

Retiring theatre professor to take stage at Commencement

A retiring theatre professor who has directed more than 50 plays at SVSU will step onto a different stage when she delivers the keynote address during Commencement exercises Friday, Dec. 17. Janet E. Rubin, professor of theatre, will speak to graduates during the 7:30 p.m. ceremony in O'Neill Arena.

The graduating class consists of 431 individuals expected to complete degree requirements who have indicated that they intend to don regalia and march in the ceremony. In all, 533 students are expected to graduate, including 424 who will receive bachelor's degrees, and 109 who will receive master's or education specialist degrees.

Rubin has earned acclaim as a scholar, arts educator and author and played an integral role in building the SVSU theatre department since joining the faculty in 1983.

While at SVSU, Rubin has received multiple awards and held important leadership positions. Her honors include the Earl L. Warrick Award for Excellence in Research in 1998, the Rush Distinguished Lectureship in 2001, and the Barstow Seminar in the Humanities Directorship in 2004. Rubin chaired the Department of Theatre for eight years and has directed more than 50 plays; she also instituted the annual Theatre for Young Audiences production. Further, she has represented SVSU abroad as a visiting scholar at the University of Mysore in India and at Ballarat College of Advanced Education in Australia.

Rubin has been active within her profession, as well, frequently presenting artistic and scholarly work at conferences and institutions around the

world, and is a co-author of *Creative Drama and Music Methods*, her latest book. She has served as president of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, a national professional organization for theatre educators and artists; as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts; and the Michigan Arts and Humanities councils. Rubin also has been a board member of the Michigan Humanities Council. As a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Rubin engaged in research which resulted in publications on using drama to teach about the Holocaust.

Regional community endeavors also have benefited from Rubin's expertise. She serves as a scholar for the Prime Time Family Reading Time

program sponsored by the Public Libraries of Saginaw and the Michigan Humanities Council. Rubin leads theatre workshops for high school students, for area theatres and service organizations, and has been a respondent for American College Theatre Festival productions at Michigan universities.

Rubin completed her Ph.D. at The Ohio State University. She also received a master's degree from the University of Connecticut and a bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University.

Rubin is retiring after 27 years of service to SVSU. She will relocate to Florida, where this winter, she will direct Neil Simon's *Chapter Two* for Surfside Playhouse.



Curtain Call — Janet Rubin, professor of theatre, (center) poses with the cast of *The Elves and The Shoemaker*, which was the last of more than 50 stage productions she directed at SVSU. Rubin announced her retirement from the faculty after 27 years of service to the university.

Mohammad Saad Alam

Assistant Professor of Electrical & Computer Engineering

Regional business groups travel the world promoting the Saginaw Valley as Michigan's solar valley, and major investments from Dow Chemical, Dow Corning, Hemlock Semiconductor and others demonstrate the effort is more than lip service. SVSU is a critical educational partner.

One of SVSU's newest faculty members, Mohammad Saad Alam, is at the forefront of these efforts.

"The main reason for coming to SVSU was everyone's response to alternative energy," he said. "Everyone I met – from professors to the dean and provost – was so enthusiastic about it, and it's definitely turning out that way."

A native of India, he is preparing for a Michigan winter, though that, too, played a role in bringing him here.

"My wife is from Wisconsin and we'd prefer to stay in the Midwest. She doesn't want to miss the ice and snow," he joked.

No stranger to northern climes, Alam worked for Chrysler in hybrid vehicle development for two years. He plans to teach a course on plug-in hybrids next semester and says it was "pre-decided" that he would leave industry to join academia to share his knowledge.

"When you are preparing students to go into industry, you should know what's going on there," he explained. "I know well what challenges my students will face, and what preparation is required besides the critical calculations, books and equations."

Even among countries that supply fossil fuels, Alam sees growing recognition of the need for other energy sources. He pointed to a team of Saudi students studying how a solar project might work in a desert area. Down the road, Alam would like to teach a course on alternative energy to the general student body "to create a healthy society."

On the curriculum side, Alam is involved in creating an academic minor in alternative energy and a master's degree program in energy and materials. He also is working to secure external funding for laboratory facilities.

Alam says solar study is "at the border of research and commercialization," as improved methods will lead to increased profitability. Recently, he led 31 students in his solar photovoltaics course on a field trip to Dow Corning; and in all of his efforts, he routinely consults with regional businesses.

"When our students graduate, they will be hired by local industry."

Alam has found SVSU students to be "very receptive. They have a desire to learn." Additionally, Alam has received a warm reception from his colleagues. "One good thing is that you can approach anybody; they're very friendly and very supportive in all aspects. I'm happy that I'm here."



Dan Goodell, Brian Mudd, Jeff Roberts, Joe Wojtkiewicz

Classroom/Instructional Technology Support • November 2010

Joe Wojtkiewicz recalls the state of classroom technology on campus when he arrived as a student in fall 2003.

“There weren’t many smart podiums. A lot of classrooms didn’t have the technology. Today, students can expect just about any class to include a smart podium, at a minimum. Technology has grown by leaps and bounds. I would say it’s a 400-500 percent increase.”

Wojtkiewicz points to advances such as high definition displays, wireless Internet access and interactive audience response systems.

“A lot more faculty are using technology, so to meet their needs, we have to continue to upgrade these rooms.”

Today, Wojtkiewicz spends 80 percent of his time fixing classrooms. He is part of the team that ensures those technology tools are in good working order. Brian Mudd said that effort should not to be taken for granted.

“In many instances, we’re talking about classrooms that are in use from 8:30 in the morning until 10 at night. Keeping up with that demand is tremendous.”

Dan Goodell chimed in: “We try to be an immediate response department. Any time we get a call, that is our first priority. If we can’t solve it over the phone, we immediately send someone to the classroom to see if we can fix the problem.”

The staff also takes measures to prevent problems before they arise.

“We try to do preventative maintenance,” Jeff Roberts said. “You can’t always predict when a lamp is going to burn out, but we go through and check all the technology, replace the batteries in remotes. We try to head off issues before they become a classroom problem. I take pride in that.”

Keeping up with current demands provides ample workload to stay busy, but one eye must focus on the future, too.

“People learn in different ways,” Roberts said. “Some people learn visually; some people learn audibly. It’s our job to know what technology is out there to support all types of learners.”

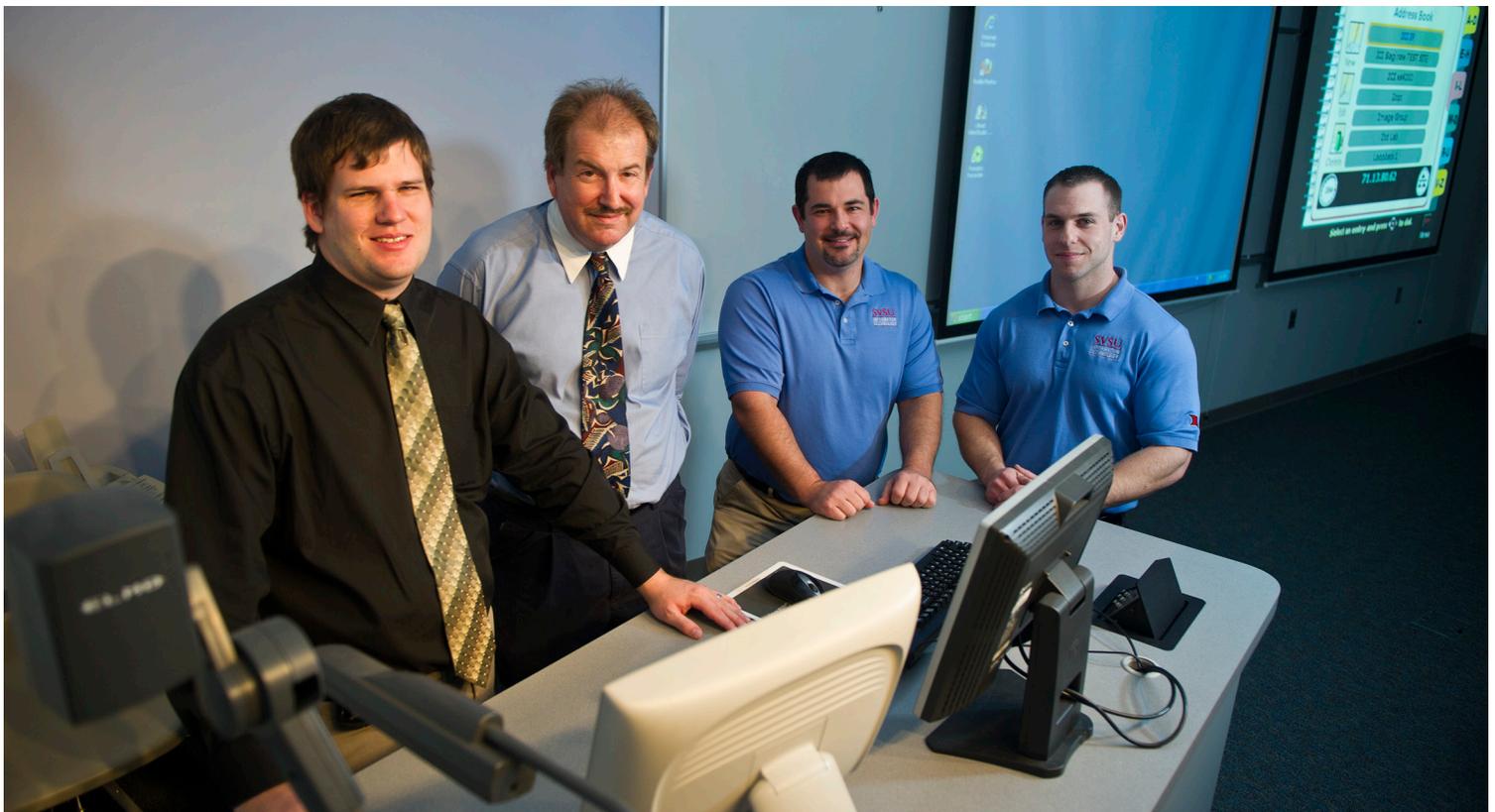
“From an instructional technology standpoint,” Mudd added, “portability is the key with students – hand-held devices – for entertainment, for communication, for everything.”

Video production is a key component of Goodell’s responsibilities.

“As video becomes more intensive, we’re starting to work with more classes,” he said. “We just did 10 student projects with the occupational therapy program, because what they illustrate can best be taught with video.”

Beyond fixing daily problems, the team members also lead workshops on how to use technology.

Goodell points out: “We’re not just ‘repair guys,’ we’re also teachers” ... a characteristic they share with those they support.



Professional Profile

- **Mohammad Saad Alam**, assistant professor of electrical & computer engineering, led students on a field trip to the Solar Discovery Center at Dow Corning Corporation, Oct. 23. The class will demonstrate the concepts learned during the trip in poster presentations on alternative energy that will be on display Thursday, Dec. 9, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. in Pioneer Hall.
- **Geoffrey V. Carter**, assistant professor of rhetoric & professional writing, had an article published in the Fall 2010 issue of *PRE/TEXT: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory*. He also joined the advisory board for *The Journal for Undergraduate Multimedia Projects* and the editorial board for *Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*.
- **Monika Dix**, assistant professor of modern foreign languages (Japanese), presented a paper titled “Japanese Language and Culture: What Is Culture and How Can it be Used to Enrich Communicative Competence?” Oct. 30 at the Teaching Japan Conference at DePaul University in Chicago. In addition, Dix received a Japanese Language Education Grant from the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Chicago (JCCC) Foundation to support her participation in the Teaching Japan Conference.
- **Jesse Donahue and Erik Trump**, professors of political science, published a book titled *American Zoos During the Depression: A New Deal for Animals*.
- **Julie Foss**, assistant professor of modern foreign languages (French), presented “Refueling Your Textbook: Authentic Materials as Contextualized Language Input” at the 2010 Michigan World Language Association Conference in Lansing.
- **Eric Gardner**, professor of English, had his book, *Unexpected Places: Relocating Nineteenth-Century African American Literature* (University Press of Mississippi 2009), named “Honorable Mention” in the competition for the 2010 Thomas J. Lyon Book Award. The award is presented each year to the best single-author scholarly book on the literature and culture of the American West; Gardner’s status as the first runner-up was announced at this year’s Western Literature Association annual meeting.
- **Poonam Kumar**, professor of advanced educational studies, published an article titled “Managing User Privacy in a Web 2.0 World” in the *Journal of Information Privacy and Security*.
- **Tai-Chi Lee**, professor of computer science, had an article titled “An Elliptic Curve Cryptosystem with Custom Computing Machine” presented and published in the Proceedings of the International Conference on Parallel and Distributed Processing Techniques and Applications at the 2010 World Congress in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and Applied Computing, July 12-14, in Las Vegas.
- **Marsha Millikin**, lecturer of rhetoric & professional writing, presented a paper titled “(Dis)Lodging Basic Writers’ Paralysis: Contested Space and Contested Knowledge in Martin Luther King Jr.’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’” at the Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE) Autumn Assembly, Oct. 29 in Lansing.
- **Hong Y. Park**, professor of economics, had a paper titled “Ideation as a Practice for Knowledge Creation and Protection” accepted for publication by the *International Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Change Management*. Hyejung Chang (Kyung Hee University) and Sang Kyu Lee (University of Suwon, SVSU MBA graduate) are co-authors.
- **Kathleen Pelkki**, biology laboratory technician, and **Sally Shepardson**, assistant professor of biology, are co-authors with Jason Scott and Peter Hodson (Queens University) and John Incardona (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) on a paper titled, “AhR2-mediated, CYP1A-independent Cardiovascular Toxicity in Zebrafish

(*Danio rerio*) Embryos Exposed to Retene.” The paper was accepted for publication in *Aquatic Toxicology*. Jason Scott is a graduate of the Biology Department at SVSU and earned his doctorate at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario. He has completed post doctoral studies at the University of New Mexico and is now at the University of Iowa.

- **Marcia Shannon**, assistant professor of nursing, was the featured speaker at the Midland Public School Retirees group, Oct. 13. About 60 people learned about a Spring 2010 study abroad trip to India.
- **Danilo Sirias**, professor of management, conducted a workshop titled “Using Problem-Solving Maps to Improve Math Education” at the 12th Theory of Constraints for Education International Conference, Nov. 11-13 in Lima, Peru.

New Cardinals

- **Mike Major**, director of career services, welcomed a son, Timothy Vincent (7 lbs., 15 oz., 20 in.), Nov. 26.
- **Angela Pohl**, assistant athletic director/senior women’s administrator, welcomed a son, Vaughn Herman (8 lbs., 7 oz., 20 in.), Nov. 20.
- **Will Stanton**, head volleyball coach, welcomed a son, Andrew William (6 lbs., 9 oz., 19 in.), Oct. 26.

Condolences

- To **Terry Bouza**, custodian, whose father-in-law, Martin Chiotti, passed away.
- To the family of **David DeSautel**, former instructor of mathematical sciences, who passed away Nov. 6. He had taught at SVSU for 26 years.
- To **Turesie Genwright**, custodian, whose father, Felix Genwright, passed away Nov. 1.
- To **Craig Snook**, assistant director of creative services, whose father-in-law, John A. Snyder Jr., passed away Nov. 7.

Briefly Speaking

- **Craig Aimar**, associate director of admissions, was elected vice president of the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers for 2010-11.
- **Tamara Barrientos**, director of the regional mathematics & science center, presented “Implementing Standards for Mathematical Practice: Instructional Strategies for Grades K-5” at the Michigan Department of Education Conference on “Instruction in the Era of the Common Core State Standards,” Oct. 25 in Grand Rapids.
- Results of the annual Sims Awards for Excellence in Public Speaking competition, Nov. 5, were: Demarcus Pringle, “Examination of Controversial Entertainers,” first place; Lauren Weiss, “Urban Legends,” second place; Stephanie Fraley, “The Humane Society of the U.S.,” third place. Finalists were Danielle Doucette, “Bed Bugs”; Dan Porta, “Leadership”; and Heather Zywicki, “Royal Family Kids Camp.”

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.

J.J. Boehm

Director of Media Relations
jjboehm@svsu.edu • (989) 964-4055

Tim Inman

Director of Creative Services
tmi@svsu.edu • (989) 964-4086

Submission Deadline:

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