

Heart of a Tiger: Celebrating SACAD, FHSU's annual learning and creative expression showcase

4/12/24 bdd, local

By Tisa Mason

It has been my pleasure to witness the growth and expansion of the John Heinrichs Scholarly and Creative Activity Days (SACAD) throughout my time at Fort Hays State University. For the past nineteen years, what started in 2005 with students exhibiting their research in Tomanek Hall, SACAD has grown into a week-long campus-wide showcase of the remarkable research and creativity of FHSU students, faculty, and staff that includes both online and in-person events and activities.

This year's 19th annual event aspires to reimagine and expand this day of scholarly celebration in a variety of new and important ways, starting with a focus on community through an Open House format. On Wednesday, May 1, we are inviting not only members of the university but also the Hays community and other areas beyond to join us in this celebration.

Spread throughout the day and at venues across campus, activities will include academic posters, art, and creative works, meet the authors (book exhibition), musical performances, and applied industrial technology projects. Showcased creations will feature work from the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, the W.R. and Yvonne Robbins College of Business and Entrepreneurship, the College of Education, the College of Health and Behavioral Sciences, and the Peter Werth College of Science, Technology, and Mathematics.

A detailed schedule of activities can be found online at <https://www.fhsu.edu/research/events-and-opportunities/sacad/event-submission-details>.

As much as I am looking forward to this year's events, I want to take a moment to reflect on the person for whom this day is named, Dr. John Heinrichs. An internationally renowned Arctic researcher, a popular professor of geosciences, and former chair of that department, John made a tremendous impact at Fort Hays State University. His colleagues, university administration, and especially his students held him in such high esteem that numerous events and awards were renamed or created in his honor after his passing in 2014.

In addition to John Heinrichs SACAD, there is now the John Heinrichs SEIRA (Student Excellence in Research Award), the Heinrichs Research Group, the Heinrichs Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor Award, and the Dr. John Heinrichs Memorial Geography Scholarship.

The John Heinrichs Scholarly and Creative Activity Days (SACAD) is the most prominent of all the honors and events dedicated to Dr. Heinrichs. One of several factors that makes SACAD truly unique to FHSU and different from other university presentation forums is the dedication to inclusivity. SACAD planners reach out across the university in order to include as many participants as possible from just about every discipline.

The amount of behind-the-scenes work required for a successful event is an example of what SACAD promotes at FHSU. The tireless efforts, dedication, and passion shown by everyone involved are a testament to John Heinrichs' vision and would not be possible without the continued commitment from faculty and staff leaders.

This year, Dr. April Terry, associate professor of criminal justice and Scholarship Environment Committee (SEC) Event Coordinator, led the SACAD planning committee. Along with graduate school and office of sponsored programs director Dr. Keith Bremer, associate professor of applied technology and SEC Chair Eric Deneault, assistant professor of criminal justice and SACAD Committee Chair Dr. Morgan Steele, and numerous other faculty, staff, and committee members, April has been instrumental in bringing this year's events to life.

"Since learning about SACAD years ago, I've looked forward to the event each year," April said. "I appreciate the welcoming environment it offers our students and the opportunity for everyone to showcase the awesome work they're doing at FHSU. I'm excited to see the new additions to SACAD 2024 and look forward to the opportunity to converse with those attending and participating."

Collaboration is key not only for the people who work to make it happen but also for all participants, even students who choose to work independently because they receive hands-on personal guidance from faculty mentors. For some, SACAD is an opportunity to reach across disciplines and bring people with different skill sets together to create something that would not be possible individually.

It is this type of collaboration, something that will be expected of many students once they begin their professional careers, that makes participation in SACAD such an impactful experience.

For members of the community who wish to attend, parking on campus will be free all day, and the FHSU Foundation and Alumni Office will provide transportation across campus. Refreshments will be available at many of the event venues, with additional food and drink options available for purchase from the Union Catering Company within the Memorial Union. Sno-cones, cotton candy, and popcorn will also be served in the quad (limited to the first 200 attendees). I believe there are also plans for a variety of games and activities on the quad as well.

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