FINISH TO FALL SEMESTER 2020!

2020 has been a year of flexibility and transformation! We have all adjusted to changes in how we work, teach, and learn! We continue to be extremely proud of our HIMSE community for their support, patience and compassion in dealing with these changes in this start to the 2020-2021 academic year.

At the start of the semester we offered a modified face-to-face schedule of classes and were happy to see many students, faculty, and staff return to campus! To facilitate best health practices due to pandemic concerns, Saint Martin’s extended the Thanksgiving break to a whole week and students were asked to finish the semester completely online. This ‘quarantine at home after the holiday’ approach allowed students to travel home and spend the holiday season with their families, with the hope that the students and faculty return to our campus for Spring 2021 semester in safety and good health.

Several changes were made to the spring semester for best health practices. Spring break was cancelled to prevent possible virus contamination or transmittal back to campus after the break. The semester will start a week later on January 19th, the day after the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. In lieu of the spring break, there will be a 3-day break March 6-8 (Sat-Mon). Other spring breaks: Feb. 15 for President’s Day and Apr 2-5 for Good Friday/Easter Monday.

This has been Saint Martin’s Year of Transformation as well, with everyone working together through our Benedictine values and core themes of faith, reason, service, and community to be even more inclusive and supportive of the beautiful diversity we are blessed to embrace and celebrate on a daily basis through our personal, spiritual, and educational experiences.

We are thankful for the continuing and outstanding support of the full Saint Martin’s team and HIMSE internal and external communities to ensure health, safety, security, and justice for everyone as the academic year progresses!

We wish everyone a joyous, healthy, and safe holiday season!
Saint Martin’s University commemorated its 125th anniversary with a virtual celebration event held on November 7, 2020. The Master of Ceremonies duties were shared by comedian RC Smith and SMU’s own Director of Events Services Kathleen Thomas. This memory- and fun-filled event replaced the annual Saint Martin’s Gala. The Gala featuring world-renowned chef Jacques Pépin and his daughter Claudine had to be rescheduled for next year, due to potential pandemic complications and state restrictions.

Serving as the university’s primary scholarship fundraising event for 2020, the 125th Anniversary Celebration featured video stories and photos from alumni and current students, as well as blessings from the monks of Saint Martin’s Abbey, including Abbot Marion Nguyen, O.S.B., who became the abbey’s ninth abbot in July. This very successful event raised over $1.4 million and all proceeds will be directed towards scholarships for current and future Saints!

To view a recording of the 125th anniversary celebration, visit www.stmartin.edu/125watch.

VETERANS RECOGNIZED

HIMSE Dean David Olwell was the speaker at Saint Martin’s November 9th event in honor of veterans held at the flag pavilion near our Grand Staircase. About 25 people masked up, social distanced, and braved the crisp autumn weather. In addition to Dean Olwell’s speech honoring all service members past and present and their families, those in attendance participated in creating a special flag display.

Special guests at the event were members of the Lacey station, Recruiting and Retention Command B Area 7 of the WA Army National Guard led by MSG Hawkins. We all appreciated the attendance of these service members in uniform: SSG Altamiranda, SSG Harrod, SSG Whiteman, SGT Benham, and SGT Steele.

The salute to veterans continued with the campus closed for Veterans’ Day/Saint Martin of Tours Day on Wednesday, with a final fun event on Thursday, November 12 at the TUB from 12-4 p.m. Of course, Saint Martin was originally a Roman soldier, and, by extension, a veteran. Many thanks to all veterans and their families for their service!

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Amanda Goldie-Wells on the award of a generous scholarship from KPFF Consulting Engineers for her outstanding scholarly achievements and community engagement. Amanda is currently a senior in Civil Engineering. KPFF, a leader in sustainable design, is a multi-discipline firm with offices and projects in over 10 states. We are grateful for their continued support and employment of our outstanding students and graduates!
CANOE DIG IT? WE KNEW THAT YOU COULD

Last year, our Civil Engineering students’ concrete canoe’s name was Canoe Dig It, emphasizing construction and a popular phrase from yesteryear “can you dig it?” Since, due to COVID cancellations, the team did not have the honor of competing in the regional competition, Brendan Leistikko, our Engineering and Computer Technology ASSMU Senator, had the great idea of using the canoe for a good cause. The team and student chapters of ASCE, AISC, APWA, and SWE sponsored a food drive event called “Canoe Fill It”, with the goal of filling the canoe with goods to be donated to the Thurston County Food Bank. The event was held November 13-17, with the canoe set out at a couple of campus locations to gather donations. The event was a great success and when this mighty vessel joins others in “the grove” campus display, its plaque will recognize this community contribution!

CYBERSECURITY CLUB HOSTS TECHNOLOGY EVANGELIST

On November 18th, our Cybersecurity Club hosted Dr. James Stanger, the senior chief technology evangelist from CompTIA. Dr. Stanger is an authority in security, open source, network administration, and IT education and has been consulting for more than 20 years. He spoke to the group about the information technology and cybersecurity industries, CompTIA, and industry trends. He so enthralled those in attendance, that he was still answering questions and providing his valuable insights for an extra hour over the scheduled time!

Faculty Advisor for the club, Mark Wright, said this “Insight by experts in the computer industry provides students with valuable data points that can shape and direct their studies to be the most impactful. Students gain valuable feedback on key focus areas for their research and, ultimately, their future careers. SMU Computer Science (CS) graduates will help shape and drive future innovation and direction in the computing industry. Our CS Speaker Series at SMU provides students the ability to network with industry leaders and adds to the rich set of knowledge and opportunities offered by attending Saint Martin’s University computer science programs.”

If you are interested in IT, cybersecurity, or CompTIA certification, become a member of the Cybersecurity Club! All are welcome! Email Club President Gary Choi (gary.choi@stmartin.edu) to be put on the list and get the meeting links.

STUDENTS ADVISE STUDENTS CORNER

David Stride, senior in Civil Engineering with a minor in Business, began working as an Engineering Trainee/Intern for the Construction Division of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in June 2019. His internship was a bit unique, working in their Pathways program. He continues to be employed with the USACE through the Pathways program till graduation, but is currently on leave without pay while he is a full-time student. After graduation, he will automatically be offered a full-time position. His eventual goal is to independently operate as a Contracting Officer Representative (COR).

His advice to HIMSE students: Utilize the resources at your disposal-- professional organizations and career fairs are awesome outlets to build or strengthen your networking--essential for your career.

David at the Mud Mountain Dam Fish Passage Facility site
PI TAU SIGMA FALL INDUCTION
In a virtual ceremony on November 11th, we inducted 17 students into the Pi Tau Sigma honor society: Irfan Ahmed, Turki Andergiri, Zachariah Brincken, Chad Campbell, Seth Carl, Christopher Carlisle, Patrick Conerty, Nikolas Cook, Emily Crawford, Patricia McGarrah, Benjamin Miller, Carrie Stricklin, Lawrence (Bo) Newcomer, Samuel Nilsen, Ranele Lyn Serrano, Morgan Smith, and Parker Woolworth. Mr. Quinn Dolan, SMU alumnus BSME ’00, member of our Engineering Advisory Board, and NW Operations Director of Centennial Contractors Enterprises, Inc. was inducted as an honorary member and offered inspiring words to those in attendance. Dr. David Olwell, and Dr. Daniel Einstein spoke at the event. PTS Alpha Tau Chapter’s current officers and several of its members also attended. To be eligible for induction, students must be mechanical engineering majors, have at least junior standing and have a 3.25 GPA. These inductees all made the grade (literally) and we offer our congratulations to these new inductees!

SEE MORE

FACULTY NOTES – NOTED FACULTY

Dr. Tapas Das presented two papers at the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) Annual Virtual Meeting in San Francisco November 16-20: “Black Liquor Gasification Chemical Recovery and Combined Cycle Power at Pulp and Paper Mills Biorefinery” and “Process Intensification and Integration Potential in Manufacturing Pollution Prevention”. Dr. Das sent in his pre-recorded presentations to the organizer, and they ran them in two sessions on November 18 and 19. Well done, Tapas!

READ MORE and READ MORE

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Dr. Shahlaa Al Wakeel had her co-written article “Improving Concrete Toughness by Aggregate Arrangement” published in RILEM Technical Letters August 2020. This paper addressed the open question: Can we engineer the distribution of coarse aggregate in concrete to improve crack growth resistance? Congratulations, Shahlaa! READ MORE

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Robert ‘Bob’ Kelley, retired SMU Engineering faculty of Lacey, Washington, passed away on September 22, 2020. He was 92 years old. Bob enjoyed a long career with Washington State DOT, decades of service in the United States Army Reserves, and yet another career as a Civil Engineering instructor at Saint Martin’s College. He enjoyed helping others less fortunate than himself, and showed that in his community efforts. His most fulfilling life’s work, in his later years, was with the Lacey Sunrise Lions. He helped build hundreds of wheelchair ramps for people in need. In Bob’s honor, the Lions organization re-named the project after him. Bob was a mentor to many and a friend to all. Our condolences to his family and friends.

OUR ALUMNI

TWO HIMSE ALUMNI NAMED IN MILKY WAY GALAXY RESEARCH

While research opportunities at other universities are usually restricted to graduate students, Saint Martin’s faculty encourage and recruit undergraduate students to participate in research. “In a series of papers carried out largely with my research group at Saint Martin’s, we were able to show that we are able to handle these pulsating variable stars,” shared Dr. Andrea Kunder, assistant professor of physics, “A number of undergraduate students, including Jonathan Ogata, Dylon Maertens (’20 BSME), Alexander Tilton (’20 BSME, MSME), Emily Boren and Emma Murari, worked meticulously on various different analysis of these stars, publishing our results to illustrate to the scientific community that the BRAVA-RR survey is both successful and impactful.”

Dr. Kunder was awarded a $187,000 National Science Foundation grant to sustain her Milky Way Galaxy research. The NSF grant is an expansion of the work Dr. Kunder conducted with support from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Fund’s College Research Program. Part of the grant will also help fund six undergraduate research assistants who will travel to Australia with her to use the 4-m class Anglo-Australian telescopes to carry out observations. READ MORE

ALUMNI- PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH!

Please email us about your latest news – new positions, promotions, speaking engagements, personal milestones, etc.! We want to let your fellow alumni know all about it and share your achievements with our students, faculty, and staff! Please email us at: SMUHIMSEAlumni@stmartin.edu. You can also email me directly at tieger@stmartin.edu.

CALENDAR AND EVENTS

- Dec 14-17 Final Exams
- Dec 18 (F) MSSA Fall Cohorts Graduation
- Dec 18 (F) Order of Engineer/Pledge of Computing Professionals Ceremonies (Dec grads)
- Dec 18-Jan 17 Winter Break (no classes)
- Jan 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (holiday)
- Jan 19 (Tu) Spring semester classes start (00/08/10)
- Jan 26 (Tu) 08/10 Add/drop deadline-Attendance Due
- Jan 29 (Th) MAIN 00 Add/drop deadline–Attendance Due
- Feb 15 (M) Presidents Day (holiday)
- Feb 16 (Tu) 08/10 Mid-term grades due
- Mar 8 (M) Mid-semester break (no classes)
- Mar 13 (Sa) Last day of 08/10 terms with final grades due Mon, Mar 15
- Mar 14 (Su) Daylight Savings – Spring forward an hour at midnight!
- Mar 15 (M) Main 00 Mid-term grades due | 09/11 terms start
- Mar 22 (M) 09/11 Add/drop deadline-Attendance Due
- Mar 22-26 Advising Week (NO classes on Fri, Mar. 26)
- Mar 27 (Sa) Benedictine Scholars Day

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DEAN’S CORNER

This has been a semester for the record books. In the midst of a pandemic, the faculty and staff of the Hal and Inge Marcus School of Engineering have continued to offer an outstanding education to our students. They accommodated online learners, in-person learners, students who switched between modalities due to changing circumstances, and they did it all with grace and composure. I am so very proud of them.

We have continued as many of our routines as possible. We had an online initiation for Pi Tau Sigma; the Cyber Security Club had a guest speaker; we are holding virtual design reviews with the Engineering Advisory Board; and we will hold a virtual MSSA graduation, Order of the Engineer ceremony, and Pledge of the Computing Professional event at the end of the semester. We have continued to recognize students who have been placed on the Dean’s List for their scholastic achievement (in the photo above, I am congratulating Marcus Lenker ’23, who is also a varsity basketball player!)

I am particularly proud of Dr. Shawn Duan, who encouraged eight of his students to prepare papers that were peer-reviewed, accepted, and presented (by Matt Torrey ’20, William Von Dolln ’19, and Violet Cunningham ’20) at the ASME International Mechanical Engineering Congress and Exposition in November.

Saint Martin’s has fared very well compared to other schools in the Washington state during this pandemic. Courageous leadership by the President, Provost, and cabinet members has allowed the school to weather this storm. There has been serious belt-tightening and sacrifices, but they have not significantly affected our teaching. We are hopeful that the pandemic will taper with the introduction of vaccines, and that we will be back to normal by summer of 2021. We plan to be open for face-to-face instruction this spring while still supporting students who cannot come to campus with online alternatives. We have been blessed by being spared from having many cases on campus and we trust in Divine providence (and strict adherence to our protocols) to avoid more in the spring.

We will hold a virtual engineering week in February. To continue our tradition of the Engineering Banquet, we will try to arrange a series of Zoom “Happy Hours” where groups of alumni and current students can mix. We will also offer a short talk by a distinguished guest speaker with discussion afterwards. Watch for details in January.

During this Christmas season I am so grateful for the continuing support of our alumni, benefactors, and friends in the community. You make such a difference in the lives of our students! My Christmas prayer is that the entire HIMSE community – students, staff, faculty, alumni, benefactors, and friends – stays healthy and enjoys a peaceful celebration of the season.

Best wishes,
Dave

David H. Olwell, Ph.D., Dean
Hal & Inge Marcus School of Engineering

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