Greetings from the Materials Science, Engineering, and Commercialization (MSEC) program at Texas State University! The MSEC program continues to grow, and we are so proud of the accomplishments of our students and faculty. In this issue of MSEC Matters, we share with you some of the many student and faculty awards and achievements during this past year, updates on our growth, and a new development in our admissions policy. As Texas State University celebrates its quasquicentennial, MSEC is proud to help lead the university into the next 125 years.

There are currently 71 students enrolled in the MSEC program, by far the largest enrollment we have had since the program began 12 years ago. MSEC is now one of the largest doctoral MSE programs in the state of Texas. Much of this growth was catalyzed by the university’s investment in additional “Run to R1” (R2R1) assistantships. Although MSEC no longer has these additional R2R1 assistantships to offer incoming students, the growth in the program is being sustained through increased funding of students from faculty research grants. In fact, MSEC is on track to admit nearly as many students in Fall 2024 as were admitted in Fall 2023.

Since its inception, MSEC has only accepted MS-level applicants, but that is about to change. Based on feedback we have received from external reviewers of the program and with support from the university, we will begin accepting BS-level students into the MSEC PhD program. This will put MSEC in line with the other MSE doctoral programs in the state and nation, and make the program accessible to a broader group of students. We anticipate this change to be fully implemented with Fall 2025 admissions.

In this issue of MSEC Matters, you will find examples of the many recognitions that MSEC faculty and students have received. We also welcome new faculty to the program and celebrate the award of a numerous grants to our faculty. Please enjoy the stories of success that we share with you, and please reach out and share any thoughts, ideas, or your own success stories with us. We welcome hearing from you.

Dr. Sean Kerwin, MSEC Director
On May 2nd, McCoy College faculty and staff, University administrators, along with family and friends, gathered to celebrate Dr. William Chittenden’s retirement from Texas State. Dr. Chittenden joined Texas State University (Southwest Texas State University at the time) in 2000 as an Assistant Professor of Finance. During his nearly 24 years at Texas State, Dr. Chittenden served as Chair of the Department of Finance & Economics, Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in the McCoy College of Business, and Presidential Fellow. He co-taught MSEC 7301 and 7302 with Dr. Gary Beall for many years, and he helped create the dual MBA/MSEC Ph.D. degree pathway. At one point, Dr. Chittenden had served on more MSEC dissertation committees than any other faculty member. Dr. Chittenden has already started the next chapter of his career by being named President & CEO of the SW Graduate School of Banking Foundation in the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University. We thank him for his many years of service to the MSEC Program and wish him the best on this next chapter!

Farewell Dr. Irvin!

After 15 years of dedicated service and academic excellence, it is with mixed emotions that we announce the departure of Dr. Jennifer Irvin from Texas State University. Dr. Irvin’s contributions to MSEC have left an indelible mark on our institution and have inspired countless students over the years.

Dr. Irvin joined Texas State in 2008 and was listed as Core Faculty in the MSEC doctoral degree proposal, approved in 2011. She served as MSEC Admissions and Recruitment Coordinator from 2014-2015 and was appointed MSEC Director in September 2015. As MSEC Director, she served as academic advisor for 70+ doctoral students, completed the program’s first Academic Program Review, served on the Graduate College Council, oversaw admissions, and taught MSEC courses. She created the MSEC student and faculty handbooks, instituted the Outstanding MSEC Doctoral Student award, created the laptop loan program for MSEC students, founded the MSEC Student Club and initiated our MSEC Matters newsletter among many other achievements. She became MSEC Associate Director in 2021 when she became Director of the Materials Application Research Center (MARC).

Dr. Irvin will be joining the University of Houston-Clear Lake where she will start her new role as Dean of the College of Science and Engineering. Her leadership in MSEC as former Director and current Associate Director will be missed as she moves on to this next stage in her career this August.
MSEC Innovation, Commercialization & Entrepreneurship Bootcamp

The Spring 2024 MSEC Innovation, Commercialization & Entrepreneurship Bootcamp was a resounding success, blending insightful sessions, expert guidance, and fierce competition. Over two days, students showcased their innovative projects, engaged with seasoned entrepreneurs, and competed for top honors.

The first day was filled with featured distinguished guest speakers including Russell Hinds, an angel investor, who shared valuable insights into the world of early-stage investments. Tomas Louda, a successful founder, provided real-world perspectives on entrepreneurship, while Aaron Perman, a VC Investor Partner from S3 Ventures, discussed the dynamics of venture capital and what investors look for in startups. Shams Juma, another seasoned founder, shared his entrepreneurial journey and lessons learned. In the afternoon, students participated in a presentation workshop led by Mark Paz, a communications instructor at Texas State, which focused on enhancing their pitching skills.

The second day began with an overview and introduction of the judges, followed by the semi-finals presentations. Thirty-two (32) PhD students presented their startup ideas to a panel of judges including Christian Adams (Founder, RepairPricer.com), Matthew Domo (Angel Investor & Founder, FifthVantage.com), Jennifer Newell (Founder, BettysCo.com), Art Olbert (Angel Investor, Former IBM), and Brian White (Founder, DoorSpaceInc.com). The top projects from each track then moved on to the final round, judged by venture capitalists Brad Bentz (ATX Venture Partners) and Morgan Flager (Silverton Partners).

After an intense day of pitches and deliberations, the winners of the Business Plan Competition were announced. First place, with a prize of $500, went to Gauri Ravikant Mahajan for her project Pavement Asset Management Software (PAMS), which leverages AI to identify road condition issues and prioritize repairs. Second place, with a prize of $300, was awarded to Leo Rodriguez for his innovative SmartDisc, a disc golf disc equipped with a GPS tracker and motion sensors to enhance gameplay and reduce lost discs. Third place, receiving $200, was Beng Wei Chong for his eco-friendly construction material Eggcrete, which uses egg waste to produce a cost-effective concrete alternative. Additionally, the Student Choice Award went to Pallab Kumar Sarkar for his project Bongo-tech Farm, a software platform that facilitates farm equipment rentals among farmers in developing countries.

The Spring 2024 MSEC Bootcamp not only highlighted the innovative potential of its participants but also provided them with the necessary tools and feedback to refine their entrepreneurial ventures. Congratulations to all the participants, speakers, judges, and especially the winners, for making this bootcamp an inspiring and successful event. We look forward to seeing these projects develop and make a significant impact in their respective fields.
The MSEC Student Club is a dynamic student group dedicated to promoting career development opportunities and hosting inclusive activities for all MSEC students. This year, they successfully arranged a meeting between MSEC students and Wolfspeed, a major semiconductor device fabrication company, which provided vital information on internships, job applications, and CV preparation. Furthermore, the MSEC Student Club prioritizes developing strong links between senior and entering students, allowing for the sharing of experiences to help newcomers on their PhD journey. The Student Club holds monthly meetings where senior students and graduates talk about their success stories, offering inspiration and direction. They also arrange ethnic potlucks, which provide an opportunity for members to mingle with one another and MSEC faculty while tasting varied foods reflecting members backgrounds.

They extend an invitation to all MSEC students to join the vibrant organization in the upcoming semester. The nomination process for new officers will take place within the first two weeks of the fall 2024 semester. If you’re interested in joining the MSEC Student Club or running for a position, please reach out to Ganesh Aryal at g_a272@txstate.edu for further details.

The Materials Research Society (MRS) is a global network of materials researchers dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary materials research and technology for the betterment of society. Established in July 2022, the MRS Texas State University Chapter has quickly become an integral part of this community, connecting members to a diverse range of materials research professionals.

As a member of the chapter, students and professionals enjoy a variety of benefits, including discounts on membership fees, financial support for travel, grants for special projects, social events, professional development opportunities, alumni connections, networking events, and a complimentary subscription to the MRS bulletin.

The chapter provides a platform for individuals to expand their knowledge, build relationships, and contribute to the field of materials science and technology. Join the MRS Texas State University Chapter and become part of a community that is shaping the future of materials research.
Welcome New MSEC Faculty

Dr. Eunsang Cho
Assistant Professor
Ingram School of Engineering
Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering
University of New Hampshire

Dr. Subasish Das
Assistant Professor
Ingram School of Engineering
Ph.D. in Systems Engineering (Civil Engineering Focus), University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dr. Michael Jacobs
Assistant Professor
Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry
Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry
University of California-Berkeley

Dr. Krishna Kisi
Assistant Professor
Department of Engineering Technology
Ph.D. in Engineering
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Dr. Mithil Mazumder
Lecturer
Department of Engineering Technology
Ph.D. in Materials Science, Engineering, and Commercialization
Texas State University

Dr. Robert JC McLean
Regents’ Professor
Department of Biology
Ph.D. in Biology
University of Calgary

Dr. Nathan Satchell
Assistant Professor
Department of Physics
Ph.D. in Physics
University of Leeds

Dr. James Wilde
Professor
Department of Engineering Technology
Ph.D. in Civil Engineering
University of Texas at Austin

Dr. Amir Hosein Zamanian
Assistant Professor
Ingram School of Engineering
Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering
Southern Methodist University
Dr. Michelle Londa
Associate Professor to Professor
Ingram School of Engineering

Dr. Eduardo Perez
Associate Professor to Professor
Ingram School of Engineering

Dr. In-Hyouk Song
Associate Professor to Professor
Department of Engineering Technology

Dr. Luis Trueba
Tenure
Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
Department of Engineering Technology

Dr. Meysam Khaleghian
Tenure
Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
Department of Engineering Technology

Dr. Krishna Kisi
Tenure
Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
Department of Engineering Technology

Dr. Christopher Rhodes
Associate Professor to Professor
Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry

Dr. Jelena Tesic
Tenure
Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
Computer Science

Dr. Mark Wistey
Tenure
Department of Physics

Dr. Xiaoyu Xue
Tenure
Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry
Dr. Jennifer Irvin
Dr. Jennifer Irvin received a Formosa Innovation Award from Texas State University. This award was established by Formosa Plastics to support a Texas State University faculty member’s intellectual contributions toward scientific and technological solutions for industrial problems. This award will allow Dr. Irvin’s research group to continue developing their patent-pending flame retardant polymer technology.

Dr. Keisuke Ikehata
Dr. Keisuke Ikehata received the 2023 Reuse Impact Award from WateReuse Texas. WateReuse foresees business individuals who exhibit an understanding and clear direction in the art of water recycling.

Dr. Anthony Torres
Dr. Anthony Torres received the Honorary Professor of International Studies award from the International Studies at Texas State University. This award showcases the exemplary performance that Dr. Torres contributes to the educational community. Dr. Torres also received the Presidential Distinction Award which highlights his astonishing service to the university.

Dr. Jeff Shi & Beng Wei Chong
MSEC student Beng Wei Chong and his advisor, Dr. Jeff Shi, received the Nina Vaca award at the TXST Innovation lab at SXSW. Nina Vaca is a trailblazing Latina entrepreneur and philanthropist who has endowed the Nina Vaca Innovation and Entrepreneurship Award to celebrate and recognize two outstanding students each year. The award recognizes outstanding work in innovation and entrepreneurship and comes with a $1,000 prize.

Aamar Danish
MSEC student Aamar Danish received 1st place at the American Concrete Institute National Convention for presentation titled, “Extending aluminosilicate material horizons: Cleaner production and performance assessment of reclaimed fly ash- modified geopolymers”.
Student Achievements

Luis Albiter
- Fall 2023 Doctoral Research Support Fellowship.

Oluwasola Arigbabowo
- Fall 2023 Doctoral Research Support Fellowship.
- 2023-2024 Doctoral Retention Scholarship.
- Presented research titled, “Effect of Ball Milling on the Magnetic Performance of Strontium Ferrite (SrFe12O19) Powders” at the SAMPE 2024 Conference and Exhibition.
- Presented research titled, “Magnetic Properties Evaluation of Polyamide 4.6 Bonded Magnetic Composite” at the SAMPE 2024 Conference and Exhibition.

Ganesh Aryal
- Received an internship offer as a power R&D Intern from Wolfspeed in Durham, North Carolina for Summer 2024.
- 2023-2024 Doctoral Retention Scholarship.
- Presented research titled, “Growth of Diamond Within the Trenched AlN Surface and Study of the Induced Stress” at the 2024 APS March Meeting.

Scott Barrett
- 2024 SPE Student Scholarship.
- Presented research titled, “Advancements In Renewable Energy Via Organic Chemistry” at the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education.

Muhammed Bayram
- Fall 2023 MSEC STAR Showcase award for High Impact ‘Cool’ research.
- 2023 Dorothy Coker Research Fellowship.
- Fall 2023 Graduate College Fellowship.
- 2023-2024 Graduate College Scholarship.
- Fall 2023 Doctoral Retention Scholarship.
- Fall 2023 Student Government Scholarship.
- 2023 National Science Foundation Travel Fellowship Award.
Student Achievements

Sushmit Sharma Bhattarai
- Presented research titled, “Potential and Limitations of BIM in Designing Fire Sprinkler System: An Expert’s Perspective” at the 60th Annual ASC International Conference.

Beng Wei Chong
- Received the Nina Vaca Innovation and Entrepreneurship Award at the TXST Innovation lab at SXSW.
- 3rd place at the Spring 2024 MSEC Innovation, Commercialization & Entrepreneurship Bootcamp

Aamar Danish
- 1st place at the American Concrete Institute National Convention for presentation titled, “Extending aluminosilicate material horizons: Cleaner production and performance assessment of reclaimed fly ash- modified geopolymers”.

Malay Kumar Das
- Presented poster titled, “Calcium-Dependent Chemiluminescence Catalyzed by a G-Triplex DNA from the c-MYC Promoter” at the 2024 ASBMB organized Discover BMB conference.

Rujan Kayastha
- 2023 STAR Grant Award
- 2024 TXST Society of Plastics Engineers Chapter Award.
- Presented research titled, “Analysis of Price Adjustment Claim during Project Time Extension” at the International LADR Workshop.
- Presented research titled, “Legal Disputes Between Home Builders and Home Buyers in Sustainable Housing Construction” at the International LADR Workshop.

Nischal Khakurel
- Spring 2023 Doctoral Research Fellowship.
- Presented poster titled, “Hole Transport Layer Optimization for a Triple Halide Perovskite Solar Cells using Poly-TPD” at the Fall 2023 Texas Section of the American Physical Society Meeting.
- Presented poster titled, “Fabricate Perovskite Solar Cells using Poly-TPD as a Hole Transport Layer with Surfactant PFN-Br” at The United States Department of Energy - Environmental Management
- Presented poster titled, “Additive assisted one-step crystallization of various MA free wide bandgap perovskites” at the United States Department of Energy- Environmental Management

Alam Khorshed
- Fall 2023 Graduate College scholarship.
- Presented poster titled, “Low cost reduction of shutter transients in Molecular Beam Epitaxy” at the 2024 TXST Graduate Research Conference.

Rigo Mayorga-Luna
Student Achievements

Gauri Mahajan
- 1st place at the Spring 2024 MSEC Innovation, Commercialization & Entrepreneurship Bootcamp.

Md Mahamudujjaman
- Fall 2023 Samsung Scholarship.
- Presented poster titled, “Angle-Resolved X-Ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy of Spin-Casted Triple Halide Perovskite” at the 2024 TSM Meeting.
- Presented poster titled, “Insights into (Cs0.22FA0.78)Pb(I0.85Br0.15)3 Triple Halide Perovskite films: Stability Investigations via Angle-Resolved XPS Analysis” at the Graduate Student Research Conference.

Asmita Mankar
- Presented poster titled, "Experimental and Statistical Modeling of Ultra High Performance Concrete for Sustainable Development“ at the American Concrete Institute National Convention.

Tijani Mohammed
- Accepted Job Offer at the Bureau of Mining Regulations and Reclamation.

Leobardo Rodriguez
- 2nd place at the Spring 2024 MSEC Innovation, Commercialization & Entrepreneurship Bootcamp.

Junaid Ur Rehman
- 2024-2025 Graduate School Scholarship.
- 2024-2025 Student Government Scholarship.
- Received a NSF-PREM Summer Internship Grant.
- Presented poster titled, “Electrospun and Vapor Phase Deposited Electroactive Polymer Nanocomposites for Water Purification Studies via Photocatalysis“ at the SPE Conference.

Ron Saha

Muhammad Usama Salim
- Spring 2023 ACI Competition Travel Stipend Scholarship.
- 2nd place at the American Concrete Institute National Convention for presentation titled, “Towards Sustainable Construction: Performance Evaluation of Slag-Cenosphere Geopolymers Under Different NaOH Concentrations”.

Pallab Kumar Sarkar
- Presented research titled, “Large Area Diamond Growth on B-Ga2O2 and AlN using Q-Carbon Interlayer” at the 2024 TSM Meeting.

Drew Sowersby
- 2023 STAR Grant Award.
- 2024 TXST Society of Plastics Engineers Chapter Award.
Student Achievements

Ayush Subedi

- Presented poster titled "Effect of Vibration on the Crystallization of ZBLAN" at the American Physical Society Conference.
- Fall 2024 Graduate College Scholarship.
- Presented poster titled, “Understanding the Effect of Vibration on the Crystallization of ZBLAN” at the American Physical Society Meeting.
- Received the Best Presentation Award at the 2023 STAR Showcase.

Saif Al Arafia Taqy

- 2023-2024 Doctoral Merit Fellowship.
- 2023-2024 Graduate College Scholarship.
- 2023-2024 Student Government Scholarship.
- Presented research titled, “Laser annealing induced growth and characterization of carbon nanostructures” at the 2024 TSM Meeting.
- Presented research titled, “New Insights into Q-Carbon: Novel Interlayer in Gan-Diamond Integration for Improved Heat Dissipation” at the 2023 MRS meeting.
- Presented research titled, “Fabrication of Q-Carbon Nanostructures and Subsequent Formation of High-Quality Diamond on β-Ga2O3” at the 2023 MRS meeting.

Kushal Thapa

- Fall 2023 Graduate College Scholarship.
- Fall 2023 & Spring 2024 TXST Student Government Scholarship.
- Fall 2023 TXST Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) Chapter Awards.
- Presented poster titled, “Photothermal Modulation of Dynamic Covalent Poly(ethylene glycol)/PEDOT Composite Hydrogels for On-Demand Drug Delivery” at the 2024 MRSEC Annual Meeting and Industry Day.

Md Nasir Uddin

- Presented poster titled, “Advancing lightweight engineered cementitious composites: An interpretable machine learning framework” at the TXST Graduate Student Research Conference.

Jihyeon Yun

- Presented research titled, “Evaluation of Storage Stability for CRM Asphalt Binder Based on Rheological Properties and AFM Images” at the TXST Graduate Research Conference.
- Presented research titled, “Global Review of Carbon Sequestration in Asphalt Industry” at the DOE EM Symposium Conference.
- 2023 DOE-EM Fellowship.

Fatema Zohra

- Presented research titled, “Thermal simulation to improve heat transfer challenges in device testing ovens” at the 2024 TXST STEM Conference.
- Presented research titled, “Design and simulation of Superhydrophobic Surfaces to Enhance Atmospheric Water Generation Capability” at the 2024 TXST Graduate Research Conference.


Bayram M., Kuranli O. F., Nis A., Ozbakkaloglu T., Recycling of pulverized fuel ash as supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) and aggregates in concrete production; Treatment and Utilization of Combustion and Incineration Residue. (May 31, 2024), Paperback ISBN: 9780443215360


Bayram, M., Kuranli, O. F., Nis, A., and Ozbakkaloglu, T. Recycling of pulverized fuel ash as supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) and aggregates, Treatment and Utilization of Combustion and Incineration Residues, May 26, 2024


Espinosa-Rodriguez, G., Arigbabowo, O., Alvarado, J., Tate, J., & Geerts, W. J. (2024). Wire texture C-axis distribution of Strontium Ferrite/PA-12 extruded filament. AIP Advances, 14(2).
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Khadka, M., Arigbabowo, O. K., Tate, J. S., & Geerts, W. J. (2024). The magnetic anisotropy of field-assisted 3D printed nylon strontium ferrite composites. AIP Advances, 14(2).
https://doi.org/10.1063/9.0000791

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.137617


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jobe.2024.109605

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2023.133844

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.139842

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.2.0.0.24.080

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ab.2023.115373

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2024.135438


Tate, J., Geerts, W., & Arigbabowo, O. (2024). High-performance thermoplastic-based magnetic composites. SAMPE 2023. https://doi.org/10.33599/nasampe/s.23.0279


Yun, J., Na, I.-H., Choi, P., Ji, B., & Kim, H. (2023, August 23). Laboratory evaluation of high-temperature properties of recycled PMA binders. MDPI. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151712744

MSEC Students Advancing to Candidacy

Oluwasola Arigbabowo
Advised by
Dr. Jitendra Tate and
Dr. Wilhelmus J. Geerts

Muhammed Bayram
Advised by
Dr. Togay Ozbakkaloglu

Aamar Danish
Advised by
Dr. Anthony Torres

Dipa Devkota
Advised by
Dr. Mark Holtz

Asmita Mankar
Advised by
Dr. Anthony Torres

Muhammad Usama Salim
Advised by
Dr. Carlos Moro Martinez

Ayush Subedi
Advised by
Dr. Anthony Torres

Kushal Thapa
Advised by
Dr. Tania Betancourt

Fatema Zohra
Advised by
Dr. Bahram Asiabanpour
Dr. Navid Hemmati
Advised by
Dr. Soon-Jae Lee

Dr. Tuhin Dey
Advised by
Dr. Mark Wistey

Dr. Md Abdul Halim
Advised by
Dr. Gary Beall

Dr. Tijani Mohammed
Advised by
Dr. Anthony Torres and
Dr. Frederico Aguayo

Dr. Jacob Armitage
Advised by
Dr. Benjamin Martin

Dr. James Banks
Advised by
Dr. Anahita Emami
Dr. Mahmuda Monne graduated from the MSEC Program in Spring of 2022 with her dissertation on Printed and Flexible Micro-Electro-Mechanical-System (MEMS) Switch for High-Frequency Applications. She is currently serving as a Senior Scientist at Applied Materials in Sunnyvale, CA, where she is playing a pivotal role in developing cutting-edge semiconductor manufacturing tools, particularly focusing on the hybrid inkjet system.

Prior to joining Applied Materials, Dr. Monne honed her expertise as an Applications Scientist at Electroninks Inc. in Austin, TX, where she worked on developing particle free Metal-organic inks for printed and flexible electronics application, and gained valuable experience in the practical application of innovative technologies. With a passion for pushing the boundaries of scientific exploration and a commitment to driving technological advancements, Dr. Monne is dedicated to contributing to the forefront of semiconductor manufacturing and shaping the future of the industry.

MSEC strives to provide the best educational experience and your generosity will allow us to provide our students & faculty with more opportunities to excel academically and in research.

To support MSEC directly:
### Admissions Data

**MSEC Applications Submitted and Reviewed by Admissions Committee**

- **Fall 2022-Spring 2023:** 59 applications
- **Summer 2023-Spring 2024:** 157 applications
- **Fall 2024:** 127 applications

### Enrollment Data

**MSEC Student Enrollment per Academic Year**

- **Fall 2022-Spring 2023:** 45 Students
- **Fall 2023-Spring 2024:** 75 Students
- **Fall 2024 Anticipated:** 92-97 Students
Connect with MSEC

https://www.msec.txst.edu/

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6713617/

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