

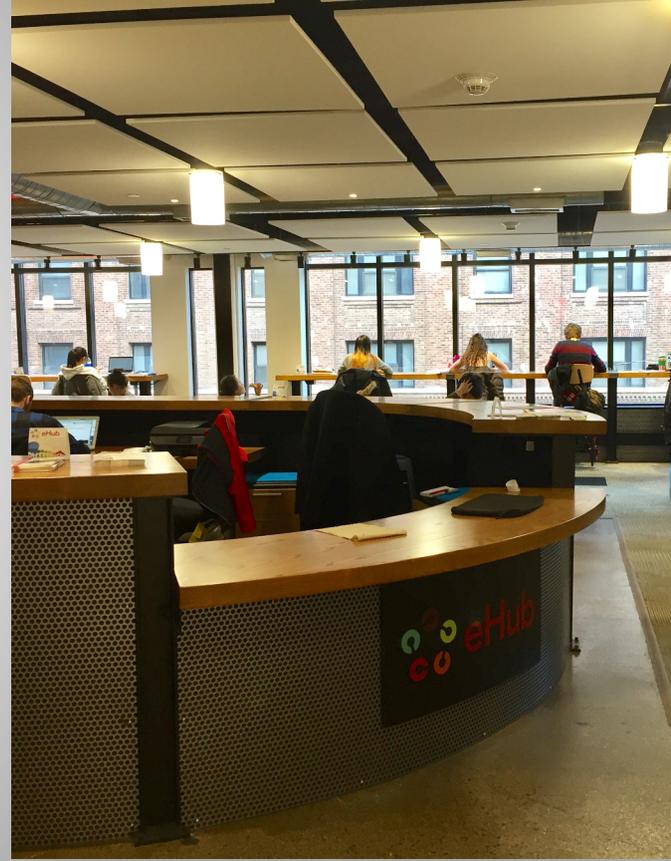


STUDENT AGENCIES FOUNDATION

JUNE 2017

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello all,

Now that the academic year has come to a close, I am looking towards the summer to see what our eLab and SAI teams will accomplish. Additionally,

the next academic year brings promise in entrepreneurship as new students come to Cornell and previous students and alumni come back.

This month specifically brings excitement, as it is Reunion for Cornell alumni, and many Student Agencies Foundation affiliates will also be returning to the Cornell campus - I look forward to seeing many familiar faces.

This edition of eNews will include:

- A Celebration recap, specifically focusing on SAF's three featured events;

- An interview with a General Manager of Big Red Shipping and Storage, **Nick McConnell ('19)**, and his reflection on his Student Agencies experience thus far;
- An alumni spotlight on **Alan Eisner (BS '89, MEng '92)** about his entrepreneurial venture, creating an SAI business, and how that experience has carried over to his professional career;
- A look at Orthofit, an eLab startup founded just one year ago by **Jason Guss (BS '13, PhD student)** and **Apoorva Kiran (B.Tech '08, MSc '11, PhD '17)** that creates smart wearable technology to prevent workplace injuries; and
- Former SAI President, Director of HR, and Real Estate Manager **Obed Louissant (BS '01)** gives his advice on what to do with a career in tech as mentioned in the Business Insider.

Reflecting back on the year, I am very proud of eHub's evolution into a thriving space for the creative-minded of Cornell, and I am continually anticipating updating everyone on the positive progress of SAF in coming months.

Sincerely,

Michael Karangelen ('90)

Chairman and President

Student Agencies Foundation, Inc.

CELEBRATION RECAP

By Gabrielle Zacky



Celebration, Entrepreneurship at Cornell's two-day conference, took place on April 27 and 28. Student Agencies Foundation was the underwriting sponsor of the event, which was an impressive success, as it brought countless entrepreneurs, both students and alumni, to visibility at Cornell. This event also allowed students to take advantage of the symposiums and events that hosted these entrepreneurs.

Many parts of Celebration took place in eHub's Collegetown location, allowing students and

visitors to meet the people behind different business ideas. There were three events that were planned by affiliates of Student Agencies Foundation, including Shark Tank, Demo Day, and the SAI Networking Reception.



Pictured above from left: Matthew Wagner (MBA '09), Yve-Car Momperousse (MA '14), Eric Young (BS '78), Sean Neville ('MBA '02), Tim Delisle (MHA '15), June Drake Hayford (BA '78), Amy Bunszel (BS '89)

(MHA '15) of Datalogue, and **Sean Neville (MBA '02)** of Healthwick, and gave them the opportunity to share their businesses with a room of notable alumni and entrepreneurial students.

The Shark Tank panel brought in three successful Cornell entrepreneurs, **Yve-Car Momperousse (MA '14)** of Kreyol Essence, **Tim Delisle**

Demo Day gave the eLab teams an opportunity to pitch their startup ideas to an audience of Cornell students, alumni, and entrepreneurs. A few of the student startups from the eLab class of 2017 are:

- CamaronesHostels, a startup focused on standardization for hostels in Mexico;
- Comake, a startup that accesses files and information based on contextual and relational searching for architectural firms;
- Dimitri, which focuses on facilitating the buying and selling of customizable 3D models; and
- XBoard, which created the world's first electrical skateboard.

The SAI Networking Reception brought the new student managers of the Student Agencies businesses to eHub where they set up tables with products from their

businesses to showcase their undertakings from this past year.

Lance Collins, Dean of the College of Engineering and Chair of the Entrepreneurship at Cornell governing board, says "the spirit of entrepreneurship is thriving at Cornell, with expanding programs and more students than ever taking part in related classes, eHub (our fabulous co-working space), competitions, eLab (our student business accelerator program), and internships." This energetic, idea-filled community, invited hundreds of people to the extremely successful Entrepreneurship at Cornell Celebration.

Q&A WITH BIG RED SHIPPING AND STORAGE MANAGER NICK MCCONNELL ('19)

Interviewed by Gabrielle Zacky



Hi Nick, how did you first get involved in SAI?

I applied for Big Red and Hired Hands my freshmen year and was ultimately rejected from both in the final round of the interview

process. I came out again my sophomore year and was hired as one of the general managers for Big Red.

How has SAI shaped your experience at Cornell?

SAI has taught me a lot - both in the office and out on the job. I've developed professional

skills through meetings and presentations with company executives and board members, and learned how to manage interpersonal relationships between employees, co-workers, and the rest of the SAI team. Additionally, as my primary extracurricular, SAI has structured my experiences outside the classroom, teaching me how to manage my time efficiently, plan ahead, and deal with obstacles as they arise.

What is the craziest story from your times on the job at Student Agencies?

During our 2016 December Peak, our truck got stuck in snow at our warehouse. Our phone batteries were both under 10%, and it was already close to 10PM. We probably spent 45 minutes constructing a makeshift ramp out of unused boxes, and another 20 minutes digging the tires out of the snow. Eventually we were able to drive out, but the entire ordeal was incredibly stressful.

What do you do in your free time, when you aren't at the office in eHub?

Besides stressing about Big Red, when I'm not in the office, I can often be found relaxing with friends and exploring all Ithaca has to offer. I enjoy live music at local venues, taking advantage of the magnificent gorges that dot the Cornell campus, and exploring the best of Netflix original content.

What are your hopes for the coming year?

In the coming year I hope to improve the status of Big Red for future managers and customers alike, by working on implementing solutions that address key operational and logistical issues. By standardizing operating procedures, hiring more full time employees during our peak periods, and working to actively promote Big Red through an analytics based marketing campaign, I think that we will increase the overall customer base, improve

customer satisfaction, and leave in place a company that runs more efficiently than before. If we can meet these objectives, the year can be considered a success.

How do you anticipate your time at Student Agencies will impact your future?

As an American Studies major, I hope that my time at SAI will provide me with practical business skills that I can apply to my profession. As someone who isn't sure what I want to do yet, I'm hoping that this experience will help me explore my passion, once I figure out what that is. Additionally, the professional connections formed on the job between both fellow student managers and a passionate alumni network will serve me well as I enter the workforce.

SAI ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ALAN EISNER

By Gabrielle Zacky

When **Alan Eisner (BS '89, MEng '92)** first arrived on Cornell's campus as a freshman, he put his name on every club's list to "really get involved." However, at the close of his freshman year, Eisner felt dissatisfied that he hadn't left his own mark on Cornell. When a friend from home at Princeton University told him about his tuxedo rental business at Princeton, Eisner thought he could take this idea to Cornell's campus.



With the seeds of a new business in Eisner's mind, he approached the Student Agencies

President at the time, **Peter Everett (BS '87, MBA '90)**, with his new idea. He credits Everett with encouraging him to make his business idea a reality. From there, a new Student Agencies business was born: SAI Tuxedos. Eisner says that starting this business was invaluable, as he learned how to write a business plan and execute a marketing strategy.

Eisner focused primarily on the Greek system with this new business. His strategy was to get in communication with the social chairs of different fraternities, and from there, he would go to the individual houses during their dinners to set up a table and take measurements of people for their tuxedo. Within the first month, Eisner exceeded the number of suit rentals anticipated by the wholesale company and impressed them enough to get a 50% discount. Eisner also credits this business with giving him the "rudimentary tailoring skills" he has today.

SAI Tuxedos allowed Eisner to gain the skills necessary to become an entrepreneur, and during the process, he learned how to hire good workers and also how to be a good worker himself. Eisner states that “making difficult hiring and firing decisions gave me the opportunity to walk in the shoes of my workers—when someone couldn’t be on a job, I would go.” Eisner’s flexibility also translated over to the VP of Development position that Student Agencies created just for him.

His senior year, he handed SAI Tuxedos to another student and focused on his job as VP of Development. Eisner reflects “my strength was starting businesses”; the businesses that Eisner launched during his senior year include a photography agency aimed at Greek organizations for their formals, and a relaunch of the Student Agencies laundry and dry-cleaning service—a business that is still profitable today. Eisner had fun trying to

“figure out how to source businesses for less than the competition.”

After graduating from Cornell, Eisner worked at Mobil Oil for a year, then moved to United Technology as an advanced technology engineer. Thereafter, Eisner embarked on a journey to obtain his doctorate. Eisner received his Ph.D. from the Management Department, Stern School of Business, New York University. Thereafter, he went straight into higher education at Pace University, where he has been ever since. At Pace, Eisner is a professor in the Lubin School of Business as the Chair for the Management and Management Science Department, and he teaches courses ranging from Entrepreneurship Implementation to Global Business Policy.

Eisner says “working in education is much more interesting than working for a company—each semester there is a brand

new crop of students, and I get to do research and teach simultaneously.” Today, Eisner creates the case studies for a strategic management textbook, and in doing this, he analyzes about five new business each year, reminiscent of his job as Vice President of Development at SAI.

Eisner believes that he can relate nearly all the aspects of his professional career back to his time at SAI. In teaching his entrepreneurship course at Pace University, his experience at SAI gives him authenticity since he was once an entrepreneur himself.

Reflecting back on his college experience working at SAI, Eisner is grateful for friendships that were made with colleagues, including **Michael Karangelen (BA '90)** and **David Lesser (BS '87, MBA '88)**. They still see each other ever so often, and when they do, they remember the old times at 409 College Avenue.

Looking to current managers at SAI, Eisner advises that “this is a great opportunity to explore and make mistakes in a relatively risk-free environment. Sometimes being an entrepreneur can seem like a lot of work, but you have to focus on the fun aspects of it and become a better manager by putting yourself in the shoes of your workers.” He hopes that each manager at SAI takes advantage of their time running businesses at Cornell and applies the experience to their future endeavors.

ELAB FEATURED STARTUP: ORTHOFIT

By Catherine Goldsmith



Founded just one year ago as part of the eLab class of 2017

by **Jason Guss (BS '13, PhD student)** and **Apoorva Kiran (B.Tech '08, MSc '11, PhD '17)**,

Orthofit addresses the problem of poor workplace ergonomics and posture, which typically lead to chronic medical conditions, by providing professionals with custom smart wearable solutions that enable posture monitoring and correction. Guss says that "Orthofit makes the workplace safer by preventing repetitive motion injuries and improving workplace ergonomic evaluations with our smart wearable technologies and software."

Apoorva Kiran came up with the idea for Orthofit when he witnessed his friends and family suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome

while lacking any understanding of what had caused them to develop it. The company was later founded when Guss, CEO; Apoorva



Kiran, co-founder; and **Will Weinlandt (BS '14, MEng '15)**, Product Development, were accepted into the Rev Summer Hardware Accelerator Program. Guss speaks fondly of the bonds he has built with the other

members of his OrthoFit team while experiencing the extreme ups and downs of starting a business together. He says, "We all were acquaintances or friends and quickly found that we loved working with each other."

According to Orthofit, musculoskeletal issues result from exposure to risk factors at work like lifting heavy items, bending, and poor body postures. Additionally, repetitive motion injuries are linked with undergoing

forceful exertions, experiencing vibrations, and holding sustained positions. These repetitive motion injuries account for about 2/3 of workplace injuries in the United States. These injuries cost about \$17 billion a year to the United States economy through medical costs, lost productivity, compensation, and wages.

Orthofit, the smart wrist sleeve, allows posture tracking and feedback for upper limb activities, informing the user about improper posture over the course of the workday through their mobile application. This tool allows Health and Safety Officers to determine the safety of specific movements and conditions, so employers and insurance companies can use this information to assess workplace risk.

Guss says that the most memorable part of starting Orthofit has been contacting the world's



largest meat and poultry processing company on their Contact-us portal. Within a week, the Orthofit team heard back from the Director's of Health and Safety, interested in their product. Guss says, "This really demonstrated to us we had found a true customer pain point."

Guss expressed Cornell's seminal role in helping to foster his desire to start his own company and making the most of his time at Cornell, asserting, "The access to amazing and experienced mentors has really helped guide my path thus far."

Guss says, "I would like the Cornell community to know that we are thankful for all of their assistance so far." Orthofit is now in the process of recruiting customers for their product and is seeking anyone in the Cornell community who knows of individuals in the manufacturing sector or involved in health and safety.

AN IBM WATSON VP SAYS YOU DON'T NEED A FANCY DEGREE — OR A COMPUTER SCIENCE BACKGROUND — TO MAKE IT IN TECH

By Aine Cain, Courtesy of Business Insider

Myths abound for the kinds of people who work at top tech companies like IBM: they all have computer science degrees, and they all come from Ivy League or big-name universities.

But it turns out you don't need to fit this mold to make it in tech.

As Obed Louissant, IBM Watson's VP of HR, tells Business Insider, his company actively looks for people from all backgrounds who can add new perspectives to its worldwide team



Pictured above: Obed Louissant

of around 380,000 employees.

"We have all types here," Louissant says. "We do value people who think differently from us. When they're authentic and let their curiosity show, and they show there's a distinctiveness in them, then we like that because that's going to test us and bring us into new areas."

Here's how not having a computer science degree or a fancy diploma can give you a boost in the tech world — if you're willing to promote yourself and learn the necessary technical skills on your own.

1. Not majoring in computer science gives you a different perspective

According to Louissant, diversity of thought is a key component of IBM's work culture. That means that you don't need to study tech in college to land a job at the company. In fact, majoring in other disciplines can give you a unique way of thinking and

problem-solving that tech companies like IBM value.

"Individuals who've gone to university and studied something like French or philosophy, later on they can determine, 'Hey, the world is being rewritten in code. I'd like to see what that's about,'" he says. "They bring those differences in the way in which they were taught or the way in which they live life. Then we provide better products, better software, and better services and better hardware to our clients and to the world."

Of course, tech skills are important to companies like IBM, but if you major in English and code on the side, that can actually give you a boost in hiring process.

2. For some tech jobs, skills are more important than where you went to school

To work at IBM, Louissant says that you don't need a degree from an Ivy League university. In

fact, you don't even need a traditional, four-year degree.

As Business Insider's Chris Weller previously reported, IBM has been making a push to hire for new collar jobs, a hybrid of white and blue collar jobs that straddles the space between professional and trade careers. For the server technicians, database managers, and other assorted IT jobs, relevant skills and an ability to adjust are more important than knowing everything.

Stanley Litow, president of the IBM Foundation, told Business Insider that more employers need to bridge the gap between higher education and the working world.

To find new collar workers, IBM has been working with individuals attending community colleges or trade programs. The point of the program, Louissant says, is to help individuals "build their technical skills and then work with them over a period of

time."

"It's not about degree, it's about skills," Louissant says.

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