



PROFESSIONAL & CAREER READINESS
Our curricular and co-curricular learning experiences optimize students' professional and career readiness.

Help Wanted

CAREER COUNSELOR ASSISTS STUDENTS WITH THEIR NEXT STEPS

For the past six years, Career Center counselor and Clothes Closet coordinator **Cheryl Love** has been working to get students ready for life after graduation. As part of a staff of 15, Love says the most rewarding aspect of her job is helping students find their path.



STEM Learning One Shovel at a Time

By Nancy Yeang

Kellogg Polytechnic Elementary students pick fresh snap peas from their garden, learning that the green pods have edible peas and the seeds in the yellow dry pods can be placed in the soil to grow new plants. With the help of Cal Poly Pomona undergraduate students, the children are learning STEM concepts.

The fellows, who are being introduced to education as a potential career through the Ernest Prete Jr. Fellowship program, collaborate with teachers at two Pomona schools to create and deliver lessons for young learners that use the garden as a hands-on laboratory. Healthy eating habits, higher education opportunities and college life are a few of the co-curricular lessons.

This year, 29 Prete Fellows in STEM majors are paired up with classroom teachers – 14 co-teaching at Kellogg Polytechnic and 15 at Armstrong Elementary. Two of the fellows are mentors who completed the program last year.

This partnership was launched through a \$117,000 grant from the Ernest Prete Jr. Foundation. Fellows receive an annual stipend of \$5,125, attend workshops and dedicate 10 hours a week to the program, with at least six of those hours working in the schools.

COMMUNITY & GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT
We are engaged with our community, link our academic programs to local and regional stakeholders, and have an understanding of global perspectives and trends.

What do employers want from prospective employees?

Teamwork. Regardless of the industry, employers are looking for people who can play well with others. Also, they want people who can communicate and problem solve. Whether you're an engineer or a kindergarten teacher, you're going to have to do some problem-solving.

Leadership. If there's a problem to solve or a program to implement, can this individual take the lead and make sure those things happen?

Other core competencies include professionalism, career management, oral and written communication skills, and the ability to use technology.

How are we preparing students differently than other universities?

I think the polytechnic aspect of Cal Poly Pomona makes the university unique. For example, the Career Center's Clothes Closet has become a learning lab for apparel merchandising and management students. I have three interns this semester.

Also, students studying retail simulation in the apparel merchandising and management department get placed in different retail settings on campus, including the Clothes Closet, so they see all aspects of what working in a store is like.

What are the strengths of a Cal Poly Pomona graduate?

Because learn by doing is at the core of all that happens here, we have students who are very good at problem-solving. The polytechnic aspect helps them develop excellent communication skills and the ability to work with diverse populations.

How has our approach to career readiness changed over the years?

Career readiness is a part of GI 2025. [GI 2025 is a CSU initiative to increase graduation rates for all students while eliminating achievement gaps.] The shift is that career readiness is not just the responsibility of those of us in career services. It's a campus-wide responsibility. We do some good things, but getting everybody to the party is going to help us do great things.

What should students be doing to get themselves career ready?

We created a four-year timeline that guides students from their freshman year, so when they are done, they will be ready for career opportunities.

We're helping students understand the importance of things like extracurricular/co-curricular activities. Employers say they want students who do well in their classes, but they also want someone who is engaged in the campus community.

Career readiness is a process that starts freshman year. It is something you work on throughout your time and beyond.



Martin Rios, a botany student and a Prete Fellow, shows a group of Armstrong Elementary students the loveliness of ladybugs that will be released into the garden.