GENERATION STEM

NEWSLETTER

COMMENCEMENT 2022

SPECIAL ISSUE

SDSU Georgia

SDSU Georgia Commencement Ceremony

SDSU Georgia Returns to In-Person Instruction

SDSU and MES Signal Future Cooperation

Partner Universities Continue Progress Towards International Accreditation

Faculty Development Program Resumes

125 Years of Excellence

SDSU | Georgia

ABOUT SDSU GEORGIA

San Diego State University Georgia, through funding from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Millennium Challenge Account Georgia (MCA Georgia), offers students an exciting educational opportunity to study in Tbilisi, Georgia. Here, in the heart of the Caucasus, students are able to earn a professionally accredited, internationally recognized U.S. bachelor's degree. San Diego State University (SDSU), along with three top Georgian Universities, Tbilisi State University (TSU), Ilia State University (ISU), and Georgian Technical University (GTU), offers courses leading to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) internationally accredited bachelor's degrees. Programs offered by the university support the development of engineering, science, and technology fields, as well as Georgia's human capital capacity for economic growth.

In five cohorts, SDSU Georgia has admitted 780 students and more than 500 will graduate the programs. Georgia campus offers six degree programs:

- Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Engineering
- Computer Science
- Construction Engineering
- Electrical Engineering

American degree programs include a well-rounded liberal arts education and feature accreditations from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), and the American Chemical Society (ACS). SDSU Georgia graduates will leave with a broad base of knowledge and the critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in a STEM career locally, regionally, or internationally.

Members of the SDSU Georgia community form a unique and special cohort of individuals who will earn regionally and nationally accredited and internationally recognized high-quality STEM bachelor's degrees. Additionally, SDSU Georgia students will be exposed to the same academic benefits available to their peers at SDSU's main campus in California, including state-of-the-art technology and laboratories. The San Diego State University Aztecs alumni family includes over 500,000 national and international leaders. At SDSU Georgia, we empower our students to achieve academic, professional, and personal goals.

Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact ended on July 1, 2019. Since then, SDSU has been focusing on the Sustainabilty initiatives to ensure continuous development of U.S. STEM degrees in Georgia.

The Newsletter of San Diego State University Georgia is published by the Dean's Office and distributed to SDSU Georgia stakeholders, faculty, students, and friends.

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
Adela de la Torre
President

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY GEORGIA
Halil Güven
Dean

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Table of Contents

Message from the President

On behalf of our entire SDSU family, I want to first offer my heartfelt congratulations to our SDSU Georgia class of 2022 graduates! We are deeply proud of what you have accomplished, and the steadfast dedication and commitment that got you here.

We have so much to celebrate! You have persisted and have been remarkably successful, and I cannot wait to hear about the careers you will each launch into.

Our graduates are a living reminder of the success we are achieving together, with an outstanding class of STEM professionals now ready for their next step. About 45% of this year's graduating class are women, a remarkable step toward eliminating gender inequality. This summer, each of you — our fourth cohort of SDSU Georgia graduates, and the second to include civil and construction engineering graduates — will join a distinctive network of SDSU alumni in Georgia who are prepared to support sustainable development in the region.

We are not stopping here. SDSU Georgia is also building capacity at local state universities who have been successful in adopting the standard of education our university has brought to Georgia. We continue to expand opportunities that will produce exceptional leaders ready to tackle the greatest challenges in their communities and the world. In partnership with SDSU Global Campus, SDSU Georgia will continue to provide innovative education programs that transform lives locally and internationally.

Now, I want to speak directly to our graduates: Today you begin a journey, not without obstacles, but with the skills to navigate and help others reach their potential. With your SDSU Georgia diploma, you can walk boldly into places and spaces that need your curiosity, compassion, expertise, and courage to tackle the challenges ahead.

We are exceedingly proud of what you have accomplished, who you are becoming, and even more, who you will continue to become. I hope you will always consider San Diego State University as your home; you are a permanent part of this family. And as of today, you are part of the university's global network of 500,000 living alumni. Know that your SDSU family loves you and wishes you continued success as you embark on your next adventure.

With pride and gratitude,

Adela de la Torre
President

Message from the Dean

In 2019, SDSU Georgia held its inaugural Commencement Ceremony in the historic Rustaveli Theater, graduating the first cohort of STEM professionals. Our second Commencement Ceremony was held at the Palace of State Ceremonies for the 2020 and 2021 graduates. Despite the ongoing pandemic, our graduates and we at SDSU Georgia had a chance to share this milestone with our friends and supporters and send the next generation of STEM professionals off to a successful and vibrant future. This year, we are going back to the Rustaveli Theater to give our next group of 160 graduates a day to mark their next step, the commencement of their professional life out of college. We will once more be joined by a delegation from SDSU, headed by the President, Adela de la Torre, along with the Georgian Government, our donors, and partners to celebrate the SDSU spirit once again.

One of SDSU Georgia's objectives was to improve human capital in critical STEM fields in Georgia. With the ardent support of all our friends and partners, we will have more than 500 STEM professionals at the end of 2023. These gifted professionals are the best manifestation of all our efforts and support. I look forward to sharing with our supporters the joy of seeing this new STEM generation commence the rest of their lives, and feel the pride of our contribution, as their names are called, and they walk off into their bright futures.

As a capacity building objective, SDSU has brought a novelty of ABET and ACS accreditation to Georgia. All programs transitioned to the Georgian public universities will meet SDSU standards for curriculum, faculty training, and accreditation. The notable success of Tbilisi State University in accrediting two of its programs has been since reflected in the increased international rankings. Ilia State University is now utilizing the new STEM building constructed through our partnership. All three partner universities are coordinating their efforts for the internationalization goals. SDSU and the three partners are also working to explore additional opportunities for the continued sustainability of the program achievements.

And finally, to our graduating class of 2022,

On behalf of the SDSU Georgia community, I congratulate you on this achievement! It was not an easy road, but you have managed to walk with strength and prowess, despite the drawbacks of the pandemic, you have created beautiful memories, and most importantly, acquired the knowledge that will see you through the rest of your career. This commencement day will be the first of many successful moments on your journey as Aztec and a part of the academic and research powerhouse with a 125-year history of excellence that is SDSU!

Halil Guven, Ph.D.
Dean, SDSU Georgia

SDSU Georgia Commencement Ceremony 2022

On May 31st,

SDSU Georgia will celebrate the graduation of 160 students with a commencement ceremony at Rustaveli Theater. The ceremony will be held in person, in compliance with all COVID-19 regulations, and will also be streamed on the SDSU website and social media accounts.

This year's ceremony will be held on the main stage of Rustaveli Theater, just as the inaugural commencement ceremony was in 2019. Commencement for 2020 and 2021 was held in a hybrid format due to pandemic restrictions. SDSU President Dr. Adela de la Torre will give welcoming remarks. The ceremony will be attended by graduating students, an academic delegation from SDSU headed by President de la Torre, representatives of the Government of Georgia and the Millennium Foundation, and public and private partners of SDSUG.

With this year's cohort, SDSU Georgia will have graduated 410 students in STEM subjects who will go on to fulfill vital roles in Georgia's development, addressing critical economic needs.

SDSU Georgia Commencement 2019

Trustee Adam Day is attending Commencement 2022

Adam Day is a Trustee at the California State University. He was previously the Chair of CSU Board for two years (2018-20). Adam is also a graduate of San Diego State University with a bachelor's degree in political science.

He is a veteran public administration and public affairs executive with extensive experience managing the efficient delivery of municipal services, government relations, community outreach, coalition development, and multi-million dollar charitable and media campaigns.

news

SDSU AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SIGNAL FUTURE COOPERATION

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining principles for future cooperation was signed by SDSU President Dr. Adela de la Torre and Georgia's Minister of Education and Science Dr. Mikheil Chkhenkeli. The signing took place during the SDSU Commencement Ceremony in June 2021.

The MOU envisages collaboration between SDSU and the Georgian government on projects in general and tertiary education. These projects will promote the organization of activities and events to strengthen ties between SDSU, the Georgian government, the private sector, and local educational institutions for the purpose of improving and developing educational programs. The MOU also includes cooperation on activities and events for students and educators for the purposes of research, collaboration, professional development, and internationalization.

125 YEARS
FOUNDED IN 1897
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

This year, San Diego State University celebrates the 125th anniversary of its founding with a series of events including lectures, panels, ceremonies, and sporting events. A delegation from Georgia will travel to San Diego, California in September 2022 to participate in the commemoration.

SDSU was founded on March 13th, 1897 and has educated over 500,000 students in its 125-year history. In this time, SDSU has gained recognition as a premier university for education, research, and service, with an enrollment of over 36,000 students.

PARTNER UNIVERSITIES CONTINUE PROGRESS TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

ABET Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission

ACS Chemistry for Life®

With the help of SDSU Georgia, the Computer Science and Electrical & Electronic Engineering programs at Tbilisi State University (TSU) have received accreditation by The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

Dr. George Sharvashidze
Rector of Tbilisi State University

As part of its capacity-building mission, SDSU Georgia has developed a framework for the accreditation of local STEM programs and supported local universities in navigating and completing the accreditation process. In addition to the TSU programs, the Computer Engineering program at ISU and the Biomedical Engineering program at Georgian Technical University are currently under review as ABET accreditation candidates.

ABET accreditation is a rigorous, five step process which is conducted over the course of 18 months. ABET examines documentation from the university, conducts an on-site visit, and extensively reviews evidence that the program meets the highest standards of educational quality. Programs must demonstrate that they meet detailed criteria related to student outcomes, educational objectives, facilities, faculty, curriculum and assessment, and industry-specific professional standards.

Dr. David Gurgenidze
Rector of Georgian Technical University

List of ABET and ACS track programs at Partner Universities of SDSU

Tbilisi State University (TSU)
- Computer Science (Eng & Geo)
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering (Geo)
- Chemistry (Eng, ACS)

Ilia State University (ISU)
- Civil Engineering (Eng)
- Computer Engineering (Eng & Geo)
- Computer Science (Eng)
- Electrical Engineering (Geo)

Georgian Technical University (GTU)
- Electrical Engineering (Geo)
- Computer Engineering (Geo)
- Civil Engineering (Geo)
- Computer Science (Eng)
- Biomedical Engineering (Eng & Geo)

Dr. Nino Doborjginidze
Rector of Ilia State University

featured interview

ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: AN INTERVIEW WITH GIGA ZEDANIA

SDSU Georgia and Millennium Foundation met with the current and former rectors of Ilia State University

You became a rector of Ilia State University when the collaboration between SDSU and ISU started. How has the partnership with SDSU impacted ISU during that time?

The new partnership with SDSU was one of the most exciting and important processes of my period as a rector. Eight years ago, ISU was not an institution with which one associated strong engineering programs. We were very strong in humanities and natural sciences back then, but developing new programs in computer science, computer engineering, electronic engineering and civil engineering proved to be a challenge. Attracting new academic staff, finding resources for new infrastructure, making the new programs visible to the prospective students – these were the main goals and we have seen some spectacular success stories along these lines.

Why do you feel ABET accreditation is important for ISU's Georgian and English-language programs?

Some may view ABET as just a simple addition of prestige to the already existing programs, as if those programs would need nothing else but the recognition from the authoritative US accreditation body. But it has been our approach at ISU from the beginning that engineering and technology degrees in Georgia need reform in order to comply with the new global academic, technological and social developments and market demands. Many things we at ISU started from scratch, but we certainly had solid foundations in sciences as well as in general education (so-called stadium generale of the tradition) on which the new programs could be built.

As for my personal involvement with ABET, having background in humanities and social sciences, I no doubt lacked the capacity to understand all the intricacies of the accreditation process of engineering programs, but the hours spent in the rooms with the best global specialists in the field helped me to make decisions about where the resources were needed in order to make ISU programs correspond to the standards of excellence required by this leading accreditation body.

How has the partnership helped develop facilities at ISU?

The new building constructed jointly by SDSU and ISU which we call the T Building (T for technology) serves as a wonderful symbol for the fruits borne by this collaboration. It houses the newest teaching labs provided by SDSU and Millennium Challenge Corporation and is being used daily by hundreds of students and teachers.

I would especially like to mention here the contribution of the Dean of SDSUG, Dr. Halil Güven. His deep knowledge of the field, acquaintance with the American and Georgian systems, and his willingness and ability to help in every matter produced impressive results. And we are all very touched by the enthusiasm as well as impressed by the expertise of our colleagues from San Diego who have been overseeing the construction of the building from the day of its inception – as well as all academic processes that are taking place here.

How has the partnership helped develop capacity within Georgia?

SDSU, with the support of the Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact, has introduced a new impetus for the STEM disciplines in Georgia. It turned the attention of hundreds and thousands of Georgian students to the fields of engineering and technology, without which there is no hope for our country to build a modern economy based on knowledge.

What do you think the future holds for the partnership between ISU and SDSU?

I am very optimistic for the future of this collaboration – first of all, I have witnessed the engagement of the president of San Diego State University, Adela de la Torre, not just with ISU, but also with educational and social problems in Georgia in general. ISU has a new rector as well, Prof. Nino Doborjginidze, who regards this collaboration as one of her priority focus fields. There are dozens of researchers and teachers as well as hundreds of students who would like to keep this cooperation alive and thriving. Thus I am confident that it will continue successfully in the years to come.

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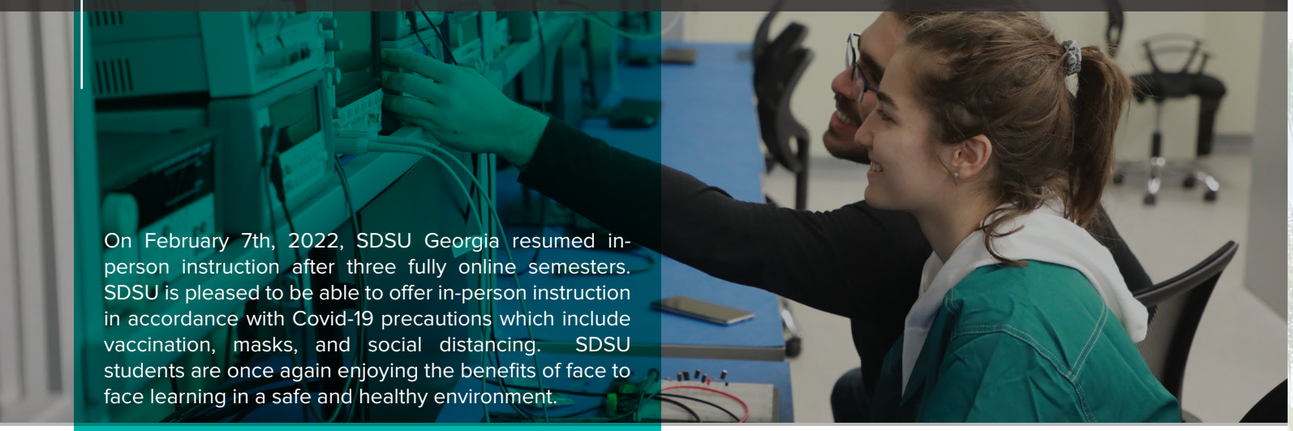
IN PERSON INSTRUCTION RESUMED



On February 7th, 2022, SDSU Georgia resumed in-person instruction after three fully online semesters. SDSU is pleased to be able to offer in-person instruction in accordance with Covid-19 precautions which include vaccination, masks, and social distancing. SDSU students are once again enjoying the benefits of face to face learning in a safe and healthy environment.

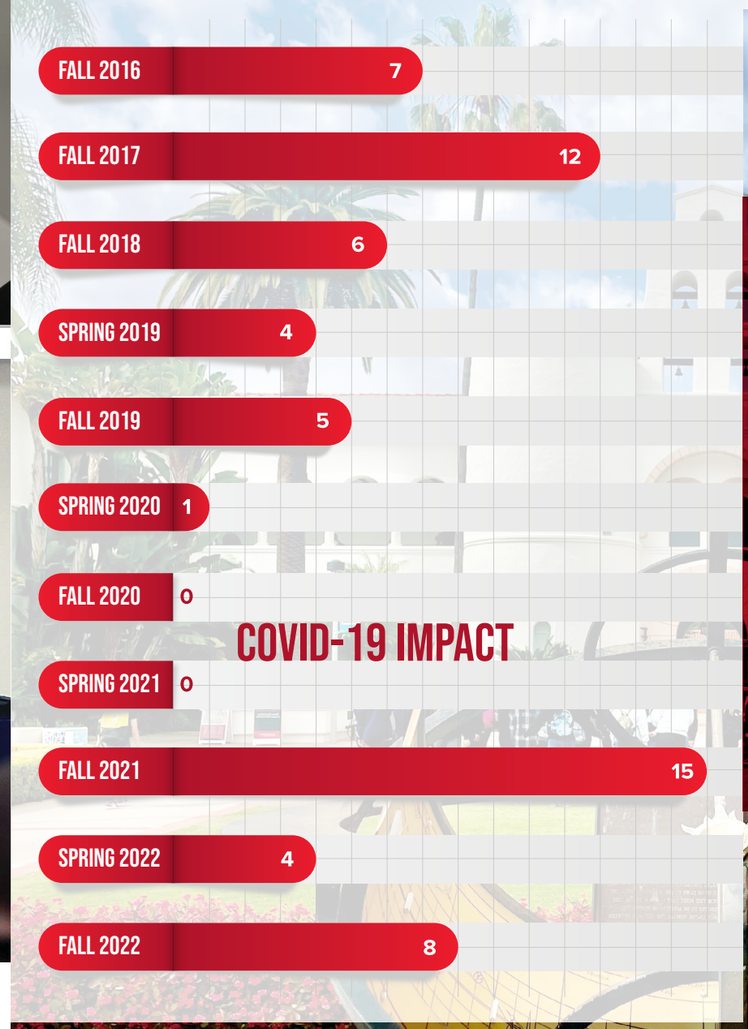
95% of SDSU students are fully vaccinated, and SDSU is ensuring that students and faculty have access to high quality KN95 face masks. SDSU is also enforcing restrictions on the capacity of classrooms and lecture halls to ensure adequate space for social distancing.

SDSU Georgia moved to online instruction starting from March 2020 and had three semesters fully online. During the Fall 2021 semester, students were offered hybrid instruction, with school laboratories open for student practical work while lectures and exams were conducted online. SDSU places a high value on this hands-on, practical lab work because it gives students experience with the tools and techniques that they will use in their future careers.

SDSU students and faculty are glad to take this step towards returning to normal. Chemistry program coordinator Dr. Giorgi Jibuti says “it feels good after several semesters to get back in classrooms/labs and interact with students in person.” According to Dr. Jibuti, the benefits of in-person instruction, including interactivity during lectures and especially hands-on experience, are “almost impossible to gain online.” Dr. Jibuti says the process of returning to classrooms has been going smoothly, with remote accommodations still in place so students in COVID isolation can continue their studies as well.

opportunities

STUDENT EXCHANGE WITH SDSU MAIN CAMPUS



Semester-long exchange program between the SDSU Georgia and the main campus is being implemented successfully despite difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic regulations. SDSUG managed to send 4 exchange students to the main campus for the Spring 2022 exchange. All 4 students were funded by SDSU Georgia and Tbilisi State University.

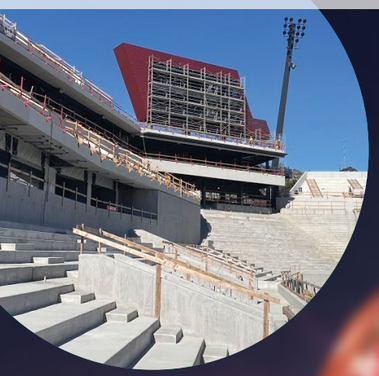
8 students will participate in the Fall 2022 Exchange program. 1 of them was selected to receive full need-based funding for the program from SDSU Georgia. Six other students received partial financial assistance.

Exchange program between SDSU Georgia and main campus has been ongoing since Fall 2016. Participant numbers are presented graphically on the left

SDSU Georgia Seniors Collaborate to Design New Campus in Mission Valley

Building the Future

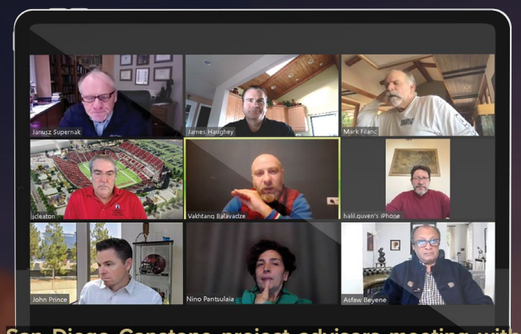
In Spring 2022, SDSU Georgia seniors studying Civil Engineering and Construction Engineering will complete Capstone Projects in partnership with the brand new SDSU Mission Valley campus in San Diego, California. These design projects allow students to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired at SDSU Georgia to solving real-world engineering problems in partnership with professional engineers. The experience students gain from their Capstone projects provides a solid foundation for their future careers and empowers them to create sustainable engineering solutions to benefit their communities.



The Capstone Project: Building Skills and Solutions

"Engineering is a profession of solving problems, so it is only natural that the culmination of every SDSU Engineering degree is a Senior Capstone project in which students solve a real problem," says Dr. Halil Güven, Dean of SDSU Georgia. "After spending the first three years of their respective programs studying theory and acquiring knowledge of fundamentals, students in their last year are given the opportunity to apply that knowledge to creating a practical solution."

In 2021, engineering students worked on projects such as solving traffic congestion on Rustaveli Avenue and designing new schools for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Working on authentic problems for real clients provides important structure and context to students' projects, giving them an opportunity to perform research, interact with clients, deliver presentations to stakeholders, and see how their work can impact their communities. Students also have the opportunity to work under the supervision and mentorship of professional engineers, which not only develops their skills, but also expands their professional networks.



San Diego Capstone project advisors meeting with the SDSU Georgia team. Students worked with the SDSU advisors: Chair Supernak, James Haughey, Mark Filanc, James Cleaton, John Prince, and faculty advisor Vakhtang Balavadze.

The Capstone Project is structured as a complete design project which students work through in teams from start to finish. In the first phase, students research a problem, determine project goals and objectives, define conditions for success, and make an overall plan and timeline for the completion of the project. The role of each student is clearly defined based on their particular specialty. Then, students analyze their findings in order to inform their design decisions and begin to develop drafts for their final designs. In the last phase, students finalize and present their design solutions in multimedia format, including a poster presentation, a video, and a set of design deliverables presenting an actionable solution in detail.

Looking Forward

Working with the professionals who are building the new Mission Valley campus allows SDSUG students to take part in building the future of SDSU, while also preparing students for their future careers. To this end, SDSU Georgia students are taking part in a series of workshops designed to develop their project management and presentation skills - workshops on conducting meetings, delegating responsibilities, taking on leadership roles, writing progress reports, and other skills which will benefit them in this project and in their professional lives.

These types of experiences are very new for Georgian higher education, which typically does not have seniors solve a real design problem as a capstone project. The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), an internationally recognized and prestigious certifying organization, requires a design component as part of all ABET accredited courses, so introducing these projects is an integral part in helping Georgian partner universities build capacity and prepare for ABET accreditation.

The capstone projects also help SDSU Georgia with corporate outreach. When the project began, engineering and design companies did not see any value in working with student engineers. As of last year, however, demand had grown to the point where there were six proposals from Georgian companies for capstone projects but only three project slots.

The Mission Valley partnerships and the the collaborative work with Georgian companies provide students with authentic experiences - projects with owners, real deadlines, real clients, and the chance to work alongside real engineers. Students gain mentorship, networking opportunities, and hands-on work experience while helping to build their future, the future of SDSU, and the future of Georgia.

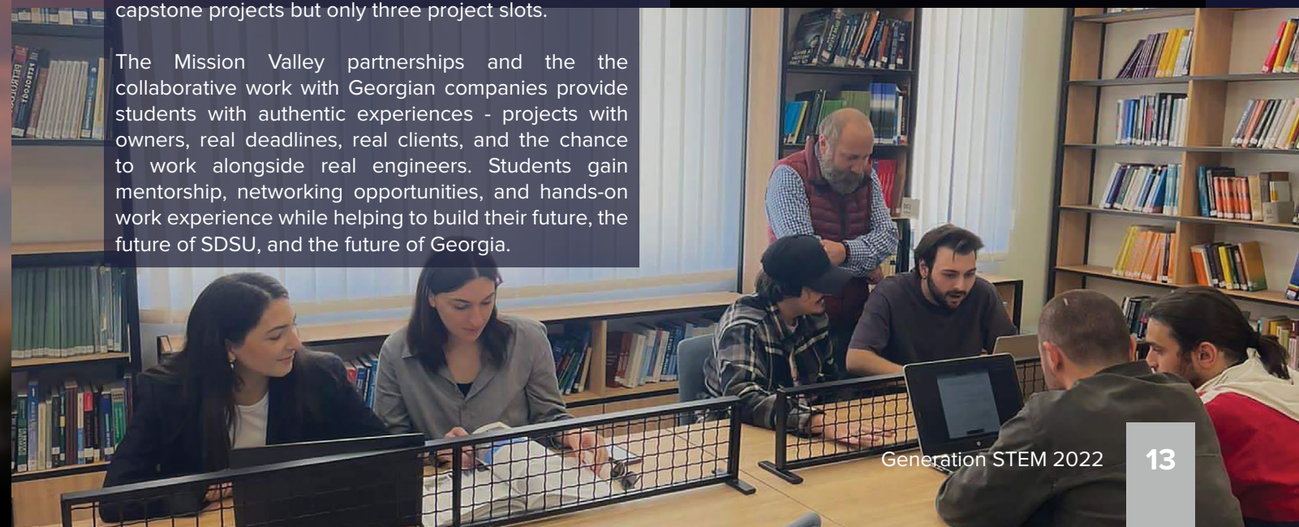
Mission Valley: A New Site for Opportunity

The San Diego State University main campus was established on the outskirts of San Diego in 1897. In the past 125 years, the city has grown around SDSU so it is now more central and there is limited room to expand the campus. Meanwhile, the school has grown to serve almost 35,000 students. When the Qualcomm Stadium in Mission Valley, San Diego came up for sale, SDSU placed a bid and won the rights to redevelop the site. Qualcomm stadium has been demolished and is being replaced with a new Snapdragon Stadium, which is being built on raised ground to avoid the flooding problems faced by the old stadium. Plans are in place to build new campus buildings which will expand SDSU's enrollment capacity to 50,000, as well as providing low-income housing, a hotel, and new riverfront recreational areas and facilities for the public.

When Dr. Güven visited San Diego in January of 2021, he had the idea to connect the SDSU Georgia Senior Capstone Design Projects to the design of the new Mission Valley project.

goaztecs

The design of the new campus provides numerous authentic design challenges for civil and construction engineers, with a special opportunity to take part in environmental engineering and sustainable development. One of the Capstone Projects involves the design of a wastewater treatment facility, and another is to design a new life sciences building on the campus.



student life

EMPOWER WOMEN CLUB OUTREACH AND STUDENT EVENTS

A letter from Nino Makasarashvili, President of the Empower Women Club

Empower Women Club was established by the first cohort of the SDSU Georgia, however, after the founders of the club graduated it became inactive. The revival of the club started in the spring of 2021 when the executive committee of the club was gathered. Among the 8 members of the executive committee, I was honored to be chosen as President. However, everything in the club is decided and realized with the equal contribution of the President, Vice President, and the executive committee members.

Empower Women Club is dedicated to encouraging girls who are willing to join the STEM fields. In our lives, most of us have had to overcome obstacles to choose the path we wanted because in our society there remain traces of associating science, technologies, engineering, and math to be most suitable for men. Sharing each other's experiences, highlighting the precedents, and planning certain activities are tools through which we aim to realize our purpose.

The first event that Empower Women Club pulled off was the essay contest "Women in STEM". Students were able to submit their work in three different categories which were: personal experience, role model, and movie review. Gladly, the event succeeded as we had a fair competition in all three categories. After that, we aimed to increase the range of our work and decided to cooperate with another university (Kutaisi International University) and started planning various joint activities, one of which was a guest speaker series.

Another major event that our club carried out was the outreach in Batumi. The purpose of the Empower Women Club is to encourage girls' involvement in STEM fields and during this outreach, we intended to achieve this through presenting the work that our club had done, raising awareness regarding discoveries and innovations created by women with an interactive presentation and an activity about the separation of jobs based on gender, and a discussion about the possible ways of facing barriers raised by stereotypes. In the end, students were given a questionnaire for their feedback regarding the club and on the issue in general.

Currently, our club, together with the Georgian Student Chapter of the American Chemical Society and the Associated Students' Board of Directors, is involved in organizing a charity event - intellectual game "What? Where? When?" - to raise funds for supporting Ukraine. At troubled times like this, we decided to go beyond our target audience and do our duty as a society.

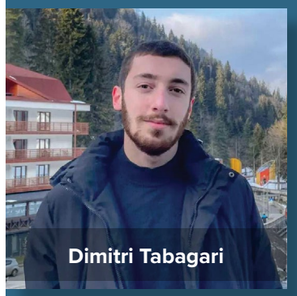
As I am graduating this year, I hope that the remaining cohort will maintain the activity of the club. I feel proud and honored as I had the ability to provoke changes in STEM society with small steps and a huge aspiration against gender-based stereotypes alongside a team of bright-minded young scientists and engineers.

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Associated Students Board of Directors (ASB) is a directly elected, student-governed organization representing the student body of SDSU Georgia. The ASB serves as the voice for students among SDSU Georgia faculty and administration and also works to build consensus on key student body issues and initiatives.

SDSU Georgia's ASB general organizational structure and election procedures are modeled after SDSU main campus' Associated Students Board of Directors, but are adapted to serve a smaller student body. The SDSU Georgia Associated Students Board of Directors is also predominantly comprised of women, with seven out of 10 board members, including the president and executive vice president.

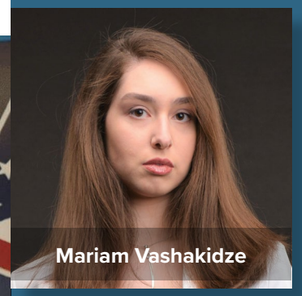
Over the course of the 2021-2022 academic year, the ASB has prioritized building more efficient communication channels between the student body and university leadership in order to better represent student voices and enhance both students' academic and extracurricular experiences. This has played an especially vital role in assisting the student body's return to face-to-face learning after an almost two-year hiatus because of COVID-19 restrictions. "It has been a delightful year utilizing my experience to help students solve their issues. I'm glad we did our best to create an unforgettable student life experience for them", says ASB President Ana Toria, who previously served on the 2021-2022 ASB as the computer engineering program representative.


Dimitri Tabagari

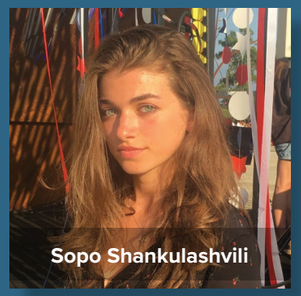

Ana Geladze


Ana Toria


Shota Abuladze


Mariam Vashakidze


David Gogia


Sopo Shankulashvili


Nino Makasarashvili


Lizi Bodzashvili


Nino Kacharava

student success

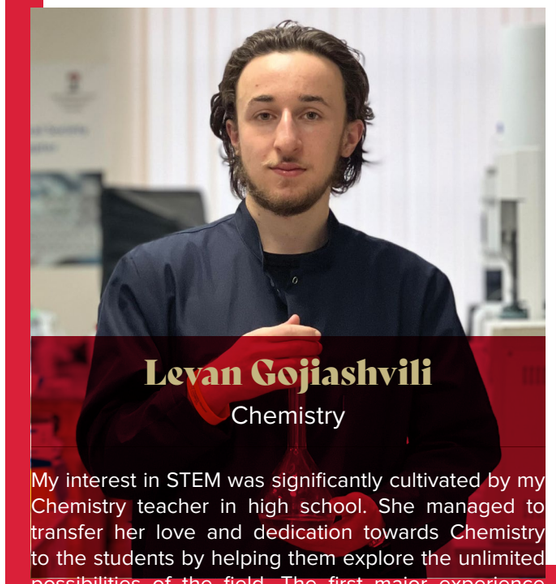
Mariam Kantaria

Construction Engineering

My deep interest in STEM began at school. I was passionate about discovering the universal rules of nature by exploring geometrical figures, the behavior of physical objects, and interactions between different chemical elements. When I applied to SDSU, I was delighted to meet wonderful professors in both technical and general education subjects. Being an SDSU student is not simple, but it is a very exciting journey. After hard work and many sleepless nights, I managed to make the Dean's List and I confidently applied to some of the best universities in Europe. I am looking forward to responses in the upcoming month.

I always cared about getting real-life experience along with my studies in university. I am proud that my portfolio includes projects that are game changers for the Georgian economy and act as an important driving force for regional development of the country. Some of the projects I was leading as assistant project manager are the Poti expansion project, Poti port rehabilitation project, and construction of the Hampton by Hilton. My portfolio also includes other important projects for which I have done research, such as City Mall Saburtalo and the Gori general land use plan. I am currently employed as a maintenance planner for BP. I am glad to be part of the greatest oil and gas infrastructure operation in Georgia.

My overall experience has shown me that educational institutions and recruiters are not always relevant and responsive towards the existing job market. Professionals in the modern world tend to start their career development at a younger age, but the systems around them do not rapidly respond to their needs. I am dedicating myself to adopting new management approaches, which focus on being supportive towards other members of the team and addressing their needs. I have a strong belief I can become the leader I needed when I was younger.



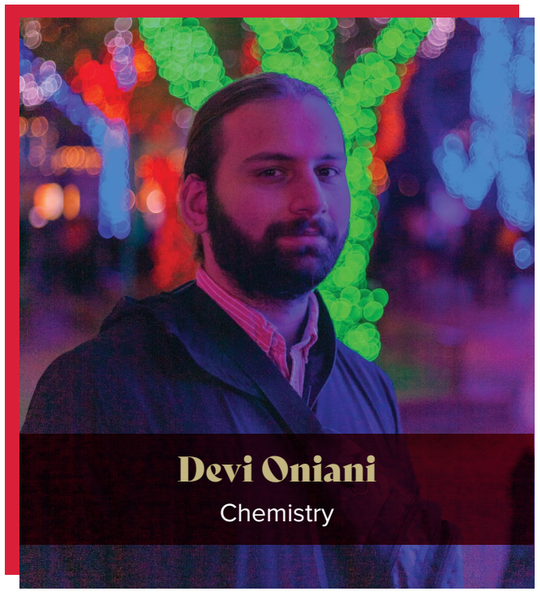
Levan Gojiashvili

Chemistry

My interest in STEM was significantly cultivated by my Chemistry teacher in high school. She managed to transfer her love and dedication towards Chemistry to the students by helping them explore the unlimited possibilities of the field. The first major experience that I gained in chemistry was through participation in the National Chemistry Olympiads for three consecutive years during high school. As a member of the Georgian Chemistry Team, I represented my country at various international chemistry Olympiads in Thailand, Kazakhstan, Belarus, The Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

After finishing high school, I applied to San Diego State University Georgia. It was the only American Chemistry degree program in Georgia which could allow me to compete in higher level education. One of my greatest achievements during my studies at SDSUG was becoming the President of the American Chemical Society Georgia Student Chapter. I believe that it is absolutely necessary to increase awareness of STEM subjects among the Georgian public. To fulfill this goal, during my presidency, we organized many successful projects and events and as an acknowledgement of our work received the ACS Outstanding Award. My professional experience is not limited to the university. I am currently working at CPI Georgia, which is a leading company in producing stable isotopes, where I am head of the project of synthesizing isotopically enriched chemicals for retail sales. My job involves devising methods for synthesis and analysis of isotopically labeled compounds, as well as assembling and designing a retail website.

My goal is to get a PhD in Chemistry and then continue working in industry, making cheap and less toxic catalysts for various industrial processes which will significantly reduce the harmful effect of chemical waste on the environment. I was accepted into the SDSU's Chemistry PhD program and will be moving to San Diego this Fall for my studies.



Devi Oniani

Chemistry

Understanding the world around me is something I have consciously done for as long as I've been able to think. The act of comprehending phenomena and acquiring insight has always brought me immense joy and pleasure, but over time I realized that even though gaining knowledge was exciting, it had no real value if I didn't share it or apply it. This is why I chose to study STEM, and in particular, chemistry - a science that has almost limitless applications that can improve the lives of everyone in various different ways.

Thanks to the American education and diploma I received at San Diego State University Georgia, I had a strong chance of being admitted to top universities to conduct groundbreaking research in chemistry. I was especially drawn towards studies regarding climate change and sustainability conducted at **Yale University**, which compelled me to apply for their PhD program in chemistry. I was accepted, and I consider this to be my greatest achievement by far, as it finally allows me to fully apply my abilities to make a tangible contribution to the betterment of the world; a possibility I was robbed of during my bachelor's program due to the pandemic.

Although I still have to make the final decision on exactly which research I will work on during my doctorate program, my options are all about using chemistry to improve sustainability or combat climate change. Both of these issues are urgent and critical for the survival of modern civilization as we know it. This is why I want to join the effort to find solutions for these problems - because if we do not collectively fight climate change and improve sustainability, we soon won't have a habitable planet we can call home.

Nino Kacharava

Civil Engineering

I am Nino Kacharava, a civil engineering senior at SDSUG. Even though in my school years I also dedicated my time to arts and crafts, I always knew my dream career was in a STEM field. I am a winner of a National Olympiad in Georgian language and literature. I was chosen to represent my country in the Giffoni film festival in Macedonia, and I represented the Georgian team in Erasmus+ in Cyprus. These experiences and many more have helped me become the person I am today. During my bachelor's studies, I maintained a perfect GPA (4.0) and engaged in campus activities such as leading the Associated Students Board of Directors and various student clubs. As I wanted my future to be connected to research work, I started writing research papers as a junior and I am proud to say that in 2021 my article about Traffic Congestion and Efficient Ways to Deal with it in Tbilisi, Georgia was published in a peer-reviewed journal.

I am currently an invited Hydraulic Modeling Specialist at the National Environmental Agency. The work I perform in this position is pivotal for Georgia's development, as it will set an example of hazard maps across the nation. I am also grateful to have worked on developing the Tbilisi Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan and have worked as an assistant project manager on several construction projects in Tbilisi.

My most important goal for 2022 was to be able to continue my education and I am delighted to have been accepted to graduate schools like Columbia University, UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, and TU Delft. I finally chose to study at **Cornell University** with a prestigious fellowship for a Ph.D. degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering. My research there will be directed towards flows and transport in the lower atmosphere and generally to the human-scale impact on the natural environment under an evolving climate.

opportunities

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

The Employment Services at SDSU Georgia hosts a series of events to help students get started in their careers and build the foundation for future success. In December 2021, the fourth online Virtual Career Fair allowed students to attend interviews with local companies interested in hiring from SDSU Georgia. Then, from March 15th through April 15th, Career Month gave students the opportunity to work on job search skills and participate in meetings with SDSU Georgia's industry partners to network and learn more about working at these companies.

The Job Fair is held twice per year - once in fall, and once in spring. This year, on May 4th, SDSU Georgia held the first in-person Job Fair since the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees signed up to interview SDSUG students and alumni, as well as to list their job opportunities on our career website, and access a database of SDSU Georgia student CVs.

SDSU Georgia also announces Career Month twice per year. This spring, from March 15th through April 15th, students attended workshops and training sessions on CV writing, practiced job interview skills through mock interviews, and participated in employment events such as the Open Door Industry Meetings. These meetings organized throughout the Career Month give interested employers the chance to promote their companies to SDSU Georgia students. Companies introduce themselves and provide an overview of their organizations, including their business activities and opportunities for employment. Students have a chance to learn about company culture and get answers to their questions. This provides an important networking opportunity and often leads to job interviews and job offers for students.

SDSU Georgia's career and employment events open the door for students and alumni to launch their careers and pursue meaningful, challenging work that helps their communities and their countriy. Partnering with local companies helps them to hire talent from Georgia and develop the local economy while contributing to vital infrastructure and services. These partnerships also help SDSU Georgia emphasize the qualifications of its students, who are highly competitive candidates fully equipped with the technical and general skills necessary for success in the modern world.

sustainability

Sustainability of U.S Stem Degrees in Georgia

In 2014, the SDSU Georgia project was initiated through Georgia's second Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact, aimed to address the quality of human capital in Georgia. The MCC Compact ended on July 1, 2019. Since then, SDSU has been focusing on Sustainability initiatives to ensure the continuous development of U.S. STEM degrees in Georgia. To that end, SDSU is currently looking at the feasibility of sustaining STEM degree programs in Georgia, in partnership with Tbilisi State University and Ilia State University.

The project feasibility study is being conducted by SDSU Global Campus, represented by Dean Karen S. Myers-Bowman. We have met with Eddie West, Assistant Dean, International Strategy and Programs at SDSU Global Campus, to discuss the project's potential and long-term impact on the country, and the sustainability of the SDSU STEM degrees in Georgia.

BACKGROUND AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Can you start us off with a general overview of the sustainability idea?

SDSU Georgia degree programs are currently taught in partnership with three Georgian public universities and run under the auspices of SDSU Georgia. To ensure sustainability of STEM degree programs in Georgia, partner universities have started developing programs that will be ABET accredited and comparable to SDSU's degree programs in San Diego. There has been considerable success in this regard and more of partner university programs are expected to receive international accreditation soon.

SDSU is currently investigating the feasibility of developing STEM programs that will be run in partnership with the partner universities in Georgia. There are four potential programs - Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in partnership with Tbilisi State University, and Computer Engineering and Civil Engineering in partnership with Ilia State University.

IMPACT ON EDUCATION SYSTEM

Can you tell us how this might impact the Georgian education system?

The idea behind the original MCC grant was to help build capacity within Georgia. A key component of the entire SDSU Georgia project has been the pursuit of ABET accreditation in the interest of raising the existing programs to internationally recognized standards. We are now investigating the further opportunities to sustain the gains that have been made via the SDSU Georgia project, to deepen the commitment to the U.S. degree standards.

If feasible, the hope is that by extending these degree programs, we would further strengthen the STEM education in Georgia, by providing excellent education to students, and continue helping the faculty from our partner universities to also reach more opportunities for development.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

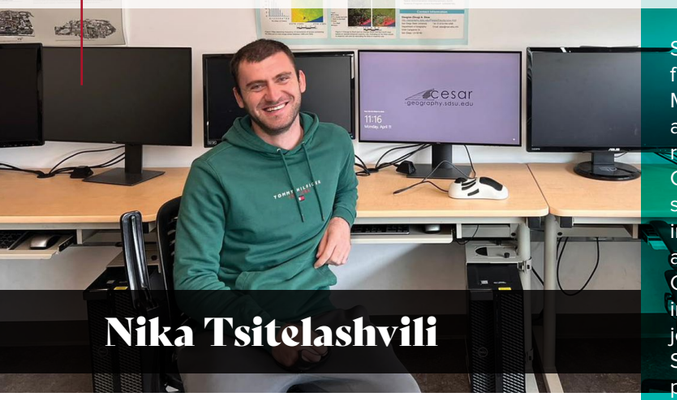
Can you say a little bit more about the impact that you expect the SDSU degree programs to have on Georgian students?

Of course, the main hope is that the students get an excellent education and that they advance towards their own further educational goals or their employment and career goals. One of the more interesting findings from our market research is that employers in Georgia who were interviewed said they really appreciated the open-mindedness of SDSU Georgia graduates, and this was directly attributed to the general education coursework that students undertook as part of their degree studies. That is important to develop students' social skills or soft skills, their presentation and communication skills, and cultivate that kind of open-mindedness.

Finally, we want our graduates to be able to get jobs that are sufficiently stimulating and challenging. We interviewed graduates from our existing SDSU Georgia programs and found that they very much desire that kind of work. They want to be challenged, and hopefully the continuation of STEM degree programs in Georgia will get our future graduates on the path to being able to access such opportunities.

sustainability

GEORGIAN PH. D STUDENTS TRAVEL TO SAN DIEGO FOR RESEARCH INTERNSHIP



Nika Tsitelashvili

The first three Georgian researchers have traveled to San Diego, California to take part in SDSU's doctoral research support program for young Georgian scholars. This project, funded by the US Department of State, will allow up to 18 Georgian Ph. D. students to conduct research at SDSU for a period of three to six months. The students will receive direct guidance from an SDSU Faculty Mentor and will have access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities for conducting STEM research.

The doctoral research support program was created by Dr. Walter Oechel, distinguished professor of biology at SDSU, and Dr. Halil Güven, Dean of SDSU Georgia, with funding from the US Embassy and support from the Millennium Foundation and SDSU Georgia. The project aims to strengthen the quantitative and qualitative research skills and academic writing skills of young Georgian Ph.D. students; raise collaborating Georgian scholars' research capacity to international standards; increase interaction between Georgian and American academics and researchers, and mentor and coach Georgian scholars for publishing research papers in Georgian and Western academic peer-reviewed journals in STEM fields. The project also facilitates SDSU Georgia's mission for building capacity for the partner universities in STEM fields.

In addition to the Ph. D. internships in San Diego, the program includes a series of short courses via Zoom. These short courses are meant to cover modern approaches to research methodology, scientific writing, publishing, communication, oral and poster presentations, use of scientific literature, preparation of modern bibliographic resources, and scientific publications and ethics. So far, five of these mini-courses have been delivered, with up to 800 individuals, including undergraduate and graduate students, administrators, observers, presenters, and academic staff members from Georgian public and private universities, attending the sessions.

Aleksandre Telia

UNITED STATES AND GEORGIA
CELEBRATING THIRTY YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

2022 marks 30 years of diplomatic relations between the United States and Georgia. Through this long friendship, the United States has been assisting Georgia in strengthening democracy, addressing geopolitical challenges, and growing the economy. Millennium Challenge Corporation grant has been one of the products of this friendship. SDSU Georgia programs are being implemented and continue supporting STEM education in Georgia, through this partnership with the United States. The doctoral research support program "Supporting STEM Research and Graduate Education in Georgia" was also sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, supported by the Millennium Foundation and SDSU Georgia.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROGRAM RESUMES

SDSU Georgia's Faculty Development Program has resumed sending faculty from Georgian partner universities to the SDSU main campus for training after a long break due to COVID-related travel restrictions.

Faculty professional development is a vital part of SDSU Georgia's mission to build STEM teaching capacity in higher education in Georgia. As part of the program, faculty from SDSU's Georgian partner universities travel to San Diego for an intensive, three week training program in which they build familiarity with SDSU curriculum and assessment practices, develop teaching and laboratory skills, and collaborate and co-teach with SDSU faculty members. Faculty also develop familiarity with the senior Capstone Project and with SDSU facilities, including laboratories and the SDSU library.

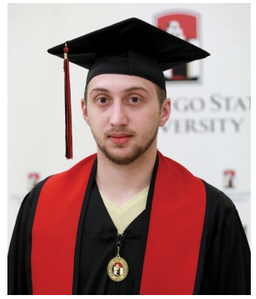
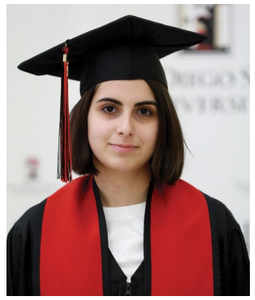
Doctor Tinatin Davitashvili, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, visited San Diego in 2014. "I had an excellent opportunity to share the high-quality educational experience offered by SDSU and to get acquainted with the ABET accreditation requirements and SDSU approaches on academic program evaluation," says Dr. Davitashvili. Dr. Davitashvili expresses her deepest gratitude towards her hosts and emphasizes the value of the guest lectures she was able to deliver in conjunction with her program mentor, Dr. Ken Arnold. Dr. Davitashvili says that as a result of this visit, she "adopted new skills and practices for teaching and lecturing and successfully implemented them here at Tbilisi State University."

This April, two professors from Georgian Technical University (GTU) traveled to the United States to take part in the faculty development program. Since 2014, a total of 101 Georgian faculty from SDSU partner universities have participated in the faculty development program, and an additional 16 faculty members are slated to take part by 2023.

SDSU Georgia Class of 2022

Chemistry

Akhmeteli Leone
Alimbarashvili Davit
Batsankalashvili Tamari
Chkhaidze Lolita

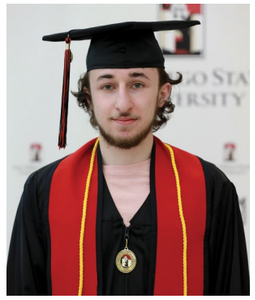




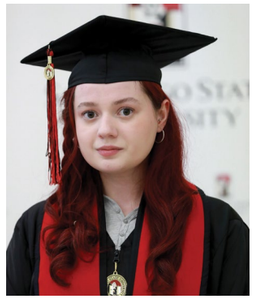


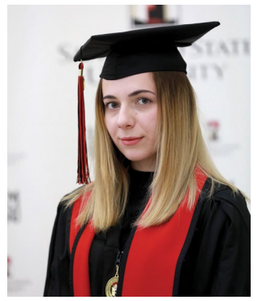

Ptskialadze Tekla
Revazishvili Vasili
Sarishvili Marika
Shapakidze Lado

Dushashvili Salome
Gabelaia Davit
Gojiashvili Levan
Iosava Jemali





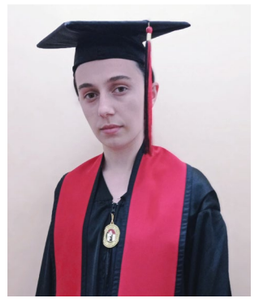
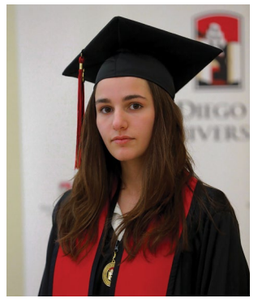


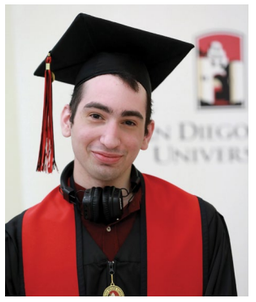
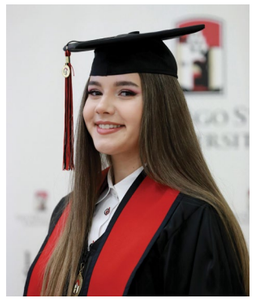
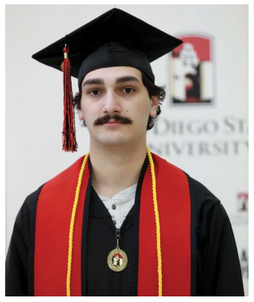
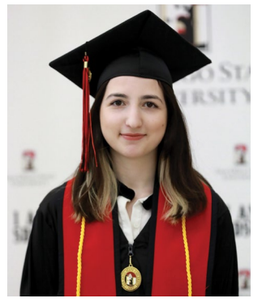
Tskhomelidze Mariam
Vadachkoria Sophia

Biochemistry

Antia Tamar
Babalashvili Tiniko

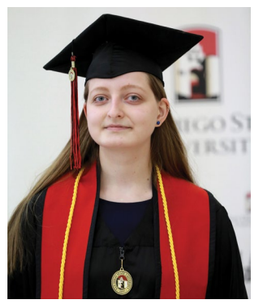
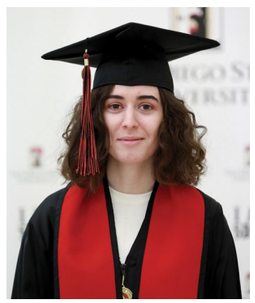
Ivaniashvili Elene
Kirtadze Lia
Kitovani Sopio
Makasarashvili Nino

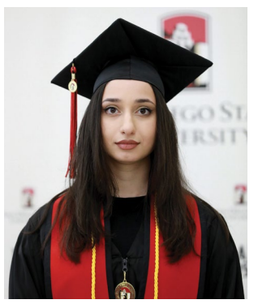




Bakhsoliani Sandro
Basilashvili Eleni
Birkadze Saba
Chakhunashvili Salome

Mamukashvili Shota
Mirotadze Nana
Nadareishvili Mertsia
Natroshvili Tsira

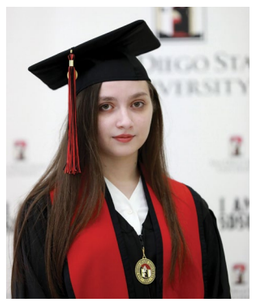


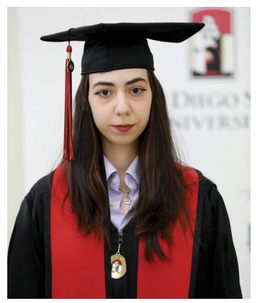

Chichua Ani
Chikhladze Anastasia
Gagunashvili Ana
Geladze Ana

Oniani Devi
Petriashvili Giorgi
Pirtskhalava Tamari
Pochkhua Luka







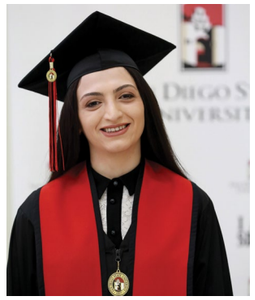
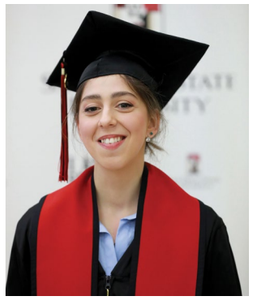
Gogatishvili Nino
Gonashvili Lia
Iobashvili Teona
Jimsherishvili Lilia

SDSU Georgia Class of 2022

Computer Science

Karchkhadze Marta
Kenia Elene
Khitarovi Natia
Khitiri Barbare





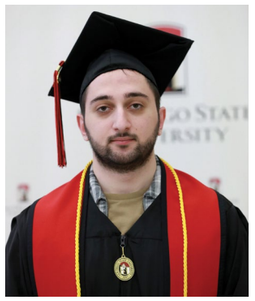
Gvalia Giorgi
Iosebadze Anastasia
Javakhishvili Davit
Julakidze Eka

Abramishvili Ana
Ambrosishvili Lika
Bakidze Saba
Berdznishvili David





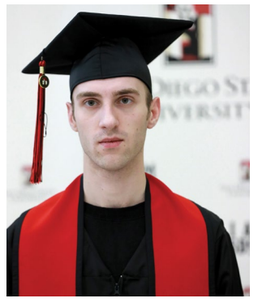
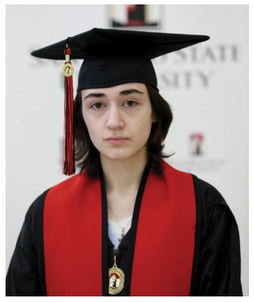


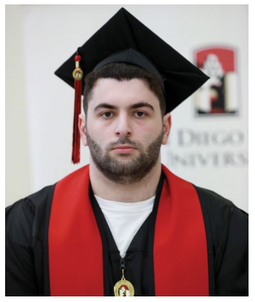
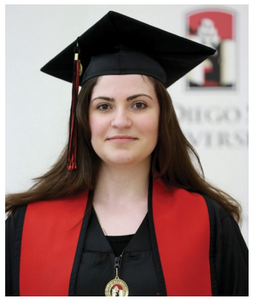



Kakhurashvili Kakha
Kalandadze Nikolozi
Kavtaradze Zurab
Khutsishvili Givi

Beruashvili Aleksandre
Bodzashvili Lizi
Chargazia Mikheil
Chikovani Mariam



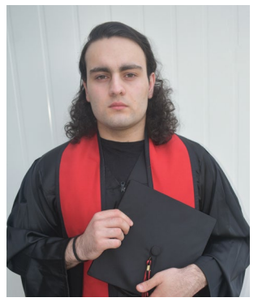




Kokoevi Nikoloz
Kopaliani Beqa
Kurtanidze Nino
Lapanashvili Giga

Chitaishvili Luka
Dondoladze Dimitri
Dzidziguri Giorgi
Esakia Luka



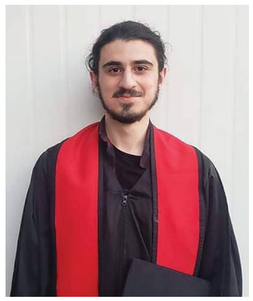





Magradze Ekaterine
Maridashvili Tornike
Metreveli Beka
Midelauri Shako

Etcheverry Andriy
Ezugbaia Giorgi
Gogia Giorgi
Gurgenidze Beka





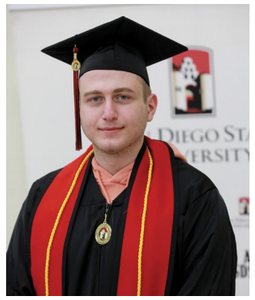
Mujirishvili Ana
Nagervadze Niko
Omiadze Mariami
Pruidze Nikoloz

SDSU Georgia Class of 2022

Sebiskveradze Tatia
Shalashvili Revazi
Tsiklauri Ivane
Tsivilashvili Nika

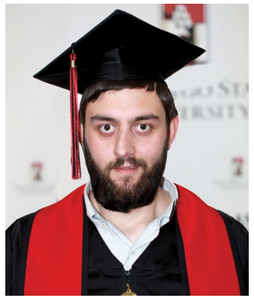
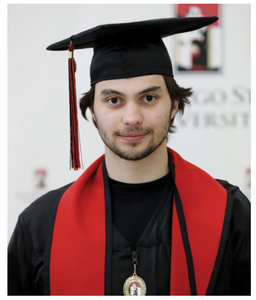




Davlasheridze Bakhva
Dzigvashvili Nika
Gambashidze Tornike
Gejadze Ioseb

Uchaneishvili Giga
Umetadze Vakhtangi
Usanetashvili Ani
Vakhtangov Robert



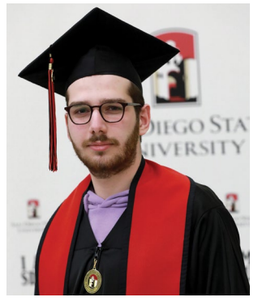


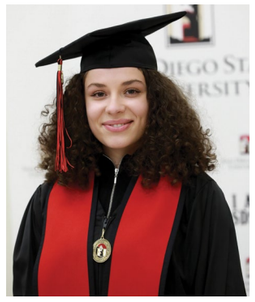
Gigauri Tornike
Gogaladze Levan
Gugeshashvili Giorgi
Gugushvili Mariam

Electrical Engineering

Abramishvili Tengizi
Gigauri Mariam
Kukchishvili Irakli
Kvitashvili Luka





Jelia Liana
Kakalashvili Eka
Karegishvili Giorgi
Kurashvili Nikoloz

Mzhavanadze George
Nikolaev Vasili
Odishvili Luka
Rogava Zurabi







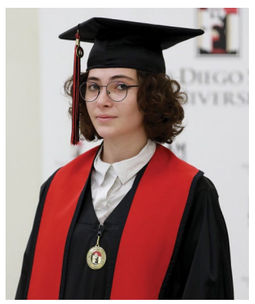

Kurdadze Vakhtang
Magradze Ana
Mushtashvili Saba
Nikuradze Khatia

Tskhomelidze Ana

Computer Engineering

Bokhochadze Giorgi
Chanturia Nick
Chemia Ekaterine



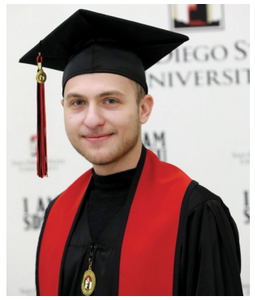


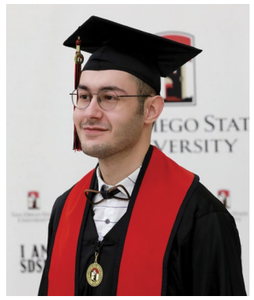
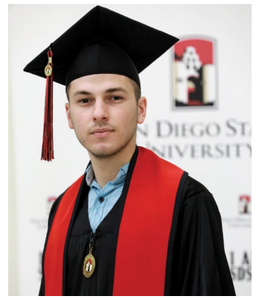
Rukhaia Beka
Shankulashvili Sopio
Simonishvili Tamuna
Tabagari Dimitri

SDSU Georgia Class of 2022

Tabidze Kristine
Toria Ana
Tsartsidze Giorgi
Tsirekidze Mariam






Vashakidze Mariam

Construction Engineering

Abuladze Shota
Erkomaishvili Luka
Gabaidze Zaur

Utmelidze Ina
Vadachkoria Mariam
Zirakashvili Giorgi

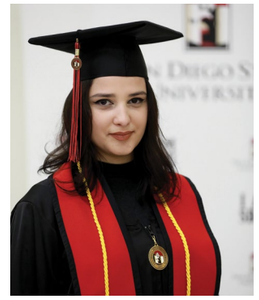
Civil Engineering

Atadzhanov Nazar







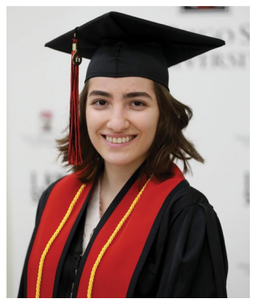
Gomareli Nana
Kantaria Mariam
Tsetsadze Medea
Vardanyan Milena

Chkhartishvili Nino
Giorgadze Nino
Gurgenidze Daviti
Iskandarova Nia




Jalalishvili Rati
Janashvili Amiran
Kacharava Nino
Kantaria Ani






Maisuradze Natali
Meparidze Zurab
Meskhi Zaal
Odishelidze Nini




Did you Know?

SDSU Georgia admitted its first cohort of students in **2015**

In total, SDSU Georgia has admitted **780 students** and more than 500 will graduate from its programs

SDSU Georgia has already graduated three cohorts and **250 individuals**

SDSU Georgia has implemented a need-based financial aid program, with **$3.2M** in philanthropy commitments for student scholarships

SDSU Georgia students outperform their peers at SDSU home campus academically, with current average **GPA of 3.51**

Female participation in SDSU Georgia programs is almost **50%**

7 out of 10 members of the SDSU Georgia Associated Students Board of Directors, including the President and Executive Vice President, **are women**

The SDSU student community is **extending** and includes ACS Student Chapter, American Society of Civil Engineers, as well as Alumni Association and Student Clubs

3,500 sq. m. of labs and classrooms have been renovated at Partner University facilities and a new STEM building (4,000 sq.m.) was constructed in partnership with Ilia State University

A high resolution **NMR Spectrometer** was installed at TSU

Capacity building: **100+** partner university faculty have been trained at SDSU main campus, to continue teaching in the Georgian partner university programs in line with US education standards

Three partner universities – Tbilisi State University, Ilia State University, and Georgian Technical University – are currently in the process of acquiring **ABET/ACS accreditation** for their programs, as part of the capacity building objective of SDSU Georgia project

SDSU Georgia Students Receive Support from HEERF

This year, SDSU Georgia students received financial support from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) in the US. HEERF was established by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in order to provide emergency funding to students impacted by the pandemic. SDSU President Adela de la Torre arranged for SDSU Georgia students to receive funding from HEERF after visiting Georgia and hearing about the hardships faced by the students and their families as a result of the pandemic. SDSUG students were each awarded $630 for the 2021-22 academic year.

highlight

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

This year, San Diego State University celebrates the 125th anniversary of its founding with a series of events including lectures, panels, ceremonies, and sporting events. A delegation from Georgia will travel to San Diego, California in September 2022 to participate in the commemoration.

The Georgian delegation will include SDSU Georgia's Advisory Board, the rectors of SDSU Georgia's three partner universities, and representatives of the Millennium Foundation, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, as well as SDSU Georgia's private partners. During the visit, new collaboration and partnership agreements will be signed to extend the cooperation between SDSU and partner universities: Georgian Technical University, Ilia State University, and Tbilisi State University. Delegates will also attend a football match between the SDSU Aztecs and the UA Wildcats at Snapdragon Stadium on SDSU's new Mission Valley campus in San Diego.

SDSU was founded on March 13th, 1897 and has educated over 500,000 students in its 125-year history. In this time, SDSU has gained recognition as a premier university for education, research, and service, with an enrollment of over 36,000 students.

COMMENCEMENT 2022

MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION
ათასწლეულის ფონდი

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT GEORGIA

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SDSU
Georgia

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