

The Interior

SV
SU SAGINAW VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 2020

SVSU hires new dean of Education

SVSU has hired an experienced educator – with a passion both for preparing the next generation of teachers and developing individuals already leading classrooms – to serve as the new dean of the College of Education.

James Tarr will join SVSU after more than three decades spent working as a teacher, researcher and faculty leader at the K-12 and higher education levels, including most recently at the University of Missouri.

Tarr said he was excited for the opportunity to join an institution with SVSU's strong reputation for empowering individuals in the education sector.



James Tarr

"As dean, I will support SVSU's outstanding faculty and staff in delivering high-quality programs, engaging

with local communities, and producing scholarship that informs practice and addresses important societal challenges," Tarr said.

"One of my favorite sayings is, 'To teach is to touch the future.' Today's college students are passionate about making a difference in the world, and a career in teaching is an essential way to cultivate a new and brighter future."

Deborah Huntley, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, said she was impressed by Tarr's experience as an administrator and his strong record of research and teaching.

"We are looking for a strong leader as we work to respond to the current and looming teacher shortage across Michigan, as well as other changes in the educational landscape," Huntley said.

"Our College of Education has been growing in enrollment, and we want that momentum to build. We are confident Dr. Tarr has the qualities and experience we need, and we welcome him to SVSU."

Tarr served in various roles at the University of Missouri, which he joined as an assistant professor in 2000 and was promoted to associate professor in 2006. After earning his status as a professor of mathematics education in 2013, he served first as the associate director and later as chair of the university's Department of Learning, Teaching & Curriculum. In those roles, he oversaw expansion of online education; developed graduate programs; and advocated for policies that favored diversity and inclusion among students, faculty and staff.

He served in leadership roles for several University of Missouri programs exploring the influence of various math education approaches on students. Among those programs was a research initiative known as the COSMIC (Comparing Options in Secondary Mathematics: Investigating Curricula) project, which examined how different math education curriculums impacted teaching and learning in U.S. high schools.

As an educator, Tarr also demonstrated a passion for studying the influence of math education. He authored 65 scholarly papers and presentations that appeared in professional journals, books and academic conferences. He also served as chairperson of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics research committee from 2012-13.

Prior to joining the University of Missouri, he worked as an educator at Illinois State University, Middle Tennessee State University and as a visiting scholar at the University of Minnesota. Earlier, he gained experience in the K-12 system as a middle school and high school math teacher in Lincoln, Nebraska and St. Paul, Minnesota from 1987-1993.

Tarr received a Ph.D. in mathematics education from Illinois State University in 1997. He earned a master's degree in educational psychology and measurement from University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1993; and both a bachelor's degree in mathematical sciences as well as a teaching license in math from University of Iowa in 1986 and 1987, respectively. He will join SVSU on July 1.



THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY IS INVITED AS
PRESIDENT DONALD J. BACHAND
DELIVERS THE 2020
STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY
ADDRESS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6 AT 4 P.M.
IN THE MALCOLM FIELD THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

A RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW THE ADDRESS

Eric Gardner

Professor of English

Eric Gardner's interest in black literature and history stretches well beyond the February calendar.

The professor of English recently received a prestigious national fellowship — for the second time in eight years — to support his effort to inspire new appreciation for a 19th-century African-American activist, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper.

The National Endowment for the Humanities research fellowship will allow Gardner to focus full time in 2021 on research for a planned book about Harper, the Civil War and Reconstruction.

"In an era dominated by discrimination against both African-Americans and women, Harper fashioned a public career as a black woman writer and activist that lasted for decades. But her career remains surprisingly understudied, even though her efforts shaped African-American literature, abolitionism, suffrage and civil rights struggles, the temperance movement, the black press and American lyceum culture," Gardner said.

"Harper's work has been the basis for rich discussions in a number of my courses, and students have asked tough questions that have pushed me to dig further into the archive and to think hard about what I've found."

That archival research has allowed his students to be among the first in the nation to read rediscovered literary texts by early African-American writers. It has also given Gardner opportunities to remind his students that he is also always learning.

"Curiosity, research and dialogue are at the core of good learning," he said. "That's why we have classrooms, libraries and colleges — to help us work together to build communities of learners."

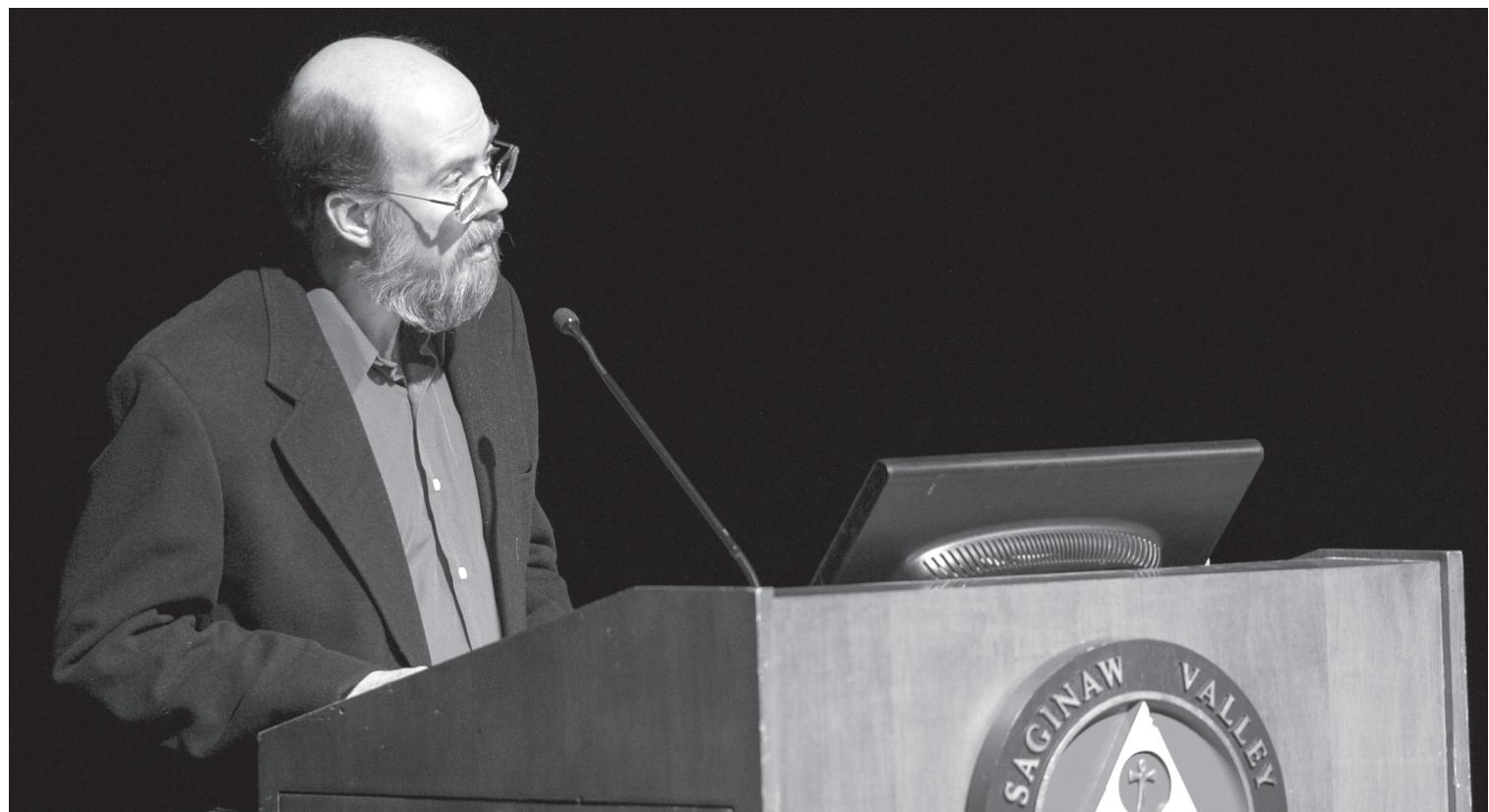
Gardner's first NEH fellowship was awarded in 2012 to support work on his book "Black Print Unbound: The Christian Recorder, African American Literature and Periodical Culture." In 2017, the book, published by Oxford University Press, received the Book Prize from the Research Society of American Periodicals. That same year, he won a Regional Hero Award from the Saginaw chapter of the NAACP.

He received SVSU's Earl L. Warrick Award for Excellence in Research in 2010. Gardner also received the Braun Fellowship in 2007 to pursue research for his book, "Unexpected Places: Relocating 19th-Century African-American Literature." That text won the 2010 Research Society for American Periodicals Book Prize.

Gardner joined SVSU's faculty in 1996; he chaired the Department of English from 2006-10. He also served as associate dean of the College of Arts & Behavioral Sciences from 2013-15.

Gardner received a Ph.D. in English from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1996.

As he does every February, this month Gardner will be affirming that black culture should be celebrated on every day of the year.



Michael Randolph

*Marketing Specialist for Videography & Photography
January Staff Member of the Month*

Michael Randolph joined SVSU as a part-time photographer in 2013, when his keen eye and calculating focus first began bringing to life many of the defining images of the university and its community. His work promoting and documenting the university has appeared in framed photos lining campus hallways, on billboards towering over busy interstate roadways and in magazines and brochures mailed to homes throughout the U.S. After he transitioned to the full-time role of videographer last year, his filmed productions also are viewed worldwide on social media.

For a university determined to shed its status as a “best kept secret” among prospective students, Randolph’s imagery often offers the introductory glimpse of SVSU’s scenic campus to teenagers considering college. It’s a weighty responsibility. Fortunately, his skill has earned him a career decorated with awards and praise at SVSU and at newspapers where he has worked prior to joining the university.

The Cadillac native’s first work with a camera, though, happened much earlier. His formative experiences were as a young teen tangling with his father’s Canon AE-1 camera. Shy and introverted, Randolph soon found comfort in communicating with the world while adjusting a lens.

“I was terrified to approach anyone when I was a kid,” he said. “Photography gave me the confidence I was lacking to interact with people I didn’t know.”

His passion for photography intensified throughout high school and The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, from which he graduated in 1994.

Randolph’s professional career began as a photojournalist for three years with The Cadillac Evening News. In 1998, he joined The Bay City Times at the same position before spending the final six of his 13 years there as the publication’s photo editor.

“I can’t underscore how much image-making means to me,” he said. “My hobby is photography.” In his Midland basement, he built a photography dark room, where he processes film with images captured by the old-school analogue cameras he grew up using. When traveling with his wife and daughter, he packs his suitcase with bundles of film to document their trips overseas and across America.

“I have a bucket list, before my passport expires, to hit all seven continents,” he said. Randolph crossed off Asia last summer while accompanying a group of SVSU College of Education faculty and students who visited Kittur, India. The eye-opening experience — shared in a photo essay in the latest issue of Reflections magazine — thrust him into an environment unfamiliar to him. As was the case since childhood, his camera helped better connect Randolph with strangers.

“Westerners are very rare there, so we stood out like a sore thumb,” Randolph said. “The people were friendly, though, and when they saw my camera, they wanted me to take their picture.”



Professional Profile

• English faculty **Sherrin Frances**, **Dan Gates** and **Elizabeth Rich** collaborated with colleagues from California State Polytechnic University in Pomona to build a Human Library at the 2020 Modern Language Association National Convention, Jan. 11 in Seattle. The catalog included seven "books" from the MLA community whose stories touched on issues of social justice, discrimination and breaking down stereotypes.

• **Susan L. Hillman**, professor of teacher education, co-authored with Neha Chheda, Adhyayan, India, a presentation (with Chheda as presenting author) on "Empowering Teachers Building Digital Portfolios for Professional Growth" at the Open Conference on Computers in Education, Jan. 6-8 at the Tata Institute for Social Sciences in Mumbai, India.

• **Jeffrey Koperski**, professor of philosophy, has published a new book titled *Divine Action, Determinism, and the Laws of Nature* (Routledge, 2020). Thanks to a grant by the John Templeton Foundation, the ebook is free to download at taylorfrancis.com/books/9780429029110.

• **David Nichols**, associate professor of philosophy, presented a paper titled "Transcendence and Immanence in Leonardo da Vinci" at Renaissance Man — Re-appropriation and Re-invention, a conference hosted by Jadavpur University in Kolkata, India, Nov. 14. Also, Nichols's student Melanie Ross will present her paper, "Life at the Margins: An Anthropological Study of Bedouin Liminality," at the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts & Letters conference, March 13.

• **Khandaker Abir Rahman**, associate professor of computer science, and his student Deepak Neupane, presented the paper "Web User Authentication Using Chosen Word Keystroke Dynamics" at the 18th IEEE International Conference on Machine Learning and Applications, Dec. 16-19 in Boca Raton, Florida.

• Since his retirement in 2005, **David Weaver**, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, has continued scholarly activity by publishing articles and essays on the website VoegelinView — a locus for scholarly explorations. These include a republication of an article on "Leadership as a Political Process" originally published in the Michigan Academician, "A Brief Reflection on Thomas Paine," "The Libertarian Error," "Leadership and Machiavelli" and "Hobhouse on Leadership." He is currently working on an essay tentatively titled "The Next State?"

• Professors of history **Paul and Melissa Teed's** book, *Daily Life of African American Slaves in the Antebellum South*, was recently published by Greenwood Press. It is a part of Greenwood's Daily Life Through History series.

• **Scott M. Youngstedt**, professor of anthropology, in November presented a paper titled "Quests for Healing: Navigating Medical Pluralism in Niamey, Niger" at the 62nd Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association in Boston.

Condolences

- To **Anthony Dizon-Webb**, accountant, whose father-in-law, Donald W. Webb, passed away Jan. 7.
- To **Beth Johns**, electronic resources librarian, whose father, Paul William Emanuelson, passed away Jan. 1.
- To **Dale Klimmek**, network engineer, whose mother-in-law, Coreen M. Siminski Pajak, passed away Dec. 11, 2019.

Braun Fellowship awarded to faculty

Each year, two SVSU faculty members are empowered by the Braun Fellowship to develop their research and support scholarly pursuits that benefit communities across the globe.



Heubo-Kwegna



Singer

Olivier Heubo-Kwegna, professor of mathematics, and Ross Singer, associate professor of communication, this year received these grants to help further their respective research projects that explore a nearly century-old math theory as well as gender-based stereotypes in environmentalism.

Heubo-Kwegna's research will attempt to address "multiplicative ideal theory," which began to take shape in 1930 when well-known German mathematicians Wolfgang Krull, Heinz Prüfer and Emmy Noether first began to work on the ideal systems at the core of the theory.

Singer's research will examine the relationship between gender and environmentalism. He plans to examine how gender-centric stereotypes about environmentalists — particularly the stereotype that leads some to consider environmentalism as a feminine cause — impacts environmentalism.

Established in 2005, the Braun Fellowship program awards \$37,500 over three years in funding for a research project for each recipient. The program was created through a \$1.5 million endowment from the Saginaw-based Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation and is administered by the Saginaw Community Foundation.

- To **Diane Knights**, faculty secretary, whose mother, Violet Irene Knights, passed away Dec. 22, 2019.
- To the family of **Carol Maday**, senior secretary, who passed away Dec. 19, 2019.
- To the family of **Alan Ott**, who passed away Jan. 12. Ott, for whom the Ott Auditorium in Gilbertson Hall is named, was a member of the SVSU Foundation Board and received an honorary doctorate from SVSU.
- To **Cheryl Saffarian**, administrative assistant, whose father, Raymond Maxson, passed away Dec. 16, 2019.
- To **Cal Talley**, project director, whose mother, Dorothy Mae Dixon, passed away Jan. 11.
- To the family of **Joyce K. Woods**, who passed away Jan. 12. She served on the SVSU Board of Control from 1984-1991 and received an Honorary Doctor of Humanities from SVSU.

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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Noon on Wednesday before the publication date
Please email submissions to: jjboehm@svsu.edu