

College of Engineering and Business

School of Engineering and Computing

Dahlkemper School of Business

A Note from the Dean

The holidays are here, and the splendor of the season is showing everywhere! Gannon is displaying its Christmas finery, and downtown Erie is aglow with beautiful lights and decorations to mark this special time for people of all faiths! As the wreaths, trees, garland, and lights indicate the start of the festivities, this season also reminds us to reflect on our accomplishments over this past semester.

It's been such an active and exciting time for our students marked by incredible events, such as the official opening of MakerSpace in the Center for Manufacturing and Technology and the Career Fair to name a few. These activities and so many more are helping to shape our students' experience here at Gannon and help them grow and develop into productive and innovative global citizens who are mindful of their impact on the world.

Please take a few moments to celebrate who we are and where we're going. With 2024 right around the corner, could there be a more perfect time to both look back and look ahead, to process all that we've done, and speculate on all that is yet to be done? May this new year prove to be an even more productive and eventful time for us all as, together, we continue to believe in the possibilities.

Karinna M. Vernaza, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Engineering and Business.



Dr. Karinna Vernaza, Dean of the College of Engineering and Business, Dr. Sarah Ewing, Provost and Vice President of Student Experience and Academic Affairs, and Dr. Walter Iwanenko, President, as they cut the ribbon during the dedication and blessing ceremony for the opening of MakerSpace in the Center for Manufacturing and Technology (6th Floor of I-HACK).



Jeanette Schnars, Ph.D., Executive Director, Erie RSC

Litter Capture Devices Piloted in Presque Isle Bay

Once again, Gannon, along with an impressive list of stakeholders, is showing its commitment to the environment with an emphasis on our area's greatest natural resource: Lake Erie, and specifically, Presque Isle Bay. Litter control booms are being used to not only collect trash and debris that finds its way into the bay, but the contents are being studied to determine the type of litter and, more importantly, where the litter is coming from.

To support the pilot program, Gannon students, Kendall McGarity and Santiago Torres, started this past June monitoring the two points of stormwater discharge in Presque Isle Bay while interning at the Regional Science Consortium (RSC). They have been collecting and testing samples, and have found that the most common litter is cigarette debris. While it may seem

obvious to some, many do not recognize that they are contributing to the problem that has both lasting and devastating effects on a vulnerable environment, such as the bay and the lake. So what can be done? It starts with us, by being responsible citizens who don't contribute to the litter. This project aligns with [Gannon's NePTWNE initiative](#). To see the full story as reported on *Erie New Now*, [CLICK HERE](#).

Dedication and Blessing of MakerSpace



The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, Bishop of the Diocese of Erie, blessing the MakerSpace in the Center for Manufacturing and Technology this past October 6, 2023.



The Center for Manufacturing and Technology is a premier workspace for manufacturing innovation and hands-on learning that encompasses Gannon's new, versatile and high-tech MakerSpace. Located on I-HACK's sixth floor, students as well as small businesses now have access to learn and practice cutting-edge techniques to develop products and advance traditional manufacturing into a new age of technology. The resources here are also available to larger businesses to engage with members of Gannon in research and development opportunities for their companies.

President Dr. Walter Iwanenko, opened the day with a sincere greeting to the those in attendance and recognized supporters of the new facility, "Thank you to representatives of our funding partners who are here as well as our development and construction partners. None of this—none of it—would happen if it wasn't for your confidence in us, your support, and your countless hours of careful planning and execution to bring the vision of this floor to life...We would also like to acknowledge and thank our university donors, our alumni, representatives from our federal and state government, county and city officials, community leaders through our partnering agencies, our faculty, our staff, and our students—this also does not happen without your commitment and support."

As a resource, the benefits of this new space and its far-reaching effects cannot be measured, but the possibilities truly are endless in terms of connecting manufacturing and technology needs to solutions.

Nick Devine, Design and Fabrication Engineer for the Center for Manufacturing and Technology and proud Gannon alumnus shared these comments, "I have had the pleasure of being part of the development of this floor from day one. It has been an honor working with such an amazing team, especially our students. They provided their ideas and input and have been here every moment they can, ensuring everything functions how we've envisioned it together, so that this space is a valuable resource for everyone."



The MakerSpace, Center for Manufacturing and Technology floor houses 10 distinct areas dedicated to advanced manufacturing techniques and production. The university received over \$1.2 million in grant and donor support to furnish these sections with high-end technology found at today's leading manufacturers.

"We are proud to bring the Center for Manufacturing and Technology to our students and community," said Karinna Vernaza, Ph.D., dean of the College of Engineering and Business. "There is technology here that is not available anywhere else on campus. This will expose our students to new manufacturing technologies and give them a more competitive edge as graduates." She continued, "This Center is integral to the entrepreneurial ecosystem that Gannon has created."





X-Culture Global Business Symposium

A week-long competition, the X-Culture Global Business Symposium was held at Curie Skłodowska University, Gannon's partner institution in Poland. With only 150 students and 25 professors invited worldwide to participate, we're proud that Dahlkemper School of Business students Halle Petrillo and Edwin Lopez, along with Dr. Bruce Kibler were counted as invitees.

Curie Skłodowska University Hosts Symposium, July 2023

X-Culture unites companies with international business challenges to global virtual teams (GVT) of students (approximately 15,000 worldwide) with a universal objective: find business solutions to those challenges. X-Culture promotes cooperation and teaches participating students how to overcome barriers, such as varying cultures, languages and time zones. The culmination is Global Business Week, where top-performing students are invited to compete.

Gannon's participation in this year's Symposium was supported in part by a Gannon University Barker Grant and the Dahlkemper Endowment. With Dahlkemper School of Business's emphasis on experiential opportunities for students, their involvement with the X-Culture Global Business Symposium met this school objective as a value-added experience. Along with the event, students with Dr. Kibler visited MasterMedia, Europe's largest food distribution company and one of the corporate participants in this year's Symposium.



Halle Petrillo, Dr. Bruce Kibler, and Edwin Lopez

Investing in Their Futures: Career Fair 2023



Welcome to Career Fair 2023!



Full Access: Students and Employers Were Brought Together to Network and Explore Jobs and Intern Opportunities

Held September 19, 2023, from 11:00AM-4:00PM in the I-HACK building, this year's Career Fair was, once again, an amazing success in terms of attendance and participation, and more importantly with regard to networking and student access to services. The event provided a time and place for students and employers to connect, to meet, ask questions, discuss opportunities, and initiate relationships. Career Fair 2023 didn't disappoint...it surpassed all expectations.

Over the five-hour period, 560 students converged on I-HACK, and they took full advantage of the easy access to the 65 employers set up there. Mutually beneficial, the employers were able to arrange for interviews, internships, and job prospects, advancing opportunities for both students and employers.

Employment readiness was the order of the day for Gannon's Career Closet, available through Student Success Center. Students were encouraged to make the necessary preparations to land their ideal job. A checklist of considerations, such as copies of their resume, questions for employers, and professional attire were all presented at the portable Career Closet. Consider joining us in 2024.



Professional Headshots



Portable Career Closet



International Mechanical Engineering Congress & Exposition



Shubhankar Desai, Nishant Thakkar, Vijay Javvaji, Davide Piovesan, and Irati Arzalluz

Gannon was a presence at the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' IMECE 2023 event held in New Orleans, October 29-November 2, 2023. Gannon Professors Drs. Davide Piovesan and Longyan Chen, along with students, Nishant Thakkar, Shubhankar Desai, Vijay Javvaji, and Irati Arzalluz, presented topics from the synthesis of biodegradable plastic from beer spent grain (BSG), the creation of new green materials for 3D printing, the creation of composite material with BSG and Mushroom Mycelia, new rehabilitation devices, to the construction of a flight simulator.

The annual event draws from a diverse group including research leaders from academia, government, and industry who come together to share insights for innovation across engineering disciplines.

Featured speakers this year included representatives from Lockheed Martin Space, Georgia Institute of Technology, MIT, Argonne National Laboratory, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, University of Kansas, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and Rice University. For additional information about the expo, [CLICK HERE](#).

Presque Isle CPCU Chapter I-Day 2023 Event

I-Day, also known as Insurance Day, was held this year in Gannon's Yehl Ballroom. Largely attended by local agents, insurance company representatives and other industry affiliates, the event began with an informative and educational keynote address by Greg Zimmerman, Vice President of Claims Talent at Erie Insurance on the topic of Conflict Resolution.

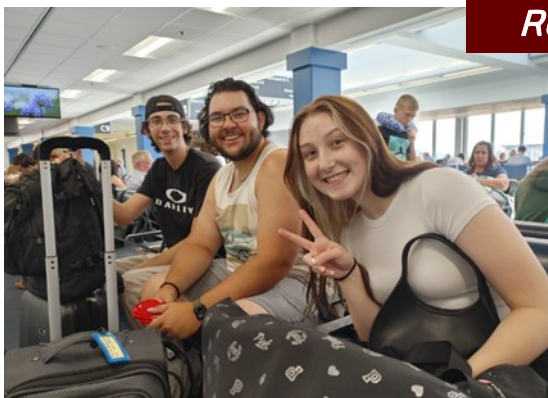
Guests heard from a panel of three Gannon alumni—Sean Dugan and Lee'a Thigpen with [Erie Insurance](#), and Anthony Cusati of [Sitter Insurance](#). Joining the panel on Attracting Talent were Gannon's own Dr. Emma Wei of the [Dahlkemper School of Business](#) and Dr. Alyson Eagle of the [Career Exploration and Development Office](#). Each panelist brought unique perspectives on pathways and platforms to recruit and retain top-tier talent in the industry.



Dr. Alyson Eagle



Dr. Emma Wei



Reflection on HASP Thermal & Vacuum Testing

Sara Jones, rising sophomore and Cyber Engineering student, reflects on her recent research experience. Headed by Dr. Wookwon Lee, chair of the Electrical and Cyber Engineering department and Sara's advisor, this five-day project was established to conduct thermal and vacuum testing on a payload created for a livestream of the solar eclipse (October 2023 and April 2024), part of the Nationwide Eclipse Ballooning Project. Sara, along with her advisor and colleagues, Zack Dickinson and Jack White, traveled to Palestine, Texas, to prepare and test their payload: changing the altitude and temperature to determine if the payload would be able to function in different conditions.

While there were many challenges along the way, the team went home happy and exhausted—after five hours into testing on the final day, they had achieved their goal.

Sara wants to thank her fellow workers on the project who labored alongside with her over the week in Texas to ensure the success of the project. She has an even bigger thank you to her supervisor, Dr. Lee, who encouraged her to work hard, stay focused, and never give up. The experience taught her about working as a team, solving last-minute problems, and how to adapt and overcome obstacles. She added that she is very grateful for all the opportunities she gets here at Gannon, and she looks forward to the start of a new semester.



Welcome to New Faculty



Dr. Longfei Zhou

Assistant Professor, Industrial Engineering at Gannon University since he joined the faculty in May 2023, Dr. Longfei Zhou holds positions in both the BISE department and the Center for Manufacturing and Technology at I-Hack. Dr. Zhou's research interests revolve around smart manufacturing, scheduling, simulation, and AI.

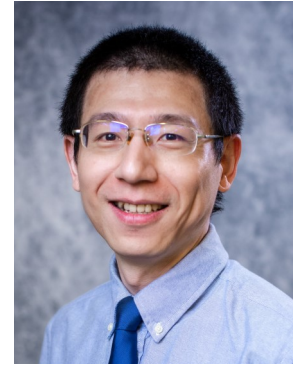
Dr. Zhou completed his Ph.D. degree at Beihang University in 2018 and later pursued a postdoctoral position at the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab at MIT starting in January 2019. During his time at MIT, he did research on AI technologies for manufacturing and transportation and served as the MIT Postdoc Association Fundraising Chair. In November 2020, he transitioned to Duke University as a postdoc, focusing on the development of AI algorithms for imaging.

Dr. Zhou has authored over 40 research papers that have garnered more than 1200 citations worldwide. He has also made significant contributions to the field by publishing a National Standard in China as a main drafter, holding two patents, and authoring two books.

Dr. Zhou's accomplishments have been recognized through several prestigious awards, including the Outstanding Contribution Award from the IEEE International Conference on Universal Village in 2020, the Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award from the China Simulation Society in 2019, and the Outstanding Graduate Award from the Beijing Municipal Education Commission in 2018.

In addition to his research and academic achievements, Dr. Zhou actively participates in the scholarly community. He serves as an editorial board member for two journals and acts as a guest editor for the journal *Sensors*. Furthermore, he takes on responsibilities such as session chair or program chair for various conferences organized by IEEE, ASME, and CIRP.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Finance. While he is a visiting professor for the remainder of this school year, Dr. Wang has accepted a permanent position as Assistant Professor of Finance starting Fall 2024. The combination of his teaching philosophy, passion, and respect for his students and their education made the decision for the committee an easy one.



Dr. Lei Wang

"I believe that teaching should be a collaborative effort inside and outside of the classroom. Through students' inputs, professional development workshops, and advice from my colleagues, I have always tried to improve and tailor my teaching style for each of my courses," stated Dr. Wang. His research interest is on topics related to assets pricing, market microstructure, investor behavior, international finance, and cryptocurrency market.

Dr. Wang earned his Ph.D. from the University of New Orleans and currently is featured in two publications. In one of them, he identified the market timing abilities of mean-variance strategies and their sensitivity to estimation error as two key drivers that are able to capture the pro-cyclical dynamics of mean-variance profitability. In another one, he designed an equilibrium model for the mining market in the presence of professional and casual miners. They found that technological enhancements have a negative impact on the activities of casual miners and resulted in professional miners' monopolies. In addition to the already impressive submissions, he has several papers under review.

Along with teaching and research, Dr. Wang is currently serving on the Dahlkemper School of Business Assessment Committee. He is excited to contribute to the field of economics, business, and finance through his research and to make a lasting and positive impact on the lives of his students.

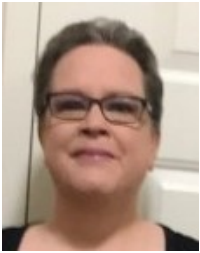
Announcements

We are happy to announce a successful ABET visit during the fall semester for the Biomedical, Cyber, Electrical, Environmental, Industrial and Robotics, Software, and Mechanical Engineering accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET. During the same visit, Computer Science and Cybersecurity were reviewed by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET.



Accreditation
Board for
Engineering and
Technology

Welcome to New Staff



Natalie Luksan

Secretary, BISE and Mechanical Engineering Born and raised in California, Natalie has two degrees in Business Administration and spent much of her career in Human Resources and Office Management. As a professional, she volunteered extensively for numerous Boards, Commissions, and Committees, including the Chamber of Commerce, City Civil Service Commission, and served as President of the Human Resource Association of Central California.

In 2009, Natalie moved to Germany to work as a government employee on a U.S. military base. During that time, she also volunteered over 5,000 hours at the local U.S. military hospital, earning her numerous awards, including an office of the President of the United States "Lifetime Achievement Award" and an American Red Cross "Service to the Armed Forces Award," for which she is especially proud because of who she was serving. However, during that time in Germany, her father passed away and her mother moved back to the Erie area (where her mother was born and raised), so Natalie decided to move to Erie in 2019 to be close to her mother. She also has a beloved dog, Phoebe. Natalie looks forward to bringing not only her extensive experience, but also her kind spirit to Gannon.

Congratulations!

Drs. Ramakrishnan Sundaram and Lin Zhao, professors in the Electrical and Cyber Engineering department, were awarded the PA Space Grant in the amount \$12,000 each in the 2023 summer.

For 35 years, the Pennsylvania Space Grant College and Fellowship Program has been working to expand opportunities in Pennsylvania for citizens to learn about and participate in NASA programs by supporting STEM education, training, research, and public understanding while promoting multi-faceted diversity among project participants. The program is one of 52 NASA Space Grant programs across the country that are part of the NASA-run initiative to support educational initiatives in the STEM fields – science, technology, engineering and mathematics.



Dr. Ramakrishnan Sundaram



Dr. Lin Zhao

Welcome to Our Newest Addition



Westley Orion and Saoirse Wolfe

Born to Caitlyn and Jordan Wolfe, this is Westley Orion Wolfe with his sister Saoirse. He was born 8 lbs. exactly on October 31, 2023, at 3:07 pm. His sister is over the moon to have a sibling as evidenced in the photo. Both parents are Gannon employees: Caitlyn works for the College of Engineering and Business as the School of Engineering Secretary, and Jordan is an Assistant Professor in the theatre department. For the record, the parents are over the moon as well.

Upcoming Events

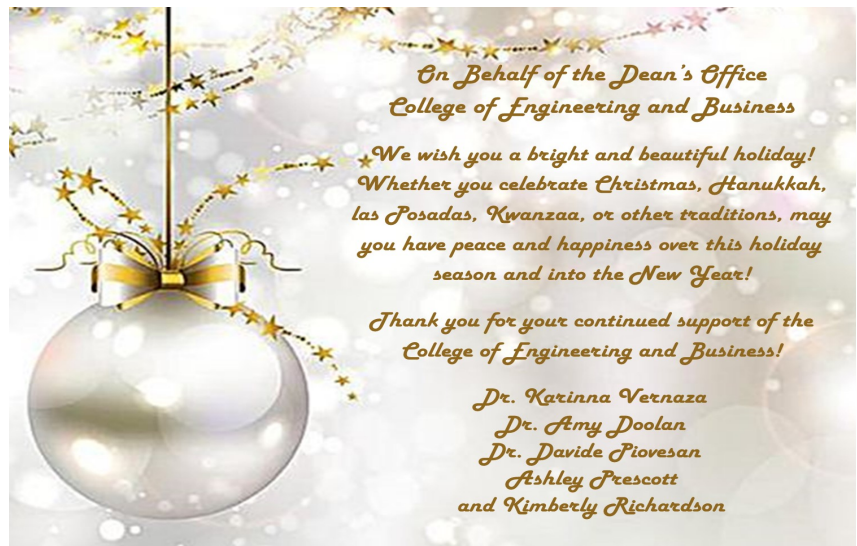
Thursday, January 4, 2024, 9:00A-10:30A
New Faculty Orientation—Palumbo Room 1050

Friday, January 5, 2024, 10:30A-1:30P
CEFL Community Expo for Teaching—Nash Library

Friday, January 5, 2024, 12:45P-2:00P
CEB Faculty Photos—CBI 104 (before College Meeting)

Friday, January 5, 2024, 2:00P-4:00P
CEB College Meeting—CBI Lobby

Friday, January 12, 2024, 3:00P-4:30P
Faculty & Staff Community Meeting—Yehl Ballroom



*On Behalf of the Dean's Office
College of Engineering and Business*

*We wish you a bright and beautiful holiday!
Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah,
las Posadas, Kwanzaa, or other traditions, may
you have peace and happiness over this holiday
season and into the New Year!*

*Thank you for your continued support of the
College of Engineering and Business!*

*Dr. Karinna Vernaza
Dr. Amy Doolan
Dr. Davide Piovesan
Ashley Prescott
and Kimberly Richardson*