

*President Steven D. Bennion
in front of the Burg Eltz in
Munstermaifeld, Germany.*

S U U P R E S I D E N T
S T E V E N B E N N I O N

SUU pushes ahead on many fronts

Several important initiatives have been advanced at SUU this past year while others are being planned.

The opening of the beautiful new Eccles Living Learning Center last fall with 300 beds drew full occupancy last year and was filled very early for this 2005-06 year. This is the first new on-campus housing in the last 40 years.

The initiation of SUU's new bachelor of science degree in nursing in the fall of 2004, has drawn a large number of capable student applicants. Originally planning to admit 40 students per year (20 each semester), we have increased the number of students admitted to 60 per year, 30 each semester. With great support from a state nursing initiative and Intermountain Health Care, this high demand program is booming.

After a six-year quest seeking funding for a new teacher

education building, SUU was successful in obtaining legislative funds coupled with a generous grant from the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation. Planning and designing are underway with expected ground-breaking to occur early in 2006. Part of the motivation behind this new facility is utilization with a soon-to-be renovated Old Main. Integrated in purpose for the preparation of teachers, this use of both Old Main and the new teacher education facility promises to be a very appealing and economical way to meet the burgeoning need to prepare more high quality teachers.

In late April, Southern Utah University received approval to launch its fifth master's degree program, this one in professional communication. This program begins fall semester of 2005. With a large and successful bachelor's program in communication,

and with the growing demand for more individuals with advanced preparation in communication, SUU is well positioned to begin this new master's program. Dean **Rodney Decker** of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, exclaimed: "This new master's degree program marks the first in the College of HSS. The highly subscribed Communication Department is uniquely well prepared to offer this badly needed program."

In order to more closely align computing, engineering and technology programs with an increasingly technological world, SUU created a new College of Computing, Integrated Engineering and Technology (CIET). This organizational change is aimed at providing a closer

match between the needs of industry and students. Provost **Abe Harraf** notes: "As we surveyed the needs of the industry and our own programs in computing, engineering and technology, we concluded that it was time to sharpen the connection between industry's needs and the University's programs. We believe this will augment student opportunities for employment and internships in companies matching their education preparation." **Dr. Mikhail Bouniaev** served as the interim dean for the College of CIET during the 2004-05 year and in May, following a national search, was appointed as the permanent dean of this new

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college. Dean Bouniaev is a professor of math who recently served as chair of the Mathematics Department. This new college includes the following departments: Computer Science & Information Systems, Integrated Engineering & Technology, and Mathematics.

As a complement to the creation of the new College of CIET, SUU has planned with and is co-sponsoring with Iron County School District a new charter high school called SUCCESS Academy. SUCCESS stands for Southern Utah Center for Computing, Engineering and Science Students. The need to prepare more students in these critical fields is clear. The demand for experts in engineering, computing, science and math where there are high paying jobs, is readily evident.

Vickie Wilson, former principal of Canyon View High School, is the president of the school and **John Emron Tripp** serves as the counselor. SUCCESS Academy opens this fall and will be located at the University. Students enrolled will take a curriculum heavily focused in science, math, engineering and computing. It is expected that students graduating from the SUCCESS Academy at the normal time of high school graduation will have completed two years of college.

Quality assurance is a term we often hear in business. It has rightful application in higher education. Accreditation reviews by outside experts are the means by which this is achieved. This past year we underwent three specific accreditations for programs in athletic training, integrated engineering and dance. We learned this spring that athletic training was granted and we are optimistic that the reports on the other two will achieve a similar positive result. In the coming year we will be seeking accreditation for nursing, business (AACSB) and music (a reaffirmation of an earlier accreditation).

Our student athletes continue to excel both on the field of athletic competition and in the classroom. This past year the men's cross country team won the national academic championship among well over 300 teams, a

phenomenal achievement. This marks the 11th time since becoming an NCAA Division I school that an SUU team has won the national academic championship! Two athletes, of that Men's X-country team and of the men's track and field team, respectively, were recently named national academic All-Americans—**Chad Sanada** and **Jess Baumgartner**. They were the only men's track and field performers in the state of Utah to be so named. In addition, SUU received the Sportsmanship trophy for the third consecutive year in the Mid-Continent Conference, and the fourth time in seven years.

In a shrinking world, there is a critical need for students to become more familiar with the entire global community. In an effort to foster opportunities for student and faculty exchanges, **Dr. Alla Paroiatnikova**, SUU's Director of International Programs, and my wife Marj and I, recently visited three universities/colleges in France, Switzerland, and Germany to strengthen ties and establish exchange agreements for students wishing to attend those schools. It was a promising trip and confirmed the excellent research Dr. Paroiatnikova had performed in selecting three very good institutions for SUU. We took numerous pictures from which two or three are shared with this article. **SU**



Rebecca Brailsford, Alla Paroiatnikova, Steven D. Bennion, Marge Bennion, Amelia Richards, Emily Hyde, and Travis West in front of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.