



October 24, 2012

Dear Members of the Top 500 Innovators Program, Class of 40.3,

Welcome to Stanford University—the heart of Silicon Valley and one of the most innovative places on earth. We are delighted to have you with us.

Your class is following in the footsteps of the two inaugural groups of the Top 500 Innovators program, the Class of 40.1 and 40.2—a wonderfully dynamic, hardworking, inquisitive group of professionals. As these alumni are already involved in a multitude of activities applying what they have learned in this program to their respective disciplines and endeavors—becoming agents of change in Polish academia, industry, and economy—we ourselves are applying the lessons learned from their experience to bringing you an ever more challenging and inspiring experience on and off this campus. This year we will also welcome a group of your peers, the Top 40.4, to the University of California, Berkeley. Stanford and Berkeley—two “competing” schools with somewhat different philosophies and histories—have one key thing in common: their drive for excellence and innovation.

I have been asked again by Stanford University to serve as Academic Director of your program. I am deeply honored and touched by this privilege, and very much aware of the enormous responsibility it entails. For over 20 years I have worked actively to build academic and high-tech industry bridges between Poland and the United States, and recognize the Top 500 Innovators program as an unparalleled opportunity to deepen knowledge and innovation-based ties between Poland and the US. As I watch the Classes of 40.1 and 40.2 returning to Poland with new knowledge, experience, and a wealth of Silicon Valley connections and friendships, I am proud and grateful to say that this program is everything we at the US-Polish Trade Council and the US-Poland Innovation Hub in Silicon Valley hoped it could be.

With every term of this program’s existence, we grow closer to the critical mass required to effect real change in the Polish economy. Stanford University and the Stanford Center for Professional Development (SCPD), have welcomed many distinguished Polish visitors over the years—leaders from government, business, and academia. The opportunity to host the 3rd group of the Top 500 Innovators program promises to deepen an already-close relationship that will benefit generations of Polish and American innovators. I know I speak for all of my excellent colleagues at SCPD—especially Mr. Paul Marca, the Center’s Executive Director—when I say that we are grateful to the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW) for sending you here to us at Stanford. We also thank all of you for the dedication and initiative that have brought you to our door.

You were selected to participate in this program because of your undeniable talent and your ambition to channel that talent and the talent of your peers into innovation and economic growth. Polish science and technology experts are known to be among the best in the world, but the R&D community and the business establishment of Poland have not yet created a successful model for bringing their achievements into a direct contact with the national economy. For this reason, the government of Poland, and in particular the MNiSW, has rightly identified increased innovativeness and entrepreneurship among the country’s best young minds as a key strategic goal for the country.

Here at Stanford, you will be exposed to lectures, symposia, and workshops designed to introduce you to best business practices and challenge your understanding of practical aspects of science and technology transfer from the laboratory to the market. The information you absorb in the classroom will be reinforced and enriched through internship hours with business and industry reached with the assistance of the U.S.-Polish Trade Council, an organization with a broad range of industry expertise in Silicon Valley and beyond.

California is not only one of the most innovative and dynamic regions of the world, it is also extraordinarily beautiful. We are preparing a number of outings and “disruptions” to your studies so that not only the desire for more intellectual exchange but also warm and aesthetic memories will keep you in touch with us for years to come.

Witamy w Kaliforni, w Dolinie Krzemowej, na Stanford University

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Piotr D. Moncarz".

Piotr D. Moncarz, Ph.D., P.E., SCPM
Consulting Professor