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MENU 

Oakland University

**School of Engineering
and Computer Science**



The official newsletter serving students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the School of Engineering and Computer Science at Oakland University.

July 2014

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Engineering alum earns highest award in aeronautics

Alan Pinnick's career has really taken off since he graduated from Oakland University in 1981 with a degree in mechanical engineering.

Now at the pinnacle of a highly successful career, he has joined an elite group of aeronautic pioneers who have earned his field's highest honor, the Robert J. Collier Trophy.

The National Aeronautic Association presented this year's award to Pinnick, as part of the X-47B Unmanned Combat Air System Demonstration (UCAS-D) industry team. He works as a mechanical engineer specializing in aircraft mechanical systems for the Skunk Works© division of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics.

In May 2013, the group successfully launched the X-47B, the first unmanned, tailless aircraft to catapult launch from an aircraft carrier. Three days later, the aircraft made the first carrier-based touch-and-go landings.

Then, on July 10, 2013, the X-47B made history again by being the first unmanned, tailless aircraft to make an arrested landing aboard a carrier. This was Pinnick's main role in the project. He served as the lead design engineer of the arresting hook system and structure that made the historic landing possible.

Each piece plays its part

"Our Skunk Works© team was part of a partnership that included the U.S. Navy, Northrop Grumman and several other sub-contractors. We worked together to make the X-47B a reality," Pinnick said in a phone interview from his home in suburban Atlanta. "Our arresting hook system played a key role in the success of landing an unmanned aircraft on the aircraft carrier at speeds of 140 knots."

Conferred annually, the Collier Trophy is named for Robert J. Collier, publisher of Collier's Weekly magazine, air sports pioneer and former president of the Aero Club of America. The award recognizes an individual or team who has made "the greatest achievement in aeronautics or astronautics in America" during the previous year. Past recipients of the trophy include: Orville Wright (1913), Howard Hughes (1938), Neil Armstrong (1969), Dick Rutan (1986) and the B-2 Stealth bomber (1991).

"It is humbling to know you have joined the list of aviation's most recognizable names and projects," Pinnick said. "For me, it was a thrill to meet and talk to the legendary Dick Rutan who flew his Voyager aircraft around the world non-stop and unrefueled in 1986.

Early influencers at OU

Pinnick also recalled fond memories of his time at Oakland University. He remembers learning about internal combustion engines and hydraulics while on campus. He said his early influencers, like professor Bhushan Bhatt, left a lasting impression on him that helped guide his career.

Pinnick was a standout student during his time at Oakland, according to current School of Engineering and Computer Science Dean Louay M. Chamra, Ph.D. "Alan earned OU's Professional Development award as a graduating senior by demonstrating personal initiative and the greatest technical development in his studies."

That award plaque bearing Pinnick's name is on permanent display in the Dean's suite.

"Now, Alan is part of Collier Trophy history. That is a crowning professional achievement for him and something we can all be proud of at Oakland University," added Chamra.

Pinnick and his wife Brenda say they are looking forward to their next visit to Oakland University to tour the new home of the School of Engineering and Computer Science that will be unveiled this fall. They will likely make the visit to Michigan in a plane Alan built and flies himself!

Visit [oakland.edu/secs](http://www.oakland.edu/secs) (<http://www.oakland.edu/secs>) to learn more about the School of Engineering and Computer Science opportunities at Oakland University.



ENGINEERING IN THE NEWS

FANUC America provides OU with nearly \$500,000 in robotics equipment (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11536)

Industrial and Systems Engineering Students Talk About Their Internship Experiences (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11546)

OU Industrial and Systems Engineering Dept. teams up with Fulcrum Edge for new project management course (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11537)

Partnership with Chinese institutions offers future engineers global perspective (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11517)

Alumni and industry team up with Industrial and Systems Engineering for 4 new classes (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11494)

Young alum gains internship in world-renowned particle physics lab (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11492)

Summer STEM Camps successfully kick off (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11479)

OU and University of Michigan team up for ISE class trip (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11463)

Alumni reunites with FSAE team 15 years later (http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=527&nid=11427)

OUTREACH EVENTS

There is still time to register for an upcoming camp or event.

Electrical and Computer Engineering (https://ebill.oakland.edu/C21178_ustores/web/store_cat.jsp?STOREID=52&CATID=211&SINGLESTORE=true)
One-week camps for 3rd - 12th grade students who have an interest in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

To learn more about outreach events and opportunities through the School of Engineering and Computer Science visit [oakland.edu/secs/outreach](http://www.oakland.edu/secs/outreach) (<http://www.oakland.edu/secs/outreach>).

(http://www.oakland.edu/view_news.aspx?sid=34&nid=10342)

UPCOMING EVENTS

University Closed - Labor Day Holiday
September 1

New Student Convocation
September 2



OU alum Alan Pinnick (SECS '81) works as a mechanical engineer and has earned his field's highest honor for his work on the X-47B.

University bids Associate Dean Smith farewell and good luck, Dr. Zou appointed SECS Interim Associate Dean

Associate Dean Lorenzo Smith has accepted a position as Dean at California State University-Sacramento. July 18 will be his last day at Oakland University, and Dr. Qian "Beth" Zou, Professor of Mechanical Engineering, has been Interim Associate Dean.

"OU has definitely become home to me," Dr. Smith said. "I love this campus and its people."

Dr. Smith earned his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1991 from the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana. In 1993 he finished his Master's at Wayne State University, and he completed his Ph.D. in Engineering Mechanics in 1999 from Michigan State University.



Following work with Ford and General Motors, Dr. Smith started working as a professor at OU in 2000.

Dr. Smith's research focused on sheet metal experimental mechanics. In his endeavors, he worked on laboratory tooling for evaluating forming limits, surface distortion and draw bead behavior for sheet metal.

During his research, Dr. Smith produced 57 publications and secured \$3.5 million in external funding as sole-PI from multiple sources, including Pacific Northwest National Labs, Ford and Chrysler. He has also graduated seven Ph.D. students, and served as co-chair for the 2005 international NUMISHEET Conference, where he is currently a scientific research committee member.

After finding success as an OU faculty member from 2000 to 2011, Dean Louay Chamra asked him to take on the position of Associate Dean. From 2011 to present, Dr. Smith held the role.

"I am forever thankful to Dean Louay Chamra for taking a chance on me," Dr. Smith said. "He trusted me with decision making and with leadership roles for key initiatives and programs. He is responsible for transforming the SECS associate dean position from a mundane job to an exciting career."

Dr. Smith's responsibilities as dean included management of four Ph.D. programs, undergraduate and graduate catalogs, admission applications, lab space, and program accreditation support.



Fall classes begin
September 3

Engineering Center Grand Opening
September 12
Open House: 12:30 - 2 p.m.

Fall Homecoming and Reunion Weekend
September 19 - 20

2014 Hammerle Lecture, Featuring Dr. Pamela McCauley, Ph.D., Presidential Energy Fellow
Seeing beyond us: True diversity
(<http://www.oakland.edu/apps/events/event.aspx?sid=527&EventID=9920>)
September 22
10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Detailed information about all upcoming events can be found at [oakland.edu/secs/calendar](http://www.oakland.edu/secs/calendar) (<http://www.oakland.edu/secs/calendar>).

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The School of Engineering and Computer Science is always interested in hearing from our alumni. E-mail us a few lines about your latest job, accomplishment or relocation to prawdzik@oakland.edu (<mailto:prawdzik@oakland.edu>).

"Lorenzo worked closely with the faculty to advance SECS academic and research programs," Dean Chamra said. "He was very committed to working with our graduate and undergraduate students, together with colleagues across Oakland University, to ensure that the school remains on its forward trajectory. Dr. Smith will be greatly missed in the school next year. He has aggressively advocated for increased research support for our students and committed his efforts to attracting top students into engineering, and taking graduate education to a new level of excellence."

As Co-founder and Director of the Chrysler Learning and Innovation Center For Sheet Metal Forming (CLIC-form), Smith acted as a leader to the students. His efforts helped evolve the way students are trained for the workplace, according to Bruce Williams Jr. Head of Quality Resident Engineering at Chrysler, who partnered with Smith.

"I want to take the time to thank Associate Dean Smith on the behalf of the CLIC students, instructors and I for all of his leadership in building a model that has changed the way the sheet metal industry is training students for the workplace.

Lorenzo's gentle and humble approach resonated in the students and the team involved with CLIC," Williams said. "I consider Lorenzo not only a partner but a friend. We will truly miss him. We can only hope that Lorenzo expands his scope and reach with his new university. They are very lucky to have such a passionate and caring individual on their team as Lorenzo Smith."

While working for OU, Smith was also a mentor to students. His service included serving as faculty advisor for the National Society of Black Engineers, in addition to hosting Grad Connection's first public forum and an engineering student bonfire, to name a few.

"Dr. Lorenzo Smith has been an excellent club adviser," said Jared Oluouch, President of the OU chapter of NSBE (National Society of Black Engineers). "He is always there for us for advice and consultations. He has made sure our activities are funded. He is such an inspiring role model."

Students and faculty alike wish Dr. Smith well, but said they will miss him as both a colleague and friend. He served not only as an instructor and Dean, but an inspiration and mentor to many.

"I will always remember the kindness of the OU people, the pride showing in the eyes of our senior design students, the unsolicited thanks from graduate students, the incredible working relationship I had with Dean Louay Chamra, and the amazing professional support from the Dean's office staff," Dr. Smith said.

Dr. Zou's background is mainly focused in tribology. She earned her B.S. in Mechanical Design and Manufacturing from Tsinghua University in China, in 1992. Continuing her studies at the college, two years later, she received her M.S. in Mechanology, and in 2001, her doctorate in Mechanical Design and Theory. During her stay in Tsinghua University, Dr. Zou worked at the National Tribology Laboratory, doing research in addition to lecturing. In 2002, she started at Oakland University as a visiting professor, soon moving up to assistant and associate professor for the Mechanical Engineering Department.

"Dr. Zou is an excellent teacher who has an extensive research record and great service to her department, SECS, and Oakland University," Dean Chamra said. "I strongly believe that she will do a great job in serving and helping SECS faculty and students to reach their full potential and achieve excellence in all areas of teaching, research and service."

When Dr. Zou begins her associate dean duties in August, she will also officially become a full professor. She said her experiences provided her with a solid basis for her teaching, which is something she really enjoys.

"I think teaching and research cannot be separated," Dr. Zou said. "Being a professor, one of the good things is that you teach students knowledge, but you also affect them in different aspects. This is the part I enjoy most as a professor." Bringing the research projects, and also, the current technology in the field will definitely make the student be more interested in the subject. I definitely think my research helped my teaching."

When Dean Chamra approached Dr. Zou about becoming dean, the offer surprised her at first.

Dr. Zou spoke with fellow faculty, her husband and Dr. Smith, and soon made her decision. She has since been shadowing Dr. Smith to learn the duties she will take on. Dr. Smith, like Dr. Zou, started as a faculty member, and said he enjoyed switching to associate dean.

"(After working with Dr. Smith) I'm more confident than before that I will be able to do a good job in this position," Dr. Zou said. "Dr. Smith gave me a lot of encouragement, and said I would be a good associate dean."

With a focus on organization and details, Dr. Zou is confident she will succeed in her new position. She has many changes she wants to enact, including improvements to the graduate program and admissions process, but the first step is getting settled in her new office, in the new engineering

building.

"I am honored to be given this position and I look forward to working with the faculty and students," Dr. Zou said. "I will do my best to serve them better in the future. If they have any questions, concerns or anything, I will be more than happy to help."

Dr. Sangeorzan appointed Interim Chair of Mechanical Engineering

Change is happening in the Oakland University School of Engineering. The long-anticipated new building opens early August, a new Associate Dean has been appointed, and now, a new Chair will be brought into the Mechanical Engineering Department.

Dr. Brian Sangeorzan has been appointed Interim Chair of the Mechanical Engineering Department, as Dr. Zissimos Mourelatos steps down to dedicate more time to research and teaching.

"Research in my opinion is extremely important, because among others, you advance the state of the art," Dr. Mourelatos said. "It allows us to continuously enhance the content of the taught material for the benefit of our students and also provides a healthy and exciting competitive environment with faculty members from Universities around the world to come up with the next "new" development in your area of expertise. In addition, it provides a forum to interact with practicing and research engineers, work with students in carrying out projects, and provide visibility to Oakland University."



Dr. Mourelatos earned his Ph. D. from the University in Michigan in 1985, and after 18 years at the General Motors R&D Center, he came to OU in 2003 where he served as the Chair of the Mechanical Engineering Department since 2010. He has decided not to seek reappointment but rather, "stay on as a professor, doing exactly what professors do — putting all my efforts into teaching, research, and service."

He noted that serving as the ME Department Chair was a great experience, which gave him a lot of perspective on how things work within the university.

As the new Chair, Dr. Sangeorzan comes with considerable experience, having been an OU faculty member since 1984.

"I've seen OU grow from a fairly small university, in an almost-rural area, into the current 20,000 student campus and vibrant surrounding community that we have today — quite a remarkable growth in a short period, especially the growth in professional schools and the new medical school," Sangeorzan said.

Before coming to OU, Dr. Sangeorzan earned his BSME at the University of Detroit, while working as a co-op student at Ford Motor Company (Engine Division), and stayed at U of D as a teaching assistant. For graduate studies, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, focusing on engine research. He has also worked at the US Army TACOM, General Motors Research Labs, FEV Engine Technology, Chrysler and conducted research for other organizations, including the EPA. During his time at OU, Dr. Sangeorzan recalls many enjoyable experiences.

"I have a lot of favorite moments — watching the 'lights go on' in a student who's been struggling with something, sharing the sense of accomplishment in one of my graduate students when they've completed their thesis or dissertation, meeting with former students who are now accomplished in their careers, and watching our SAE Formula team grow into a world-class contender," he said.

Dr. Sangeorzan said that serving as Chair for various committees within SAE, including serving as Chair of the 10,000 member SAE Detroit Section in 2012, was an important part of his experience. While he has big shoes to fill after the excellent work of previous chairs Dr. Mourelatos and Dr. Barber, Dr. Sangeorzan knows he has their support to further make a difference at OU as he takes on this position.

"It will be an exciting time for the school as we move into the new Engineering Center," Dr. Sangeorzan said. "Our students will benefit from state-of-the-art laboratories and new equipment and machine shop facilities. I think the new space will also invigorate the faculty, and bring recognition from the professional community. For me personally, every new role brings new challenges and opportunities."

Oakland University Robotics Club's hard work pays off

The Oakland University Robotics Association knows the value of hard work.

Taking home First Place for the Main Autonomous Navigation Challenge, Third Place in the Basic Autonomous Challenge, Third Place in the Interoperability Profile Challenge and the Grand Award for Overall Performance at the 22nd annual Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition didn't come easy. "(Winning) was an exciting moment — a stress relieving, load off the shoulders moment," member Sami Oweis said. "It meant even more for us when we were told that we had just broke a record that was held unbeaten since the Auto-Nav challenge was developed to finish the complete advanced course."

OU Engineering students Mike Truitt, Brian Neumeyer, Hudhaifa Jasim, Kevin Hallenbeck, Link Lorenz, Lucas Fuchs, Michael Norman, Micho Radovnikovich, Oscar Sanchez Vazquez, Parker Bidigare, Steve Grzebyk and Oweis make up the association.

IGVC was the club's biggest event, and hundreds of hours were spent building their robot, "Mantis," to perfect it for the international competition, allowing them to take home the Lescoe cup for the second year in a row.

Mantis had a wheelchair-based suspension with a lightweight aluminum superstructure, the programming power of two Lenovo ThinkPad computers, a removable electronic box and green lights for effect—a combination the team knew would be effective at IGVC.

And it was— at the Mantis it became the first and only robot to ever fully complete the Advance Autonomous Challenge course which was introduced in the IGVC three years ago.

"This year we were more ready than ever before," Hallenbeck said. "This meant more time for testing and tweaking parameters at the competition, and reasonable amounts of sleep."

Students involved say the club is a great opportunity to apply skills honed in the classroom into the real world. In addition, it gave them experience working as a team.

Being involved since IGVC's start, Oakland Robotics moved up from 20th, 13th and 3rd place, earning 1st for two years in a row, Grzebyk said.

"This was the eighth IGVC I've participated in since I was a junior in undergrad in 2007," said Radovnikovich. "Every single year since then we've improved, and it was really nice to see the team reach the peak this year, my first year as an advisor."

At this year's competition, Oakland broke the four year record of no team completing the advanced course, making a mark on the industry and the university.

"It will be an honor if the first place trophy graces the hall of the new state of the art engineering building when it opens," Grzebyk said. "It will serve as a reminder that we must continue with the proud tradition that this team has established, excellence in engineering and hard work. Now it falls to the senior members to step aside and help train and mentor a new generation of eager engineers."



Grand Opening of Engineering Center is around the corner



The School of Engineering and Computer Science's new Engineering Center continues to come along nicely. The Grand Opening takes place Friday, September 12.

Engineering and Computer Science Brag Corner

News and notes from around the School of Engineering and Computer Science.

School of Engineering and Computer Science

- Oakland University** has been cited in a ranking of the 25 most innovative companies in Southeast Michigan by Crain's Detroit Business. Oakland is ranked 23rd in the "Eureka Index," and is the only university that appears in the ranking. The ranking was determined by analyzing patents that were issued by organizations to identify those that were most innovative. Special mention is in order for **Dr. Lorenzo Smith** from the Department of Mechanical Engineering and **Dr. Hongwei Qu** from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in the School of Engineering and Computer Science. These individuals developed patents in 2013 that were acknowledged for quality and innovation that led to the ranking in Crain's.

Electrical and Computer Engineering

- Dr. Brian Dean** and his co-authors were notified that their journal, "Biomimetic signal conditioning and light adaptation for compound vision sensors," was accepted by the *IEEE Sensors Journal*.
- Dr. Jia Li** was offered a Senior Research Associateship award at the Air Force Research Laboratory/Sensors Directorate in Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies. This award is for three months and provides her an opportunity to pursue her approved research plan in association with Dr. Robert L. Ewing, who is an NRC approved research Adviser at the Air Force Research Laboratory/Sensors Directorate.
- Dr. Hoda S. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy** served as the Co-Chair of the IEEE National Aerospace & Electronics Conference, in Dayton, OH, June 25-27. Oakland University was listed as a co-sponsor of the event, at no cost – only through Dr. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy's work. At the conference, three of Dr. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy's students presented papers: **Ahmed AAI-Muraeb** and Hoda S. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy, "Study and Simulation of Microstructured Photonic Crystal Optical Fiber," **Stephanie Roth** and Hoda S. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy, "Radar Data Classifications using IC Daubechies Wavelet Chip," and **Thomas Bryant, Mohamed Zohdy**, and Hoda S. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy, "Improved Radar Angle of Arrival Classification using Modified Self-Organizing Feature Maps." Also at the conference, Dr. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy served as TRACK Chair on "Bio-inspired and cyber-physical applications." She will present a tutorial/workshop on "Bio-Inspired Chips for High Fidelity Classifications."
- Dr. Subramaniam Ganesan** has the following publications in May, 2014: I. Subramaniam Ganesan, Ravi Anand and Beena Anand, "Cloud based solution for collaborative manufacturing," *International journal of Advanced Manufacturing, IJAMS, Special issue on Agile Manufacturing*, Vol. 15, issue 1, 2014, pp. 103-110. –Won Best paper award. II. Madhur Bhattacharya, Aqeel F AQEEL, Subramaniam Ganesan "Suture Tension Monitoring device with wireless interface" *IJES, International Journal of embedded systems and computer engineering*, Volume 5, number 2, Jan-June 2014. III. Rohollah M Khosjki, Sami Oweis, Shumei Wang, George Pappas, Subramaniam Ganesan, "FPGA Hardware based implementation of an image watermarking system" *International Journal of Advanced Research in computer and communication engineering*, Vol. 3, issue 5, May 2014, pp 6400-6405. IV. Subramaniam Ganesan and Ravi Puvala, "Vehicle to Vehicle communication technology, secure protocols, spectrum requirement", NWRCs, National Wireless research collaboration symposium, Idaho Falls, May 14-16, 2014.
- Dr. Khalid Mirza** had the Nabtesco student project final presentation on May 16. The presentation went well and Nabtesco was happy with the results. Nabtesco Motion Control is the largest precision Cycloidal gearbox manufacturer in the world that are used on practically all the industrial robots. This is the first time this large Japanese company has collaborated with any university and we are honored that they chose Oakland University and gave a generous gift of \$50,000 for this student challenge and development of Robotics and Automation program in SECS.

Industrial and Systems Engineering

- The ISE Department will offer a new 2-credit course this fall semester titled *ISE 495/595 PLM Applications - Configuration and Change Management* to be taught by **Srinivas Kuppa** from Siemens PLM Inc. The course will involve heavy hands-on use of Teamcenter and will be taught out of the ISE Department's new Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) Laboratory. The course will meet once per week from 7:30-9:17 p.m. on Thursday evenings from Sept. 4 to Dec. 11, 2014. In addition to ISE students, this course is open to any engineer (ISE, ME, EE, etc.) for professional development. Due to its hands-on nature, class size is limited to 15 students. Please contact **Dr. Robert Van Til**, professor and chair at (248) 370-2211 or vantil@oakland.edu (<mailto:vantil@oakland.edu>) to learn more about the course and how to enroll for professional development.
- ISE graduate students **Ruth John** and **John Katona** are serving as instructors in SECS's summer K-12 STEM camps. They worked with the K-12 students on ergonomics and statistics projects. In addition, K-12 students will be coordinating a light show to be played at a concert by Katona later this summer.
- The ISE Department received a \$40,000 grant from the non-profit Enterprise Architecture Interest Group Inc. to support further development of a new course titled "Competing in a Connected World." The pilot Connect World course was offered in fall of 2013 and taught by ISE alumni **Gregg Garrett** of CGS Advisors LLC. The course is scheduled again for this fall, to be cross-listed with the School of Business Administration. Gregg will team-teach the course with Professor **Mohan Tanniru** and **Warren Ritchie** of CGS Advisors LLC.
- It's another busy summer for ISE students working on their paid summer internships at companies such as Chrysler, GM, Faurecia, Comau, R&E Automated Systems, AAM, ThyssenKrupp, Amazon and Disney. Please contact **Dr. Robert Van Til**, professor and chair, at (248) 370-2211 or vantil@oakland.edu (<mailto:vantil@oakland.edu>) if your company is interested in hiring an ISE student for an internship.

Mechanical Engineering

- **Dr. Xia Wang** has been named the SECS Distinguished Associate Professor. The title is conferred upon an Associate Professor who has exhibited preeminent scholarly achievement among all SECS Associate Professors.
- **Dr. Zissimos P. Mourelatos** has been re-elected as the John F. Dodge Chair of Engineering. The title is conferred upon a Full Professor who has exhibited preeminent scholarly achievement among all SECS Full Professors.
- **Dr. Chris Kobus**, professor and director of outreach and recruitment, won the 2014 SECS Teaching award.
- **Dr. Laila Guessous** won the 2014 SECS Service award.
- **Dr. Zissimos P. Mourelatos** has been awarded a \$100,050 grant from the US Army TARDEC through the University of Michigan for the project titled, "Restraint System Optimization with Finite Element Models: Simulation and Calibration-based Validation using Physical Tests."

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