

SVSU student accepted at University of Wisconsin-Madison summer research program

An SVSU student is spending her summer pursuing a passion for chemistry research through a highly competitive program at a university nationally renowned for its graduate programs in chemistry.

Emily Dzurka, a chemistry major from Bay City, is participating in the Research Experience for Undergraduates program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from May 31 to Aug. 5. She will perform

research with faculty, staff and students in the university's Department of Chemistry, which U.S. News & World Report in 2014 ranked No. 9 nationally among higher education chemistry departments.

"I was so ecstatic when I found out," Dzurka said. "I would love to go to the University of Wisconsin-Madison for graduate school, so getting my feet wet like this is an amazing opportunity."

Dzurka already has experience in chemistry research through opportunities at SVSU.



Emily Dzurka

Through an SVSU partnership, she has worked as a co-op student at The Dow Chemical Company in Midland, where she managed analytical instrumentation and performed sample testing.

On campus, she teamed with advisor Stephanie Brouet, SVSU associate professor of chemistry, on undergraduate research projects involving molecule synthesis.

Brouet said about 700 people applied for 15 spots in UW-Madison's Research Experience for Undergraduates program.

"So this is a very big opportunity," Brouet said.

Having witnessed Dzurka's determination to tackle complex research projects, Brouet is confident Dzurka is prepared for her latest challenge.

"She excels in lab work," Brouet said. "She's very self-motivated, very reliable and very professional in her approach. What's most impressive is her dedication to organic chemistry. She's very passionate about what she's doing."

A 2012 graduate of Bay City Western High School, Dzurka plans to earn a bachelor's degree from SVSU in May 2017. She said laboratory work is one of her passions.

"I like to be in the lab, and enjoy running my own reactions to figure out what works and what doesn't work," Dzurka said. "They're like puzzles that I like to figure out."

Dzurka said she hopes one day to work full-time in research at Dow.

Psych major recognized for research on brain functionality

Zackary Bowers has earned two major accomplishments recently for his dedication in research relating to improving the lives of individuals who have suffered traumatic brain injuries.

While attending The Michigan Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience conference last month, Bowers, a psychology major from Freeland, received an Undergraduate Student Outstanding Poster Award from among 180 poster presentations.

The award recognized Bowers' research in improving brain functionality for individuals suffering from traumatic brain injury.

The research was performed in SVSU's Brain Research Lab, where he has worked for about two years under the guidance of Charles Weaver, assistant professor of health sciences, and Jeffrey Smith, SVSU's Malcolm & Lois Field Endowed Chair of Health Sciences.

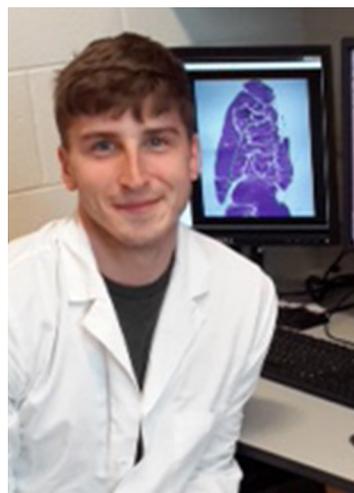
"The mentorship has been great," Bowers said. "And the faculty here provide so much room for you to grow, so long

as you are willing to work hard. I didn't think undergraduates were able to do this kind of research until I saw the kind of research they were doing at SVSU."

Smith said Bowers is deserving of the accolades.

"He's a very bright, hard working student," Smith said. "He puts a lot of effort into everything he does."

Bowers, in turn, credited SVSU's faculty and resources for providing an environment that leads to academic success, as well as the classmates who helped in



Zackary Bowers

his research efforts. "It's been a life-changing experience," he said of the research.

Bowers' next life-changing opportunity will include presenting at the National Neurotrauma Society's conference. He received a travel award that will fund his attendance at the organization's annual symposium June 26-29 in Lexington, Kentucky.

He will be a rare undergraduate student presenting research at the conference, which primarily features Ph.D. researchers and graduate students discussing the latest findings in neurotrauma science.

"I'm very excited about the opportunity," said Bowers, who was born in Caseville and graduated from Gladwin High School in 2010. "It's going to be a great experience."

Bowers expects to graduate in May 2017 and plans to pursue a Ph.D. that focuses on research of brain cell development. Eventually, he hopes to work as a university professor.

Olivier Heubo-Kwegna

Assistant Professor of Mathematics

Olivier Heubo-Kwegna hasn't quite adapted to the snow yet.

The associate professor of mathematics moved to Michigan in 2009 after growing up in the tropical African nation of Cameroon and later studying in the dry desert heat of New Mexico.

"It was a shock," Heubo-Kwegna said of the harsh winter months in his new home. "I wasn't used to this."

While Heubo-Kwegna may be out of his element when it comes to the region's weather, he has settled in comfortably with a campus climate that emphasizes both teaching and research for its faculty and students, undergraduates included. That all-encompassing focus was one of the reasons he applied for a job at SVSU in the first place.

"I was looking for a university that balances teaching and research, and SVSU is the perfect fit for me," said Heubo-Kwegna.

His research involves finding connections between various mathematical theories. Specifically, he is interested in bridging commutative algebra and order structures, as well as applying fuzzy mathematics to commutative algebra.

Since he arrived at SVSU, Heubo-Kwegna has published more than a dozen articles in leading mathematics journals, has presented international talks on his research, and is serving as editor and reviewer for several mathematics research journals. His peers also honored him with the 2015 SVSU Faculty Association Outstanding Scholarship Award.

Through his department, he is involved in community outreach programs such as math camps for high school students as well as the SVSU Math Olympics (an annual event involving middle and high school students from the region).

Some of Heubo-Kwegna's SVSU students have excelled academically, receiving accolades for that excellence. For instance, Brooke Szymoniak, a math education major from Onaway who has collaborated with Heubo-Kwegna in mathematical research, this year won the outstanding student talk award at the Michigan section meeting of the Mathematical Association of America.

Heubo-Kwegna began his career in education as a high school teacher in Cameroon. But his desire to pursue research and teach more advanced mathematics led him to study at first in Italy (via a UNESCO scholarship) to study at the prestigious International Center for Theoretical Physics and later in the United States, where he earned a Ph.D. at New Mexico State University.

While Heubo-Kwegna now teaches at the college level, his classroom style is inspired by a teacher from his teen years in Cameroon.

"I try to push and motivate the students," he said. "For some of them, math is challenging. I try to tell them, 'It's not as hard as you think it is.' The real question is, are they ready to do the work to succeed."



Scott MacLeod

Assistive Technology Specialist • May Staff Member of the Month

Scott MacLeod has a mantra he brings with him to work every day, where he helps SVSU students with disabilities by providing them with technology for classroom use.

For good measure, the words are emblazoned in decal form on his Wickes Hall office wall: “Imagine with all your mind. Believe with all your heart. Achieve with all your might.”

“I wanted a saying that encompassed everything I’m trying to help the students achieve,” MacLeod said. “I know what it’s like to go through this struggle. I very much enjoy being able to help students navigate and be able to reach their education goals.”

MacLeod’s empathy stems from first-hand experience. He has cerebral palsy and was himself an SVSU student, graduating first with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice in 1989 and later with a master’s degree in communication and digital media in 2015.

His passion for empowering the disabled began during those undergraduate years through his work in the student organization called Ablers First (now known as Ability First), which promotes opportunities and addresses issues for SVSU students with disabilities.

MacLeod said in the late 1980s the group worked with university leaders to fund and install what he believes was the campus’ first

automatic door, which remains in place on the first floor of Wickes Hall, facing the courtyard.

The Bay City native began working eight years ago as an assistive technology specialist with SVSU’s Office of Diversity Services.

“I saw the job posted on our website, and two of the criteria for the position were ‘must be comfortable with people with disabilities’ and ‘must work well with computers,’” he said. “That was perfect for me.”

And MacLeod has been perfect for the job, his colleagues say. Monica Reyes, director of Disability Services, called her co-worker an “inspiring team player.”

“He’s up to do anything we need him to do,” said Reyes, who nominated MacLeod for the Staff Member of the Month award.

“He never says, ‘I can’t,’ and he never uses his disability as an excuse. He’s a can-do guy. We had 460 registered students with disabilities in the winter semester, so it’s always all-hands-on-deck. We need everybody doing everything they can to help our students, and he always goes above and beyond the call of duty.”

Reyes said MacLeod provides more than technology assistance to students serviced by their office.

“I’ve heard him talk to students having a bad day, helping them out,” Reyes said. “He’s such an inspiration.”



Professional Profile

- **Chad Dewey**, lecturer of computer science & information systems, along with SVSU students Joseph Maes and Michael Roof, participated in the newly-formed Intel Automotive Security workshop and participated in testing the security of “in-vehicle infotainment” systems. Their names, along with the university, were mentioned in the list of 17 participants in San Diego.
- **Michael Mosher**, professor art/communication & multimedia, created a 6-foot effigy of Saginaw poet Theodore Roethke (1908-63) as a community art piece for a May 25 picnic at Roethke’s home in Saginaw. Those attending the picnic attached personal verse and messages to the sculpture. Mosher also improvised a sound bed on the Roethke family parlor piano at the event.
- **Thomas Renna**, professor emeritus of history, presented three papers: “Herman the German and Humanism at the Time of Maximilian I” at the Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, March 10 in Sarasota, Florida; “The *Germania* in German Humanism” at the 62nd Annual Conference of the Renaissance Society of America, April 1 in Boston; and “The Reception of Tacitus in the Italian and German Renaissance” at the Second International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Thought, held April 9 at Sam Houston University in Huntsville, Texas.
- **Kristin Sovis**, assistant professor of English, was elected to the executive board of the Michigan Council of Teachers of English as college chair. Founded in 1924, MCTE provides professional development for English language arts teachers and English education professors throughout the state. Its goals are to disseminate current English education scholarship and assist English language arts teachers as they make decisions about pedagogical practices, student populations, and teaching philosophies. Also, Sovis began her term in October 2015 as vice president of the Michigan Conference on English Education, a state affiliate of Conference on English Education. The Michigan Conference on English Education is an organization of professors of English and education dedicated to the preparation and professional education of outstanding language arts teachers.
- **Stephen Taber**, professor of biology, has a manuscript titled “Three New Species of *Boletina* Staeger Fungus Gnats with Notes on the Nearctic Members of the *Boletina nitida* Grzegorzek Species Group” accepted for publication in *Southwestern Entomologist*.
- **Anne Tapp**, professor of teacher education and acting assistant dean, published a paper titled “Using a Ternary Diagram to Display a System’s Evolving Energy Distribution” in *The Physics Teacher*. Also, Tapp recently presented a paper titled “Tracking a System’s Evolving Energy Distribution with a Ternary Diagram Society” at the American Association of Physics Teachers Winter Conference in New Orleans.
- **Scott M. Youngstedt**, professor of anthropology, and **Sara Beth Keough**, associate professor of geography, together with their Nigerien colleague Cheiffou Idrissa, published an article titled “Water Vendors in Niamey: Considering the Economic and Symbolic Nature of Water” in *African Studies Quarterly*.

Condolences

- To **David Cline**, associate professor of teacher education, whose father, Irvin Cline, passed away May 10.
- To **Linda Haas**, retired administrative secretary, whose husband, Donald Haas, passed away May 17.

Briefly Speaking

- **Ann Coburn-Collins**, director of academic programs support, presented “Practical Approaches to Managing and Supporting Adjunct Faculty” at the Academic Impressions Conference that was held in May in Atlanta, Georgia. Also, Coburn-Collins was a panelist for “The Future of Contingent Faculty in Higher Education: Addressing Equity Through Policy and Practice” at the 2016 Ewingleben Lecture Symposium that was held in April at Michigan State University.

Golf Center named for George Eastland



SVSU dedicated the George W. Eastland Golf Center, located in the SVSU fieldhouse, Wednesday, May 25. President Don Bachand (left) spoke at the ceremony, as did Eastland and Joe Vogl, men’s and women’s golf coach. Eastland joined the SVSU chemistry faculty in 1969 and served as SVSU’s faculty athletics representative for more than 40 years, playing an important role in the growth of the athletics program at SVSU. He also served as interim athletic director during the 2006-07 academic year. As a scholar, Eastland has written some 40 publications in the field of chemistry. He also has received a number of honors, including the Landee Teaching Excellence Award, SVSU’s most prestigious honor for quality teaching, as well as SVSU’s Rush Lectureship in 2009. Eastland and his wife Judy are avid golfers in their leisure time.

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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