Alumni Appointed to Top Administrative Positions at MUM

Young alumni continue to fill important administrative positions, most recently with Patrik Siljestam (‘11, ’14) accepting the position of controller and Mariam Daudi (’08) being named director of admissions.

Mr. Siljestam, a native of Sweden, earned a BA in business (summa cum laud) and an MBA, and for the past five years has been working for MUM in strategic planning, which entailed synthesizing and analyzing data. As controller, he will oversee MUM’s accounting operation.

Ms. Daudi, a native of Afghanistan, has an MBA in sustainable business from MUM and formerly worked as an admissions counselor. She has also attended a course to become a teacher of the Transcendental Meditation technique and has taught over 600 people.

“It’s great that the University can provide the opportunity for some young graduates to launch their careers,” said Rod Eason, vice-president of enrollment management and marketing. “Some of the best and brightest have taken us up on this offer.”

In addition, Tabitha Sedgwick (’16) and Soangela Hardt (’14) have recently been hired as admissions counselors. Ms. Sedgwick has a BA in leadership and communication, and Ms. Hardt a BA in media and communications and a minor in sustainable living.

Filmmaker Peter Farrelly Gives Lectures to Screenwriting Students

The new low-residency MFA in screenwriting is off to a strong start, with 18 students coming to campus from around the U.S. last month for their initial 10-day residency.

Filmmaker Peter Farrelly was on hand to give guest presentations, filmmaker David Lynch connected via Skype for 45 minutes to answer questions from each student, and international script consultant Dara Marks gave lectures on transformational narrative.

Students in the two-year program do their coursework online and come to campus at the beginning of each semester for a residency.

“It’s an amazing group of students,” said Dorothy Rompalske, who heads the program. “We were selective in who we admitted. They already have a basic understanding of how to create a story. And they’re interested in developing their spiritual side – which is what makes us unique.”

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The students learned the Transcendental Meditation® technique early in their residency, and heard from Professor Fred Travis how it changes the brain and fosters greater creativity.

The theme of the residency was learning to access deeper levels within oneself. The students discussed David Lynch’s notion of “catching the big fish” – latching onto and manifesting ideas that come from deep within.

Mr. Farrelly spoke about his films and about how learning the Transcendental Meditation technique in recent years has affected his work. Along with his brother Bobby Farrelly, he is best known as the creator of such films as “There’s Something About Mary,” “Dumb & Dumber,” “Shallow Hal,” “Hall Pass,” “Stuck on You,” and “Me, Myself & Irene,” among other hits.

“We’re thrilled to have a filmmaker of Peter Farrelly’s stature joining our team,” Ms. Rompalske said. “In addition to sharing his vast knowledge of screenwriting and the film industry, he embodies our program’s unique objective.”

The program’s website includes a video of Mr. Farrelly talking about how Transcendental Meditation has affected his creative processes. See www.mum.edu/mafa-in-screenwriting.

When not in residence, the students take self-guided instruction online. They also connect weekly with a mentor, as well as meet online as a group once a week. Workshops, in which they read and comment on each other’s work, are also an important component.

Three different mentors who are experienced screenwriters are guiding the students: Roz Sohnen and Adam Nadler in New York, and Antonia Ellis in Los Angeles.

In addition to focusing on generating ideas, keeping a journal, and developing their creativity, the students will work with their mentors to create highly polished scripts. Then their final residency, at the end of the program, will be held in Los Angeles, where they will meet with David Lynch and other Hollywood professionals and learn how to pitch their work.

FROM THE FOUNDER

“Study of the Absolute will reveal to students the great and hidden values of life which lie beyond the obvious, phenomenal phase of existence. It will give them a deeper sense of existence, a broader vision of life, and insight into the unfathomable ocean of wisdom.”

— Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Science of Being

MBA Students Finish in Top 1% in Worldwide Business Simulation

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)

Rahul Kedia, Sushil Aryal, and Ankhbayar Sukhmaa

A team of MBA accounting students recently finished in the 99th percentile in an online business simulation that involved 1,136 master’s-degree-level teams worldwide, including teams from Indiana University, Kansas State, Temple, University of Georgia, and California State.

The team included Rahul Kedia (India), Sushil Aryal (Nepal), and Ankhbayar Sukhmaa (Mongolia).

In the Capsim Management Simulations points are earned through well-defined metrics based on the Balanced Scorecard, a concept developed by Robert Kaplan at Harvard University. It recognizes four perspectives for measuring performance: customer, financial, internal business processes, and learning/growth.

The students must manage both short-term and long-term metrics across eight rounds of decision-making, with each round representing one year. They use their knowledge of marketing, finance, operations, human resources, accounting, problem-solving, and data analysis.

The teams act as executives who plan strategies and implement tactics across eight years of business activities.

“Looking at the average results of all five MUM teams that participated for three weeks in January 2017, our MBAs overall performed better than two-thirds of participating MBA schools,” said Professor Andy Bargerstock, who taught the capstone course that involved participating in Capsim. “As faculty in the business college, we feel that the simulation results demonstrate the readiness of our students for job markets now and ultimately for executive leadership positions.”

Since beginning the Capsim business simulations in 2011, the University’s MBA accounting students have consistently performed well, with many teams finishing in the top 10th percentile, including three previous #1 finishes.

The team’s results in this ongoing simulation were confirmed by Brianne Haustein, client relations consultant with Capsim Management Simulations in Chicago, Illinois.
Student Film Wins Awards at Major Film Festivals

Monica Demes, who graduated from the David Lynch MFA in 2015, has been winning awards and gaining attention at international film festivals for the film she created while a student at MUM – “Lilith’s Awakening.” Having first won awards in the Iowa Motion Picture Association for best director, best actress, and best cinematography, her film was selected for the prestigious Internacional Film Festival of Ourense, which is one of the 10 biggest film festivals in Spain and which focuses on art house films. One of Spain’s largest newspapers described “Lilith’s Awakening” as a “grunge Gothic, disturbing, vampiric fairy tale.”

“It was amazing to see ‘Lilith’ received so positively at the festival, in such a beautiful and fancy place,” Ms. Demes said. “And it was my first time among interesting people.”

Her film was also selected for Lund Fantastic Film Festival, which is the biggest horror film festival of Scandinavia. Her prestigious awards include best director from the Optical Theatre Festival in Rome, and best film and best director from Boca do Inferno at a festival in São Paulo, Brazil. In addition, the film was listed on five different film-related websites as one of the best of 2016.

Female vampire character

“Lilith’s Awakening” is a haunting yet beautiful vampire film that uses a female as the vampire character.

“I think they love that it’s a gender film using a vampire as a symbol for women’s empowerment,” Ms. Demes said. “Instead of the old association of the vampire with something bad, we use it as a symbol for women’s liberation.”

Ms. Demes is now working intensely on two screenplays – both thrillers with women protagonists.

“I hope the success of ‘Lilith’ means my next film will be bigger and will fly much higher,” she said.

Ms. Demes noted that “Lilith’s Awakening” is a student film competing among the first line of professional horror and art films, despite being shot with students and with a very low budget. She hopes to find distribution for it after making the rounds of 2017 festivals.

Impact of David Lynch MFA

“MUM had a great impact in my life, not only because I love Fairfield and the film reflects the love I felt for the Midwest, but also because meditation helped me in my creative process and in making me feel confident that I would accomplish my goal,” she said. “It’s as if Fairfield has this mysterious power that makes you focus on your work and at the same time it makes you grow as a human being.”

“Lilith’s Awakening” included student Sophia Woodward as the protagonist (for which she won the IMPA award for best actress) and Brazilian pop singer Barbara Eugenia as Lilith. Also acting in the film were student Lloyd Wilcox and Eden West, the associate director of the MFA program. MFA student Gregor Kresal was the cinematographer.

Ms. Demes gives much of the credit for her success to the David Lynch MFA. “The MFA program gave me full support,” she said. “I had total support from Professor Dorothy Rompalske when I was working on the screenplay and on the editing, as well as from Michael Barnard, the director of the program. And I had great psychological support from program cofounder Joanna Plafsky. Of course the advice from David Lynch was also great.”

Spring Semester Enrollment of New Students Increases

The new MUM team charged with increasing enrollment is already showing results, with 157 new students arriving for spring semester as of mid-February compared to 127 a year ago.

The numbers include “readmits” – those who have been students at MUM sometime in the past and have returned to continue their education.

The new arrivals comprise 83 in the MS in computer science, 43 in other graduate programs (including 18 in the new MFA in screenwriting), 30 undergraduate students, and 1 certificate student.

By way of comparison, a year ago the new arrivals included 74 computer science students, 29 other graduate students, and 24 undergraduates.

Overall, as of mid-February there were 1,708 students enrolled, including non-degree-seeking students. Of these, 685 were in Fairfield. The rest included computer science students in practicum positions at U.S. companies, other distance-education students, and 114 students at the Maharishi Invincibility Institute in South Africa who are enrolled in MUM’s BA in business.

Of the 1,708 total, 1,396 are graduate students and 312 are undergraduate.

MUM continues to focus on attracting a larger number of undergraduate students. The efforts of the new marketing team, which began last fall, should be even more apparent this coming fall.

Low-Cost Taxi Service

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Global Ayurveda Conference Coming in April

An international conference on Ayurveda and Psychology will be offered April 28–30, featuring MUM experts in addition to a wide range of practitioners and book authors.

MUM President John Hagelin will be the guest of honor, and will open the conference speaking about Ayurvedic medicine as cutting-edge “unified field-based medicine.”

The plenary speakers will be Robert Schneider on Maharishi AyurvedaSM and mental health and aging, Vasant Lad on the Ayurvedic concept of Manovaha Srotas, and Keith Wallace on the microbiome and Ayurveda.

Other MUM-affiliated speakers will include Nancy Lonsdorf, Andrew Stenberg, Sonja Gobec, Sankari Wegman, and Dinesh Gyawali.

Presenters with origins in India include Sapna Punjabi-Gupta, speaking on food and mood, Sujatha Reddy, on the Ayurvedic approach to mental disorders, Indu Arora, on yoga nidra and the psychology of sleep, Vijay K. Jain on the journey from tattva to satvaa, Priyaa Balaa, on psychology in Ayurveda and Vethathriu, and Shekhar Annambhotla, on the Ayurvedic approach to autism spectrum disorder.

Other speakers will include Oleg Sorokin, who has developed a computerized pulse analysis device said to assess the doshas and make recommendations.

For more detail on the conference and to register, see tinyurl.com/h9lkpyq. The event is being organized by Global Ayurveda Conferences, which organizes conferences on Ayurveda worldwide.

Registration for the three-day conference is $350 for students and $400 for others, and includes five meals. Group discounts are available. Passes for a single day of the conference are $150.

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