

ALUMNI OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Newsletter

SDSU

Georgia

ISSUE n.2 | Class of 2021

Keeping up with SDSU Georgia 4.0 Alumni Life updates

We asked them about their time at SDSU Georgia, what they took away from the experience, and what they are working on now.

Industry Opportunities for SDSU Georgia Alumni

Meet the New Alumni Board

Stipend Program with International Education Center

Since 2018, The International Education Center, in partnership with San Diego State University, has been implementing a stipend program called "Academic Programs at San Diego State University" with the support of the Millennium Foundation.

Message from the Dean

SDSU Georgia is a small but principal part of the SDSU Aztec community, with a 125-year history of providing academic excellence, student success and groundbreaking research. Since 2019, when SDSU Georgia graduated the first group of STEM professionals, our alumni numbers keep growing, and the success multiplies. This year, the collective journey of our community continues with 160 more graduates, bringing the total number of outstanding alumni educated to current international standards to above 400.

These exceptional graduates continue establishing themselves professionally at the top universities and organizations all over the map, determined to share their knowledge and experience with their peers. SDSU Georgia's Alumni Association, established to connect our alumni network, continues working with our seniors for the graduate studies recommendations and tips on interviewing for their dream jobs.

This shared sense of belonging and a supportive environment brings the SDSU Georgia alumni network closer to the international Aztec community. This Alumni Newsletter is a tradition that we started last year to keep us connected with our growing STEM alumni network, hear stories of their successful career shifts, and share their journey with friends and supporters of SDSU Georgia. It is with the help of these public and private partners that our alumni continue growing and contributing to the future of Georgia.

Dear SDSU Georgia alumni, thank you for your commitment to our community. With your resilience, dedication, and power that is a product of an educated mind, we expect you to be a part of SDSU's future. You continue to inspire and support your younger peers at SDSU Georgia. Together as the leaders of this STEM generation, you are shaping the future because Leadership Starts here at SDSU!



SDSU Georgia Aztecs around the world



Based on the Class of 2021 Surveying results, most of our alumni - 71% - said they are currently working in Georgia, which highlights the success of the mission of SDSUG to expand the pool

of human resources available within Georgia, as these alumni are already contributing their skills and expertise to the development of the Georgian economy.

Support Provided for the SDSU Georgia Alumni

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 Accreditations 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 400,000 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 Sustainability 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

Newsletter created by Editor-in-chief

Asmati Naskidashvili

Writer

Neal Zupancic

Contributors

Gvantsa Kheladze
Anna Shakhnazarova
Brianna Quintero
Daniel Williams

Design

Mariam Gogilashvili

Table of Contents

- 2 About SDSU Georgia
- 3 What should people expect from the yearly edition of the Alumni Outreach and Engagement Newsletter?
- 4 SDSU Georgia Alumni Association Events
- 5 Industry Opportunities for SDSU Georgia Alumni
- 8 SDSU Georgia Alumni - Where are they now
- 9 SDSU Georgia Aztecs around the world
- 10 Career Support - Corporate Relations
- 11 Career Support - Career Development
- 12 Meet the New Alumni Board
- 15 Stipend Program with International Education Center
- 17 Keeping up with SDSU Georgia 4.0 Alumni Life updates
- 20 Selected Alumni Bios

What should people expect from the yearly edition of the Alumni Outreach and Engagement Newsletter?

There are 250 graduates from the classes of 2019, 2020, and 2021. By the end of this academic year we'll have more alumni than students. In light of the rising number of alumni, some of the tools we use to keep ourselves in the loop of our alumni life updates are social networks like Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as various surveys, with the purpose to stay informed about the life updates of our alumni. Alumni Association is a framework that helps us extend the services we provided for them during their undergraduate studies at SDSU Georgia after graduation as well. Some of the events that are already being implemented in the framework of the association are Alumni Guest Speaker Series, Experience Sharing meetings with SDSU-G current students, Informal networking sessions, etc.

With the rising number of alumni, interesting stories and life-changing experiences also arise. There are more success stories to tell and more memories to guard. We decided to create the newsletter



specifically on alumni life and engagement with SDSU Georgia and our partner organizations to showcase as many individual and team successes as possible. The 2nd issue of the newsletter covers topics on SDSU Georgia's continued support for our alumni; graphically visualized statistics; partnership with the International Education Center and stories of the stipend recipients; SDSUG major-related industry opportunities for our alumni; Alumni Association and implemented events; Individual life updates from some of our alumni, etc. The Alumni Outreach and Engagement Newsletter is one of

the most important tools for SDSUG and its alumni body to stay in touch and maintain a strong network.

SDSU Georgia Alumni Association has a new board comprised of four alumni. The new board plans to implement various online and in-person events during its term. They have already organized several online meetings with the current students and alumni, listened to the ideas, brainstormed on new ones, and set the timeline for the activities beneficial for the whole student and alumni body. In light of the endemic and decreasing number of COVID-19 cases, in-person events will be prioritized, and the association, with the help of the administration, will be able to carry out reunions and specific topic-oriented events with the purpose to share experiences and expand the horizons of their networks.

We will definitely have the next issue of the Alumni Outreach and Engagement Newsletter, which will cover all the updates regarding mentioned activities. SDSU Georgia will continue its support for the alumni with all the means at its disposal. Career Advising meetings, Employment Services events, and any administrative support has been available for the alumni since the graduation of the very first cohort. We, of course, plan to continue in this direction and even do more. At SDSU Georgia, we love to say that SDSU does not leave you, even after you graduate. We try to keep up with this saying.



Asmati Naskidashvili

Student and Alumni Affairs
Manager

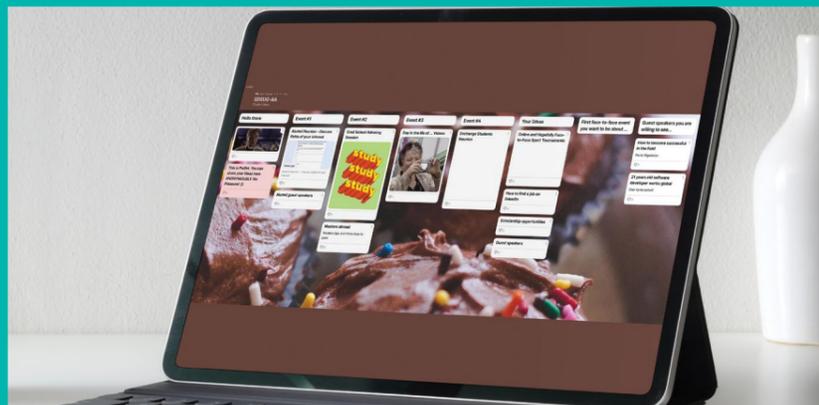
Asmati Naskidashvili is the Student and Alumni Affairs Manager and an Editor in Chief of the Alumni Outreach and Engagement Newsletter. When the first cohort of students graduated from SDSU Georgia, the school realized that students could continue to benefit from the type of services offered by the Student Affairs Department even after graduation. Ms. Naskidashvili oversaw the extension of the department to

cover Student and Alumni Affairs. The department works to facilitate communication and collaboration to develop programs that will help to provide services to students after graduation. To that end, the department has maintained connections to alumni through social media networks, alumni surveys, and alumni meetings and events, and has assisted in the creation of the Alumni Association.

SDSU Georgia Alumni Association Events

Introductory Meeting of the New Board

The Alumni Board held its first meeting with students on Zoom on February 24th. The meeting was an informational session to introduce the board members and their goals for the Alumni Association for this year. Student and Alumni Affairs Manager Asmati Naskidashvili opened the meeting by introducing the new board members and discussing the importance of Alumni Associations in supporting students both before and after graduation by promoting friendship, cooperation, and collaboration. The board members gave presentations introducing themselves and their goals for the year.



Co-president Anna Pavliashvili, Class of 2021, spoke about providing alumni with networking opportunities, hosting a guest speaker series, developing a marketing and communication strategy for the Alumni Association, and finding ways to support current students. Ms. Pavliashvili shared six ideas for meeting these goals, including setting up current students for internships with alumni and their employers, establishing a homecoming/reunion tradition, exploring fundraising opportunities, creating a "Day in the Life" video

series made by alumni, holding a series of webinars on professional development hosted by alumni, and delivering care packages from the alumni board to students.

Co-President Ana Tomash, Class of 2020, also spoke about plans for the Alumni Association. She discussed the importance of sharing her experience with current and former students to help prepare them for success, and of soliciting suggestions from current and former students about how the Alumni Association can better serve the alumni. Ms. Tomash shared a padlet for students and alumni to share their ideas and the meeting attendees posted

several new suggestions, such as an advising session on getting a Master's degree abroad, a seminar on using LinkedIn for finding jobs, and an event to help students find scholarship opportunities.

Board member Giorgi Berelashvili, Class of 2020, spoke about implementing several past plans which had to be postponed due to COVID. Mr. Berelashvili highlighted the need to create an environment where alumni and students in different fields could interact and communicate, and shared a short Google Form for alumni to sign up as volunteers to share their experiences.

Industry Opportunities for SDSU Georgia Alumni



To start with some statistics, based on the Class of 2021 Surveying results, most of our alumni - 71% - said they are currently working in Georgia, which highlights the success of the mission of

SDSUG to expand the pool of human resources available within Georgia, as these alumni are already contributing their skills and expertise to the development of the Georgian economy. Overall, 87% of

respondents said they had stayed in Georgia. 75% of respondents said they are currently employed, and 25% are currently studying in graduate programs.

Along these lines, SDSU Georgia proudly highlights the results from the most recent survey (February 2022), which was carried out among the graduating students who will be joining SDSU Georgia alumni as of May 31. According to

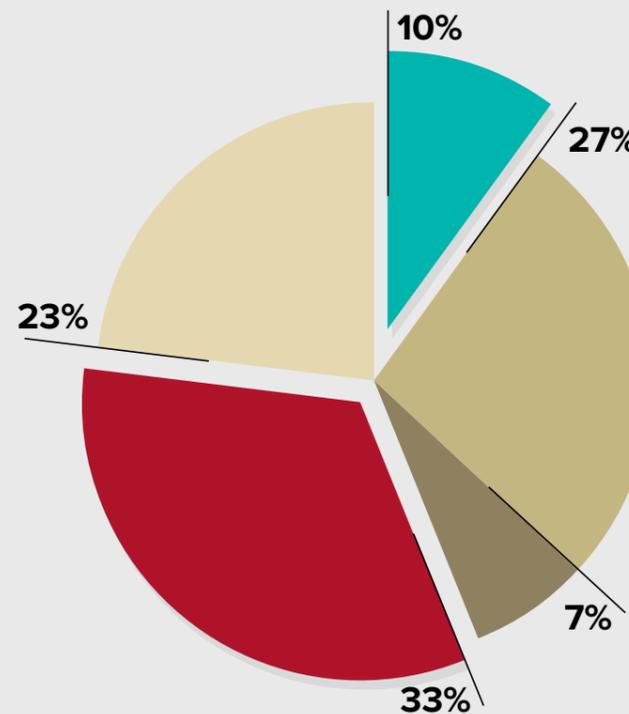
the survey results, the number of students whose primary goal after graduation is to stay in Georgia and work at top companies in our country has doubled since the beginning of our undergraduate programs. To the question - What is your main

goal after graduation - 33% of SDSU Georgia students responded they want to pursue their careers at top companies in Georgia, and 10% of SDSU Georgia seniors responded their goal is to start their own company in Georgia.

Grad School Information Session

SDSU Georgia Career and Graduate School Adviser Brianna Quintero held a grad school information session for students and alumni via Zoom on March 2nd. Her presentation included information about timelines for graduate school applications in the US and Europe, funding and scholarship options for 2022 and 2023, and suggestions for students on how to make the most of a gap year between undergraduate and graduate programs.

Ms. Quintero emphasized strategies for short-term planning around important deadlines and long-term planning to ensure that students will be able to build up the foundations of a successful career. After the presentation, Ms. Quintero answered questions from the audience about motivation letters, personal statements, letters of recommendation, applying to study at SDSU main campus, taking the GRE, and in-person meetings for graduate school advising.



After Graduation Students Main Goals are the following:

155 Responses out of 160

- Join a graduate (Masters or PHD) program in the U.S.
- Join a graduate (Masters or PHD) program in Europe
- Join a graduate (Masters or PHD) program in Georgia
- Start an own company
- Be employed at a top company in Georgia

SDSU Georgia has graduated three cohorts of bright and brilliant students from six different majors, all of them being Science and Engineering Bachelor Programs. To showcase some of the data based on the years 2019, 2020, and 2021, SDSU Georgia graduated 56 students from the Chemistry and Biochemistry programs, 66 students from the Computer Science program, 58 students from the Computer Engineering program, 40 students from the Electrical Engineering program, 17 students from the Civil Engineering program, and ten students from the Computer Engineering program. This data showcases the numbers of our graduates up to this date and doesn't include the information about the Class of 2022. Even though success stories and life updates of the alumni from the Class of 2022 will be covered by the next edition of the Alumni Outreach and Engagement Newsletter, here is a sneak peek at the numbers: As of the Commencement Ceremony 2022, SDSU Georgia will graduate 45 Chemistry and Biochemistry students, 14 Civil Engineering students, 32 Computer Engineering students, 47 Computer Science students, 10 Construction Engineering students, and 9



Electrical Engineering students. According to the surveys SDSU Georgia alumni are filling out months after their graduation, we can share a short narrative on the industry opportunities our alumni are employed within.

Chemistry/Biochemistry students are usually hired by pharmaceutical companies, research institutes, or international pharmacy companies such as: LEPL G. Tsulukidze Mining Institute, Ivane Beritashvili Center of Experimental Biomedicine, Aversi, PSP Pharma, Levan Samkharauli

National Forensics Bureau, Pharmalex Georgia (Soluutiv LLC), as well as getting internships in such organizations as Richard Lugar Center for Public Health Research and National Center for Disease Control and Public Health.

SDSU Georgia **Computer Science** and **Computer Engineering** majors mainly build their careers as Data Scientists, Software Testers, Software Engineers, Android Developers, iOS Developers, IT Auditors, and related vocations. They are employed at companies like Exactpro Systems,

Pulsar AI, Bank of Georgia, TBC Bank, BDO Georgia, RSM Georgia, Blocshop, Exadel, Novelty Today, and other major partners of SDSU Georgia. In these capacities, our alumni mainly perform duties related to but not limited to developing and maintaining various applications; Cyber and Information security, and IT and IS audits; Participating in all stages of software product development, software engineering, testing, deploying, and support; Developing and improving an application software; Designing technical architecture; Implementing software tests and debugging code; Producing the design schema of a database, etc.

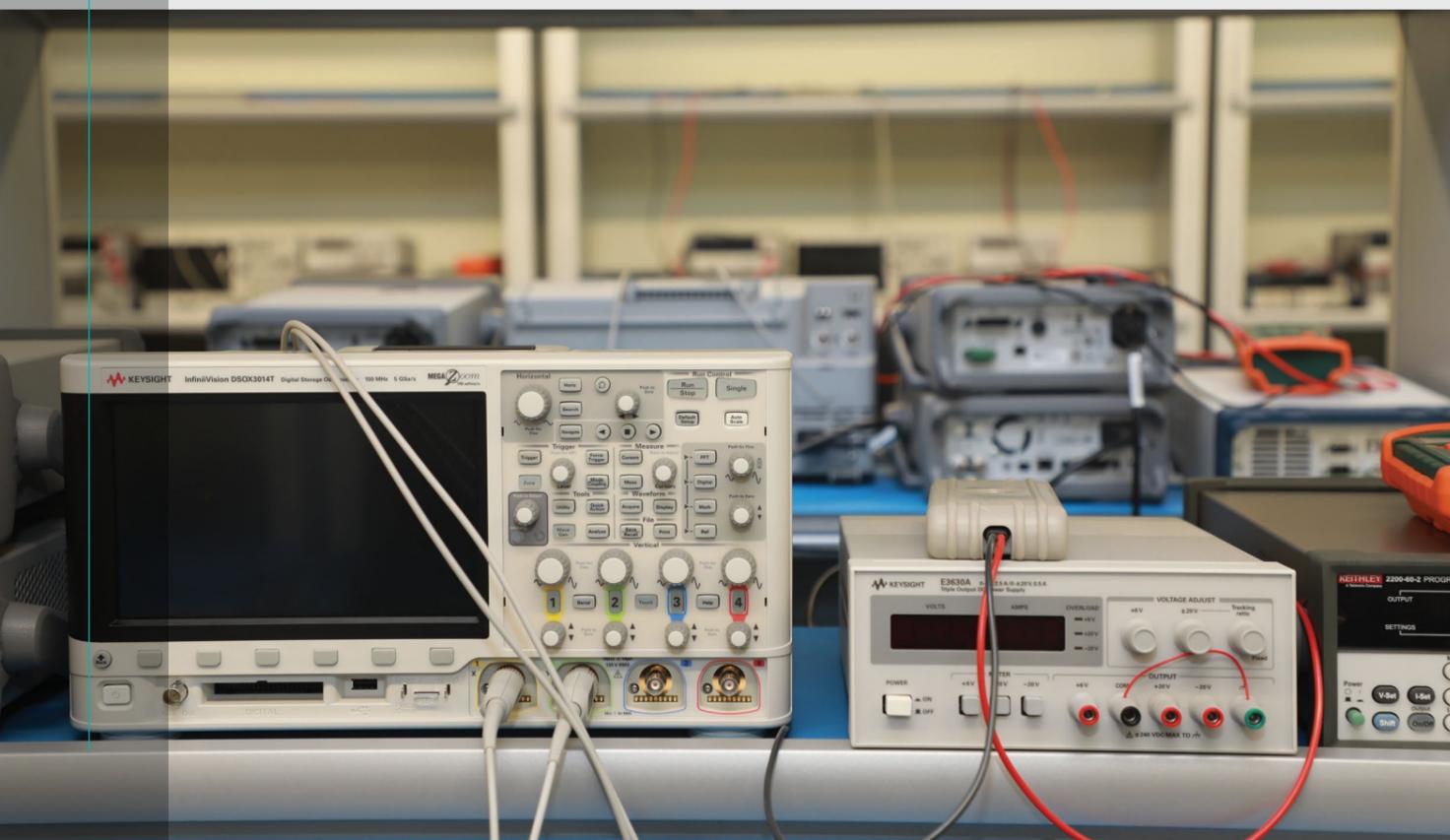
Electrical Engineering graduates mostly pursue their careers as Embedded Engineers, Energy Market Analysts, Technical Managers, etc. In this vocation, they participate and lead the process of designing machine learning systems and self-running AI software to automate predictive models, resolve problems on industrial machines, maintain machinery, etc. SDSU Georgia Electrical Engineering graduates are employed at the companies like Georgian Water and Power, Meama, Georgian Energy Exchange, Energo-Pro Georgia, Georgian Railways, etc. Some SDSU



Georgia alumni, including Electrical Engineering alumni, choose to build their careers in academia.

Civil and Construction Engineering alumni are currently working as Construction Project Managers, Structural Engineers, Quantity Surveyors, Senior Traffic Engineers, Branch Managers, Junior Engineers, etc. They are employed at the companies like Baltic Business Development, Caucasus Road Project, Smart Transportation Solutions, Cubicon, Metta, JSC

Transmsheni, Caucasus Internet Development, Anagi Development, PMCG, APM Terminals Poti, M2, ILF Consulting, etc. At these companies, SDSU Georgia Alumni are performing the duties directly related to and not limited to their majors at SDSU Georgia.



Article Prepared by Asmati Naskidashvili (Newsletter Editor in Chief),
Special contributor: Anna Shakhnazarova (SDSU Georgia Employment Services)

SDSU Georgia Alumni

Where are they now

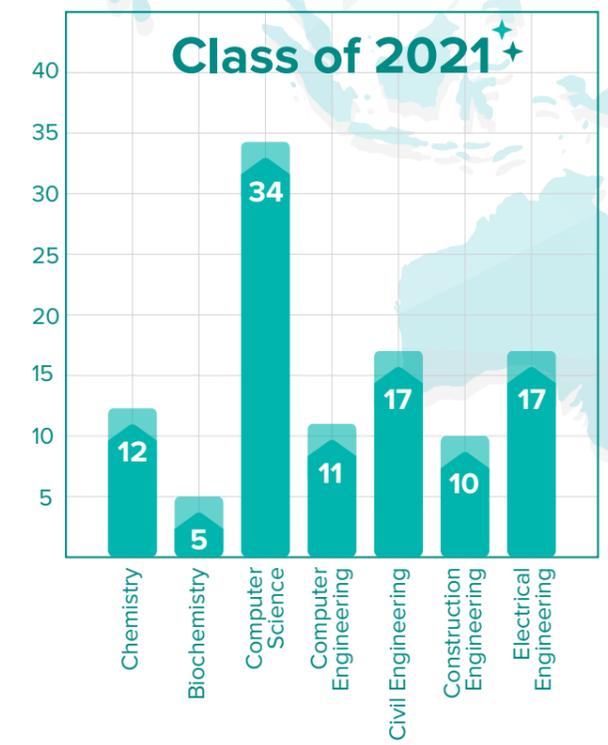
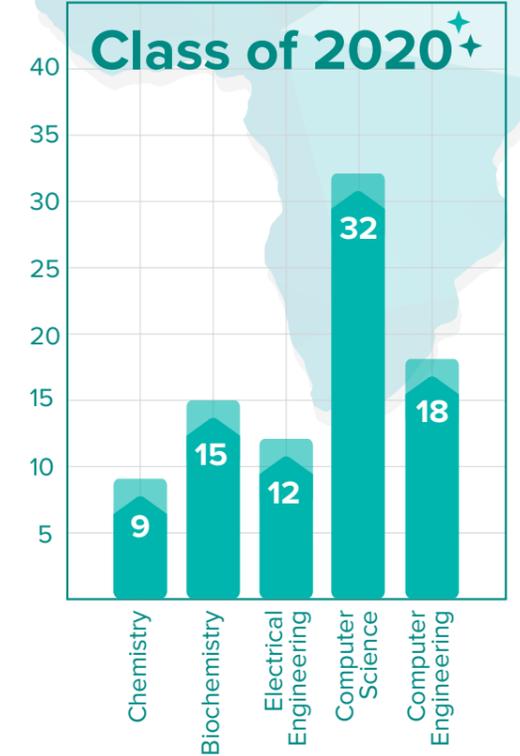
SDSU Georgia

Aztecs around the world



Where do they study?

Agricultural University of Georgia; Budapest University of Technology and Economics; Business and Technology University, Georgia; Caucasus University, Georgia; Dartmouth College; University of Barcelona; European University Viadrina; Friedrich Schiller University Jena; Georgian Technical University; Ilia State University; KTU Royal Institute of Technology; KU Leuven; Paris-Saclay University; Politecnico di Milano; Polytechnic Institute of Paris; RWTH Aachen University; Sapienza University of Rome; San Diego State University; Tallinn University of Technology; Tbilisi State University; Technical University of Dresden; Technical University of Munich; Tsinghua-Berkeley Shenzhen Institute, Shenzhen, China; TU Kaiserslautern, Kaiserslautern, Germany; Université Côte d'Azur; University of Konstanz; University of Paris-Sud; University of Regensburg, etc.



Career Support

Corporate Relations



SDSU Georgia
ANNUAL JOB FAIR
 Biltmore Hotel, Grand Ballroom
 May 4, 2022
 14:00 - 17:00

Corporate Relations Manager

Anna Shakhnazarova is the Corporate Relations Manager at SDSU Georgia. In this capacity, she connects SDSUG alumni and students with potential employers by forging partnerships and thus expanding the school's network of corporate contacts.



To contribute to the country's economic development, part of the mission is to contribute to Georgian innovation and economic growth by providing highly qualified graduates. To that end, Ms. Shakhnazarova keeps local corporations apprised of the school's STEM programs and helps these companies promote themselves to SDSU Georgia alumni and students through industry meetings and exclusive listings on the SDSUG employment website.



How does the Employment Services department benefit SDSU alumni and students?

The Employment services department has been offering different services for alumni and students to build connections with local companies and organizations, introducing available vacancies and internships from our partner organizations through various types of events and activities. Annually Employment services hold Job/ Internship Fairs, Career Months, and Capstone showcase events. In addition, we are constantly updating our database of potential employers and introducing new companies to our alumni and students via Industry Meeting events.

What have been the greatest achievements of the Employment

Services department so far?

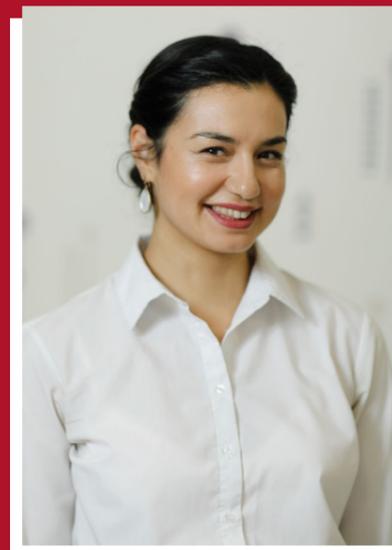
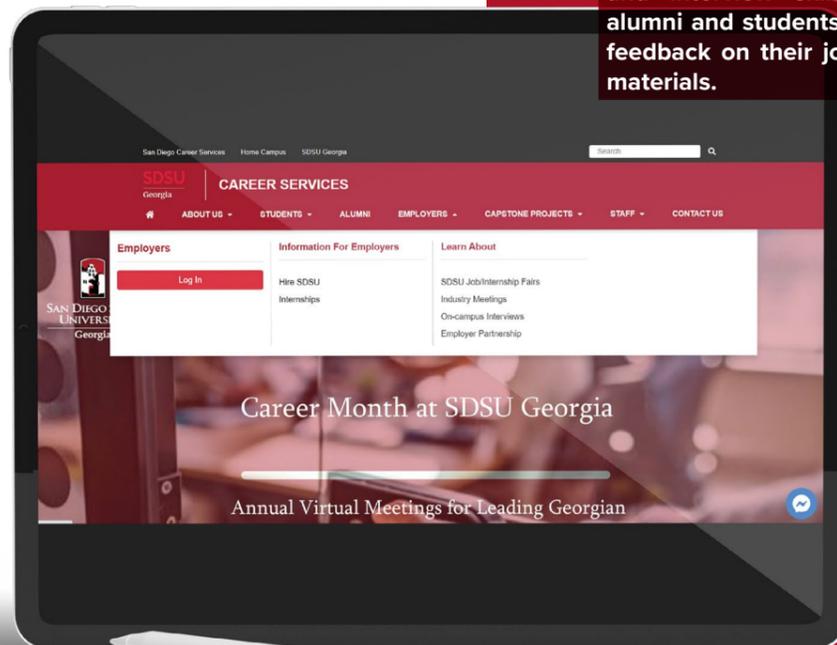
By the time students graduate, approximately 80% of SDSU Georgia students are already hired full-time or have gained experience in participating in internships provided by different companies. Our goal is to provide as many offers from companies as possible before students graduate and continue providing our services after graduation.

What have been the greatest challenges for the Employment Services department?

During the pandemic, we changed our approach to our partner companies and conducted most of our Career events using online platforms and holding interview sessions online.

What do you hope to accomplish over the next few years?

Soon we'll have more alumni than current students. Our efforts will be aimed at delivering them to the job market and getting competitive offers. We'll continue promoting vacancies for our alumni and students to keep them in the loop of competitive offers available on the Georgian job market.



Career Development Advisor

Brianna Quintero is the Career and Graduate School Advisor at SDSU Georgia. In this role, Brianna helps alumni and students prepare applications for graduate schools through workshops, information sessions, and individualized assistance. Ms. Quintero also runs training sessions on CV building and interview skills and gives alumni and students personalized feedback on their job application materials.

How does Career and Graduate Advising benefit SDSU students and alumni?

Career and Graduate School Advising is beneficial for both students and alumni. To concentrate the response on alumni, those who took a gap year may need support with graduate school applications, and those who would like to make a career change or move up in their current field benefit from supplemental career training, including professional development, CV, and interview assistance.

What have been your greatest achievements so far as Career and Graduate advisor?

I am passionate about helping students and alumni realize their potential, and helping them create clear, actionable plans to achieve their career goals. Students are often their own biggest critics, so it's great to encourage students and alumni to dream big, and give them the confidence and support they need, whether it's the courage to change majors, apply for Ivy

Administrative Support

In addition to the graduate school and career advising, SDSU Georgia Alumni are also provided with administrative support in a prompt and timely manner. Gvantsa Khvedeliani is a person to approach/contact if our alumni need assistance and directions to obtain a variety of official documents connected to their studies at SDSU Georgia, such as a certificate of graduation, a work experience certificate at SDSU Georgia, a certificate stating the instruction language at SDSU Georgia, an unofficial transcript, etc.

League universities, or travel across the world for a new opportunity. One of my greatest achievements has been watching our alumni volunteer to share their success stories and help provide guidance for current students. It's amazing to see how interested they are in passing their knowledge on to younger students!

What have been your greatest challenges in this role?

Recently, my greatest challenges have been helping alumni and students navigate COVID-19 and visa regulations. There were many changes in application deadlines, formats, and finally, visa restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for international students.

What do you hope to accomplish over the next few years?

Over the next few years I hope to deepen my knowledge in student counseling so I can better serve alumni and students and provide more support, especially during difficult and uncertain times.



Career Support

Career Development

Meet the New Alumni Board

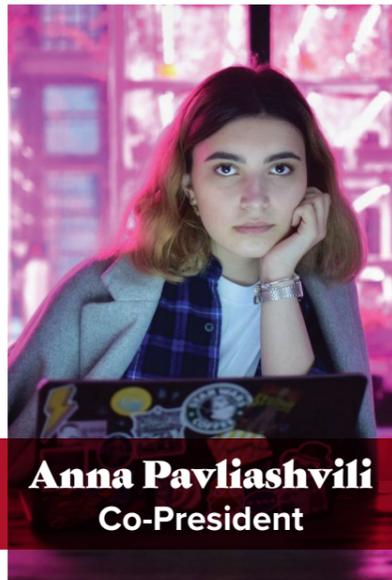
The SDSUG Alumni Association held its second elections for the Board of Directors, and according to the results, the Board members are:

Ana Tomash: Co-President
Anna Pavliashvili: Co-President

Giorgi Berelashvili: Board Member
Irakli Ambokadze: Board Member

The election of two female co-presidents demonstrates the efficacy of SDSUG's ongoing commitment to empowering women in STEM fields.

The board members were kind enough to grant interviews to the Alumni Newsletter so that our readers can get to know them a little better.



Anna Pavliashvili
Co-President

Anna Pavliashvili

Anna Pavliashvili is an Alumni of SDSU Georgia, majoring in Construction Engineering. Currently, she is working as a Project Assistant in a construction company LLC Metta on one of the major rehabilitation projects in Tbilisi. She is striving towards driving changes in the industry by implementing more sustainable ways of construction and improving the overall working environment and experience in Georgia.

What made you want to join the Alumni Board of Directors?

After graduation, I missed the student connection as during my university years I was actively engaged in university activities and student life. I feel that by joining the Alumni Association, I can stay

involved with the big part of my life besides work and improve student education and engagement. No matter how hard one works, people are the key to success and change in any field. Thus, stronger bonds and connections are what we as a community of educated and bright students and graduates should strive towards achieving.

How has SDSU Georgia impacted your life?

SDSU Georgia literally opened the doors for me, which otherwise would have been locked. I am grateful to the university because it gave me opportunities to learn, work, enjoy, contribute and succeed. At SDSU Georgia, I met bright and amazing students who motivated me to grow even more. I learned that the level at which you succeed depends solely on you.

Most importantly, I learned that you are never alone. Difficult assignments and exams bring people together, and some of them even create life-long bonds. I am happy that SDSU Georgia allowed me to meet people who hold an important part of my life nowadays and whom I can count on in every situation. University is a small imitation of what one will experience in the future, and you should try to experience it all before diving into the adult world.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

In terms of career goals, I am looking forward to growing as a leader and hope to lead a team or department as a Construction Engineer. Apart from that, I want to actively be engaged with academia and promote the Civil and Construction Engineering fields

which I already have started during my university years when I and my peers established the first American Society of Civil Engineering Chapter in Georgia. I hope to deepen my knowledge by acquiring a Master's degree and focusing on sustainability topics which will later enable me to educate students and promote sustainability which is crucial for the development of the engineering field in Georgia.

What is your most important goal for the Alumni Association?

The Alumni network is a powerful tool that can be used for the success of individuals as well as a community as a whole. Thus, the main goal for the Alumni Association is to maintain a bond the students have shaped during the university years after graduation. I am happy to see the energy and motivation of current board members who are already successful professionals in their fields but are willing to give. I believe we will have a positive impact on today's students as well as will be able to engage and interest all the alumni members.

What advice would you give to students who are about to graduate from SDSU Georgia?

Be ready for a failure. Never get scared not to succeed and trust the process. The first couple of years after graduation is the perfect time to try what you enjoy or not. There is no better time to try something new. Understand what you are passionate about and get experience with what you love, not in something you HAVE TO do, as passion will get you further. And most importantly, do not let life pass you by. It is important to establish goals for your career and

life but only living for "tomorrow" can steal your present life. The skill of balancing things out is the most important one graduate should focus on, as especially nowadays it is so important to appreciate how amazing life already is.

Ana Tomash

This is Ana. She graduated from SDSU Georgia in 2020 with a major in Electrical Engineering and with Summa Cum Laude honors. For the whole 4 years of her bachelor's studies, she has also been a president of an SDSUG Art Club, where she hosted multiple unforgettable shows for students. The Art Club activities were a place for students and professors to relax, forget about their stressful classes, and express themselves in terms of art. Ana has chosen her future path to become a successful Biomedical Engineer and for gathering experience, she has worked as a Biomedical Engineer in EVEX Clinics. Now she has a Software Engineering role on a project that she is very proud of. She loves traveling, hiking, camping, cycling, dancing, and anything connected to nature. A fun fact about Ana - she loves to procrastinate as you do.

What made you want to join the Alumni Board of Directors?

I decided to apply for the Alumni Association President position mainly because I want to be a leader who I wanted to have when I was a student. And also I want to develop leadership skills further and challenge myself in a different environment.



Ana Tomash
Co-President

How has SDSU Georgia impacted your life?

SDSU Georgia gave me confidence, skills, and vision to see the enormous pool of opportunities around me and how to teach myself anything I ever want to.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

My long-term career goals intend to become a thoroughly educated Biomedical Engineer who applies advanced research skills, cutting-edge technologies, and biostatistics in developing efficient tools to make people's lives better worldwide.

What is your most important goal for the Alumni Association?

My most important goal is to be SDSU Georgia students' voice representative, to try to deliver what is needed for their academic and personal development.

What advice would you give to students who are about to graduate from SDSU Georgia?

Every drop of your sweat is worth something that you will see in the future in a bigger picture.

Irakli Ambokadze

Irakli Ambokadze is a San Diego State University Georgia Civil Engineering Graduate. Irakli has more than 4000 hours worked in numerous civil engineering companies, varying from Bridge Structural Design to Environmental Impact Analysis. Currently, Irakli is a structural engineer in Cubicon LTD, where he has been working on implementing and developing BIM technologies within the company, as well as analyzing, adapting, and implementing various structural analysis software and codes of standards widely spread in Europe and the US.

What made you want to join the Alumni Board of Directors?

Years spent at the university cover more than just sitting by the books (or as it usually goes - procrastinating sitting by the books), listening to lecturers, frustrating ourselves about the exams, and at the end, holding a piece of paper whilst gazing at students who are almost strangers from some stage. I believe university experience is more than that, and most importantly, it does not end with academic studies. Although I was among the unfortunate ones who because of pandemic-related reasons, wasted a year and a half staring at each other through Zoom, the bonds formed during the first years enabled us to get through those tough times. I decided to join the Alumni Board of Directors to ensure that existing bonds do not vanish and help young students establish new ones.





Irakli Ambokadze
Board Member

How has SDSU Georgia impacted your life?

SDSU Georgia has always been more than an educational institution for me. First and foremost, it has been a place where I met amazing people and established lifelong bonds. I believe that having a strong network is not less important for academic and personal development than getting proper education. Fortunately, SDSU Georgia enabled me to attain both.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Although five years is not a very long time, it is still hard for me to imagine myself standing there. However, I can talk about my ambitions and goals I am striving to achieve after five years. I would love to see myself as a strong leader, one who is capable of creating something valuable for a society; I would love to see myself kind of a leader who is guiding others towards their development, supporting them in achieving their respective goals and objectives. Although I do not know exactly what I might be doing after five years, I can say with certainty that all my activities will be directed towards fulfilling these goals.

What is your most important goal for the Alumni Association?

Alumni Association provides immense opportunities for establishing and keeping strong bonds with professionals from

various professions. However, given the current devastating world environment, including pandemic and economical and political distress, even relatively easy tasks gain extreme difficulty. I believe that the Alumni Association should strive towards this – strengthen and support network establishment processes between alumni and students.

What advice would you give to students who are about to graduate from SDSU Georgia?

It is apparent that currently we are going through one of the toughest periods in recent world history given the pandemic on an unprecedented scale, the Russia-Ukraine War and the resulting economic and political distress in the whole world. However, despite the pessimistic environment, our focus should be directed towards self-development more than ever. I believe that in order to overcome the damage caused by these catastrophes, the world will need more professionals, ones who would devote themselves to community and society.

Giorgi Berelashvili

What made you want to join the Alumni Board of Directors?

During my time at SDSU Georgia, there was a sense of friendship between the students, so I wanted to give back to our community even after graduation, and given my experience as president of the Associate Student Board of Directors, the Alumni Board of Directors seemed like a good opportunity to help others out with their plans as graduates.

How has SDSU Georgia impacted your life?

I have learned quite a lot at SDSU Georgia besides the subjects covered by my major. A lot of my experience was involved with time management, work ethic, and teamwork. SDSU Georgia's student exchange program was also a wonderful opportunity which made me want to improve the quality of

life we have in Georgia and help our country develop even better.



Giorgi Berelashvili
Board Member

Where do you see yourself in five years?

In five years, I see myself working in my own company and in some way contributing to different social and/or cultural processes happening in Georgia.

What is your most important goal for the Alumni Association?

In my opinion, the Alumni Association should be a mediator and hub between students - both graduate and undergraduate - to be able to share their experiences and create a better sense of an organized community. The community which would have a sense of All for one and one for all, united we stand divided we fall. to quote Alexander Duma's The Three Musketeers.

What advice would you give to students who are about to graduate from SDSU Georgia?

My advice would be to not be afraid of changes and to always keep moving forward. There may come a time when you feel like the challenges before you are insurmountable but you shouldn't despair, and look to those around you for help.

Stipend Program with International Education Center



Since 2018, The International Education Center, in partnership with San Diego State University, has been implementing a stipend program called "Academic Programs at San Diego State University" with the support of the Millennium Foundation. The stipend program supports Chemistry/Biochemistry senior students in acquiring scholarships to continue their graduate studies at the Master and Ph.D. level in Chemistry and Biochemistry programs at San Diego State University. The scholarship amount is 50,000 USD over a five year period, and includes tuition, travel, health insurance, and other related costs.

Stipend beneficiaries are required to return to Georgia within one month of graduating the graduate program, and work in the country for a minimum of three years. They are also required to engage in academic collaboration with higher education institutions in Georgia in their field.

Stipend recipients from Class of 2019:

Mariam Basilasia
Paata Burnadze
Nino Shatirishvili
Ana Shalamberidze

Stipend recipients from Class of 2020:

Elene Albekioni
Ana Kutchuashvili
Ani Tchakhrakia

Our alumni have kindly agreed to share their experiences and ongoing research updates on the topics they are working on with our newsletter readers:



Ana Shalamberidze

The origin story: How did you come up with this hypothesis & what got you interested?

I first joined the Purse Lab in 2017 when I was on an exchange program to SDSU main campus. I got fascinated by the work Purse Lab did at that time and joined the lab. The lab specializes in design and synthesis of fluorescent nucleoside analogues, characterization of their photophysical properties and their biochemical applications. The first thing that struck me as most exciting was working with DNA, RNA, and viruses, even though I was quite unfamiliar with the practices. That was the year when our lab first published and patented 8-Diethylamino tricyclic cytidine (DEAtC) analogue with fluorescence turn-on properties when matched with a complementary base –

guanine and the interest in this molecule and its applications from many different biochemistry labs skyrocketed. When I rejoined the lab as a graduate student in 2019, I picked up my work and continued working on the design and synthesis of a red-shifted nucleoside analogue that would allow us to study multiple nucleoside analogues simultaneously at different wavelengths, as well as offer greater photostability and tissue penetrance.

What spurred this study or this question?

So far Purse Lab has been studying these analogs in DNA. We wanted to study our analogues in single-stranded and duplex RNA to understand how molecular structure and local environment controls fluorescence, which would enable the optimal fluorophores to be designed for intended applications. Therefore, currently, I am mainly working on the synthesis of ribonucleoside amides for future collaboration with UC Irvine and metabolic labeling while collaborating with Kleiner Lab at Princeton University.

Why is your research important? What are the possible real-world applications?

Fluorescent nucleoside analogs, which can be used as detectable surrogates for the natural nucleobases and are sensitive to local chemical environments, are effective probes for studying nucleic acid structure, dynamics, recognition, and damage. Base-modified fluorescent nucleoside analogues have been exceptionally valuable in the study of nucleic acid structure and function. When fluorescent nucleoside analogues are incorporated into oligonucleotides, they can report on changes that occur site-specifically as well as globally.

We aim to develop methods for using

fluorescent nucleosides for direct fluorescent metabolic labeling of RNA in living cells that would enable real-time, continuous monitoring of RNA synthesis, trafficking, and degradation. Looking at these processes correlatively at different locations in cells, and studying the effects of different conditions, will give new insights into RNA biology.

Briefly, what excites you about your work?

This is the most exciting time for me so far, because we just submitted my first paper titled "Live-cell RNA imaging with metabolically incorporated fluorescent nucleosides" in Nature magazine - the world's leading multidisciplinary science journal. This paper is published in collaboration with Kleiner Lab at Princeton University, and we plan to continue our collaboration with them by synthesizing and testing out additional analogues. I recently applied for a grant as well, which will fund my travel and research at Princeton University for several weeks with Kleiner Lab. I'm very excited that my work gives me an opportunity to get out of the box, network and enjoy myself.

Paata Burnadze

The origin story: How did you come up with this hypothesis & what got you interested?

I am a co-author of a previous project in which gold nanoparticles were used for modeling processes mediated by metal-binding proteins such as Calmodulin. We published this paper during my undergraduate studies. Since then, I have been interested in nanoscience, but in graduate school I did not have a chance to keep working in this field until now. After several canceled projects last fall, I was brainstorming to find new ideas for Ph.D. studies. My PI shared his thoughts about a possible collaboration with a different lab in nanoscience. I realized that I found a new correlation between the nanoparticle's application and metal-binding protein from the projects of the former Ph.D. student. I started digging in the literature and in two days the first draft of my current project was ready.

What spurred this study or this question?

It may sound funny, but – the increasing price of my hybrid car. The current crisis in chipset manufacturing spurred this study.

Why is your research important? What are the possible real-world applications?

My thesis is about Rare Earth Elements. REEs, particularly the lanthanides, are in high demand as key components in technologies such as permanent magnets, hybrid/electric car batteries, lasers, phosphors, and smartphones. However, their chemical properties often require harsh, environmentally harmful, and laborious methods for mining and separation. This is the inspiration for the introduction of the future engineering biotechnological tools. Bioengineering methods are being used for more facile and environmentally friendly methods to be developed.

What is the coolest thing about your work/research?

If our method works, this may become a subject of multiple patents which will make me rich. I think this is the coolest thing in any kind of work.



Mariam Basilaia

The origin story: How did you come up with this hypothesis & what got you interested?

I have been interested in drug discovery and medicinal chemistry since I started learning chemistry.

I think drug development has a tremendous impact on our society and continuously improves the lives of thousands of people. I am specifically interested in researching cancer drugs. According to the American Cancer Society, cancer accounts for about 1 in every 6 deaths worldwide.

One member of the anti-cancer drug family is kinase inhibitors that Dr. Gustafson's laboratory focuses on. If you look at the structures of small molecule drugs approved by the FDA, 30% have a rotational axis in the structure, leading the molecule to bind to undesirable targets and cause side effects in patients. That's where the idea of limiting the rotation of the axis in the structure of the drugs and testing how it affects selectivity came from. I work on developing methods to make these drugs in a way that their rotational axis is locked into place. The results from our lab indeed show that locking the axis of the drug structures improves their selectivity. This sparked another idea for my second project that I am working on. As I have already mentioned, our lab work is on kinase inhibitors which bind to the proteins that cause cancer and block their action. Previous graduate student Dr. Sean Toenjes found a way to optimize a kinase inhibitor for thyroid cancers and lung cancers. We were inspired by this work and decided to transform this molecule from a kinase inhibitor to a degrader. Degradation has a lot of advantages over inhibitors as they destroy cancer-causing targets.

Why is your research important? What are the possible real-world applications?

My research can have applications in the drug production process for optimizing methods that companies use for making drug molecules. My second project might also lead to developing a new superior drug molecule for treating lung cancers.

Tell me what you like to do when you aren't working on research.

When I am not working on my research I like to hike, travel, try new food, spend time with my friends, and explore. I love animals and have a calico cat in Georgia.

Keeping up with SDSU Georgia 4.0 Alumni Life updates

As part of our commitment to keeping in touch with our community, the Alumni Newsletter interviewed four alumni who achieved the distinction of maintaining a

4.0 GPA during their time at SDSU Georgia. We asked them about their time at SDSU Georgia, what they took away from the experience, and what they are working

on now. We hope their stories will inspire all of our students to strive for the highest levels of achievement.

Sergi Betkoshvili

Where are you working/studying now?

I am studying Theoretical Chemistry and Computational Modeling at the University of Barcelona (Erasmus Mundus Master Studies).

What was the most helpful advice anyone gave you about university?

I extracted the best advice by observing my classmates: consistency and discipline make challenging things easy. If you are paying attention, it saves a lot of time and keeps you on track.

What was your most challenging class at SDSUG?

I could not isolate one single class as the most challenging. However, advanced STEM classes required dedication and understanding of many new concepts. Those classes brought the best out of me in terms of academic achievement.

What was your favorite class?

Organic Chemistry II (CHEM 432) and Calculus III (MATH 252).

What was your major/department?

Major in Chemistry, Department of Chemistry/Biochemistry.

How did SDSU help prepare you for your next steps?

SDSU gave me experience that helps me navigate social situations. Furthermore, I realized that success is also about working under pressure productively.

Who is the most inspiring or interesting person working in your field?

The most inspiring person in



people from my country and our future depends on them.

What did you do for fun when you went to SDSUG?

Since my friends are a significant part of my life, mostly, I went out with my friends with whom I shared various sporting or casual activities. Especially, exchanging new ideas and discussing various topics has been incredibly relaxing and rejuvenating for the upcoming workload that I sometimes had.

How did you celebrate your final GPA?

I did not celebrate the final GPA, I celebrated having finished University and having found the right place to continue my studies. I celebrated these in multiple parties with my friends.

Natia Inadze

Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, 2021 Alumna

Where are you working/studying now?

After completing my Bachelor studies at SDSU Georgia, I have continued to a Master program in Biochemistry at Friedrich Schiller University Jena in Germany.

What was the most helpful advice anyone gave you about university?

The most helpful advice I got about university was from my mom, who taught me that knowledge is the most important thing I can take and that I should always try to make that a priority.

What was your most challenging class at SDSUG?

The most challenging class at SDSUG was probably calculus, but we had an amazing lecturer (George Chelidze), who tried his best to make it easier for us. And I feel incredibly grateful to him for this!

What was your favorite class?

My favorite class at SDSUG was organic chemistry. This field still fascinates me even though I have shifted to Biochemistry.

What was your major/department?

I graduated with a degree in Chemistry.

How did SDSU help prepare you for your next steps?

The most important thing I took from SDSU was knowledge. This is what helps me now feel confident in what I do and keeps me motivated to continue my studies in the future.

Who is the most inspiring or interesting person working in your field?

There are certainly many inspiring and interesting people working in the field of Chemistry and Biochemistry both here in Germany and elsewhere. From the people I know personally, I would name Prof. Ute Hellmich, whose group is working on elucidating structures of various protein families, trying to discover something fundamental to life.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I would be about to finish my PhD studies by then. I can't wait to see what the future holds!

What do you hope to accomplish in the future?

For short term goals, I hope to finish my Master's successfully and then get into a desired PhD program. For relatively long-term ones, I would like to have my own research group and try to contribute my share to fundamental research in science.

What did you do for fun when you went to SDSUG?

I mostly spent my spare time with friends and family. Studies haven't really left much time, so I tried to dedicate as much of my time to



them as I could.

What advice would you give STEM students?

At some point, you learn that while you are at a certain stage of your life, you can only try to make the best of it. I tried to do that at SDSU, and that is what I am trying to do now, as well as moving forward. I would advise the same to STEM students and all students in general.

How did you feel when you saw your final GPA and learned you had maintained a 4.0?

My aim has never been to have a 4.0 GPA really. I always tried to learn what I was taught to the best of my ability and the grades came with it naturally. However, I was surely very happy to have the GPA as a measure of how hard I had worked over the past four years!

How did you celebrate your final GPA?

I would say I have celebrated the knowledge which came with my final GPA. I think it's truly important to give yourself credit after hard work to keep yourself in focus while moving forward and that's what I did!

Guga Kupradze

Where are you working/studying now?

Nowadays I am working at Georgian Energy Exchange as an Energy Market Analyst and at the same time manage several Blockchain projects at an International Company called Everstake.

What was the most helpful advice anyone gave you about university?

During my exchange year at an American high school as a FLEX Student, my electrical engineering teacher was the one who broadened my horizons with respect to engineering fields. He was the one who taught how important it is to stick to your guns in order to achieve your goals and create a better and brighter future.

What was your most challenging class at SDSUG?

I would say that at SDSU every class required a high amount of work and motivation from every student. For this reason, every semester and every single class required a high level of time management and hard work from me.

What was your favorite class?

For every engineer, it is a great opportunity to have the ability to use the knowledge we have gained in practice. For this reason, laboratory classes, and especially the Capstone project course, were my favorite. There I had an opportunity to work on advanced circuit/PCB design, learn 3D printing technology working principles, and get significant knowledge in terms of IoT.

What was your major/department?

Electrical Engineering.

How did SDSU help prepare you for your next steps?

SDSU and the American educational system/culture helped me to leave my comfort zone and grow as an individual and a professional at the same time. A well-designed curriculum and support from the University and professors allowed me to find the answer to every single question and solution to every single challenge I faced during the past 4 years.

Who is the most inspiring or interesting person working in your field?

Definitely L.Rafael Reif – Current president of MIT and a professor conducting research in the aspect of microelectronic fabrication methods.



Where do you see yourself in five years?

In 5 years I see myself working in the field of renewable energy. Mainly my interest is related to the topics of decentralized energy markets and their surveillance.

What do you hope to accomplish in the future?

In the near future, using my knowledge and experience I have a desire to support Georgia's ongoing energy market decentralization process. This is a complex reform taking place already for two years and requires a high level of professionalism and strong experience during the whole process.

What did you do for fun when you went to SDSUG?

My favorite activity for fun was the hiking club. Thanks to its members, during spring and summertime I had an opportunity to have fun, meet new people, and create unforgettable memories.

What advice would you give STEM students?

STEM is all about curiosity. This is a path that is full of surprises and discoveries. The success of every individual in STEM will depend on their ability to overcome obstacles and leave their comfort zone.

How did you feel when you saw your final GPA and learned you had maintained a 4.0?

At that moment I felt really happy, my self-confidence was on another level, but at the same time, I knew that this is just the beginning of a long journey, where there will be a

lot more new interesting challenges and goals to achieve.

How did you celebrate your final GPA?

I had an opportunity to celebrate graduation with my friends. After finishing university, I went on a trip with the community of my friends and with the people I enjoy spending time and sharing feelings with.

Giorgi Solomnishvili

Where are you working/studying now?

Currently, I am focusing on my Graduate studies. Shortly after graduation, I was selected for the European Masters program in Embedded Computing Systems (EMECs). This is a two-year program. Selected students get to study the first year in Germany and the second year in Norway. In October of 2021, I started my graduate studies with the Technical University of Kaiserslautern, located in Germany, Kaiserslautern.

What was the most helpful advice anyone gave you about university?

The most helpful advice anyone can give a student about university and academic life is that if you set your goals, apply yourself and manage time correctly, anything is possible.

What was your most challenging class at SDSUG?

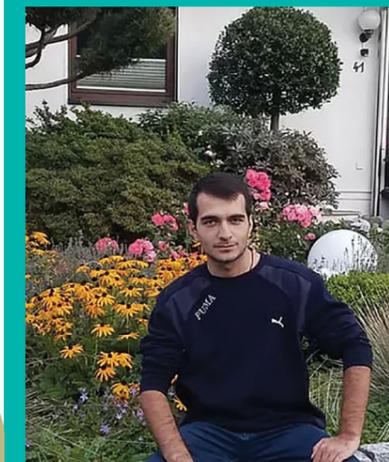
Studying at SDSU was not easy. I had classes, like Biology, that were the most challenging.

What was your major/department?

In May of 2021, I graduated from SDSU_G with a degree in electrical engineering.

How did SDSU help prepare you for your next steps?

A couple of weeks before graduation I started working for Kutaisi International University as a teaching assistant. I was an integral employee in assembling the Computer Architecture Lab. All this was possible thanks to the knowledge of Computer Architecture received at SDSU Labs. After undergraduate studies, most students continue



their careers in industry and apply for grad programs. The SDSU gave me knowledge that was necessary for those next steps.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

After finishing grad school, I plan to apply for a Ph.D. and continue working in the industry. I think five years from now, I will be a successful postdoc researcher.

What do you hope to accomplish in the future?

In September of 2022, I will continue my academic life at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, located in Trondheim, Norway.

What did you do for fun when you went to SDSUG?

Besides academic life, my social life at SDSUG was exciting because I was a member of student clubs such as Hiking and Gaming clubs.

How did you feel when you saw your final GPA and learned you had maintained a 4.0?

Having a 4.0 GPA is a good accomplishment. Grad school admission committees like applications with a high GPA. During our undergrad studies, STEM students are overwhelmed with information. I always tried to analyze given information, and get knowledge and, if possible, wisdom out of it. This was my main objective and maintaining a 4.0 GPA was its side effect. When I celebrated graduation with my friends and colleagues, I was happy, because I felt I was "wiser" than 4 years ago.

Selected Alumni Bios



Davit Khutsishvili
SDSU'21

In my senior year at SDSU Georgia, I worked at an international pharmaceutical company. This fall, I started my Ph.D. studies at Tsinghua–UC Berkeley Shenzhen Institute.

SDSU Georgia is a place that helped me strengthen my growth mindset. SDSU Georgia students, faculty, and staff prepared me to be open to new experiences and challenges. Constant changes don't stress me out. Instead, they encouragingly challenge me.

This year, my Ph.D. studies are online. I saw this as an opportunity for personal growth in areas I had not considered before. I collaborated on a series of virtual STEM workshops with the U.S. Embassy Bookmobile that promoted STEM fields and benefited Georgian youth from rural villages. I also took the first step toward starting my YouTube channel. For now, it looks basic, but I find it entertaining. So yes, dear friends, you are more than welcome to drop video content ideas under my YouTube videos – you can find me with the DavidForWorld username.

I have been working at RSM Georgia Solutions since my junior year, for almost two years, as a .NET software developer, and in December of last year, I started working at EPAM Systems also as a .NET Software developer. I decided to take a break from my studies



Khatia Merabishvili
SDSU'21

Before graduation from SDSU Georgia, I worked as a physicochemical laboratory analyst in the pharmaceutical company Biotecsi LLC, which manufactures veterinary drugs and supplements.

Currently, I am a holder of the International Education Center and Campus France joint scholarship. I'm studying at the University of Paris-Saclay, in the Department of Pharmacy, majoring in the Development of Drugs and Health products.

Nowadays, I am working on the agonists of immune checkpoints that have great potential as an antitumor agent and I have to coordinate with one of the lecturers at the University of Southern California on this specific topic. From May I will do an internship at Hôpital Bicêtre Research Laboratory in Paris.

During my Bachelor's program at SDSU Georgia, I learned how to meet all the deadlines at work and for school assignments. It taught me to handle stressful situations, which are a major barrier that a student might encounter.

for a year and focus more on my job. I think I will continue my studies to get a Master's degree. I think SDSUG gave me all the basic skills to get my first job in tech and build my career. Also, very importantly, it bolstered my English speaking skills.



Ketevan Gogia
SDSU'21

When starting my endeavors in the EE field, I had a crystal clear goal of what I wanted. Our senior year project called PEHS was one of the finalist projects at an exhibition hosted by the Museum of Georgian Inventions and UNDP Georgia. As of now, I am taking test automation courses at TBC and am enrolled in an ICT C++ CPA Program.

The foundational knowledge the university had provided was of great assistance in trying out all the new and exciting things I wanted to learn about.

For some SDSU-G may be the very first step into the STEM field, as it was for me.

I am happy with where I am in life and see many opportunities ahead.



Luka Pantsulaia
SDSU'21



Giorgi Natroshvili
SDSU'21

I started working as a part-time intern at the beginning of my sophomore year and was mostly working with coding financial applications. Due to the pandemic, lectures became remote and were mostly held in the evening. This gave me the opportunity to work full time during the day while not missing out on the lectures. Instructors were also supportive of students' careers. In a few months, I got promoted and became a Full Stack software developer. After graduation, I changed jobs, and currently, I am working at Credo Bank Georgia on developing financial applications.

Currently, I am applying for several Master's degree scholarship programs in Europe (Germany, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary). I am planning to complete my Master's degree in the EU.



Levan Berelidze
SDSU'21



Giorgi Chankseliani
SDSU'21

I'm currently a full-time employee at a San Francisco, CA-based startup company called Collagia, and recently I got promoted to a Head of Experience Engineering position, which is basically a fancy name for Head of Frontend Development. I'm studying for a Master's degree in Applied Computer Science at The University of Göttingen (Göttingen, Germany).

My responsibilities include full involvement in project management and strategy, and supervision of other front-end developers, including writing and assigning tasks, managing their deadlines, reviewing their work, etc.

SDSU Georgia played a huge role in my professional and personal growth. Besides the actual knowledge in my major, the university gave me independence, the desire for bigger goals and achievements, and the ability to work and adapt to different situations.

To current SDSU Georgia students I would say that during your studies and even more after graduation, there are infinite possibilities. Just think about what you want to do next, what to learn, where to work, where to go, and do everything to achieve those goals.

After graduating I sought a full-time job in the software industry and right now, I am employed at Electra Group, a tech company operating in the fields of blockchain, cryptocurrency, and SMS communications. I find the knowledge received as an undergraduate to be extremely valuable in my everyday work as during the time spent at the university,



Giorgi Machavariani
SDSU'21

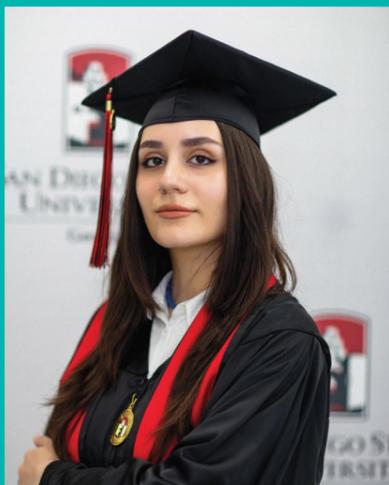
I am currently working for Far Out Solutions, which is an amazing IT company based in Florida. I'm a full-time IT worker and have a wonderful team which makes this company more than a job for me.

After graduation, I applied for my master's degree at Czech Technical University in Prague (CVUT). The Czech government gave me a 100% scholarship for my study, stay, and insurance. So now I'm a Master's Student in Cyber Security and living in Prague.

Even though I have been traveling a lot and was living abroad before, for me, it was still challenging to move to another country. Fortunately, I was not alone. My best friend Giorgi Turdziladze, who also graduated from San Diego, applied here with me but in the Software Engineering faculty and we moved here together.

For now, I'm waiting for summer and wondering what Prague looks like without the studying process.

I really grasped the fundamentals of computer science. In the ever-growing field of software development, keeping up to date with emerging technologies is vital and having a strong theoretical background does help in acquiring new practical skills.



Nata Tchitchinadze
SDSU'21

I graduated from SDSU in May 2021 with a major in chemistry. Now I work in one of the few prominent Georgian skin and hair care brands - Biosyo. Nearly 3 months ago I was hired as a chemical formulator. Since then I have formulated a new natural hand cream which is soon to be sold on the wide market as a new Biosyo product. I have also created several shampoos, hair conditioners, micellar water, etc. (These, however, are still being tested). I find this job both fulfilling and fun. I now realize that Confucius was right - if you do what you love, you'll never have to work a day in your life.

I'm especially grateful to SDSU for giving me the necessary knowledge and skills to work in a chemical laboratory.



Vakhtang Kontridze
SDSU'21

I work as an iOS software developer at Flat Rock Tech, a software company based in the UK. The company provides applications, software solutions, and support to global customers. My responsibilities include mentoring juniors, developing software, designing app architecture, designing UI components, and managing testing and deployment.

I graduated from SDSU with a bachelor's in Computer Engineering. Having experience in both software and hardware, I chose the former as a career path. I got my first software job in Sophomore year, and have been employed since.

I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from San Diego State University Georgia, with honors "Summa Cum Laude". As of March 2021, I was appointed as a teaching assistant at Kutaisi International University (KIU) for the faculty of Computer Science. My duties include conducting seminars and guiding students.

My interests mainly focus on hardware engineering, operating systems and computer organization and architecture; however, I have experience in software development as well. As for my future plans, I am planning on continuing my career in the academic field.



Tinatin Vacheishvili
SDSU'21

During my studies at SDSU-G, I simultaneously worked for a Construction Company JSC Transmsheni where I was Construction Project Manager for two fifteen-floor residential buildings for more than 2.5 years.

After graduation from my Bachelor's program, I enrolled in a Master of "Project and Contract Management in Construction Works" program at Politecnico Di Milano (Milan Technical University).

SDSU-G has helped me both in my academic life because SDSU-G has contributed to my professional life and made me resilient to the obstacles that I have faced in the field.



Salome Piroshmanishvili
SDSU'21

Ever since my sophomore year I have been employed in several companies which made my work experience diverse. During the pandemic, I decided to keep up with the world and started working online in various foreign companies and this also made it easy for me to be successfully self-employed.

I can surely say that SDSU has great prestige and being its alumni was always appreciated everywhere I went. The most important thing I have learned since graduation is that every class and every single lecture can give us knowledge and information that will prepare us for future challenges.



Levan Lobjanidze
SDSU'21



Flashback to the Commencement Ceremonies for the Classes of 2019, 2020, and 2021

According to the Thesaurus, the word Commencement has multiple synonyms: Initiation, Kickoff, Celebration, Starting Point, Birth, Opening, etc. Each of these words represent the beginning of something new and unique. SDSU Georgia students confidently and steadily become alumni of their Alma Mater on the day of the Commencement Ceremony and celebrate the first day of the rest of their lives.

SDSU

Georgia



SDSU
Georgia

5 Kostava Str, Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
sdsu.edu.ge | +995 (32) 2 311 611
f SDSU.georgia i sdsu_georgia
✉ georgiainfo@sdsu.edu