

Braun Fellows to improve health of pregnant women, write poetry collection

Two SVSU professors have received support from SVSU for their scholarly activity. Arra Ross, associate professor of English, and Rebecca Schlaff, assistant professor of kinesiology, have been selected for the Braun Fellowship.

Ross intends to write and publish a book of poetry, while Schlaff will further her growing research aimed at improving the health of pregnant women and new mothers. Each will receive research support grants totaling up to \$37,500 over the next three years to further their scholarly and professional activities. Funds may be used for research expenses, equipment, travel and/or other related support.

Ross plans to author a full-length poetry collection that will build on the work of her first poetry book, "Seedlip and Sweet Apple (2010)," which followed the historic personage Ann Lee to explore the spiritual roots of the Shaker religion in the mid to late 1700s. She also plans to submit poems for publication in leading literary journals.

Some of her poems will ask questions about dogma and judgment, and about compassion and faith, drawing from the gnostic gospel, The Gospel of Mary.

Ross previously received an SVSU Research Grant that funded extensive place-based research into Scandinavian prehistory and Old Norse religion, which provides a foundation as



REBECCA SCHLAFF



ARRA ROSS

she explores ideas about abundance and scarcity, both within the human psyche and on a larger scale.

Ross joined the SVSU English faculty in 2010. She completed a bachelor's degree at Macalester College in Minnesota and a Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska.

Schlaff, assistant professor of kinesiology, will expand her community-based research to target postpartum depression and mental health outcomes

among pregnant women and new mothers.

Since joining the SVSU kinesiology faculty in 2012, Schlaff has worked to develop and implement a behavioral physical activity and nutrition intervention for pregnant women; this began in April 2016.

Schlaff completed a bachelor's degree at SVSU and a Ph.D. at Michigan State University. She has been awarded eight research grants, including a 2015 grant of more than \$19,000 from the Allen Foundation in Midland to study a pilot nutrition and physical activity intervention for pregnant women.

Established in 2005, the Braun Fellowship program was created through a \$1.5 million endowment from the Saginaw-based

Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation. Administered by the Saginaw Community Foundation, the program's purpose is to recognize the exceptional accomplishments and potential of select SVSU faculty and staff. It is named in honor of Ruth and Ted Braun of Saginaw.

DONALD BACHAND WILL DELIVER HIS STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

4 P.M., THURSDAY, FEB. 16

IN THE MALCOLM FIELD THEATRE
FOR PERFORMING ARTS

THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY IS
INVITED TO ATTEND

A RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW
THE ADDRESS



The former top law enforcement official in the United States, Eric Holder Jr., was the keynote speaker for SVSU's Martin Luther King Jr. celebration Jan. 25. Most recently, Holder was the 82nd attorney general. When he took office in February 2009, Holder was the first black person to serve in that position. When he stepped down in April 2015, he was the third-longest-serving attorney general in the nation's history. Saginaw County Chief District Judge Terry L. Clark, a past Board of Control member, served as moderator for the program.

Julie Keil

Assistant Professor of Political Science

Julie Keil spent 30 years as an attorney. It's a career she has no desire to resuscitate.

"I don't miss it," said the assistant professor of political science.

Now that she's exited the profession, her passion involves helping students interested in entering it.

In 2010, Keil and a group of students founded SVSU's moot court program, where 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.

SVSU joined other universities with similar programs that competed within the American Moot Court Association. The organization hosts a series of tournaments across the nation that culminate in a national contest in January, when the top performing teams of students from each region gather.

The national tournament features elite students from prestigious universities across the nation. Keil said seeing one of her teams advance to the competition during the program's history would have been considered a success.

An SVSU moot court team has advanced to the national tournament every single year of its existence. Sometimes more than one SVSU team has achieved that goal in a given year. For instance, eight SVSU students traveled to Gulfport, Florida, this month to compete in the contest.

"It's a huge source of pride," Keil said of the program's success. "These students are remarkably talented. And moot court was just a beginning for them."

SVSU moot court alumni are attending law school in six different states. Other former team members already are practicing law in Michigan.

"Moot court has been a huge benefit for these students," Keil said. "It doesn't get them into law school, but it helps them when they get there."

Eventually, Keil hopes, she will extend the moot court competitions to include international contests.

"We are ambitious," she said.

When she's not teaching in classrooms or working with moot court students, Keil enjoys traveling. She plans to combine her love for travel and research in May, when she visits Rome.

Her research involves exploring the rights of financiers over the monuments they fund.



Jason Rasmussen

Energy Management Specialist • December 2016 Staff Member of the Month

Few people are as responsible for how well your workday goes as Jason Rasmussen. That's because the SVSU energy management specialist has control over the temperatures of every room on campus, save for a few student housing suites.

The magnitude of this power isn't lost upon the 52-year-old. It's a responsibility he takes seriously — and with pride.

"I can tell you that the temperature in your room right now is 72 degrees," Rasmussen, from his office in South Campus Complex A, tells this profile's author, whose office is in Wickes Hall. "There are some studies that say that's the most comfortable temperature. I want people to be comfortable."

Establishing that comfort begins when Rasmussen boots up a pair of computers that host the software that sets temperature levels for most of the campus' individual rooms and commons areas. When the programs load, Rasmussen switches between screens showing maps of various building floorplans and offices, overlaid by a rainbow of colors designating equipment functions and heat. With a few taps of his finger, Rasmussen turns chilled rooms hot, and dry suites humid. He performs this task in real-time or weeks in advance using a scheduling system.

There's a sense of strategy to the work. Rasmussen determines the timing for environmental changes within spaces with people's work schedules in mind. Classrooms are cooled to reasonable levels when students go home for the night. Gymnasiums are warmed up before a crowd is expected to arrive for a sporting event in the afternoon.

Not everyone is aware of the systems in place to request environmental changes in individual spaces. The deed is as easy as clicking a "Request Maintenance" tab on the university's website. Rasmussen doesn't mind the extra workload, he says.

There are other elements of his job that keep the Grayling native busy. Equipment in need of repair is one of those duties. Recently, he absorbed foreman responsibilities from a co-worker who retired.

The work keeps him happy. He's served at SVSU for 18 years. "There's not too many places where you come and enjoy work," he says. "This is one of them."

Next academic year, the youngest of his two daughters plans to attend the university. He's not certain yet if she will live on campus or remain at home. Either way, Rasmussen adds, he will be the one who controls the temperature in her room.



Professional Profile

• **Monika Dix**, associate professor of modern foreign languages, presented “Innovative Design Thinking for 21st Century Learners: Real-World Competencies in Japanese + STEM” at the 11th International Symposium on Japanese Language Education and Japanese Studies, Nov. 19 at The Open University of Hong Kong.

Also, Dix received the 2016-17 Japan Foundation Teaching Material Purchase Grant.

• **Eric Gardner**, professor of English, presented a paper, “Information Wanted Ads as Elliptical Slave Narratives,” Jan. 5 at the Modern Language Association Annual Convention. He also has an essay, “Nineteenth-Century American Women’s Poetry of Slavery and Abolition,” in the newly-published collection *A History of Nineteenth-Century American Women’s Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

• **Stephen Taber**, professor of biology, has a manuscript titled “A New Nearctic Species of *Azana* Walker Fungus Gnat (Diptera: Mycetophilidae)” accepted for publication in *Southwestern Entomologist*.

• **Scott M. Youngstedt**, professor of anthropology, and **Sara Beth Keough**, associate professor of geography, presented a paper titled “The Sedentarization of Tuareg and Fulani: Water Vending in Niamey, Niger” at the Programme Point-Sud Workshop: Sahelian Identities in Times of Crisis, Past and Present in Bamako, Mali, in December 2016.

New Cardinals

• **Adem Althor**, international student advisor, announced the birth of a daughter, Nancy Althor (7 lbs., 3 oz.), Jan. 3.

• **Eric Davis**, assistant director of the Academic Advisement Center, announced the birth of a daughter, Reagan Elizabeth Davis (8 lbs., 18 in.), Jan. 18.

Condolences

• To **Marty Arford**, associate professor of geography, whose mother, Jane Arford, passed away Jan. 10.

• To **Roberto Garcia**, school improvement & transition specialist, whose father, Roberto Garcia Sr., passed away Jan. 8.

• To **Barbara Jones**, associate professor of teacher education, whose father, Willie J. Dulaney, passed away Dec. 25.

• To **Julie Reinbold**, senior programmer/analyst, whose father-in-law, Donald M. Reinbold, passed away Jan. 6.

• To **Marilyn Skrocki**, professor of health sciences, whose father, Theodore Salgat, passed away Dec. 17.

• To **Erik Trump**, professor of political science, whose father, Marvin Trump, passed away Dec. 19.

Saginaw chamber recognizes SVSU for community service

President Donald J. Bachand at a February reception will accept the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce Corporate Community Service Award, given to SVSU as an institution. The chamber chose SVSU as this year’s award recipient as a result of the university’s strong community engagement. These efforts include the continued success of Battle of the Valleys; the Business, Art and Theater Revive Urban Communities (B.A.T.) Program’s contributions to the City of Saginaw; the introduction of The Dow-SVSU Mobile Research Lab to area K-12 schools; the creation of the Saginaw Urban and Civic Partnership Scholarship; and the ongoing partnerships with nonprofits such as The United Way of Saginaw County, The Saginaw Community Foundation and Habitat for Humanity.

Bachand will accept the Corporate Community Service Award at the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce Chairman’s Ball Feb. 11. SVSU was nominated for the award by The Dow Chemical Company.



Michael Mosher, professor of art/communication & multimedia, offers instruction to students visiting SVSU from Saginaw’s First Ward Community Center. The students were participants in the B.A.T. Program, which is among the community engagement activities by SVSU that has made a positive impact in the region.

Briefly Speaking

• The Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum is hosting an opportunity for faculty and staff to display artistic talent. The Creative Cardinals Exhibition, which runs May 26 through June 17, showcases works created by our talented peers at the university. For more information, or to print a submission form, visit marshallfredericks.org/exhibitions/upcoming/creativecardinals.

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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