

## SVSU makes the case, wins moot court competition, and headed to nationals

Seven months of determined preparation for a team of two SVSU students resulted in winning a regional moot court competition in Chicago. The win earned teammates Connor Hughes and Madison Laskowski an invitation to the national tournament in Gulfport, Florida in January 2017.

In a moot court competition, students act as attorneys in teams of two. They make arguments to a panel of judges by drawing from constitutional law and Supreme Court cases. Judges then decide winners based on public speaking ability, knowledge of cases and of law, and the ability to answer questions.

In May, competitors received an informational packet containing court documents and rulings related to the case. Hughes and Laskowski

immediately began readying for the November tournament when the packet arrived seven months earlier. Julie Keil, assistant professor of political science and adviser to SVSU's moot court program, said the pair devoted five to 10 hours each week studying and preparing.

"It's been a huge time commitment for them," she said. "They know the case; they are hard to shake on the facts, and that really showed."

Despite several impressive showings over the years and a national top 20 ranking, SVSU's victory marked the first time a team from the university won an American Moot Court Association regional tournament. Hughes, a political science major from Howell, and Laskowski, a political science major from Bay City, will extend SVSU's impressive streak of



**Connor Hughes, left, and Madison Laskowski holding the winning trophy.**

earning berths to the national contest, where they will be among 80 teams competing.

The current uninterrupted run spans the entirety of the 6-year-old SVSU moot court program's existence.

"That's not common," Keil said. "There are a number of teams that are always very competitive, but they aren't in the nationals every year like this. This says a lot about our students."

More than 350 colleges and universities field American Moot Court Association teams.

Another SVSU team of Alexander Partridge, a history major from Vassar, and Jaclyn Zembrod, a political science major from Walton, Kentucky; placed 13th in the 19-team contest.

Each year, American Moot Court Association organizers create a single fictional U.S. Supreme Court case — often based on actual cases heard in lower courts — that competitors must address when participating in the regional and national tournaments.

This year's case study concerns voter rights. The case specifically deals with a citizen who divorced her husband, changed her name but did not update her ID documents in time for the election. As a result, clerk employees did not allow the citizen to vote because her ID did not match the voting registry.

"The timing on that was funny," Keil said, noting that the national presidential election and subsequent voter rights concerns made headlines during the same week as the Chicago tournament.

Keil said SVSU's success — and the moot court program's culture of excellence — is fueled by a proud network of supportive faculty and alumni. Keil said additional SVSU students may earn invitations to the national tournament. Six more teams from the university will compete in a American Moot Court Association regional tournament hosted by SVSU Dec. 2-3.

## SVSU wins 2016 Battle of the Valleys competition



SVSU students showed their passion to help their community. The streak continues as SVSU won the annual Battle of the Valleys fundraising competition for the ninth consecutive year against Grand Valley State University. The \$26,000.25 that SVSU collected will benefit the Saginaw-based Hidden Harvest, which supplies food pantries in the Great Lakes Bay Region and supports Diaper Alliance, a Midland-based nonprofit that provides diapers to families in need. This year, GVSU students raised \$17,000 for Laker Children's Fund. In total, the two universities have collected \$552,150 since 2003.

# Khandaker Abir Rahman

Assistant Professor of Computer Science & Information Systems

Khandaker Abir Rahman is on the move. In more ways than one. Rahman has an academic specialty in cyber behavioral biometrics, or the study of how people move — and behave — when surfing cyberspace.

It's a subject that has, in a way, fascinated him since he began pursuing a profession in computer science while still a high school student in Dhaka, the capital and largest city in Bangladesh.

"My plan at first wasn't to become a professor, but when I started my master's degree, I fell in love with computer science research," he said.

Now, more than a decade later on the campus of SVSU, Rahman's work involves both inspiring students interested in the computer science fields while also attempting to make his mark in the engineering side of the industry.

Rahman and undergraduate student research assistants earlier this year filed a request with the U.S. Patent Office for technology that would allow consumers to unlock their smartphones using a series of physical movements.

To some, the concept may seem like a less secure alternative to the traditional method of typing a password on a keyboard. However, cyber behavioral biometrics-based studies, Rahman argues, shows a movement-based password system can offer a kind of security difficult to replicate by people other than the device's owner.

Rahman also stays busy as adviser of the SVSU club that competes in the International Collegiate Programming Contest, a computer programming competition involving the top students in the world. Rahman's group recently placed 51st out of 129 teams in the regional division that includes Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, eastern Ontario and western Pennsylvania. Competition includes students from other institutions with solid reputations in computer sciences such as University of Michigan, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Waterloo and University of Toronto.

"They will give you a number of computer programming problems to solve, and a lot of teams can't solve any of them," Rahman said. "When we did well and placed 51st, the competition was surprised. They hadn't heard of SVSU, but we did quite well."

Rahman's interests also led him to another responsibility that keeps him on the move. He serves as adviser to the SVSU Cricket Club that formed in recent months after the university created a cricket field on campus.

"Cricket is my first hobby," he said.

The club fell short during its first tournament competition against Wayne State University in September. During the game, though, Rahman wasn't simply watching his team play. He became a player. The tournament organizers allowed him to move from the sidelines, onto one of the many fields he loves.



# Lisa Micsak

## Administrative Services Coordinator • November Staff Member of the Month

Lisa Micsak is from a one-traffic light town, but when it comes to her career, she's discovered an open road without a stop sign in sight.

The Linwood native now serves as the administrative services coordinator for The Conference Center at SVSU, where she began working while still an undergraduate student in 2010.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in management in December 2013, then returned as a full-time employee in June 2014 to The Conference Center at SVSU.

While a university campus provides a busier setting than her small town beginnings did, Micsak said it was the "close-knit family atmosphere" at her office that inspired her to apply for a job there after graduation. "The best memories I have here all involve the people," she said. "It is inspiring how well everyone looks out for each other and takes pride in the overall community-oriented culture of the university, making it a very harmonious atmosphere."

That level of comfort spills over into interactions with clients. The Conference Center at SVSU works both with clientele on campus as well as outside organizations and guests interested in utilizing campus facilities for various events.

One of Micsak's favorite work experiences involved coordinating the wedding of a couple whose groom was an SVSU graduate. Micsak, though, largely worked with the bride-to-be, who lived in another state at the time.

"Our correspondence was all by email or phone leading up to the wedding," Micsak said. "She had to really trust my recommendations and planning abilities. When we finally met on the day before the wedding, it was amazing to see the excitement and joy on her face."

Micsak's professional ambitions include furthering her career in higher education. She is enrolled at SVSU in classes for a Master of Public Administration and expects to graduate in May 2018.

"Long-term, I would like to work with students and look forward to being a mentor to them," she said. "Most of my life, friends have come to me for guidance or advice. A lot of people need someone to listen to them and provide a caring outside perspective to help them with critical decisions they are encountering in their life."

Micsak said her accomplishments don't belong exclusively to her. She often is cheered on by her family, and her parents have played an important key role in her success.

"I was the first college graduate in my immediate family, so being able to attend my graduation, for them, was like attending their own graduation," she said.

"They've been my motivators and my role models; without them I would not be where I am today, and for them I am truly grateful."



## Professional Profile

- **Ann Coburn-Collins**, director of Adjunct Faculty & Academic Support Programs, presented “Adjunct and Part-Time Faculty: Working Toward Organizational Structures that Support Instructors and Student Success” Aug. 22 at the American Sociological Association meetings in Seattle.
- **Monika Dix**, associate professor of modern foreign languages, presented “Textuality and its Material Display in the *Taima-dera Jikkai-zu byobu*” Oct. 28 at the Association of Japanese Literary Studies Conference at Pennsylvania State University.
- **Mary Klaus** and **Diane Deacon**, ESL specialists, co-presented “Challenging the Status Quo: Practical Ideas to Add Diversity to Classrooms” with Jeremiah Lee (Northwood University) Oct. 14-15 at the Mi-TESOL conference at the University of Michigan-Flint.
- **Chris Noller**, assistant professor of health science, published “Third Party Payments of Qualified Health Plan Premiums” in the *American Bar Association, The Health Lawyer*.
- **Dennis Savard**, assistant professor of criminal justice, with Daniel Kennedy (professor emeritus, University of Detroit Mercy), published “Inadequate Security Litigation: Assessing the Effectiveness of Security Measures Designed to Prevent Criminal Attack” in *Customer Connection: Retail and Hospitality News*.
- **Kerry Segel**, **Veronika Drake** and **Natalia Knoblock**, English faculty, together with **Janette Hermina** and **Kate Scott** from the English Language Program, organized and presented a workshop titled “English-Mediated Instruction: An approach to delivering content in an L2 setting” Oct. 14 at the Mi-TESOL conference at the University of Michigan-Flint.
- **Gail Sype**, associate professor of management, is publishing a book titled *Choices and Consequences: Short Cases in Management Decision Making* (Kona Press).
- **Gary Thompson**, professor of English, published an essay titled “A Taxonomy of Bullshit” in a new volume published by Southern Illinois University Press, *Propaganda and Rhetoric in Democracy: History, Theory, Analysis*. The collection of essays brings attention by some distinguished rhetoricians to the timely and vexing problem of propaganda in U.S. democracy.

## New Cardinals

- **Melissa Ford**, archivist at the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum, announced the birth of a daughter, Harper Alice Ford (8 lbs., 14 oz.), July 17.
- **Sharmee Gloss**, transition coordinator, announced the birth of a daughter, Regan E. Gloss, Oct. 26.

## Condolences

- To the family of **Dale Irish**, who retired from SVSU in 2007 as director of business services.
- To **Leo Mioduszewski**, chief of police, on the loss of his wife, Shelley Mioduszewski, who passed away Nov. 2.
- To **Michelle Strasz**, research & online course support librarian, on the loss of her father, John D. Kohlschmidt, who passed away Oct. 26.

## Alumna to deliver address to December grads

Janet (Jan) M. Botz will deliver the commencement address at the Dec. 16 and 17 ceremonies in Ryder Center.

Jan received a bachelor’s degree from SVSU in 1974, majoring in sociology and English. She was a reporter and later editor of *The Valley Vanguard* and served in student government. Her Master of Business Administration is from Central Michigan University.



Jan Botz

Jan is passionate about the value of liberal arts to corporate organizations; and in 2013, she established the Botz Fellowship at SVSU to help liberal arts students gain corporate experiences via internships. She also serves on the university’s Foundation Board of Directors and is a past member of the Alumni Board and the Board of Fellows. She received the university’s Distinguished Alumni Award in 1998.

Jan began her career at *The Saginaw News*. After several years as a reporter and an editor, she moved on to the Dow Corning Corporation. She held positions of increasing responsibility in various business and communications roles in the U.S. and Europe for some 30 years. She retired after seven years as chief communications officer and transitioned to higher education as vice president of Public Affairs and Communications at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. While in South Bend, she served as a member of the board and the executive committee of WNIT, the northern Indiana PBS station.

Jan formed her own communications consultancy firm in 2012. She currently works as program director of the Conference Board for two executive peer groups and conducts the annual Corporate Communications Conference. She was a decade-long member of The Conference Board’s Corporate Communications Strategy Council, serving as chair for several years.

A member of the Friends Board of Wisconsin Public Television, based in Madison, Jan also belongs to the Arthur W. Page Society for communications executives. She and her husband Tom Lippert, a retired attorney, now reside in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

**Faculty and staff may present the diploma jacket to graduating members of their immediate family** during the ceremonies, which take place at 7:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 16 and 11 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 17. Please call the Alumni Relations Office at ext. 4196 to make arrangements. To confirm your regalia order, call the Bookstore at ext. 4277.

**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 email submissions to: jjboehm@svsu.edu**