

# SMMU

COLLEGE OF  
ARTS &  
SCIENCES

SPRING 2022







# A Year Transforma





Saint Martin's  
UNIVERSITY

# Year of Adaptive Change



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# WELCOME OUR

## Interim Dean, Dr. Aaron Coby

Is it Spring? The amount of rain, snow, hail and freezing temperatures we've endured these last few weeks makes me wonder. But, in truth, there's no holding it back. The buds, flowers and pollen (achoo!) tell me that the academic year is drawing to a close.

The number of student activities and ceremonies also tells me we're winding up to a finish. I've had an opportunity to participate in a number of events this Spring that I've sorely missed these last couple years. To name a few: The Hope Concert was fantastic. There's nothing quite like a live performance. The Pasifika and Lū'au parties were amazing. Such good food, fun dancing (fire!), and wonderful energy! Certainly a far cry from my Covid reclusiveness. I hope we can stay on this path.

Over the summer our office will help to welcome our new President, Dr. Bonds-Raacke, and begin the process of introducing them to the College of Arts & Sciences. We are the heart of the liberal arts tradition of Saint

Martin's University and the cornerstone of its undergraduate learning experience. We have many things to show off and be proud of.

The stories in this newsletter (Grants, Fulbrights, Newts, Math, Poems, Earth Day, Diversity) and all the newsletters this past year paint a clear picture of a vibrant, engaged and active community. We are doing the hard and rewarding work of a liberal arts college. One of my goals this summer is to plan ways for us to come together to celebrate each other and the work that we're doing. Watch for details on an early Fall CAS picnic, and other CAS-sponsored events to help us build our community. I hope to see many of you over the summer, and I hope that you find the time to recharge and go on adventures that you can tell us about when you return.

Have a wonderful and safe summer everyone!





# R NEW

## Interim Associate Dean, Dr. Julia Chavez

Julia McCord Chavez, Professor of English, has been a faculty member at Saint Martin's University since Fall 2011. Her teaching and research interests are eclectic and include nineteenth-century British and world literature, Victorian print culture and serialization studies, transatlantic studies, gender studies, the field of law and literature, and composition studies. These wide-ranging interests have grown out of her own diverse educational experiences. As an undergraduate she majored in English with minors in art history and anthropology. Her graduate studies include a J.D. from Indiana University School of Law – Bloomington and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Interdisciplinarity is a hallmark of Chavez's teaching and research as she seeks to bring literature to life for 21st century readers through historical, cultural, visual, and aesthetic contexts. Some of her favorite classes have been "Jane Austen on Film," "The Age of Frankenstein," "Gothic Fictions," "Serial

Storytelling," and "Reading Literature in the Digital Age." As a scholar in the field, Chavez has published journal articles and book chapters on gender rights in nineteenth-century world literature, women writers and public opinion, Victorian reading practices, and teaching Charles Dickens' serialized fiction. Currently, she is finishing a huge project -- A Literary Companion to the Major Works of Charles Dickens.

In addition to teaching and research, Chavez has also served as Director of the Center for Scholarship and Teaching and Advisor to the Benedictine Scholars Program. When she is not on campus or in the library, you can find her out at Our Common Home Farms happily working in the dirt with colleagues, students, and community volunteers.





# **Dr. Jennifer Bonds-Raacke, Ph.D. to be the 11th President of Saint Martin's University**

**Unanimously supported by the Saint Martin's University Board of Trustees following a nationwide search, Dr. Bonds-Raacke will assume the role on July 1, upon the retirement of President Roy Heynderickx, Ph.D.**

Dr. Bonds-Raacke brings a wealth of experience in cultivating welcoming and inclusive campus communities, allowing all members of an institution to flourish and succeed. During her time as provost at St. Norbert College, she has worked with partners in academic affairs to create equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) and mission cohort hires; sponsored anti-racism training for faculty, staff, and students; and partnered with human resources to revise policies and procedures, ensuring transparency and due process. At her prior institution, Fort Hays State University in Kansas, she was the dean of the Graduate School and Office of Scholarship and Sponsored Projects, where she developed and supported programs to work closely with first generation, adult learners, military and veterans, and historically underrepresented groups to ensure a college education is achievable for all.

“Dr. Bonds-Raacke has dedicated her academic career to removing barriers and creating opportunities for individuals to benefit from the experiences received from attaining a college education,” says Medrice Coluccio, chair of the Saint Martin's University Board of Trustees. “With this commitment to student success and devotion to a mission-focused university, she positions Saint Martin's for continued excellence.”







**“I am honored to have been selected as the next president of Saint Martin’s University. As a first-generation college student, I know how a college education can transform your entire life,” shares Dr. Bonds-Raacke.**



# Dr. John Hopkins, Ph.D., as new Chief Diversity Officer

**J**ohn Hopkins, Ph.D., is our new chief diversity officer. He took this title on January 1, 2022. The chief diversity officer is a new position at Saint Martin's that will report to the president and the dean of students. As the chief diversity officer, he will help shape a holistic vision and initiatives on how Saint Martin's realizes diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in all facets of university life. He will also serve as the university's ambassador for DEI initiatives in partnerships with various on and off-campus constituents, specifically the South Puget Sound region and tribal nations.

“

**DEI is not accomplished through the efforts of one person. It requires all of us. My hope in this new role is to collaboratively envision and develop the strategies that help us live out our Benedictine, Catholic tradition more fully so every student feels a deep sense of belonging.**

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Dr. Hopkins, a citizen of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, has been a long-time advocate and mentor in the field of diversity and equity. He previously served as an associate dean of students, the director of the Diversity and Equity Center (DEC), and as an adjunct faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences. He is currently co-chairing the Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity (DEI) Committee this year, which is a newly established standing university committee composed of abbey members, students, staff, and faculty.

His scholarship focuses on Indigenous education, policy, and philosophy. In his book, *Indian Education for All: Decolonizing Indigenous Education in Public Schools* (Teachers College Press, 2020), he critiques Native education policy reform in Montana State, proposing decolonizing learning as necessary strategies in pedagogical and curricula reform.



**“We are excited for John to take on this new role to guide our community in these efforts”. -SMU President Roy Heynderickx, Ph.D.**





## Francisco Calixto, M.S, as new Diversity and Equity Center Program Manager

**“I aim to create spaces where individuals can feel validated, supported, and encouraged to persist,” said Calixto. “As a first-generation Latino, I understand the complexities of navigating an educational system often not created with students like me in mind. Through this position, I want to become a strong leader, advocate, and contributor in order to mitigate and eradicate barriers that perpetuate equity gaps.”**

Kevin Francisco Calixto, M.S., is our new program manager for the Diversity and Equity Center (DEC). The program manager is a new position in the DEC that will help support Saint Martin’s University Chief Diversity Officer John Hopkins, Ph.D. As the program manager, Calixto will assist in building community, developing programs, and providing resources, support and advocacy for students with historically underrepresented identities. He will be an active contributor to the overall goals and responsibilities of the Office of Student Affairs and to the university’s strategic priorities related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Calixto comes to Saint Martin’s with four years of experience in DEI work and two years of experience working with Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO). TRIO refers to federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. This includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-in-

come individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs.

Prior to his new role, Calixto served as TRIO student support services faculty advisor at Everett Community College. In this role, he was responsible for teaching college success courses, developing program activities, and advocating for students navigating systemic and institutional barriers.

He began his career in higher education at California State University, Fullerton, where he served as National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) undergraduate fellows program coordinator. Calixto earned his undergraduate degree in social work from Pacific Lutheran and completed his masters of science in education at California State University, Fullerton.



# Nursing News

**Director of Nursing, Dr. Teri Woo**, received the Loretta Ford Distinguished Fellow award from NAPNAP this Spring for her many years of advocating for children and educating pediatric nurses. The The FAANP Loretta C. Ford Award is presented annually to an NP who demonstrates participation in health care policy development at an international, national or local level; a sustained and specific contribution to clarification of the role and scope of practice of NPs; and/or a creative and effective action to turn a challenge to the NP role into an effective opportunity to advance practice.

**Dr. Shandeigh “Nikki” Berry**, received the ELNEC 2021 Award for inspiring and distinguished contributions to palliative care education. Dr. Berry’s research focuses on supporting parents experiencing perinatal loss related to a life limiting fetal condition. She is also the founder of Project Poppyseed, a non-profit organization dedicated to breaking the silence of perinatal loss through research, education, and advocacy. Dr. Berry teaches the ELNEC curriculum to undergraduate nurses and provides perinatal loss training in the nurse residency program of a local hospital.

## **\$1.8M Premera Blue Cross grant to Help Area Colleges Address Nursing Shortage**

Premera Blue Cross announced a \$1.8 million grant to establish a new program at four colleges in Washington — including Green River College in Auburn and Saint Martin’s University in Lacey — to help Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and address a nursing shortage.





**L**inda Trader, Nursing Professor, had her abstract and poster presentation, titled “Implementation of Transgender Toolkit to enhance rehabilitation with the Washington State Department of Corrections”, accepted at Sigma Theta Tau Region 1 Conference during April 2022. There are many challenges in doing research work with vulnerable populations—including those who are incarcerated. This project focuses work on a vulnerable population within a vulnerable population (incarcerated transgender persons). Trader initially submitted her WSIRB application for review at the end of May 2021 and it was finally approved through expedited review in Dec. 2021. Because of COVID related issues such as disease outbreaks, quarantine due to Delta and Omicron variants, and staffing shortages at DOC locations, implementation of this project has been further delayed. She has recently started implementation and data collection in hopes to have made sufficient progress in order to present for her doctoral defense on April 26, 2022 so that she can graduate in May 2022.

Trader has completed focus groups with transgender populations at Monroe Correctional Center, Stafford Creek Correctional Center in Aberdeen, WA, and has scheduled focus groups at Washington Corrections Cen-

ter for Women in Purdy, WA, and Airway Heights Corrections Center in Spokane, WA, in the next two weeks. Trader hopes to be able to schedule the final focus groups at Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, WA, in the near future. Trader is currently developing a toolkit for transgender inmates for use within the DOC and will utilize information obtained from focus groups to enhance self efficacy and ability for individuals to navigate accessing their needs to enhance rehabilitation.





# Saint Martin's University Competes in International Math Competition

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**Saint Martin's University students compete in the Consortium for Mathematics and Its Applications' international Mathematical Contest in Modeling/Interdisciplinary Contest in Modeling (MCM/ICM)**

While most of our campus community was enjoying a long weekend over President's Day, February 17-21, six students broken into two teams of three represented Saint Martin's University in the international Mathematical Contest in Modeling/Interdisciplinary Contest in Modeling (MCM/ICM). One of the teams consisted of De'Anna Agleham (Biology), Abby Bozarth (Mathematics), and Rhys Mathis (Mathematics). The other team consisted of Katie Augsburg (Exercise Science), Jamie Bishop (Mathematics), and John Lane (Mechanical Engineering). These two teams competed with over 25,000 teams from around the world. During the 100 hour long contest, teams selected one of six complex real-world problems that experts have not yet solved. The topics of the

six problems this year were the power profile of a cyclist, water and hydroelectric power sharing, trading strategies, data and analytics system evaluation, forestry for carbon sequestration, and international policy for potential asteroid mining. By the end of the contest window the teams must each submit a report, of up to 25 pages, that communicates their modeling process and findings to a general audience of STEM professionals. Through this experience, teams develop and enhance their "human skills" in addition to applying and exploring further their academic pursuits. Before the 100-hour-long competition began, the teams spent considerable time working with Dr. Kayla Blyman (Mathematics) to develop competition strategies and build up their mathematical modeling skills. Dr. Katherine Porter (Mathematics) served as the teams' advisor during the competition taking care of several logistics. The teams will learn the results of the competition by May 20, 2022.







**Saint Martin's University CAS faculty support the Consortium for Mathematics and Its Applications' international Interdisciplinary Contest in Modeling (ICM)**

With over 12,000 teams participating in the Interdisciplinary Contest in Modeling (ICM) this year, there are a lot of logistics to handle and a lot of scoring to do. Dr. Kayla Blyman (Mathematics) serves as the co-director of the Interdisciplinary Contest in Modeling (ICM) and as the problem director and author for the contest's sustainability problem. This year Saint Martin's University had eight CAS faculty members – Dr. Bonnie Amende (Mathematics), Dr. Kayla Blyman, Dr. Robert Bode (Biology), Dr. Brandy Fox (Chemistry), Dr. Mary Jo Hartman (Biology), Dr. Katherine Porter (Mathematics), Dr. Cameron Sweet (Mathematics), and Prof. Yvonne Shevalier (Biology Adjunct) – reading papers about forestry for carbon sequestration from February 28, 2022 through April 4, 2022 during the contest's "triage" judging window.

Over the weekend of April 22-24, 2022, Drs. Blyman and Hartman will join STEM professionals from around the country at the final judging round for the contest in Bedford, MA. By supporting the ICM in these ways, Saint Martin's CAS faculty are contributing to the massive effort that it takes to provide an authentic modeling experience to thousands of undergraduate students from around the world.



## Let's Save the Earth Together.

This year, Saint Martin's celebrated Earth Day by giving back to Our Common Home. Pictured: SMU Volleyball Team and Hui 'o Hawai'i Club volunteering at Pigman's Produce Patch, the Garden Club planting the campus garden beds, and the SMU Vet Corps giving some much needed love to the 9/11 Memorial, planting flowers and adding benches.

In addition, Alisa Woodruff from the Northwest Indian College gave a presentation about Cascade Red Fox and the intersection between Indigenous wisdom and Western science. Dr. Irina Gendelman (Professor, Communication Studies) said, "We had some fun around food and wanted to highlight local Indigenous peoples' stewardship of the land. A number of friends came to campus and shared their family recipes of fry bread. There were so many delicious breads, including jalapeño tacos!"











**Dr. Stephen Mead's (Professor, English)** poem, "Zoo Announcement," was published in the May 2022 issue of *America: The Jesuit Review of Faith and Culture*. This is quite an accomplishment, as *America* is widely considered a "leading Catholic journal of opinion in the United States" with a circulation of more than 40,000 readers. According to its editors, "America magazine is known across the Catholic world for its unique brand of opinion and analysis. From theology and spirituality to politics, international relations, arts and letters, and the economy and social justice, America's coverage spans the globe. We tell the stories that matter most to the church and the world" (<https://www.americamagazine.org/about-america-media>). Mead's poetry has also appeared in *The Indiana Review*, *The Crab Creek Review*, *The Artful Dodge*, and *Paintbrush*.

# Faculty Publications

In *Significant Food in American Literature* (University of Georgia Press, forthcoming), **Jeff Birkenstein, Ph.D. (Professor, English)** and **Robert Hauhart (Professor, Society and Social Justice)** are developing an edited collection of essays analyzing the role of food in American literature. Though historically relegated to secondary status by many critics, food in literature, and specifically in American literature, is having a transcendent moment. Those who love literature have begun to realize that food is worthy of study when it is inextricably

connected to a story or narrative, when this story's meaning cannot exist without it. Thus, critics increasingly recognize that food used as a significant plot or other substantial narrative device warrants the same attention we devote to other literary techniques or symbols. Characters in most well-written works do not prepare, cook, serve, eat, and talk about food merely because they are humans and humans require food. Rather, food is at the center of the stories under consideration here. To more fully understand the meaning of these stories,

then, one must analyze the role food plays in sustaining the narrative. Collectively, Dr. Hauhart, Dr. Birkenstein and contributors will investigate what might be called the multifaceted grammar of food in literature, and analyze how food is used by writers to make a compelling narrative.





# ASHES

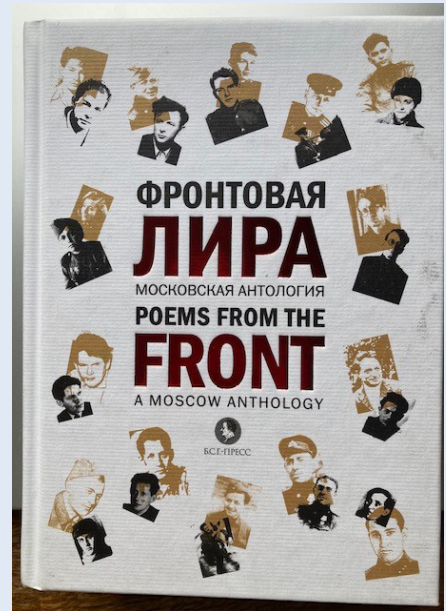
**Semyon Lipkin (1911-2003)**

**I was a pile of ash, cooled down,  
without thought or speech, faceless,  
but I came out of that oven, out  
of the womb, and back to earthly places**

**While I had yet to grasp this life  
or mourn the ending of the last one,  
I walked through the Bavarian grass  
and passed among unpeopled barracks.**

**At dusk, as Volkswagens and Mercedes  
were streaming languorously past,  
I whispered, “They burned me up.  
Now, how do I get back to Odessa?”**

1967



*Translated by Dr. Jamie Olson, Ph.D.*



**Dr. Jamie Olson (Professor, English)** contributed translations of poems by Semyon Lipkin and Arseny Tarkovsky to *Poems from the Front: A Moscow Anthology*, a collection of WWII authors that was recently published by BSG Press in Moscow. This fall, Columbia University Press will release *A Hundred Years of Childhood: An Anthology of Soviet and Contemporary Russian Writing for Children*, which will include Dr. Olson’s translations of stories by Sergei Sedov and a long comic poem

by Sergei Mikhalkov. In May, he will travel to Chicago to take part the annual meeting of the Society for Textual Scholarship, which will be his first in-person conference since the start of the pandemic. During the 2022-2023 academic year, Dr. Olson has a Fulbright. The following year, he will take a sabbatical leave in part to work on his translations of poetry by Moscow poet Timur Kibirov and Kharkiv poet Irina Yevsa, who recently had to flee her home country of Ukraine and seek refuge in Germany.



# Dr. Nathalie Kuroiwa-Lewis, Ph.D.

This Spring, **Dr. Nathalie Kuroiwa-Lewis (Professor, English)** published her poem *“Dragonfly”* in volume 2, issue 2 of the Pacific Northwest anthology of poetry titled *The Madrona Project: Human Communities in Wild Places* by Empty Bowl press.

In addition, she recently published her book chapter *“Hiding Guns In Schools: The Rhetoric Of US Mass Shootings”* in the rhetoric collection *Rhetoric and Guns* by Utah State University press and edited by Lydia Wilkes, Kate Kreuter and Ryan Skinnell.



## THE MADRONA PROJECT

Volume II      January 2022      Number 2

*Human Communities in Wild Places*

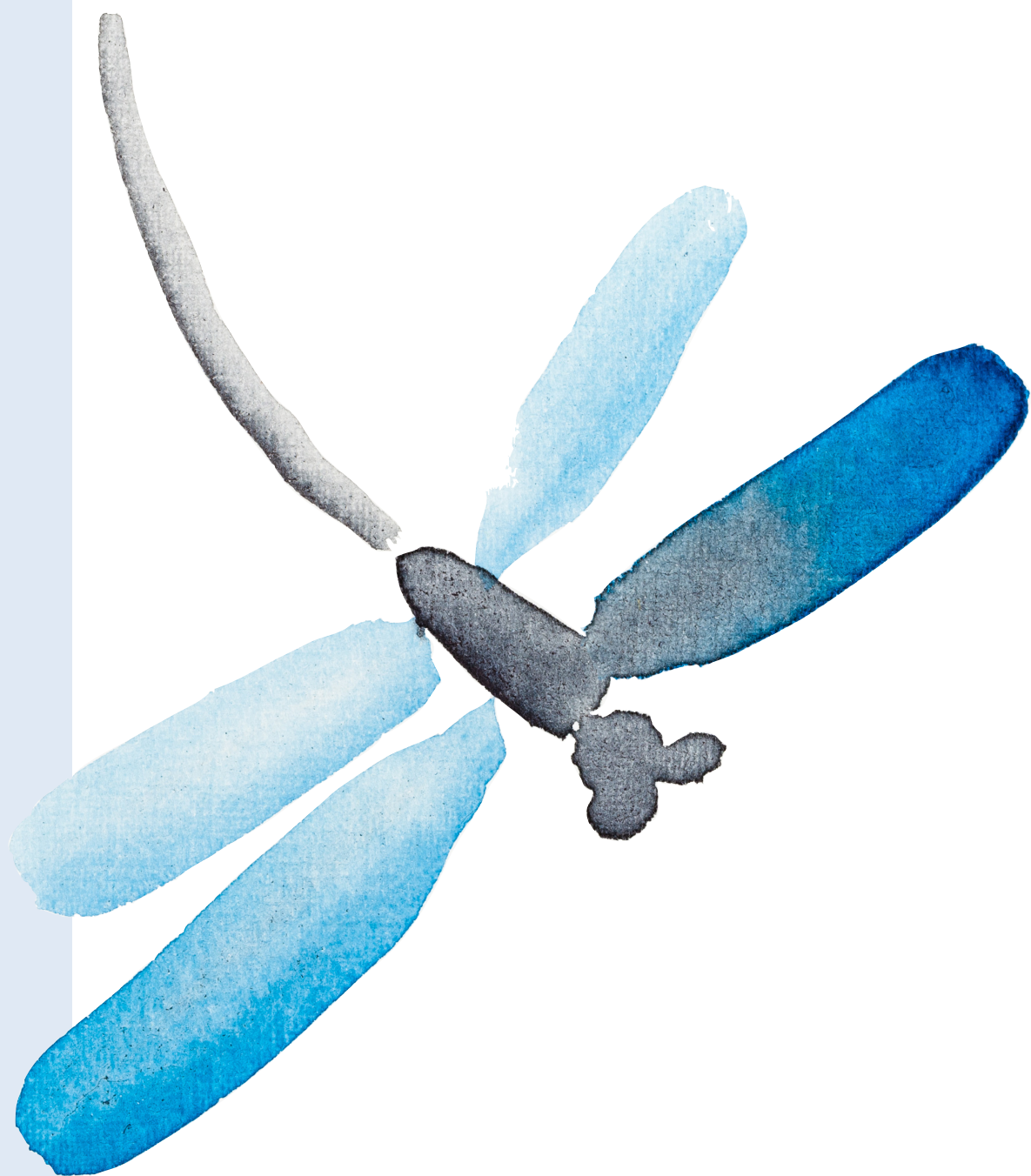


## DRAGONFLY Nathalie Kuroiwa-Lewis

**You watch its wings  
orange and checkered green  
flitting in the sun  
as it hums  
passing by  
body moving  
forwards, backwards  
perpendicular**

**before the change comes again  
you must prepare  
for the change  
again.**







# Music to Our Ears





### Hope Concert 2022

The Hope Concert featuring SMU's Chorale and Jazz combo, and student solos and ensembles was a wonderful evening full of diverse music and styles. Congratulations on a wonderful concert!

### \$25,000 Music Endowment Gift

In other news, the SMU Fine Arts Program was gifted a \$25,000 music endowment. The music faculty, along with the Advancement Office, have decided that the most appropriate

use of this endowment is as a starting point for music scholarships. Having a guaranteed endowed scholarship, which can grow over time, would be a monumental shift for recruiting into the music department.





# Social Work & Psychology Department Highlights



## **Dr. Tam Dinh**

Dr. Tam Dinh kept busy this semester, delivering several presentations! The following two of her presentations:

**Dinh, T. Q. (2022, April).** *“Model minority or problem gambler: Deconstructing contradictory Asian American personas. Plenary session for the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling’s”* | Focus on the Future Conference, Vancouver, WA.

**Dinh, T. Q. (2022, February).** *“The new treatment plan: Addressing implicit bias and microaggressions.”* | Virtual training for the Seattle King County Dental Society.



## **Dr. Lori Sirs**

Dr. Lori Sirs presented with Dr. Tam Dinh at the Annual Conference of Baccalaureate Program Director’s Meeting on March 24th.

Their presentations were titled, *“A Macro Approach to Trauma-informed Care*

*Through an Explicit, Robust, and Comprehensive Trauma Curriculum”,* and *“Innovation in a Time of Crisis: Creating an On-campus Student Support Internship Program”*





### Social Work & Nursing Collaboration!

Drs. Nikki Berry and Lori Sirs co-presented, along with two students, at the Western Institute of Nursing Conference in Portland, Oregon on April 9th. Their poster presentation shared preliminary findings of their

current study, *“Therapeutic Poi Spinning as a Grief Intervention for Men Following Perinatal Loss.”* This interdisciplinary collaboration involves both a nursing and social work student research assistant, Sanyt Shores and Cristina Tapia, respectively.



### Social Work Students

At this year’s Military-Affiliated Awards Ceremony, several social work students were represented. Cristina Tapia (BSW ‘23) was awarded the Inspiring Military-Affiliated Student of the Year. In addition, Don Seese (BSW ‘22) was recognized with the Leadership through Mentoring award. Lastly, for the Leadership in Living the SMU Mission Award, both Nurgazy

“Nick” Kaipov (BSW ‘23) and Roger Dover (BSW ‘23) were finalists, with Nick Kaipov receiving the award. The social work faculty and students are very proud of this year’s recipients!



### Psychology Students

100% of the Psychology Students who applied to present their research at the Western Psychological Association annual conference were accepted to present at least one study. Students traveled to Portland in April to share work from their senior the-

ses and research internship work with Dr. Emily Coyle’s lab, Studying Emerging Attitudes and Learning (SEAL) developmental psychology lab on campus.





# Newts get a helping hand: Dr. Freisen's Class Featured in the *Olympian*

Author: Craig Sailor | Photos: Tony Overman

There's a march underway in the wild spaces of Lacey. Over leaves and around blades of grass, thousands of tiny feet plod with a single-minded purpose. It's mating season for the rough-skinned newt. The lovelorn amphibians, in search of a mate, have spent hours, maybe days heading toward a group of retention ponds on the edge of Saint Martin's University where they can finally find a desirable ... fence?

A newt-proof fence, it turns out. The fences were built to contain an undesirable invasive amphibian, the African clawed frog. But now, biologists have discovered, they're preventing newts from entering the ponds to breed.

"This is a classic conservation issue where we're mitigating the negative impacts of this invasive species," said Saint Martin's biology professor Megan Friesen. "But in doing so, we're creating a conservation problem for one of our native amphibians." Now, Friesen and her students have started a newt bucket brigade to help the languid amphibians over the wall. More than 1,000 of the salamander species have been transported to their watery love nests.

## AFRICAN CLAWED FROGS

The frogs were discovered in 2015. Soon, fences were installed by the city of Lacey and state Department of Fish and Wildlife to contain them, according to



Max Lambert, the department’s “frog guy”. The frogs aren’t from around here, as their name implies, and aren’t welcome. They eat a lot, Lambert said, and their favorite meal seems to be their neighbors.

“We’re really worried about them eating our native species of amphibians as tadpoles or even young fishes,” Lambert said. Fish and Wildlife has tried trapping them, but it doesn’t take many to repopulate a pond. The department obtained an Environmental Protection Agency permit to add salt to the ponds in 2017. That killed more than 6,000 of the frogs.

But, some survived. “The frogs actually crawled up the storm sewers out of the pond,” Lambert said. “And then when the water cleaned up, they recolonized it.”

#### A GATHERING OF NEWTS

Friesen and Lambert began collaborating in 2021 to study the clawed frogs in the hopes of stopping their spread.



In March, they met at the ponds to perform a routine check on frog developments, Friesen said. But, it was the salamanders that soon dominated their observations. “We just started noticing that there are all these newts trying to get into the different stormwater ponds and being trapped,” she said. In some areas, the newts are piling up like a chain-reaction wreck on a salamander highway. “It was just nuts,” she recalled. “They were walking through gravel, which is a weird place to see an amphibian.”

They found over 100 newts that first day. “Once we moved them over the fence, they all just went straight into the water,” she said. “Like it was clear that that was their natural migratory path ... into this waterway.” The ponds are relatively new, so both Friesen and Lambert think the newts have colonized them.

Continued...



## TAKE THIS FROG AND...

If there was a most wanted list for invasive species, the African clawed frog would be on it. It's not the frog's fault. It was introduced all over the world for a reason that by today's standards seems bizarre.

"People who wanted to know if they were pregnant would literally pee on an African clawed frog in the doctor's office, and if they were pregnant, they had enough hormone that would actually cause the female clawed frogs to ovulate and lay eggs," Lambert said. The frogs were then released in to the ponds. Today, there are over-the-counter pregnancy tests, but the frogs remain coveted by the black market pet trade. They are illegal to possess and sell in Washington. Non-native species can spread diseases to native species, including salmon. The frogs have tested positive for ranavirus. It's not known how the frogs were introduced to the Lacey ponds. Often, a well-intentioned pet owner releases an animal into the wild rather than kill it. But, that action can lead to the death of native species. The frogs are almost fully aquatic, Lambert said, and will only cross land if their pond dries or if a poison is introduced. Other populations of the clawed frog have been found in Bothell and Issaquah, Lambert said.

## NEWT HELPERS

Friesen's students were already set to work at the ponds, trapping the clawed frogs for study. The problem, though dire for the newts, would become a lesson for the students. The students collected 250 stuck newts the first day Friesen took them to the ponds. She asked for volunteers to monitor the ponds. Nearly half her students volunteered. Now, students go to the ponds nearly every day to rescue and relocate the newts. Since then, more than 1,000 newts have been collected by Saint Martin's students and immediately released into the ponds they were desperate to reach. On a warm day last week, Saint Martin's environmental studies students Dioni Roberson and Quin Butler were patrolling the fence, buckets in hand.



Each of the three ponds is surrounded by two plastic cloth fences just short enough for a person to step over but monumental for newts. Occasionally, the students would find a newt hiding under a fold. The women said the work helped them understand amphibian life cycles. It was also an extension of their childhood.

"Growing up, I used to play a lot in the mud and dirt and collecting all types of bugs," Roberson said. "I would always catch snakes, and we would just have pet snakes and then, obviously, our parents would make us let them go," Butler said. Nearby, a garter snake slithered along a fence. The students were enthusiastic about helping the newts, particularly the young ones, just an inch long. "I find a great interest in them," Butler said. "I think they're really neat. And I think they're really cute, too." Butler is making the newts the subject of her senior research project.



## CONSIDER THE NEWT

It's hard not to like a newt. They are the sloths of the forest, a slow-motion gecko. Their forward facing eyes and hint of a smile seem better suited to a cartoon character than an amphibian. When they are not making a bee-line to water, they're often found in the forests of the Pacific Northwest. They are dry to the touch and will squirm slightly when picked up. Their dark brown tops contrast with bright yellow-orange undersides. All newts are salamanders but not all salamanders are newts. The rough-skinned newt ranges from California to British Columbia and as far east as Idaho and Montana. They eat slugs, worms and any other invertebrates they can find.

The newts, which can reach 8 inches long, use their tails to swim deftly in water but are sluggish on land where they spend most of their lives. Even the laziest predator could gobble them down with little effort. But the newts live, unmolested, thanks to an effective deterrent. They contain tetrodotoxin, one of the deadliest natural poisons on the planet. "You don't have to be fast if you are really, really toxic," Friesen said. Handling the critters is considered low risk, but students wear gloves.

"You could handle a newt and not get sick or poisoned from touching it," Lambert said. The Saint Martin's effort isn't the only salamander-saving effort underway. From California to Michigan, volunteers shepherd them safely across roads. Cars do not mix well with salamanders.



## UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

It's not yet known if, in a few weeks or months, there will be airport-like lines of newts waiting to go through the fences on their return trips. If so, students will be ready to help them. There's also the question if the newts will survive their encounters with the frogs. The frogs might be immune to the effects of tetrodotoxin, which is produced by bacteria that live in and on the newts. Could the well-meaning students just be delivering newt takeout to the voracious frogs? Friesen doesn't know yet. "There's so many more questions from a conservation perspective," she said.



# Josee Pacheco: Biology Graduate

Josee Pacheco graduated from SMU in 2020 with a Biology major and Chemistry minor. Following graduation, she began attending the University of Washington's School of Medicine Department of Occupational Therapy.

While attending SMU, Josee says that she has fond memories from her small chemistry class, where she spent her hours of time in lab and

equipment rooms. This taught her about her capacity for patience and how to ration her time. One memory from SMU that Josee holds especially dear to her heart, is living on the Norcia Leadership floor during her Freshman year. She says, "Never in my life had I experienced love from a school or professional environment. That was when I knew that SMU was more than just a school; it was another home".

Starting graduate school in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic certainly wasn't easy. Josee had concerns about her workload and future in-person work due to the new and constantly changing state of public health. The pandemic made adjusting to a new environment difficult at the start, but thanks to her education at SMU, she was able to acquire a part-time job and become successful throughout her first year.

When asked what advice she would give to students considering pursuing a master's degree, she stated that, "it is important to evaluate and understand that attending a graduate school outside of SMU is completely different and to really make sure that it is something worth the sacrifice of putting your life on pause for. Personally I am just speaking from my own experience but attending graduate school feels very much like I have put my life on hold at times. The schedule remains relatively constant with lecture-test or lecture-project format. Going straight from undergrad into this environment can sometimes make you feel very burned out. Student life feels very different from the real-world so I would recommend, if possible, to evaluate the length of the program and the possibility of a gap year".

As she continues with the rest of her program Josee is adapting to the ever changing world and becoming more comfortable with her new school! (Josee is pictured here in her Freshman Chemistry class celebrating mol day!)



# Honors Convocation Awards 2022

## BIOLOGY

**The Biology Service Award:** Maryn Budiman

**The Rosalind Elsie Franklin Award:**

Dave Anderson

**The Undergraduate Biology Research Award:**

Olivia Cervantez

**The Upper Division Biologist Award:**

Emily Alberts

## CHEMISTRY

**CRC Press Achievement Award in General**

**Chemistry:** De'Anna Agleham

**Fr. Bede Ernsdorf, O.S.B Award for Excellence in**

**Research in Chemistry:** Daisy Garcia-Rivera

**Tetrahedron Award for Excellence in the Study  
of Organic Chemistry:** Ruby To

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Outstanding Senior Thesis in Criminal Justice**

**Award:** Sandra Spence & Trixia Delos Santos

## ENGLISH

**English Faculty Prize:** Tuilei Scanlan

**Les Bailey's Tennyson Award:** Sophia Lim

**Nursia Prize in English and American Letters:**

Kayla Angulo

## HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE

**Outstanding Senior Thesis in History and Political**

**Science Award:** Jalyn Boado & Noa Peralta

**The Ed Schaller, Jr. Scholarship:** Byron Aguon

## HUMANITIES

**Michael J. Contris Award in Humanities and Letters:** Zyon Rodriguez

## MATHEMATICS

**Cap of Pythagoras Award:** Rebekah Kuss

**The CLIMB Award:** Rebekah Kuss

**The Euclid Award:** Joann Johnson

## PSYCHOLOGY

**Outstanding Senior(s) in Psychology Award:**

Nicole Akana

**The St. Dymphna Psychology Award for Social**

**Justice:** Katherone Jamerson

## SOCIETY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Father Jerome Toner Award:** John McCann

**Maria Jensen Award:** Steven Gonzalez

## NURSING

**Leadership in Population Health Nursing Award:**

Talia Woods

**Saints Nursing Leadership Award:** Justine Equall







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