Eleven outstanding students will learn what it takes to become exceptional leaders after being selected to participate in the Roberts Fellows program for the 2009-10 academic year. In addition, six student projects were granted funding by SVSU's Student Research and Creativity Institute for 2009-10.

Roberts fellowships support a select group of students who have demonstrated both scholarship and leadership potential. These students will be supported through a two-semester program of both academic course work and extracurricular activities that is designed to further develop their potential as future political, economic and civic leaders. The program culminates in a trip to Asia to provide the Fellows with an international perspective on leadership. Drew Hinderer, SVSU professor of philosophy, serves as the group’s faculty advisor.

Established in 1999, the program is named in honor of Donna Roberts, a respected attorney, business leader and philanthropist who retired from The Dow Chemical Company, where she was Secretary and Assistant General Counsel.

SRCI awards creativity
The Student Research and Creativity Institute awards funding for wide-ranging exceptional endeavors that span the arts, the environment, the economy, education and quality of life, and have a regional and Michigan emphasis.

Any SVSU student may submit a proposal to receive financial support for his/her research or other creative endeavors. Each student project is eligible to receive up to $10,000. All student submissions must be sponsored by an SVSU faculty or staff member. Students serve as the primary researcher, author or creative agent for each project but are guided by faculty and staff.

Students selected to receive funding are:
- Mufadal Amiji, Mohamed Mkakile and Dean Norfleet, all electrical engineering majors, received $5,120 to develop an automated monitoring system for aquaponics, a method of growing plants without using soil.
- Adeline R. Bauer, a biology major, was awarded $5,600 to study the genetics of mussels that have invaded the Great Lakes.
- David Bosco, Jason Kopka, and Ashley Schumacher, all mechanical engineering majors, received $6,950 to design and build a wheelchair-accessible outdoor merry-go-round for the Millet Learning Center, a Saginaw County school for some 270 students with special needs.
- Brett Elliott, Tyler Frank, and Jennifer Wilk, all theatre majors, were awarded $2,000 for Deathtrap, a Tony-nominated murder mystery, performed May 20-23.
- Samantha Noah, an accounting major, received $1,463 for a research project investigating the effects and implications of the increase in Michigan's minimum wage on businesses, particularly with respect to employment.
- Christi J. Raines, a biology major, was awarded $6,050 to study the molecular ecology and population genetics of Michigan waterfowl, specifically mallards, teals, wood ducks and geese.

The 2009-10 class of Roberts Fellows are (from left, front to back): Lindsey Zion, Justin Alexander, Donna Roberts (retired Secretary and Assistant General Counsel, The Dow Chemical Company), Holly Plewa, Cassie Hare, Kristin Whitlock, Dorota Best, Jessica Winger, Jamie Wendorf, Brian Piacentini, Margie McCue-Enser (assistant professor of communication), Nana Akowuah, Madison Bangert, and Drew Hinderer (professor of philosophy and director of the Roberts Fellowship program).
A “good country kid from west Texas” who “never expected to stay in Michigan” and began his studies in exercise science “by accident,” Jeremy Knous has thoroughly enjoyed his first year at SVSU and teaching the discipline.

“I love Saginaw Valley. It’s been a fantastic situation, and the genuineness of the people has been amazing,” he said.

From his graduate studies at Michigan State, Knous knew Josh Ode, and when he met his other future colleagues on his interview, he was sold.

“Their demeanor and the way they looked at the educational process was phenomenal and it seemed like a good place to be.”

Knous hasn’t been disappointed, and he enjoys explaining his field to those outside the department.

“It takes your hard sciences, like biology and chemistry, and puts them in a ‘real world’ setting,” he said. “The spectrum is so broad that you can do a lot of things with it, whether it’s working with someone as a personal trainer or working with athletes.”

That flexibility appeals to students, who have impressed Knous. “I’ve found they want to learn. Their interest and their thoughtfulness with questions – that’s been the most interesting part.”

A college soccer player, Knous was surrounded by sports, which slowly formed his academic interest. He relates to students unsure about a path of study, and for those with an expressed interest in the field, he pushes them to explore it.

“What I try to do is get students involved and excited about the ‘doing research’ part and not only coming to class but diving into the subject of exercise science.”

One plunge Knous would like to take is looking at the physical activity of the university, and tapping into the Healthy U wellness program as a research tool.

“It’s a great place for research to happen. You have such diversity in people and thought processes here, it would be a great place to see why people are physically active and what are the barriers to working out.”

Knous has found SVSU to be a good fit. “I like the small school atmosphere. I think it allows for a more intimate relationship between students and faculty, which can get lost at bigger universities.

“Being able to help students, give them options and relay insight that I may have is really important in helping the students find a path that works for them, because it’s not a cookie cutter mold,” he said. “That’s the fun part for me – how I can reach every student differently.”
Debra Storch knows she is fortunate to have a job where on any given day, she could be visited by one of “1,200 friends.” As the secretary for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at SVSU, she regularly interacts with the group of active adults age 50 and over.

“We run programs in everything,” she said. “Yoga, science classes, line dancing, hiking trips, international trips – and my main job is registration.”

Storch has been with OLLI since it started in 2001 when it had far fewer classes and members.

“It’s been great to watch it blossom. It’s busier, but I’m more comfortable now because I’ve been doing it so long,” she said.

A big part of Storch’s job is answering questions that run the gamut from refunds to class offerings. “It’s never boring,” she said with a smile.

While there are fewer offerings over the summer – “People don’t want to be indoors,” Storch explained – the number of members continues to increase.

“We reach a lot of people and it’s growing all the time,” she said, adding that an upcoming trip to a Detroit Tigers game is generating quite a bit of interest, as is “pickle ball,” a sport similar to tennis that is quite popular in Florida and is being added to the program lineup.

While there may be no such thing as a “typical” OLLI participant, Storch says they do share some common characteristics.

“They’re looking for challenges. Some are physical; they want to stay flexible. For a lot of them, it’s about stimulating their mind. They want the meaty courses – the sciences, the history. They don’t want to stop learning. That’s the exciting part.”

Storch says camaraderie in the workplace is “vital” and she feels fortunate to have that with her “three-woman show” that includes coworkers Jo Brownlie and Shelley Wegner.

“We get along very well, like sisters,” Storch said. “We complement each other and we need that to be successful.”

Away from work, Storch spends most of her time caring for daughters Alexis, 12, who holds a black belt in karate, and McKenzie, 3.

OLLI members have become like an extended family to Storch, talking about their children and grandchildren.

“They come in and hug me. I had a lady bake me brownies.” In such an environment, it’s no surprise Storch enjoys her job.

“I love what I do,” she said. “I’m rewarded every day. I like coming to work because of these people. The relationships – that’s what I like the best.”
Eleven outstanding Michigan educators have been selected for the fourth class of the Gerstacker Fellowship. They will receive concentrated leadership training over a one-year period, including a trip to Asia to gain international leadership experience and examine leadership practices in other cultures. Known as Gerstacker Fellows, the select participants will meet monthly on weekends, starting in August. SVSU faculty from various disciplines will instruct the Fellows on subjects dealing with leadership ethics, political problem solving, human resource management and education with a global perspective. The fourth class of Gerstacker Fellows are, from left: Jeffrey Budge, Shannon Blasy, Michael Decker, Joan Anderson, Melleretha Moses-Johnson, Deborah VanSumeren, Carol Lynn Neff, Matthew Schmidt, Maryanne Moriconi, Christine Schwerin and Ann Vayre.

**Williams steps down as dean; Huntley to serve in interim**
Ronald Williams has resigned as dean of the College of Science, Engineering & Technology, and will join the faculty of the Chemistry Department, effective July 1. Deborah Huntley, associate vice president for academic affairs, will serve as interim dean. A professor of chemistry, Huntley served as acting assistant dean from 2001-04 before assuming her current role in 2006. A national search is being conducted for Williams’ replacement. Those serving on the search committee include Moe Bidgoli, Brooks Byam, Russell Clark, David Karpovich, John Mooningham, Charles Pelzer, Marian Shih and Marwan Wafa.

**Professional Profile**
- **Mark Giesler**, assistant professor of social work, has been elected to the national board of the American Men’s Studies Association. He presented two papers at AMSA’s annual conference in Montreal, Canada, April 3-5. He also published an article titled, “Escape artist, fraud, or negotiator?: The search for the authentic me” in the journal *Reflections*.
- **Farid Hallouche**, associate professor of computer science and information systems, presented two papers with Scott James, John Hansen, and Moe Bidgoli at the World Congress of Engineering and Computer Science, Oct. 22-24, 2008, at the University of California, Berkeley. The papers were titled “Knowledge Management: Assessment of Strategies and Innovative Technologies” and “Capstone Experiences: Lessons Learned in Mastering Computer Science Competencies.” Hallouche also attended the 11th Annual Data Mining Conference and training workshops, Oct. 26-28, 2008, by SAS Institute, as well as Adobe’s Max 2008 Conference and training workshops, Nov. 16-19, 2008, in San Francisco.

**New Cardinals**
- **Stephanie Sieggreen**, assistant director of international education study abroad, had a girl, Augustyna Lee Sieggreen, March 27.
- **Jamie Teddy**, police officer, had a girl, Maryn Claire Teddy (9 lbs., 14 oz., 20-1/2 in.), April 23.

**Condolences**
- **To Steve Erdody**, lab technician, on the loss of his father, Stephen Erdody Sr., who passed away May 21.
- **To Myra Fall**, assistant professor of teacher education, on the loss of her father-in-law, Elmer (Buck) Fall, who passed away May 13.
- **To the family of Jason Frisch**, custodial specialist, who died May 12.
- **To Jeff Losee**, groundskeeper, on the loss of his father, Lloyd Losee, who died March 30.
- **To Mike Holliday**, manager of information technology services support center, on the loss of his father-in-law, Joseph G. Zilafro, who died April 26.

**SVSU faculty, staff receive grants**
The Office of Sponsored Programs announced the following grants that were recently awarded to faculty and staff:

**College of Science, Engineering & Technology**
- **Morteza Marzjarani**, professor of computer science & information systems, received $2,500 from the Michigan Space Grant Consortium’s Undergraduate and Graduate Fellowship Program on behalf of student Rochelle Hand for her research, “Study of Our Planets.” Over the past few years, Marzjarani has helped other students obtain these grant funds while serving as a mentor for their research.

**Staff**
- **Walter Rathkamp**, executive director of the Center for Science & Mathematics Education, received $18,620 from the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative Planning Grant. SVSU is uniquely positioned to assist the GLFT reach its goal of increasing awareness and understanding of the ecology of the Great Lakes.

The Interior is published on the last Tuesday of each month for faculty and staff at SVSU. University departments sponsoring activities or events listed in the Interior will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities when contacted at least three days in advance.

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**Submission Deadline:**  
Noon on Wednesday before the publication date. Please send items by e-mail to: tmi@svsu.edu.