NICOLE CONARY

B.S. COMPUTER SCIENCE '09

Reflecting on her time as a college undergraduate, Nicole Conary likes to say, jokingly, "It was the best seven-and-a-half years of my life!"

Conary started at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. She majored in English, intent on a career as a teacher. However, three years into the program she realized she no longer wanted to teach. She spent her senior year focused on technical communications, seeking ways to bridge the gap between English and technology.

A year after graduating – and feeling like she wasn't aligned with her aspirations – Conary and her husband discussed options that would offer her a greater sense of fulfillment.

"I was good at math and always enjoyed technology, so he suggested looking into computer science," she says. "The rest is history. I enrolled at CI and earned my second bachelor's degree."

Today, Conary is a UX Design Engineer with OmniUpdate, a content management system software company in Camarillo. UX stands for "User eXperience," which means that she helps ensure products are easy to use and allow customers to accomplish tasks with optimal efficiency.

"UX is a great environment for problem-solving, being creative and helping others – things I love to do," she says. "I get to put these passions into our products every day."

Although Conary describes the academic paths of English and computer science as "polar opposites," she sees a correlation and a benefit to the U-turn in her educational journey.

"Computer science is, in some ways, a study of languages, and the combination of English and computer science has helped me communicate with our development team," she says. "It's true that there are many paths to a career – some ideal, some not-so-ideal – but as long as we learn, grow and apply ourselves, any career is possible."