

A woman with curly hair and glasses, wearing a black dress, is singing into a microphone on a stage. A bright spotlight shines down on her from above, creating a starburst effect. The background is dark with blue vertical bars.

# SMU

College of  
Arts &  
Sciences

Spring/Summer 2023



# A JOURNEY COMPLETED: COMMENDING THE CLASS OF 2023

As another academic year comes to a close, it is with great joy and pride that we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the exceptional individuals who make up the Graduating Class of 2023 at Saint Martin's University. This is a momentous occasion, marking the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. You have demonstrated extraordinary resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to your education that deserves to be celebrated.







During your time at Saint Martin's University, you have not only acquired knowledge but have also grown personally and professionally. You have embraced the values of this esteemed institution, fostering a sense of community, integrity, and service to others. Through your involvement in various clubs, organizations, research projects, and community service initiatives, you have demonstrated your dedication to making a positive impact on the world around you. As you embark on this new phase of your lives, remember that learning is a lifelong endeavor. Seek out new experiences, embrace diverse perspectives, and remain open to growth and self-improvement. Remember the strong foundation that Saint Martin's has provided you, and let it serve as a guiding light as you pursue your dreams and aspirations.

In closing, we extend our warmest congratulations to each and every one of you. The Graduating Class of 2023, you have made us proud. We are excited to see the impact you will make as you go out into the world, carrying the values and traditions of Saint Martin's University with you. Remember, you will always have a home here, and we look forward to celebrating your future accomplishments.

Congratulations, Class of 2023!



# SOCIAL WORK WONDERS

## STORIES OF EMPOWERMENT AND CHANGE



We are excited to share the news about the recent success of the Student Social Work Association's annual Spring Fling event. The event was held in celebration of Social Work Month and provided an opportunity for students pursuing or considering a degree in social work to engage with one another and learn more about the profession.

One of the highlights of the event was a panel discussion featuring alumni who returned to share their experiences in the program and post-graduation. This provided an excellent opportunity for current students to gain insights into the field and hear about the successes and challenges of those who have gone before them. The event was well-attended, and students reported a heightened sense of community and connection. It was a great opportunity to promote the major and the profession and to engage in fellowship with others who share similar passions and goals. The Student Social Work Association worked hard to make this event a success, and we commend them for their dedication and commitment to promoting social work and building a strong community of students and alumni. We look forward to seeing more events like this in the future and hope that they continue to inspire and support students as they pursue their goals in social work.





We are thrilled to announce that Dr. Lori Sirs, one of our esteemed faculty members in the Social Work department, has been recognized as the Social Work Educator of the Year by the NASW, Washington Chapter. This prestigious award was presented to her at the annual Social Work Month Celebration in March. We congratulate Dr. Sirs on this well-deserved recognition of her hard work and contributions to the field of social work education. Dr. Sirs has been actively engaged in presenting her research and ideas at various conferences and events. Along with Gaby Hyre, she recently presented a workshop titled “Stronger Together: Fostering

Cohort Cohesion Through Participation in a BSW Senior Retreat” at the annual meeting of the Baccalaureate Program Directors in Birmingham, AL. The workshop highlighted the importance of promoting a sense of community and collaboration among BSW students and provided insights into the benefits of a senior retreat program. Dr. Sirs also facilitated a workshop session on “Poi Spinning as Embodied Self-Care” at the same conference. The workshop provided an innovative approach to self-care for social work students and professionals through the use of poi spinning, a form of dance and movement.

The BPD meeting in Birmingham, AL, marked the first in-person meeting since 2019, and Dr. Sirs’s contributions were particularly significant in light of the challenges posed by the pandemic. We are proud of Dr. Sirs’s accomplishments and are grateful for her dedication and commitment to social work education. We look forward to learning more about her future research and contributions to the field.





# PSYCH SPOTLIGHT: LATEST DEPARTMENT UPDATES

We are thrilled to share the exciting news about Dr. Emily Coyle's recent research presentation at the Society for Research in Child Development biennial meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. Dr. Coyle, along with her collaborators and students, presented research on various topics related to child development and teaching methods. Her workshop, titled "T is for Teaching: Teaching developmental psychology through the lens of Sesame Street," drew on the pedagogy of themed courses, and showcased the work she is doing with seven scholars at six institutions across the country. This work also includes SMU Psychology major, Mikayla Wall, who is serving as project manager.

Furthermore, some of Dr. Coyle's research work has been published as open education resources via Buffalo State's Digital Commons, making it accessible to students and faculty worldwide. At the conference, Dr. Coyle also presented a poster co-authored with SMU Psychology major, James Watson, titled "Leveraging 'Frugal Science' in an Experimental Intervention to Build Rural Children's STEM Interest and Identification." Additionally, she co-authored a symposium presentation titled "Gender biases in the teaching and learning of spatial tasks" with collaborators from other institutions, using data collected by SMU students. Dr. Coyle's research efforts and contributions to the field of child development and education are invaluable to our college, and we are proud to have her as a member of our faculty. We look forward to seeing more of her work and its impact on our students and community.



The recently concluded Western Psychological Association annual conference was an exciting event that showcased the hard work and dedication of SMU psychology majors. Megan Convery, Olivia Schmidt, Mark Van Doornik, Ky Cuthbert, Madeline Federico, and Aleja Perea-Ortiz were among the students who presented their senior thesis projects, demonstrating their commitment to the field of psychology.

Mark Van Doornik, Ky Cuthbert, and James Watson also presented their collaborative work with Dr. Emily Coyle in her SEAL lab, where they had served as research interns. Their projects, titled “Building rural children’s STEM interest and identification: Leveraging ‘frugal science’” and “Students in Quarantine: COVID-19 Pandemic Effects on Emerging Adults’ Stress and Coping,” high-

lighted the interdisciplinary nature of psychology and its application to contemporary societal issues.

The latter project, “Students in Quarantine,” had been initiated by students during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and included follow-up data as the pandemic evolved. This research provided valuable insights into how the pandemic impacted the stress and coping mechanisms of emerging adults. Meanwhile, “Building rural children’s STEM interest and identification” employed “frugal science” techniques to enhance science education accessibility for rural children, potentially making a substantial impact on STEM education in underserved areas.

The conference served as a platform for these students to share their findings with a wider audience and engage in discussions

with fellow psychology professionals. Their participation was a testament to their dedication to the field and their commitment to advancing our comprehension of human behavior and the mind. We extend our best wishes to them for their participation in the conference and eagerly anticipate the future trajectories of their research endeavors.





# INSIDE THE NEWS AND NURSING DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A Celebration of Compassion and Commitment: Saint Martin's University's Nursing Pinning Ceremony 2023

Amid the blooming days of May, Saint Martin's University radiated with pride and accomplishment as the institution's Nursing Pinning Ceremony took center stage. This year, a remarkable total of 39 Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduates were honored, marking a significant milestone in their educational journey and the promise of impactful careers in the field of healthcare.

With a diverse array of paths leading to this accomplishment, the ceremony celebrated the achievements of 25 traditional BSN graduates, 13 LPN to BSN achievers, and one RN to BSN graduate. Each graduate's journey is a testament to their unwavering dedication, commitment, and passion for the nursing profession. The Nursing Pinning Ceremony is a cherished tradition, symbolizing the transition from students to professional nurses. It is a time-honored ritual that embodies the core values of nursing – compassion, empathy, and a commitment to serving humanity.





As the Nursing graduates received their pins – a symbol of their dedication to healthcare and their commitment to upholding the highest standards of nursing – they joined a legacy of Saint Martin’s University nursing alumni who have gone on to impact countless lives through their care, expertise, and unwavering compassion.



**Shandeigh Berry** is a remarkable figure on the SMU campus, making a name for herself both as a researcher and as a community member. Berry’s most recent achievements include being a featured author on the quarterly “Research Reveals” speaking on her publication on the trauma of perinatal loss in a virtual webinar. Her research is set to be presented at the Institute of Reproductive Loss annual research conference in San Diego, CA. There, she will serve as a panelist on trauma-informed communication methods for parents experiencing perinatal loss and present her symposium on a framework for trauma-informed care throughout the perinatal loss experience. Berry’s passion for research extends to her work with five student research assistants under a WA Civic Fellowship Grant, where they are developing a Perinatal Loss Follow-up Toolkit. In addition to her impressive research, Berry is also a dedicated community member. She volunteered as a medic for a student roller-skating event on campus, ensuring that everyone had a safe and fun experience. She also participated in the Hot Ones challenge and emerged as the winner. Furthermore, Berry is a published author and has contributed to the medical textbook “Principles of Neonatology” with a chapter on the ontological death associated with perinatal loss. Her work is a testament to her commitment to advancing knowledge and improving the lives of those affected by perinatal loss. SMU is proud to have Shandeigh Berry as a member of its community and looks forward to seeing her future contributions to the field of Nursing.



A young man with dark, curly hair is shown in profile, playing a silver flute. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt and a red wristband. The background is blurred, showing other people in a dimly lit room, likely a concert hall or rehearsal space. The lighting is warm and focused on the musician.

## From Broadway to the Silver

**Screen:** SMU Jazz Combo and Wind Ensemble Perform

On March 15th, the SMU Jazz Combo and Wind Ensemble performed a concert entitled "From Broadway to the Silver Screen". The performance showcased the versatility and skill of SMU's talented musicians and featured a selection of popular and classic songs from Broadway and the silver screen. The Jazz Combo performed jazz interpretations of popular musical numbers, while the Wind Ensemble performed orchestral arrangements of well-known movie soundtracks. The concert was a wonderful opportunity for students and the broader SMU community to enjoy a night of great music and entertainment.



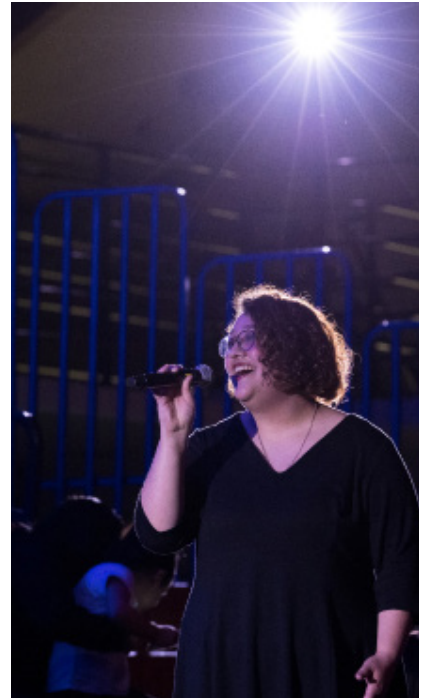
# HOPE CONCERT

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On March 2nd, the SMU Chorale, Jazz Combo, and student soloists took to the stage for the annual Hope Concert. The event showcased the musical talent of SMU students and raised awareness and funds for suicide prevention. The concert featured a variety of

musical styles, including choral performances of classical and contemporary pieces, as well as jazz and popular music selections performed by student soloists and the Jazz Combo.

The Hope Concert has become a cherished tradition at SMU, and this year's event was a resounding success, both in terms of musical performance and raising awareness about suicide prevention.





# DR. JULIA CHAVEZ'S CONTRIBUTION SELECTED FOR INCLUSION IN WILEY'S CONCISE COMPANION TO WORLD LITERATURE

Dr. Julia Chavez's scholarly work has been selected for inclusion in the Concise Companion to World Literature. Ken Seigneurie and Kathleen Scheel express their pleasure in informing Dr. Chavez about the selection of her



essay. This selection, they note, stems from the essay's centrality to the discipline of World Literature and its remarkable quality in both writing and research.

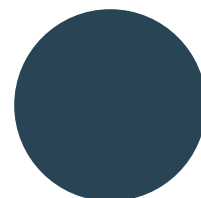
The concise edition of the Companion is destined to be more focused and tailored towards an undergraduate audience, aligning with the specific needs and perspectives of students who are embarking on their literary journeys. It will also incorporate essential teaching aids such as syllabi, enriching the learning experience for students and educators alike.

Dr. Chavez's essay, *"But Women Feel Just as Men Do": Gender Rights in Nineteenth-Century World Literature*, occupies a special place within this narrative. She reveals that this particular piece presented its own set of challenges, a reflection of the complex global context in which it was conceived. Despite these challenges, the essay emerged as a testament to her dedication, insight, and scholarly prowess. Dr. Chavez exudes genuine enthusiasm about the forthcoming appearance of her work in a version of the Companion



that has been thoughtfully crafted for undergraduate students. This achievement not only reflects Dr. Julia Chavez's personal excellence but also underscores the caliber of scholarship within our College of Arts and Sciences. Her success is an inspiration, reminding us all of the significant impact that our scholarly pursuits can have on the wider academic community.

As a community, we celebrate Dr. Chavez's accomplishment and eagerly anticipate the arrival of the Concise Companion to World Literature in 2024. This accomplishment reinforces the reputation of our college as a center of academic excellence and further solidifies our commitment to advancing knowledge and fostering intellectual growth.





# CHAMPIONING THE HUMANITIES: DR. MEAD AND DR. LUZARRAGA ADVOCATE AT NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE'S ADVOCACY DAY

Dr. Stephen Mead and Dr. Ramon Luzarraga from our college recently attended the National Humanities Alliance's Advocacy Day in March. This event provided a platform for humanities advocates across the country to come together and address pressing issues facing the humanities today.

During the event, Dr. Mead and Dr. Luzarraga participated in discussions with policymakers and other advocates to advocate for the value of the humanities in higher edu-

cation and beyond. They emphasized the critical role that humanities play in fostering critical thinking, cultural understanding, and civic engagement, and highlighted the many ways in which the humanities contribute to the public good.

As part of the event, attendees also had the opportunity to meet with members of Congress and their staff to advocate for increased funding for humanities programs and research. Dr. Mead and Dr. Luzarraga joined these efforts, stressing the importance of sustained federal support for the humanities and the impact it has on students and communities across the nation.

The College of Arts and Sciences holds a distinguished tradition of producing trailblazers in the field, and Dr. Mead and Dr. Luzarraga are sterling exemplars of this legacy. Their participation in the National Humanities Alliance's Advocacy Day extends beyond advocacy; it is a testament to their dedication to both their fields and the societal relevance of the humanities.



Such events serve as more than advocacy platforms – they are vital conduits for our faculty to remain attuned to the ever-evolving currents of their disciplines. By engaging in these dynamic dialogues, Dr. Mead and Dr. Luzarraga exemplify their commitment to advancing the humanities and ensuring their timeless resonance in our rapidly evolving world.

The College of Arts and Sciences is profoundly honored to have faculty members who transcend their roles, stepping into the realm of advocacy and activism. Dr. Mead and Dr. Luzarraga stand as luminous torchbearers, casting a light on the humanities and reinforcing their enduring relevance. As we celebrate their contributions, we also renew our collective commitment to nurturing a rich and robust landscape for the humanities within our academic community.

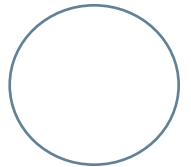




# DR. JAMIE OLSON SHEDS LIGHT ON RUSSIAN AGGRESSION BEYOND BORDERS

**Dr. Jamie Olson**, a professor at our college, recently had an op-ed published in the Tacoma News Tribune. In the piece, titled “I’ve seen Russia’s aggression while teaching abroad. Ukraine isn’t the only victim,” Dr. Olson shared his personal experiences witnessing Russian aggression while teaching in other countries. Dr. Olson’s op-ed comes at a crucial time, as tensions between Ukraine and Russia have been escalating. In his piece, he argues that while the world’s attention is focused on Ukraine, other countries have also been victims of Russian aggression, including Georgia and Moldova. As a professor of international studies, Dr. Olson has a unique perspective on these issues, and his op-ed sheds light on the broader

implications of Russian aggression beyond the current crisis in Ukraine. His expertise and insights are invaluable to our community, and we are proud to have him as a member of our faculty. We applaud Dr. Olson’s efforts to raise awareness about this important issue and look forward to continued contributions from him in the field of international studies.





# CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS: DR. IRINA GENELMAN'S TEACHING ENDEAVORS DOWN UNDER



**Dr. Irina Gendelman**, a professor at SMU, had the opportunity to be a Visiting Teaching Fellow at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Sydney, Australia for the months of February and March in 2023. During her time there, Dr. Gendelman designed and led teaching workshops with UNSW faculty, aimed at promoting interdisciplinary teaching practices.

Through her workshops, Dr. Gendelman was able to make new connections and foster relationships across disciplines between SMU and UNSW. Additionally, she established connections with the La Parouse Indigenous guides, who may serve as future guest lecturers.

This exchange program gave Dr. Gendelman a unique opportunity to share her expertise in interdisciplinary teaching practices with fellow educators and also learn about the teaching practices of other institutions. The program allowed for the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and experiences in teaching, ultimately benefiting both institutions.

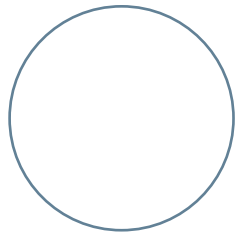
The opportunity for faculty members to participate in exchange programs and collaborate with colleagues from other universities not only enriches their own professional development but also strengthens the relationships between universities and promotes the advancement of education as a whole.





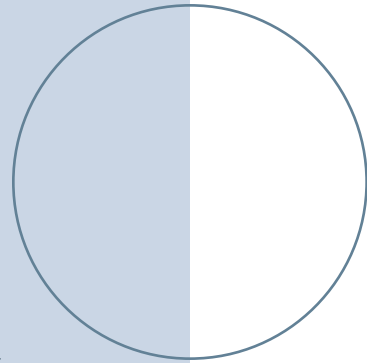
## ASTRONOMY ADVENTURES

Saint Martin's University astrophysics research group (PI, Dr. Andrea Kunder) and Seattle University research group (PI, Dr. Joanne Hughes) travelled to Sunspot, New Mexico to use the Apache Point Observatory. Three nights were spent using the 3.5m telescope there to observe stars in the center of the Milky Way Galaxy. SMU students Claire Skaggs, Macy Ball, Carlos Campos and Mike Rivet, as well as the three SU undergraduate students, had a chance to drive the telescope and work with the raw spectra that were collected. The astrophysics team took observations of a new supernova that exploded in M101, looked through the eyepiece at planetary nebula and globular clusters and saw the APOLLO laser being shot at the moon. The science objective was to collect new spectra of promising extra-tidal stars around the Gran 4 globular cluster in the bulge. Here are two photos of the telescope that was used. This trip and research is being funded by the RAISE grant, under the M.J. Murdock Trust.





**Claire Skaggs**, Mechanical Engineer major/Physics minor, spent two weeks finalizing her astrophysics results at a premier research institute in Munich, Germany, The European Organization for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO). Claire began calculations of the strengths of Calcium lines in old stars in the Galactic center this summer in Dr. Kunder's astrophysics research lab. From five different observations of 250 stars in the heart of the Milky Way, taken last summer using the Anglo-Australian Telescope, Claire set out to measure the amount of elements in these stars. She developed python programs to scale each observation by the properties of each star and worked with image reduction software to increase signal-to-noise for each of the observed stars. The final two weeks of her project entailed working in person with Dr. Zdenek Prudil at the astrophysics research facility ESO, one part of the European Intergovernmental Research Center, whose headquarters are in Munich. While in Germany, Claire spent the weekends exploring the museums and churches of Munich, took a train ride to Vienna, Austria (see photo) and went up the highest Alpine peak in Germany. Claire will present her calculations of the chemical signatures of her old stars at the Murdock conference in November 2023, and they will be used in conjunction with the upcoming observations from NASA's Roman Space Satellite Galactic Bulge Time Domain Survey. Dr. Kunder's summer research program is funded by grants from the National Science Foundation AST#2009836 as well as the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust.

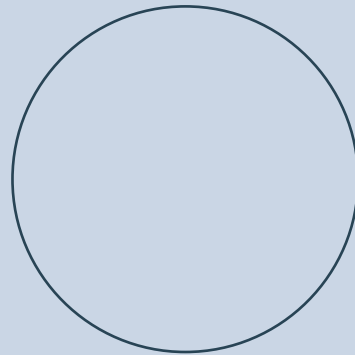




# LATIN RETURNS TO SMU'S RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAM

SMU's Religious Studies program has reintroduced Latin classes to its curriculum with adjunct professor Ivana Ackermann at the helm. This exciting development offers students the opportunity to study a language that has played a crucial role in the development of religious texts and traditions, as well as Western literature and culture. The course is designed to provide students with a foundational understanding of Latin grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. They will also explore the language's connection to religious texts and liturgical practices. In addition, the class will delve into the history and cultural significance of Latin, including its influence on the devel-

opment of Western art, music, and literature. The course is open to students from all disciplines, regardless of prior experience with Latin. With its focus on language, history, and culture, the class offers a unique and interdisciplinary approach to the study of religion and the humanities.







# STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Saint Martin's University has a long history of promoting experiential learning opportunities, and this semester, four students have been selected to serve as interns for the Washington State Legislative Internship Program. The program, which is highly competitive, offers students the chance to experience the legislative process firsthand and gain valuable skills in research, writing, and communication. Vanessa Ponce, Christian Bianes-Delasorio, Cheyenne Yap, and Zoe Krausmann are the four students representing Saint Martin's University in this year's internship program. These students have shown a commitment to academic excellence and a passion for civic engagement, and they will undoubtedly make valuable contributions to the legislative process.

In addition to the legislative internship program, the Chemistry program at Saint Martin's University is also providing students with unique opportunities for learning and growth. This spring, 15 students attended the Spring 2023 National Meeting of the American Chemical Society, with seven students presenting their work in poster sessions.

This conference offers students the opportunity to engage with current research in chemistry and explore potential career paths in the field.

The students who presented their work at the conference were Shania Lazcano, Karely Rivas-Camacho, Kaylee Slone, John Farrell, Rudu Wani, Avionna Williams, and Veronica (Jasmine) Hubbs. These students have shown exceptional dedication to their studies and research, and their presentations at the conference were a testament to their hard work and commitment. Saint Martin's University is proud of the achievements of its students and the dedication of its faculty in providing opportunities for learning and growth. Whether it is through internships, research, or the performing arts, students at SMU are empowered to explore their passions and develop the skills they need to make a positive impact in the world.



