



# GENERATION STEM

Newsletter

CONVOCATION  
2019  
*Special Issue*



## *Robust STEM workforce for Georgia*



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*p.6 Hardware Hackathon  
Student Victory*

*p.7 The New Building*

*p.8-9 Commencement 2019*

*p.10 Where Are First Graduates  
Now?*

*p.11 Transition to Partner  
Universities*

*p.14 Convocation 2019*



# 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 courses leading to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) internationally accredited bachelor's degrees. Programs offered by the university support the development of engineering, science and technology fields, as well as Georgia's human capital capacity for economic growth.

In five cohorts SDSU Georgia 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 Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the American Chemical Society (ACS). SDSU Georgia graduates will leave with a broad base of knowledge and the critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in a STEM career locally, regionally, or internationally.

Members of the SDSU Georgia community form a unique and special cohort of individuals who will earn regionally and nationally accredited, and internationally recognized, high quality STEM bachelor's degrees. Additionally, SDSU Georgia students will be exposed to the same academic benefits available to their peers at SDSU's main campus in California, including state-of-the-art technology and laboratories. The San Diego State University Aztecs alumni family includes over 300,000 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 Community Relations and Development and Student Services departments and distributed to SDSU Georgia stakeholders, faculty, students and friends.

### **SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY**

Adela de la Torre  
President

### **SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY GEORGIA**

Halil Güven  
Dean

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### **Table of Contents**

About SDSU Georgia	2
Message from the President	3
Message from the New Provost	4
Message from the Dean	5
Hardware Hackathon Victory	6
WiSci Camp in Estonia	6
New Building Opening	7
2019 Commencement	8-9
Where Are First Graduates Now?	10
Transition to Partner Universities	11
Magda Magradze Interview	12-13
2019 Convocation	14
Letters from the Editors	15

## ADELA DE LA TORRE, PH.D.



### *Message From the President*

I am thrilled to welcome you to a new academic year. It has been over a year since I first had the opportunity to meet many of you. This past June, I returned to Tbilisi to celebrate SDSU's first Commencement Ceremony in the Republic of Georgia. I continue to be impressed and inspired by our students, faculty, and staff—particularly by their passion for and commitment to Georgia's future.

Our first cohort of SDSU Georgia students left the university with the skills, tools, and experiences to make a difference in their respective fields, to lead, and to make an impact that will transform their communities and the world for decades to come.

We can all be proud that Class of 2019 graduated with exceptional academic performance: 40% of students graduated with honors, Summa Cum Laude or Cum Laude. I have no doubt that these students will shape the future of Georgia. Yet, this is just the beginning.

During my visit, I had the privilege to open SDSU's new STEM building on the campus of our partner, Ilia State University. The new STEM building is equipped with state of the art technology and offers students hands-on experience using the latest teaching methods and techniques.

I am proud that together we have seen significant progress in supporting our Georgian partner universities to obtain International Accreditation. We can all be proud that soon they will receive international accreditation from ABET and ACS. The best part is that more Georgian students will be able to benefit from studying internationally accredited programs offered by Georgian Universities.

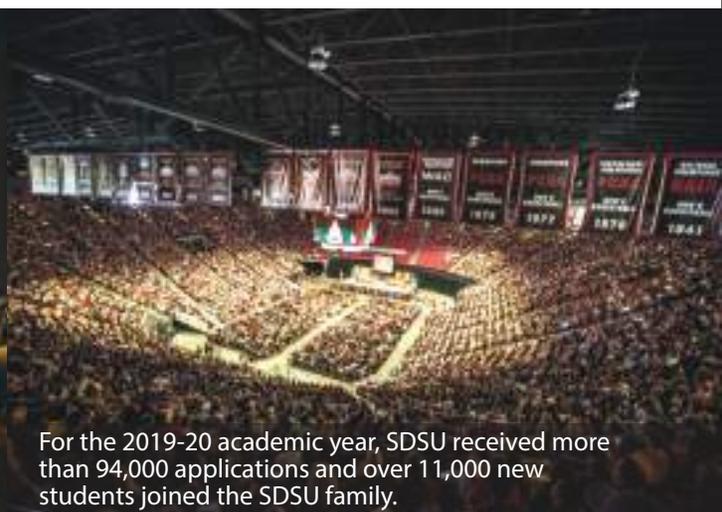
In September 2019, our SDSU Georgia program celebrates yet another important milestone by welcoming a new cohort of students to our American degree programs in Georgia. I know that this group of students can be as successful as their peers. My heartfelt wish for them is that they show up every day with curiosity and courage as they take on this exciting journey.

My very best to you,

Adela de la Torre



SDSU President de la Torre at the 2019 SDSU All-University Convocation in San Diego.



For the 2019-20 academic year, SDSU received more than 94,000 applications and over 11,000 new students joined the SDSU family.



## Message from the New SDSU Provost

### **DR. SALVADOR HECTOR OCHOA**

Since being appointed Provost and Senior Vice President of San Diego State University in July, I have learned much about the success of SDSU Georgia and the wonderful talent this project is producing. I appreciate the shared vision of SDSU and SDSU Georgia in educating life-long learners who are able to significantly contribute positive outcomes in both our home countries. I am incredibly impressed with the dedicated and thoughtful instruction provided and the academic achievements of SDSU Georgia students. I look forward to visiting the campus to share in their accomplishments and learn more about their experiences and contributions.

SDSU has a long and successful history working closely with organizations, agencies, and industry partners that have enriched San Diego's ability to become one of the world's major hubs of pharmaceutical technology, biotechnology, and cyber technology. Education is the catalyst for this development. By evaluating companies' needs and opportunities available, SDSU tailors the training of its students to produce graduates who are competitive in the global job market. SDSU Georgia has successfully adopted this experience and formed unique partnerships with the private sector in Georgia to provide similar opportunities for its graduates.

As SDSU Georgia celebrates its fifth cohort of brilliant students entering SDSU programs this year, I would like to join the team in congratulating them in this next chapter of their lives.

### *Biography*

Dr. Salvador Hector Ochoa earned a Ph.D. in School Psychology from Texas A&M University in 1989. Prior to serving as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at San Diego State University, Dr. Salvador Hector Ochoa was professor and dean of the College of Education at The University of New Mexico from 2014 to 2019. He also served as the Dean of the College of Education at The University of Texas Pan American from 2007 to 2014.

Dr. Ochoa was an associate professor of educational psychology at Texas A&M University (TAMU). At TAMU, he was the program co-coordinator of the Educational Diagnostician Program, and served as the Director of Training of the Doctoral School Psychology Program.

Dr. Ochoa's research focuses on bilingual psychoeducational assessment and educational programming issues pertaining to Latinx students. He has had input on these issues at both the state and national levels. Dr. Ochoa has been on several Texas Education Agency committees. He also served on a U.S. Department of Education Expert Advisory Panel for the Study of English language learners with special needs.



First graduates of SDSU Georgia at the 2019 Commencement ceremony at Rustaveli Theatre in Tbilisi.



## Message from the Dean

### **DR. HALIL GÜVEN**

Dean, San Diego State University Georgia

#### *Students of the 2019-2020 cohort!*

I would like to welcome you to SDSU Georgia and extend my heartfelt congratulations to you on your successful entry to U.S. degree programs.

This year, as we admit the last cohort of students to SDSU Georgia, we celebrate the overall success of the project and the efforts we have made to battle the critical shortage of STEM professionals in Georgia. By introducing American degree programs to the Georgian education system, SDSU Georgia has also brought a novelty of ABET accreditation to its partner institutions and is now facilitating transitioning of STEM programs to them. All programs transitioned to the Georgian public universities will meet SDSU standards for curriculum, faculty training, and accreditation and the students entering partner university ABET-track programs will be able to receive ABET-accredited diploma after the completion of their studies, if our accreditation efforts are successful.

SDSU's presence in Georgia has produced first graduates in 2019, most of them with academic honors and admission to graduate programs at top universities in the world. Another cohort of students will graduate this year. SDSU Georgia has formed a team working on Career Development services and has established a net of potential employers from private sector in Georgia. These efforts serve to prepare our graduates with competitive skills and education for the job market.

SDSU Georgia also supports partner university faculty and young researchers with multiple exchange opportunities to help enhance their research skills and provide incentives for scientific work in the country. SDSU Georgia will keep building bridges with local partner universities to achieve sustainability of the joint accomplishments.

We are looking forward to welcome the new cohort of students who will join the group of the future engineers and scientists that will lead Georgia to a brighter future.



SDSU President Adela de la Torre and SDSU Georgia Dean Halil Güven award Computer Engineering B.S. diploma to SDSU Georgia valedictorian Davit Soselia.

## Hardware Hackathon



Levani Tchikaidze presenting the smart trash bin to the competition judges.

In July 2019, a team of four SDSU Georgia sophomores won a Hardware Hackathon organized by Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA). Computer Engineering majors Giorgi Bokhochadze and Dimitri Tabagari, Computer Science major Tornike Maridashvili and Electrical Engineering major Levani Tchikaidze had 48 hours to make a prototype of a project.

Ten teams participated in the competition, choosing from a problem to tackle. "We decided to create a smart trash bin which could detect if the trash bin is full or empty, has caught fire, or is exuding toxic materials into the air," Tabagari said. "An array of sensors processes this information and relays it to a mobile app for monitoring."

Although the prototype was made using a small trash bin, the team wants to see the device implemented in larger trash bins in the streets. They're working on adding a Windows application with built-in maps and locations. "We are using a GSM connection, so that the device can be used in villages where there may not be a constant Internet connection," Tabagari said.

Teams presented their prototype to a panel of judges at the end of the 48 hour marathon. The SDSU Georgia team took first place, winning a 500 GEL voucher to an electronics store, access to the Technopark's high-tech FabLab and professional help from the start-up accelerator Spark in putting together a business plan and finding investors.

## 2019 WiSci STEAM Camp

From July 14-27, 2019, SDSU Georgia Chemistry/Biochemistry sophomore Anastasia Lejava served as a counselor for WiSci Girls STEAM Camp in Tallinn, Estonia. WiSci Camp brings together teen girls from different backgrounds to live and learn for two weeks together. 78% of girls who have attended WiSci STEAM camps and are currently completing their university education have gone onto STEAM subjects.

The United Nations Foundation campaign Girl Up hosted a similar WiSci STEAM camp last year in Georgia for young women from the Caucasus region and the U.S. This year Lejava was the only Georgian counselor at the camp and was accompanied in Estonia by ten Georgian campers. The goal of the camp was to give the 100 campers hands-on training to develop their STEAM and leadership skills. "The girls learned the value of taking risks and building personal strength to always continue to achieve," Lejava said.

Lejava mentored a group of ten young women from five different countries. "I aimed to be a role model of a woman in STEAM who is curious about life and its technologies, and who is learning modern tools to make the world a better place," Lejava said. "Being an SDSU Georgia student helped me to apply for this position and help expose girls to the STEAM magic of coding, flying drones, building autonomous cars and other awesome things. The girls learned about everything—gender, diversity, leadership, advocacy, public speaking, storytelling and goal-setting. And they built deep friendships."



Anastasia Lejava leading a discussion with her group of campers at WiSci.

## The New Building

SDSU Georgia's new four-story and over 4,500 sq. meter educational institution will be open for classes this September. The new building is conveniently located on Ilia State University's campus, close to Vake Park on Cholokashvili Street. The space hosts electrical and civil engineering labs, classrooms, teaching and common areas. It's also the new home of our student services department!

The building, equipped with modern facilities and state-of-the-art labs, is a result of the partnership between SDSU-Georgia and Ilia State University. The building itself was funded by the Ilia State University and the technical outfitting of the labs was funded by the U.S. Government through the Second Compact of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.



The Student Services department that will work at the new building!



Honored representatives discussing the features of the new building.



Opening celebration!



President de la Torre addressing the audience at the opening ceremony of the new building.



New engineering equipment at the new building.



SDSU Georgia civil engineering professor Michael Saunders at the new equipment.

## 2019 Commencement Ceremony

On June 3, 2019 SDSU Georgia held its inaugural Commencement Ceremony for the first graduating class of the university at Rustaveli Theatre. Graduating seniors received Bachelor's degrees in Chemistry/Biochemistry, Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering. President of Georgia Salome Zurabishvili and SDSU President Adela de la Torre spoke to first graduates and honored attendees at the Ceremony.



Honored attendees at Rustaveli Theatre.



Chemistry/Biochemistry graduates.

**“ The commencement ceremony was a perfect day to celebrate our success after years of hard work. It was a day to create special memories with family members and friends.**

*Computer Engineering graduate Qeti Kvirikashvili*



Computer Engineering graduate and valedictorian Davit Soselia.



SDSU Georgia Linguistics and Chemistry professors before the Ceremony.

**“ We are part of a special community and have responsibilities to do great things.**

*Computer Engineering graduate Qeti Kvirikashvili*



GTU Rector Archil Prangishvili (left), TSU Rector Giorgi Sharvashidze (second from left) and honored guests on the Commencement stage.



First graduates preparing for the moment.

**“ I felt so happy to see the fruit of my labor, yet I felt sad that I had to leave the place that I grew to love.**

*Chemistry/Biochemistry graduate Magda Aptsiauri*



SDSU Georgia Dean Halil Güven, President of Georgia Salome Zurabishvili and SDSU President Adela de la Torre.



First graduates perfectly dressed for the Ceremony.

**“ When the march began, my heart was beating and for a second I felt that I could not walk. I knew that I was among friends. This was one of the most comforting and greatest feelings that I have ever experienced.**

*Chemistry/Biochemistry graduate Magda Aptsiauri*



Breaking the fourth wall of Instagramming.



The Commencement is over and the celebration begins!

## Where Are First Graduates Now?

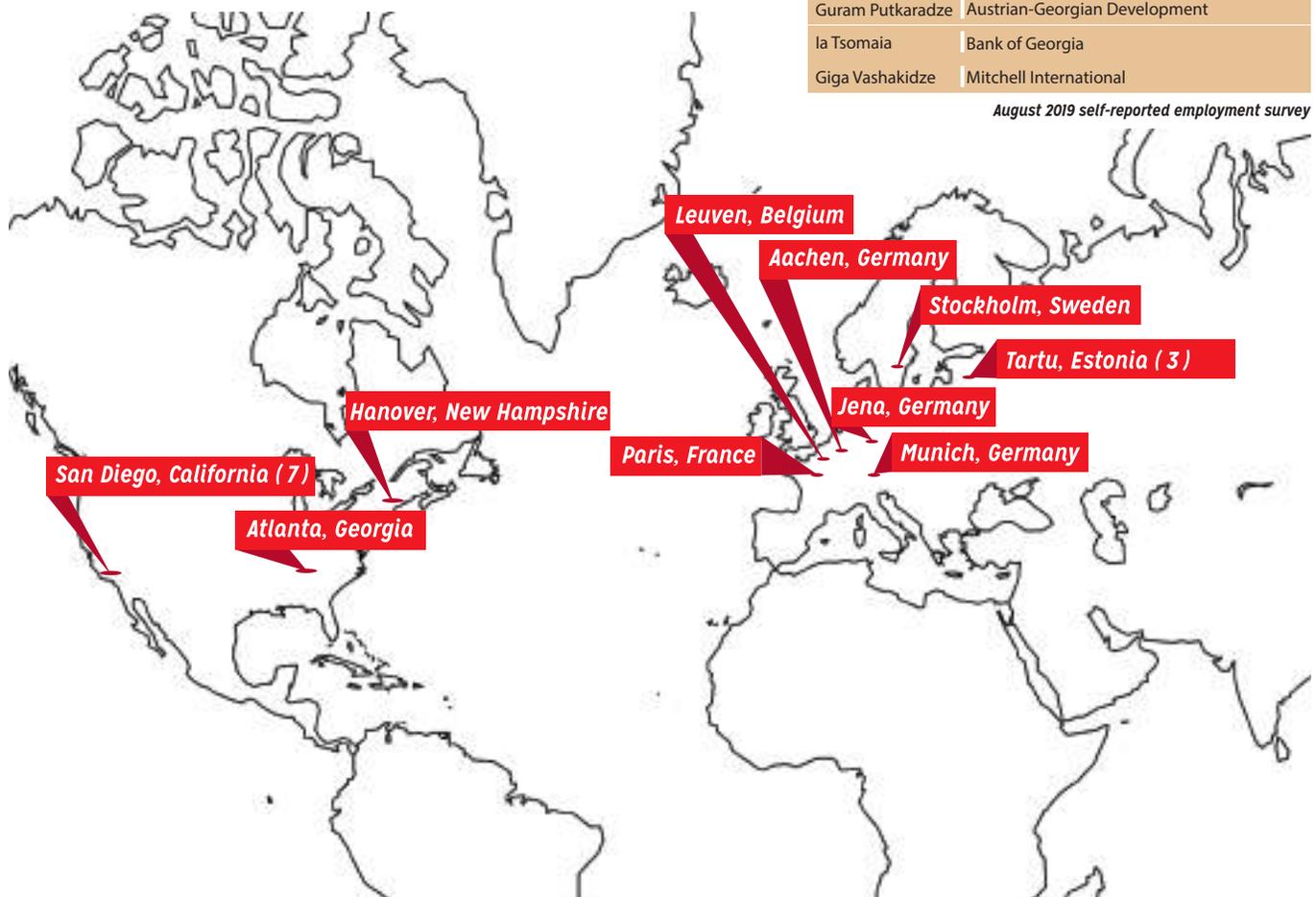
### First Graduates Studying Abroad

Shota Amashukeli	University of Tartu, M.Sc.	Computer Science
Irakli Bajelidze	RWTH Aachen, M.Sc.	Computer Engineering
Tamar Basiashvili	Dartmouth College, Ph.D.	Biochemistry
Mariam Basilaia	San Diego State University, M.Sc.	Chemistry
Paata Burnadze	San Diego State University, M.Sc.	Biochemistry
Lana Gaspariani	University of California, San Diego, M.Sc.	Computer Engineering
Elguja Gojashvili	San Diego State University, M.Sc.	Chemistry
David Janelidze	San Diego State University, M.Sc.	Computer Engineering
Givi Kalandia	KU Leuven, M.Sc.	Chemistry
Irakli Koberidze	Georgia Institute of Technology, M.Sc.	Computer Science
Ketevan Kvirikashvili	University of Tartu, M.Sc.	Software Engineering
Ana Lomashvili	Technical University of Munich, M.Sc.	Communications Engineering
Tamar Maisuradze	Friedrich Schiller University Jena, M.Sc.	Chemistry of Materials
Mariam Mikava	University of Tartu, M.Sc.	Software Engineering
Ana Shalamberidze	San Diego State University, M.Sc.	Chemistry
Nino Shatirishvili	San Diego State University, M.Sc.	Chemistry
Davit Soselia	KTH Royal Institute of Technology, M.Sc.	Machine Learning
Luka Tatarashvili	University of Paris-Saclay	Chemistry

### First Graduates Employed

Magda Aptsiauri	Synevo Central Labs
Mariam Arabidze	TBC Bank
Davit Bakuridze	MLC Medical
Mikheil Chkheidze	Freelance contractor
Vakhtang Donadze	Exactpro Systems Georgia
Mariam Gagua	Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency
Giorgi Gigauri	Evolution Gaming
Dachi Gogitidze	Evolution Gaming
Nino Grigalashvili	Campania NewSteel
Sopio Gvenetadze	Apollo 11
Sandro Iosava	BDO Georgia
Sandro Khoperia	LEPL Data Exchange Agency
Levan Kuprava	MnChemical Georgia
Mikheil Kushashvili	Bank of Georgia
Giorgi Kviria	Georgian Water and Power
Luka Lomtadze	Facebook
Nino Mikadze	Delta
Nika Pruidze	Dressler Consulting Georgia
Guram Putkaradze	Austrian-Georgian Development
Ia Tsomaia	Bank of Georgia
Giga Vashakidze	Mitchell International

August 2019 self-reported employment survey



## *SDSU Georgia's New Role in Georgia*

SDSU Georgia represents a \$64 million investment from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC Georgia Compact II) and the Government of Georgia to stimulate the country's economy by building educational infrastructure around STEM fields to produce professionals to address Georgia's growing needs for qualified experts in STEM.

Since SDSU Georgia's inception in 2014, there has been a sizable increase in interest around STEM fields within the country. Our STEM programs attract more talented students each year and the program graduated its first baccalaureate cohort of 55 students, including 18 women, in 2019, 20% of whom graduated summa cum laude.

Although SDSU Georgia will not be accepting students for future cohorts, it will continue to support its existing student body through their university studies and remain in Georgia until at least 2023. All SDSU Georgia graduates will receive both an American SDSU degree and a Georgian degree through their partner university.

SDSU Georgia's goal is to help transform higher education in STEM disciplines in Georgia by delivering state-of-the-art STEM education to students in the country. To accomplish this, we are collaborating with top universities to ensure that students have access to the best educators and research facilities in the country. We have partnered with with Ilia State University, Tbilisi State University, and Georgian Technical University to meet this goal.

Through our partnerships with Georgian universities, new STEM infrastructure has been created in the form of renovated top-of-the-line facilities and training opportunities for Georgian faculty. In total, SDSU Georgia has renovated approximately 9,000 square meters of facilities at partner universities to ensure that students have access to modern laboratories and over 100 partner university faculty members have been trained in San Diego.

In addition to upgrading educational infrastructure and curriculum, SDSU Georgia is working closely with its partner universities to facilitate the international accreditation of certain of their STEM programs under ABET. With this accreditation, degrees earned through Georgian universities will be as internationally respected as an American degree.

ABET (Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology) accreditation of United States demonstrates that an institution's programs in applied and natural sciences, computing, engineering, or engineering technology 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.

Our partner universities are on track to receive ABET certification for their individual STEM programs over the next several years, meaning that soon Georgian students will be able to study in internationally accredited programs offered by Georgian universities.



A delegation of SDSU and SDSU Georgia deans and professors.



Ilia State University Rector Giga Zedania (left).



## ACHIEVEMENTS OF MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT – GEORGIA

Millennium Challenge Account – Georgia (MCA-Georgia) Chief Executive Officer Magda Magradze spoke to Generation STEM about the success of the SDSU-Georgia project. She reflected on SDSU-Georgia and MCA-Georgia's goals and achievements over the last five years of collaboration, and the successful example that was set for future collaborations between Georgian and American universities.

### *What were the goals of the SDSU Georgia project?*

The SDSU-Georgia program had two goals. Goal number one was to bring U.S. accredited STEM Bachelor's degree programs to Georgia and have at least 600 graduates who could benefit from getting U.S. diplomas. Goal number two was to ensure sustainability and long term benefits of this program by transferring the same quality of Bachelor's degree programs to the Georgian partner universities.

This was the plan from the beginning of the project in 2013, when the Government of Georgia, represented by MCA-Georgia, announced the international procurement to select a U.S. university to partner with Georgia. Those two goals were already incorporated into the philosophy of this project. I'm very glad that both goals are being met through this project.

### *How has this project been funded?*

The project has received up to \$65 million in funding both from the U.S. government, in the form of the Millennium Challenge Corporation's Second Compact to Georgia (over \$36 million), as well as funding from the Government of Georgia (approximately \$26 million) and the private sector (over \$3 million). The project has evolved such that all of the six B.S. degrees that SDSU-Georgia was supposed to offer through the project are being offered now and all project goals are successfully accomplished.

### *How has this partnership benefited the partner universities?*

This year will be the last cohort of SDSU-Georgia degrees for Georgian students, however the same quality programs will continue to exist, this time offered by Georgian partner universities. Starting from 2020, the programs will gradually start to be offered by partner universities: Ilia State University, Tbilisi State University and Georgian Technical University.

All of these universities have very well equipped labs and a learning environment infrastructure that was created as part of the SDSU-Georgia project. Approximately \$11 million was invested into infrastructure and capacity building through the MCC Compact. Now these Georgian partner universities have capacity in terms of infrastructure and well equipped laboratories, as well as Georgian faculty who were trained at SDSU in California, to be able to offer high quality STEM Bachelor's programs in Georgia.

### ***How long will SDSU-Georgia remain in Georgia?***

This transition is now being organized as part of the SDSU-Georgia project. SDSU will continue to work in Georgia at least until 2023. We are now discussing with SDSU future partnership opportunities that could go beyond 2023. That could be joint research, that could be faculty development, or it could be dual degrees that we could offer with SDSU and partner universities, or other Georgian universities.

This project has been very successful, as all the goals that we originally set are being met. In addition to that, Georgia has a very strong partner in the face of a U.S. university, SDSU, and we believe that this partnership between institutions and people of the U.S. and Georgia will continue to benefit both of our countries, the U.S. and Georgia.

### ***How has this project built STEM capacity in Georgia?***

During 2014-2019, Georgia has been implementing the Millennium Challenge Corporation's second Compact. The overall budget of the Compact is \$140 million, the goal of which is to help build STEM human capital and workforce to reduce poverty and promote economic growth in Georgia. The SDSU-Georgia project is a remarkable project, however there have been other activities that have laid grounds for the development of STEM workforce and human capital.

We have carried out projects to improve the learning environment in rural and regional public schools. MCA-Georgia has rehabilitated 91 public schools with over 37,000 students. We've also trained 20,000 STEM, English language teachers and school principals throughout Georgia. Educators went through training to learn student-centered learning and teaching approaches, which has contributed a lot to raising awareness about STEM, why STEM is important, how to better teach STEM and what it means to implement a "21st century" classroom.

In addition to that, we've carried out a vocational education project that has helped found 51 new and renewed Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs in Georgia in STEM, as well as tourism and agriculture. The project aims to promote building the workforce necessary for Georgia's economic growth and industry development. The way we look at our activities is that it covered all sectors of education, starting with schools, teachers, vocational education, and higher education. This approach is in place as our ultimate goal has been to help Georgia build the specialists, professionals and workforce that will support to attract investments and help build industry.

### ***What are you most proud of about this project?***

We are very proud of the SDSU and Georgia partnership. As I said, this is a project that will continue beyond the Compact. It will bring a lot of very positive results to the education sector and it has been an example for many other universities, not only in Georgia but abroad, for how a U.S. university could enter an unknown higher education market and be successful. We had a lot of challenges on the way, but I think these challenges are very good lessons learned for others. Our experience is a good platform that other universities in Georgia are looking forward to utilizing for setting future partnerships.

We are very proud of the fact that the goals of the Compact and our activities were always in line with the country's major needs and priorities. What we have done on a smaller scale, for example with 91 public school rehabilitations out of 2,085 public schools in Georgia, has become an example of how Georgia can continue to implement activities in the field of general, vocational and higher education.

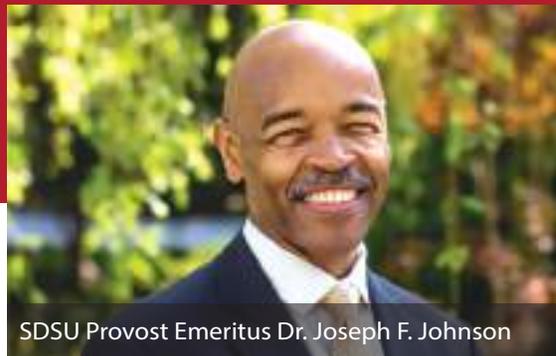
We are proud to have attracted the attention of the private sector to education. The private sector has contributed over \$10 million funding for projects in education that were implemented by MCA-Georgia, including but not limited to granting scholarships for socially vulnerable and low income, talented and high achieving students of SDSU-Georgia. These have been very good public-private partnerships that we have been able to establish, and I'm very proud to see how others are trying to replicate these good examples.

# CONVOCATION CEREMONY 2019

*MCC CEO Sean Cairncross and SDSU Provost Emeritus Dr. Joseph F. Johnson to address fifth SDSU Georgia cohort*



MCC CEO Sean Cairncross



SDSU Provost Emeritus Dr. Joseph F. Johnson

On September 16, 2019 at Expo Georgia, SDSU Georgia will hold its fifth Convocation of students to mark the start of the new academic year and formally accept first-year students to its programs.

The incoming cohort of 137 new students, including two students from Kazakhstan and Turkey, will pursue Bachelor's degrees in Chemistry/Biochemistry, Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering.

Convocation brings new students and their families together with faculty and staff to mark the beginning of their academic journey and instills core SDSU institutional values of scholarship, citizenship and leadership. Millennium Challenge Corporation CEO Sean Cairncross and SDSU Provost Emeritus Dr. Joseph F. Johnson will attend the Convocation ceremony and address the new freshman class.

Two SDSU Georgia sophomore students, Eleni Basilashvili and David Gurgenidze, will speak to the incoming freshmen at the Ceremony. Generation STEM asked them for some pieces of advice that they'd like to share with new SDSU Georgia students.



*Do not be afraid to express yourselves; make mistakes and then learn and improve on them. It is fine to be scared, but you have to stand up, face your fears and overcome them. Only this will show you what you are capable of.*



*Use all the possible sources that university is providing for you. Join clubs, go to the Help Desk, use the ELDC, ask questions, go to job fairs, and have fun!*

*Chemistry/Biochemistry sophomore Eleni Basilashvili*



David Gurgenidze (left) and his full scholarship sponsor, Archil Gachechiladze (right)



Eleni Basilashvili



*Success is not an accident. It is hard work, persistence, studying, starting again over and over, from failure to failure, until you get to the point of success.*



*No matter how clever you are, at some point you will struggle with something. It's okay. Failure is just proof that you are trying. You can't make it perfectly for the first time, and that is not a problem.*

*Civil Engineering sophomore David Gurgenidze*

# LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

Hi! I'm Konstantin Samoilov and I've been a student coordinator at SDSU Georgia since July 2018. I grew up in Moscow and Los Angeles and graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts in Geography.

I've lived in Georgia since April 2016, moving here to serve as a Peace Corps Georgia Volunteer. For two years, I lived and worked in Poti, Samegrelo, teaching English, creative writing and journalism skills to Georgian youth. I also directed the countrywide Technovation Challenge competition, supporting teams of Georgian girls to design mobile applications that solve problems in their communities.

As a student coordinator, I write stories about our university and help students to develop awesome extracurricular clubs and activities. I adore music, video games, board games, soccer, tennis, politics and writing. Students: please feel free to bother me about any of that!



Hi again! I'm Cherish Broker and I'm one of your incoming student coordinators. I'm excited to be a part of the SDSU Georgia family! Prior to working for SDSU Georgia I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Georgia, working in English education, women's empowerment, and youth activities. I've spent the last year traveling the world as a freelance writer.

In my free time I love partner dancing, playing board games, and getting lost in the mountains. I'm excited to get to know you all over the next year! If you ever want to talk about tango techniques, which Star Trek series is the best (even though it's obviously Deep Space 9), or strategies for winning Settlers of Catan, come find me in the new Student Services office! Or if you'd rather talk about student life and what you're up to, I'd love to chat about that too.

