

We have had a remarkable year here at Saint Louis University. Amidst one of the greatest challenges in our lifetime — the COVID-19 pandemic — we persevered and succeeded thanks to the adaptability, hard work and compliance with COVID protocols displayed by the staff, faculty and students of SLU.

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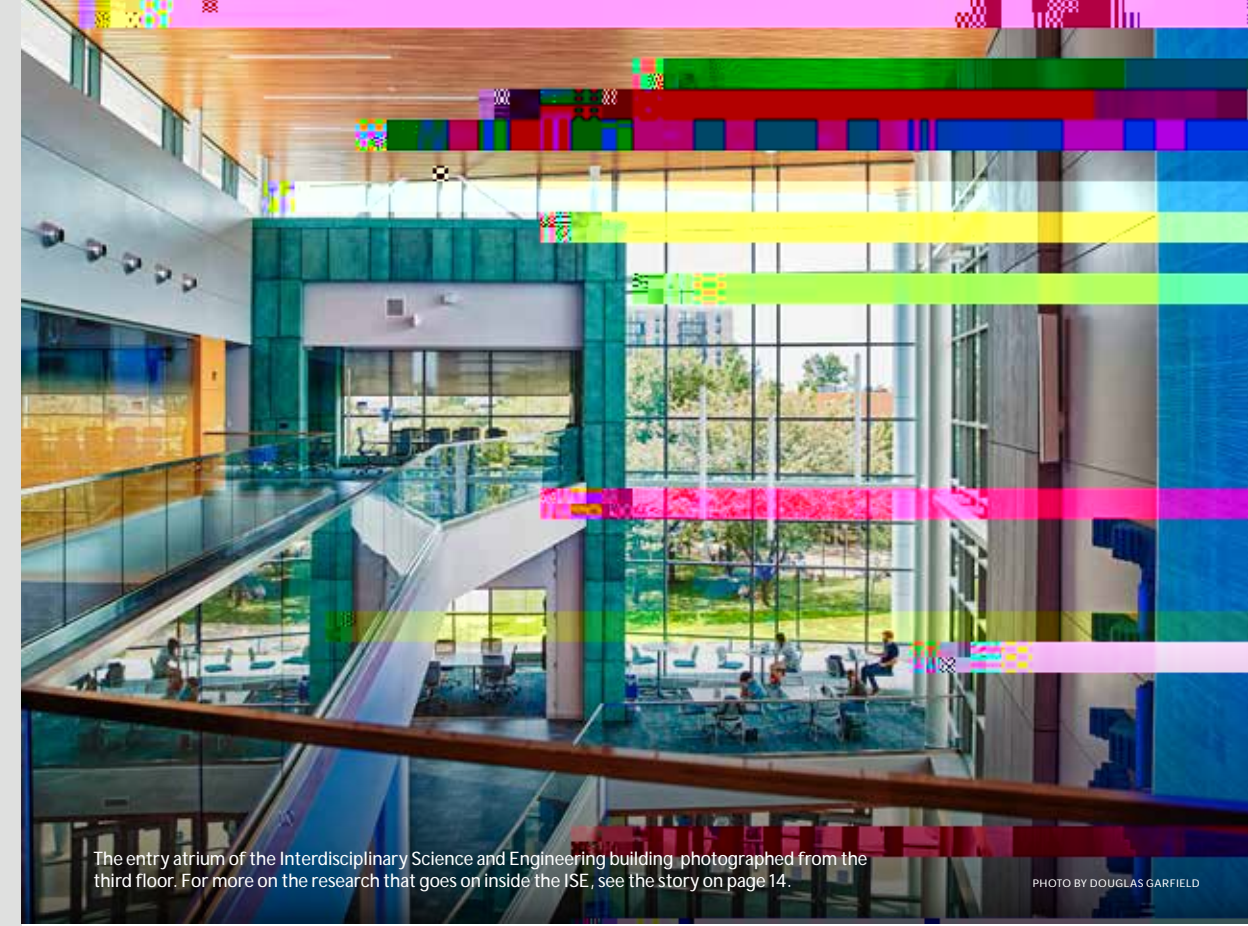
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ON THE COVER

The Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Building

Photo by Steve Dolan

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The entry atrium of the Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering building, photographed from the third floor. For more on the research that goes on inside the ISE, see the story on page 14.

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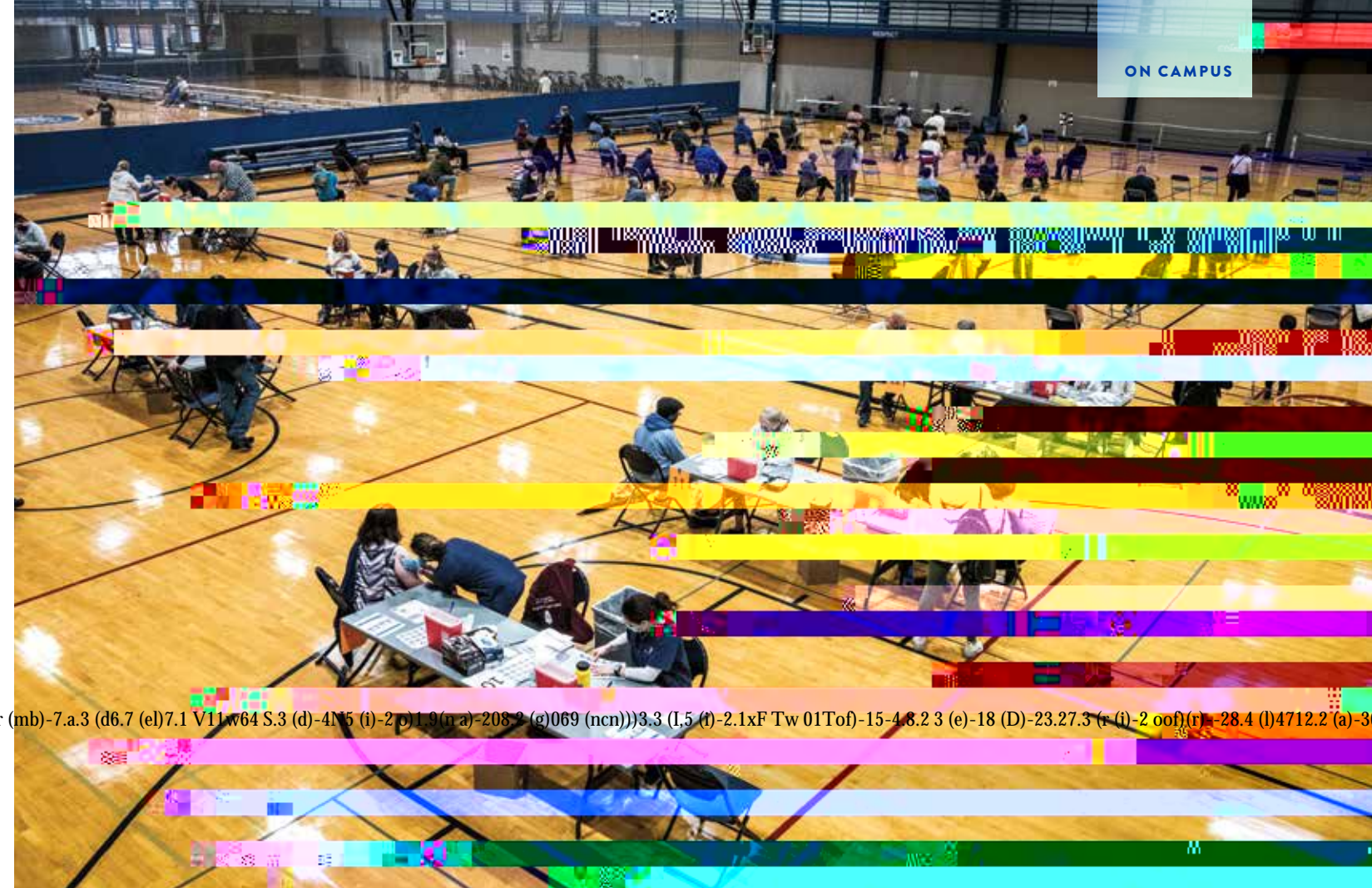
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THE LAST LOOK



▶ Saint Louis University successfully wrapped up its 2020-21 academic year — one that brought unprecedented challenges due to a global pandemic — without having to suspend its commitment to mostly in-person classes, entirely in-person labs and on-campus living.

▶ “Every member of our Saint Louis University community should be proud of all we have accomplished this past year, much of which many thought impossible a year ago,” said University President Dr. Fred P. Pestello. “The pandemic tested us, and we pulled together and rose to the challenges as One SLU.”

Pestello continued: “I have heard from many students and parents about how well SLU communicated with them and how positive it was to them that we kept our campus open and taught primarily in person.”

But why was SLU able to keep its campus open at a time when other colleges across the country were being forced to shelter in place, suspend in-person classes or move completely online?

Among many other factors, University officials point to a decision early in the crisis to engage SLU’s experts and solicit them to lead the University’s response to COVID-19, including three uniquely qualified faculty members: 8 (a)-23.b19au iea9yqw 0.ge 77c 0 Tw 011Fe(it)-38.A3w-7.2 (eV.3 (d1f86.9 (i)-t)0.7 (3b-85u)-2005 (i)1.a(e3-4.6)-1453 (a77c)24.1 (G (?)Tr (mb)-7.a.3 (d6.7 (el)7.1 V11.w64 S.3 (d)-415 (i)-2 (o)1.9(n a)-208.2 (g)069 (ncn)))3.3 (I.5 (t)-2.1xF Tw 01Tof)-15-4.8.2.3 (e)-18 (D)-23.27.3 (r (i)-2 oof)(r) -28.4 (l)4712.2 (a)-3



2021

For the first time, Saint Louis University held in-person and virtual events to celebrate its graduates.

Members of the class of 2021 had the opportunity to attend in-person precommencement ceremonies where they celebrated with fellow graduates from their college or school. To accommodate COVID-19 protocols, there were 16 precommencement ceremonies May 18-22 in Chaifetz Arena. Each ceremony was capped at 250 graduates, who could bring four guests each. All attendees were required to wear masks and keep a safe distance from others in the arena. The events were livestreamed for loved ones to view at home.

The University's main commencement ceremony took place virtually. The video event, featuring speakers and degree conferrals, was released May 23.

The high-profile physician leading the St. Louis region's fight against COVID-19 delivered this year's commencement address. Dr. Alexander Garza (Grad PH '03), incident commander of the St. Louis Metropolitan Pandemic Task Force, gave advice to SLU's newest alumni, calling them "my future heroes."

"You have been through a lot over the past four years. You have strived, you have endured, and you have undoubtedly suffered," Garza said. "And now, you have experience and understanding. And you will be there when the next pandemic or other complex, hairy, insurmountable, worldwide problem comes along, and when they ask 'Who shall we send?' you will say, 'Here I am, send me!'"

The chief community health officer of SSM Health, Garza was tapped in April 2020 to lead a coalition of the region's four largest health care systems in a unified response to COVID-19. A colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve medical corps, he was deployed to Iraq in 2003 with a civil affairs team to rebuild hospitals and clinics. In 2009, he was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve as the assistant secretary and chief medical officer of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. In 2013, Garza returned to his *alma mater* to become the associate dean for public health practice and an associate professor of epidemiology at SLU's College for Public Health and Social Justice. In 2016, he started at SSM, where he also has served as chief quality officer and chief medical officer of the health system.

Garza joined four others in receiving honorary doctoral degrees from SLU this year.

Dr. Brenda (Grad A&S '81) and Larry Thompson were recognized for their dedication to collecting, sharing and preserving African American works of art. The Thompsons donated 100 works of art celebrating African American culture to the Georgia Museum of Art in 2012. And they have donated 55 pieces of artwork by African American artists to the Saint Louis University Museum of Art. Recently, they established a graduate scholarship at SLU to support students who have an interest in art by African American artists.

Linda and Alan (CSB '69) Vogt were honored for their longtime support of Billiken athletics and SLU student-athletes. During the past 25 years, the couple has made contributions that provide resources to all student-athletes at SLU, including academic support services, nutrition programs and campus life activities. In 2017, they received SLU's Bauman Sportsmanship Award and were inducted into the Billiken Hall of Fame.

Because no midyear ceremony could be held in December 2020, the May 2021 ceremonies honored both fall and spring semester graduates.

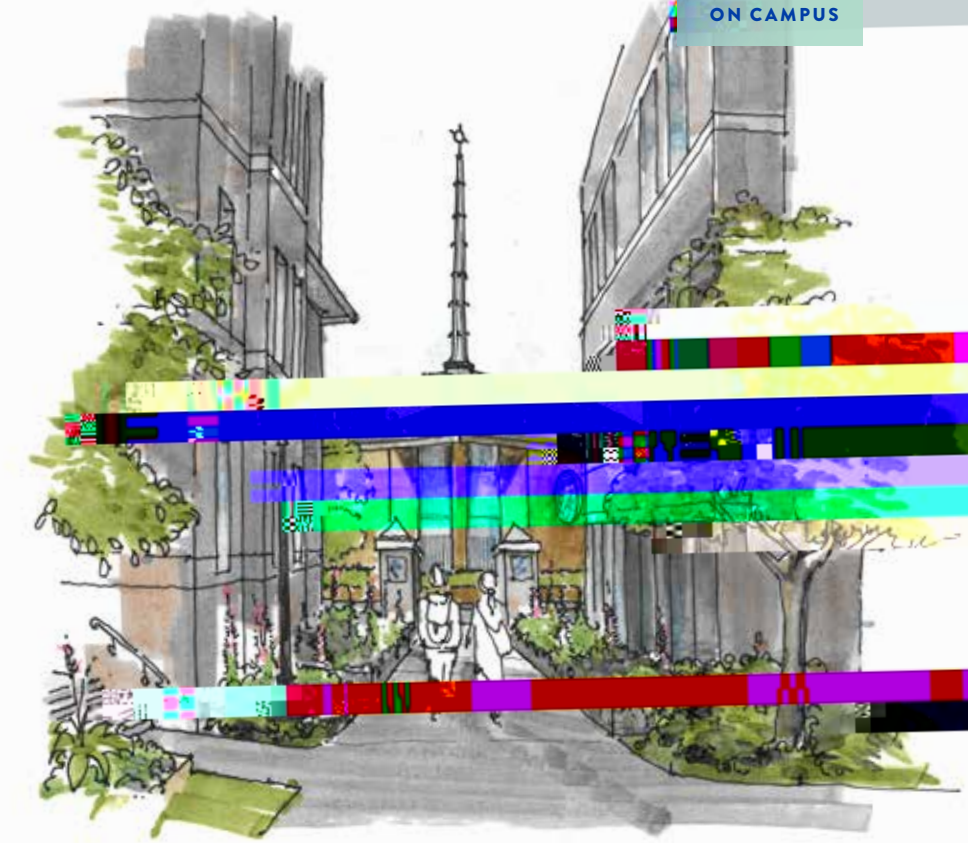
Class of 2020 to be Honored in August


To celebrate SLU's May 2020 graduates — whose commencement was postponed last year due to the pandemic — the University will host Commencement and Celebration Weekend Aug. 6-8, with an official ceremony taking place on Saturday, Aug. 7. In addition, activities to honor and celebrate the class will be held throughout the weekend.

"Honoring you is important to all of us, as is recognizing the work and dedication you've achieved."

\$464

Accelerating Excellence: The Campaign for Saint Louis University has raised more than \$464 million in the three years since its public phase began.





After leading Saint Louis University's Division of Information Technology Services on an interim basis since March 2020, Kyle Collins was appointed permanent vice president and chief information officer in May.

Collins, who most recently served as assistant vice president for technology transformation, has served in higher education IT leadership roles for more than 20 years, including 11 years with SLU. He became interim

Saint Louis University's Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Building (ISE) was constructed with 125 tons of structural steel, 94 miles of power cabling, 8,000 cubic yards of concrete and a vision for STEM breakthroughs.

The three-story, 90,000 square-foot ISE Building represents the heart of SLU's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs. It was designed

Researchers with the Water

T238





Grandmaster Dorsa Derakhshani has made a name for herself around the world, but she's happy to call Saint Louis University home.

At 8 years old, Dorsa Derakhshani won one of the first chess tournaments she ever played, a national championship in her native Iran. She accepted her award in a princess gown and tiara, sweetly standing out among the other girls wearing traditional headscarves.

It wasn't the first time Derakhshani stood out, and it wouldn't be the last.

Like the queen in the game of chess, Derakhshani knows what it is to be the lone female in the crowd. But also like the queen — generally considered the most powerful piece on the board — she draws on her ability to move exactly as she wants in any direction.

Derakhshani grew up in Tehran, the first-born of a pediatrician father and psychiatrist mother.

Her mother didn't have many professional opportunities as a woman in Iran in the late 1990s, so she "decided to stay home and work on me instead," Derakhshani said. That meant undivided attention and instruction from the very beginning. It soon became clear that the child reached milestones before anyone else around her.

At 18 months old, she could read.

At 2.5 years, she finished the equivalent of first grade. At age 4, fourth grade.

It was extraordinary, but when it came time for the little girl to begin her formal education, it posed a problem: There was no real precedent for the situation in her country. Eventually, Derakhshani started school in a first-grade classroom, even though she was academically years past her classmates.

Her parents realized their daughter needed more. They sought enrichment for her at every turn: ballet, swimming, painting, music and, of course, chess. She had been around the game for as long as she can remember.

"My father played chess in high school before the revolution in Iran," Derakhshani said. "But after the revolution, it was banned for a while. He couldn't play in public, but he would play in the house with my mom. That's how I learned."

By 6, she started chess lessons, but the hobby quickly turned into something more, as Derakhshani's competitive nature kicked in. Unlike some of her



1990

Phillip Tucker

(GRAD A&S) has written more than 70 books of history, garnering recognition as “the Stephen King of history.” He lives in Central Florida, where he writes full time after a career of more than two decades as a historian

Ms. Martha (Jakubiak)

Brockmole (DCHS '43)

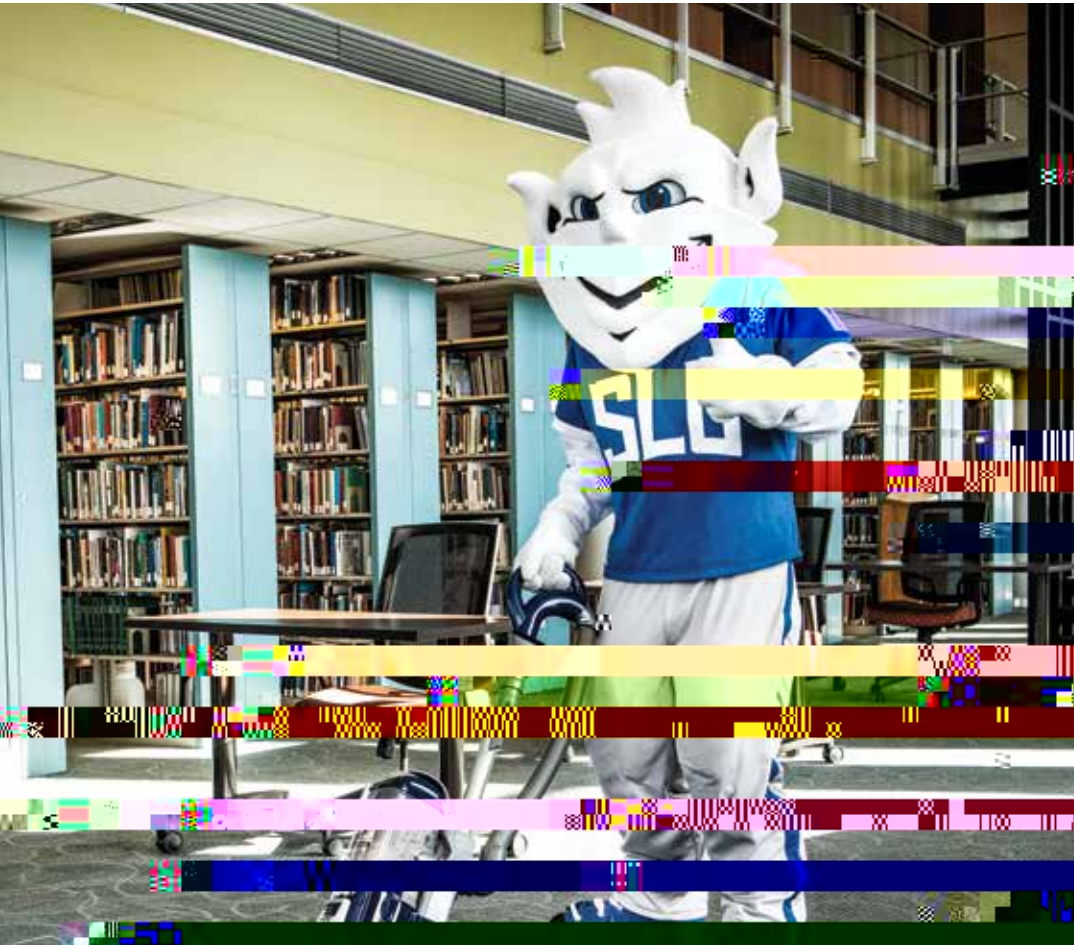
Mr. Robert Helfrich Jr. (PC '44)

The Simon Recreation



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The Bill Iken is tidying up after another successful semester at SLU, and that includes ensuring his contact list is super clean.

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