Letter from the Faculty Director

The end of the fall semester always seems so complete. While the spring semester closes, ironically, with “commencement,” new life and new beginnings, warm summer breezes, excitement and uncertainty, there is a certain finality and completeness to the end of the fall semester. The cooler weather, winter darkness and holiday preparation also call for reflection and introspection. It is at these moments when I cannot help but feel tremendous gratitude to all of those who have helped us on this journey. And so it is that I begin my reflections for 2014 with deepest gratitude to all of you who have supported the Center for Peace and Commerce throughout 2014. Thank you!!!

The changes that occurred in the CPC during 2014 were amazing. We began the year with an expansion of the Social Innovation Challenge (SIC) to include four other San Diego universities, including UCSD, SDSU, PLNU and San Diego City College. Due to a generous grant from the Moxie Foundation, we initiated this change in a pilot form for the 2013-14 academic year. The end result was a sweep of the external “San Diego Track” by SDSU student projects, including Art Without a Roof, W.E. Do Good and a trifecta win for Vena (prize money from Moxie Foundation, Outerwall, and the Social Global Mobile Live Audience Choice Award). We were so pleased with the expansion “pilot” project that we decided to expand it this year to include all “eligible” San Diego university students (see website for details). Moxie Foundation is again sponsoring the expansion.

University of San Diego students also had a strong showing with winners like Green Room, Memoria, GROWING, Pacific Clean Tech and Rice Pollution Solution (see this link for details: http://www.sandiego.edu/cpc/sic/past-awards-main-page.php). I am more convinced than ever that the Social Innovation Challenge, which began rather humbly in 2011, is where the CPC can have its greatest impact both pedagogically and in terms of promoting peaceful, sustainable and impactful social enterprise development.

We were also blessed with a beautiful new addition to the CPC family as Nadia Auch gave birth to a baby girl, Pia, in September. While Nadia was on maternity leave, former SIC winner and USD Masters in Peace Studies graduate, Grace Michel, filled in as Interim Assistant Director. Please join me in thanking Grace for her capable assistance!

The Idea Labs for the fall semester have been going well, reaching over 200 students (http://www.sandiego.edu/cpc/idealabs/2014-idealabs.php). Tiffany Persons led off with an inspiring presentation on how she founded her organization, Shine On Sierra Leone. She showed us all how to break the infamous “inertia bias” and start making a difference—no matter how small. As she shared with us her success in transforming the schools in Sierra Leone we were at once hopeful and fearful that the Ebola epidemic would not continue its deadly march through western African nations. Next, we learned from Brant Cooper, coauthor of The Lean Entrepreneur, how to incorporate Lean Startup principles into startup ventures. Finally, we heard important updates from the 2014 Social Innovation Challenge winners in the Ideas Meet Reality Idea Lab. They related many important lessons but perhaps the most important of these was “grit” and steadfast determination.

That is a great lesson for all of us, actually, as we think about what lies ahead in 2015. I am very excited to see what the new year will bring. Please feel free to contact me (sconroy@sandiego.edu or 619.260.7883) at any time to share ideas, concerns, etc. I enjoy my interactions with all of the stakeholders of the CPC. God bless and I wish you the very best for a healthy and prosperous 2015!
Women Peacemakers offer their wisdom on cultivating leadership for peace and prosperity

In November, the CPC sponsored a lunch and conversation with USD’s 2014 Women Peacemakers to discuss leadership for positive social impact. Staff, students, alumni, and leadership professionals from across the globe joined Robi Damelin of Israel, Nimalka Fernando of Sri Lanka, Ashima Kaul of India, and Margaret Arach Orech of Uganda. Echoing the sentiments of Tiffany Persons and Brant Cooper’s Idea Lab presentations, the Women Peacemakers talked about the importance of listening carefully to the voices of the populations one is trying to help. They emphasized the role of passion, empathy, and flexibility in designing and leading solutions to some of the world’s most challenging problems.

Reverse Innovation with Vijay Govindarajan

In cooperation with the Ahler’s Center for International Business, the CPC sponsored a talk by one of the world’s leading experts on strategy and innovation. Mr. Govindarajan addressed the topic of reverse innovation - the process of designing products for developing markets and bringing those innovations back to American and European consumers. He offered student entrepreneurs guidance on how to navigate the difficulties of reverse innovation and how to seize the opportunity to develop products in specific markets and adapt them to new markets.

Raj Patel inspires USD to address critical inequalities in the global food system

As a member of the USD Just Read Alliance, the CPC supported the effort to bring author and activist Raj Patel to campus for a highly-attended lecture about his book, “Stuffed and Starved”. Faculty Director Stephen Conroy participated on a panel with Mr. Patel as they discussed problems with the global food economy, its causes, and potential solutions. Patel’s reflections spoke to the mission of the university, the Center for Peace and Commerce, and participants in the Social Innovation Challenge. He said, “By putting the privilege of the university together with service to a community that needs it seems to be a mission we all need to adopt in our own lives; taking our great privilege and putting it in the service of those who don’t have those privileges.”
10 Questions with Ben Patterson, Co-Founder of Pacific Clean Tech and $5,000 winner of the 2014 SIC

By: Steve Conroy

Q: So, Ben, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

A: I’m 27 years old, and the only one in my immediate family to go to college. My dad was a mechanic and my mom worked for a trash hauler. I grew up on the “wrong side of the tracks” and decided to join the Coast Guard to get out of my then-current environment. I spent five years in the military and it turned me from an undisciplined boy into a self-made man. During my time in the Coast Guard I qualified as Boarding Officer; where I assisted in the search and seizure of human and narcotic traffickers in the Caribbean. I then qualified as a ship navigator, and finally a rescue swimmer. After three years of duty in Miami, Key West, and Puerto Rico I was transferred to San Diego where I acted as the Reserve Forces Liaison—a paperwork job that focused on activating and deploying the reserve units based on the needs of the Coast Guard. The more notable events were the Haitian earthquake and the BP oil spill. In 2009 President Bush signed the Post 9-11 GI Bill which was exponentially better than the Montgomery GI Bill. Once that Bill passed I began to start taking night classes at the San Diego Community College District campuses, left the Coast Guard in 2010, and transferred into USD in 2011. I owe the Coast Guard a great deal, because without that GI Bill I would never have been able to afford USD.

Q: Thanks, Ben, you’ve got a great “story” and one that I think many people can relate to on some level. Can you tell us a little bit about Pacific Clean Tech?

A: Like I said earlier my mom worked for a Trash hauler, so I pretty much grew up in the (trash) industry. My mom was a single mother (at that time) and she would take me to work with her and make me power-wash compactors and whatever leaked out. (I can still remember how bad it smelled!) Years later, I really started to understand the importance of recycling and waste management but I had no idea how to make a career out of it. The actual idea came to me in a MGMT 300 class with Professor Patricia Reily. We had to come up with a business idea and looking at how USD managed their trash we came up with a better solution that was generalizable—i.e., it happened to be beneficial for any large business complex with dumpsters spread around the facility. We have since grown the company and developed relationships to provide detailed waste and recycling programs by targeting the different types of waste, isolating it, and then consolidating and reducing it. Currently we represent a national equipment rental company and implement waste and recycling programs for their customers here on the West Coast. I am also in the process of partnering with an international consulting company as well.

Q: I love to see the tie-in to your USD classes, Ben. We’ve actually recognized Patricia Reily publically for her work in helping to promote social entrepreneurship on campus. Go Professor Reily! So, Ben, you won $5,000 last May. How did you use the money?

A: Honestly we haven’t spent the money, yet, since we are saving up to buy some equipment that is a bit more expensive.

Q: Great. That sounds like a great use of the money. So, who is your biggest mentor or person you look up to the most?

A: Keith Brask, who is the CEO of the equipment rental company, has really taken me under his wing. He has shown me the “ins” and “outs” of the trash and recycling industry, and has introduced me to some of the big players in the game. He has also put me in a position where I can rent any equipment I need from him, which eliminates most of my overhead. This has been critical in getting Pacific CleanTech off the ground.

Q: I know you have mentioned the important role your mom played, as well as Professor Reily, but what attracted you to this particular endeavor in the first place?

A: A big part of it was an Environmental Ethics class I took with (USD Philosophy Professor) Rodney Peffer. It touched on a lot of problems that could be solved by better waste management practices. I also really like the idea of working in an industry that extends resources. That’s what sustainability is really about to me. How can we be more efficient with our resources? The second aspect is I want to find a way to help out my fellow veterans. After discovering how high the veteran unemployment rates are, I felt obligated to help them out.

(continued on the next page)
Important Dates for Spring 2015

February 5, 2015: Idea Lab 4: Business Model Creation
February 16, 2015: Social Innovation Challenge Round 1 Submissions Due
February 27, 2015: SIC Semi-finalists announced
March 5, 2015: Idea Lab 5: Advance Workshop
March 17, 2015: Idea Lab 6: Speed Coaching
March 30, 2015: SIC Round 2 Submissions Due
April 10, 2015: SIC Finalists Announced
April 16, 2015: Idea Lab 7: Final Pitch Rehearsal
April 28, 2015: Final Pitch to Judges
May 1, 2015: Award Ceremony

2014 SIC Winner talks about his venture

(continued from previous page)

Q: So, Ben, I know the life of a social entrepreneur is not always a bed of roses—especially in the waste management industry. What have been some of your biggest challenges since the competition?
A: Getting a sit-down meeting with a decision maker. It seems that no one onsite has the ability to make approvals anymore. Things have to be run up to a corporate office that often isn’t even located in the same state.

Q: How have you dealt with these challenges?
A: I have been learning that it is easier to partner with an organization than to sell directly to them. If you can partner with someone who already has the attention of a decision maker and they can benefit from bringing you in, then things will start to move much more quickly.

Q: Interesting…. So, if you won a million dollars today, what would you do with it?
A: My long-term vision is to become a specialized recycler. To do that we would need a warehouse and wide range of different recycling equipment. A million bucks would get that ball rolling pretty fast.

Q: Love it. When do you expect to be cash-flow positive?
A: Because we take on very little overhead we are already cash-flow positive.

Q: You just made my day, Ben! So we’ve learned that you’re in the black, financially, but here’s the money question (if you’ll pardon the expression). How are you doing on the social impact side?
A: The greatest social impact is diverting waste away from landfills. We will never bring waste into a landfill. Granted we work with haulers that do that for us now, but we will not get involved in trash hauling off the facility until we have a process that goes “zero waste” to landfill.

That sounds awesome, Ben! Thanks for taking your time to answer these questions. I’ve enjoyed getting to know a little more about you, waste management and Pacific Clean Tech. If readers would like to learn more about Pacific Clean Tech, here is a link to a YouTube video on them: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vu2-JdqmTA

Help Wanted:

Judges, Mentors, & Coaches for the SIC
Seed money is great, but the most lasting benefit of a student’s participation in the Social Innovation Challenge is access to the expertise and advice of our volunteers.

Be a mentor or coach
Review student pitches and projects and provide real-time feedback at one of our Idea Labs.

Be an SIC Judge
Decide which projects go on to the next round of the Social Innovation Challenge from the comfort of your home.

If you or someone you know would like to judge, let us know!

THE CENTER FOR PEACE AND COMMERCE
CORONADO 110
5998 ALCALA PARK
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110
TEL: 619.260.4857
WWW.SANDIEGO.EDU/CPC
SANDIEGOSOCIALINNOVATION.ORG
GRACEMICHEL@SANDIEGO.EDU
SCONROY@SANDIEGO.EDU