



SMU^{In} *STRIDE*

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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial.....	1
News and Events.....	2
Research and Development.....	6
Partnership, Outreach and Community Service.....	9
Administrative News.....	13

Committed to Excellence!

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the March 2025 edition of SMU in Stride (Volume 27, Number 70).

Teaching and Learning Highlights

In this issue, we celebrate key moments, such as the graduation ceremonies for the 2017 E.C. undergraduate and postgraduate students, including the IGNOU Students Graduation Ceremony. Additionally, we share updates from St. Mary's University's 2016 E.C. Annual Performance Report session and other stories.

Research and Development Features

This section spotlights efforts to cultivate institutional research culture through the Annual Research Review Session. It also covers national meeting on implementing thematic research and SMU's active participation in the ETA research conference.

Partnerships, Outreach, and Community Services

This section features new collaborations, including the signing of strategic partnership agreements with various organizations, such as the MoU with SAARC MASTS TECH PVT LTD. Highlights also include SMU's knowledge-sharing initiatives, where it shared its Successful Access Program Strategies with Mekelle University, along with community engagement activities that strengthen ties with society.

Administrative News

In this column, we focus on initiatives to empower staff and enhance efficiency. Highlights include induction programs for new employees and numerous training sessions aimed at improving archive management, basic computer skills, and customer service within the registrar's office.

We sincerely thank you for your continued support and contributions to our newsletter. Your feedback and suggestions are invaluable as we strive to grow and improve.

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

NEWS AND EVENTS

Teaching and Learning

A Colorful Graduation Ceremony

On February 22, 2025, St. Mary's University held its graduation ceremony at the Adawa Memorial Museum Pan African Hall, conferring degrees upon its undergraduate and postgraduate students. Wondwosen Tamrat, (PhD. Asso. Prof) founder and President of the University, extended heartfelt congratulations to the graduates for their commendable academic achievements.



He praised the graduates for successfully completing their studies in various fields at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He also acknowledged the efforts of the instructors, supportive staff, and families who contributed to the graduates' success.



The President emphasized the significant impact of education on societal development, noting that countries which prioritize education and training

achieve greater economic prosperity. St. Mary's University has been dedicated to education, research, and community service for the past 25 years, contributing to the nation's development by educating thousands of professionals.

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

Reflecting on the University's enduring legacy of excellence, the President announced that this year, 243 postgraduates and 1,001 undergraduate students, totaling 1,244 graduates, have met the rigorous academic standards and national examination requirements to be presented as candidates for graduation. The gender composition of the graduates showed a notable increase in female participation, with 55% of postgraduates and 63.9% of undergraduates. In his congratulatory message, the President urged the graduates to exemplify the values and knowledge they have gained in both their professional and personal lives. He also extended his heartfelt best wishes for their future endeavors.

The guest of honor, Dr. Fekede Agwar Debel, Founder and Chairperson of the Board of Healing Valves Ethiopia, presented awards to academically distinguished graduates. In his closing remarks, he advised graduates to face challenges head-on and find solutions. He emphasized the importance of building good relationships and quoted, "A business that makes nothing but money is a poor business."



The event concluded with a commemorative photo session, capturing the moment shared between the senate members and the graduates.



The ceremonies commenced at the IGNOU headquarter in New Delhi, marked by an opening speech of Uma Kanjlal (Prof.), Vice Chancellor. It was a vibrant celebration of academic excellence, showcasing the dedication of the graduates. Awards were conferred ranging from certificates to PhDs, with more than 300,000 local and international students who graduated during this momentous occasion, which marked a significant milestone in their educational journeys.



St. Mary's University's IGNOU Students Graduation Ceremony

St. Mary's University (SMU), in partnership with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), held its 38th graduation ceremony on March 5, 2025 to celebrate the graduates' achievements in a virtual format.

This grand event saw participation from local students across India and representation from more than 15 overseas centers. Among which, SMU is represented with graduates who virtually participated from SMU's Syndicate room. The graduation ceremony in Ethiopia was coordinated by Ato Mekonnen Tadesse, Dean of Faculty of International Programs, and he expressed his gratitude to the graduating students for participation and success on their studies. Moreover, Misganaw Solomon (PhD), Vice President of Research and International Relations, was a guest of honor in the graduation ceremony and congratulated the graduates.



At the IGNOU headquarter, Pawan Kumar Sing (Prof.), Director of the Indian Institute of Management, was the guest of honor and presented gold medals and cash awards to eligible graduates to acknowledge their outstanding accomplishments.



The 38th Convocation ceremony was a testament to the resilience and commitment of SMU graduating students as well as the dedication of the faculty and staff of the two institutions. SMU's management extended its heartfelt congratulations to all graduates and wished them success in their future endeavors.



The Faculty of International Programs of SMU has been responsible for coordinating Master's programs with IGNOU since 2006. In collaboration with IGNOU, it has offered a range of postgraduate programs, including Masters in Business Administration, Public Administration, Sociology, Social Work, Commerce, Economics, Political Science, and Rural Development.

St. Mary's University held its 2016 E.C. Annual Performance Report session

On January 4, 2025, St. Mary's University held its 2016 E.C. Annual Performance Report session at the Main Campus Syndicate Room. The session was opened by Ato Desalegn Berie, Vice President for Business and Administration, and chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee for Planning and Resource Development. He introduced that the purpose of the meeting was to set the stages for a comprehensive review of the University's performance.

Ato Shegaw G/Medhin, Director of the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA), demonstrated the 2016 E.C. Annual Performance Report for all supportive and academic offices. He divulged a comparison of the 2016 E.C. plan performance with that of the 2015 E.C., and

the overall performance rate of 88.1% pointed out a 4% improvement from the previous year. The report also disclosed the activities that were fully, partially, and incompletely accomplished performance, and assessed the performance of various offices as per the seven strategic priority areas.

The event also featured the presentation on the major activities accomplished in 2016 E.C. and a five-year performance review, showcasing the University's continual progress and achievements over the period.

Following the report, open discussions where attendees engaged in questions and comments, provided insights into the strengths and weaknesses of different offices. The discussions stressed the indispensability of proper documentation and reporting, teamwork, and leadership skills in achieving the University's objectives.

The session was culminated with remarks by Wondwosen Tamrat (PhD), President of SMU. He recognized the outstanding efforts of CEIQA and underscored the cruciality of learning from effective performance. He spotlighted four key points: planning, implementation and follow-up, dissemination of plans, and the steering and supervising roles of important divisions. Thus, the session which underscored the University's commitment to continuous improvement and strategic planning, posed a positive tone for future strives.

St. Mary's University Library Annual Plan Dissemination Session

On January 30, 2025, St. Mary's University Library held a session on review of performance report of 2016 EC annual plan and activities of 2017 EC. The session was led by Biruk Megerssa, the chief librarian. Twelve library employees participated in the event, which aimed to raise awareness and ensure that library staff understood their roles and responsibilities at the university.

The report analyzed 38 planned activities and evaluated based on evidence. Key tasks included downloading online resources, conducting a user satisfaction survey on library services, creating a cumulative bibliography of graduate theses, providing the Electronic Resource Management

handout, conducting staff training, performing a SWOT analysis, and engaging in community service activities. The review also covered various unplanned tasks carried out by the library.

Additionally, the meeting addressed various challenges encountered during the 2016 Ethiopian Calendar (EC) and proposed solutions for moving forward. Overall, the session provided a thorough overview of the library's initiatives and accomplishments from the past year, setting a clear direction for future achievements.

Finally, Ato Shegaw G/Medhin, the Director of the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA), shared his insights with the participants.

The meeting commenced with introductory remarks from Shegaw G/Medhin, the Director of CEIQA. Following this, Nibretu Kebede (PhD) presented the annual performance results of the 14 QECs. The report detailed the activities that were completed, partially completed, and those that were not initiated, along with the major challenges faced during the implementation of the plan.

Out of the 138 activities planned in 2016 E.C., 110 (81%) were successfully completed, 19 (15%) were not done, and 4% were at various stages of completion. The overall performance saw a significant increase, with 118 activities (85%) completed in 2016, marking a 28.38% improvement compared to the previous year.

The second part of the presentation focused on the plans for 2024/25, outlining how the plan was developed and the activities planned by each QEC for the current academic year.

The QECs then reflected on their achievements and challenges, followed by an open discussion session that provided valuable feedback and suggestions. The meeting concluded with remarks from Ato Tedla Haile, the Executive Vice President, who commended the work done by CEIQA and offered reflections on the performance of the QECs.



QEC's Annual Performance Report Session

St. Mary's University Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA) presented Quality Enhancement Committees (QECs) 2016 E.C annual performance report on January 11, 2025. The event, held in the Syndicate room, was attended by members of the Quality Enhancement Committees (QECs), department heads, deans, office heads, and top management members.



Research and Development

RaKMO Annual Research Review Meeting

The Research and Knowledge Management Office (RaKMO) held its Annual Research Review on March 1, 2025 in the Syndicate Room at the Main Campus. Misganaw Solomon (PhD), Vice President welcomed all the research paper presenters and participants, emphasizing the importance of the review session. He noted that the session is one of the five key research events annually organized exclusively for the University's academic staff. The session aimed to evaluate the research proposals submitted by St. Mary's University's (SMU) staff and to fund those who meet the criteria.



Matheas Shemelis, Assistant Professor and Director of RaKMO, highlighted the aims of the review in maintaining the quality of the University's research efforts. He noted that RaKMO has been providing comprehensive support to SMU's staff, facilitating research activities of institutional and national importance. However, he pointed out several challenges, including a limited number of research initiatives, low publication rates, poor staff engagement and insufficient funding. To address the stated snags, he recommended that the staff had better secure research grants, recognize research as a fundamental duty of instructors, build research capacity within the University, and increase funding for research projects.

During the event, five papers were presented, including one previously funded research project and four new proposals. The research topics ranged from urban agriculture to social and educational issues.

Following the presentations, the research proposals were reviewed, and the presenters defended their works. This was followed by the discussion session where the participants shared their questions, suggestions, and comments on the research papers.




The event, attended by the staff from various SMU's offices, featured the discussion session where the participants imparted their challenges and raised questions about areas needed improvement. The half-day session which included the 2016 E.C outstanding researcher award ceremony was conducted although no one met the criteria for the award this year. The award has been designed to recognize the researchers' contributions and encourage the staff to actively engage in research.

Finally, Wondwosen Tamrat, (PhD, Asso. Prof.) founder and President of SMU, delivered a commendation for the diligent efforts of RaKMO. He highlighted the critical role that research and publication play in the academic and developmental trajectories of the University. He also emphasized the need for continuous support and encouragement for faculty and department members to actively engage in the research activities.

VPRCE meeting on “Thematic Research” implementation

A day-long meeting which deliberated on the implementation status of “Thematic Research” at Ethiopian universities took place on February 10,



2025 at the Ministry of Education. Organized by the Ministry of Education, the purpose of the meeting was to ensure the proper implementation of Thematic Research at Ethiopian universities toward enabling the leadership and conduct of impactful research through effective and efficient utilization of the limited resources and making the research outputs available to readers via technology.

Reiterating the introduction of Thematic Research and Grant Management as part of the reform agenda at the Ministry, HE Ato Kora Tushune, Higher Education State Minister, Ministry of Education, in his opening remarks, urged universities to lead and conduct problem-solving research in a well-structured and cost-effective manner.

The meeting moderator Dr Serawit Handiso, CEO of Research and Community Engagement at the Ministry, clarified the purpose of the meeting and the expectations of the Ministry from universities. He made it clear that the Ministry wants to see Thematic Research properly implemented and will evaluate universities' performance based on the KPI developed by the Ministry. He urged universities to make Master's students' theses and faculty research outputs uploaded on the National Academic Digital Repository of Ethiopia (NADRE) to help the Ministry fight plagiarism. He then asked Vice Presidents' of sample universities from all clusters to present the status of Thematic Research at their respective universities. Accordingly, twenty-two universities made brief presentations on the progress they have made so far in this regard.

It was observed that all of them have started the journey though they are at different levels. They have conducted awareness raising training to make their academic staff responsive to the initiative. Many of them have developed Thematic Research Guidelines. They have identified Thematic Research areas. They are funding some thematic research undertakings. On the contrary, from the presentations, it was evident that the universities had different levels of performance. The presentations and the Q & A allowed institutions to learn from one another.

Following the presentations, reflections were made by Professor Masresha Fetene who has been supporting the Ministry in the implementation of the initiative and Dr Serawit Handiso. They underscored the need for implementing Thematic Research for

more meaningful impact. Dr Serawit stated that each public university will be evaluated based on the KPI as of March 2025. He emphasized that each university is required to set up an innovation center, support 3 start-ups, and help the birth of 2-3 project ideas that would allow income generation before the end of the academic year. Stating that only 12 public universities to have formed "Ethical Review Committee", Dr Serawit urged the rest to set up this committee immediately and ensure ethical issues are well addressed during the conduct of each research undertaking.

In attendance were university vice presidents for research and community engagement and research directors. SMU was represented by the Vice President for Research and International Relations.

Research Ethics Review and Scientific Integrity

The Ethiopian Ministry of Education provides training on "**Research Ethics Review and Scientific Integrity**" to instructors and researchers of higher education institutions. A representative of many private and public higher education institutions take part in this training. St. Mary's University was invited to send participants. Hence 5 trainees designated from the academic and research staff have been sent and take part in the training on behalf of our university. The training was conducted on February 28, 2025– March 1, at the Ethiopian Ministry of Education meeting hall, Addis Ababa Ethiopia.

The training was introduced by the opening speech of Dr. Serawit Handiso the CEO of Research and Community Engagements Affairs at the MoE. In his speech Dr. Serawit addressed current issues and global trends in research ethics and scientific integrity. His Excellency Mr. Kora Tushune, the state Minister of MoE also delivers a brief key note speech. As it is noted by the Minister ethical consideration should not be compromised in any circumstance of conducting research. The Minister also highlights the ongoing effort of MoE to fix ethical pitfalls of research in Ethiopia. The provision of such capacity building trainings, establishing legally registered research ethics committee in every higher education institution and continuous supervision by the MoE has been identified as a breakthrough of solving the problem as it is explained by the Minister.

The training was delivered for two days. Through

four consecutive sessions trainers attempt to cover underpinning issues regarding research ethics and scientific integrity. These involve fundamental principles of research ethics, overview of national guidelines about research ethics, and particular ethical considerations across various disciplines.

The conference was closed by the final remark of Mr. Tsega Mekonene, Director of Research Ethics Desk at the MOE. The director forwards his genuine gratitude to trainers, trainees and organizers for their role in the successful accomplishment of the training. Indeed, the training was essential which gives the trainees opportunity to understand scientific research ethics and be informed about current scenarios concerning the issue. In addition to the theoretical understanding the training provides us practical skill on how to organize research ethics committee, how to operate with them, how to deal with ethical issues and how to prepare standards of operating procedures (SOP). Thus, we get back to our institution with such resources and assignment to practice it.

This training also proves me how St. Mary University is doing well in research and publication. Because the achievement of St. Mary University was highly acknowledged in this training, and it was mentioned as a role model to other higher education institutions by the CEO during his opening speech. Particularly he was appreciating the international accreditation of Mizan Law Review. I hope with our collaboration this achievement will continue to be repeated in all our publication and attract additional acknowledgment to our institution. I am really grateful to be part of this significant training.

SMU participates at a research conference

SMU took part at a research conference on “International Day of Girls and Women in Science, Research, Technology and Innovation” held on February 11, 2025 at Skylight Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The conference which had a theme “Advancing Adolescent Girls’ Health and Well-being through Science and Technology” deliberated on girls’ and women’s health and empowerment in STEM fields.

Opening remarks were made by HE Ato Kora Tushune, State Minister for Higher Education, and Dr Dereje Duguma, State Minister, Ministry of Health. They both underscored the need for strategizing schemes that empower girls and women which constitute half of the Ethiopian population and working hard toward the betterment of girls’ and women’s lives and the lives of all Ethiopians. Following their remarks, keynote addresses were made by representatives

of several organizations including UNESCO, MSI Ethiopia, and STEM Power all of whom called for collaborative actions to improve the lives of women. This was followed by a panel discussion which highlighted the challenges girls and women are facing in higher education institutions and what institutions are doing to curb these challenges. Then, presentations were made on efforts being made by the Center for Adolescent Girls’ Health.

Among the good initiatives shared at the conference was a mobile app developed to provide information, guidance, counselling and services to girls of different age ranges. The purpose of this mobile app is to help girls safeguard themselves from abuse by creating access to useful information and professional advice and services. Another project, which is a four-year nationwide study that intends to identify girls’ challenges, impacts of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) on girls and solutions for these problems, was presented. Other presentations focused on girls’ and women’s dwindling participation in tertiary education, the causes for their low participation, the extent of GBV and its effects on the lives of girls and women and the strategies to mitigate the multi-faceted problems girls and women are facing. The presentations were followed by questions and comments raised by participants.

The conference was organized by the Center for Adolescent Girls’ Health in collaboration with the FDRE Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. Several local and international organizations partnered to organize the conference.

The conference was attended by representatives from the Ministries stated above, universities, and NGOs. SMU was represented by the VP for Research and International Relations.



Partnership, Outreach and Community Services

St. Mary's University and SAARC MASTS TECH PVT LTD Sign MoU

On February 3, 2025, St. Mary's University and SAARC MASTS TECH PVT LTD from India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The collaboration aims to implement innovative, customized IT solutions leveraging artificial intelligence and cloud services. SAARC MASTS TECH PVT LTD, a recognized software development agency registered with the Ministry of MSME, Government of India, will provide advanced IT software solutions tailored to various industries.

The MoU includes custom software design and development, software integration services, quality assurance, testing, training, documentation, customization, scalability, deployment, and implementation. According to the MoU signed SAARC will ensure timely delivery and quality assurance, while St. Mary's University will provide necessary data, resources, and approvals.

The MoU was signed by Wondwosen Tamrat (PhD) President of St. Mary's University, and O. R. Nandagopan (PhD), CEO of SAARC MASTS TECH PVT LTD.



SMU Hosts Prestigious 2025 Jessup Moot Court Competition

St. Mary's University, Center for Law in Sustainable Development (CLiSD) hosted the Ethiopian National Qualifying Rounds of the esteemed 2025 Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition from February 1-2, 2025. Teams from four universities were participants in the moot court

competition. The Jessup, is recognized as the world's largest and most prestigious moot court competition, and Jessup 2025 attracted participation from around 700 law schools across 100 countries.



The competition enabled the students to address intricate current issues of public international law through written memorials and oral arguments, simulating proceedings before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The event centers on a fictional legal dispute between nations, detailed in a document known as the Compromis. The final winner for this year's Ethiopian Qualifying Rounds was determined by a combined score during the oral arguments conducted in four sessions on February 1 and 2, 2025 and written memorial scores submitted to the International Law Students Association.

St. Mary's University Library visited St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College

On February 10, 2025, a team of library staff from St. Mary's University Library visited St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College Library for a half-day experience-sharing session. The purpose of the visit was to exchange insights on various aspects of library operations, including strategic planning, annual plan preparation, acquisition development, digital library services, library facilities, IT support, website services, and the management of reading rooms, cataloging, circulation, and periodical sections.

During the visit, the library director of St. Paul's

Hospital Millennium Medical College Library provided a comprehensive tour, highlighting the roles and responsibilities of each operational unit. These units are managed by a team of trained professionals and support staff, ensuring efficient and effective library services. The discussions with the director delved into the evolving demands for both e-books and printed books, as well as strategies for addressing user inquiries and interests.



The visit proved to be highly productive, offering both teams fresh perspectives and innovative ideas for enhancing their library services and team structures. St. Mary's University Library extends its heartfelt gratitude to the staff and the library director at St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College Library for their warm hospitality and for making the visit both enriching and enjoyable. This event underscores the importance of sharing knowledge and best practices in the continuous improvement of library services.

St. Mary's University Shares Successful Access Program Strategies with Mekelle University

Invited by the Regional English Language Office (RELO) of the US Embassy Addis Ababa, St. Mary's University shared its experience in running the Access Program with Mekelle University Access

Program providing team on January 28, 2025 at Mekelle American Corner.

Misganaw Solomon (PhD), the program coordinator, presented SMU's experience which was greeted with acclamation by the Mekelle team.

The presentation covered a topic on "Planning and implementing on-site activities". Developing a well-thought-out plan, setting goals, having shared knowledge about the project, discharging roles and responsibilities, adhering to the plan, putting in place smart monitoring and evaluation schemes, identifying and making wise use of resources and documenting activities during implementation and using them for teaching purposes were among the core issues presented. Sample students' project outputs were also presented.

During the reflection held the end of the session, participants underscored that the presentation gave them insights and perspectives which they found interesting to consider. They said the documentation taught them a great deal and want to replicate the valuable experience. Copies of the documents were handed out to the coordinator for their use.

SMU ran four cohorts of Access Program, training 375 students. This makes SMU the only institution in Ethiopia running the program for such a long time.

The Roles of HEIs in Community Engagement

The Ministry of Education (MoE) organized a training session on Community Engagement (CE) reform plan introduction for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from January 2-3, 2025 at its head office. The event aimed to create a platform for stakeholders to discuss shared reform issues, facilitate knowledge exchange, and foster a common understanding among HEIs. The ultimate goal was to enable HEIs to play impactful roles in CE.

The training session commenced with an opening remark by W/ro Selam Alemu, the CE and Indigenous Knowledge (CEIK) desk head at the MoE. The primary objective of the training was to discuss identified shared reform issues, facilitate knowledge exchange, and foster a common understanding among the respective offices.

During the event, six major Key Performance SMU in Stride

Indicators (KPIs) were identified as focal points for HEIs' CE activities. Experts from relevant offices presented on the six major KPIs. These KPIs are: Digital Literacy about which HEIs are expected to enhance within the community by providing training and resources, workshops, creating online learning platforms, and collaborating with local organizations to ensure community members have access to digital tools and skills; local school support initiatives, including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) promotions, where HEIs should buttress local schools by promoting STEM education through mentorship programs, organizing science fairs, providing resources and training for teachers, and encouraging students to pursue STEM careers; Road and Transport Safety, where HEIs can contribute to improving road and transport safety by conducting researches, developing safety programs, and collaborating with local authorities to implement effective measures, organizing awareness campaigns, providing training on road safety, and advocating for better infrastructure; Mental Health and Control of Drug and Substance Abuse, where HEIs play significant roles in addressing mental health issues and controlling drug and substance abuse by offering counseling services, conducting awareness programs, and collaborating with healthcare providers to support affected individuals, and engage in researches to develop effective intervention strategies; Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking, where HEIs should work towards preventing illegal migration and human trafficking by raising awareness, conducting researches, and collaborating with law enforcement agencies, organizing workshops, providing legal assistance, and supporting victims through rehabilitation programs, and Gender-Based Violence, where HEIs ought to address the issue of promoting gender equality and providing support to victims through conducting awareness campaigns, offering counseling services, and collaborating with local organizations to implement preventive measures, and engaging in researches to understand the root causes and develop appropriate panaceas.

The presentations were followed by group discussions to overcome potential snags. The outcomes of these discussions were shared, and general comments and reflections were provided. Dr. Serawit Handeso PhD, CEO at MoE, delivered the closing remarks, summarizing the key points discussed and emphasizing the importance of CE and University Social Responsibility (USR) in addressing societal

concerns. The two-day training was concluded with a commitment to implement the discussed reform agenda effectively.

By focusing on these six KPIs, HEIs can play significant roles in addressing social issues and fostering community development. Through collaboration, research, and active engagement, HEIs can contribute to creating a more informed, safe, and equitable society. St Mary's University was delegated by its International Relations and Communication Office.



Second Time Recognition Event

In a notable act of community engagement, St. Mary's University was lauded once again by Lideta Sub City Labor and Skills Office for its contribution to youth employment. This recognition was extended to the University's engagement in the second round of the youths' hands-on practical job training project funded by the Ethiopian government and the World Bank.

The University provided ten young individuals from Woreda 10 with job training opportunities. The youths were integrated into various departments within the University, where they gained practical experiences, such as data entry, administrative support, archiving, and other essential services over a six-month period. The University offered job opportunity to those who excelled in their performance during their apprenticeships.

To celebrate the University's contribution, Lideta Sub-City Labor and Skills Office once again hosted a recognition ceremony on January 15, 2025. During the event, St. Mary's University, along with other institutions, received a certificate of recognition. The event underscored the University's dedication

to empowering young people and fostering a skilled workforce.



A gesture of community engagement!

In a commendable act of community support, St. Mary's University donated benches worth 65,000 Birr to Lideta Sub-City Landholding Registration and Information Agency on March 3, 2025. This

generous contribution was made in response to a specific request from the sub-city office, which has been facing a shortage of seating for its increasing number of customers.

The donation was facilitated through the university's community engagement services, following a need-based agreement.

The initiative underscores St. Mary's University's commitment to community service and its proactive approach to address local challenges.

The collaboration between St. Mary's University and Lideta Sub-City exemplifies the positive impact of community partnerships. It highlights the importance of supporting public institutions in their efforts to serve the community effectively. This donation not only addresses an immediate need but also strengthens the bond between the University and the local community, fostering a spirit of cooperation and mutual support.



Administrative News

Induction Programme for New Employees

St. Mary's University held the second session of its half-day employees' induction program on Friday, January 3, 2025 at the Chamber Room.



The event, organized by the Human Resources Management Office, was designed to seamlessly integrate 18 newly hired employees into the university community.

The induction commenced with a warm welcome, underscored the importance of the new hires to the institution. The participants were acquainted with St. Mary's University's vision and mission, which emphasize the core values, such as excellence, integrity, and collaboration. This introduction aimed to align the new employees with the University's strategic goals.



During the day, RaKMO and HRMO presented their respective office activities which ensured that the new employees were well-informed about their roles and responsibilities within the University. In addition, the induction accentuated the compliance with the importance of sticking to established protocols and maintaining the institution's standards.

Enhancing Registrar's Office Customer Service

On January 11, 2025, St. Mary's University's Human Resource Management Office conducted a comprehensive customer service training for 25 officers and staff members of the Registrar Offices. Led by Ato Desalegn Berie, Vice President for Business and Administration, the training aimed to enhance the skills and resources necessary for providing honest and streamlined services.

The session had multiple objectives: exploring service delivery guidelines, reviewing current practices, exchanging experiences, identifying gaps, and developing the skills needed to provide efficient and honest services. The training covered various critical aspects, including the definitions of organization, service, customer, as well as institutional policies and guidelines such as the vision, mission, values, senate rule policy, and miscellaneous management guidelines of the University.

Participants learned about different ways and means of service, including in-person, written, and phone services. They also discussed the key functions of service providers before, during, and after service. Special conditions concerning the Registrar's Office and its staff were addressed, focusing on creating a positive overall impression, setting clear expectations, following guiding principles, paying attention to instructions, identifying deficiencies, and learning from observed issues.

The session concluded with a discussion and summary, where participants asked questions, provided comments, and received summary guidance. The training marks a significant step towards improving the quality of service provided by the Registrar's

Office. By focusing on these key areas, the office aims to enhance customer satisfaction and ensure that all services are delivered with the highest standards of professionalism and integrity.

This initiative reflects the University's commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in service delivery, setting a benchmark for other departments to follow.

Enhancing Archive Management

On January 17, 2025, St. Mary's University's Business and Administration Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) conducted an awareness session on file management. Led by Ato Tenaw Alemayehu, the session aimed to create awareness to St. Mary's academic and administrative staff who work on archiving and documentation, on the benefits of proper archiving and the necessary precautions when handling files. The ultimate goal is to establish a consistent and efficient archive management system.



During the session, it was emphasized that archives play a crucial role in preserving documents, ensuring that information remains accessible and intact over time. This enhances ease of use and operational efficiency. Documents, whether letters, memos, or photos, serve as evidence and should be properly classified and stored. Key functions of archive management include obtaining the relevant officer's approval for documents, organizing them chronologically, and maintaining them to save time, energy, money, and space. Protecting documents from damage and unauthorized access is also essential.

Additionally, the session covered document retention, which involves identifying available documents, defining their purpose, and determining their

retention period. Challenges in archive management, such as inconsistent classification, unclear locations, and cluttered practices, were also discussed. Proper documentation ensures quick access, supports transparency, meets legal requirements, and preserves institutional knowledge.

During the session participants were advised to file documents correctly, conduct regular checks, use secure storage, label clearly, and participate in training. By following these guidelines, employees can contribute to an efficient archive system, ensuring the right documents are available at the right time.

The session concluded with a discussion on the gaps in archive management within the offices, and various questions and answers were entertained.

Enhancing Basic Computer skill

St. Mary's University's Human Resources Management Office organized an extensive training program focused on Basic Computer Applications and Secretarial Work. This program was designed to enhance the skills of 14 employees from various departments within the University. The training sessions were conducted in two separate batches, running from December 11, 2024, to February 24, 2025, and spanning a total of 40 hours.



The participants included administrative secretaries, file clerks, and mail workers, all of whom demonstrated a strong commitment to professional development throughout the training period. The sessions were led by W/ro Birtukan Atnaf from the Exam Administration Department. The Human

Resources Management Office (HRMO) extends its appreciation to the trainer for her dedication and expertise in offering this valuable training program.

Success Story of Nardos Melaku

Management graduate, former SMU Book Club Leader and treasurer of Gavel Club



The International Relations and Communication Office of SMU had the privilege of interviewing Nardos to uncover the secrets behind her success

and to share her experiences with current and future students. Here is her story:

Nardos Melaku, a distinguished graduate of the class of 2017 E.C. from the Department of Management of St. Mary's University (SMU), achieved an extraordinary cumulative GPA of 3.8. Her journey is a compelling narrative of determination, resilience, and the influential role of a nurturing academic environment. Her accomplishment not only highlights her personal dedication but also serves as a testament to the quality of education and support systems available at SMU.

Early Academic Journey

Nardos's academic path was not linear but filled with purposeful decisions that ultimately shaped her success. After completing high school, she initially enrolled in a public university. However, upon reflection, she realized that the field she was studying did not align with her passions or career aspirations. This self-awareness led her to reassess her goals and choose a different path.

Encouraged by her family, Nardos decided to transfer to a private university in Addis Ababa, where she believed she could find a better fit for her academic pursuits. With her cousin's recommendation and her family's strong belief in the excellence of St. Mary's University among private institutions, she joined the Management program, where she felt she could combine her interests with practical opportunities for growth. This decision proved to be a pivotal moment in her life, setting the foundation for her exceptional achievements.

Keys to Her Success

The key factors contributing to Nardos's success were a blend of her personal qualities, unwavering commitment, and the supportive environment provided by her family, the university, and its faculty. Her strong sense of self-discipline and determination were evident in her dedication to her studies and her

SMU in Stride



ability to persevere through challenges.

Nardos credits the faculty at SMU for their significant role in her development. The instructors fostered a culture of academic rigor by encouraging students to engage in extensive reading, participate in diverse assignments, and undertake research activities. These assignments often required students to conduct interviews, analyze findings, and present their conclusions—valuable exercises that helped Nardos hone her organizational skills, boost her self-esteem, and build her confidence.

The availability of comprehensive reference materials, both in physical and digital formats, provided her with the resources she needed to excel. Nardos also emphasized that being a student of Management played a crucial role in shaping her decision-making abilities and problem-solving skills, qualities that were essential to her academic and personal growth.

Practical Teaching-Learning Process

One of the standout features of SMU's education system, according to Nardos, was its practical approach to learning. The university excelled in bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world applications. Classroom discussions often extended beyond textbooks, allowing students to engage in practical exercises, case studies, and group projects that mirrored real-life scenarios.

Nardos found these practical components to be immensely beneficial. They not only enriched her understanding of complex concepts but also equipped her with hands-on experience that prepared her for future challenges. She particularly appreciated the university's emphasis on turning abstract ideas into actionable plans, a skill she found invaluable both academically and personally.

Additionally, the friends Nardos chose during her time at SMU played a significant role in her achievements. Surrounding herself with motivated and like-minded

peers created a positive and encouraging atmosphere that inspired her to aim higher.

Time Management Challenges

Despite her many strengths, Nardos faced challenges in managing her time effectively. Balancing academic responsibilities, extracurricular activities, and personal commitments required careful planning and prioritization. Initially, she struggled to allocate sufficient time for each aspect of her life. However, through trial and error, she developed strategies to overcome these difficulties.

Nardos prioritized attending classes regularly and paid close attention during lectures. She meticulously completed assignments, ensuring they met high standards of quality, and sought clarification from instructors whenever she encountered difficulties. On occasions when she missed classes for reasons beyond her control, she proactively attended another section to catch up on missed topics.

Through diligent time management, she learned to distribute her energy across schooling, recreation, and other tasks. By avoiding procrastination and staying committed to maintaining high-quality work in group assignments, she succeeded in staying ahead academically.

Extracurricular Activities and Personal Growth

Nardos's involvement in extracurricular activities was instrumental in her personal and professional development. As a leader of SMU students Book Club and treasurer of the Gavel Club, she gained valuable skills in public speaking, interpersonal communication, and team coordination. These experiences allowed her to explore her interests beyond academics and contributed to her overall growth.

One of the highlights of her time at SMU was presenting the annual performance plan to the university's top management. This opportunity not only boosted



her confidence but also provided her with firsthand experience in strategic planning and professional communication. These lessons proved invaluable as they prepared her for future responsibilities in her career.

Reflections on Her SMU Experience

Looking back, Nardos fondly describes her time at SMU as a transformative and enriching experience. The university empowered her and her peers through training sessions and workshops that fostered positive competition and encouraged continuous improvement. She made lasting friendships and matured in various aspects of life by learning from her experiences and the diverse perspectives of those around her.

However, not everything was perfect. Nardos pointed out the challenges posed by frequent changes in exam and class schedules, which sometimes disrupted her plans. Despite these drawbacks, she maintained a positive outlook and adapted to the circumstances, further demonstrating her resilience.

Advice for Students

Drawing from her journey, Nardos offers valuable advice to current and future students. She emphasizes the importance of choosing supportive and motivating friends, as they can significantly influence one's academic and personal growth. Effective time management is another key lesson she shares, highlighting the need to prioritize tasks and avoid procrastination.

Additionally, she suggests that SMU could enhance its support for students by organizing sessions focused on studying techniques, note-taking strategies, and time management skills. Such initiatives, she believes, would further empower students to achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

Nardos Melaku's journey is a shining example of how determination, strategic time management, and a supportive academic environment can lead to outstanding success. Her story not only serves as an inspiration for her fellow students at SMU but also offers valuable lessons for anyone striving to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

Compiled by International Relations & Communication Office, SMU



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- የ Praxis Exam
- የ CISI Exams እና

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