ALUMNI OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Newsletter

1ST ISSUE
Class of 2019 & Class of 2020

SDSU GEORGIA GRADS IN WORK AND STUDY IN GEORGIA AND ABROAD: WHERE ARE THEY?

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

SDSU came to Georgia almost seven years ago with an objective to provide an American university education in Georgia, focused on STEM disciplines that would improve human capital in the Georgian labor force, and to battle the critical shortage of STEM professionals educated to current international standards.

By 2021, we have already graduated 250 outstanding students who are continuing their path to a successful career. This is a generation of young STEM professionals who are honoring the investment made in their future by the two Governments of Georgia and the U.S. and the public and private partners of SDSU Georgia.

In this first Alumni Newsletter, we showcase these exceptional individuals, many of whom have already managed to establish themselves professionally, at the top organizations and universities in Georgia and around the world. After completing their graduate degrees, or gaining more experience, they will continue serving their country by utilizing the knowledge and resources which SDSU Georgia has equipped them with.

The network of SDSU Georgia graduates keeps growing each year, as we try to keep up with their new successful endeavors. By establishing an Alumni Association at SDSU Georgia we strive to follow our graduates on their successful path, connect them with each other and our current students who will also graduate in the coming years.

This network of SDSU Georgia graduates keeps growing each year, as we try to keep up with their new successful endeavors.

Dear alumni, SDSU Georgia - your alma mater, our partners, and supporters are exceptionally proud of your accomplishments. We plan to use every opportunity to introduce you to the world, as the future leaders of the STEM generation, because Leadership Starts Here at SDSU!

SELECTED ALUMNI BIOS
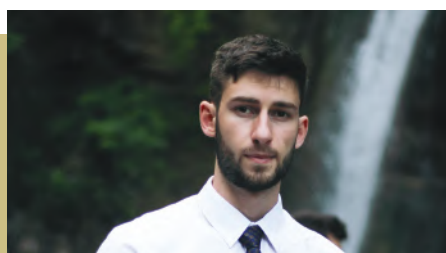
LUKA LOMTADZE '19 ON THE JOB SEARCH

DAVIT SOSELIA '19 ON ACADEMIC WRITING

Student and Alumni Affairs Manager Interview

Student and Alumni Affairs Manager

Alumni Outreach and Engagement
Newsletter Editor in Chief

Asmati Naskidashvili is a Student Affairs and Alumni Center manager at San Diego State University Georgia and is managing the issues related to the broad variety of students' and alumni concerns and interests.

What is the role of Student and Alumni Services?

Before SDSU Georgia graduated its first cohort of students, the main focus and purpose of the Student Affairs Department was to work on student related issues. We implemented student development platforms like exchange programs and international conferences/ competitions. Besides that, our department worked on financial aid programs, student orientation events, Associated Student Board activities, student life activities like creating student clubs, inviting guest speakers, etc.
As soon as SDSU Georgia graduated its first cohorts, we realized we needed to create a platform that would enable our alumni to communicate with each other on multiple levels, formal and informal. There are 141 graduates from the Classes 2019 and 2020. Some of the tools we use to keep ourselves in the loop of our alumni life are social networks like Facebook and Linkedin, various surveys, and because of Covid-19, virtual meetings on various issues.
We thought that the Alumni Association would be a framework that would help us extend the services we had provided for them during their undergraduate studies at SDSU Georgia, after graduation as well. Some of the events that already were implemented in the framework of the association are Alumni Guest Speaker Series, Experience Sharing meetings with SDSU-G current students, Informal networking sessions, etc.

How has COVID-19 affected student life and alumni engagement?

In light of the worldwide pandemic and the regulations related to COVID-19, it's been very hard to come up with and implement networking events which would contribute to exchange sharing and perspective broadening. But together we managed to make the best of virtual relations. Physical distancing is nothing like social distancing. Social connections between alumni have grown even though they have not been able to shake hands at face-to-face events in a long time. We are looking forward to going back to face-to-face communication and networking.

How will SDSU Georgia's relationship with its alumni change as it graduates its remaining cohorts?

As time passes, the count of SDSU Georgia alumni rises and the count of current students decreases. At some point soon we'll have more alumni than students. We'll need to adapt to the realities of this by being more flexible with the tools of communication with them. With this purpose we decided to create the newsletter specifically on alumni life and their engagement with SDSU Georgia and our partner organizations.
The purpose of this is that Executive boards of the association take over the management of the association gradually. We'll be announcing the second elections for the Alumni Association Board positions, and we expect high interest from our alumni to contribute to the effort of maintaining strong connections and assisting each other in various endeavors.

SDSU Georgia Aztecs Around the World

Jena | Germany
Stockholm | Sweden
Tartu | Estonia
Leuven | Belgium
Aachen | Germany
Paris | France
Regensburg | Germany
Orsay | France
Nice | France
Hanover | USA
San Diego | USA

SDSU Georgia graduated its first two cohorts in 2019 and 2020. Our 141 current graduates have ranged far and wide in pursuit of work and graduate-level study, in such places as Germany, Estonia, Belgium, and California.

	COMP E 33.3%	COMP S 22.7%	EE 16.3%	BIOCHEM 12.8%	CHEM 14.9%
2019	29		11	3	12
2020	18	32	12	15	9
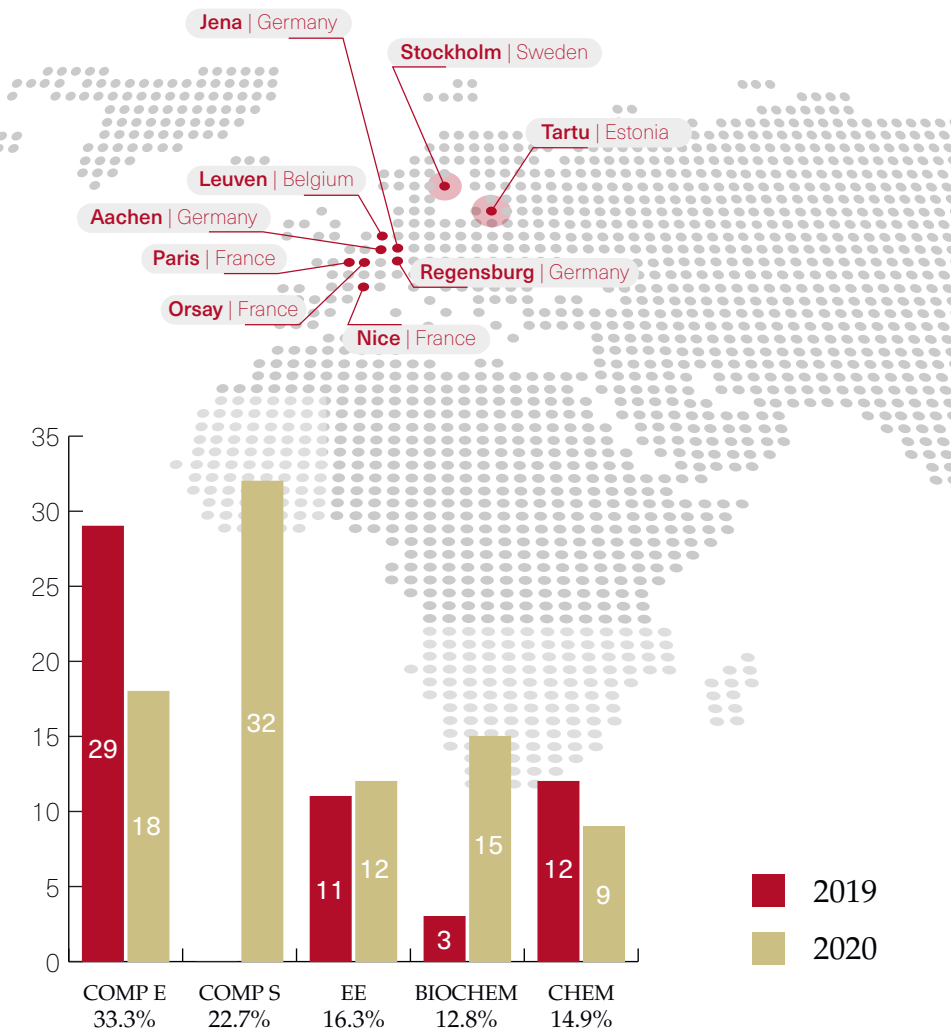
WHERE DO THEY STUDY?

KTH Royal Institute of Technology
Friedrich Schiller University
San Diego State University - San Diego
Tbilisi State University

Ilia State University
Agricultural University of Georgia
Georgia Technical University
Tallinn University of Technology
Technical University of Munich

KU Leuven
Dartmouth College
University of Paris-Sud
RWTH Aachen University
Polytechnic Institute of Paris

University of Regensburg
Caucasus University
Université Côte d'Azur

WHERE DO THEY WORK? | EMPLOYERS:

Google
Evolution Gaming
MLC Medical
Embedded Lord
British American Tobacco
BDO
Georgia's
Innovation &
Technology Agency
Campania Newsteel
Mitchell
International
Georgia Water & Power
Austrian-Georgian
Development

Exactpro Systems
The Australian Industry Group
Newton Free School
Loialte
Apollo 11
Voida LLC
Liberty Bank
ITS
Solaris LLC
Georgian Railway
Credo Bank
RealTyna
Bank of Georgia
Future Laboratory
ACT

Feedc
IT Group
Nutrimax
Veon
Webiz
RSM Georgia
Solutions
Murtsku
Georgian
Renewable Power Company
Soluutivo LLC
Lupi AI
LEP Laboratory Research Center
TBC Bank
Maxin AI

STC Delta
Veckta Inc.
Betsolutions
NCDC Lugar
Laboratory
Weinor
Quantori
Pulsar AI
PharmaLex
Swiss National
Centre of
Competence & Research

SDSU Georgia Alumni Association Created

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 current students and recent graduates.

On May 1st, 2020, SDSU Georgia's first graduating cohort held the inaugural meeting of the Association (by Zoom, of course). Newly elected Association President Giorgi Kviria and Vice President Mariam Gagua chaired the meeting. Dean Guven opened with some words of welcome, and spoke about goings-on at SDSU Georgia, including the plans for its joint degree program in partnership with Tbilisi State University and Ilia State University. Dr Guven noted the uniquely challenging circumstances faced by all during the covid-19 pandemic, and encouraged the assembled alumni to view this as an opportunity to plan for the future, strategize, and to take stock of their assets, tangible and intangible, which they may make use of.
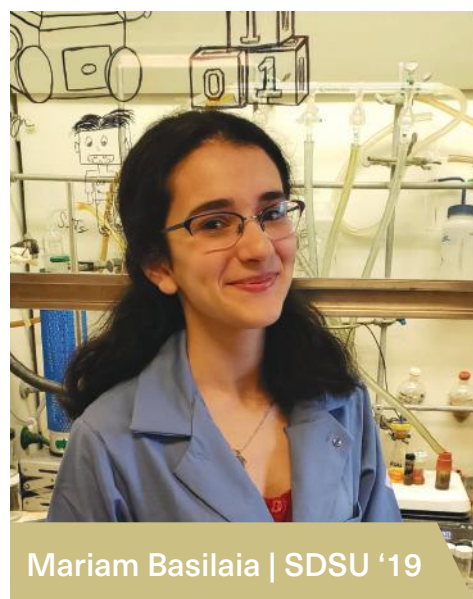
Mr Kviria then briefly outlined his vision for delegating to departments of a new Association Board different areas of responsibility, and endorsed alumni participation in the university's Guest Speaker series, creating a student-mentorship program along the lines of main campus' Aztec Mentorship scheme, and connecting students and alumni who have startup ideas to business professionals who may be interested. Ms Gagua seconded

Mariam Basilaia | SDSU '19

Giorgi Kviria, President
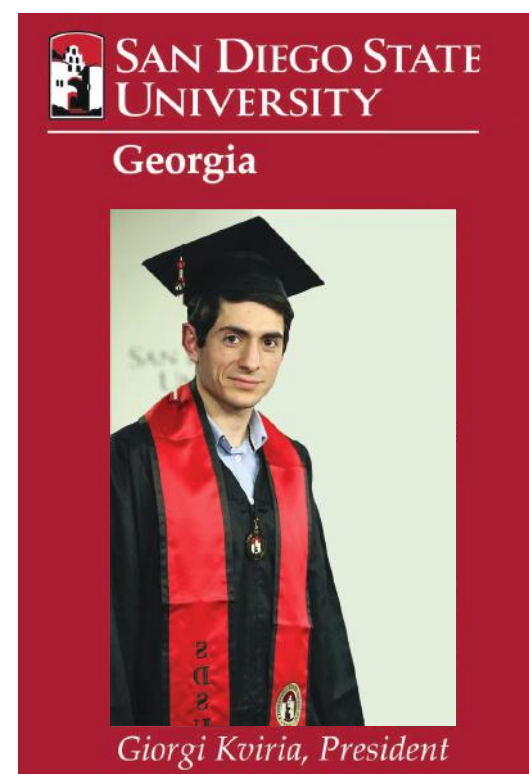
those ideas, and shared her own experience working at Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency, which she described as a networking bonanza, and offered to put her contacts thus acquired at the disposal of alumni and students. The other alumni in attendance then took turns sharing their own work and study experiences, and among themselves selected a group of volunteers to act as board members for the
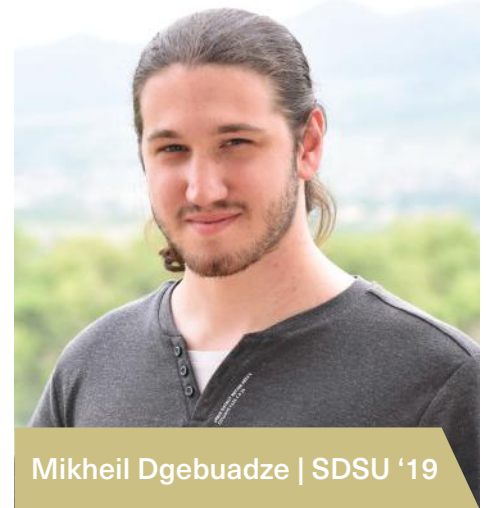

Otari Rurua | SDSU '19

Keti Kvirikashvili | SDSU '19

Luka Lomtadze | SDSU '19

Alumni Association Welcomes New Members

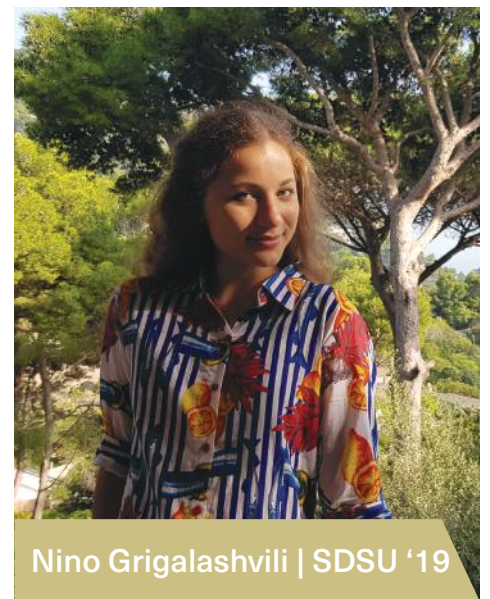**ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Mariam Gagua, Vice President

new association.

Representatives from SDSU Georgia's Employment and Career Services' offices requested alumni's help running their twice-annual job-and-internship fairs, and reminded them to avail themselves of the services of the university's advisors as they apply to graduate schools and polish their CVs.

The newly elected board agreed to meet again the following week

to draw up association bylaws and make concrete plans for projects. Dr Guven concluded by recommending speed in creating bylaws and a list of official members so that they could set up SDSU email accounts for each of them, and promised to support their requests for funding projects once concrete proposals have been outlined.

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. Employers' representatives will be invited, and there will be bells and whistles galore. Looking forward!

Mikheil Dgebuadze | SDSU '19

Davit Soselia | SDSU '19

Nino Grigalashvili | SDSU '19

On June 6th, the executive board of the SDSU Georgia Alumni Association held a virtual networking event with members of the newly-graduated class of 2020. Association President Giorgi Kviria ('19) presided. Dean Guven gave some opening remarks, and Mr Kviria outlined his plans for the Association's activities over the following year. The new graduates were encouraged to

formally join the Association and register to receive communications and updates.

A delegation of members from the class of 2019 made some brief remarks, and a Q&A period followed, during which graduating seniors asked questions about the Association and the members' own lives, work, and study since their graduation.

SDSU Georgia's Employer Rela-

tions manager Anna Shakhnazarova joined the discussion, and reminded the graduates to continue to make use of SDSU's Career Development services, job fairs, and future networking events.

The event was fun and informal, and the participants spent several minutes at the end chatting and catching up.

SDSU Georgia Alumni Association Events

Luka Lomtadze

On March 5th, 2021 alumnus Luka Lomtadze ('19) spoke to thirty-seven of our current students about his adventures since graduation. Luka lives in California and works at Google. In his talk, he described the journey that led to his current position, starting from the internship he had during his time as an exchange student. Luka prepared a detailed and humorous slideshow to illustrate his main points. Our students asked questions about applying for jobs and getting a visa, and Luka expounded at length on the wisdom he has acquired. The students were especially interested in his advice on how to choose a career path and prepare for interviews.

Davit Soselia

On Friday, February 19th, 2021 SDSU Georgia alumnus Davit Soselia ('19) gave a presentation on Zoom to 21 SDSU Georgia students about academic writing. Davit is working toward his master's at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden, where he has been researching theoretical and applied Machine Learning, and doing consulting work. The focus of his talk was evaluating solicitations from academic journals and conferences to choose reputable publications, and to avoid having work misappropriated. Attendees were shown examples of suspicious communications, and catalogues which can be referenced to check the legitimacy of publications.

SDSU Georgia Alumni Association Events

On March 13th, a panel of SDSU Georgia alumni gave an informal presentation to our students to close out our Career Month. They discussed their current work and studies, and shared advice on job hunting, applying for grad schools, and scholarships. They emphasized the utility of networking, and of making use of SDSU's career advising services. Of particular interest to students were the explanations of the day-to-day tasks and duties of alumni in their past and current positions, such as Georgia Water & Power and the National Environmental Agency. The students took inspiration from the alumni's stories, and agreed to stay in touch to sustain alumni-student advising going forward. The panel included:

Giorgi Kviria

Computer Engineering, Class of 2019, President of the Alumni Association and Senior Technical Expert at the Automation Department of Georgian Water & Power

Mariam Gagua

Computer Engineering, Class of 2019, Vice President of the Alumni Association and Mobile Bank Product Owner at Bank of Georgia

Magda Aptsiauri

Chemistry/Biochemistry, Class of 2019, Invited Specialist in the Environmental Pollution Monitoring Department of the National Environmental Agency in Georgia

Sandro Gogia

Chemistry/Biochemistry, Class of 2020, DAAD Scholarship holder and current Biochemistry Master's student at the University of Bonn, currently involved in Aptamer research
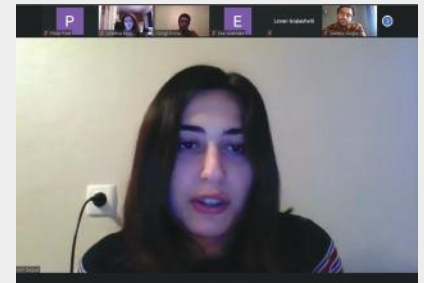
David Janelidze

Electrical Engineering, Class of 2019, Hardware Engineer Co-op at Cisco Systems in Signal Integrity Team and SDSU Electrical Engineering Master's student with a machine learning thesis

Corporate Relations

Meet SDSU Georgia's New Corporate Relations Manager

Anna Shakhnazarova has been working for San Diego State University Georgia since 2015. She built the necessary procurement strategies and supply chain to maintain university processes running efficiently, including the outfitting of laboratories with the latest equipment.

Since 2019 Anna took over the Employment Services department and began growing and developing the network of potential employers for SDSU Georgia program graduates.

Anna is an alumni of the International Black Sea University with Bachelor degree in International Economic Relations/Social Sciences and a Master Degree in Business Administration.

With a total working experience of 12 years in Supply Chain and Corporate Relations, she shares all the expertise gained throughout these years and continues to contribute to the overall goal of the project success.

What is the role of the Corporate Relations Manager?

The involvement of SDSU Georgia in our students' lives is not framed only by giving them a high-quality education; we also prepare and kickstart their future careers, starting by helping them in preparations for their first interview, CV preparation, and offering a variety of events, like job and career fairs where they can network with potential employers.

Here is where the Corporate Relations Manager gets involved. Building a strong network of partner organizations that are interested in hiring SDSU Georgia students, spreading info on STEM degree programs that our students are obtaining, and offering different partnership benefits are among the main roles of Employment Services.

SDSU Georgia's partner organizations are privileged by having opportunities to organize industry meetings where they can give a deeper insight into the processes running inside their company, share organizational politics, and promote available vacancies. Our employers are also registered to the SDSU Georgia career webpage where they have access to the pool of our talented students' resumes and can post vacancies and notes exclusively for our students.

The Corporate Relations Manager's main goal is to create a bridge between potential employers and SDSU Georgia students. This connection can be obtained through different types of activities, some of which I have already mentioned. I would like to add one amazing tool that SDSU Georgia uses to integrate students and industry in a real-world project and give both benefits from the partnership. This is the Capstone Senior Project.

During their senior year, SDSU Georgia students are obligated to conduct a Capstone project with industry. A company reaches to SDSU-G

out with a real problem they are having and a team of students, together with their instructor and an industry mentor, students work on the project over two semesters. This is a great way for companies to select future employees by working with the teams for almost six months.

Why was this position created now?

As we had our first graduates in 2019, the urgency to provide employment services increased. We needed to place all the graduates into specific industries and STEM-related fields. After the high level and quality of education that SDSU Georgia is offering to our students, we have to make sure that these highly qualified students will stay in Georgia and raise the economy of Georgia by helping companies to bring in new innovative ways of working in specific fields.

Georgia has a lack of qualified personnel and most of the employees that are working, for example, in civil and construction businesses, are usually hired from different countries.

In order to prove that this project really has an impact on the Georgian economy, we had to create this position and spread information to the local employers that we are graduating qualified personnel in Georgia. They don't have to seek them outside of the country.

How do SDSU Georgia's corporate partnerships benefit our students?

SDSU Georgia hosts different types of activities to help our students to build strong networks and strong connections

with potential employers before they graduate. We offer them job fairs, industry meetings, and internship fairs. This gives them an opprotunity to start working during their third year of their studies by being involved in internships addressing real industry problems. By the time our students graduate, they usually have several offers from different organizations, and most of them are already employed. The role of the corporate partnership is very beneficial for the students as well.

Students benefit from getting hands-on work experience by using our internship opportunities from our partner organizations and the job fairs. So, before they graduate and even before their senior year, they already have education plus experience which is required at the first stage of their job interviewing in the future as well.

How does building a relationship between SDSU Georgia and our private partners help to improve Georgia's STEM economy?

It is very important to build a bridge between private partners and our students before they graduate in order to keep this

program sustainable. This program exists because there was demand in the market for STEM field professionals. Our goal is to improve the quality of STEM education and the quality of work within Georgia.

When entering the job market, every individual brings their own heart and shares their own part in the company's prosperity and success. Our students have the background and opportunities to bring innovative approaches to solving industry problems. We strongly believe that the education and skills our students receive while studying at SDSU Georgia will help Georgian companies build more successful businesses, strengthen their work processes, and make their business flow more efficient.

This is the main point I would like to make: Our students can really help improve the Georgian STEM economy by investing their education in each and every company they enter after graduation.

Career and Graduate School Advising

Career and Graduate School Advisor Brianna Quintero, on helping current and former students succeed in the job market and postgraduate studies:

Brianna Quintero is a communication lecturer, public speaking coach, and SDSU Georgia's Career and Graduate School Advisor. Brianna previously served as a communication lecturer and speech and debate coach at San Diego State University California, training students to participate in national speech competitions. Additionally, Brianna has worked in the tech industry, providing communication training and support for entrepreneurs, startupers, students and professionals. Since 2016, Brianna has been serving as a communication lecturer and providing career development training at SDSU Georgia. This includes career development workshops, one-on-one career and graduate school advising, as well as graduate school application assistance. She received her B.A. in Communication from San Francisco State University and her M.A. in Communication at San Diego State University. Brianna is a proud SDSU Alumnus and Aztec for life.

Why is it important for students to learn career development skills during their studies?

It's important for students to prepare early for success. This is true for both students who plan on entering the workforce and those who hope to continue their studies after they graduate. Interviewing, networking, and professional communication are all skills that should not only be taught to students, but be given time to practice. Also, the earlier you build a CV for your dream career, the clearer you are about what types of activities and experiences you should aim for over the next four years. For our students interested in applying for graduate school, we begin the process by holding information sessions and workshops for students at the end of their junior year to ensure they have more than a year to research, plan, and prepare their graduate school applications, ensuring they don't miss any opportunities or deadlines.

What kind of services/support do you provide for alumni?

We have continued SDSU's tradition of providing continued support for our alumni and professional development opportunities at SDSU Georgia. For our alumni interested in graduate school opportunities, we provide graduate school application workshops, information sessions, and free GRE workshops and materials. For alumni who are open to new job opportunities, they may choose to join an SDSU Georgia Job Fair and attend training sessions on CV, cover letter, and interview skills, as well as receive personal feedback on their application materials.

How has your role been affected by COVID-19?

Since Covid-19 we've continued to provide student support on-

line. Students are able to schedule one-on-one meetings with me via Zoom to receive individual career and graduate school advising. This actually makes meetings more accessible for students and alumni as they no longer have to travel to campus for meetings and we can set meeting times after work or study hours. We have also held various career and graduate school workshops online. This has inspired a new virtual interview training session, which includes Zoom and video interview tips and online mock interview sessions. These will be helpful not only during Covid-19, but also for the future, as we see a shift toward virtual interviewing, especially for employers who are recruiting for international organizations.

What's your favorite part of being a Career and Graduate School Advisor at SDSU Georgia?

I love that my job is to help students develop personally and professionally, and help them realize and strive toward their goals. Whether it is graduate school or a dream organization, I encourage students to dream big, and realize that they have the potential to reach their goals by creating a plan and breaking down this large goal into small actionable steps. Also, I enjoy helping connect students to mentors-whether they are senior employees, academics, or alumni, SDSU has a global network which they are now a part of and can learn from. Finally, I love teaching students how to market themselves as professionals to ensure they stand out from other applicants, and showcase their unique talents and skills. They have so much to offer, and it's my job to help them shine!

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY Georgia — **STEM** SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATH

Fulbright Scholarship Presentation

On Wednesday, June 10th, 2020 U.S. Embassy Fulbright Coordinator Ms. Tea Kutchukhidze held a special presentation for SDSU Georgia alumni about the 2021-2022 Fulbright Graduate Study Program. This program is funded by the U.S. Embassy supports study at a graduate school in any field in the U.S.

In this meeting Ms. Kutchukhidze described the application requirements, process, award details, and answered questions from participants.

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY Georgia — **STEM** SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATH

GRE Workshop

On Monday, September 28th, 2020 SDSU Georgia hosted a GRE Workshop for seniors interested in applying to U.S. universities. Students were given an overview of the exam, including registration information. Then, practice problems and strategies were shared for the Verbal Reasoning and Analytical Writing section. Finally, study resources, including a prospective study timeline, was provided. A live Q&A session followed at the end.

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY Georgia — **STEM** SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATH

Virtual Interview & CV Workshop

From October 19th, 2020 SDSU Georgia held a Virtual Interview & CV Workshop to support seniors and alumni who were participating in the Virtual Career Fair on October 22-23. This workshop provided specific online interview techniques, frequently asked interview questions, and the STAR method response for contextual interview questions. Also, CV building strategies supported by recent research led by global recruiting companies were shared with students.

Some of SDSU Alumni Employers

Selected Alumni Bios

Giorgi Kviria | SDSU '19
SDSU Georgia Alumni Association President

"Studying at SDSU Georgia gave me a huge experience. I have learnt the value of helping others to overcome obstacles to professional and academic development. Years of late nights spent studying are finally resulting in success.

As a Senior Technical Expert in the Automation Department of Georgian Water & Power LTD, I am working on Supervisory Control & Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems, automating systems and processes within the company. I manage water flow and pressure measurement and safe data trans-missions throughout Tbilisi, Mtskheta, Rustavi and Gardabani.

I am also the SDSU Georgia Alumni Association president, helping alumni to remain a community and promote one another."

Mariam Gagua | SDSU '19

"As product owner of mBank, Bank of Georgia's mobile application, I'm responsible for ensuring a seamless user experience for our users. I proactively search for new features, work with our stakeholders and business development team, manage the product development life cycle and ensure the completion and distribution of products and solutions that bring value to our hundreds of thousands of users. The biggest project I've worked on is the first "digital card" in Georgia, which enables our users to order their debit card in just one second and use it immediately. My main goal is to help Bank of Georgia digitalize its products and meet the needs of the market...

Fortunately, I had the chance to master these skills at San Diego State University. Without work ethic, knowledge of computer engineering, and the opportunities SDSU has given to me, I wouldn't be able to accomplish my career goals. It's a great honor and responsibility for me to be SDSU Georgia's Alumni Association vice president and give back to the community."

Mikheil Dgebuadze | SDSU '19

"After graduating from the Department of Chemistry at San Diego State University Georgia, I started working at the Newton Free School, where I supervised the chemistry lab for pupils and helped innovate the teaching process. I recently transitioned into industry, and now work at one of the private analytical laboratories in Tbilisi which specializes in testing the quality of food products, soil samples and more."

Gurami Putkaradze | SDSU '19

"The main reason I chose electrical engineering is renewable energy. Georgia is a country rich in resources for hydro energy. For me, energy independence is the key to economic stability. With the increase in electricity consumption, importation of electricity is increasing as well, and Georgia's national security could be in great danger. That is why I think that it should be the first interest of the Georgian people to have more successful energy projects in Georgia...

I could not have accomplished this without basic theoretical and practical knowledge, which I got through years of studying at SDSU Georgia. Aside from basic engineering classes, which helped me to work as an engineer, I learned how to work as a team member and develop communication skills."

Selected Alumni Bios

Teimuraz Nikolaishvili | SDSU '19

"I was first employed by the Data Exchange Agency as a junior back-end developer. I worked on several interesting projects and implemented various services for the Public Service Hall of Georgia. After four months I decided to tackle something more challenging and got employed by Alta Software as a full-stack developer. The company focuses on creating software for banks not only in Georgia but in Europe as well...

I always had difficulty presenting in front of people, but SDSU helped me to master my oral communication skills and create presentations and speeches of great quality. In the end, I want to say that without SDSU's internship fairs and resume-writing sessions I wouldn't be able to succeed in my career."

Kesi Katsitadze | SDSU '19

"I am currently the Innovation Community Development Manager at Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency - the job which assembles all my experiences and goals and gives me the best opportunity to develop myself in STEM fields, but in terms of management...

If you are freaking out because you have no idea what to do after graduating, or if there is a conflict between your interests and the diploma, know that you are strong enough to figure it out. You WILL figure it out, and you will come up with the mixture that is unique and best for you. As a real alchemist, and the witch of your own life, in the end it's only up to you how you arrange the ingredients for the desired potion."

Sandro Iosava | SDSU '19

"I am currently employed at BDO, which is a leading international network of consulting and business advisory firms employing 88,120 people and operating 1,809 offices in 167 countries. I am a technical specialist, and my colleagues and I implement an ERP system for companies and support the technical aspects of it on a daily basis.

San Diego State University gave me an opportunity not only to learn essential subjects of the STEM fields, but also to develop skills like communication which are crucial in professional settings, such as interviewing with potential employers and working with clients and colleagues."

Temuri Mikava | SDSU '20

"During my first year at SDSU, my friends and I founded an educational company. Since then, I have been working as a developer and a CTO. I am responsible for writing codes, consulting other employers, and mentoring interns. We have had several popular projects, including Murtsku, Lupi, Hubu, and TVSchool. Currently, all our projects are only in Georgian, but we will soon start translating them into several different languages and will try to introduce our projects to other countries too...

Although I have a bachelor's degree in Computer Science, I have decided to gain multidisciplinary knowledge by applying to a different field. Right now, it is a bit hard, since everything in this program is related to either physics or chemistry and I have taken just two courses in physics. However, I am confident that I will soon overcome the obstacles since studying many materials in a short time is the skill I have acquired at SDSU Georgia."

Selected Alumni Bios

Vakho Donadze | SDSU '19

Vakho attended an exchange semester at NTNU: Norwegian University of Science and Technology on a fully-funded scholarship. At NTNU he took advanced courses in software development and communication technologies. He now uses the skills he gained during his time at SDSU Georgia to work for Exactpro.

"Similar to being in the first cohort at SDSU, I started working for Exactpro during its first months of opening offices in Tbilisi. I've been working there since my graduation and am currently in a Java Developer position."

Vakho's Advice for Aztecs: Cherish your time at university. Take as much as possible from the great opportunities that SDSU is offering. Try to build up a solid network of peers as well as experts in the field. And be sure that all the extra effort you put into your studies will be repaid in days to come.

Mariam Narchemashvili | SDSU '20

"Currently, I am working as a software developer in the IT operations and development department at RSM Georgia Solutions, which is a certified, award-winning SAP partner. I got to know about this organization from one of SDSU Georgia's job fairs. I started working as a junior developer in January 2020, and soon got promoted to software developer...
Apart from gaining working experience, which I believe is one of the most important things that students can do, I am planning to continue my master's studies abroad. Nowadays, I am applying to several programs at Italian and Swedish universities and also participating in scholarship programs. The knowledge gained in computer engineering from San Diego State University and almost two years of working experience in my major will help me to be a successful applicant for a master's program in one of the world's highest-ranked universities"

Otari Rurua | SDSU '19

"My name is Otari Rurua, I am 23 years old, and an electrical engineer. I graduated from San Diego State University Georgia in 2019.
My career started in 2015, soon after I enrolled at SDSU...

In 2019 I started work as a product support specialist at VEON Georgia. This year I have become a teaching assistant at SDSU, and have begun work on a startup that will be ready for next year, and which I hope will be successful.
I am fond of teaching; whenever I have time, I always try to help someone. I have one student whom I tutor in programming. I was also an Intel volunteer at STEM Camp in 2018."
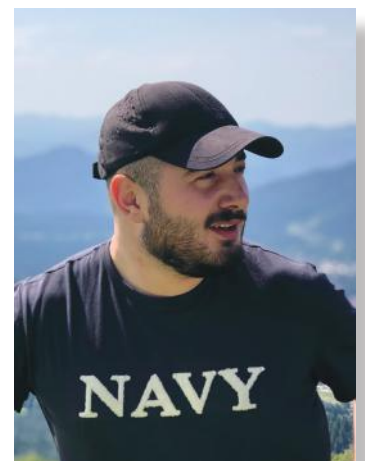
Nino Grigalashvili | SDSU '19

"After graduation, I was employed by an international Israeli IT company, Webiz, located in Tbilisi, Georgia. I have been a member of this friendly work environment for about a year, and have had the ability to work with the latest technologies. As a front-end web developer, my team and I have worked on an enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform. As a front-end developer, I was engaged in React.js development and enhanced my skills in React.js, JavaScript, HTML5 and CSS3. Lately I have transferred to Mobile Application Development and have been enhancing my knowledge of it. Currently, I am working on React native. Working at Webiz has been a great experience."

Selected Alumni Bios

Giga Vashakidze | SDSU '19

"I am working as a Software Engineer II at Mitchell International. I am creating innovative solutions around software configuration management, software release automation, and continuous integration. I am leading a team of several software engineers. I make sure to keep the software release updates and changes to the most-trafficked sites without users ever noticing a glitch in service. I work with other software engineers and delivery managers to ensure our services and products seamlessly move from development through rollout and into production."

Ana Lomashvili | SDSU '19

"My application achieved the highest score for admission to a graduate program at the Technical University of Munich. This led to my admission to the university, which is ranked 20th in electrical engineering worldwide, all without an interview. This is all thanks to San Diego State University Georgia, which helps all its students to develop into internationally-appealing candidates for academia as well as industry."

Ana Shalamberidze SDSU '19

"I have been admitted to the JDP (Joint Doctoral Program) between San Diego State University and the University of California San Diego. I am taking courses at UCSD, which is ranked among the top chemistry programs worldwide."

David Janelidze | SDSU '19

"I received my master's degree in electrical engineering at San Diego State University, in San Diego, California, United States...

From the very first week I was appointed teaching assistant of COMPE 470 Lab with Dr. Ken Arnold. This was a FPGA lab, which gave students the possibility to have hands-on experience with FPGAs and design various projects using Minized FPGA boards and other electronic equipment. I took this course at SDSU Georgia myself, which is why I feel like I understood my students' concerns and am more confident...
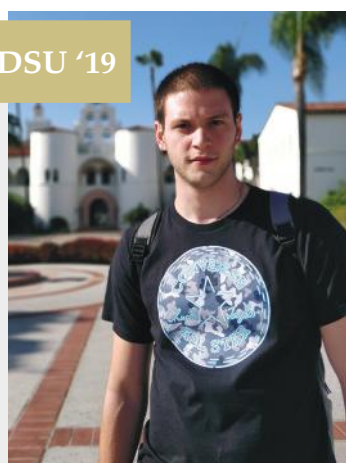
I am working at Cisco Systems as a Hardware Engineer, mostly oriented toward signal and power integrity. I am very excited to work at a company as big as Cisco, and to be on a team with experienced engineers."

Davit Soselia SDSU '19

"I am at KTH, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm. My time is spent mainly between courses, research, and consulting. The courses are highly rigorous. The university operates on a schedule of four periods per year, making the experience pretty intense. I've also been involved in various research projects both in theoretical and applied machine learning, and I have mainly had time for research starting in the third period...

Overall, my time at SDSU Georgia has prepared me pretty well for the program in terms of both academic and life experiences. I would suggest to future students to try to schedule as much as possible beforehand, since the environment is pretty rapid. There are a lot of opportunities, and time is a luxury."
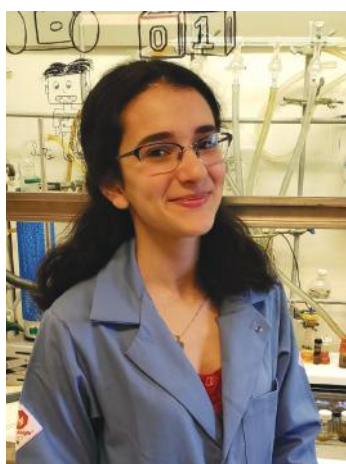
Givi Kalandia | SDSU '19

"My name is Givi Kalandia and I am currently a master's student in chemistry at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Leuven, Belgium...

As you can imagine, my first semester was very exciting. I was not only tested on my prior knowledge of the subject, but was also introduced to new depths and practical aspects of the field. Some of the topics that were included in the courses were 2D NMR post processing, introduction to the chemistry behind creating transistors, understanding the physics behind polymer materials such as Kevlar, and organometallic chemistry as a tool for designing synthetic pathways that are vastly superior to regular organic chemistry approaches.

San Diego State University played an essential part in all of the above. Even the admission procedures convinced me that my experience and degree would meet international standards. Even though the classes in the beginning contained overwhelming amounts of material, San Diego State University Georgia equipped me with all the essential tools for adapting to the situation and overcoming the challenges."

Gurami Keretchashvili SDSU '20

"Since graduation I have been working at an international company, Veon (Beeline), as a data scientist. My main task is to analyze big datasets, visualize, and create machine-learning models from them. My job is really interesting since it gives me the opportunity to use not only my technical skills, but also artistic skills while working on data...

After graduation, I realized how important the skills and experience I gained from SDSU are, because they gave me not only a specific superior knowledge in my field, but also key skills to enable me to put his knowledge into practice in real life."

Mariam Basilaia SDSU '19

Mariam received her B.S. from San Diego State University Georgia summa cum laude. She received her master's degree in organic chemistry at SDSU, and is currently pursuing her PhD. She takes classes, conducts research and works as a TA (basically, she has no time at all to enjoy California). Her research primarily focuses on optimization of selective kinase inhibitors. Currently, she is working on obtaining asymmetric methodology for BTK kinase inhibitor synthesis. She is very grateful to have a chance to study in the USA and to get to know interesting people.

Ketevan Kvirikashvili | SDSU '19

"In 2019 I graduated from San Diego State University Georgia as a computer engineer. I had been thinking a lot about what I was planning to do after graduation. Finally, I decided to apply for a master's program in software engineering at the University of Tartu. I was accepted and got a tuition-waiver scholarship...

During this semester, I am part of the Global Digital Innovation Programme (GDIP). Six students from the University of Tartu work collaboratively with students from Inno.Space - Design Factory Mannheim. Currently, our team is finishing up with our solutions for the projects offered by the company VidaWell, located in Germany. The final presentations were supposed to be held in Mannheim in June, but unfortunately because of the virus it will be held online. It was a really great experience for me to learn about product design and development during the process."

Selected Alumni Bios
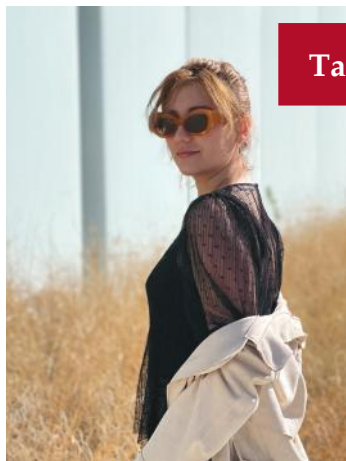
Tamar Kerdikoshvili | SDSU '20

"I am Tamar Kerdikoshvili, SDSU Georgia Class of 2020 alumnus. I cannot believe that four amazing years of my life passed so fast, and that I am now sharing my experience as a Master of Science student at the French Riviera. My advice to current students who are probably overwhelmed from the journey they are stepping into is to stop being anxious, as they made the best decision of their life when they chose SDSU...

I moved to the French Riviera in October to study Environmental Hazards and Risks Management at Université Cote d'Azur...

I have to mention that my background is biochemistry, but because of the American education system I had less trouble getting acquainted with programming languages, data science and remote sensing concepts compared to my classmates...

As for my future plans, I will do very interesting research at the Institute de Chimie de Nice with my wonderful chemistry professor starting in May. I feel a lot of responsibility, but also a lot of confidence because I am familiar with all the relevant lab techniques that will be applied during research."

Luka Lomtadze | SDSU '19

"The future is nothing but a yet-undefined set of events. The easiest way to achieve our goals is to constantly focus on them and persistently push toward success. Perhaps this is the simplest way to describe my path from being a regular school student in Kutaisi to landing full-time software engineering job offers from both Facebook and Google in Silicon Valley...

Currently, I work at Google on the Android OS team developing amazing features for the world's most widespread mobile platform, used by more than two billion people. It feels like it's just the beginning. There are a lot more boundaries in the world which need to be innovatively broken."

Irakli Bajelidze | SDSU '19

"I'm studying a so-called "Software Systems Engineering" master's program, although, it's just a fancy name for computer science. The university is RWTH Aachen in the small city of Aachen in Germany. Aachen is a nice city, right at the border of Netherlands and Belgium, so you can literally travel to two different countries within a couple minutes' bus ride...

There are many courses I took at SDSU that were very helpful. Many do not appreciate this enough, but some of SDSU's general education courses, like some "LING" language courses that I've taken, or Oral Communication, are extremely important in academia. Many of my final year's major courses related to communications engineering, like COMPE 560 - Computer Networks, and these became the foundation for the path that I've chosen in the field of communications engineering."

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, SDSUGeorgia offered six Bachelor's degree programs:

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

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