

# GENERATION STEM

Newsletter

VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT

2020

*Special Issue*



SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Georgia



*Celebrating our graduates in the COVID era*

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# SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

## 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, Georgian Technical University (GTU), Ilia State University (ISU), and Tbilisi State University (TSU), offers internationally accredited bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. 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 offered six Bachelor's degree programs:

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

These American-style 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.

The Newsletter of San Diego State University Georgia is published by the Student Services department and distributed to SDSU Georgia stakeholders, faculty, students, and friends.

### SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Adela de la Torre  
President

### SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY GEORGIA

Halil Güven  
Dean

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**ADELA DE LA TORRE, PH.D.**



# President's Message

On behalf of our entire SDSU family, I want to first offer my warmest and heartfelt congratulations to our SDSU Georgia class of 2020 graduates! We are deeply proud of what you have accomplished, and the steadfast dedication and commitment that got you here.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that this is a bittersweet moment for our SDSU family, as we are not able to celebrate in-person this summer. We are indeed in unprecedented times that prevent us from celebrating in our traditional way. But if this COVID-19 crisis has taught us anything, it is this: Together, we can rise above even the most dire circumstances to purposefully find meaningful ways to honor our most precious moments with those we care and love. We will certainly do that, leveraging our technology and our creativity to celebrate this important milestone virtually.

And we have much to celebrate! Our graduates are a living reminder of the success we are achieving together, with an outstanding class of STEM professionals now ready for their next career step. This summer, each of you — our second cohort of SDSU Georgia graduates — will join a distinctive network of SDSU alumni in Georgia who are prepared to support sustainable development in the region.

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

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

We are exceedingly proud of what you have accomplished, who you are becoming, and even more, who you will continue to become. Know that your SDSU family loves you and wishes you continued success as you embark on your next adventure.

My very best,

Adela de la Torre

President



# Dean's Message

**DR. HALIL GÜVEN**

Dean, San Diego State University Georgia

San Diego State University came to Georgia in 2015, with an objective to target the critical shortage of STEM professionals, educated to current international standards. SDSU's presence in Georgia produced first graduates in 2019, most of them received academic honors, competitive offers, and admission to graduate programs at top universities in the world.

This year, SDSU Georgia will celebrate bringing 87 more highly qualified professionals to the workforce. The COVID-19 world pandemic has interfered in our plans to say a festive goodbye to our graduates in June 2020 with a Commencement Ceremony to be attended by President Adela de la Torre from SDSU. However, it has also inspired us to engage technology and find innovative solutions for teaching, learning, collaboration, and connection in this new reality. We see this challenge as an opportunity to create a unique and memorable experience for our graduates and to recognize them with a Virtual Commencement Ceremony.

We want to thank again the Millennium Challenge Corporation of the U.S.A., the Millennium Challenge Account Georgia, the Government of Georgia, and our Public Private Partnership Fund donors for their support. It is due to their contribution that our students were able to utilize this unique opportunity to acquire a U.S. degree and enter the competitive job market with great success. With the help of our partners, SDSU Georgia continues working with its partner universities to build capacity and to ensure the sustainability of the STEM initiative in Georgia. We would also like to congratulate our partner universities for their continuous success in making considerable progress with the International Accreditation of their Engineering and Science programs in Georgia.

Congratulations, Class of 2020! This year we celebrate your journey of knowledge, professional growth, and social development. We have followed and taken pride in your success every step of the way, and we are STEM proud to share your achievements with your friends, family, and supporters. You are now ready to move forward and to contribute significantly to the bright future for yourselves and the country of Georgia because Leadership Starts Here at SDSU!



SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
Georgia

## SDSU Georgia Thanks the Generous Donors Who Make Our Work Possible

SDSU Georgia represents a \$64 million investment from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC Georgia Compact II) and the Government of Georgia. This investment has allowed us to build educational infrastructure around STEM fields and to produce a professional and highly qualified workforce to fill the gap in the nation's need for qualified STEM experts.

We would like to thank our private and corporate donors, whose generous contributions have helped us continue to provide state-of-the-art STEM education to Georgian students. These funds have been used to make education more accessible by providing scholarships to students. Here, we would like again to recognize ALL our donors (Major donors are listed below).

### Major Donors\*

Major Donors*	Donated
Cartu Foundation	\$1,657,500
GPF/Billi Management	\$420,000
BoG (Tree of Life)	\$317,895
US Embassy	\$150,000
GIG	\$128,421
GDI	\$96,842
Silknet	\$96,316
GM Pharma	\$65,263
Irakli Rukhadze	\$63,158
GWP	\$60,000
Archil Gachechiladze	\$32,631
TBC Bank (cohort 2)	\$23,816

\*Only donations above \$20,000 are shown here



## SDSU Georgia Welcomed Its Final Cohort at this Year's Convocation

SDSU Georgia held its final Convocation event on September 16, 2019 at Expo Georgia. 137 incoming students and their families attended the event, where they were welcomed into the SDSU family and learned about the University's core values of scholarship, citizenship, and leadership.

Students were addressed by Dean Halil Güven and SDSU Provost Emeritus Dr. Joseph F. Johnson, as well as Millennium Challenge Corporation CEO Sean Cairncross, Millennium Challenge Account Georgia CEO Magda Magradze, the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport for Georgia Mikheil Batiashvili, and Chargé D'Affaires of the United States to Georgia Elizabeth Rood. They were also given advice for success by Davit Gurgendize and Eleni Basilashvili, two sophomore students.



Faculty, new students, and their families were all in attendance, in addition to the TSU rectors and our PPPF members.

“Convocation was very nice, seeing all the professors for the first time that we are going to work with for the next four years, hearing inspirational messages from the leaders of the STEM community, it was very motivating.”

*Dimitri Paichadze*

“Convocation was amazing. I attended with my mother and she absolutely loved it. She was mesmerized by the headphone translation feature. Overall it felt like I was part of something great. It was also the first time I've heard the detailed insights from sophomores and, to be honest, I loved it.”

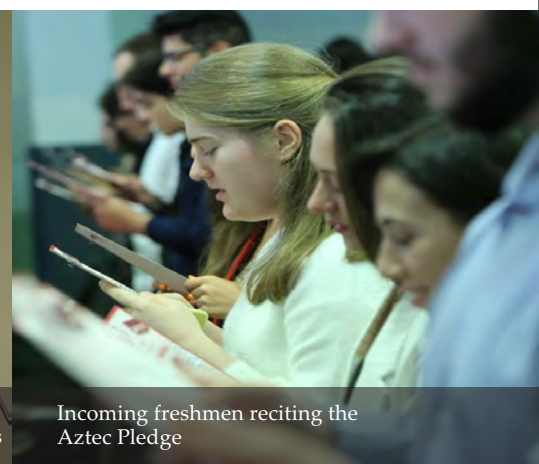
*Marlen Shengelia*



The Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and the Rectors from our partner universities showed their support to the new students



Millennium Challenge Corporation CEO Sean Cairncross addressing the incoming class



Incoming freshmen reciting the Aztec Pledge

## TSU Prepares to Admit Students into Internationally Accredited Degree Programs

As SDSU Georgia continues to transition its six STEM degree programs, we are working closely with our partner universities to facilitate the international accreditation of their STEM programs. In addition to building new STEM infrastructure, in the form of renovated top-of-the-line facilities and training opportunities for Georgian faculty, and stimulating the nation's economy by producing a qualified STEM workforce, assisting our partner universities to receive this accreditation is one of SDSU Georgia's main goals.

On December 10th, 2019, SDSU Georgia and Tbilisi State University (TSU) and representatives from ISU and GTU held a joint event announcing the NAEC quota for admission of the first cohort of students into soon-to-be internationally accredited bachelor degree programs at TSU. Starting in 2020, the admission of students into two programs, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, marks a milestone in building the capacity of our partner universities.

This accreditation, through the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET), will allow students who hold accredited degrees to pursue their goals almost anywhere in the world. It ensures that their education, in terms of curriculum, qualification of professors, and access to modern laboratories and resources, meet the global standards set by their respective technical professions. Students of these programs receive an education that prepares them to successfully enter the workforce and opens the doors to licensing, employment, and further educational opportunities.



A delegation from SDSU main campus attended the event with Magda Magradze, Millennium Foundation CEO



Informational material on internationally recognized programs at TSU, ISU, and GTU



Leadership from all three partner universities came together at the joint event



Dean Güven congratulating TSU on their success

# STORIES

## *It Was a Big Year for the ACS in Georgia*

### **American Chemical Society Georgia chapter established**

This has been an exciting year for the American Chemical Society in Georgia! In addition to the established ACS student chapter, American Chemical Society Georgia (ACS Georgia) has been officially approved. This means that Georgia is the 24th country to be granted a national chapter, putting the country on the map and strengthening ties between Georgia and the international community. This was made possible through SDSU Georgia's collaboration.

ACS Georgia will promote chemistry studies and practices throughout the country and in the larger region. As an organization, they will foster partnerships between academic, state, and industry institutions.

### **ACS-track English Language Chemistry / Biochemistry Program at TSU**

In addition to TSU's upcoming ABET-accredited degree programs, starting in the 2020-21 academic year, TSU will begin accepting students into their American Chemical Society (ACS) track English language chemistry/biochemistry program! ACS certification is expected in 2022 and will ensure that students will engage with a broad-based and challenging curriculum so that they receive an education specifically designed to "prepare them for success in a broad array of science-based careers."



### **ACS Student Chapter engages with the community**

The ACS is one of SDSU Georgia's most active student organizations. From organizing the ACS Symposium to bringing chemistry to children during the STEM Picnic, the ACS Georgian student chapter stays busy sharing the wonders of chemistry with the larger community.

According to Giorgi Meshvildishvili, ACS student chapter president, "The ACS Georgia student chapter is important because we want to increase the interest among school and university students in this specific discipline. Our goal is to involve children in different activities and make chemistry more interesting for them. As chemistry, generally science, is not very popular in our country, it's crucial to spread and encourage the younger generation to learn chemistry in a more easy and entertaining way. That's why we held different activities in the previous years and have more planned through the semester. These events will ensure to attract the attention of young scientists, who are fascinated with a complex world of chemistry."



Members of the ACS student chapter bringing the joys of chemistry to youth at the STEM Picnic



# Associated Student Board

## Upcoming Elections

Elections are underway for the 2020-2021 Associated Students Board of Directors. The board members serve as representatives for the student body, acting as the voice for SDSU Georgia students and participating in shared governance.

The Board is composed of a representative from each academic program, in addition to the president, vice president, secretary and Dean's office designee.

Prospective board members will be campaigning until May 26th. The election itself will take place on May 27-28th. The Board structure and election procedures are modeled after the SDSU main campus Associated Students Board of Directors

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the ASB worked collaboratively with both the student body and University administration to address general student needs and to enhance students' overall university experience.

Through these partnerships, the Board advocated on behalf of students to make SDSU's facilities more comfortable and encouraging for study, by expressing students' desires for more designated study areas with University administration.

As a result, SDSU Georgia administration was able to provide new designated study spaces in several of the University's facilities which are now commonly used by many students.

To complement this, program representatives actively engaged with constituents to learn about their program-specific academic needs, addressing them to University administration when necessary and building more effective cooperation between staff and students.

In addition to the Board's focus on academic matters, student programs were also at the forefront of the Board's work over the academic year. The Board contains a member-led Green Committee which introduces sustainable and eco-friendly initiatives to the SDSU Georgia community.

This past year, the Green Committee partnered with SDSU administration to begin the process of transforming SDSU Georgia's facilities into recycling friendly spaces by installing recycling bins for paper and plastics. Also, a recycling awareness campaign has begun to be drafted and is set to take off next academic year.

"In the 21st century, a green lifestyle is an essential part of every community. San Diego State University students should be the example of not only high academic performance but role models of successful citizens with high morality and responsibility. That's why Green Committee took on the recycling program initiative, which encourages our students to be conscious and carry on a green lifestyle", said Ana Pavliashvili, Junior Construction Engineering Program Representative and Green Committee Co-lead.



AS Board President Giorgi Berelashvili and Vice President Luka Tvaliashvili address the Advisory Board

## FEATURED ARTICLE

# Nikoloz Khundzakishvili on University/Industry Partnership

The Generation STEM team caught up with Nikoloz Khundzakishvili, Corporate Affairs Director at Efes Brewery Tbilis and member of the SDSU Georgia Advisory Board to get his take on Capstone Projects, the importance of maintaining industry/university partnerships and SDSU's role in building the digital economy of Georgia.

### **What is your relationship to SDSU?**

Almost three years ago SDSU Georgia invited us to take a position as a member of the business advisory board. We accepted it with great pleasure and since then we have participated in each and every board meeting. We are industry partners to SDSU. We firmly believe that STEM is very good for the country and the industry as well because we need more engineers, chemists, etc. In this respect we have openly stated that we support you.

For example, we have participated in each and every job fair, offering some positions for the graduates and a few of the graduates also went through our company for their internships. We also travel to San Diego to show support and to state our position that it is good to cooperate. Recently we have been asked to have the Capstone Project and we came up with the idea to have extended producer responsibility.

### **What skills do students develop through the Capstone Project?**

The students working with us are from the computer science faculty. Writing the code is not a hard job; they can do it. But when they see this code has an application to something real, then they might think about the future.

For example, someone might outsource you just to write the code but you do not know what the final result will be. You have a task and you do it and you are paid. But while you're doing this Capstone Project and you know the next two or three steps, you are more engaged and happier. You will develop more skills to build either your own software or company later on. I believe that with this small project students will develop the skills to be more confident in order to build their own stuff.



### **What do industry partners get out of the Capstone Project?**

In reality, we could do these projects by hiring a development company. But if students are doing the project - if it will be real - then I will propose that the students then become the leaders of that future company.

As a producer, I will not be in operation of that entity. But here they are and we have a place for them to be employed.

The industry needs fresh minds. Sometimes we are in a cycle and we need something to break it; we need someone to think outside of the box. When this fresh blood comes to us they bring crazy ideas that we never thought about.

Of course this benefits us because they bring us the project and we are able to work together. They will be the first people we will ask to come work with us. They might say no, but they have the first refusal right.

## ***Why is it important to maintain a partnership between industry and universities?***

Universities might have different faculties, but if they are not in combination with the industry here, we are losing our people. For example, if we have quantum physics specialists and we do not have demand in our industry here then they will go to those countries which do have demand. That's why we need to be efficient. In a sense we are paying this money for their education because we are one of the largest taxpayers.

That means we need this money to be spent wisely. Wisely means that we need to develop those skills and specialties that are currently needed for the industry. But the industry is also developing, so we need to invest in education wisely to develop those majors or specialties that will serve the industry in the next 10 years.

## ***How do you think this partnership benefits Georgia specifically?***

At the end of the day if we are bigger, if we are growing, then we are paying more and people will be happier. There will be more disposable money for public projects. It goes without saying that if all those people, those very well prepared specialists, will serve and will work in Georgian companies of course we will be paying them more.

One thing to pay attention to is the brain drain. Many of us will graduate from the university, I mean our children, you know, students, young people, and they want to continue somewhere outside of the country unfortunately. For example, a lot of graduates from SDSU Georgia are abroad right now. They're doing MBAs, they are doing master's degrees and PHDs, but the problem is that they will seek employment where they are.

But then, after 20 years, they will decide that Georgia is a great country and they will come back. But we (by 'we' I mean parents and the business community) are in charge of the money. We are in charge of the businesses, which means we have to create the infrastructure or ecosystems that convinces these people to stay here instead of leaving the country and working elsewhere. This is our obligation and that's why I'm very happy to be in close contact with SDSU Georgia and also with other institutions.

## ***How can you see SDSU Georgia playing a role in developing Georgia's digital economy and encouraging entrepreneurship?***

This is one of my favourite subjects! This is not just a job for SDSU Georgia, but SDSU Georgia should have and must have partners in the industry. Together we might come up with a project that has SDSU Georgia, the business community, and the government all involved. We can call it a Public Private Partnership because it will have an impact on society; it's not even a commercial project.

So it is a vital role that you have here because of the human resources that you will collect. This is a very important part in the entrepreneurship classical triangle: the team you will be in charge of, me as a business resource, and also the opportunity. Opportunity is there, I mean in each and every corner you can find the opportunity.

Second, you provide access to the mental community in California and San Diego, and also all the US community here. We need mentors, not for two or three months, but fully engaged. Business provides resources; resources means money plus we also provide necessary space, internet and utilities costs. On one side will be us and on another side is SDSU, with the connection to the mentor community, and the government will bind all of us together.

There are a lot of Georgians that are very successful abroad because they are in a proper ecosystem and they are in a proper environment. I know many of them in Microsoft, in Google, in Facebook. A lot of our guys are working there which means that we have the mental capacity, but we do not have the team spirit, entrepreneurial approach, and the resources from the business community and government support.

We're ready to invest. When I say 'we' I mean twenty of us business leaders. We believe in you, we believe in education, we believe in the future digital economy. IT is the future. I believe one day Georgia will succeed and my belief doesn't come out of the blue.

## SDSU Georgia Students Host at Touch Digital Summit

SDSU Georgia Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering students Iko Gejadze and Levan Tchikaidze volunteered at the Touch Digital Summit 2019. The two students put the skills they learned at SDSU Georgia into practice, both on and off the stage.

Touch Digital Summit took place in Tbilisi between October 30-31st. The summit brought together digital professionals from Europe and the Caucasus to network, share their knowledge, and build the digital economy of Georgia.

Gejadze and Tchikaidze, in addition to helping make the event run smoothly, were chosen to be MCs on the Startup Stage. These roles were a great challenge for the students and put their skills to the test. Gejadze reflected about the importance of his communication classes in being chosen for the position:

“After a briefing at night, considering our skills and stage experience on different venues including PowerPoint Karaoke and the Stories Department, Levan and I were selected to be MCs and conduct the event on the Startup Stage – one of the two stages. This really was a challenging task; however, we were excited about our role in the summit. We made good use of our Comm-103 [public speaking] class.”

Tchikaidze added, “At first it was scary to think about us hosting onstage at Rustaveli Theater, but a couple of red-bulls and breathing exercises helped a lot.”

The two students had a blast working at the event, which challenged them to wire the theatre for internet and prepare the venue for the summit beforehand, in addition to hosting. The event also put them in touch with many other tech-minded entrepreneurs.

Tchikaidze said, “We met a lot of great entrepreneurs from Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and other neighboring countries, so we even learned a little bit about the startup ecosystem in the region.”

“Georgia is not a rich country – at least with natural resources; however, I believe there are great minds in Georgia who just do not have enough information and confidence to start something by themselves.

Startups are an excellent example of how a small team of students or inexperienced people can achieve a lot with enough will, devotion and commitment. When there are many such enterprises in the country, people subconsciously ask themselves “If so many people could do it, why can’t I?” Gejadze reflected.



Iko Gejadze MCing at the Startup Stage for the Touch Digital Summit



Levan Tchikaidze MCing at the Startup Stage for the Touch Digital Summit



Touch volunteers celebrating a successful event

## Student Ambassadors Step Up

Student Ambassadors are an essential part of the SDSU Georgia team. They volunteer their time throughout the year to make sure events run smoothly, from new student orientation to commencement, bringing their professionalism and enthusiasm to everything they do.

As part of the Student Ambassador program, participants are invited to attend leadership development trainings throughout the year. Their first event was a training where they developed the interpersonal and professional skills that would help them both as ambassadors and in their future careers. They were also invited to attend an evening of Powerpoint Karaoke to hone their public speaking skills.

This year our student ambassadors helped lead New Student Orientation by serving as orientation leaders. They acted as mentors to groups of six students through the orientation process and helped them navigate their first year of the university experience.

The Student Ambassadors also assisted with Convocation, taking on various roles as ushers, guides, and registration assistants to ensure the event went off without a hitch and welcomed our new students into the Aztec family!



Student Ambassador Anastasia Lejava meeting with her small group at New Student Orientation

## GREEN TEAM ADVOCATES FOR RECYCLING ON CAMPUS

As SDSU Georgia works to align itself with both the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and SDSU's values, a group of students and staff members have formed a coalition to bring recycling to the STEM building and Ilia State University's campus!

The SDSU Georgia Green Team and representatives from Ilia State University (ISU) have met with the organization Polyvim to facilitate the placement and pick up of recycling bins to reduce the institution's carbon footprint. In collaboration with both Polyvim and WWF Georgia, a recycling campaign and presentation is in the works to introduce students to the importance of recycling and how they can get involved both on and off campus.

Salome Piroshmanishvili, one of the Associated Student Board representatives of the Green Team stated, "Our main goal is to work on environmental issues in our university community and spread the word among fellow students to make them realize the importance of this huge issue our world is currently facing."

In regards to their upcoming plans she added, "We are planning to work on the improvement of SDSU Georgia's campus paper recycling system and are negotiating with a company to achieve this goal. Moreover, we are planning to do a green-themed hackathon among SDSU Georgia students. It will be a great way to raise awareness of this issue among the students. Students are an internal part of our university and their role in making SDSU Georgia's campus greener and more environmentally friendly will be priceless!"



SDSU Georgia is working towards the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

## Student Clubs

The 2019-2020 academic year has been SDSU Georgia's most successful year for clubs so far. In addition to the pre-existing Artificial Intelligence and Art Clubs, six new clubs were formed this year. The new clubs include Rugby Club, Basketball Club, Board Game and Chess Club, Personal Wellness Club, Cycling Club, and Math, Physics and Quantum Mechanics Club.

One of our goals at SDSU Georgia is to cultivate an active student life that encourages students to expand their horizons beyond academics. Through club activities, students have the opportunity to express their creative sides, participate in sports, and delve deeper into the topics that interest them.



Personal Wellness Club's pillow fight helped students destress after classes

“Personal Wellness Club is an initiative that focuses on the mental and health wellness of SDSU Georgia students. This type of club is unique and one of a kind to do something new and extraordinary based on students' needs in a Georgia realm. Personal Wellness Club has already done some activities which concentrate on awaking different perspectives in our students. Personal Wellness Club is all about students; if students need support, we are there for it; if students want to express themselves, we are there!”

**Davit Khutsishvili**



Students playing Board Game and Chess Club's games in between classes



Personal Wellness Club hosted a Professors' Masterclass and Networking Event in the Fall



Students playing Board Game and Chess Club's games in between classes

“The Board Game and Chess Club, which was founded this fall was a great success. We constantly kept students interested in our club activities. As time went on, more and more students were interested in our club activities. We, on the other hand, were bringing more and more games to the table.”

**Giorgi Bokhochadze**



Board Game and Chess Club members playing Dungeons & Dragons together

## Student Clubs

“Before [the quarantine] we have had numerous events discussing several topics of math physics and quantum mechanics. The most recent being astrophysics. On the other hand club members usually volunteer to help the students out with the questions about math and physics using text messaging.”

*Aleksandre Jaoshvili*



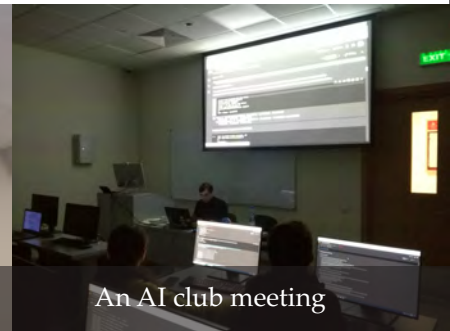
MPQM members attend a lecture hosted by a fellow member



Students in the AI club having a spirited discussion



MPQM's first meeting was an Intro to Quantum Mechanics

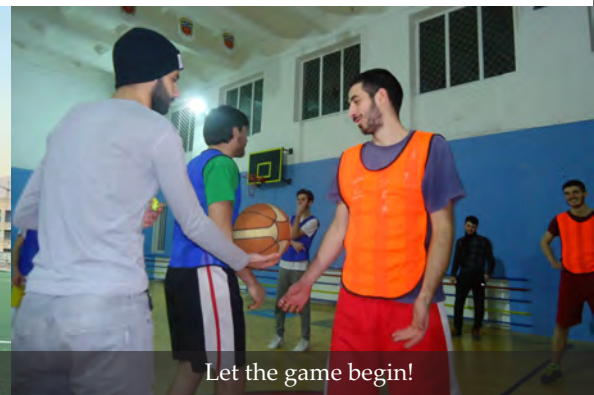


An AI club meeting

*In addition to academic clubs and recreational clubs, SDSU Georgia students also participate in sports! All of our sports clubs compete against students from other universities, bringing the Aztec spirit to Georgia! Some clubs, like Basketball Club, also host intramural competitions.*



SDSU Georgia's Rugby Team



Let the game begin!



The SDSU Georgia Futsal Team prepares for a game



Students competing for the futsal prize



Students battle in the SDSU Georgia Basketball Championship

# STORIES

## SDSU Georgia Guest Speaker Series Continues



Ann Davies, Head of BP Georgia with some of SDSU's women in STEM

SDSU Georgia's Guest Speaker Series started up again for the 2019-2020 academic year. The speaker series invites exceptional professionals working within Georgia from many different fields to come to SDSU Georgia and introduce students to an array of different careers both inside and outside of the STEM fields.

This series brings students together with all sorts of people and gives them the chance to ask them questions about their jobs and get a broader perspective on topics both related to Georgia specifically and globally. The series has been an ongoing success since Fall of 2018 and continues to be a favored regular event among students.

This year's series began with a collaboration between the university and DataFest Tbilisi. Giorgi Jvaridze, CEO of Maxin AI, spoke about data science, artificial intelligence, and deep learning.

U.S. Embassy Legal Advisor Michael Grant gave a talk on the justice system in Georgia and Assistant Information Officer Althea Cawley-Murphree hosted a timely conversation on the American election system.

One of the highlights of this series was a visit from Ann Davies, the Head of Georgia for BP. During her informal talk, Davies invited students to ask her questions about anything they were interested in, ranging from the politics of oil to her experiences as a student and the importance of a holistic education.



Empower Women members attending a meeting with Dr. Oya Atakan Güven and Nana Dvali of the International Women's Association of Georgia

## Empower Women Club Celebrates the Success of Women in STEM

Empower Women Club at San Diego State University Georgia is a STEM oriented student organization which aims to actively recruit women into STEM majors, proactively support women studying in STEM programs, and promote a growth-mindset environment while educating students about the dangers of stereotypes.

The Empower Women Club hosts various events throughout the year which allows participants to develop a strong and supportive social network while pursuing and expanding their interests. The club, which hosts panel discussions and a lecture series, currently consists of 40 active members.

In the last year, participants were invited to meet with several notable women, including SDSU President Adela de la Torre, Ambassador of Turkey to Georgia Fatma Seren Yazgan, and two members of the International Women's Association of Georgia, Ms. Nana Dvali and Dr. Oya Atakan Güven. At these meetings, Empower Women Club members were invited to hear the stories of these women and engage in meaningful dialogue.



# Students in San Diego

Name: Zaza Managadze

Major: Computer Science

**Why did you apply for an exchange semester?**

Because I was offered a full funding due to my academic record, so I decided to take advantage of this opportunity.

**What was the most surprising thing about SDSU/San Diego?**

The most surprising thing about SDSU was how large the Campus was. SDSU campus is a whole city inside the city itself. SDSU definitely has one of the best campuses in the world.

**How did the exchange program help you grow as an individual?**

The exchange program made me a more independent person. That was my first time being abroad, and it was a really useful experience for me. From now on, I'm not afraid of living in another country.

**Describe your experience in one sentence:**

I had the opportunity to meet all kinds of students and professors which was very exciting to me.



Name: Demetre Saghliani

Major: Computer Science

**Why did you apply for an exchange semester?**

Why wouldn't I? Everyone loves novelty, and spending a semester in a place so far away, both geographically and culturally, is certainly a way to get that. More, I would get to see the college our own is modeled after, and I'd also get to take that one class I wanted that we didn't have here.

**What was the most surprising thing about SDSU/San Diego?**

Nothing in particular. There's not anything that stands out glaringly. Rather, it's the little things, like people's behaviors or the infrastructure, that add up to a different... atmosphere, or feel, of the place.

**How did the exchange program help you grow as an individual?**

Living on your own for months will make anyone grow up. Being dropped in a new place forces you to adapt and start over in many things that you took for granted – the cooked food on your table, for example, or your familiarity with ordinary conveniences like public transit; and, of course, knowing people.

**Describe your experience in one sentence:**

Living out a dream, except the dream is real life with all of its problems and mundanity.



# SENIOR SUPERLATIVES

Senior Superlatives are an American tradition. The senior class was invited to nominate one another for titles and voted amongst themselves. Congratulations to the winners!



**Best-Smile**  
Mariam Abramishvili



**Food Monster**  
Giorgi Meshvildishvili



**Best-Athlete**  
Aleksandre Gogoladze



**Always-Late**  
Nini Gavashelishvili



**Best-Laugh**  
Nini Mamasakhlisi



**Mr. Know-It-All**  
Sandro Gogia



**Nature's-Child**  
Beso Utiashvili



**Most Likely to be President**  
Mamuka Anjaparidze



# SENIOR SUPERLATIVES



**Most likely to survive alien invasion**  
Ani Rukhadze



**Always sleepy**  
Elene Aslanikashvili



**Most likely to be on Vogue Magazine cover**  
Tamar Kerdikoshvili



**Partyboy**  
Irakli Buadze



**Drama King/Queen**  
Irakli Buadze/Mariam Narchemashvili



**Best International Student**  
Amin Ghahremani



**Most likely to work at NASA**  
Thomas Mikava



**Best Bromance**  
Luka Chkhaidze & Achi Beridze



**Class Clown**  
Luka Chkhaidze



# SDSU Georgia Responds to COVID-19 Crisis

## Virtual Learning at SDSU Georgia

In response to the unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic, SDSU Georgia faculty and staff have responded swiftly to create a virtual education environment that prioritizes the health and wellbeing of our students in addition to ensuring the same high-quality learning is able to take place. We understand that this is a difficult time for students, staff, and faculty, and are working to support the SDSU Georgia community through the COVID-19 crisis.

The first case of novel coronavirus was confirmed in Georgia on February 26, 2020. By March 2, following suggestions from the Government of Georgia, SDSU Georgia suspended in-person classes. Courses moved exclusively to virtual learning platforms. The following month, remote lab services were added, allowing civil engineering and chemistry students to access lab computers from their homes and utilize essential software for their coursework.

Courses are being conducted through a mixture of mediums. Blackboard Learn is the virtual learning environment and learning management system which was already in use by SDSU professors and which continues to be used to engage with students, provide

them with resources, and monitor grades. For lectures, professors are hosting Zoom meetings, which allow students to participate in discussions in real time.

In order to continue providing educational resources to our students, the ELDC, chemistry help desk, and math help desk have all been moved online. This allows our students to continue to seek out academic assistance. Academic advising is available online as well. As students no longer are able to drop by our offices, staff from the student services department host several weekly live chats on Slack to address student questions and concerns.

During this time of economic uncertainty SDSU Georgia has extended the tuition fee payment period for students, giving them until summer to pay their fees for the Spring semester, and is working with students who are experiencing hardship to ensure they will be able to continue their education.

The COVID-19 Social Support Committee was also formed to reach out to the student body and come up with additional means of supporting socially vulnerable students. This included providing temporary laptops and internet packages, among other things. Online counseling services have also been made available to both students and staff who need additional emotional or mental support during this difficult time.

- The sum of the flow ratios  $\gamma_i = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{v_i}{s_i} \right)$   
 $= 0.171 + 0.338 + 0.217 = 0.726$
- Total cycle lost time  
 $(3 \text{ timing stages} \times 4 \text{ s/phase}) = 12$
- For the minimum cycle length, a somewhat conservative value of 0.9 will be used for the critical intersection  $v/c$  ratio to minimize the potential of cycle failures due to occasionally high arrival volumes

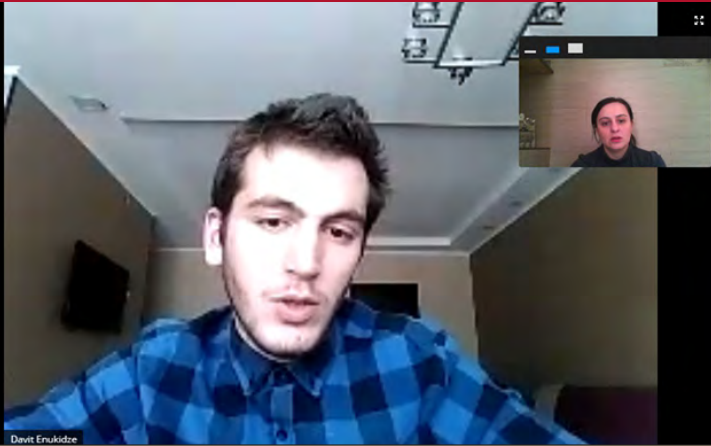
$$C_{min} = \frac{12 \times 0.9}{0.9 - 0.726} = 62.1 \rightarrow 65 \text{ s} \quad C_{opt} = \frac{1.5 \times 10^4}{1.0 - 0.726}$$

### Nonverbal Communication Functions

Public Speaking	Interpersonal Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethos</li> <li>Organize</li> <li>Enhance/express</li> <li>Inform/persuade/entertain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage conversations</li> <li>Express emotions</li> <li>Maintain relationships</li> <li>Form impressions</li> <li>Influence/persuade</li> <li>Conceal information</li> </ul>

Professors Michael Saunders and Brianna Quintero delivering lectures via Zoom.

# SDSU Georgia Responds to COVID-19 Crisis



Davit Enukidze interviews with the Road Department of Georgia

## SDSU Georgia Hosts Successful Virtual Career Fair

In light of the governmental restrictions on large group gatherings, our annual career fair moved to a virtual medium as well. 18 companies, including Energo-Pro Georgia and the Road Department of Georgia, hosted interviews for positions in their organizations on April 27-28. This was SDSU Georgia's first big virtual event and was a huge success!

As part of our employment and career development services, students were able to seek out assistance with their resumes and participate in mock online interviews to prepare for the career fair ahead of time.

In addition to the fair, SDSU Georgia continues to hold different types of employment activities, including hosting (virtual) industry meetings, organizing online interviews for students, and providing recruiting services for companies by providing shortlisted candidates for specific vacancies.



Comm 245 students practicing their video interview skills before the Career Fair

## Board Game and Chess Club Holds Online Chess Tournament

Students have also stepped up to continue some of their extracurricular activities in a digital medium. The board game club hosted a week-long virtual chess tournament on April 20-27, streaming the competition for spectators. Over forty students competed in the competition.

The SDSU Georgia Chess Tournament Final took eleven matches. Winning the eleventh match of the after ten draws, Mao Shengelia took home first place! Nine students from SDSU Georgia, including Shengelia, have gone on to compete in a virtual chess tournament among other Georgian universities.



The final moments of the SDSU Georgia Chess Tournament Final between Mao Shengelia and Tomrike Iarajuli

## SDSU Georgia Responds to COVID-19 Crisis

### Guest Speaker Series goes digital

As a result of the shift to virtual education following the novel coronavirus pandemic, the Guest Speaker Series moved online as well. Our first virtual guest speaker was Shelby Barnes, an Amazon Business Analyst who joined us from the United States to share what it is like working at one of the world's leading tech giant companies. The virtual Guest Speaker Series will be continuing with weekly speakers hosting virtual chats through the end of our Extended Session.

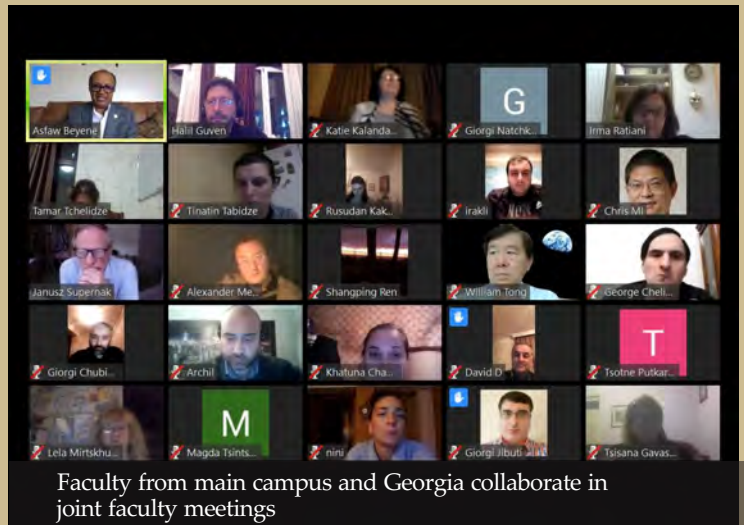
#### 3. Be a Problem SOLVER

- The world is full of critics- it is easy to point out what is wrong with something
- But just knowing what is wrong doesn't make a difference- providing solutions to solving the problem does
- Don't ever point out a problem without being prepared to provide a potential solution
- Find the root cause, dig deep
- It is okay if your first suggestion isn't the right solution, it started the conversation

Shelby Barnes from Amazon delivering our first virtual Guest Speaker Series lecture

### Faculty meetings with main campus

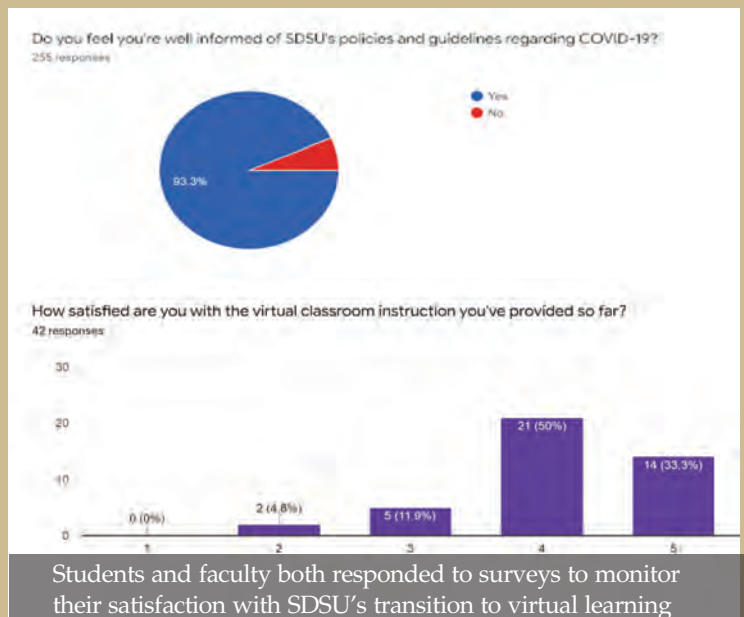
One of the positive things to come out of the pandemic situation is the combination of main campus and SDSU Georgia faculty meetings. As these meetings have shifted to an online medium, Zoom, our faculty are able to keep in closer contact with the faculty in San Diego. This allows mentors and mentees from our Faculty Development Program to collaborate more closely and grows the relationship between both campuses.



### SDSU checks in with students and faculty

As part of SDSU Georgia's response to COVID-19, we have been sending out regular surveys, in addition to our daily Slack chats and Facebook groups, to check in with both students and faculty. This allows us to make adjustments to our student, academic, and employment services that meet the changing needs of our students and faculty during this difficult time.

These surveys show that the majority of our students and faculty are satisfied with their virtual instruction. In fact, faculty responses to the surveys suggest that student attendance and participation has increased with virtual classes. One anonymous faculty member stated, "The only thing I can notice is that most students... are more attentive, active, mobilized and result oriented within virtual learning."



# American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Student Chapter at Ilia State University



Students at SDSU Georgia and Ilia State University have passed the first step of creating the first American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) student chapter in Georgia. Our students now have the status "statement of intent" to establish a Chapter, which will be reviewed with a year and if successful the Chapter will be approved by the ASCE board. This process has been spearheaded by interested students in coordination with Michael Saunders, Director of the School of Technology at ISU and Assistant to the Vice Dean and Civil Engineering Instructor at SDSU Georgia.

According to their website, ASCE "stands at the forefront of a profession that plans, designs, constructs, and operates society's economic and social engine - the built environment - while protecting and restoring the natural environment." They have over 150,000 members in 177 countries.

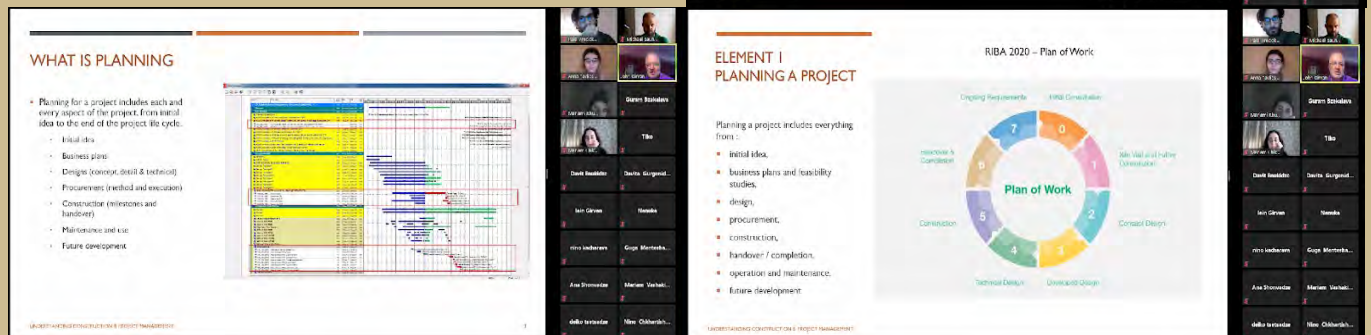
ASCE student chapter president Irakli Ambokadze commented on the need for this student chapter, "Being part of the Soviet Union for almost a century has drastically affected Georgia's development in many fields, including civil engineering. While still being bound to old standards, our country has lagged behind from the developing international community. Therefore, establishing a connection to the outer world will give us an opportunity to catch and keep up with them and make our presence in the engineering world noticeable and remarkable."

The rigorous application process requires students to demonstrate their ability to live up to the standards of the ASCE. ISU and SDSU Georgia's pending chapter of the ASCE currently has 29 members and are organizing events, ranging from field trips to companies working on significant infrastructure projects to social functions to connect our future civil and construction engineers to current professionals.

The goal of the ASCE chapter is "not only to be educational but fun and creative, which in my opinion

will be the most rewarding," said Vice President Anna Pavliashvili. "Thanks to the San Diego State University's program in Georgia, students who are passionate about the Civil and Construction Engineering field have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams of becoming a part of the engineering world. However, we still lack the feeling of being a part of this huge community and are not able to share our thoughts, achievements or problems. That is why establishing the ASCE chapter was our goal since we heard about this program at the beginning of our journey at university, and luckily we got the opportunity to fulfill our desire and be able to support the development of the comparatively unpopular field in our country."

Joining Ambokadze and Pavliashvili are Nino Giorgadze, Ani Kantaria and Mariami Khukhunashvili who will serve as chapter correspondence secretary, recording secretary and treasurer respectively.



28 civil and construction engineering students participated in the ASCE's first guest speaker meeting via Zoom

## SDSU Georgia Alumni Association Hosts First Meeting

As our first group of skilled STEM graduates enter into the workforce and higher education, SDSU Georgia has established its own Alumni Association. This will allow graduates to stay connected and maintain their social and professional network, while giving back to their alma mater by hosting events to support both students and graduates.

On May 1st, the Alumni Association hosted their inaugural meeting over Zoom. Newly elected Association President Giorgi Kviria and Vice President Mariam Gagua chaired the meeting. Dean Güven opened with some words of welcome, and spoke about goings-on at SDSU Georgia, including the plans for its dual-diploma program in partnership with Tbilisi State University and Ilia State University.

All agreed that the original plans for their inaugural meeting - smart-dress, in-person, and with a proper reception - would not be cancelled because of the constraints of social distancing, but rather merely postponed to a time, to be determined, after the quarantine.

The board is currently in the process of creating bylaws and putting concrete plans in place for future projects and activities. Official members will be given access to SDSU email accounts and will be able to request funding for the association's activities. All of our alumni, both current and upcoming, are invited to join the SDSU Georgia Alumni Association and its growing community of STEM professionals.



**Mariam Gagua**  
**SDSU Georgia Alumni Association Vice President**

In addition to voting for the president, SDSU Georgia alumni also voted in Mariam Gagua as their inaugural vice president. Mariam Gagua is an Alumni of SDSU Georgia, where she majored in Computer Engineering. Mariam has 5 years of experience working in both the Private and Public sector. More specifically, she specializes in Mobile App development. Currently, Mariam Gagua is a Mobile Bank Product Owner at Bank of Georgia.

She believes the Alumni Association is a tool for alumni to remain in contact with each other and share experiences. We asked her about her vision for the burgeoning organization.

“At SDSU, I’ve thought that having strong connections with our classmates would lead us to become better professionals in the future. SDSU graduates build a better future not only for Georgian communities, but the whole world; and for great accomplishments - we need to be together in this journey.

I always loved building communities, and serving as a Vice President of the association is both an honor and a great pleasure for me.”





## **Meet SDSU Georgia's New Alumni Association President**



**Giorgi Kviria**  
SDSU Georgia Alumni Association President

SDSU Georgia alumni voted in the Alumni Association's inaugural president on March 10th. The position went to Giorgi Kviria, SDSU Computer Engineering graduate and Senior Expert at the Automation Department at Georgian Water & Power LTD where he works on Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems.

Kviria believes that the role of the Alumni Association is to allow students to be able to maintain and develop relationships with their peers on an academic, professional, and social level.

The Generation STEM team caught up with Kviria to see what he has in mind for the new Alumni Association.

"I always thought that the Alumni Association can have a massive impact on students and their futures. As the president of the SDSU Georgia Alumni Association, I will be serving based on students' wants and needs.

For that, the association will be organizing special meetings that go beyond connecting students to business professionals. We will also share examples of alumni experiences with upcoming alumni members. SDSU Georgia Alumni will be exemplary to all. As we are organizing the SDSU Alumni Association Georgian chapter, we will bring coherence to students paving their way to the future."

## *2020 Outstanding Graduates*



**Zaza Managadze**  
Summa Cum Laude  
Department of Computer Science



**Ana Tomash**  
Summa Cum Laude  
Department of Electrical and  
Computer Engineering

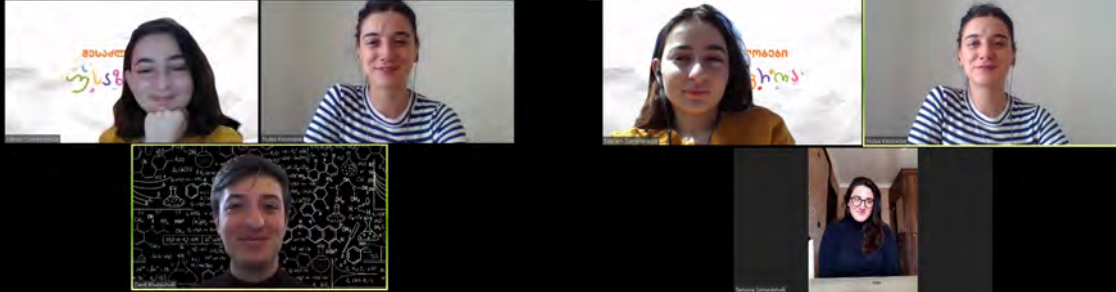


**Nika Asatiani**  
Summa Cum Laude  
Department of Chemistry/Biochemistry

# **Congratulations!**

# POST-COVID

## SDSU Georgia Hosts Successful Virtual Career Fair



SDSU Georgia students Davit Khutsishvili and Tamuna Simonishvili interviewing during our Virtual Career Fair

### Virtual Career Fair Spring 2020



April 27-28, 2020

#### Participating Companies and Organizations

- Lanars** – Computer Science
- Lupi AI** – Computer Science/Engineering
- Voida** – Computer Science/Engineering
- Adjara Group** – Chemistry/Biochemistry/Computer Engineering
- ExactPro** – Computer Engineering
- Road Department of Georgia** – Construction/Civil Engineering
- Euroins** – Computer Science/Engineering/Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Silknet** – Computer Engineering
- Fina** – Computer Engineering
- Free Academy** – Computer Science/Engineering/Chemistry/Biochemistry
- BOG** – Computer/Electrical/Civil Engineering/Computer Science/Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Energo-Pro Georgia** – Computer/Electrical Engineering
- Finca Bank** – Computer Engineering
- Sakpatenti** – Civil/Electrical Engineering/Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Future Laboratory** – Computer/Electrical/Construction Engineering/Computer Science/Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Cornerstone** – Computer Science/Engineering/Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Iliia Vekua Sukhumi Institute of Physics** – Electrical Engineering/Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Insta** – Electrical Engineering



## SDSU's Virtual Commencement Ceremony Took Place on May 16th

On May 16th, SDSU Georgia graduating seniors were invited to join the SDSU Virtual Commencement Ceremony streaming from San Diego. While an in-person ceremony was unable to take place at this time, we were able to come together with our peers and colleagues around the world to celebrate the Class of 2020.

SDSU Georgia's graduating seniors, the faculty who have taught them over the last four years, staff and alumni, in addition to representatives from the Millennium Foundation and Center for International Education, all joined together via Zoom to watch the ceremony and share congratulations.

Congratulatory remarks were made by SDSU Georgia Dean Halil Güven, SDSU Associate Dean Asfaw Beyene, Millennium Foundation CEO Magda Magradze and Nino Chinchaladze from the Center for International Education. Several staff and faculty members shared their best wishes for the Class of 2020 as well.

Students, faculty, and staff participated in a live chat during the ceremony. The chat brought together members of the SDSU Georgia community around the world. Nino Kokiashvili, former SDSU Georgia professor, joined the Zoom meeting from Texas to wish the graduates luck.



Millennium Foundation CEO Magda Magradze addresses the SDSU Georgia graduating class

“So happy to share in the excitement of your graduation day, and so very PROUD of YOU! I love you my dear students! <3 Warmest congratulations from TEXAS :)”

**Nino Kokiashvili**

“Congratulations to all of you dear students, I am very proud of every single one of you. You have made wonderful progress, and I have been able to see you grow. Congrats once more, wishing you all the best, don't forget your Alma mater!<3

**Salome Kilanava**

“Dear Students, it was an honor teaching you - wish you good luck and all the best in your future life

**Erekle Magradze**



Nino Chinchaladze from the Center for International Education congratulates the Class of 2020



SDSU Provost Hector Ochoa salutes the graduating class during the SDSU Virtual Commencement Ceremony

# CLASS OF 2020

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year we were unable to arrange a traditional photo shoot in caps and gowns. However, our graduates have sent in photos of their own so that we can continue to celebrate their success.*



# ***Congratulations to the SDSU Georgia Class of 2020!***



# ***Congratulations to the SDSU Georgia Class of 2020!***



# ***Congratulations to the SDSU Georgia Class of 2020!***





# SDSU Virtual Commencement Ceremony 2020



“ Thank you all. Congratulations guys, we did it. Wish you all the best in life <3  
**Tamar Mosiashvili**

“ Congratulations everyone! I love you all so much!  
**Tamar Kerdikoshvili**

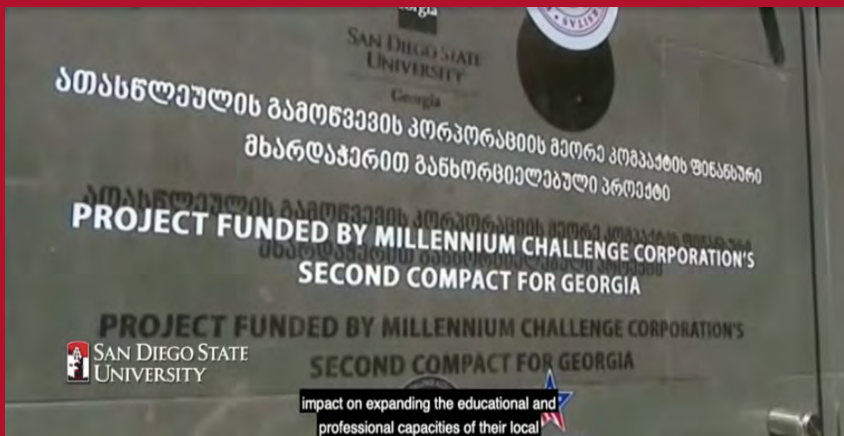
“ Congratulations class 2020! It wasn't easy, at times it was getting even harder, but you've succeeded! Wish you brilliant future and we're all proud of each one of you!  
**Anna Shakhnazarova**

“ Thank you all!  
**Ana Tomash**

“ Dear Students, I believe you can fly! Congratulations and best wishes!  
**Ana Goletiani**

“ Great to see Tbilisi in the video!  
**Magda Magradze**

“ Congratulations, wish you the bright future and success in science!:)  
**Rusudan Kakava**



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