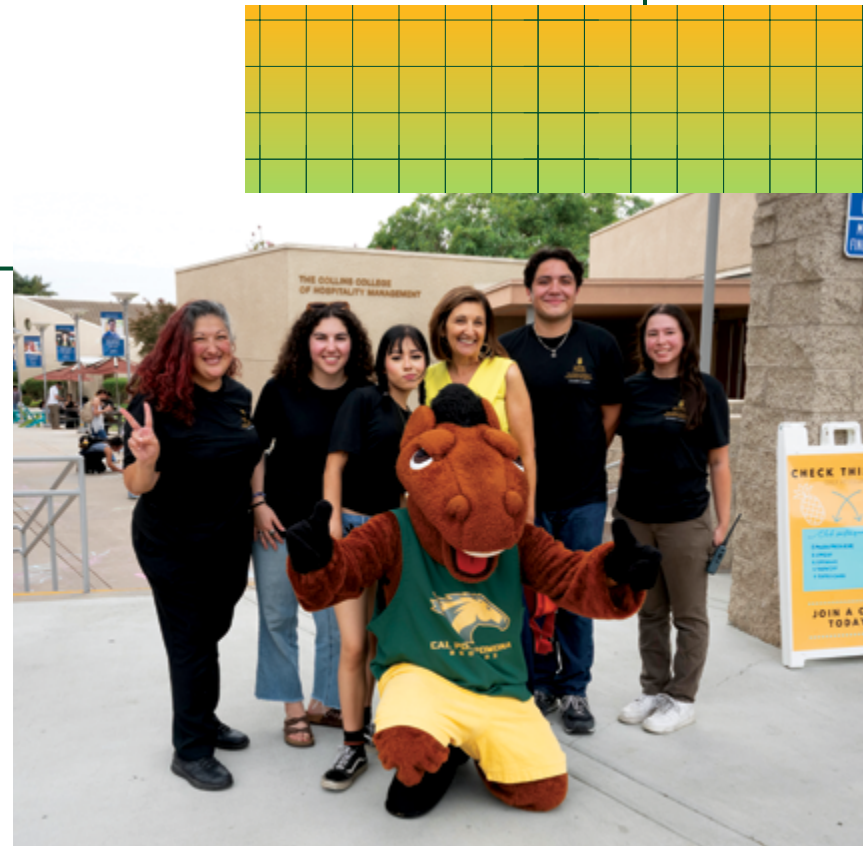
On-campus lectures and meetings, visits to Southern California hospitality properties, opportunities to attend national conferences and our on-campus career center combine to ensure that Collins students are prepared for a great future.



Welcome back BBQ

Collins celebrated with a Welcome Back Barbecue in August for students, staff and faculty with food from The Habit Burger Grill, a live DJ spinning tunes and student-run activity stations. There were sweet treats from Le Chef Bakery and Billy Bronco showed up for photo opps.

During the afternoon of community-building and fun, participants also received a student survival kit and got the chance to learn about Collins' many clubs.



Collins represents at the IMEX conference in Las Vegas

In October, 20 students from Eta Sigma Delta and the Society for Hospitality Foodservice Management traveled with Professor Andrew Yoon to attend IMEX, the world's largest trade show. The students came back energized and excited to share what they learned. Thanks to chair of the Dean's Advisory Board, Javier Cano (far right), for his inspiration and leadership.



Hotel and Event Planning Industry Weeks

The Collins College hosted two weeks of dynamic programming this fall that brought together students, alumni and industry partners to explore careers in hotel and event management.

Throughout Hotel and Event Planning Industry Weeks, students had the opportunity to practice professional networking, gain career insights and hear directly from alumni who have translated their Cal Poly Pomona experience into successful careers.

Representatives from industry partners Marriott, Hilton and Hyatt spent time talking about internship opportunities, skills needed in today's ever-changing hospitality industry and anything else students wanted to discuss.

Industry Weeks began with Coffee Chats with Marriott recruiters, where students enjoyed morning coffee and conversation while learning about the Marriott Voyage Program.

Hyatt recruiters joined students for a morning of career connection and insight. Hyatt 1:1 Career Chats gave seniors the opportunity to schedule individual meetings with company representatives for personalized advice.

The following week students began with coffee and networking at H-Café, where they connected with recruiters about Hilton's Management Development Program.

Other events included I'll Be the Next presentations, where students got to hear from alumni about their career paths and opportunities for Collins grads, and Get The Scoop talks, where alumni like Julian Herrera ('18), shared lessons about working in hotel management. Herrera, front desk manager at the Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills, is a graduate of Hilton's management program.

Jessica Zhang ('14), left, of Prospera Hotels, Professor Ben Dewald ('82), Carolina Sanchez, Alyssa Vidaure ('20) of Montage International and Dean Margie Ferree Jones gathered after Zhang and Vidaure led an I'll Be the Next session.



Career and Coffee Chats gave seniors the opportunity to schedule individual meetings with company representatives for personalized advice and insight.





Jon Farzam ('11) | Owner of The Shore Hotel

NSMH tours Farzam's The Shore Hotel and Regent Santa Monica Beach

Senior Shawn Shi organized a tour in November for members of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality at The Shore Hotel, owned by Collins alumnus Jon Farzam ('11), and Regent Santa Monica Beach. The students spent the day learning about hospitality management at the top-tier properties and dined at Orla, owned by the MINA Group, whose founder, Michael Mina, is the 2026 honoree at Hospitality Uncorked.

Lex Fuller ('24), Regent experience manager, was happy to host the group. "Creating and hosting this tour for The Collins College students was honestly one of the proudest moments of my career so far," he said on his LinkedIn page. "Their curiosity, ambition and energy reminded me exactly why I fell in love with this industry."

Students attend SHFM conference in Indian Wells

Students from the Collins chapter of the Society for Hospitality and Food Service Management attended the SHFM conference in Indian Wells in September thanks to board member Michele Gendreau ('83), who sponsored their attendance. Gendreau, director of food and beverage at The Walt Disney Company, was a keynote speaker at the event, delivering a talk on "The Power of Storytelling: Elevating Hospitality Excellence."

Collins board member Gina Brinegar, who was on the conference planning committee, is also a board member for SHFM and managing principal at Webb Foodservice Design.



#1

Polytechnic University
for Diversity & Economic
Mobility in the Nation

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, 2025



#3

Among Regional
Universities in
the West

COLLEGENET, 2024

Q&A

Why Accreditation Is So Important for Collins

Every organization likes recognition, especially if that acknowledgment comes with an industry stamp of approval. Since 1994, The Collins College has earned accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA), an international educational body that evaluates programs every seven years to determine if they meet academic and experiential standards that will ensure students are prepared for careers in the industry.

Professor Zhenxing “Eddie” Mao, who will turn over the reins as Collins’ department chair after a decade next year, leads the college’s re-accreditation efforts, working with other faculty to identify and report the program’s strengths and areas for improvement.

ACPHA also conducted a site visit in mid-October, and Mao said the board will report its findings in late winter. We asked him about the accreditation process and its importance.



Professor Zhenxing “Eddie” Mao

Why is ACPHA accreditation so important for Collins? Do prospective students use it as a criterion for programs where they want to enroll?

There are many reasons it’s important. ACPHA accreditation is vital for Collins because it acts as both a benchmark of quality and a strategic advantage in the competitive field of hospitality education. Accreditation signals that the program meets nationally and internationally recognized standards for curriculum, faculty credentials, facilities and student support services.

Being accredited also enhances the institution’s leader standing among peer schools, employers and prospective students. The review process encourages schools to update curricula, teaching methods, technology integration, course and program assessment, and industry alignment to stay current with global hospitality trends.

It also offers a competitive edge, differentiating a school from competitors, making it more attractive to applicants and partners (e.g., internships, exchange programs, industry collaborations).

ACPHA accreditation plays a significant role in students’ decision-making process. For them and their parents, it provides a sense of security and assurance that their education will have long-term value. It’s like a quality warranty that the program is well-structured, professionally relevant and held to high standards.

It also helps with employability and career readiness: Employers often view graduates from accredited programs as better prepared for the workforce, which can improve job prospects and career advancement.

Does it help attract faculty talent or research funding? What other reasons is it important?

Faculty members are often drawn to accredited programs like ours, as accreditation reflects educational excellence, professional recognition, opportunities for career development, collaboration with industry and long-term institutional stability.

It also enhances public understanding of the hospitality field. It reassures alumni that their degrees retain long-term value and recognition in the marketplace, while giving employers confidence in developing hiring pipelines, internship programs and partnerships with Collins based on the consistent quality of its graduates.

Can you talk about Collins’ emphasis on the “management” component in its hospitality management degrees? The college communicates that it doesn’t just set tables, it sets standards. Tell me more about that.

Collins has built a strong brand identity around the “management” component of its hospitality management degrees, and that’s what makes it stand out. Let me expand on this in a way that ties to accreditation, reputation and student outcomes:

The college emphasizes that its programs are not merely about teaching the technical skills of hospitality, such as setting tables, preparing menus or operating a front desk, but about cultivating leaders who set standards for the industry. Students are trained not just in service techniques, but in areas like organizational leadership, financial management, marketing, human resources, sustainability and global business strategy through critical thinking. This ensures that graduates leave Collins with the ability to analyze trends, make executive-level decisions and lead diverse teams within the hospitality and tourism industries. This distinction is at the heart of its focus on management.

The emphasis on management also aligns with accreditation standards, which demand that programs prepare students to meet industry needs at both the tactical and strategic levels.

This approach also benefits employers and industry partners. Employers want graduates who understand the full scope of hospitality operations, from service delivery to profitability, guest experience and long-term sustainability. Collins’ management-focused curriculum assures them that its graduates can contribute immediately to organizational success while also having the vision to drive innovation and change.

Students who come here also understand that they are going to do a lot of hands-on learning, including at least 800 hours in internship work. Why is the experiential model important for their education?

In short, Collins’ experiential model is important because it transforms students from learners into professionals.

Hospitality is a practice-driven industry where leadership is best developed through hands-on application. Classroom learning provides theories of management, service and strategy, but internships immerse students in the realities of guest interaction, operations and problem-solving. This

Accreditation

\ə kre-də tā shən\

Noun: An independent, external review process that evaluates colleges and universities to ensure they meet established standards of academic quality. In the U.S., accreditors are recognized by the Department of Education as trusted authorities on quality in education.

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

integration of theory with practice makes learning deeper, more relevant and more impactful.

Students learn concepts in class and then see how these ideas are applied in real hospitality environments. Meanwhile, professional work experience can foster active learning and meaningful discussion. Moreover, students will have better ideas on what they want and they don’t want in their future career.

Professional work experience develops students’ practical professional skills that cannot be replicated in the classroom: managing staff under pressure, resolving guest issues, handling logistics and working with diverse teams. These experiences build confidence and adaptability, which are essential for leadership roles.

Employers often prefer candidates who can “hit the ground running,” and the internship model makes Collins graduates more competitive in the job market.

Now that you’ve gone through a lot of the process on re-accreditation for 2025, are there some new hospitality management concepts you expect to show up in the Collins curriculum in the coming semesters?

There is a need for updated content in technology, data analytics and sustainability, which has been incorporated in our new curriculum revision process. In addition, we are looking into micro-credentials, certificates and interdisciplinary integration for our program development.

IN MEMORIAM

JIM COLLINS

(1927-2025)

Remembering the Man
Who Never Stopped Giving

BY MELISSA MCCOY

As a child growing up during the Depression, Jim Collins didn't have a lot of material possessions. But as he matured, the Southern California native developed some critical skills on his journey to success in the hospitality industry — a strong work ethic, big ideas and a willingness to take chances.

When he died in March at 98, the namesake of The Collins College left a legacy that reached far beyond his business acumen. His life will be remembered as one of civic service, mentorship and the steadfast belief that life is best lived when giving back.

Collins set out to become a self-made man, honing a keen intellect and sharing his compassionate heart. But his eldest child, Cathy (Collins) Hession, said he also succeeded through loyalty and "a lot of luck," something that her father never forgot during his long career as an entrepreneur and businessman.

Perhaps more important, though, was that Collins genuinely loved other people. That, his daughter said, led to his success as a philanthropist, leader and role model, his generous spirit enriching the lives of countless others in countless ways.

"He lived an incredible life that he loved and was very grateful," Hession said, "and took every ounce of enjoyment out of life," which largely revolved around helping people.

"It's a lot of fun to make money," Collins often said, "but it's even more fun to give it away."

The humanitarian and his wife, Carol, started donating to the still-young hospitality program at Cal Poly Pomona in the early 1980s, and their consistent giving helped to put the university on the map for hospitality education.

After donating \$10 million in 1999 to significantly expand the school's offerings, the Collinses, who were married 74

years, kept giving — including with endowments — funding new buildings, scholarships and other opportunities to help students achieve their dreams.

Collins was among the early believers in the now half-century-old program, joining hospitality luminaries including Richard N. Frank of Lawry's, Carl Karcher of Carl's Jr. and Al Levie of Gulliver's Restaurants, in pushing to establish what would become a Top 10 globally ranked hospitality college that today offers bachelor's and master's degrees, and a minor.

There is probably no philanthropist who gave more in donations, expertise and leadership than the man for whom The Collins College of Hospitality Management is named. And he encouraged his friends and colleagues to give too.

"Jim approached his work with the college like a personal investment in a new restaurant concept," said Dean Margie Ferree Jones during a memorial for Collins in July. "Start with a good location, find the right people to run it and actively nurture it so it stays relevant."

Collins, who strongly endorsed the college's hands-on approach to learning, also saw that it made business sense to keep hospitality education strong — because he wanted exemplary college graduates flooding the industry, even admitting that "it was maybe even a little selfish" to get those alumni working for his own ventures.

"He didn't just support dreams — he fueled them."

Collins' journey into hospitality management was surprising, even if his early commitment to philanthropy was not.

After serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Collins graduated on the G.I. Bill from UCLA, worked briefly as an engineer and then started a self-service hamburger stand in Culver City, not a choice a young man with a degree in civil engineering might be expected to make, and not one some friends and associates thought would be successful. But he quickly expanded his business operations, becoming a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchisee. In 1967 he bought the Sizzler Restaurant chain and the next year he took Collins Foods International public.

His dedication to giving back started long before his business success, and he became a great supporter of the Westside Family YMCA and the Boys and Girls' Club of Venice, where his daughter said he provided food daily for hungry children at the request of the executive director.

"When I first got involved with the UCLA Alumni Board, I didn't have any money," Collins once said. "The money has

“

He lived an incredible
life that he loved
and was very grateful.”

CATHY (COLLINS) HESSION

always followed the time.” He and Carol were happy to use a lot of that money to help worthwhile causes, especially educational endeavors.

After her father died, Hession found paperwork showing that over many decades her parents had given 500 individual gifts to UCLA, their shared alma mater, beginning soon after they graduated.

“He wasn’t really wealthy,” she said of the first donations. “He just wanted to start giving early. He felt that it also strengthened community bonds to give.”

By all measures, he was a successful entrepreneur and businessman, but Hession said it was as a leader that her father shone most. He took leadership roles with nonprofits like the Rotary Club and YMCA (he was on the Westside Y board for over 60 years) as well as serving on educational and restaurant industry boards, all of which he remained connected to out of loyalty.

“He always took leadership positions,” she said. “He felt it demonstrated his commitment to the group. He wanted to model behavior for others.”

He often modeled behavior through his deeds, including his support for programs like ProStart, which trains nearby high school students in hospitality with the goal of having them one day attend CPP. Hession said he was especially proud of the difference it was making.

Jones knew Collins from his many visits to campus and college events over three decades and noted he was a role model for everyone in the university. His contributions to The Collins College and Cal Poly Pomona were celebrated when he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the CSU.



Collins Dean James Burke, Jim Collins and CPP President Bob Suzuki at the dedication celebration in 2002 for the opening of Buildings 79A and 79B.

“He was the consummate hospitality professional — warm, joyful and always smiling,” Jones said at his memorial. “He lit up every room. His energy brought out the best in others. He didn’t just support dreams — he fueled them.”

Collins also fueled fundraising by encouraging fellow restaurateurs, hoteliers and hospitality professionals to donate to the college, spend time with students and stay involved.

Despite having achieved so much, her father remained humble, said Hession, who started her own career in youth development and has run The Carol and James Collins Foundation for over 25 years, which provides opportunities for young people and underserved communities through education, mentorship and leadership connections. Hession has over the years, just like her father, served on many boards.

She still stewards his legacy on some of the boards where they shared duties, and was a board member and chair of the Westside Family YMCA, where they overlapped for over 40 years. Hession and her father were very proud of opening the Collins & Katz Y on the Westside in 2017 after the membership outgrew the original building.

She said her father believed that “when much is given, much is expected,” a mantra embraced by three generations of the Collins family.

In addition to his wife, Collins is survived by four children, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. The four oldest Collins grandchildren, including Hession’s daughter, serve on the foundation board.

When asked what her father would encourage Collins alumni to do to help their alma mater, she said his advice would have been straightforward.

“My father would say to just start, just do it now, whatever you can! He always believed he got so much more out of giving than he put into it,” Hession said. “Whether it’s your time volunteering or going back to a class to talk.

“Not everyone can afford giving a lot of money. You could be a year out of college and still help. Participating is so important. Any little giving of yourself is giving a lot to someone else.”

As dean, Jones is grateful to Collins for his many contributions to all of those someones.

“As we remember Jim today, we carry his legacy forward,” she said at his memorial. “Not only in buildings and endowments but in how we welcome others, how we lead and how we lift up our students with kindness and purpose.”



Jim and Carol Collins



Collins and Cal Poly Pomona shine AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

#1

Best in California for
Undergraduates Studying
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COLLEGE FACTUAL, 2025



#10

Best Hospitality &
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CEOWORLD MAGAZINE, 2025

... and on the global stage too.

FOR THE LOVE OF TEACHING

Gregg Patterson's many gifts pay dividends for students

BY MARY BRASWELL

Gregg Patterson's ties to The Collins College go back nearly 40 years, to the day when he first took the mic as a guest lecturer in a class on managing private clubs.

Patterson knew a thing or two about the topic. He had worked his way up from security guard and busboy in Los Angeles' country club scene to become general manager of the exclusive Beach Club in Santa Monica.

It was a dream job, and more than a full-time commitment. But that day at Cal Poly Pomona sparked a new passion.

"I found out that teaching is one of the great joys of my life," said Patterson, who signed on as an adjunct faculty member for courses focusing on managing clubs, developing business plans and navigating global tourism.

*For me, it's hugely important because you'd like to believe that you're helping them enlarge and enrich their life experience — **not just their business experience, but their life experience.***

During his 14 years on the Collins faculty, Patterson's infectious enthusiasm helped him connect with young people eager to make their mark on the hospitality industry.

His teaching draws from a lifelong sense of adventure. From a modest upbringing in Maine, he developed a love of motorcycles and British imperial history before discovering his calling in Southern California, in the world of private clubs. With a bachelor's degree from Colgate University, Patterson decided to return to New York to earn a master's degree from Cornell University's hotel management program.

That education and experience led to the top job at the Beach Club, which he held for 34 years before launching a new enterprise as a motivational speaker and writer in 2016. Patterson now brings his high-energy message to boardrooms, classrooms and conferences around the world but remains a familiar face at Collins, delivering lectures, hosting "caffeine and conversation" sessions with students and sending new graduates into the world as the 2022 commencement speaker.

Patterson and his wife, Elaine, have also been steadfast financial supporters of the college, recently entering Cal Poly Pomona's Founders' Society recognizing individuals and organizations that have contributed significant lifetime gifts.

For years, they have funded a scholarship that puts a Collins education in reach for students in need. Now, they are continuing their legacy of generosity with a \$2 million bequest from their estate to create the Excellence Fund, which will support the college's top priorities into the future.

"The fact of the matter is, I was a first-generation college kid in my family," Patterson said. "And now I find myself on a mission to find people who, like me, have that hunger and that curiosity. I want to say, 'Let me give you shoulders to stand on, and let me give you insights into the journey so that you can flourish.'"

THE MANY FACES OF PHILANTHROPY

Tiffany Darrell ('07), a longtime Collins donor and volunteer, wants to help students fulfill their dreams.

Sharing Time, Talent, Treasure (and Trust)

BY MARY BRASWELL

RIGHT AFTER EARNING his Collins College degree, Adrian Laksmono relocated to Boston to launch a career in hotel finance.

He's now nearly 3,000 miles away from his alma mater, but that hasn't deterred Laksmono ('23) from nurturing the network of professors, staff, students and industry contacts he built over four years at Cal Poly Pomona.

Peers regularly call on him for advice on which career paths to pursue, how to prep for interviews, even whether their tattoos might be an issue for hiring managers.

And when the college's annual fundraising gala, Hospitality Uncorked, took place this past spring, Laksmono boarded a transcontinental flight to show his support in person, mobilizing other young alumni to join him. Just a few years earlier, a series of prestigious scholarships helped him finance his education, so he was eager to pay it forward.

"One of the things that Collins really does well is scholarships, along with helping students build connections with industry leaders," said Laksmono, a revenue manager for Marriott International. "We have such great industry support, and that's a huge win for students."

At Collins, philanthropy takes many forms. There are the pioneering donors whose major investments put the college on the map half a century ago. They include California-based hospitality icons including Richard N. Frank of Lawry's Restaurants. Their work was followed by the college's namesakes, Carol and James A. Collins of Sizzler International, and many others, including Peggy and Andrew Cherng of Panda Restaurant Group, the Don & Lorraine Freeberg Foundation, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Russ and Judy Bendel.

They join many generations of industry leaders, alumni, faculty and friends who have found unique ways to donate their time, talent and treasure to drive the college's success.

Krista Spangler, senior director of development for Collins, adds a fourth "T" to this list: trust.

"Trust is the heartbeat of philanthropy. It's what makes people feel good about giving — believing that what they give, in any form, truly matters," she said. "People want to know their contributions are honored and making a difference. When donors have trust, real partnerships form and lasting impact follows."

WHEN ALUMNA TIFFANY DARRELL brings her talents to the table, it's sure to be filled with mouthwatering flavors.

With a lifelong love of cooking and training in the culinary arts, Darrell ('07, hotel and restaurant management) came to Collins to acquire the skills needed to run a thriving business. Since 2008, Tiffany's Catering, based in the San Gabriel Valley, has steadily expanded to include a brick-and-mortar bakery, full-service event planning and high-end party rentals.

The Cal Poly Pomona community has seen Darrell's flair for hospitality up close. This spring, Darrell was a featured vendor at Collins' Entrepreneurial Alumni Showcase.

Adrian Laksmono ('23), left, Lex Fuller ('24), Collins senior and 2025 Excellence Scholarship recipient Jenae Redekopp and Gloria Drew ('22) at the Hospitality Uncorked fundraiser in March.

Russ Bendel, Judy Bendel, Cathy (Collins) Hession and Ed Hession at Hospitality Uncorked 2025.



“

One of the things that Collins really does well is scholarships, along with helping students build connections with industry leaders. We have such great industry support, and that's a huge win for students.”

Adrian Laksmono ('23)
Revenue manager for Marriott International

She's also active with the Honors College and Black Alumni and Friends, and has catered events including a Black History Month meal featuring food from the African diaspora.

A longtime Collins donor, she said she is eager to find ways to empower students like herself, who want to bring their entrepreneurial dreams to life.

"I just enjoy supporting the new generation that's coming up," Darrell said. "A very important aspect of going through college is feeling a community of support."

THAT WILLINGNESS TO BE PRESENT, to build personal connections with the Collins community, cannot be underestimated. People from all sectors of the hospitality industry, from recent graduates to corporate leaders, frequently come to campus to meet with students, answer questions, and share personal stories of career steps and missteps.

And in addition to mobilizing financial support, the college's Board of Advisors continuously seeks out creative ways to take the Collins experience to the next level, Spangler said.

One of the board's passion projects is "Suited for Success," which with the support of Cintas and the Hyatt Foundation outfits graduating students with custom-tailored suits, shoes included — a confidence-building parting gift as they move into the workforce.

The two board members who spearhead the program, Bruce Gorelick ('78) and Pam Jones ('73, business administration; '76, MBA), are keen to share their energy and expertise after long careers at Marriott International, which is one of the companies that employs the most Collins graduates. They rally donors to support the program, line up apparel companies and local tailors and even show up on fitting days to offer personal style tips.

"I've seen Bruce come in and just connect with the students. He'll say, 'Wow, that looks so good on you' and talk about cufflinks and how to tie a tie," Spangler said. "And then you see these students just light up, and they feel confident, they feel ready."

People invest their time and energy in what they find meaningful, she said.

"We're all so busy. Traffic is crazy. So when someone gives us their time, what that really says is, 'I'm so passionate about what you're doing, and I have something to give, and I want to be a part of it.'"



Marissa Smeets ('18), left, a senior manager at SoFi Stadium and Anna Knezovich ('20), an account manager with NVE Experience Agency, are two of the Collins grads who have come back to campus to speak at an I'll Be the Next event. By volunteering their time and expertise, alumni inspire students to explore a wide variety of career paths.

Suited for Success

\süt tid fər suc-cess\

Noun: A project that outfits graduating students with custom tailored suits, shoes included — a confidence building parting gift as they move into the workforce.

Enterprise Mobility donations help LAUNCH STUDENTS toward success

Enterprise Mobility has again partnered with Collins to support the college through its career center, most recently hosting a workshop in conjunction with our annual Suited for Success event, where students were able to chat with and seek advice from members of the Dean's Advisory Board.

The "How to Meet, Greet, Mingle, and Be Memorable" event was just one of the ways that Enterprise's financial support and expertise have helped Collins students over the years.

Since 1995, Enterprise Mobility has been a steadfast friend to the college, and in 2022 it sponsored Resumaniac, a program that assists our hospitality management students with crafting, updating and refining their resumés. Undergraduate and graduate students partner with an industry professional, a career center expert, a mentor from our alumni family, or a board or faculty member to get one-on-one assistance with their resumé.

Another grant enabled Collins to set up a photo booth for professional headshots, ensuring that graduates could put their best selves forward while seeking employment.

Bruce Gorelick and Chelsie Vasquez Salazar



Tiffany Darrell ('07), left, accepts a thank you gift from Linda Urserly-Fleming ('75, liberal studies) of the Cal Poly Pomona Black Alumni & Friends chapter after Darrell catered and spoke at a February 2025 dinner for students.



Letting Horses TAKE THE LEAD

BY MARY BRASWELL

On a warm October morning at Cal Poly Pomona's 100-year-old W.K. Kellogg Arabian Horse Center, a group of business managers came together to learn how to guide their employees through uncertain times.

Their teachers? The horses themselves.

Watching the strong, gentle animals observe, develop trust and navigate their herds with confidence is at the core of CPP's TeachingHorse program, the first stop on a day of exclusive experiences aimed at sharpening leadership skills.

The package, auctioned off in March at the annual Hospitality Uncorked fundraiser, included lunch at the Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch, operated by hospitality management students; a behind-the-scenes tour of the Rose Float Lab; and a wrap-up session at Innovation Brew Works, the campus' learn-by-doing craft brewery.

"At the live auction, there was so much excitement over these experiences because you can't get them anywhere else. It's a unique day of learning," said Collins Board of Advisors member Pam Jones ('73, business administration; '76, MBA).

After 30-plus years in the hospitality, health-care and nonprofit spheres, Jones founded the leadership consulting firm Crescendo, where she coaches individuals and teams looking to take their management and workforce skills to the next level. She curated and facilitated the daylong experience with the goal of showcasing The Collins College's thriving partnerships across campus.

The winning bid went to Kristin Crellin, a senior vice president with SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union, who brought 18 managers onto campus to learn new perspectives on effective leadership.

Their visit to the already-busy Rose Float Lab highlighted creative problem-solving under intense pressure. Each year, students from Cal Poly Pomona and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo develop a float design, then work together to bring it to life.

"You've got this non-negotiable deadline. You've got to get this float to Orange Grove and Colorado Boulevard on New Year's Eve," Jones said. In bracing for the unexpected — issues with the weather, mechanics, flower shipments — the students learn flexibility and resilience, essential skills for any workplace.

During their morning with TeachingHorse, a North Carolina-based company that partners with the university's esteemed equestrian center, the credit union managers spent time with instructors who explained the herd dynamics that organizations can use to manage change.



Their teachers? THE HORSES THEMSELVES.

They then moved outdoors to come face-to-muzzle with the horses themselves, first connecting through scent and soft strokes, then establishing the trust and authority needed to lead them around an arena.

Instructors observed and offered guidance: Holding reins too tightly for too long is a classic trait of a micromanager, one noted.

The credit union team left with wise lessons from the animal kingdom: Be attuned to your surroundings, especially signals from your companions. Know when to slow the pace, pause or redirect. And always keep your eyes on the horizon.

Board member and Cal Poly Pomona alumna Pam Jones curated the daylong program on campus.



Hospitality Uncorked Puts THE FUN IN FUNDRAISER

BY MARY BRASWELL

The annual gala is the can't-miss event of the spring, hosted by a Board of Advisors committed to students, the industry and giving guests a night to remember

IF YOU WANT TO THROW A PARTY FOR THE AGES — one so over the top that guests can't wait to come back next year — who better to plan it than a college of hospitality?

The team behind The Collins College's Hospitality Uncorked gala rises to this challenge each year, eager to celebrate an industry that drives Southern California's culture and economy and support the students who are essential to its future.

The spring event at the JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. Live draws more than 600 people for a reception, dinner, entertainment, student showcase and auction, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for Collins programs and scholarships. But the evening's creative flourishes are what the buzz is all about.

"The goal is that people just walk into the room and say, 'Holy moly, what is this? It's beautiful!'" said Bridget Bilinski ('79), a

member of the Collins Board of Advisors who created the event in 2012 as a stylish successor to the college's Harvest Auction, launched in 1994.

Most of the guests at Uncorked are in the business of entertaining others, including curating bespoke experiences, Bilinski said. "They've seen it all. So we are charged with putting together an event that is so creative and honors our industry in such a special way that they've got to see it."

One year, the Marriott ballroom was transformed into the arrondissements of Paris, complete with sketch artists, strolling musicians and a World War II love story between an American soldier and a young Frenchwoman.



Bridget Bilinski ('79) leads the team organizing Hospitality Uncorked every year.

Thoughtfulness is key
TO THE
GALA'S SUCCESS



The inspiration? Donor and Mimi's Café founder Tom Simms, that evening's recipient of The Collins College's Robert Mondavi Wine and Food Award, had once recounted his father's wartime romance during a conversation with Uncorked planners months earlier. But he had no idea that this memory would come to life so vividly until he entered the room.

This kind of extreme thoughtfulness is key to the event's success. So is the exacting planning that begins two years before each gala, led by Bilinski, who rose through the ranks at Marriott to become a regional vice president.

A subcommittee of the Collins Board of Advisors and Dean's Office selects the Mondavi Award nominee, someone who has demonstrated exceptional vision and leadership in the hospitality industry. In 2025 it was Robert Alter of Seaview Investments; 2026's honoree is chef and restaurateur Michael Mina.

After the selection the board conceptualizes the perfect theme and curates each detail, including food by celebrity chefs, signature cocktails, top-caliber entertainment and breathtaking décor.

The full Board of Advisors — over 40 industry leaders representing restaurants, hotels, theme parks, airlines, cruise lines and more — steps up to build energy for the event, lining up sponsors, encouraging table sales and donating auction items that are far from run-of-the-mill.

A Louis Vuitton Neverfull bag is usually the first to be snapped up, Bilinski said. And bidders go to battle to score luxury hotel experiences, rare wines, European vacations and more, including access to VIP suites at L.A.'s top sports venues over a full year and a wine country excursion with private guide and dinner at The French Laundry.

"The board is passionate when it comes to these events," Bilinski said. "They don't happen without their efforts, donations, connections and time commitment."

Uncorked also puts a spotlight on Collins students. They're moving through the room, welcoming guests, delivering auction items, sharing their stories and demonstrating the service and care that their management training has instilled. It's a tremendous opportunity for event sponsors — this year numbering more than 120 — to recruit talent.

"This event is designed to lift the cachet and awareness of the college, create new friends, bring in new supporters, make people understand the quality of our students and also bring the industry together," Bilinski said. "We're fun people and, on this night, we serve each other."



SAVE THE DATE

Michael Mina to Be Celebrated at Uncorked 2026

Next year's Hospitality Uncorked will honor chef and restaurateur Michael Mina with the Robert Mondavi Wine and Food Award, which recognizes a hospitality leader for their service to the industry.

Mina has been wowing sophisticated diners for decades at his intimate fine dining restaurants, lively bars and top notch steakhouses. His MINA Group, an award winning hospitality company with a collection of more than 30 chef driven concepts across the country, showcases the best of food, wine and spirits.

The annual celebration will feature a seascape theme, "Tide of Flavors," on **Saturday, April 18, 2026**, at the JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. Live in downtown.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, donating an auction item, volunteering or purchasing a ticket, please visit hospitalityuncorked.com.

The Shupnick INNOVATION CENTER



Jo and Larry Shupnick

Collins Receives \$3 Million Gift to Reimagine Facilities

BY MELANIE JOHNSON

Hospitality education in California is entering an exciting new era thanks to a transformative gift from the Larry and Jo Shupnick Family Foundation. The \$3 million contribution will establish the Shupnick Innovation Center at The Collins College of Hospitality Management.

This cutting-edge facility will be home to a space where collaboration with industry ignites innovation and enriches student learning, a place designed to inspire creativity and forward-thinking in the next generation of hospitality leaders.

The Shupnick Innovation Center, a reimagining of the spaces and facilities in building 79A, will feature flexible learning and collaborative workspaces and a state-of-the-art test kitchen. It will serve as an interdisciplinary hub where students, faculty and industry partners can experiment with new ideas,

develop entrepreneurial ventures and explore exciting trends shaping the global hospitality landscape.

"There's tremendous potential to make these spaces truly dynamic learning environments," said Larry Shupnick, the longest-serving member of the Dean's Advisory Board. "We want students to be ready for where the industry is going, not just where it's been."

SHUPNICK'S VISION FOR MODERN HOSPITALITY education was shaped by more than five decades in the industry. His impressive career includes leadership roles with Sheraton, Hilton and Interstate Hotels & Resorts, and entrepreneurial ventures such as Loral Hotels and Central, the James Beard Award-winning Washington, D.C., restaurant. He has also invested in wineries and resorts across California and beyond.

His wife, Jo Shupnick, is an accomplished entrepreneur and interior designer whose firm, Interiors by Jo Frank, has shaped hundreds of homes and commercial spaces throughout California, Idaho and Mexico. Together, the couple established The Larry and Jo Shupnick Family Foundation, which supports educational, community and philanthropic causes nationwide.

Larry's connection to Cal Poly Pomona runs deep. Since joining The Collins College Dean's Board of Advisors in 1997, he has been instrumental in advancing its mission. He famously helped bring culinary legend Julia Child to campus in 2000 — an event that inspired students and earned Child an honorary doctorate. In 2018, Shupnick was honored at Hospitality Uncorked, the college's signature fundraising gala, for his lifetime contributions to the industry.

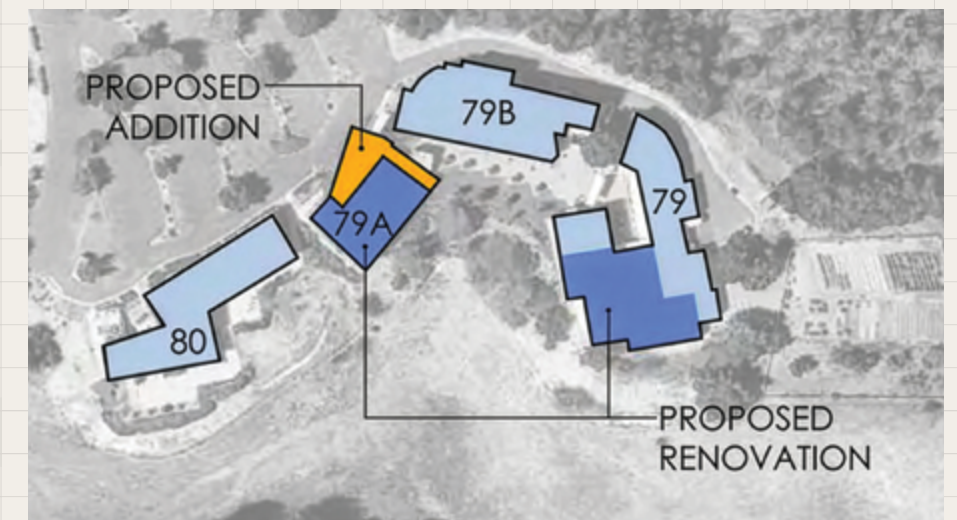
"Larry's dedication has been pivotal in helping our programs grow and flourish," said Dean Margie Ferree Jones. "This investment will ensure that our students have the tools and spaces they need to thrive in an ever-evolving field."

Cal Poly Pomona President Emerita Soraya M. Coley praised the Shupnicks' generosity as "more than a donation — it's a legacy." She added, "Their belief in our mission helps us create opportunities that change lives and lift communities."

With the Shupnick Innovation Center, The Collins College of Hospitality Management is poised to lead the future of hospitality education — blending creativity, business acumen and global insight to prepare students for the opportunities of tomorrow.



Collaboration with industry
IGNITES INNOVATION
and enriches student learning



*Still in development

PREPARING FOR A CHANGING INDUSTRY

Kellogg Grants help professors bring new technology, ethics lessons to the classroom

BY LES DUNSEITH

Four professors at The Collins College of Hospitality Management who were awarded competitive campus grants this summer are part of a fast-moving conversation now taking place in classrooms, kitchens and hotel lobbies: What role should artificial intelligence play in the future of hospitality?

The 2025 Generative AI Course Integration Grant, supported by Cal Poly Pomona's Kellogg Legacy Endowment, challenges faculty across disciplines to weave AI into their teaching, and this cohort is already putting concepts into practice, positioning them at the forefront of identifying how artificial intelligence can help sharpen student learning.

"This grant gives me and my students the chance to learn and experiment with Generative AI together," said Wan Yang, the James A. Collins Distinguished professor.

*"For me, this is a unique way to **bring the 'future of work' directly into the classroom**, while also fostering the critical mindset students need to question and evaluate AI outputs rather than accept them blindly."*

Yang and her colleagues — Associate Professor Jamie Sun and Professors Linchi Kwok and Michelle Yoo — have been given a chance to redesign and update their courses, prompting them to rethink what students need to learn for the future. All four have already conducted important research in the AI field.

For Yang, keeping an open mind about AI is key: "The essence of higher education is not to give students answers, but to prepare them to ask better questions — even when those questions are asked of a machine."



Faculty members Jamie Sun, Wan Yang, Michelle Yoo, Linchi Kwok

PROMISE AND CAUTION IN THE CLASSROOM

The AI grant recipients describe themselves as excited — but careful — adopters.

"I feel like AI can make event planning easier," said Sun, who teaches a course on the topic. "Previously, students might need to learn a program like Photoshop to design event materials. Now, they can just use prompts in an online platform to create a very good-looking event flyer." Still, she wants them to remain cautious about the technology. "If students rely too much on AI, it reduces their skills and creativity."

On a personal level, Yoo is an advocate for Generative AI. "I love using it. I see so many positive sides of it," Yoo said, though she shared Sun's concerns. "But I sometimes wish the students didn't have access to it when they're learning, because I do think it can inhibit critical reasoning."

Fourth-year student Alyssa Sanchez-Carrillo, the current president of Eta Sigma Delta, the hospitality honor society chapter at Collins, has used Generative AI in her classwork.

She relates an example of reading a textbook passage three times without understanding it, then putting that same passage into ChatGPT to be restated in a different way. "I use AI to reframe information in simpler terms so I can understand it and save time, rather than reading it six more times."

She also uses AI to check her work, especially when writing essays or working on research papers.

"I like to write everything out, and then put my assignment into AI and ask it, 'Did I miss anything?' And it'll let me know if I overlooked any points that are beneficial to my assignment."

Using AI in this way helps strengthen her work, Sanchez-Carrillo said, while allowing her "to keep it in my own voice. It makes me a better student because I learn from it what I might have missed."

Yang is also a cautious proponent. "Generative AI opens tremendous opportunities for hospitality ... but I remind my students to see AI not as a quick-answer machine, but as a partner that requires human judgment, creativity and ethical reflection."

Although Generative AI is still relatively new, Kwok believes it has the potential to transform the industry.

"From staffing, from customer service, from back of the house and front of the house, AI can streamline operations and make us work smarter. **That's the goal,**" he said.



Wan Yang is a cautious proponent of AI.

For Yoo, the grant offered momentum to dig deeper. "When I first started incorporating AI, it was more a general perspective. [The grant] gave me an opportunity to look into it more specifically related to my course on hospitality marketing management," she said. "I do want students to use AI so they can be competent when they're out in the workforce ... and know which AI to use."

Sun described a similar process. "This grant actually gave me the chance to sit down and deeply think how I can

integrate AI systematically." She will emphasize a balance between the time-saving benefits and the responsibility to use the new tools ethically.

Yoo encourages students to use AI tools but cautions them to think critically about the results, which can include factual errors, mistaken citations and even fictitious information. "I show them in class exactly how AI makes mistakes," she said. "When they see it for themselves, they're in awe."

When used properly, AI has benefits. The four educators use advanced statistical analysis techniques in their research, for example, and they noted AI's growing impact on hospitality research.

Kwok emphasized openness, noting that even experts like himself sometimes feel stressed by rapidly changing technology. He has published articles about the impact of AI, but "at the same time, I have to say I'm learning with the students."

ALUMNI ALSO SEE THE SHIFTS

Alumna Aracely Cardona ('12) now runs a restaurant consulting company and sees AI reshaping operations at every level.

"I definitely think the ability to communicate online, to do marketing online, to get customer leads, all of that stuff has changed the panorama for people who want to open their own business," she said. "And I think it's going to get way more intense."

In hospitality, employee costs are significant and continue to rise, said Cardona, which has led some restaurants to explore automated food preparation or implement self-ordering kiosks.

With her clients, she explains how this could reduce labor costs: "If you needed two or three cashiers on a busy shift, but then you can teach the customer to use a kiosk themselves, then you probably only need one, with a manager who can back that person up."

“

As an educator, one of the most important things we have to teach is how to use AI securely and ethically.”

Michelle Yoo
Professor

Benefits



Streamlined
Operations



Enhanced
Learning

Warnings



Erosion of
Critical Thinking



Vulnerability to
System Failures

Cardona also advises clients on social media strategies, including the good and the bad of AI. “There is software that will run your website, run your social media,” she said. “It’s all AI created.”

It may seem cost-effective, but AI can be cold and repetitive. When a human touch is involved, “you’re going to get more followers, more engagement, and ultimately more customers coming in,” Cardona said.

A real-world example involved Sanchez-Carrillo’s use of AI tools during an internship last summer at a Hyatt Regency in San Antonio. She used AI to create a sales mix, which matched the proportion of different menu items needed by a fine dining restaurant she was managing to customer expectations.

“It was a really efficient way to make sure that I completely understood all the numbers,” recalled Sanchez-Carrillo. Using

AI helped her adjust prices and potentially increase revenue, “while still making sure that I didn’t increase the prices too much to where a guest wouldn’t want to come and eat there.”

Collins Alumni Society President Néstor González Ramírez (’14) has seen the potential of AI to speed up marketing tasks in his field, including wine distribution. “We have a whole camera system where we take pictures of the bottles. Before, it was taking forever to edit the pictures,” he said. “Now, we click what we do or don’t want, and the AI takes care of it. It’s able to cut time.”

Even so, González Ramírez sees vulnerabilities. “The moment that this system goes down, there’s only one person that is certified to fix it. And he might be across the country fixing another issue, and then the company is losing hundreds or thousands of dollars a minute. That is one of the downsides of technology. It’s great — when it works.”

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The pros and cons of artificial intelligence are at the forefront of many conversations in hospitality. It is already affecting how restaurants manage labor, how people book hotel rooms and how students prepare for careers. And faculty research can help frame these conversations to ensure the impact on people is not overlooked.

- In a paper published in August, Kwok explored AI in human resource management. He and his co-author identified likely impacts of AI on functions including talent acquisition, onboarding and training, which are likely to see job reductions because of AI. Others, such as employee retention and separation, require a nuanced approach that is better suited to human interaction.

“We have now entered the era of the fourth industrial revolution when GenAI has reshaped how we conduct business ... [with innovation] projected to outpace the progress of academic research,” they wrote. They cite a need for careful deployment that mitigates “the negative impacts of GenAI applications, such as biases,

ethical concerns, privacy and security issues, and lack of irreplaceable human-centric components.”

- In a 2023 paper analyzing 30,000 TripAdvisor reviews, Yang and her co-authors wrote: “People are a critical driver of positive experiences.”
- Yoo helped conduct a 2022 study that examined the use of machine learning to better predict hotel booking cancellations with an eye to more profitable pricing. “It will also allow hotels to reduce overbooking and relocating guests, which causes a negative impact on guest experiences,” the authors wrote.
- Sun has participated in research on customer engagement through AI platforms and was a co-author of a study published in 2024 that identified fear as a driving emotion among employees who committed “robot abuse, wherein humans inflict physical damage to service robots, leading to elevated maintenance costs.” The authors recommended that organizations “should train employees to effectively manage and work alongside robots, potentially reducing employees’ fear of robots and the likelihood of robot misuse.”

The grant recipients plan to emphasize the complexity of AI and human interaction in their classrooms, and not to shy from trying new things. Kwok warned against letting uncertainty lead to inaction.

“We’re dealing with a moving target at this point,” he said. “But I think we just have to **try it out and see where it goes**, instead of being so scared that we don’t use it.”

Sanchez-Carrillo, who plans to graduate in May 2026 and pursue a career with a hotel that emphasizes environmental sustainability, recognizes that AI will impact her work life. She applauds The Collins College’s increased effort to integrate AI into classroom instruction.

“AI requires guidance to be effective,” said Sanchez-Carrillo, who advocates the use of AI for its efficiency in handling repetitive tasks and crunching numbers. “And that way we can focus on the more human sides of our work, pairing it with empathy and creativity to solve problems.”

Preparing for AI IN FUTURE BUSINESS

86%

of Employers Anticipate
that AI Will Transform
Their Businesses by 2030

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM'S
FUTURE OF JOBS SURVEY

85%

of College Students Say
They’ve Used Generative
AI for Coursework in
the Past Year

INSIDE HIGHER ED



Néstor González Ramírez uses AI in his wine distribution work.

FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch names Matthew Vaillette new executive chef

The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch has a new executive chef who brings a multitude of skills to Collins and is committed to staff training, mentorship and culinary education.

Matthew Vaillette, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, has more than 20 years of leadership experience, including his work in Michelin-level kitchens, luxury restaurants, catering, senior living and as a private chef. He's worked at Thomas Keller's Bouchon Bistro in Beverly Hills and The Ranch in Anaheim, among other marquee culinary venues, and is adept at executing large-scale events for 1,000+ guests, including the James Beard Awards.

Vaillette, who started in October, said the job was a great fit for him because he's ready to make a difference, and he feels that his leadership skills and easy-going demeanor mesh well with teaching Collins students.

"My end goal in hospitality really wasn't earning a Michelin star or some other award," he said. "I wanted to make my mark by giving back, and this is the best place and best role for me to do that."

When he was starting out, it wasn't unusual to be berated in the kitchen by higher-ranking team members and made to feel intimidated by the atmosphere, Vaillette said, "which is not a great way to be successful." He wants to create a new, consistent paradigm for the industry, where cooperation and respect yield the best results.

"New students will make mistakes, and they need to do that to learn. That's why I'm here," he said. "A lot of our students will be managing people in their careers, and they need the confidence to know it can be done a different way."

Dean Margie Ferree Jones, Chitra Perera ('08), Collins' interim director of business services, and Patrick Cormier, a Dean's Advisory Board member, led the search to find the new executive chef for RKR. Cormier, regional vice president at Encore Global based out of Los Angeles, said the board was



looking for a unique professional to fill a niche job who was "at a point in their career where they were looking for a higher purpose. They didn't just want to help guests but wanted to make an impact on the industry around them."

He said Vaillette was that person, and with his calm leadership and warmth, everyone is expecting great things as he oversees the recently reopened RKR, working with students as they navigate the restaurant world in real time.

"He developed a love not only for the craft but for the people he works with," Cormier said, which every hospitality professional knows is key to success in any venture.

Vaillette, who is based in Fullerton, already had ties to Collins. His brother, Nicholas ('18, finance, real estate and law) is a Cal Poly Pomona alumnus, and Vaillette has always admired the world-class program.

He said that he hopes RKR can expand its hours on the days it's now open (Tuesday and Thursday for lunch and dinner; Wednesday and Friday for lunch only). He's already impressed with the level of knowledge and eagerness that students bring to the front and the back of the house.

"All those little things they are learning add up — and they'll use them their whole career no matter where in hospitality they go," Vaillette said. "They'll learn the daily pivot, that running a kitchen is like running a show, that details matter. These are the next leaders of our industry."

RKR: Blending tradition and innovation in a unique learning environment

The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch opened its doors in 1990 thanks to the vision and generosity of Jim and Carol Collins. For 35 years, the student-run restaurant has been a shining example of what makes The Collins College of Hospitality Management one of the leading hospitality schools in the nation.

It's also why many students from across the globe choose to attend Cal Poly Pomona — it uniquely provides a real-world, hands-on experience in all aspects of a restaurant's operation, from kitchen work to front-of-house management.

If you've visited the restaurant — affectionately nicknamed RKR — you know to expect a spectacular view, great food and an exuberant welcome from the student workers. Over three decades, these have been hallmarks of the RKR dining



experience. Behind the scenes, however, some changes are happening. One of them is recently hired Executive Chef Matthew Vaillette.

Vaillette's hands-on teaching philosophy fits in with CPP's model of learning-by-doing, something he credits the first chef he worked under for instilling in him.

"He didn't sit in his office," Vaillette said. "He was on the line. That's where I want to be too. I want students to ask questions and learn as much as they can. This is an unparalleled opportunity. I mean, we're using 3D printers and high-tech equipment that most people in the industry would love to have at their fingertips."

But it's not the technology at RKR that makes Vaillette's eyes light up. "We have produce that comes from as close as 10 yards away," he said. "We're getting herbs, melons, anything you can think of. Restaurants spend millions of dollars to get that array of farm-fresh food. The possibilities for our menu, well, it's exciting, for sure."

One of those possibilities is Vaillette's avocado Green Goddess salad (see recipe, page 38).

"I took the melons grown right here on campus and compressed them in a vacuum sealer, which made them really nice and crunchy and beautiful," Vaillette said. "Then, I added feta, some English cucumber and Valencia orange slices. This is exactly the kind of thinking we're going to be doing in the coming months at the restaurant. A little more composed. More high-end."

And fresh. About as fresh as food can be.

"We could literally point to the exact plant or tree, and say, 'This is where this came from,'" he explained. "It's the best choice revenue-wise. It's the best choice health-wise. It's the best choice sustainability-wise. I mean, you could count on two hands the number of restaurants in the United States that can do that."

His students appreciate the opportunities.

"This class offers a unique insight into what restaurant culture really looks like," said Andrew Soel, a graduating senior.

"Whereas other classes are more theoretical, this experience showed me firsthand what leadership feels like. It's not easy to be someone's peer one day and their manager the next. But it's given me the confidence to say, 'I know how to lead people.'"

Senior Jucinda Lopez agrees that working in the restaurant this semester has been a confidence-booster. "I've always been nervous in the kitchen," she admitted. "If you would have told me that I would be cooking for other people, I wouldn't have believed you!"

Lopez especially appreciates how much Vaillette genuinely cares about students. "No matter what mistake we make," she said, "he helps us figure out how to work around it. That means a lot to me, and I think it means a lot to other students as well."

Vaillette is keenly aware of providing real-life training for students while also ensuring a great dining experience.

"We need to cement it into people's minds that we're here to make delicious food. We're here for your parties, for banquets. We can be the best thing in the area. I plan to make that happen."



Compressed CPP Melon Salad

This salad can be as rustic as you want or as fine-dining as you want (above). The flavors are classic but with modern technique.

COMPRESSED MELON AND ENGLISH CUCUMBER

- 1 each peeled cucumber
- 2 each melons (e.g. cantaloupe, watermelon, honeydew)

Peel melon by slicing off both ends. Stand melon on the cut-end, cut down, shaving off the outer skin of the melon, continuing all around the fruit. Cut in half and cut into small, more manageable pieces. Place into vacuum seal bag and seal on strongest setting on vacuum- seal machine. Place in fridge for 1 hour. Remove from fridge and cut into desired shapes and sizes.

Peel cucumber and place into vacuum seal bag and seal on strongest setting on vacuum-seal machine. Place in fridge for 1 hour. Remove from fridge and cut into desired shapes and sizes.

PICKLED RED ONION

- 1 each thin-sliced onion
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup water
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

Heat ACV, water and salt in small pot over medium heat until simmering. Pour over thin-sliced red onion. Let cool to room temperature and then keep refrigerated.

AVOCADO GREEN GODDESS DRESSING

- 1 large avocado, ripe
- 1 lemon, juiced
- ¼ cup water
- 1 cup chopped herbs (e.g. tarragon, chives, parsley, basil)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

FRENCH FETA

- 2 ounces French feta, crumbled

With a clean gloved hand crumble feta cheese and keep off to side to mix in to salad at last moment.

VALENCIA ORANGE SEGMENTS

- 2 each Valencia oranges

Cut off rind of orange and cut in between segments to get clean pieces of orange without the pith.

BUILDING SALAD

Place all ingredients in a bowl and lightly toss. Served chilled as a light side dish or cleanly place on plate and use Green Goddess to garnish — it's up to you!

Collins' outstanding advisor

Hyounae (Kelly) Min was named an outstanding advisor for her commitment to student success. Min, an associate professor who received her doctorate in business administration from Washington State University, focuses her research on how social judgments, biases and stereotypes influence perception and decision-making in the service context.

She has published her work in top-tier hospitality and business journals such as the Journal of Business Research, International Journal of Hospitality Management, and Hospitality and Tourism Research. More recently, Min expanded her research to operational analytics and social media analytics.

She also loves teaching. Students in her HRT 3950 class, Hospitality Property Development, had a lot of fun this year creating a restaurant pop-up they called Seoul Krispy. It's a group exercise she assigns each semester.

"I want students to get hands-on experience developing a concept, calculating finances and preparing for the real world — not just theoretical learning," she said.

Min also wants them to enjoy the work. "The more we do this, the better projects become," she said. "And having fun is important!"



A pop-up restaurant called Seoul Krispy created by students in Professor Min's Hospitality Property Development class



Professor Linchi Kwok creates new class

Collins is introducing a new elective designed to prepare students for leadership roles in private club management. Professor Linchi Kwok, whose research interests include hospitality trends, social media, information technology, service marketing and service operations, will lead students through a combination of online sessions and guided tours of top local clubs. In 2024, Kwok was the college's first recipient of the prestigious Provost's Award for Excellence.

His work often appears on the most cited/downloaded list in esteemed hospitality journals, and he has won seven best paper awards at various conferences.

Students in the new class will gain insider knowledge of operations and service excellence; explore career paths in private club management; work with Club Management Association of America (CMAA) professionals and industry leaders; and develop real-world skills in leadership, operations and event planning.



STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

Al Levie Family President's Scholar

Brandon J. Ocegüera has won the prestigious Cal Poly Pomona President's Scholarship, which rewards academic achievement (3.5 GPA or above), co-curricular excellence and honors students who lead with integrity, engage deeply in service and apply their learning to make a real difference in their communities.

Ocegüera, who is specializing in food and beverage, envisions a career that redefines hospitality — curating memorable experiences while creating spaces where people feel truly seen and at home. "Heart, to me, means hospitality with soul. It's what makes people remember how you made them feel," said the senior, who is also an ordained minister.

He also wrote an application essay and completed personal interviews to earn his scholarship, is active in the Golden State Chapter of CMAA as both a student and event coordinator and is a member of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality.

Ocegüera also received an award from the CRA Building Scholarship Fund from the California Restaurant Foundation.

California Restaurant Foundation awardees include ProStart grads

This year, the California Restaurant Foundation awarded \$177,650 in co-branded scholarships, including 11 to Collins students. Every year the Los Angeles chapter and local restaurateurs partner to support students majoring in hospitality management, culinary arts, food science and related fields with scholarships of up to \$4,000.

Among the recipients were Collins students who graduated from the ProStart high school program before enrolling at Cal Poly Pomona.

"Thank you, California Restaurant Foundation for all your support! The impact the ProStart program has made on my life is truly remarkable, as it's allowed me to **find my love for the hospitality industry**," said Charli Padilla.

Longtime benefactors Carol and Jim Collins were early supporters of ProStart, a National Restaurant Association



venture that teaches culinary skills and restaurant management principles to high school students.

The other Collins winners: Wendy Armour, Breanna Barrera, Jamie Cabrera-Briseno, Meghan Carey, Isiah Greene, Abby Hahn, Christian Kavak, Michelle Martinez, Areceli Monraz and Brandon J. Ocegüera.

'Next Generation of Leaders' win scholarships from CHLA

Fourteen Collins College students were awarded California Hotel & Lodging Association Hospitality Foundation scholarships this year at a gala in San Francisco, earning \$2,000 to \$3,000 each to help continue their education.

The hospitality management scholarships recognize "the best and brightest of the hospitality and tourism industry's next generation of leaders," according to the organization, which was founded more than 130 years ago to advocate for hospitality industry owners and operators.

Congratulations to Teresa Adela, Jordan Arano, Jean Joel Kengne Fah, Clarissa Flores, Sydney Martz, Ryan Ngo, Brandon J. Ocegüera, Neel Patel, Ryan Perez, Alyssa Sanchez-Carrillo, Lexi Segovia, Andrew Soel, Maddy Trester and Kathryn Yip.

Graduate student's restaurant recognized for highest standards

Graduate student Edinho Hayashida, owner of the Japanese-Peruvian restaurant Domo Saltado in Lima, Peru, has been recognized by Certified Angus Beef — renowned worldwide for its quality and excellence — as the International Independent Restaurant of the Year.

Hayashida, a Lima native who is attending classes on campus while also directing his brand's strategic growth and operations long distance, credited the Collins master's program for broadening his perspective on leadership and influencing how he guides his team and makes decisions.

"The professors, classmates and experiences have profoundly enriched me — not only academically, but personally and professionally," he told graduate program director Don St. Hilaire. "Each course has challenged me to think more critically, to question assumptions, and to translate theory into meaningful action within my restaurant."

CMAA recognizes Collins students

Our Club Management Association of America (CMAA) student chapter has been named the 2025 Student Chapter of the Year in the Large Chapter Category.

The national award honors the chapter's leadership, student engagement and commitment to hospitality excellence. As part of the recognition, the chapter received a \$1,000 grant from The Club Foundation to support attendance at a national CMAA conference.

MSHM students headed to entrepreneurship world finals

A Cal Poly Pomona graduate student team earned No. 2 overall honors at the TiE SoCal/TiE Pitch Competition for their concept "The Mango Tree – An Indian Express."

The event, which was hosted by CPP, was sponsored by The Indus Entrepreneurs, a global nonprofit that empowers the next generation of innovators through mentorship, networking and entrepreneurship.

The Collins College graduate students Nishant Patel and Dhyye Thakkar joined team leader and MBA candidate Varsha Soni in the competition, epitomizing the Bronco spirit of innovation and collaboration. The team will represent Southern California in the university world finals.



Edinho Hayashida (second from right)



The event, co-organized by graduate students in GBA 5700 (business planning) and faculty director Cervantes Lee of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, brought together top student teams from UC Irvine, UC Riverside, UCLA, Cal State Long Beach, Irvine Valley College and Cal Poly Pomona to pitch ideas using AI, data and smart technologies.

San Manuel Grants PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES

THE YUHA VIATAM OF SAN MANUEL NATION

has for over two decades given more than \$400 million to causes that help promote its tribal priorities by helping others, and The Collins College has been a grateful recipient of that generosity.

Once known as the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, the community's values include inspiring future generations through education; empowering lives; reinforcing healthy and resilient communities; preserving cultural traditions and empowering Indian Country.

San Manuel has given Collins two separate gifts totaling \$200,000 to support Student Success initiatives focusing on outreach, recruitment and scholarships.

Krista Spangler, Collins' senior director of development, said the grant money has supported 28 students who were either awarded gap funding or full-tuition scholarships. The tribe also formed a unique collaboration with Collins that connects graduating students with employment opportunities at its resort through the Yaamava' expansion project.

"This new collaboration with The Collins College of Hospitality Management allows us to expand our dynamic team and connect students and alumni with endless opportunities," said Peter Arceo, San Manuel chief gaming officer, when the collaboration was first announced.

"I know the partnership has been successful, and we value it," Spangler said, who added that the tribe has hired Collins alumni and students. In February 2025, Collins students toured the resort and the year before were invited to attend the San Manuel Career Exploration Day.

Although it provides funds to organizations, educational institutions and environmental groups nationwide, much of the San Bernadino County-based nation's giving is focused on programs closer to home in Southern California, where its people have lived for many generations.

Collins students visited the Yaamava' Resort and Casino in February, in a tour organized by Carolina Sanchez, student experience program lead. Christina Allgaier Boss ('12), Maria Valentina Rojas ('16) and Kevin Figueroa ('16), were on hand to discuss the many options hospitality management students have for careers, including the gaming industry.



“

I know the partnership has been successful, and we value it.”

Krista Spangler

Collins' senior director of development

REMEMBERED BY A FORMER COLLEAGUE

Chef Scott Rudolph

(1960—2025)

For more than a decade, Chef Scott Rudolph was a cornerstone of culinary instruction at The Collins College.

Scott brought to his teaching a blend of humanity, professionalism and humor. His lessons extended far beyond the kitchen. To him, cooking was never just about perfecting a recipe — it was about nurturing curiosity, discipline and a sense of purpose. He encouraged students to take risks, to live boldly and to care deeply about the people they served.

His colleagues remember him as exacting, fun and kind — a teacher who demanded the best not out of strictness but out of belief. He had a knack for seeing potential before others did and a gift for drawing it out with tough love and laughter. Whether he was guiding a student through a challenging service at The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch or sharing stories from his own days at the Culinary Institute of America, Scott led by example — passionate about his craft and generous with his wisdom.

Outside the classroom, Scott's zest for life was just as strong. He loved horse racing. Sailing his boat, Finesse, brought him joy in the simple beauty of the ocean, sunsets and good company. Even after his cancer diagnosis, he faced each day with resilience, grace and humor.

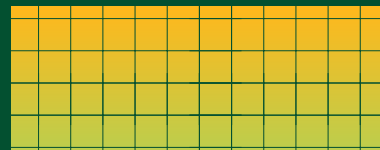
His legacy lives on in the countless students he mentored and the colleagues he inspired. His spirit remains part of The Collins College community — in every shared meal, every moment of mentorship and every act of hospitality carried out with heart.

Scott reminded us that food is more than sustenance. It's connection. And through that belief, he left a lasting imprint on all of us who had the honor to work with him.

IN MEMORIAM



Alumni and faculty gathered for **One Last Family Meal** at The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch in honor of Scott Rudolph. Attendees shared memories and laughter and **remembered the impact he had on so many** at Collins, forever grateful for Chef Scott's legacy.



In Support of COLLINS COLLEGE

Individual community donors, alumni, public agencies, foundations and corporate partners support current students and recent graduates in myriad ways.

Collins Alumni Society

As a chapter of the Cal Poly Pomona Alumni Association, the Collins Alumni Society fosters an ongoing relationship among our 8,000+ alumni, the hospitality industry and the university. Chartered in 1985, it is Cal Poly Pomona's largest and most active alumni chapter. The chapter and its members mentor current students and host professional and social events to connect The Collins College community across generations.

Activities include mentoring mixers and alumni receptions coordinated through the campus-wide Bronco Network platform.

Speaking engagements

Graduates of The Collins College frequently make presentations that inform current students about careers and trends in hospitality.

These career preparation events involve meetings on campus, virtual sessions and visits to workplaces to network with alumni or meet other hospitality professionals and hiring managers. Recent examples include:

- Ongoing speaker series such as the Richard N. Frank Distinguished Lectureship Series that bring leaders shaping the future of the hospitality industry to campus for lectures, interactive sessions and one-on-one discussions with students.
- Field trips to locations that employ hospitality workers, like the spring 2025 tour of hotels including The Peninsula Beverly Hills, the Beverly Hilton, the Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills, the Beverly Wilshire, Beverly Hills (A Four Seasons Hotel) and the Maybourne Beverly Hills.
- Topic-based speaking engagements by our graduates. An example that started in 2024 is the "I'll Be The Next" speaker series. It's more than just a set of talks by alumni — it's a glimpse into what's possible with a Collins degree.
- The Collins College graduates often go on to complete management training programs for major employers such as Hilton, Marriott and Hyatt, and those alumni then engage with current students to share their experiences and offer insights.

Job training

Alumni-managed businesses, as well as other private and public entities, often hire students as interns, providing them with hands-on experience that complements classroom learning.

Another paid professional opportunity is known as a "micro-internship." These positions connect students with sponsoring organizations to complete short-term assignments centered around highly specific projects, allowing students to gain work experience without having to quit their current jobs or cut back on academic commitments.

Endowments and gifts

Scholarships are a key component of endowments, which involve philanthropic donations by individuals or corporations. Supporters can also fund faculty development activities and curriculum updates or help advance capital construction projects. The Collins Development staff can help arrange such financial gifts and set up estate plans to support the college, often providing substantial tax benefits for donors.



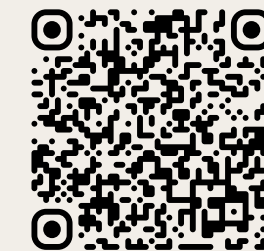
Board member Michele Gendreau (83) speaking at SHFM.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN DONATING, contact Senior Director of Development Krista Spangler at klspangler@cpp.edu or **909-869-4450**.

How to DONATE

We salute our donors!

The Collins College sincerely thanks each of our donors for their generosity and continuing support. Your gifts help to ensure that Collins remains a world-class hospitality management program where students can learn, thrive and make their dreams a reality.



**SCAN OR CLICK
TO DONATE**

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Continuing a Legacy of Leadership and Love



WE ARE GRATEFUL TO LORALEI DOPSON, whose generous donation of \$500,000 to help fund the reimagining of our facilities celebrates the life and legacy of her daughter, Lea R. Dopson, the beloved late dean of The Collins College.

Dean Dopson was a passionate educator and leader whose influence continues to shape our college and the hospitality industry. The gift from Ms. Dopson, also an educator, is a heartfelt tribute to her daughter and a reflection of their shared belief in the power of teaching and mentorship.

"Lea dedicated her life to helping students succeed," Dopson said. "She believed in education as a way to open doors and change lives. I'm grateful to be part of The Collins College family and proud to support the place she loved so much."

ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

Professor for a Day

For more than 25 years, Cal Poly Pomona has welcomed alumni back into its classrooms to teach courses and share their practical knowledge, greatly benefitting students with lessons on career readiness, workplace dynamics and leadership.

It's also an opportunity for Collins graduates to reconnect with their alma mater while collaborating with faculty.

The next Professor for a Day week is

MARCH 9-13, 2026

Go to cpp.edu/alumni → Get Involved

Dining With Broncos

Registration for alumni hosts has opened for Dining with Broncos, a unique opportunity for alumni and chapters to host students in their home or at a restaurant to provide a networking opportunity for asking questions about careers and life after college. Dates for dinners this year are February 20, 21, 27 and 28. You can also specify a different date in February that works better for your group.

If you would like to host a dinner, please confirm by

JANUARY 5, 2026

Questions? Contact the Office of Alumni & External Relations at alumni@cpp.edu



SAVE THE DATE!

Awards Gala 2026

Join your fellow Broncos at the 62nd Cal Poly Pomona Alumni Awards Gala. Cocktail reception at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and the awards ceremony at Pacific Palms Resort, City of Industry.

The next Alumni Awards Gala is

OCTOBER 16, 2026



Margie Ferree Jones, 2023 Distinguished Alumnus Matt Kuo ('06), Dennis Wong ('04).

MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNI PRESIDENT

DEAR FELLOW ALUMNI,

As we head toward the new year, I'm honored to give an update as the current president of the Collins Alumni Society (CAS).

First, a warm welcome to our new board members — Michael Varias ('15), Danielle Rognacion ('14), Eric Chavez ('14), Briana Carpio ('16), Nishrant Kharod ('11) and Paul Tchen ('90). I appreciate that they've chosen to give their time to fellow alumni and the many current students who rely on CAS for our years of collective experience in the hospitality industry.

We know that our new board members will continue creating unforgettable events for our society members, who will cherish their memories as part of the Collins family!

I'm pleased to report that last year's Holiday Toy Drive was a great success and we'll be doing it again in 2025 as we give back to our Pomona community.

We encourage you to update your email with CPP Alumni Affairs to stay informed about our calendar of events for 2026, which include an ALIS reception, Paint Night in Orange County and Hospitality Uncorked 2026! Please also follow us on Instagram and Facebook.

Special thanks to Brandon Feighner ('05) and Tyler Brown ('11) for their leadership on previous boards and assistance to current board members Rocio Antonio ('20), Barbara West ('20) and LeeAnn Ubalde ('18).

As alumni and donors, your generosity has played a pivotal role in the lives of current and future students who will become part of our ever-growing alumni family. We look forward to welcoming you at upcoming events as we expand our network.

Thank you for your enduring commitment to The Collins College of Hospitality Management. I look forward to raising a wine glass to celebrate our legacy and the achievements that await us!

With sincere gratitude,

NÉSTOR GONZÁLEZ RAMÍREZ ('14)

Collins Alumni Society president



*More than
a donor*



Cal Poly
Pomona

The Collins College of
Hospitality Management