Serial Entrepreneur

Azriel Nicdao plans to launch businesses in multiple industries, but first he needed to learn the fundamentals of entrepreneurship.

Azriel Nicdao opened an online store as a high school senior. He spent his childhood savings on a shipment of wall hangings, 1,000 tapestries in all. A solo entrepreneur, he barely sold a dozen before going out of business.

“I failed at my first business venture and lost all my money,” said Nicdao, nicknamed “AZ,” like the first and last letters of the alphabet. When he entered Sacramento State to study management information systems, he was flat broke, sleeping on his friends’ couches and “trying to stay motivated to move forward.”

The Carlsen Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship led Nicdao down a path of “curiosity and hunger,” he said, to learn the fundamentals of building a business and to try again as an entrepreneur.

“They brought in mentors, speakers, investors, and all types of people from the Sacramento entrepreneurial ecosystem and have been a complete game changer for any student entrepreneur or entrepreneur in general,” said Nicdao.

He participated in boot camps and online workshops, and even repeated some programs to gain more experience. He pitched ideas like a college savings app and a line of men’s shorts, before he zeroed in on his newest online business.

With support from the Carlsen Center's Virtual Mastermind Cohort program, Nicdao founded Stair, a technology start-up creating investment data software. He enlisted business partners and advisers and is already pitching his product to investors and bankers.

“AZ has taken advantage of everything the Carlsen Center has to offer. We have been so impressed with his willingness to jump into new programs that advanced his business and leadership skills,” said Cameron Law, executive director of the Carlsen Center.

Nicdao, who will graduate in 2023, envisions a career as “a serial entrepreneur across multiple industries” including opening his own restaurant.

“When I first entered the Carlsen Center, I was convinced that I could accomplish my goals all by myself and do everything I aspired by taking matters into my own hands. By participating with the Carlsen Center, I’ve learned to better collaborate with individuals and discovered how much I love working with other people,” he said.

“I will always thank the Carlsen Center for inspiring me to continue as an entrepreneur, and to thrive and make an impact.”