

SE&T Colloquium Series-Fall 2011

Tuesday, September 20, 4:10-5:00pm, in P-240; refreshments start at 4:00pm.

Speaker	Dr. Joseph Affholter Dow Entrepreneur-In-Residence SVSU College of Business Host: Dr. Deb Huntley
Title	<i>Chance Favors the Prepared Mind</i>
Abstract	<p>Dr. Affholter will reflect on the relationships between science, business and opportunity creation. He will do so by reflecting on one of the key questions heard in the classroom today: “why should I study this?” It is a universal question that every student (and their instructor!) asks at some point in his or her educational experience. Many students, gripped by dread, ask this question when confronting their college level math or science classes for the first time. Even those committed to technical professions ask the question as their experience in a subject deepens. Yet, the question can never be answered completely: for it applies to a future that is yet unseen. That future is the place from which many of their jobs will emerge. Often times, the answer to the “why study this?” question is no more complex than the title phrase, first uttered by Louis Pasteur, the father of the field of microbiology. Are you prepared?</p> <p>As a scientific adventurer who has spent over twenty years developing businesses in many industries, SVSU’s entrepreneur-in-residence has seen close-up the relationship between technical expertise and value creation in the marketplace. He has seen well-organized, focused pursuits fail in their primary mission, but succeed when they change direction in response to a more fitting opportunity. He has seen apparently random connections between unrelated fields create value. Whether connecting diabetes and Alzheimer’s disease; memory and frog skin; bar-b-que and oil extraction; or sea-floor micro-organisms and trees growing in sub-Saharan Africa, enormous discoveries are possible at the interface of subjects, especially in the sciences. In this seminar, Dr. Affholter will use his experiences in various industries to illustrate the broad spectrum of opportunities available to today’s students, scientists, entrepreneurs and educators. Words written nearly two decades ago by noted futurist, Daniel Burrus, continue to capture of the essence of our time:</p> <p><i>“I believe that the golden door has swung wide open, creating a time of unprecedented opportunity for any individual who notices that the way is clear and walks through with the right knowledge. I also believe that this is the greatest era ever for people who want to run successful businesses and other enterprises.”</i> [Daniel Burrus, <i>Technotrends: 24 Technologies that will Revolutionize Our Lives</i>, Harper Collins Publishers, 1993].</p>