



SMU *In* STRIDE

Quarterly Newsletter

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Committed to Excellence!

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Editorial

Dear readers,

A warm welcome to Vol. 26, No. 66 Issue of SMU in Stride! In this issue, news items around teaching-learning, research, and outreach activities that took place during the second quarter of the year are presented in the regular columns. In the teaching learning column, we find graduation event, 4th Strategic Plan Development, comprehensive thesis orientation and Engaging Sessions on Data Science and Cloud Computing.

The Partnership, Outreach, and Community Services section is dedicated to our heartwarming initiatives, including the Charitable Feast for the Elderly and Disabled. We're also proud to feature the successful completion of the Digital Learning Platform Project, the certification ceremony for Animation and Media Training at the American Corner, and another rewarding Certification Event for university preparation in collaboration with Soar to Success.

ዜና አስተዳደር column brings you updates on our employee induction program and our ongoing efforts to enhance the University's customer service experience.

We close this issue with heartfelt thanks for your unwavering support and valuable contributions to our Newsletter. Your suggestions and feedback are instrumental in our continuous improvement.

Enjoy the read!

International Relations and Communication Office, St. Mary's University.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Teaching and Learning

St. Mary's University Celebrates the Achievements of Its Graduates

St. Mary's University conferred degrees on its undergraduate and postgraduate students on March 9, 2024, at the Ethiopian National Theatre.



In his keynote address, Wondwosen Tamrat, (Ph.D., Associate Professor), the Founder and President of the University, extended heartfelt congratulations to the graduates for their commendable academic achievements.

The President acknowledged the graduates' dedication and the unwavering support of the faculty and staff, which were instrumental in the students' successful academic journey. He emphasized that the University's commitment to education, research, and community service has been pivotal in nurturing thousands of professionals over the past quarter-century, thereby significantly contributing to the nation's progress.



Reflecting on the University's enduring legacy of excellence, the President announced that this year, 142 postgraduates and 344 undergraduate students, totaling 486 graduates have met the rigorous academic standards and national examination requirements to be presented as candidates for graduation. The gender distribution among the graduates is noteworthy, with 45.8% of postgraduate and 45.9% of undergraduate degrees awarded to male students, while female students comprised 54.2% and 54% of the respective cohorts.



The President highlighted that this year's graduation statistic underscores a remarkable increase in female participation and achievement, which exemplifies the University's outstanding performance in fostering gender equity in higher education.



“In preparation for today’s graduation, extensive efforts have been made over the past years. Following the Ministry of Education’s directives, our undergraduate candidates have been meticulously trained in their respective competencies. This rigorous preparation was essential for qualifying for the National Higher Education Exit Exam. Notably, St. Mary’s University, the sole private institution to surpass a 50% graduate pass rate in last year’s exam, has once again achieved commendable results, continuing its legacy of success,” he remarked.



The guest of honor, Dr. Tewabech Bishaw, Founder and Managing Director of Alliance for Brain Gain and Innovative Development (ABIDE), had the honor of presenting awards to academically distinguished graduates.

In her closing remarks, the guest of honor imparted sage advice, urging the graduates to aspire to greatness by embracing values of equality, unity, respect, tolerance, empathy, and love-virtues our nation dearly requires. She emphasized that the graduates’ future success hinges on patriotic fervor, a positive outlook, fairness, integrity, dedication, and a robust work ethic. “Your vision will be clear, and your mission accomplished, as long as you apply your education with zeal and wisdom,” she affirmed. “The ceremony was not only a festivity of scholastic achievements but also a recognition of diligence and commitment,” She reaffirmed.



The event reached its zenith with a commemorative photo session capturing the moment shared between the senate members and the graduates.

St. Mary’s University Embarks on 4th Strategic Plan Development

St. Mary’s University has commenced the development of its 4th Strategic Plan with a briefing session held for the Steering Committee members on February 22, 2024 at the Syndicate Room, Main Campus. The session was opened by Desalegn Berie, Vice President for Business Administration and Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee for Resource and Planning Development.

The event featured presentations from Misganaw Solomon, PhD, Vice President for Research and International Relations, and Shegaw G/Medhin, Director of the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance. The presentation outlined the University’s strategic direction, emphasizing the goal to prepare a well-articulated plan that embodies SMU’s motto – “Committed to Excellence!”

During the presentation, it was disclosed that three strategic plans have been developed, and Currently, the third is being implemented. The session underscored the strategic planning process as a critical tool for mapping the Institution’s growth trajectory, informing decisions, and defining long-term objectives.

It was explained that the 4th Strategic Plan process includes a comprehensive review of the existing plan, identification of key steps and resources, and clarification of expected outputs within set deadlines. The plan’s focus areas include SWOT Analysis, Stakeholders’ Analysis, Environment Scanning, and Basic Data Compilation.

The process will proceed with the development of an action plan, assignment of responsibilities, understanding of tasks and outcomes, re-planning and resource identification, and creation of data collection instruments. This will be followed by information gathering, drafting of committee reports, compilation of findings, and presentation of drafts for feedback. The final stages involve revising, editing, and finalizing the document, submitting it to the Senate Standing Committee for Resource and Planning Development, and presenting the final Strategic Plan to the Senate for approval.



Comprehensive Thesis Preparation Orientation

St. Mary's University's Student Support Service Office (SGS) organized a half-day orientation session for second-batch (Entrant-B) postgraduate program students, focusing on thesis preparation. The event, which took place on March 16th, 2024, aimed to equip students with vital information and tools for their research journey.

The orientation featured experts from various departments, including the School of Graduate Studies, Institute of Agriculture and Development Studies, Student Support Service Office, and Research and Knowledge Management Office. They provided insights into the University's thematic research areas, thesis writing techniques, and the significance of ethical research practices.



Key topics covered include the structure and format of a thesis, clarity in academic writing, and adherence to institutional guidelines. The session also highlighted resources available to students for their research endeavors.

The interactive event concluded with a Q&A session, where students actively participated and received personalized advice and further clarification on their queries.

Engaging Sessions on Data Science and Cloud Computing

St. Mary's University's Computer Science Club, in collaboration with the Google Developer Students Club (GDSC), organized two enriching events at the American Corner on March 14 and 26, 2024. These sessions were designed to expand the horizons of tech enthusiast students about the cutting-edge fields of data science and cloud computing.



The first event, led by Bemnet Girma, a data scientist, who provided an introduction to the world of data science. His presentation was not only educational but also deeply inspiring, as he shared his personal experiences and career journey. His insights proved invaluable, leaving the students motivated and equipped with new perspectives on harnessing data for innovation.

A successive session was held on March 26, 2024, with Bereket Negash, a cloud expert, featured the world of cloud computing. His presentations unraveled the complexities of cloud technologies, offering students a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The session culminated in an interactive interview, where Bereket elaborated on the nuances of cloud computing. A vibrant Q&A session followed, sparking discussions that left attendees with new insights and ideas.



Partnership, Outreach and Community Services

University Hosts a Charitable Feast for the Elderly and Disabled

St. Mary's University (SMU) invited more than fifty elderly and disabled people from Lideta Sub-city, Woreda 10 Administration to enjoy a free meal at the Undergraduate Campus, Multi-Purpose Hall, on January 18, 2024. The event was part of the University's community service initiative, funded by a budget allocated for this purpose. The Undergraduate Program Student Support Services Office and all its Units coordinated the event.

The event began with a warm welcome and opening remarks by Wondwosen Tamrat PhD, the President of SMU. He expressed gratitude and respect for the elders, who have served their country and deserve care. He also emphasized that community service is one of the core values of the University, and pledged to continue working on it. He praised the Student Support Services Office for organizing the event and encouraged the University's community to participate in such noble activities in the future.



Ato Ermias Solomon, the Team Leader of the Community Engagement Voluntary Service Coordinating Office of the Woreda 10 Administration, commended SMU for being a leading institution in providing quality education and engaging in exemplary humanitarian work. He also urged SMU to further strengthen its involvement in community services in the coming times.

The program ended with a blessing from the elders, who thanked the University and everyone involved for making the event possible and memorable.



Celebrating Creativity

St. Mary's University hosts a certification ceremony for Animation and Media Training that took place at the American Corner located at the Main Campus of the University On February 5, 2024. The event was organized by the US Embassy in collaboration with St. Mary's University and the Ethiopian World Federation Association (EWF).

Her Excellency Naome Fellos, the Public Diplomacy Counsellor of the US Embassy Addis Ababa, described the event as a collaborative effort among the US Embassy Addis Ababa, St. Mary's University, and the Ethiopian World Federation. She acknowledged the commitment of these partners in making this graduation program possible.

Wondwosen Tamrat, Ph.D., in his remarks, congratulated the trainees who successfully completed their special training on animation after three months of hard work at the American Corner, which St. Mary's University has been hosting since May 2023.



He expressed his pleasure in hosting this vibrant center, emphasizing its rapid growth since its establishment. "Over the past 8 months, the center has become a valuable hub for information, skill training, and networking. The two-decade partnership between the US Embassy and St. Mary's University holds significant value for Ethiopian youth and job creation," he remarked.

His Excellency Ambros R. King, President of the Ethiopian World Federation Association, highlighted that this Imagining, Animation, and Media Educational project exemplifies the unity between Ethiopia and the United States of America. It draws upon a rich history of spiritual and cultural ties dating back to the 1800s and 1900s.

Her Excellency Nebiah Mohammed, the State Minister of Labor & Skills emphasized the significant potential of the creative art industry in driving economic transformation and creating quality employment opportunities, especially for youth. She expressed her gratitude on behalf of the ministry to

the US Embassy and St. Mary's University for their consistent support, which has played a crucial role in youth development and fostering innovation through such programs as Digital Animation Training.



As a culmination of their hard work, 45 students were awarded certificates of participation in the training. They also showcased their animation pieces of work, celebrating their achievements and the impact of this valuable initiative.

Digital Learning Platform Project

On February 10, 2024, a closing ceremony was held at the Syndicate Room of St. Mary's University (SMU) to mark the completion of the project "Digital Learning Platform of the Ethiopian Education System". The project was funded by DEG Deutsche Investitions-und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH, a German development finance institution, and implemented by suPPPport Ltd., an international consultancy and service provider with offices in Hong Kong, Bangladesh, and Germany.

The ceremony began with a welcoming speech by SMU President, Wondwosen Tamrat (PhD, Assoc. Prof.), who remarked that the impact of the partnership was immense for SMU's digitization and that it was quite remarkable that it catered education for more than 6000 students through its distance learning program. He also expressed SMU's commitment to ensuring the continuity of the project and its aspiration to remain more digitized and paperless. He noted that the lesson learned from the project was more than what was anticipated and hoped the partnership would continue in the years to come.

The event continued with a briefing about the project by Misganaw Solomon (PhD), who discussed the objectives and outcomes of the SMU-DEG-support joint initiative. The project, which started on March 31, 2020, and lasted for three years, aimed to improve SMU's delivery of educational services, especially its digital system and infrastructure. As a result of the project, 13 distance-learning centers have been upgraded; student enrolment in 5 undergraduate and 4 graduate programs has increased; and the learning process has been streamlined and made easier for educators and learners to access and manage educational content. The project also enabled learners to access educational materials and courses from anywhere with an internet connection, which is particularly valuable for remote learning, distance education, and corporate training programs.

Suraya Akter, General Manager of Support Ltd, acknowledged and commended the University's commitment to the realization of the project and promised that the partnership would continue. Finally, a vote of thanks was given to Ozan Oezdemir and Suraya Akter and their team, who played instrumental roles in the inception and implementation of the project.



A Charitable Event

The Student Support Service Office of St. Mary's University, in collaboration with the Charity Club, conducted a cloth donation drive on March 29, 2024. The collected garments, generously contributed by the university's staff and students, were handed over at the Undergraduate Campus. Ato Berihun Amare, Director of the Community Engagement and Voluntary Service Coordinating Office of Woreda10 Lideta Sub-city, graciously accepted the donations on behalf of the local administration.

In a gesture of gratitude, Woreda 10 administration awarded St. Mary's University a certificate of recognition and appreciation. This honor highlights the university's commitment to community service and the impactful role of the Charity Club in spearheading the collection efforts. The club's leader, representing the University, received the certificate, marking a proud moment for all involved in this charitable act.



SMU Book Club visited RAEY YEHITSANAT ENA BETESEB LIMAT MAHBER

SMU Book Club visited RAEY YEHITSANAT ENA BETESEB LIMAT MAHBER on February 29, 2024, and donated 12,220-birr worth of children's books bought at Saint Mary's Press Book Store with a 20% discount. Along with touring the grounds and seeing the kids in their classrooms, the visit included dropping by to their recently established library with shelves that were ready to be stocked with books.

The funds were gathered from the sale of charity tickets to the St. Mary's community from January 3-January 5, 2024, during the book fair held at the Charity Carnival. SMU Book club would like to thank Saint Mary's press and all of St. Mary's community for their cooperation to make this all happen.



Empowering Financial Literacy

On February 29, 2024, the National Financial Education Program for Youth and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) was launched at the Inter Luxury Hotel. This pivotal event marked the introduction of Financial Education Modules developed by St. Mary's University (SMU), commissioned by First Consult Plc, under the auspices of the National Bank of Ethiopia.

The ceremony featured keynote speeches from representatives of First Consult, the Master Card Foundation, and the National Bank. These were followed by concise presentations detailing the National Financial Education Strategy and the newly developed Financial Education Module.

The presentations outlined the project's goals, the anticipated outcomes, and provided a synopsis of the module development process.

The event culminated with the formal handover of the Financial Education Module. A representative of the National Bank delivered the closing remarks, expressing gratitude for the collaborative efforts and the chance to contribute to the National Financial Inclusion Strategy.

Representing St. Mary's University were the Vice President for Research and International Relations and the SMU technical team, who developed the Module.



Venture Capital in Africa: A Gateway to Financial Markets

St. Mary's University arranged an enlightening event titled "Introduction to Venture Capital in Africa" which was delivered by RENEW CAPITAL on March 20, 2024, at the University's Main Campus, Syndicate Room.



The session highlighted RENEW CAPITAL's pivotal role as a premier venture firm in Africa, committed to fostering the growth of small and medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs) throughout the continent. As an impact investment firm, RENEW CAPITAL has played a key role in job creation and the advancement of women's employment, contributing significantly to the economic development of various nations. The presentation elucidated the vital contribution of Angel Investors in supplying capital to promising startups and small businesses, thus facilitating their success in the absence of conventional financing options.

This engaging event shed light on numerous aspects of the venture capital landscape, greatly enhancing the participants' comprehension. The series of sessions, initiated with faculty and staff, will continue with an informative briefing for the students of the University on March 21, 2024, at the Undergraduate Campus Multi-Purpose Hall.



Unlocking Opportunities: A Certification Event

St. Mary's University, in collaboration with Soar to Success, held a Certificate of Achievement ceremony for 50, second-cohort students drawn from high schools and universities who completed the Soar to Success University Preparation Program Level One on Saturday, March 23, 2024, at the University's main campus. The event commenced with students networking and sharing their experiences.



Misganaw Solomon, (PhD) representing St. Mary's University, encouraged students to focus on their studies and emphasized the importance of interaction which gives valuable opportunities and support on their journey to success.



Chachi Tadesse, a renowned artist and humanitarian, shared inspiring words with the students. She highlighted the significance of improving their English language skills, which not only enhances communication but also opens doors to scholarships. Some students from the same cohort have already secured scholarships, demonstrating the impact of language proficiency.



The ceremony concluded with participants receiving their certificates. Educator Margaret Hofer presented these certificates, recognizing the successful completion of the 12-week TOFEL preparation program. This program aimed to enhance participants' English language abilities, equipping them for academic and professional success.

Additionally, it was announced during the ceremony

that College Preparatory Level Two classes would commence on the same day which focuses on writing skills, an essential competency for university and the workforce. Participants will delve into persuasive, narrative, and research essay writing, refining their language abilities.

Finally, the ceremony culminated with the visit of the Students to the American Corner.



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የሰራተኞች የሰራ ትውውቅ ተካሄደ

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በዶክተር ዘመኑ አይናዲስ መሪነት የተሰጠው ስልጠና የደንበኞችን ፍላጎት በአግባቡ ለማስተናገድና ለመመለስ የተዘጋጀ ሲሆን በእለቱ ከቀረቡ ዋና ዋና ርዕሰ ጉዳዮች መካከል የደንበኞች አገልግሎት አስፈላጊነት፣ ደንበኞችን ልዩ ትኩረት በመስጠት ማስተናገድ፣ የደንበኛ ምርጫዎች እና የደንበኛ ቅሬታዎችን በብቃት በማስተናገድ ላይ ያጠነጠኑ ነበር።

በመጨረሻም ስልጣኞች በተነሱት ሃሳቦች ላይ እንዲሁም አስተማማኝ አገልግሎት እና የደንበኞች እርካታ እንዴት እንደሚገኝ ተጨማሪ ውይይት ተካሂዶ ስልጠናው ተጠናቋል።



St. Mary's University

Programs Offered



Undergraduate Degree Programs (Regular/Extension)

- ◆ Accounting & Finance
- ◆ Computer Science
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Marketing Management
- ◆ Tourism & Hospitality Management

Undergraduate Degree Programs (College of Open and Distance Learning)

- ◆ Accounting & Finance
- ◆ Banking and Finance
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Marketing Management
- ◆ Financial Economics
- ◆ Rural Development
- ◆ Agricultural Extension
- ◆ Agri-Business Management
- ◆ Agricultural Economics
- ◆ Cooperative (Accounting & Auditing)
- ◆ Cooperative (Business Management)
- ◆ Educational Planning & Management
- ◆ Economics
- ◆ Sociology
- ◆ Logistics & Supply Chain Management
- ◆ Public Administration and Development
- ◆ Management

Other Services Through Our Testing Center

- ◆ TOEFL iBT (Internet based)
- ◆ Recruitment test
- ◆ GRE
- ◆ Praxis
- ◆ (CISI) Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment

Graduate Programs (Regular)

- ◆ Master of Business Administration(MBA)
- ◆ MBA in Accounting and Finance
- ◆ MA in Project Management
- ◆ MA in Marketing Management
- ◆ MA in Social Work
- ◆ MA in Sociology
- ◆ MA in Development Economics
- ◆ MSc. in Agricultural Economics
- ◆ MSc. in Computer Science
- ◆ MSc in Quality and Productivity Management

Graduate Programs Offered in Partnership with Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

- ◆ MBA in Impact Entrepreneurship

Graduate Programs In Partnership With IGNOU (Distance)

- ◆ Master of Business Administration
- ◆ Master of Arts in Social Work
- ◆ Master of Arts in Economics
- ◆ Master of Arts in Public Administration
- ◆ MARD (Master of Arts in Rural Development)
- ◆ Master of Arts in Sociology
- ◆ Master of Arts in Political Science
- ◆ Master of Commerce

Short Term Training

- ◆ Business, IT, and Education areas
- ◆ Certified Quality Manager
- ◆ Certified Quality Engineer
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System
- ◆ ISO 31000:2015 Risk Management
- ◆ Supply Chain Management
- ◆ Quality Professional
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Auditor
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Lead Auditor
- ◆ Quality and Productivity areas
- ◆ Entrepreneurship
- ◆ and more

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