



ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC &
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES

California State University
Northridge



CECE

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY UNIVERSITIES
AWARDS PROGRAM

CASE
STUDY
2020

IEP CATEGORY – TALENT

California State University, Northridge: IntersectLA

INTERSECTLA; BRIDGING STUDENT TALENT TO THE WORKFORCE

Ask enough employers and they will tell you, “The secret to a successful career is learning how to adapt.” With industries shaped by new technologies, ideas, and mediums, companies heavily value students who can quickly adapt to their surroundings. More often than not, companies and recruiters want students who can think on their feet, develop creative solutions, and communicate well with others, not just those in their specific field. But while there is a considerable amount of change in company expectations, there can be a disconnect between what students experience in universities versus what they actually do in their first job out of college. [IntersectLA](#) solves that problem – bring the real world of work to campus as a business enterprise for students.



IntersectLA student at a showcase event hosted by California State University, Northridge

The founding of IntersectLA

IntersectLA is a student-operated and faculty-managed full-service brand and creative strategy agency at CSUN. It was specifically developed for students with diverse disciplines to collaborate and fully understand the creative side of business while building their skills. Internships and apprenticeships allow students to jump-start their careers by connecting them with high-profile industry leaders in Southern California.

Housed in the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication at CSUN, IntersectLA was born from two previous campus organizations, one focused on creativity and the other on business strategy. In the Fall of 2007, the Center for Visual Communication, aka VISCOM, was launched. In 2016, a student group called RADIUS 2.0 developed. RADIUS 2.0 stemmed from VISCOM with a focus on business strategy. In December 2018, the two entities merged and the entity was named IntersectLA. That evolution demonstrated the agility and adaptability of faculty leads and students to respond to change in the world of work. Indeed, the story of IntersectLA is the model of creative strategists collaborating.

Collaborating amongst silos

IntersectLA thrives at the intersection of different fields coming together to design innovative solutions for today's problems. The concept of the intersection of design, culture and education has been deeply rooted and instilled in its mission since the beginning 13 years ago. With the 20+ active projects and the 30+ team members at any given time, IntersectLA has created the on-campus standard for a culture of collaboration and student talent development, as students practice problem solving, leadership, strategy, and integrated communication design all while providing multicultural perspectives for client and audience needs. The CSUN students from diverse cultures and backgrounds also come from a wide range of programs to study including:

- Art
- Design
- User Experience
- English
- Psychology
- Marketing
- Management
- Computer Science
- Mechanical Engineering
- Journalism
- Cinema and Television Arts
- Theatre
- Music
- Economics
- Animation
- Recreation and Tourism Management

Whether in business, art, design, psychology, engineering, or computer science, students are given the experiences and opportunities they need to excel long after they finish college. In this past year alone, IntersectLA collaborated on project with faculty and students in the areas of

- Art
- Design
- User Experience
- English

- Psychology
- Marketing
- Management
- Computer Science
- Mechanical Engineering
- Journalism
- Cinema and Television Arts
- Theatre
- Music
- Economics

And more for a range of clients both on-campus and off-campus community.

Business development methods/structures used

As a creative strategy agency that gives students the opportunity to learn through experiences by working with clients, IntersectLA uses proven branding and design methods to solve problems and add values for client businesses, organizations, and communities. The approach is three pronged:

1. **Brand Platform Strategy:** identify business goals and develop a plan to achieve them by crafting strategies that are unique and viable
2. **Concept Creative:** focus on creativity, where the intersection of message and emotion creates engaging brand touch points and experiences
3. **Implementation:** utilize traditional, internet, and social media platforms to support objectives through effective marketing tactics.

Outcomes of IntersectLA

Since the beginning in 2007, the quality of the work and the professionalism of the enterprise are recognized as evidence by the great demand from prospective clients. 1736 project proposals/work orders have been drafted over the years. That is an average of 133 engagements/proposals per year.

As a high impact practice for the university, the talent development outcomes are impressive. A 10-year student survey in 2017 showed that undergraduates who are involved with IntersectLA:

- have a 42% 4-year graduation rate (vs. a 14.2% 4-year graduation rate for CSUN overall)
- 46% receive full-time job offers by graduation
- 80% receive a full-time job offer within 3 months of graduation
- 93% receive a full-time job offer within 1 year of graduation

IntersectLA recent graduates work in companies such as: AirBnb, Facebook, Verizon/Yahoo!, CBS Interactive, Ayzenberg, Disney, Farm Design, Scorpion, and the Hilton Foundation. These companies along with many startup businesses, are seeking top talent from CSUN who are ready.

IntersectLA is a fresh take on how college should prepare students for their careers after graduation through immersive real-world engagement that broadens perspectives, develops competencies, builds resumes and grows professional networks. The intent is to disrupt the often-stimulation classroom environments and departmental silos and leverage the diverse student population to learn and work collaboratively across disciplines and produce high-quality work from clients. The mission is to shape students to be more collaborative, skillful, and independents in their careers. The results are a high-impact student enterprise that incubates talent, build confidence, instills a sense of purpose, and provides financial resources to help students succeed while in school and beyond.

ABOUT APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America's oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

ABOUT THE IEP UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM

APLU and its **Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE)** established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The **IEP designation program** recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The **IEP awards program** recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- **Talent** and workforce development
- **Innovation**, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- **Place** development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: www.APLU.org/IEP