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## **July 2014 QuickNotes**

Southern Adventist University

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## July 2014

**Hundreds of Southern Adventist University students have been involved in life-impacting projects around the world this summer. This issue of *QuickNotes* highlights just a few of the many ways they are using the skills they have learned while at Southern.**

### Recent Events

#### Unearthing Relics Amid Unrest During Archaeology Dig in Israel

*~ by Leslie Martinez, Southern student and trip participant*

Ten students from Southern Adventist University participated in an archeological dig in Lachish, Israel, this summer. Work at the site took place Sunday through Thursday of each week, beginning at 5 a.m.

Participants sifted through dusty grids searching for historical artifacts. The grueling process included carefully scouring the dirt, discovering fascinating pieces of pottery, and avoiding agitated scorpions. Students worked hard at the dig site and were later rewarded with tours of other archeological sites nearby such as the valley of Elah where the famous battle between David and Goliath took place. Weekends provided inspirational opportunities for enriching their spiritual lives as participants walked sites where Jesus fulfilled His earthly ministry.

Although students found the excavating experiences to be invaluable, the scenery breathtaking, the cultural diversity enriching, and the new friendships meaningful, the trip ended sooner than originally planned. Volatile political and religious conflicts between Palestinians and Israelis rose unexpectedly midway into the trip, and leaders determined it would be safer for the group to return home before the chaotic situation escalated further.

During their final days in Israel, participants remained calm knowing that many prayers were ascending on their behalf and that they had become a community of support for each other. Prayers were truly answered when all returned home safely.

Learn more about the [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) at Southern.

## **Artists Unite to Create Murals in Tunisia**

*~ by Elizabeth Pontvik, School of Visual Art and Design professor*

Tunisia, home of the ancient city of Carthage, has a rich and important historical legacy and is full of astonishing mosaics, ruins, and bustling Arab medinas. This summer, students and staff from the [Southern Adventist University](#) (SVAD) traveled to the North African nation and joined local students in the capital city of Tunis for a two-week, public art project.

The objectives were to celebrate Tunisian culture, create cross-cultural friendships, and vision positive values for the future of Tunisia. The task was to design and paint a 600-foot mural with the themes of environment, citizenship, and the recently ratified Tunisian constitution. Part of the team also developed a landscaping design to restore natural life to the area surrounding the wall.

The people of Tunisia taught the students much about generosity and courage, and they were eager to share the unique qualities of their country with them. A local student remarked after the project, "Even with all of the differences, we are still equal and stronger together."

SVAD student Stephanie Garcia commented, "I never expected them to be so sweet and so giving. I learned that each of them had a [unique] story and lived a different life, but art had brought us all together."

## **Global Community Development in Tanzania**

*~ by Marketing and University Relations*

Tanzania is a land recognized for Serengeti National Park, snow-covered peaks on Mount Kilimanjaro, the Maasai tribe, and the gleaming beaches of Zanzibar. But for 16 graduate students in Southern Adventist University's [Global Community Development](#), it will be best remembered as a life-changing classroom where they learned the art of transformation development through participatory planning, mobilization, and evaluation.

The seeds of these life-changing moments were planted in 2013 when Southern began offering a Masters of Science in Global Community Development. Designed by Professor Sharon Pittman, the hands-on degree emphasizes both one-on-one interactions and cutting edge technology such as [Geographic Information Systems](#) (GIS), the most powerful and advanced mapping technology on the market.

"GIS lets us visualize, question, analyze, interpret, and understand data to reveal relationships, patterns, and trends," said Mike Ruth, a consultant for ESRI Professional Services.

Some of Southern's students in Tanzania had the opportunity to work with \_\_\_\_\_ staff members collecting basic human infrastructure data using GIS while visiting more than a dozen villages. In less than three days, they helped map elementary schools, health centers, roads, and water sources. Community leaders and non-government organizations will now be able to use this information to better plan how to improve services for villagers.

The goal of this training was to replicate the process in nearly 70 other sites within the country. Jeremy Weaver, one of Southern's graduate students, used GIS technology to head a research project that mapped the impact of improved access to dairy cattle on rural Tanzanian families.

"We collected information quicker and so much more effectively," Weaver said. "We were also able to capture pictures of the research with the tablets and map areas that have never been mapped before.

It was my favorite part of the bush learning experience."

## **Campus Life**

### **New VP Hired for Student Services; Other Positions Restructured**

*~ by Ashley Noonan, Southern student intern*

As the new school year fast approaches, the campus will see several new faces among the university's administration.

Dennis Negrón, '85, has accepted the position of vice president for Student Services, following Bill Wohlers' retirement after 42 years at Southern. Negrón is a former assistant dean and recent English professor. He will be responsible for the different areas that help ensure that student experiences on campus are successful. This includes residence hall life, student government, social activities, and Campus Ministries. He will also oversee student disciplinary actions.

"My vision is to transform the image of Student Services from an office focused on discipline to one that facilitates student success," Negrón said. After serving for more than 20 years at Southern, Negrón felt a calling to his new position.

"I felt keenly aware that God was moving and that His hand was in this," Negrón said. "I've always lived my life with the motto that 'if God leads, I need to follow.'"

In another administrative change, Vinita Sauder accepted the position of president at Union College and leaves Southern after 25 years of service. She worked in many capacities here, including vice president for Strategic Planning since 2011 and had a major role in designing the university's Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan.

"I wish Vinita much success, which I am sure she will experience, as she provides innovative leadership for Union College," said Gordon Bietz, president of Southern.

Christopher Carey, vice president for Advancement, has absorbed some of Sauder's responsibilities. His new title is vice president for Advancement and Strategic Planning. Barb Edens, '91, worked closely alongside Sauder and will now serve under Carey as the director of Strategic Planning.

"I'm excited about the future of Southern," Carey said. "We have excellent students, a super president, and a dedicated staff focused on the same mission."

In addition, Ingrid Skantz, '90, is transitioning from the director of Marketing and University Relations to vice president for Marketing and University Relations. Geovanny Ragsdale is moving from a director position to serve as associate vice president for Development, and Brenda Flores-Lopez makes a similar move from director to associate vice president for Human Resources.

In an email announcement to employees, Bietz said he believes these changes to the President's Cabinet will provide continued diversity, involve more people, add unique perspectives, and provide better communication to a larger group regarding university decisions.

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