MUM’s Career Services Office has recently been revamped, with a new associate director and a renewed mission to help students dive into their careers after graduation.

Ayesha Sengupta is now at the helm, eager to bring fulfillment to students’ goals and aspirations for life after college. “I plan to help students with a wide range of activities, including résumé writing, preparing for job interviews, knowing where jobs and internships are, learning how to present oneself, and more,” she said.

One of the office’s first goals is to make the service more known to the students in order to increase the percentage of students finding jobs after graduation. Ms. Sengupta also plans to help students learn to network in order to create more opportunities. To this end, one of her current plans is to help students obtain mentors. Plus, she intends to have guest speakers come to campus to help provide the additional out-of-class learning that is also important.

Ms. Sengupta’s professional background includes working as a recruiter, helping organize international conferences, and working as a program manager at a nonprofit.

The Career Services Office is located in the student lounge in the Argiro Student Center. Students are invited to stop by to learn more about the services offered. For information or appointments, email careers@mum.edu or call 472-7000, ext. 4191.

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He said that the study of earthworms helps to understand the ecology of a region and the ecological impacts of developments such as the introduction of agriculture.

“The details of an earthworm’s structure tell its ecological function,” he said. “And looking at the totality of the population of earthworms in a region helps assess the human impact. The original species don’t survive the transition to agriculture and may never come back.”

In addition to species identification, Dr. James has also researched earthworm DNA to better understand the evolution and diversification of the earthworm ancestral tree. He said this research can also be applied to ecological questions about the functional diversity of earthworms.

It also helps scientists understand the worldwide spread of organisms on Earth over the millennia.

“We look at what processes were going on then, including the movement of the continents, and what are going on now,” he said.

Dr. James’s research was continually funded by the National Science Foundation from 2000–2016.

In addition to studying earthworm ecology, evolution, and diversity, he said that taxonomy – describing and naming a species and putting it in context – simply helps biologists clearly communicate about what they’re doing.

Dr. James is chair of MUM’s Department of Sustainable Living. He teaches soil science, ecology, soil ecology, and fundamentals of living systems.

He has a collection of additional new species that he hasn’t yet described and is continuing to work on publication of descriptions of them. He also continues to investigate earthworm evolution with genomic scale data sets, and is working with teams of researchers to study invasive earthworm ecology in the U.S.

FROM THE FOUNDER

“We have seen that through the practice of Transcendental Meditation a state is created where the entire nervous system is held in suspension without activity or passivity. When the nervous system is brought to this state, Being comes to the level of the body. The entire nervous system and body reach that state of suspension which knows no change and allows the body simply to be in the fullness of life.”

— Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Science of Being

Dr. Gyawali Presents at Harvard

Responding to the increasing interest in integrative medicine, which combines traditional approaches with modern medicine, Professor Dinesh Gyawali recently gave a presentation at Harvard University at the Integrative Medicine Network Forum, 2018 that was attended by about 400 people, including primarily Harvard professors and scientists.

He spoke about the research on the benefits of Ayurveda for cardiovascular disease and presented the results of the meta-analysis that he conducted as part of his dissertation research.

“There was a wide range of research showcased, such as yoga, acupuncture, and meditation, but I was the only one presenting on Ayurveda,” he said. “They were very interested and appreciative, and open to learning about it.”

The event was sponsored by the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, which is part of Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

Student Jessica Hernandez Publishes in Scholarly Journal

Sustainable Living student Jessica Hernandez went the extra mile with her senior project, not only doing a stellar job but also getting it published in November in the International Journal of Complementary & Alternative Medicine.

Her six-page published paper is a review of 10 herbs for traditional, homeopathic, and modern medicinal uses: aloe, basil, chamomile, dandelion, echinacea, fennel, garlic, lavender, mint, and yarrow.

For each herb she discusses the history and origins, taking her information from books on medicinal herbs. Chamomile, for example, was used by the Egyptians, Romans, and Greeks. She includes information on plant identification and growing conditions in Iowa.

Ms. Hernandez also presents the scientific evidence for the medicinal qualities of each herb, taking her information from studies published in peer-reviewed academic journals.

“I chose to write about medicinal herbs because I’m passionate about using food to heal,” she said. “I researched studies that used these medicinal herbs in conjunction with modern medicine to successfully combat a variety of health ailments, and this ultimately supports the traditional and homeopathic uses with scientific evidence.”

Information about Fairfield

Arts & entertainment, businesses, celebrations, clubs, events, food, housing & lodging, jobs, health services, parks, shopping, tours, and more.

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Editor: Jim Karpen
Contributing Writers: Livia Horvath, Christopher F. Darden
Maharishi University of Management
1000 N. 4th St., MR #694
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jkarpen@mum.edu
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New Library Website Offers Maharishi Videos for Public

Many Maharishi videos are now available to the public via the new MUM library website – one of several resources now being offered for the first time.

The Maharishi Video Library page is available at mum.edu/videolibrary.

It has a number of collections by various speakers, including a collection called One Period a Day because Maharishi felt that every classroom at every level of education should include a short knowledge video each day. It contains 450 Maharishi videos recorded during the period 2002–2007 that were originally shown on the Maharishi Channel.

One Period a Day includes 120 videos available to the public for viewing online directly from the website. An additional 330 videos in this collection are available for viewing by anyone on request by going to the tape library booth in the library, asking to see the video, and then watching it in the public viewing room.

One Period a Day includes a listing of categories. Clicking on a category brings up a page with two lists of videos: a list at left that’s viewable to anyone, and a list in the center that requires a student or faculty password, or that can be viewed in the public viewing room.

Main points accompany each video in the collection.

In addition, the publicly available collection of 120 videos is searchable by keyword. These videos have been transcribed, and keyword search results include an excerpt to show how the word is being used in context in the video.

The right column on the Maharishi Video Library page includes an additional collection of videos that talk about each of the areas of knowledge introduced by Maharishi.

The main page of the new library website can be found at library.mum.edu. The purpose of the new website is to educate students and the community, said Library Director Rouzanna Vardanyan.

In addition to providing access to vast databases of news and information, as well as the MUM library catalog, the library website includes a Special Collections link that gives access to resources such as the International Journal of Mathematics and Consciousness and the Journal of Modern Science and Vedic Science.

Other resources include a Search Engines link, which is a curated page of useful search engines such as Google Scholar and Google books. These search engines enable users to find materials that are often not available through a regular Google search.

Additional resources are continuing to be added. The Special Collections link will eventually include access to a digital archive of historical materials such as photos, brochures, and posters.

Ms. Vardanyan said that the new website is especially convenient for faculty.

“Faculty will no longer need to phone the tape library to schedule a video to show their students in class. They can simply use their password and access the video via the new website.”

Also new is BookMyne, a mobile app available on Google Play that can be used to access the MUM catalog. Patrons can also use it to see which items they have checked out, can renew items they’ve checked out, and can place holds on items checked out to another user.

MS in Computer Science 5th Largest in Nation

In the 2016–17 academic year, the MS in computer science had 348 graduates – the fifth largest total nationwide – according to latest official data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Rankings are not yet available for the 2017–18 academic year, when MUM had 390 graduates.

There are around 1,000 students currently enrolled in the MS in computer science. Students in that program spend 8–13 months on campus taking courses, then enroll in a practicum course in which they work in paid positions in U.S. companies for up to two years while finishing their degree via distance education.

The average starting rate for students in the practicum phase is $80,000 per year. There is a low entry fee to begin the program, and students use their practicum income to pay for their education.

Students in their practicum phase have worked for companies such as Google, Amazon, Walmart, IBM, Intel, Oracle, Verizon, FedEx, and Apple.

Most of the students in the program come from other countries, eager to earn a master’s degree and gain experience with a U.S. company.

Some 234 institutions award a master of science in computer science in the U.S. Ahead of MUM in the rankings are University of Central Missouri (1,395), University of Southern California (874), University of Illinois at Springfield (612), and Illinois Institute of Technology (365).

Dr. Khan Gives Presentation on Intelligent Robots

Teaching robots to understand language will be crucial to the next stage of industrial automation, according to a keynote presentation by Professor Emdad Khan at a conference this fall in Singapore.

Addressing the World Convention on Robots, Autonomous Vehicles and Deep Learning, Dr. Khan explained that he believes intelligent-agent based robots and software-only robots (called softbots) will play a significant role. These robots/softbots will incorporate the ability to understand and communicate with humans.

In his talk he described a “semantic engine” that will be a key component. It will use a brain-like approach to address key problems of robot-based automation. He said that these approaches will make it much easier for non-technical, even illiterate people to effectively use robots.

Dr. Khan is an expert in state-of-the-art areas such as natural language processing by computers, machine learning, neural networks, big data, and other advanced areas of computer science and software engineering.
Professor Passi Publishes Poem in Literary Magazine

Creative writing professor Nynke Passi recently published a poem in *Calyx*, a leading literary magazine featuring literature and art by women.

Her poem, titled “The Rise & Fall of Breath’s Slim Body,” is about a childhood memory.

“It is a great honor to be published in such a leading magazine,” she said.

Over the past 20 years Ms. Passi has taught a variety of courses, including creative process, graphic narrative, poetry, poetry and transcendence, memoir writing, personal essay, fiction, and travel writing.

She is director of MUM’s undergraduate creative writing program and is currently developing a low-residency MFA in creative writing.

Dr. Sawhney Presents on Trust at Chicago Conference

Trust is key in supply chain management, and research presented by Professor Sabita Sawhney found that practice of the Transcendental Meditation® technique by people in business helps to increase trust.

Speaking last month at the prestigious annual meeting of the Decision Science Institute in Chicago, Dr. Sawhney explained that trust is recognized as a key influencing factor in forming healthy working relationships between buyers and suppliers. And she surveyed research showing that issues such as stress and anxiety can interfere with trust.

She gave an overview of research on Transcendental Meditation showing that it can reduce afflictions such as stress and anxiety, leading her to hypothesize that the practice could lead to greater trust in business.

She then presented the results of a field study of participants from service and manufacturing companies in Fairfield. The results indicated that the regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique cultivates a higher disposition to trust.

Exhibit by Students in MA in Studio Art

A master's thesis exhibit by students graduating with an MA in Studio Art is being offered in Unity Gallery through December 21.

The exhibit features paintings by Daveed Aranda and mixed-media sculpture by Genevra Bell and Younes Kouider.

Hours are Monday – Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, 7:15 to 9 p.m.

See www.unitygalliyowa.com. For information, email art@mum.edu.