

# Enlightening students in entrepreneurship



**In conjunction with the UC San Diego Office of Innovation and Commercialization, GPS launched a Certificate in Entrepreneurship**

By Sarah Pfladderer | GPS News

On a Thursday evening at the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), the conversation in the auditorium is far from public policy or the Asia Pacific. Instead, a PowerPoint slide on the “market landscape” is projected in front of the room and LinkedObjects CEO Gioia Messinger is talking about opening a box.

“Two minutes,” the high tech entrepreneur said, is all the time a consumer uses to judge a product they ordered online. If in those two minutes the consumer isn’t enchanted by the product, they send it back.

As they’re taught to do, a few GPS students’ hands shoot up in skepticism over the number, questioning where it came from. Realizing they are not in a quantitative methods class, the discussants bring the conversation back to where it belongs: The creator of the product, the entrepreneur.



In conjunction with the UC San Diego Office of Innovation and Commercialization, GPS launched a new Certificate in Entrepreneurship this spring quarter.

Held as five two-hour classes from March 31 to April 28, the certificate requires students to complete four of the five classes. It is an extension of the School's professional development committee, which convenes a subset of faculty, staff, students, alumni and employers biannually to brainstorm means for students' professional development, beyond GPS's core curriculum.

GPS Career Services Director David Robertson said the course meets students' mounting interest in social impact and entrepreneurship, as well as the School's commitment to collaboration in STEM and health sciences across campus.

Recalling a slew of alumni that have started their own companies or nonprofits in recent years, Robertson clarified the Certificate in Entrepreneurship is more than just a crash course on growing a startup.

"The certificate not only provides students the basic tools to create and launch something innovative, but it provides them with a business perspective for addressing the potential policy implications of innovations," he explained, and noted the certificate likely will be open to GPS alumni when it returns next year.



Free of charge, the course is led by Greg Horowitz, UC San Diego director of innovation and CEO of T2 Venture Creation, and Paul Roben, associate vice chancellor for innovation and commercialization at UC San Diego, with local

entrepreneurs and business practitioners as guest speakers. The class topics include ideation, business model generation, customer and market development, financing your startup and building your team.

“It is particularly rewarding to see the enthusiasm of the students taking a course like this and to see how, over time, students adopt the lessons that they learned from this course, whether or not they go on to a career in entrepreneurship,” Roben said.

Amanda Darlington, 2016 [MIA](#) candidate, is a prime example of this.

She got a firsthand glance at the power of entrepreneurship in solving social and environmental problems as part of an Emzingo Social Impact Consultant Fellowship in Rio de Janeiro last summer.

“It was there that I was introduced to (business) concepts and tools to carry out my consulting contract with my client organization,” she explained. “Additionally through this experience, I was blown away by the extensive and well-connected social entrepreneurship and innovation movement that was happening on the ground in Brazil.”

Partaking in the Certificate in Entrepreneurship, Darlington said she most values the small pointers (think: the two-minute rule) from successful entrepreneurs that she wouldn’t hear otherwise.

“I hope to use the knowledge I gain with this certificate to further my consulting experience in partnership with social entrepreneurs to assist them in their journeys from ideation to launch and beyond,” she concluded.