ALUMNI

1-2
Patrick Colley, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Kellie Allen

3-4
Camilo Cuellar, Claremont McKenna College
Krystal Anderson

5-6
Ryan Delaney, Stanford + Cornell
Mira Thomas & Elena Hoffman

7-8
Jamie Evora, University of California, Irvine
Emily Moder & Kristina Valencia

9-10
Jeremy Gabasan, University of California, Irvine
Juliet Lee & Areanna Casas

11-12
Jeff Quinlan-Galper, University of California, Santa Cruz
Isaac Patterson & Sam Merino-Herzog

13-14
Jaleisha Jacobs, University of Pennsylvania
Savion Graham & Monica Billitti

15-16
Andrei Kryssov, Chapman University
Nikki Anderson & Indika Young

17-18
Amber Moore, Bryn Mawr + Stanford
Adrian Phu & Jorge Cortez

19-20
Kelly Hoffman, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Abigail Tull & Sofia Angulo

21-22
Saul Vazakas, San Diego State University
Brandon Miller & Monica Salas

23-24
Roman Nemzer, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Samantha Fiallo & Tiffany La
FRESHMAN YEAR, some students figured out that there was a weakness in the school’s email server that could be easily utilized. We sent one of our teachers an email from satan@hell.com talking about the endothermic nature of hell.

SOPHOMORE YEAR, during our lessons about WWI, we converted the classroom into a pair of trenches. The tables and chairs became barricades and barbed wire, and half the class was ‘stationed’ on either side of the room. This descended into barely controlled chaos, and it was one of the most engrossing and hilarious lessons I have ever experienced.

THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP FOR ME is to see if I can climb someone else’s ladder of success now that I have reached the top of my own.

RELAX, don’t worry about changing your mind, and don’t be afraid to take a chance. Once you learn to relax and listen to the promptings that come from your true self, you will find that life has a way of laying itself open for you to explore and exploit.

POSITION YOURSELF FOR WHAT YOU WANT, and then just wait for the opportunity to jump. The secret is learning to recognize the opportunities, which becomes easier with time.

MY ROLE MODEL IS my father, Tom, because he sacrificed personal advancement, extreme wealth, power, and youthful frivolity to provide a stable, nurturing home for my sister and me.

THE ABILITY to speak clearly and write cogently is not only rare but will take you a lot further than I ever thought.

IN MY LIFE, I’d like to leave the planet, own my own dealership, and go back to Ushuaia and spend a month in the Andes and on the penguin preserves.

MY ONLY TWO REGRETS from high school are not coming out earlier and not learning how to program. High Tech High has always been a place where you can be yourself, and I know now that I could have come out in freshman year if I had wanted to. As for programming, several of my classmates tried to help teach me, but I didn’t have the patience for it then.

MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT is a series of unpublished novels. Creating the stories, characters, and universe was fun, but the real accomplishment was in actually carrying on with and ultimately completing all five of the stories. The task took several years and represents one of the only long term projects I have ever managed to stick with outside of work.

WHEN I GRADUATED from High Tech High, I planned to go off and become an aerospace engineer for Boeing. More than anything, I wanted to design and build space planes and early space ships. I never went through the spaceman phase in childhood like a lot of people my age, so I substituted my college years for those early ones.

MY FAVORITE BOOKS, Mutiny on the Bounty and Men Against the Sea by Messrs Nordhoff and Hall, are among the greatest tales of human adversity and tribalism. The story investigates the psychology of officers and enlisted men and explores the things that cause otherwise measured men to mutiny.

MY FAVORITE MOVIE is The Lion in Winter because it is the best written, best acted, most engrossing tale of a dysfunctional family ever committed to film. The best part about the family’s fighting and verbal jousting is the fact that it isn’t an ordinary family. The father is Henry, King of England, mother is Eleanor of Aquitaine, and the children are a trio of lion-hearted, ruthless, and witless whelps.
I HAVE SEVERAL FOND MEMORIES FROM HIGH TECH HIGH. I loved the rock climbing project during my physics class. This actually led to my first job working at Solid Rock Gym, right there in Old Town, helping people learn how to climb. The egg drop off of the High Tech High roof was also awesome. Putting on a play in Brett Peterson’s class was fun too.

HIGH TECH HIGH ALLOWED EVERYONE TO BE AN INDIVIDUAL, and I loved that. It taught me how to interact with people from a wide spectrum.

GRADUATING SENIORS, ENJOY SENIOR YEAR and take advantage of being a student. Go explore. Ask questions. Don’t be afraid to take a trip; you learn a lot when you travel. It doesn’t have to be far. It can be as simple as checking out a new part of town.

MY PHILOSOPHY ON LIFE is work hard, be honest, and find happiness everywhere.

I WAS SURPRISED AT how different college was from high school. College focused much more on lecture and testing, more of the traditional pedagogy, which is very different from High Tech High’s project based learning. It also was the caliber of the students at my college. They were all on their A game. I liked it though because they pushed me to try harder, and I met a lot of amazing people.

I LIKE TO EXPLORE and try new things. Whenever I get the chance, I like to travel and see something new. Last year I went to Machu Picchu, and this year I went to the northern part of the Amazon River.

THE TOP 3 THINGS ON MY BUCKET LIST are: (1) Learn to fly a plane, which I think would be awesome; (2) Travel more. I’d like to go to Bali and Indonesia or maybe China or Spain; (3) Attend a World Cup, Superbowl, and Olympics.

CURRENTLY, I AM THE TREASURY ANALYST for American Golf Corporation. They own and manage golf courses all across the US and currently have 88 courses, mostly in Southern California. I am really lucky in that I’m part of a four person team, of which I’m the youngest. I really enjoy it because it allows me to gain exposure to a lot of different aspects of the business. I interact with everything from budgets to IT to payroll to accounting and finance on a daily basis.

IT’S TOUGH TO CHOOSE MY FAVORITE PLACE I’VE TRAVELED, but I would say Costa Rica is great if you want to do a lot of fun stuff like go whitewater rafting on the Pacuare River or take a horseback ride up to a waterfall. If you love history and archeology, I would recommend Peru. There is so much good food and history there, and if you do go, definitely go when you they have the Inti Raymi (Sun God) Festival in Cusco. The town doubles in size, and every day there is a parade and something cool to see, be it from 2,000 lb statues carried by church groups or the hundreds of dance groups that fill the streets with parades.

IN HIGH SCHOOL, I DIDN’T REALLY KNOW what I wanted to be when I got older, and even now I’m not certain what I want to do. I like my current job, being the liaison across several stakeholders, but I do not want to be here forever.

THE NEXT STEP IN MY LIFE is that I’m on to bigger and better things. I’m always striving to be better.
I AM AN ATTORNEY, and one of the things I enjoy most about my job is working with entrepreneurs and helping them do various transactions.

MY FONDEST MEMORIES FROM HIGH TECH HIGH were the various projects I completed. In particular, I remember the one where we created a ping pong launcher. We made a coil gun that fired an iron rod of ping pong balls. HIGH TECH HIGH PREPARED ME FOR THE FUTURE by completing projects that were a little more open-ended and required more planning on how to execute them. The skills learned through project planning and completion were useful because in the working world, you typically get assigned projects that are less defined resulting in you having to organize yourself, your thoughts, and your process or team to get the project done in a timely fashion.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE TEACHERS IN HIGH SCHOOL was a guy who was there my first and second years and taught physics and a computer class. He was great at giving us assignments and then allowing us to run with them as much as possible. One memory of a particular assignment was working on a computer model where you could click on different places on a terrain map and my program would model the best route to walk from one place to another. For example, you might go around a mountain instead of going over a hill, even if that might be the shortest route. We also learned different types of calculus that I remembered and used while at Stanford.

I INTERNSED AT A BIOINFOGRAPHICS LAB at San Diego State University during my junior year at High Tech High. I learned a fair amount of biology, statistical stuff, and programming during this internship.

WHAT I ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORK is helping entrepreneurs get their start-up companies going. There are also some very interesting legal problems I get to work on, and the whole problem solving process is very interesting and intellectual.

WHAT I WANTED TO DO IN HIGH SCHOOL completely changed. When I applied to colleges, I either wanted to do computer science or mechanical engineering. When I went to Stanford, I started to take some history classes, and I really enjoyed them, so I decided to switch my major.

THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO STANFORD was not that big of a deal. When you go to college, there are a lot of really smart people there, so you can either get really intimidated or be energized by it. I like to think that it energized me.

I WANTED THE OPPORTUNITY to have access to a much broader spectrum of academic disciplines than I might have had at Harvey Mudd. I ended up changing majors in college, so having that broader spectrum worked out. This is all ultimately why I chose to attend Stanford.

THERE ARE A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT SPECIALIZATIONS IN LAW. The main thing is that if you want to be an attorney, know what that actually means before you go to law school. It is a lot of work, there are long hours, and it is not always the most pleasant. So before you go to law school, which is a big commitment in terms of time and potential resources, you should shadow an attorney that works at a law firm and try to make sure you understand what it entails.

I’VE BEEN VERY LUCKY TO HAVE MENTORS and people that you can learn different things from. Ultimately, you should try to take the best or what you like the most from different people.

I HAVE A PASSION FOR TECHNOLOGY. I am always looking for different ways to improve what I do through programming.

BE OPEN-MINDED WHEN YOU GO TO COLLEGE. I changed my path and what I am working on, and I do not regret it. It is quite different than what I thought I would be doing.

I MADE A LOT OF FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY who were interesting. Just diversify your courses as much as possible.
FOR THE MOST PART, THINGS YOU LEARN AT SCHOOL will not really affect what you want to do when you grow up.

POWER-POINT PRESENTATIONS ARE BORING, but that’s how college is. No one in college is going to babysit you. Let's say you go to a UC school where you have a science class of 500 people. The teacher does not care about you at all. You'll be lucky if your TA cares about you.

IN COLLEGE, EVERYTHING IS ON YOU. All professors care about is your midterm and final grade.

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, MY JOURNEY WAS one of a philosophy major who realizes she is not going to become a philosopher. You kind of go through college and then afterwards in the real world you realize that you have so much debt that you just need to find a job.

COLLEGE IS NOT FOR EVERYBODY. We have people going into debt when they could’ve just as easily been successful as a mechanic because they love working with cars.

TRY TO FIND A PATH. Know that you should definitely have fun in college.

MY PHILOSOPHY ON LIFE IS to be a very positive person. I take it day by day and try not to look at the past so much. I find what I like and I just go with it. And I think just being happy and having friends that make you laugh makes life easier.

MY PASSION IS my job. I love my job. I've always loved science. Right now I'm a laboratory manager for neuroscience. I also have a strong passion for food. I think those are my two passions. And maybe my dogs.

MY BUCKET LIST IS ALL ABOUT travelling. Everything I have on my bucket list is about experiencing different cultures and becoming aware of the world around you.

MY FAVORITE PLACE I'VE TRAVELED TO IS Turkey. When you go there, you realize it's a secular region where everybody is Muslim and really nice, yet at the same time you see how different nations work.

MY NEXT STEP IN LIFE IS figuring out if I'm going to move with my lab to San Francisco. I have to decide to either stay with my lab and move with them or go on a new career path.
IN TEN YEARS. I want to be alive and still learning.

MY BIGGEST ROLE MODEL is my mom. I mirror her work ethic and compassion and integrate that into all aspects of my life.

HIGH TECH HIGH WAS SO VALUABLE BECAUSE OF the diverse student body and Presentations of Learning (POLs). POLs acclimated me to public speaking and presenting my ideas with a clear message. The Class of 2005 had about 80 students of all ethnicities and backgrounds. Learning and working from one another was an amazing experience. We were a tight group, and I still keep in contact with many of them today.

LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL gets tougher. Hold on tight because it gets crazier. Life also passes by a lot quicker. Avoid student loans if at all possible.

I RATE SUCCESS AS how happy you are. I’m grateful in that I have a steady job, great friends, a loving family, and two awesome dogs.

I’M GRATEFUL FOR my High Tech High experience. I am in a good place right now. I struggled the first year of college and had to change my major. However, I can’t blame High Tech High for all of that (it was me mostly). High Tech High did prepare me to be dynamic and adaptable in different environments.

MY BIGGEST SUCCESS DURING HIGH SCHOOL was contributing to the Boat Channel Field Study with Dr. Vavra (RIP) and meeting some of the best friends I could ask for.

I HOPE TO be a world/space traveler, have a beautiful family, and own my own business.

I’M HAPPY WHERE I AM RIGHT NOW, but I don’t think I’ll be truly satisfied until I start my own company and become successful with that.

GO PADRES AND CHARGERS! My greatest passion is sports and achieving financial freedom. Sports doesn’t tie into my career but making money and getting rid of debt sure does.

GETTING PROMOTED at my current job to a role newly created is my most significant accomplishment in my career. My boss recognized my diligent work and value to the company, and I am now an integral part of key company decisions.

I AM STILL LEARNING EVERYDAY. I’ve worked for two laboratories since high school and college, and I’ve been successful in advancing my career in commercial operations.

THE SCARIEST THING I’VE DONE is canyoneering in Switzerland. Scary, but amazing stuff.
GOING TO HIGH TECH HIGH gave me the tools for learning how I needed to learn. So, if the class I was taking in college wasn’t really teaching me the materials really well, I had the skills to go and learn it on my own.

HIGH SCHOOL ALLOWED ME TO DISCOVER MY CAREER. My senior project was a big programming project, and I had kind of liked programming before that. It was something I did for fun, but this project gave me a good chance to work on something with other people, which is something I had never done before. It cemented my desire to be a software developer. My internship was also a programming project, so there were just a lot of good experiences where I got practice actually writing software to present or turn over to someone else.

THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND AS MY FAVORITE MEMORY from school is ditching to go surfing.

CURRENTLY, I’M ON A LEAVE OF ABSENCE. My full time, normal job is at Amazon, but for the last two months, I’ve been working on this start-up project. It’s very fun because even though a lot of the work is the same, there are different types of challenges and different people I’m working with.

ASIDE FROM WORKING, I like to travel. I went to New Zealand for my honeymoon in December. There were some places there that were pretty amazing. We went swimming with seals, and it was a very strange experience. Once they’re in the water, they’re so much more agile than you or me.

IN HIGH SCHOOL, YOU GET SUMMER VACATION. I miss that. I miss it just because once you’re done with school, there’s not really a long break with no real responsibilities to look forward to. It’s really easy to look forward to summer, spring, or winter break because you get to stop going to school for a while. It’s nice even to have that opportunity just to change what you’re doing and work on something else for a while, to break up the monotony of doing the same thing every day.

ONE THING I DON’T MISS is homework. It’s something I never liked, and it’s nice to go home at the end of the day and not have to worry about work or school for the rest of the night and be able to enjoy the evening.

A VALUABLE LESSON FOR LIFE is spend less than you earn. Don’t take on debt.

REMEMBER THAT YOU NEED TO work hard, but don’t work so hard you can’t enjoy life.
THREE THINGS ON MY BUCKET LIST ARE: to change someone’s life, to see the northern lights, and to exercise enough to be able to eat whatever I want.

IN HIGH SCHOOL, I ASPIRED TO BE a Chief Nursing Officer at a major health system.

I THINK THE MEANING OF LIFE IS to love others and to be loved.

ONE THING I REGRET FROM HIGH SCHOOL IS nothing. I have no regrets.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE BOOKS IS One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. It’s an enchanting story and beautifully written. It’s one of those books you don’t want to end.

MY FAVORITE MOVIE IS Breakfast at Tiffany’s because of the clothes, love story, and Holly. I used to be a lot like Holly Golightly, so I love her as a character. I’m also a huge Audrey Hepburn fan.

IF I WON 1 MILLION DOLLARS TOMORROW, I WOULD give 10% to my church, pay off my mortgage, start a college fund for my kids, invest some of it, take my friends and family on an amazing vacation, indulge in a shopping spree at Kate Spade, and donate the rest.
THE BEST ADVICE I’VE EVER RECEIVED is if you’re ever unhappy with something, just change it. If you’re not happy with your job, try to see if you can find a new one. If you aren’t happy where you are, try to move, try to change your surroundings. Life has a lot of opportunities and possibilities; it’s too short to be upset with the situation you have, especially since we’re lucky enough to live inside the United States.

THERE ARE SOME REALLY GREAT TEACHERS at High Tech High, and the connections you have with them really helps. They help you develop these great life skills, not just book knowledge. I would not have gotten that if I had gone through a more traditional school.

A ROLE MODEL THAT COMES TO MIND is Tim Ferris. His approach to learning and being curious, not being satisfied with just taking things at face value but really digging into process and breaking things down, has really been an influence on me. I really try to emulate a lot of things that he shares, and I try to learn as much as I can from the people that he interviews.

MY ULTIMATE GOAL is to do something entrepreneurial, do my own thing, but while I’m figuring that out, I’m getting some really great experience.

I FOUND THE TRANSITION to college to be very seamless and, I guess, when I was at High Tech High I thought since we didn’t have any AP classes we weren’t prepared for the college workload. It wasn’t like that at all. For example, the skills you learn from POLs are actually really helpful.

JUST TRY TO HAVE AN OVERALL POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON THINGS. You’ll find that your thoughts dictate how certain scenarios play out. For example, sometimes I’m talking to a colleague and they are stressing out on a project that is due. By looking at it positively, the situation doesn’t seem so bad. Your partner can feed off of that too, and it just makes life a little more pleasant.

IF YOU ARE A SENIOR GOING ON THE COLLEGE TRACK, try as many different kinds of classes as you can to really see what you’re interested in. Even if you know exactly what you want to do, try to broaden your horizons because you never know if something that you didn’t think was interesting will catch your interest and take you on a whole different path.

I REALLY THINK High Tech High helped me with my confidence as far as presenting. In college that really came in handy because there were some kids that were more intimidated to go to office hours. If you go to a much bigger high school, you don’t really develop those skills.

I AM A PRODUCT MANAGER of an education company. The company is called Amplify, and we create software for schools. It’s specially designed for the teachers to be able to assess students in Kindergarten through 6th grade. We assess how kids read and how well they are able to comprehend what they read.

IF YOU HAVE A LIST OF THINGS TO DO, try to do the hardest things on your list first. I find that if you try to prioritize working on the hardest thing first, you’ll be more productive because you always have time for the easy stuff.

MY PATH HAS CHANGED A LOT. When I was at High Tech High, I thought I would go into the music business. I ended up interning at a music label. From that internship, I realized it wasn’t for me, so I changed my major slightly from business to finance. I got really into finance around that time through a club I joined at my school.

I WORK WITH A TEAM OF COMPUTER PROGRAMMERS, and my role is to understand the requirements from an outside perspective. To determine what features get built into our software, I look through a teacher’s perspective and collect all of those requirements that help guide the programmers.

SINCE I’VE JOINED AMPLIFY, we’ve released a new product that helps teachers assess reading levels of Kindergarten through 3rd grade students. I’m proud I joined the team that has had a successful launch of the new software.
LIFE IS DIFFICULT because it is full of uncertainty, but it has been much more enjoyable since I decided to believe that everything happens for a reason and that challenges are opportunities for growth in all realms (personal, social, professional). Believing these two things has allowed me to welcome change with excitement instead of worry.

DR. JAY VAVRA WAS A MAGNIFICENT SCIENTIST, dedicated educator, stellar mentor, and a beautiful human being who helped me realize that my interest in science could go beyond reading textbooks. Now, I participate in as many mentorship and outreach opportunities as possible so that I can do for others what he did for me.

HIGH TECH HIGH TAUGHT ME THE VALUE in networking, the importance of exploring my interests and gaining experience through internships, and the relevance of project based learning. Most importantly, High Tech High taught me that I needed to be and had the power to be personally responsible and accountable for my education. We were not there to memorize and regurgitate our teachers’ words and opinions; we were there to become independent, critical, and creative thinkers.

TO CURRENT HIGH TECH HIGH SENIORS, if you formed a strong bond with your High Tech High advisor or teachers, maintain contact with them. They may be able to help with your future endeavors. Mentorship, sponsorship, and networking are critical for your success. It is also important that you keep an open mind and remain flexible but make certain ‘you do you’.

I AM VERY INVOLVED IN OUTREACH AND MENTORSHIP. It is important that minority students with underprivileged backgrounds see and interact with scientists who look like them. Growing up, television showed me that doctors and scientists were white and male. Fortunately, the mentors that appeared in my life taught me otherwise, and now I am committed to paying it forward.

I ASPIRED TO BE THE FIRST in my family to go to college. Now, I am getting my PhD.
I’m one of four siblings. We all went to High Tech High. I was the third class at High Tech High, so they finally figured stuff out after the third year. The first year they had things like free study, and then there was the common area. It’s just interesting because you have a bunch of high schoolers and if you tell them they have free time then they’re just going to use that free time for not doing work. By the third year, they’d figured it out that you need a little bit of structure, and then you can give people freedom.

I did an internship and all the graphic designers told me, “You don’t want to be a graphic designer. It’s way too hard.” They said you work 80 hours a week and your pay never goes up. That was interesting. And then engineering was kind of the same thing. I wanted to be an engineer and I didn’t enjoy it, so high school helped me figure out that I didn’t want to do those two things.

I applied under business, and I was doing a tour of the school. I found a lab and I told myself, “I really enjoy engineering. I really enjoy the labs here.” And I wondered, “What’s a lab doing in business?”

They have a degree at Cal Poly that is mainly factory management, especially packaging. My brother and I both got jobs in manufacturing management. He got a job with Frito-Lay, and I worked for Pepsi and Naked Juice.

I would say that in high school I loved working with my hands--I’m a kinesthetic learner. I really enjoyed welding. I wanted to go to trade school, but my parents were like, “You’re not going to trade school. That’s crazy!”

One thing I thought was interesting that one of my best friends did was that Cuesta College is right next to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. A lot of students, including her, went to that junior college and then transferred into Cal Poly. Growing up in San Diego, the city colleges really aren’t that great. You graduate from high school, and if you don’t go to college, you go to the city school. What I found out when I went to San Luis Obispo is that not all city schools are the same, so what a lot of parents choose to do is send their kids to a JC as an alternative. You can go to a really good JC for two years and then transfer into the college. It’s a good way to go, looking at those financial options.

It’s very important to have internships and work experience. When you graduate from college, many employers look at you and go, “You had some sort of internship, some sort of work experience.” They know they’re not hiring a person that doesn’t know how to show up to work at 7:00 in the morning.

I wasn’t really planning on getting married. I wasn’t planning on having a kid. I got married last year, last September, so it’s quite a big u-turn. At the same time, I’m still managing, but now I’m helping people manage projects: my parents, husband, family events. You still take home the skills. And I learned a lot in those years. I say go for broke, learn a lot, and then take those skills and you can apply them to your personal life.

The reason why we’re living here in San Diego is because my grandma is still alive, so my daughter has a great-grandma. That’s big right now.

It’s amazing when you get out there on your own and you fail, and you have these trials and realize that you’re not a perfect person. Just coming to that realization and knowing that you don’t have to be perfect and that it’s okay to rest is important.

I think High Tech High really teaches you to not always look for direction. It’s really hard to teach initiative, but they do try to teach you that. Be sure to continue that in college, in life. It’s not really your experience; it’s the experience of pushing yourself and challenging yourself to think differently than other people.

You’re going to be better at working with people because of High Tech High; you’re going to naturally have that skill. Don’t take advantage of it and continue to push yourself.
The projects and activities in my classes are my fondest memories. Spending most of my senior year working on the Supermileage Competition in David Berggren’s class, my engineering internship at Knight and Carver Yacht Center, and, of course, the friendships I built are what I will always remember.

The hands-on learning and projects prepared me for college. Cal Poly Pomona has the same philosophy (learn by doing) as High Tech High.

Initially, adapting to the project driven learning was difficult. Working on a lot of projects also had challenges as it stretched our current skillset.

If you’re motivated and willing to put in the work, you will succeed at almost everything you do.

Be hungry, persistent, strive to learn more, and always ask questions. Don’t forget to have fun, especially in college.

Life drastically changes once you start your career.

High Tech High did a good job preparing me for college. However, it took time to get used to the amount of homework in college.

Surfing on the weekends, golfing, the outdoors, and traveling are my favorite things to do.

Travel to a new destination every year, get a promotion, and go back to school for my MBA are all things I’d eventually like to do.

I’m an energy trader for Southern California Edison (SCE). Edison is an electric utility company responsible for powering more than 14 million homes across central and southern California. My work involves buying and selling electric power in an open market (similar to a stock market but for commodities) in order to reduce the price risk and exposure for our customers. Part of my work involves forecasting weather as weather (hot or cold) affects demand for power and thus affects the price of electricity. I’m proud of my work because it ultimately helps customers save a substantial amount on their utility bill.

I originally aspired to become an engineer, which is what my original pursuit was in college.

In the future, career wise, I’d potentially like to go to Houston and pursue a career in oil or gas trading.

In my personal life, the future holds marriage and then ultimately kids.
MY FONDEST MEMORY FROM HIGH TECH HIGH would have to be doing hands-on projects. A project I remember working on was for Engineering class; it was a car using a mousetrap and I remember having lots of fun with that.

HIGH TECH HIGH PREPARED ME FOR THE FUTURE BY the hands-on projects because they were more real-world related. Our junior year internships also helped especially with communicating with older people who have already been in the industry for a while. They helped us get used to the corporate world.

WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, I thought I would either be a doctor or lawyer, but I had to change my path. I actually like what I do now. I still work in the health industry, so it’s still health-related, but I found that business is more of what I like to do.

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, I didn’t think I would be in the health industry selling supplements and vitamins. It definitely didn’t cross my mind, and I didn’t think that I would have my own little chocolate company that I started up nine months ago.

MY FAVORITE PLACE I’VE TRAVELED TO is probably London, England, and Monaco. I liked London because of the culture, the diversity, the history, and the many landmarks to see and experience. And Monaco, even though it’s a tiny country, is just so beautiful and so different from everything else. It is really clean and friendly.

FOR THE COMPANY I WORK FOR NOW, we didn’t really have a set marketing department. Everything was kind of outsourced, and when I came in, I had a couple of ideas that worked really well, so I started brochures, the website, and trade shows. Our company also has different ads and health magazines that I contributed to, so it’s something I’m really proud of.

WITH MY CHOCOLATE COMPANY, I had to come up with the chocolate recipe. I never worked in the chocolate industry before, so I had to work with a pastry chef and do the design work for the packaging. That was a lot of work looking back on it, so that’s another thing I’m proud of.

I WENT TO the University of Illinois in a little town called Champaign. It’s pretty much in the middle of nowhere, and how I decided was by visiting the campus. I just liked the campus life. It was one of the old-fashioned schools, with old-fashioned buildings and great programs for any major. I just looked at the culture and history of the school to properly experience it.

I STARTED WITH A MAJOR in Pre-Medicine Studies and a minor in Marketing Management because I actually thought I was going to pursue the medical profession. But during my sophomore year, I had an internship in the ER and that’s what changed my mind. I just followed the doctor and took notes, but the things I saw there like people coming out of accidents was just something I couldn’t handle for the rest of my life.

IT’S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY. You really need to have the passion to be a doctor, and at the time, I didn’t have enough of it. To be honest, I may have some regrets that I didn’t continue to be a doctor because it’s a really cool profession, but I like what I do now.

IT WAS SO HARD ADJUSTING FROM HIGH TECH HIGH TO COLLEGE. The first year was super difficult. I’m not sure if it was because of my Pre-Med major since I had a bunch of Chemistry classes, but I just didn’t have the background to do that from high school to be honest. I did have an advantage with my improved communication skills, but I felt that other people who didn’t come from High Tech High had an easier transition. It gets better since you get used to the exams, lectures, and how things work, but the most important thing you need to learn is how to study right. Don’t waste time and plan everything ahead. Compared to High Tech High’s relatively easy tests, college exams are super hard, but don’t be discouraged.