ASU alumni becoming successful entrepreneurs

Director of the Entrepreneurial Programs Office promotes student entrepreneurship

ASU Alumni have proven that they can make it as entrepreneurs. They have what it takes and ASU’s focus on entrepreneurship is playing an important role in the success of our current students. From business plan to production, the ASU entrepreneur is provided with the foundation from which to build a successful company. Thomas Duening, the director of Entrepreneurial Programs for the Ira A Fulton School of Engineering at Arizona State University, has developed a recipe for success.

Dr. Thomas Duening was hired in September 2004 to build the Entrepreneurial Programs Office (EPO) in the Fulton School of Engineering. Duening has a management background and has been a business school professor and administrator since 1991. He has also started several successful businesses and has conducted extensive research in the areas of entrepreneurship, business and technology, and outsourcing.

The EPO began offering an undergraduate course, Introduction to Entrepreneurship for Engineers, in Spring 2005. That course is now offered each semester and enrollments have reached maximum capacity. The EPO also offers a graduate course online titled Introduction to Technology Entrepreneurship. Students from ASU’s Fulton School and from around the country have enrolled in that course. Recently, the EPO received word that its proposed Certificate in Technology Entrepreneurship has been approved and will likely be launched sometime in 2006. The program provides a transcript credential for those students who wish to explore entrepreneurship in greater depth. Duening said, “I have been teaching entrepreneurship for more than 15 years, and find teaching engineers and scientists to be the most rewarding professional experience that I’ve had. They are very eager to learn how to take charge of the business side of their technology ideas. I personally don’t think I could be doing anything more important right now than helping to empower our scientists and engineers to take charge of their business interests in this highly competitive global economy.”

In this newsletter, we will focus on a few ASU Electrical Engineering alumni who have pursued their dreams and their entrepreneurial spirit.

New Department Chair

My name is Stephen Phillips and I am Professor and Chair of the Department of Electrical Engineering. I joined the department as a Professor in 2002 after fourteen years on the faculty at Case Western Reserve University. This past June, I succeeded Stephen Goodnick as the department chair. I look forward to meeting and communicating with many of you in the coming years.

The goal of this newsletter is to foster communication among EE alumni. In each issue we focus on a feature of special interest. In this issue, the entrepreneurial activities of several of our graduates are highlighted. As we now have more than 6000 alumni this represents a very small sample of the many interesting career successes of our graduates. I encourage you to send us information about your careers to share with other alumni. Contact us for any reason at eeinfo@asu.edu.

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Robert Llewellyn Offers Educational Resources

Robert Llewellyn, founder of Llewellyn Consulting, ASU alumni and entrepreneur.

Robert Llewellyn graduated from ASU with a BSEE in 1972 and spent over two decades with Arizona Public Service (APS) in a variety of projects and managerial assignments. These assignments varied from environmental project manager, and “controller” of Palo Verde Nuclear Plant construction, to a strategic organization change manager.

In 1995 while still working at APS, he completed the Executive MBA Program at the University of Southern California. A year after graduation, he formed Llewellyn Consulting, a sole proprietorship focused on improving business acumen among technical professionals.

Robert wrote a 350-page workbook which covered subjects from accounting and finance, to economics and organizational effectiveness. The course is a virtual “mini-MBA”; requiring five days to deliver over a three week period. In April 2005, he passed the “3000 level” of past participants.

He is now authoring a new book entitled, Leadership for the Recovering Quantoid. It will contain many tips and “how to’s” for a new “boss”. It is partially based on personal experiences and partially on research. Those who wish to contribute to the research can do so online at www.llew.com.

He feels that leaving a solid career at APS for the risky business of consulting and training was the most difficult decision of his life. While it worked out well for me, everyone has their own circumstances and needs. “I suggest anyone considering entrepreneurship understand themselves well. I am one who values growth, creativity, and difference-making over security,” advises Llewellyn, “It took me many years to identify those motives properly. Others can learn about their own career motives by studying themselves through a framework I used at USC. I would be happy to help ASU EE students identify their underlying career motives,” he adds, “I am always grateful for my ASU engineering degree that got me a toe-hold in the exciting world of the energy business.” (BSEE, 1972)

Karl Forster, who received a bachelor's and a master's degree in electrical engineering from ASU, has been instrumental in creating over $50 million in software company acquisitions in the State of Arizona. Forster was the Co-Founder and VP of software development at Mastersoft, Inc. which was a privately held software development firm in Phoenix, during 1986-1995. At Mastersoft, Inc., Karl developed the award-winning “Word for Word” document conversion and viewing technology which was licensed to over 100 of the world’s largest software and computer hardware companies. Karl is currently the Founder, President and Chief Software architect for Lockstep Systems, which is a privately held software development company whose focus is to develop and market software tools that backup and protect corporate electronic data.

Recognizing that the market lacked a cost-effective backup solution designed to take advantage of disk-based storage, Lockstep introduced Backup for Workgroups in February 2003. Targeted at the growing SMB market, Backup for Workgroups automates the backup and restore process for multiple Windows servers and workstations while storing the backup data to disk-based media instead of traditional tape. Under the guidance of Karl Forster, Lockstep continues to add features and expand the functionality of Backup for Workgroups including support for Exchange Server, Active Directory and Open Files to rival industry heavyweights such as Veritas and Computer Associates. Backup for Workgroups is quickly gaining market acceptance as it is deployed in major corporations around the world, including: Intel, Cisco, NASA, US Army, US Air Force, and EPA. (BSEE 1986, MSEE 1990)

Other ASU EE alumni entreprenuers and the companies they founded:

Vani Kola: RightWorks and NthOrbit (MSEE, 1987)

Benson Shen: Lightel (PhD, 1997)

David Bolles: Microtest (BSEE, 1978)

Are we missing your entrepreneurial endeavors? Let us know. Send your information to: eeinfo@asu.edu.
James Gilb edits IEEE standard to improve connectivity of wireless multimedia applications

For many, connecting a DVD player to a TV set can be a quite an adventure. From snaking wires through a jungle of cords to deciphering which plug connects with which port – a simple home installation could take hours.

But electrical engineering alumnus James Gilb may have helped to resolve this issue for many with his work on the IEEE 802.15.3 standard and a book he wrote, “Wireless Multimedia: A Guide to the IEEE 802.15.3(TM) Standard.” Gilb was the technical editor of IEEE Std 802.15.3 (TM), a new IEEE standard that improves connectivity of wireless multimedia applications, which will ultimately help consumers easily connect their home devices -without all the wires. Gilb was one of many who contributed significantly to the standard, in addition to acting as the Technical Editor.

“If your audio and video equipment has 802.15.3, you won’t have to fumble with cables to use them,” Gilb explained.

According to the IEEE, the 802.15.3 standard enables wireless multimedia applications for portable consumer electronic devices with whole home coverage, addressing the need for increased mobility and fast connectivity for consumer electronic devices. Gilb’s book shows how the standard can be used to develop wireless multimedia applications that include wireless surround sound speakers, portable video displays and wireless connections to flat panel displays, digital video cameras and digital still cameras.

The standard stemmed from a project that Gilb started for a previous employer. He began work on the implementation of the standard’s physical layer as the director of radio engineering at Apparent Technologies, a wireless multimedia company of which he was a founder.

Previously, Gilb was an electrical engineer at the Hexcel Corporation’s Advanced Products Division before joining the Motorola Corporation in 1995, working for the Government Systems Technology Group and the Semiconductor Products Sector. He then worked at the Mobilian Corporation, where he developed the radio architecture and wrote the specification for the RF/analog chip that supported simultaneous operation of the IEEE standard 802.11 and Bluetooth, before becoming a founder of Apparent in 2000. Now Gilb is a senior member of technical staff in wireless technologies and standards for a new company, SiBeam. SiBeam is developing multi-gigabit wireless technology to meet the growing demand for high-bandwidth services over wireless networks.

Gilb earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at ASU and graduated with his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from ASU in 1999. He also was the recipient of the prestigious ARCS scholarship from 1992 to 1994 and was named Outstanding Graduate by ASU’s Graduate College in 1989. Looking back, Gilb believes that his education at ASU provided him with a strong foundation for the research he conducts today.

“It was a great school - I really had the opportunity to learn a lot,” Gilb said. “You get the grounding you need in the basics at ASU which you need because you never stop learning in this business.”


(PhD, 1999)

EE annual report now online

Learn about department research, news and awards in our recent annual report at www.fulton.asu.edu/~eee/AnnualReport/index.html.

Please e-mail us your career updates to eeinfo@asu.edu

Jon Bayless shares his department memories

Alumnus: Jon W. Bayless, General Partner, Sevin Rosen Bayless Management Company

I enjoyed my years at ASU. I studied communications and control systems working most closely with Som Gupta and John Spragins. Truett Thompson as department chairman had recruited a great young faculty and supported my efforts to gain an NSF Fellowship. I have been working in the venture capital industry since 1981. We fund technology startups, beginning with 2 or 3 people and a dream with the goal over time of building a publicly traded company. (PhD, 1967)

Professor Carl Zimmer

Professor Carl Zimmer recently passed away. Professor Zimmer was among the first 6 faculty members hired in Electrical Engineering. He began teaching in the fall of 1959 and retired in June of 1989 with 30 years of service in the department.
In our next issue of EE Connections, we would like to feature doctoral alumni who graduated between 1959 and 1989. If you would like to share your story, please e-mail the following:

Name:

Short story of professional career:

Present location: (city and state)

Other significant professional affiliations during career:

Present (or last) professional affiliation:

ASU memories:

Include photo and send information to: eeinfo@asu.edu. You can also submit your information using our alumni contact form at http://www.fulton.asu.edu/~eee/Forms/AlumniUpdate.doc.

Are you a Doctoral Graduate from the first 30 years (1959-1989) of EE?