Monks Build, Destroy Mandala at Stockton

Stockton University featured the construction and destruction of the Medicine Buddha Mandala during Tibetan Culture Week from March 28 – April 1. The weeklong event featured a series of activities presented by Tibetan monks from the Drepung Gomang Monastery as part of their Sacred Art Tour.

Every day, the monks worked on the mandala, a geometric figure representing the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism. Sand was funneled through metal tools called chakpurs while the monks prayed in concentration. The creation of the intricate colored sand mandala is a Tibetan Buddhist tradition in which the mandala is ritualistically dismantled upon its completion.

Jongbok Yi, assistant professor of Asian Philosophy and Religion at Stockton, coordinated the monks’ visit. Yi and Patricia Donahue, assistant director of the Career Center, serve as co-advisers of Stockton’s Buddhist Club.

The mandala - a Sanskrit word for “circle” - represents various levels of wisdom, healing and purification, among other things, Yi explained.

Hundreds of Stockton and local community members attended the ceremony on April 1 to watch the deconstruction of the mandala, which was slowly whisked away with strokes of a paint brush. The destruction symbolizes the impermanent nature of material life.

“The sand was supposed to be poured into the lake, however, in order to protect the ecosystem of Stockton and to share the memory and blessing, the members of the Buddhist Club decided to share the sand with the audience in small glass jars,” Yi said.

Other events held during Tibetan Culture Week included a lecture on Buddhist philosophy, medicine and meditation; a Tibetan cooking class; and a sacred dance performance.

The event was sponsored by Stockton’s Buddhist Club, with support from Campus Religious Council, Student Senate, Holistic Health Minor, Holistic Health Club, the Wellness Center and the Office of Global Engagement.

“Thank you to the Stockton community for helping to bring this celebration of Tibetan Culture to us,” Donahue said.

Production Services recorded the construction of the mandala to create a time-lapse video. To view photos of the construction and destruction of the mandala, click here.
Research & Sponsored Programs Hosts Annual Day of Scholarship

The Office of Research & Sponsored Programs hosted the 16th Annual Day of Scholarship on April 1 to showcase distinctive research projects and collaborations between faculty, staff and students from all fields of study.

The event provided an overview of the projects that took place during the past year including grant-funded projects, internally funded projects, research endeavors, professional development, sabbaticals, study tours and academic achievements.

Meg White, assistant professor of Education, gave the keynote address, “A Tail of Two Grants: Developing a Multi-Stage Project,” about the grant-writing process.

“The presentation explored approaching grant writing in multiple stages,” said White, whose current grants will support an Urban Teacher Academy in Atlantic City schools this summer.

The Day of Scholarship also featured its inaugural PechaKucha, a fast-paced presentation style which includes 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each, totaling six minutes and 40 seconds.

Joe Trout, assistant professor of Physics; John Froonjian, senior research associate in the Stockton Polling Institute; Janet Wagner, dean and professor of Business Studies; and Rodger Jackson, professor of Philosophy, were Stockton’s first PechaKucha presenters. They all received positive feedback on the presentation style as well as their individual performances from faculty, staff and student audience members.

The following Stocktonians were integral in the organization of the day’s events: Ronnie Carlini, program assistant; Jeanne DeMarsico, program assistant; Joan Joseph, professional services specialist, all of the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs; and Michelle McDonald, interim assistant provost, who served as the emcee.

“The Day of Scholarship serves to highlight the University’s commitment to scholarly activity, with our goal being to create an atmosphere of mutual support as we share with and celebrate our colleagues, peers and students,” Carlini said. “PechaKucha and the keynote speaker, both new additions, were well received and will undoubtedly become a permanent part of the celebration moving forward for next year. Thank you to all the committee members, presenters, attendees, room monitors, Event Services and Chartwells.”

To view photos from the Day of Scholarship, click here.

Foundation Announces Continued Success in Third Quarter of FY16

Total gifts received by the Stockton University Foundation between July 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016 reached $2,433,422, according to Philip T. Ellmore, chief development officer.

The total is a 38 percent increase over the FY15 third-quarter total of $1,764,601 and a 116 percent increase over the FY14 third-quarter total of $1,127,556.

“With only three months remaining in fiscal year 2016, giving has already surpassed the total giving of the past two years,” Ellmore explained.

The Foundation is already 4 percent over the FY15 total of $2,336,552 and 36 percent over the $1,787,621 total in FY14.

“On behalf of Stockton students who benefit most from this wonderful display of generosity, my thanks to the Foundation Board and all of our donors,” Ellmore said.
HR Hosts Division of Pensions and Benefits Retirement Seminar

The Office of Human Resources welcomed 148 local members of the Public Employees’ Retirement System and the Teachers’ Pension and Annuity when it hosted the Division of Pensions and Benefits Retirement Seminar on March 16.

About 30 Stockton employees attended the seminar, presented by Andrew Kenney, trainer with the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits. The seminar covered the entire retirement process, as well as information on pension tiers, life insurance and health benefits coverage during retirement.

Chris Carrozza, Stockton’s VALIC financial adviser, followed the Division of Pensions and Benefits seminar with a social security workshop, and Rich Parrett, Prudential representative, discussed the State Employee Deferred Compensation Plan.

This is the second Division of Pensions seminar that Stockton has hosted this academic year. The first seminar was held in September 2015 and drew about 85 attendees, half of which were members of the faculty and staff. One of the goals of the Office of Human Resources this year is to increase the number of benefits education offerings to University employees.

“We want to provide our employees with the convenience of having these programs on campus, so that we’re doing everything we can to motivate and encourage them to prepare and save for their retirement,” Pensions and Benefits Manager Bart Musitano said.

Hosting the Division of Pensions and Benefits seminar introduces other local New Jersey public employees to the Stockton campus, particularly to the Campus Center and its amenities, such as the theatre and food outlets. Staff members in Human Resources received very positive feedback from both the presenters and external participants.

Faculty Present at National Council for Black Studies Conference

Donnetrice Allison, Patricia Reid-Merritt and Beverly Vaughn traveled to Charlotte, N.C. during spring break in March to present papers at the 40th Anniversary Conference of the National Council for Black Studies. Scholars from around the world attended the event, as well as hundreds of students from across the nation.

Allison, associate professor of Communications & Africana Studies, offered insights into the new yet stereotypical role of black women on television, which she presented from her paper, “The Good, the Bad and the Messy: Olivia, Annalise, Mary Jane and Cookie, The Black Women of Prime Time.”

Reid-Merritt, Distinguished Professor of Social Work & Africana Studies, focused on pedagogical approaches and best practices when dealing with issues related to race, ethnicity and identity, which she covered in her paper, “We’re Not Black: I’m Haitian and She’s Puerto Rican: Teaching About Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education.”

Vaughn, professor of Music, captivated the audience when she presented “Ethel Waters and Beyoncé: Divas!”

The conference provided an extraordinary opportunity to meet with scholars of Africana Studies. The conference concluded with the Maat Ankh Wedjua ceremony, where seven Stockton students were inducted into the National Honor Society for Africana Studies Majors and Minors.
Tucker Rowlinson Weds High School Sweetheart at Aquarium

Congratulations to Tucker Rowlinson, instructional design assistant in the Office of E-Learning, and his wife, Rachel, who married on March 6!

The newlyweds held their wedding ceremony and reception at Adventure Aquarium in Camden, N.J.

Tucker and Rachel just returned from their honeymoon - a 10-day cruise from New York City to the Caribbean.

The high school sweethearts have been together for nearly 10 years. They recently adopted a Border Collie mix named Cassie.

Faculty, Staff Volunteer at Garden State Film Festival at Dante Hall

Dante Hall Theater served as one of the three venues for the 14th Annual Garden State Film Festival held March 31-April 3 in Atlantic City. The festival featured more than 200 films from 17 countries, which were screened at Dante Hall, The Claridge Hotel and Resorts Casino Hotel.

The following Stocktonians volunteered as hosts at the festival: Alex Marino, assistant to the provost for Atlantic City instructional sites; Tom Papademetriou, associate professor of History; Nazia Kazi, assistant professor of Anthropology; Laurie Greene, associate professor of Anthropology; and Emari DiGiorgio, associate professor of Writing.

Stephanie Clineman, manager of Dante Hall, serves on the Garden State Film Festival Board of Directors.

Construction Update: Arts & Sciences Exterior Wall Project

Beginning on Monday, April 11, 2016 at 8 a.m., specific locations of the Arts & Sciences Building exterior will be worked on at various times.

This work is expected to continue until the end of the work day on Friday, April 22, 2016 - a period of two weeks. Please use caution when entering, exiting or walking around the perimeter of the building. Please stay clear of construction activity, equipment and blocked areas.

Any questions or concerns regarding this work can be directed to Project Manager Mark Ciccotelli.

Send Us Your News!

We want to know about things going on in the Stockton community. Do you have an unusual hobby? Did one of your co-workers win an award or perform outstanding public service?

Births, weddings, graduations and the like are all good things to submit to The Stockton Times. Contact the editor at 609-626-5521 (ext. 5521) or via email at StocktonTimes@stockton.edu.

News about distinguished students can now be found at Distinctive Stockton Students. To contribute a news item for the blog, please contact the editor by emailing distinctive@stockton.edu.