

# BAKER KOOB ENDOWMENT

## FINAL REPORT

*Final reports will be published on the Cal Poly Digital Commons website*

*(<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu>).*

### **Project Title**

Current Solutions

### **Project Completion Date**

September 2017

### **Student(s), Department(s), and Major(s)**

1. Maxwell Fong, Orfalea College of Business, Marketing
2. Elan Timmons, Orfalea College of Business, Industrial Technology
3. Madison Weiss, Orfalea College of Business, Entrepreneurship
4. Hannah Joslin, College of Liberal Arts, Journalism and Public Relations

### **Faculty Advisor and Department**

Sharon Dobson, Orfalea College of Business

### **Cooperating Industry, Agency, Nonprofit, or University Organization(s)**

One in four women is assaulted during her college career.

The issues of campus safety and sexual assault have seized national attention. These issues are far-reaching and affect millions of people nationwide: college-aged women often feel unsafe, parents are worried for their children's safety, members of Greek life nationwide are often painted as the “bad guys” by the national media and are looking for ways to salvage their

reputations, and from an admissions standpoint, universities are concerned with being safer. Current is utilizing its mobile app and website, and is working with organizations like It's On Us, Greek life, RISE, TEDx, and others to put its solution into the hands of the 11.7 million college-aged women and their parents, Current's initial target demographic.

These are issues that reach nationwide and beyond. In the U.S., one in four women is assaulted during her college career. As a way to spread awareness about this issue, Current created an online platform for people to share their stories. Current's content has been featured in dozens of major news outlets including The New York Times, The Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, Cosmopolitan, USA Today College, and many others.

### **Executive Summary**

Current is the first comprehensive safety solution that can, with the push of a button, dispatch police to a user's GPS location, notify friends and family, alert the nearby community, and record audio and video. Current is a phone case and mobile app that integrates hardware and software, offering user safety, ease of access, and peace of mind. No other self-defense product integrates all four layers of safety and these products are rarely in a user's hands when needed. Current's mobile device case is equipped with external buttons that can quickly and easily activate in-app functionality, which Current has worked closely with its patent attorney, Tom Lebens, in order to develop and finalize. In addition, the Current case has an external safety switch which prevents accidental releases, and the case's built-in battery supplies a user's phone extra battery life.

The fact is, everyone has smartphones. And everyone belongs to some kind of social network. Today, people still protect themselves with mace or a whistle; you do all these things by yourself. But now, we all carry these computers in our pocket, and we're all connected to people. We have GPS, we have maps, we have notifications. It's time for a new kind of safety—personal safety that leverages the connectedness of today's world.

Current is an organization started by Cal Poly students to address the issue of personal safety on college campuses. It has grown into a global platform for survivor storytelling and a solution for the 11.7 million women in college and their parents.

## **Major Accomplishments**

### **Social Impact:**

Current believes that no woman should have to feel the need for this protection. Unfortunately, many women do feel the need because of the alarmingly high rate of assault in society, especially on college campuses. In order to alleviate these issues, the conversation surrounding these issues need to be brought to light and solved by a community of connected victims, activists, and law enforcement, among others. Current's success can be attributed to the positive impact that our online platform has been able to generate. It is through this platform that survivors of sexual assault have been able to share their stories with the Current community and become empowered to speak in a place where they know they will be heard. This creates an inspirational cycle of storytelling, influencing others to open up about their experiences through the power of community.

### **Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE):**

With the utilization of Cal Poly's entrepreneurial resources, Current's progress has snowballed. Having passed through the Hatchery on campus, then the six month summer accelerator program, to the HotHouse two-year incubator program, Current attributes much of its success to the Baker Koob grant. The \$5,000 received was the driving force behind the progress that it has made. Current won \$10,000 from Innovation Quest, which also opened up opportunities to speak with mentors, investors, and professors associated with the Orfalea College of Business.

## **Expenditure of Funds**

As a growing technology company, Current has incurred operating expenses while developing its software's backend. The funding was used to cover many of the expenses necessary to develop the first working prototype of the phone case allowing the device to automatically activate all of the internal features immediately. These costs ranged from parts at the hardware store to sample components ordered from our manufacturers in China. We also used some of the funding to pay for the initial server cost that was necessary to do the first round of software development. None of this would be possible without the funds from the Baker Koob grant which kickstarted the initial payments necessary to cover costs at the beginning of this journey. Ultimately, this proof of concept was used to raise more funds.

### **Impact on Student Learning**

Cal Poly places emphasis on its key learning philosophy "Learn By Doing." As students in the College of Business, co-founders Maxwell and Elan took this motto to heart and were able to structure Current Solutions to function with this same goal in mind. From its target market research, to the creation of business plans, to financing, to networking, Current takes the concepts taught in class lectures and allows for a real-time application of each one. Current also works with various Cal Poly professors to create senior projects related to different sectors of the business, ranging from the journalism department to statistical analysis/accounting, to marketing and content creation. As a start-up company in the technology industry, at Current there are endless connections made from textbook learning to the employment of these practices. Complemented by Cal Poly's philosophy, working for Current adds an extra layer to their model by helping to execute the "Learn By Doing" way.