

Braun Fellowship to boost faculty research into economics, environment

Two SVSU professors will expand their research through support received from a Braun Fellowship.

One research project will examine the efficiency of free market societies, while another will map invasive species at a national wildlife refuge.

Kaustav Misra, associate professor of economics, and Rhett Mohler, associate professor of geography, 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.

SVSU empowers students through research opportunities, and both projects will involve SVSU students serving as research assistants.

Misra's research will test

existing studies and theories concluding that free market societies are more efficient than their non-free market counterparts. His project will involve researching the markets in India and Vietnam.

"The results will help institutional theorists and policy makers who are associated with policy designs, and increase the knowledge base of the field," Misra said. Misra received his Ph.D. in applied economics from Mississippi State University in 2010.

He joined the SVSU faculty in 2011 and now serves as the chair of both SVSU's Department of Economics; the Research and Publications Committee; and the Vitito Global Leadership Institute, a student leadership development program for students in SVSU's Scott L. Carmona College of Business & Management.

His previous economics-based research has appeared in over 20 peer-reviewed journals.

Mohler's research will involve mapping two invasive plants — buckthorn and common reed — in the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, south of Saginaw.

Using drone technology, he plans to continue monitoring the plants' presence as treatment is applied in the coming years. The results, he said, will inform wildlife management communities about the treatment's effectiveness.

"Research like this helps me to teach informed classes by being on the leading edge of what is being done in my research field," Mohler said.

Mohler earned his Ph.D. in geography from Kansas State University in 2011 and joined the SVSU faculty the following year.



Kaustav Misra



Rhett Mohler

His earlier research – dealing in part with remote sensing and geospatial analysis – has been published in peer-reviewed journals 12 times over the years.

Mohler's studies have connected him with a number of environmental groups in the region.

He is a member of both the Friends of the Bay City State Recreation Area as well as the Saginaw Bay Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area.

Both Misra and Mohler plan to present their findings through articles submitted in peer-reviewed academic journals as well as presentations at conferences across the globe.

Both projects will benefit communities — both local and global — all while providing hands-on experience for the student research assistants helping the educators analyze data and manage drone technology.

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.

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Mari MacFarland

Assistant Professor of Teacher Education

Mari MacFarland was a young girl spending time at her grandmother's candy shop in Valencia, Spain, when she first realized her passion for helping individuals with disabilities. When one of the neighborhood girls — she was either mute or a selective mute, by MacFarland's memory of things — visited the store, MacFarland made a point to play with her. The encounters usually led to the two playing jump rope or other games on the sidewalks of Spain.

"My heart went out to her, and I wanted her to feel included in what everyone else was doing," MacFarland said. "I've always had a heart for individuals with disabilities."

That interest continues to manifest itself today for MacFarland, an assistant professor of teacher education who leads several university programs aimed at improving the lives of individuals with disabilities including autism, intellectual disability and neurological disorders.

Once a K-12 teacher — including a stint at César Chavez Academy, an SVSU-authorized charter school in Detroit — MacFarland over the years built an expertise in special education and related matters. She received a Ph.D. in special education as well as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) credential from Michigan State University. Now she presents on such topics in classrooms and conferences abroad.

In February, she will present at the Behavioral Analysis Association of Michigan conference at Eastern Michigan University, and in April and May, at the Badar-Kauffman Conference at Kent

State University and Applied Behavior Analysis International Annual Conference in Chicago, respectively. In May, she will also lead a two-week study abroad course at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, where SVSU students will learn about the institution's cutting-edge technology that empowers individuals with autism and other disabilities.

Meanwhile, at SVSU, she enjoys educating tomorrow's special education teachers on how best to implement evidence-based practices in the classroom. She also continues to develop programs such as Cardinal to Cardinal, which connects students with SVSU peers with disabilities or disorders that may impede their ability to socialize. The program creates empowering relationships resembling the one MacFarland experienced during her childhood visits to Spain.

For instance, Cardinal to Cardinal recently organized an outing to a Valley Nights gathering on campus, where the group watched "Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again" with their student peers. Such social interactions can boost the confidence of the program's participants in a way that positively impacts their educational pursuits at SVSU as well as their professional endeavors later in life.

"Programs like these create a safe place for social interaction," MacFarland said. "It's all about creating community — making the space for friendships to form. That will benefit all of our students in so many ways."



Angela Bublitz

Graphics Center Manager • December Staff Member of the Month

Like the printing presses that continue churning out material for SVSU in her office, Angela Bublitz keeps adding pages to her story at the university.

Growing up in Bay City, she enrolled as an undergraduate in the 2000s, receiving a bachelor's degree in professional & technical writing in 2007.

During her last semester as a student, Bublitz earned an internship working in the Graphics Center. Since then, she has never looked back; she has only moved forward.

After receiving a full-time job there as assistant manager in 2007, Bublitz became the Graphics Center manager in 2016. It's a story she is happy to continue.

"I just like the whole culture of SVSU," Bublitz said. "I enjoy being here."

The Graphics Center is represented in a multitude of ways across the university.

From marketing materials for the Admissions office to flyers advertising events in the Performing Arts Center, the work flying off the presses in Bublitz's office can be found in all corners of campus. It's a labor of love for her.

"There isn't a typical day, which is one of the best parts," she said. "It's not just the printing. We need to do all of the finishing work — like cutting, folding and binding."

"We try to schedule all of that stuff out in the day as efficiently as possible so that everything gets done on time."

The office produces hundreds of jobs each month, some large and some smaller. The size of the job does not always mean simpler work, however.

"It's the smaller jobs that can throw a wrench in things," she said.

"The ones that you do all the time — the ones that repeat — you know what you're doing. It's the little ones — where you need 50 of this invitation or 25 of this little greeting card — but it still needs to be printed and cut out, scored and folded," she said.

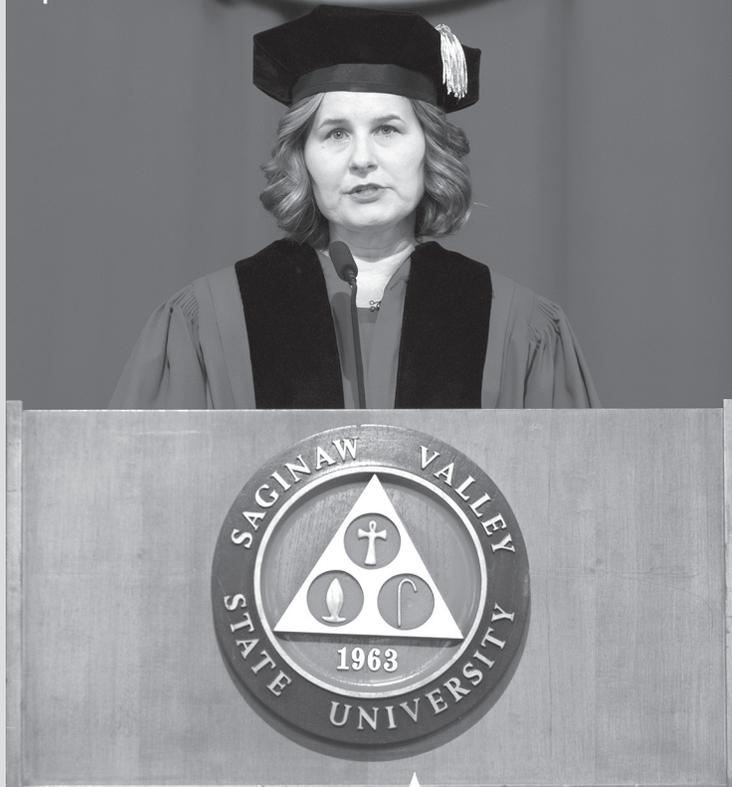
"It's the same set up, whether we're doing 1,000 cards or five."

With jobs being submitted from everywhere on campus, Bublitz enjoys working with her office's clients in order to get these jobs done.

"I just want to do the best of my ability and help them get their jobs done to the best of their ability," she said. "Nobody is on an island around here. Everybody's got to work together, everybody's got their part to make things work and to get things done for the students."

"That's the whole point of being here."





Jenée Velasquez, executive director of The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, delivered the keynote address to graduates during commencement exercises Dec. 14-15. Velasquez, who also serves as chair of SVSU's Board of Control, spoke to a graduating class that totaled 623. Velasquez, who has served as executive director for the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation since 2005, has maintained strong ties to the community. Beyond her board service at SVSU, she served as campaign co-chair for SVSU's Talent. Opportunity. Promise. private fundraising campaign, which raised \$28 million, including a \$5 million gift from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation to create the STEM Scholars Network, which provides funding to support SVSU student and faculty research, as well as outreach efforts.

Professional Profile

- **Ashley Blinstrub**, research & assessment librarian, presented a session titled "Standardized Assessment of Student Learning: One-Shot Library Instruction for the First-Year Writing Program" at the Association of Research Libraries 2018 Library Assessment Conference, Dec. 5 in Houston.
- **Julie Foss**, associate professor of modern foreign languages, presented "Building Career-Readiness Through Language" with Emily Spinelli, (Emerita) University of Michigan-Dearborn, and Irma Torres, Oakland Schools ISD, at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' Annual Convention, Nov. 16-18 in New Orleans.
- **Eric Gardner**, professor of English, has an essay titled "The Just Teach One: Early African American Print Project" in the new collection *Teaching with Digital Humanities: Tools and Methods for 19th Century American Literature* (University of Illinois Press, 2018: pp. 117-132). The essay was co-written with Nicole N. Aljoe (Northeastern University) and Molly O'Hagan Hardy (Cape Ann Museum).
- **Thomas Renna**, professor emeritus of history, had a paper titled "Martin Luther, The Devil and the True Church" accepted for publication in *Quidditas: A Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association* (Denver 39, 2018: pp. 190-206).
- **Paul Teed**, professor of history, presented a paper titled "Among the Fifes and Drums: Harriet Hawley and the Occupied South" at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association, Nov. 10 in Birmingham, Alabama. The paper was part of a panel focusing on the experience of northern civilians living in the Civil War South.

Also, Teed's book, *Joseph and Harriet Hawley's Civil War: Partnership, Ambition and Sacrifice*, was published Dec. 15 by Lexington Books. Merging the history of the home front and the battlefield, this book explores the remarkable partnership of

Joseph and Harriet Hawley, a married couple from Connecticut whose lives were transformed by overlapping experiences in the American Civil War. The research and writing for this project was made possible by a Ruth and Ted Braun Fellowship at SVSU.

- **Scott M. Youngstedt**, professor of anthropology, presented a paper titled "Itinerant Medicine Vendors on the Streets of Niamey, Niger: A Practical Health Option or a Public Health Menace" at the 117th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in November in San José.
- **Melojeane Zawilinski**, adjunct faculty in the English department, presented "Grammar through Song Lyrics" at the Lighthouse Summer Symposium sponsored by the West Michigan English Language Institute, July 20 at Ferris State University. Also, Zawilinski gave an invited talk titled "Infographics to Engage, Enrich, and Empower Teachers and Trainers for Teachers" Aug. 12 at the José Rizal University Speech Laboratory in Mandaluyong City, Philippines. While in the country, Zawilinski gave a summer immersion program informative talk to SVSU prospective students from Philippine Science High School, Aug. 15 in Davao City.

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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