



SMU^{In} *STRIDE*

Quarterly Newsletter

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Committed to Excellence!

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Editorial

Dear Valued Readers,

Welcome to the September 2025 edition (Volume 27, Number 72) of SMU in Stride.

This issue brings you a rich collection of updates and highlights from across our university community. In our **Teaching and Learning** section, we feature the recent graduation ceremony, a strategic planning briefing on SMU's Fourth Strategic Plan, and an update on the ISO project's progress and key milestones.

Our **Research and Development** column showcases the vibrant academic culture at SMU, with coverage of the 17th National Multi-disciplinary Seminar, the 19th National Student Research Forum, and the 13th Open and Distance Learning Seminar.

Under **Partnerships, Outreach, and Community Engagement**, we proudly highlight SMU's donation of over 5,400 books to support educational initiatives in Lideta Sub-City—an inspiring example of our commitment to community empowerment.

We deeply appreciate your continued interest and support for SMU in Stride. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome as we strive to strengthen our communication and connection with you.

Enjoy the reading!

International Relations and Communication Office, St. Mary's University

NEWS AND EVENTS

Teaching and Learning

St. Mary's University Secures Full Program Re-Registration Approval

St. Mary's University is proud to announce a significant milestone in its academic journey. Following a rigorous nationwide re-registration process led by the Education and Training Authority, our institution has been officially approved to continue offering all undergraduate and postgraduate programs. This distinction places St Mary's among only two universities nationwide to have met the full criteria required for continued academic operation across all levels.

This achievement reflects the unwavering commitment, resilience, and collaborative spirit of the entire university community. Faculty, administrative staff, students, and leadership alike have played a vital role in ensuring that Saint Mary's upholds the highest standards of educational excellence and institutional integrity.

The re-registration process, designed to assess and reinforce quality assurance across higher education institutions, involved comprehensive evaluations of academic programs, governance structures, infrastructure, and student support systems. St Mary's successful outcome is a testament to its dedication to continuous improvement and its alignment with national educational priorities.

As we celebrate this accomplishment, we extend our deepest gratitude to every member of the university—your contributions, both individual and collective, have made this possible. Looking ahead, we encourage all stakeholders to maintain the same level of diligence and passion that brought us here. Let this serve not only as a moment of pride but also as a renewed call to sustain and elevate our institutional standards.

Together, we reaffirm our commitment to shaping a future of academic excellence, innovation, and inclusive growth.

St Mary's University Relocates its Undergraduate Campus to Roosevelt Street

St Mary's University is pleased to announce the relocation of its undergraduate programs and associated services to a newly built campus on Roosevelt Street.

Previously based near the WabeShebele Hotel, all academic and administrative operations for undergraduate students have now transitioned to the Roosevelt Street location, which is conveniently situated next to the university's Main Campus.

This move marks a significant step in enhancing campus integration, improving accessibility, and providing a better learning environment for its undergraduate students.





St. Mary's University Hosts Graduation Ceremony

St. Mary's University conferred degrees on its undergraduate and postgraduate students on August 3, 2025, at the Ethiopian National Theatre.



In his keynote address, Tedla Haile, Executive Vice President of St. Mary's University, extended heartfelt congratulations to the graduates for their commendable academic achievements.

He acknowledged the graduates' dedication and the unwavering support of the faculty and staff, which were instrumental in the students' successful academic journeys. He emphasized that the University's commitment to education, research, and community engagement has been pivotal in nurturing thousands of professionals over the past quarter-century, thereby significantly contributing to the nation's progress.

"Building on the successful works of the past years, the University's education and training services have continued to render various postgraduate and undergraduate programs this year," he remarked.

Reflecting on the University's enduring legacy of excellence, he announced that the University has presented prospective postgraduates and undergraduates who have completed their studies as per the University's standards and passed the Higher Education Exit Exam (HEEE) and met the appropriate graduation requirements.

The Vice President enunciated that, over the past few years, the institution has made indispensable strides to prepare the prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students for their graduation. He divulged that, following the guidance from the Ministry of Education, the University had implemented well-organized training programs designed to build key undergraduate competencies for the National HEEE.



He highlighted that, as a result of these endeavors, more than 64% of the students successfully passed the entrance exams. On that occasion, he expressed his deepest gratitude to the prospective graduates for their excellent performance, acknowledged the support of their families, and lauded the dedication of the University's instructors, staff, and administrative bodies, who had played an instrumental role in preparing the students.

The guest of honor, Sr. Zebider Zewdie, Visionary Founder and Executive Director of MaryJoy Ethiopia, a charity organization, had the honor of rewarding graduates with the highest distinctions.



In her closing remarks, the guest of honor imparted sage advice, urging the graduates to aspire to greatness by embracing values of equality, unity, respect, tolerance, empathy, and love—virtues our nation dearly requires. She underlined that the graduates’ future success hinges on patriotic fervor, a positive outlook, fairness, integrity, dedication, and a robust work ethic. “Your vision will be clear, and your mission accomplished, as long as you apply your education with zeal and wisdom, and are advised to engage in charitable acts,” she affirmed.



A Briefing Session on the Fourth Strategic Plan

On August 2, 2025, the Academic Vice President’s Office, in collaboration with the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA), organized a vital briefing session on St. Mary’s University’s Fourth Strategic Plan (2025/26–2029/30) for all planning units at the Syndicate Room.



The session, led by Misraaku Mola (PhD), SMU’s Academic Vice President, focused on outlining the development process, highlighting the revised vision, mission, strategic goals, and core values of the University as per the standards of the Education and Training Authority (ETA).

He delved into the seven strategic directions, which deal with transformative teaching, impactful research, community engagement, governance, strategic partnerships, digital transformation, and quality assurance. The strategic plan includes 25 strategic objectives and 102 major activities, supported by a proposed budget framework and a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan.

The participants actively engaged in the discussion and received clarifications on a range of important issues. In summary, the dialogues were proved to be fruitful.



SMU Management Briefed on ISO Project Progress and Key Milestones

St. Mary's University (SMU) held a strategic briefing session on September 18, 2025, to update its top and middle management on the progress of its ISO 21001:2018 certification project. Led by Ato Shimelis Tamiru, the University's ISO Management Representative, the session underscored the global relevance of ISO standards in enhancing quality management, operational efficiency, stakeholder confidence, innovation, and consumer protection. Ato Shimelis emphasized that SMU's pursuit of the ES ISO 21001:2018 certification marks a significant milestone in its broader quality enhancement agenda, supported by a technical partnership with IES.

The presentation detailed SMU's journey thus far, including the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement, the formation and training of the ISO task force, the completion of a comprehensive gap assessment with IES, and the dissemination of its findings. A key achievement highlighted was the documentation phase, now halfway complete, with the task force having developed and controlled various ISO-aligned documents such as operational forms, checklists, procedures, and system protocols. Looking ahead, the presenter outlined critical upcoming milestones: conducting a risk assessment through organizational chart reviews, performing a full organizational risk analysis, preparing the Context Manual and Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) Manual, tailoring procedures and policies to SMU's specific context, implementing the full educational management system, training internal auditors, executing internal audits and management reviews, resolving non-conformities, and ultimately securing ISO 21001:2018 certification.

The session wrapped up with presentations from various planning units, followed by a dynamic exchange between the steering committee and ISO specialist. Attendees emphasized the need to integrate ISO responsibilities throughout all departments and urged staff to take an active role in documentation efforts. The conversation also highlighted difficulties in harmonizing internal standards with ISO criteria, among other topics. Overall, the event reinforced SMU's steadfast dedication to quality assurance and its collective drive toward achieving this important certification.



Research and Development

SMU Hosts the 17th National Multi-disciplinary Seminar,

St. Mary's University (SMU) hosted its 17th Multi-disciplinary Seminar on July 17, 2025, at the American Corner located in the main campus of the University. The event convened an impressive array of scholars, researchers, practitioners, and development partners to explore pressing societal challenges through diverse academic perspectives. The seminar has long been recognized as a cornerstone of intellectual exchange, and this year's edition continued that legacy by offering a vibrant platform for dialogue across multiple disciplines.

In his opening address, SMU Founder and President Dr. Wondwosen Tamrat (Associate Professor) reflected on the university's sustained commitment to hosting the annual seminar. He emphasized the value of its multidisciplinary nature, stating that the forum has become a highly respected tradition—welcoming contributors from varied backgrounds to share research that sparks meaningful discussion and informs public discourse.

A total of ten research papers were presented at this year's seminar, each reflecting the event's strategic commitment to multidisciplinary inquiry. The topics ranged from technological innovation and digital

participants from various fields but also delivered actionable insights relevant to contemporary challenges.

Presentations came from both private and public institutions, including Arbaminch University, Werabe University, Bahir Dar University, Woldia University, Medda-Welabu University, JTA Ethiopia, and St. Mary's University. This diverse group of contributors underscored the growing importance of collaboration between academia, civil society, and industry in producing research with wide-reaching impact.



Following each presentation, attendees engaged in dynamic discussions that allowed presenters to expand on their findings and respond to thoughtful questions. These exchanges helped deepen collective understanding, as participants shared ideas, raised critical points, and explored practical implications.



transformation to economic issues such as inflation and rural poverty. Also featured were studies on small and medium enterprise development, e-marketing practices, and the legal frameworks guiding financial systems. Educational and social themes held equal weight, focusing on student learning outcomes. This diverse collection of research not only engaged



SMU Hosts the 19th National Student Research Forum

St. Mary's University (SMU) held the 19th National Student Research Forum at St. Mary's University, American Corner, located in the Main Campus on July 24, 2025. This annual event, dubbed "By Students, for Students," continues to provide an invaluable platform for undergraduates from various higher learning institutions to share their research findings with students and the SMU community.



For the last 18 years, this forum has been a cornerstone for academic exchange where students can showcase their research and learn from one another.

Misraku Mola (PhD), Academic Vice President of St. Mary's University, delivered an inspiring opening remark to kick off the event. He highlighted that the primary goal of the forum is to provide an opportunity for students to practice presenting their research at a professional conference.



Every aspect of the forum was driven by students. From the master of ceremony to the chairpersons and

rapporteurs, students took the lead in the event. This provided them with opportunities to enhance their skills, further preparing them for future professional accomplishments.

The forum featured nine research papers from a wide range of disciplines, including e-commerce, psychology, information system practice, management and finance.

After the presentations, lively discussions ensued, with participants asking questions and engaging in insightful conversations with the presenters. This interactive session allowed the presenters to explain their research in more detail and receive valuable recommendations and suggestions.

SMU Hosts the 13th Open and Distance Learning Seminar

On September 1, 2025, St. Mary's University successfully hosted the 13th Open and Distance Learning Seminar (ODLS) at the American Corner, located on its main campus. The event was organized by the College of Distance Learning (CODL) in collaboration with the Research and Knowledge Management Office (RaKMO). Centered on the theme "The Future of ODL: How Policy, Pedagogy, and Digital Transformation are Reshaping Open and Distance Learning," the seminar brought together educators, researchers, and practitioners to explore the evolving landscape of open and distance education.



The seminar was opened by a welcoming Speech by Wondwosen Tamrat (PhD, Assoc. Prof.), Founder and President of St. Mary's University. He stated that this seminar remains the only one of its kind in Ethiopia, fully dedicated to the field of distance and open learning—a mode of education that is rapidly emerging as a global alternative to traditional, face-to-face learning. Through this approach, thousands of Ethiopians who would otherwise have been excluded from higher education have been able to access learning opportunities, in line with the government's enduring commitment to access and equity.



Following the welcoming speech, an opening speech was made by Eba Mijena (PhD, Academic Affairs Executive Director of the Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) who mentioned the importance of the contributions of distance learners to professional development and the government's efforts towards that goal and highlighted the government's commitment to integrating digital solutions in education.



Following the welcoming speech, a keynote speech was delivered on digitalization and its implications for open and distance learning by Professor Santosh Panda, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India, who set the intellectual tone for the day. Prof. Panda delved into the profound implications of digitalization for Open and Distance Learning, providing a global perspective on the opportunities and challenges ahead.



A significant highlight of the seminar was a panel discussion on "Ethiopia's new digital policy and its implications for open and distance learning." The discussion featured insights from prominent figures: Dr. Getahun Mekonnen (Lead Advisor, e-SHE Project, FDRE Ministry of Education), Dr. Tsigie GebreMeskel (Director, UNISA Ethiopia Regional Learning Centre), and Mekonnen Tadesse (PhD Candidate, Dean, Faculty of International Programs, SMU). The panel explored the strategic alignment of national policy with pedagogical innovation and institutional readiness.



The seminar featured a series of research presentations showcasing cutting-edge studies from various universities. Notably, scholars from the University of Gondar, Wolayta Sodo University, and St. Mary's University explored the broader challenges and opportunities surrounding Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in developing countries. The full-day session continued with insightful presentations addressing practical challenges and proposing solutions within the realm of distance education.

also acknowledged all contributors and organizers and extended heartfelt thanks for their invaluable engagement in making the event a success.



The hybrid format of the event, offering both in-person and virtual participation via Zoom enabled vibrant discussions among attendees, fostering a collaborative atmosphere to shape the future of ODL in Ethiopia and beyond.



The seminar concluded with closing remarks by Ato Behailu Tamiru, Dean of the College of Open and Distance Learning, who emphasized the seminar's significance as a vital platform for dialogue and innovation in the evolving landscape of ODL. He



Partnership, Outreach and Community Services

SMU Donates Over 5,400 Books to Empower Education in Lideta Sub-City

In a remarkable act of generosity and commitment to community development, St. Mary's University donated a total of 5,441 books to the Lideta Sub-City administration, on August 6, 2025. The donation included 4,765 books to the Lideta Sub-City Administration and 676 books to the Lideta Sub-City Woreda 10 Administration. This charitable initiative reflects the university's enduring dedication to promoting literacy, supporting public institutions, and fostering a culture of learning beyond the walls of academia.



The donated books span a wide range of subjects, offering valuable resources for students, educators, and community members. Representatives from both the university and the sub-city administrations attended the handover ceremony, expressing mutual appreciation and a shared vision for educational empowerment. The gesture is expected to enhance local libraries, boost reading programs, and provide academic support to underserved communities.

Successful Student Stories

Compiled by the International Relations & Communication Office, SMU

Sophonias Girma, a 2025 graduate of St. Mary's University (SMU), exemplifies academic excellence and personal resilience. Earning a cumulative GPA of 3.6 from the Department of Management, his journey from a natural science background to thriving in social sciences is a testament to determination, adaptability, and the power of support.

Choosing SMU: A Bold Shift

Originally assigned to a public university with plans to pursue medicine, Sophonias made a pivotal decision to enroll at SMU, a private institution in Addis Ababa. Drawn by its reputation for quality education and fair tuition, he embraced the challenge of switching disciplines. "Coming from a natural science background, I feared the transition to social sciences would be difficult," he shared.

"But my time in the Management Department was exciting and memorable—it exceeded all my expectations."

Keys to Success: Support, Mentorship, and Family

Sophonias credits his academic success to the unwavering support of his instructors and family. He fondly recalls the impact of Ato Abate Lakew, a mentor whose guidance left a lasting imprint on his academic journey. "The instructors were incredibly supportive, and the learning environment was welcoming," he said.

His mother, Tsigerdeda Worku, a teacher, played a crucial role in his progress, offering daily encouragement and helping him build strong relationships with faculty. His sister Bezawit Girma and his uncle also provided motivation, pushing him to pursue international professional aspirations. At one point, he was offered a job that could have interrupted his studies, but thanks to the advice of mentors, he chose to stay the course and complete his education.

Reflections on SMU: Strengths and Opportunities

Now working in international business and engaging with students from various institutions, Sophonias appreciates SMU's commitment to transparency, fair grading, and student engagement.

He praised SMU's qualified and dedicated faculty, as well as its extracurricular programs that helped him develop soft skills. Apprenticeships, field trips, and

resources like the American Corner exposed students to global perspectives and practical experiences.

However, he noted areas for improvement, such as scheduling flexibility. “Sometimes students spend an entire day on campus for just one class,” he observed. He also suggested inviting industry professionals for practical lectures to bridge the gap between theory and real-world application.

Working While Studying: A Balancing Act

In his second year, Sophonias completed a three-month certification and began working part-time as a communications salesperson. He managed his time effectively, gaining both financial support and valuable experience.

Advice to Fellow Students

Sophonias urges current students to reflect on their purpose: “Are you here just for a diploma, or to truly gain knowledge and live by it?” He encourages students to embrace change, contribute to their communities, and consider working part-time after their second year to build practical skills and financial independence.

Sophonias Girma’s journey at St. Mary’s University is a shining example of how dedication, mentorship, and a supportive environment can shape a student’s future. His story continues to inspire others to pursue excellence and make the most of their university experience.



Sophoniyas Girma is currently the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Stenar Trading, a local organization committed to empowering individuals

and institutions through comprehensive educational programs, training, and consultation services. In partnership with St. Mary’s University (SMU), the initiative supports the creation of meaningful career opportunities for graduates.

Beamlak Tadese: A Story of Determination, Balance, and Excellence

The International Relations and Communication Office of St. Mary’s University interviewed Beamlak Tadese to learn about her experiences and the factors that contributed to her remarkable success. Here is her story:

Choosing SMU and Her University Experience

When asked why she chose St. Mary’s University, Beamlak Tadese spoke with clarity and conviction. “I decided to study at SMU because it has many years of experience and offers a degree in marketing management, which I was deeply interested in,” she said. Her decision was rooted in both trust and passion — she believed in the institution’s reputation and was eager to pursue a field that aligned with her aspirations.

Her university experience, she recalled, was both enriching and joyful. “My time at SMU was great. I made a lot of friends and really liked the environment,” she shared. The campus atmosphere, the friendships she built, and the opportunities to grow both academically and personally made her years at SMU unforgettable.

Academic Achievement and Recognition

Beamlak’s dedication culminated in an extraordinary academic record. In 2025, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Marketing Management through the regular program, earning a cumulative GPA of 3.90. Her outstanding performance was recognized with a trophy awarded to her as one of the top graduates of the year — a moment she described as deeply fulfilling. “Receiving that award was a proud moment. It felt like all the hard work had truly paid off,” she said.

Keys to Success: Support, Mentorship, and Family

Reflecting on what contributed to her success, Beamlak emphasized the importance of discipline

and early effort. “I studied very hard, especially during the first semesters. That was when I laid the foundation— I learned how the system worked, how to study effectively, and how to manage my time,” she explained.

She also credited her family for their unwavering support. “My family played a big role. They encouraged me to study late at night and supported me financially. Their belief in me kept me going,” she said with gratitude.

Mentorship and quality teaching were also central to her journey. “The university provided me with a solid education. There were many excellent teachers who completely changed the way I see marketing management. They made learning inspiring and practical,” she noted.

During her studies, Beamlak was also taking other classes and working part-time. Balancing these responsibilities required a clear strategy. “My key approach was prioritizing tasks. I stayed focused and tried to complete one thing at a time before moving on to the next. That helped me stay organized and avoid burnout,” she said.

Reflections on SMU: Strengths and Opportunities

Beamlak offered thoughtful reflections on her time at SMU. “One of the strongest aspects of the university is its teaching staff. Some instructors were truly exceptional— they made complex subjects engaging and helped me see marketing in a whole new light,” she said.

However, she also acknowledged areas for improvement. “Not all teachers were equally effective. Some subjects became less enjoyable because of that. Also, the rules and regulations often changed, which made it hard to adapt. The registration process was especially tiring— I think it could be improved by moving it online,” she suggested.

Her reflections were not criticisms but constructive insights— a sign of her maturity and her desire to see the university continue to grow.

Advice to Current Students

As the conversation came to a close, Beamlak offered heartfelt advice to current and future students.

“Take the time to discover yourself while you’re at university. It’s not just about grades— it’s about growth. Explore, make friends, and truly enjoy those years before stepping fully into adulthood,” she said.



Her story is one of resilience, clarity, and purpose. Beamlak Tadesse didn’t just excel academically— she embraced the full university experience, overcame challenges with grace, and emerged as a role model for others. Her journey reminds us that success is not just about hard work, but also about self-awareness, support, and the courage to grow.





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- የ ጂኦርኢ ቴስት (GRE-Internet-Based Test)
- የ Praxis Exam
- የ CISI Exams እና

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St. Mary's University

Programs Offered



Undergraduate Degree Programs (Regular/Extension)

- ◆ Accounting & Finance
- ◆ Computer Science
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Marketing Management
- ◆ Tourism & Hospitality Management
- ◆ Economics

Undergraduate Degree Programs (College of Open and Distance Learning)

- ◆ Accounting & Finance
- ◆ Banking and Finance
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Marketing Management
- ◆ Financial Economics
- ◆ Rural Development
- ◆ Agricultural Extension
- ◆ Agri-Business Management
- ◆ Agricultural Economics
- ◆ Cooperative (Accounting & Auditing)
- ◆ Cooperative (Business Management)
- ◆ Educational Planning & Management
- ◆ Economics
- ◆ Sociology
- ◆ Logistics & Supply Chain Management
- ◆ Public Administration and Development
- ◆ Management

Other Services Through Our Testing Center

- ◆ TOEFL iBT (Internet based)
- ◆ Recruitment test
- ◆ GRE
- ◆ Praxis
- ◆ (CISI) Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment

Graduate Programs (Regular)

- ◆ Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- ◆ MBA in Accounting and Finance
- ◆ MA in Project Management
- ◆ MA in Marketing Management
- ◆ MA in Social Work
- ◆ MA in Sociology
- ◆ MA in Development Economics
- ◆ MSc. in Agricultural Economics
- ◆ MSc. in Computer Science
- ◆ MSc in Quality and Productivity Management

Graduate Programs Offered in Partnership with Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

- ◆ MBA in Impact Entrepreneurship

Graduate Programs In Partnership With IGNOU (Distance)

- ◆ Master of Business Administration
- ◆ Master of Arts in Social Work
- ◆ Master of Arts in Economics
- ◆ Master of Arts in Public Administration
- ◆ MARD (Master of Arts in Rural Development)
- ◆ Master of Arts in Sociology
- ◆ Master of Arts in Political Science
- ◆ Master of Commerce

Short Term Training

- ◆ Business, IT, and Education areas
- ◆ Certified Quality Manager
- ◆ Certified Quality Engineer
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System
- ◆ ISO 31000:2015 Risk Management
- ◆ Supply Chain Management
- ◆ Quality Professional
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Auditor
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Lead Auditor
- ◆ Quality and Productivity areas
- ◆ Entrepreneurship
- ◆ and more

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