Lamar University has announced the naming of the Charles and Eleanor Garrett Engineering Center on the LU campus to recognize a major gift from the Garland couple whose company is one of the world’s largest manufacturers of metal-detecting equipment. Their gift of an undisclosed amount, will enable the establishment of three different types of funds that support both student scholarships and faculty enhancement; thus, the new annex to the Cherry Engineering Building will bear their name.

"This gift will enable Lamar to establish the Garrett Scholars, which will allow the College of Engineering to recruit the best and brightest students to careers that will impact the future of engineering and build on the wonderful Garrett legacy," President James Simmons said at a news conference in the University Reception Center of the Mary and John Gray Library.

“The gift will establish the Garrett Engineering Faculty Enhancement Fund, which will provide opportunities to strengthen and enhance the work of the engineering faculty," Simmons said. The couple’s gift will also establish the Charles and Eleanor Garrett Chair in Engineering.

The gift is a significant part of Lamar University’s Investing in the Future Campaign, which is nearing its original $100 million goal. Simmons said. That goal was raised to $125 million in January 2012. The Garrett Chair is only the second academic chair to be funded during the campaign.

"Charles and Eleanor Garrett have demonstrated through numerous exceptional contributions their generosity and commitment to engineering education at Lamar University," said Jack Hopper, dean of the College of Engineering. "For Charles and Eleanor to leave the legacy of their name imprinted in the infrastructure of Lamar University brings great recognition and national respect for the quality of the education at Lamar."

"Because their company employs engineers from many disciplines, the Garretts wanted Lamar to use their gift to provide the greatest benefit to the College of Engineering," said Camille Mouton, vice president for university advancement. "Our greatest need is for scholarships and faculty enhancement. This transformative gift could not be more important or come at a more important time for our university."

Simmons said he cannot overemphasize the significance of the Garrett name in furthering academic excellence at Lamar. "Charles Garrett is an icon. He is a true pioneer in the field of metal detection. He and Eleanor are amazing friends both to Lamar and to its sister institution Sam Houston," also part of The Texas State University System.

All over the world, the black Super Wands with the eye-catching yellow GARRETT name are recognized as they help keep the flying public safe. Garret Metal Detector Co. also produces the walk-through detectors approved by the federal government for use in United States airports. Garret metal detectors have provided security at the Olympics since 1984, Charles has acquired several patents for innovative equipment and features and has authored numerous books and videos. "As their lives attest, the Garretts have never forgotten the importance of education in their own success," Simmons said. "This passion for seeking answers in their business has made it possible for them to support future entrepreneurs and teachers through their philanthropy. This extremely generous gift creates a well-deserved legacy for Charles and Eleanor Garrett at his alma mater."

Layfield, TSUS Foundation honored with $2 million gift for scholarships

Beaumont attorney DeWayne Layfield and the Texas State University System Foundation were honored today with a scholarship totaling to the combined generosity of The Beaumont Foundation of America and The Texas State University System Foundation.

Each contributed $1 million to create the L. DeWayne Layfield – Texas State University System Foundation Scholarship. The $2 million endowment will provide scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students majoring in engineering. It is the largest single scholarship gift in the university’s history.

"Mr. Layfield has distinguished himself in the practice of law and we are proud to count him among the outstanding alumni of Lamar University," Simmons said. “It is fitting that his name will forever be associated with opportunity for countless students as they too realize their own personal dreams through higher education."
Thank you to ExxonMobil for Generous Grants in the following Departments:

- Chemical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering

This grant totals in the amount of $15,000 which provides financial support for furthering Lamar University students growth in their education, development of highly qualified teachers and professional development opportunities.

Honored Cardinal Alumnus

A native of Port Arthur, Bob Jones graduated in 1973 with a B.S. in civil engineering with the environmental track and later earned his master of engineering degrees from UT in Austin. The Texas Water Quality Board hired him in July 1973. Jones advanced at the state, eventually becoming Chief Engineer of the Construction Grants and Water Quality Planning Division. In 1976, Bob met and married Beth, his wife of 37 years. The couple has two children. Recognizing the opportunity to create a business helping industry and local governments deal with the ever-increasing volume of environmental regulation, Jones left the state in 1982 with another engineer and formed the consulting company, Jones and Neuse. By the early 90s, it was one of the largest independently owned environmental consulting companies in the state, with more than 250 employees in seven offices, including offices in Louisiana and Mexico. The company was purchased and merged with another engineering company, RMT. Jones stayed with RMT for two years, and, in 1997, Jones and a friend formed another consulting company, JDC Consulting. JDC grew to be a preferred provider of environmental services to many Fortune 100 process industries, including most of the big industries in Southeast Texas. In 2007, the London-based international consulting company RPS purchased JDC. Jones stayed with RPS until February 2012. In March, Jones formed RSJ Consulting, and began working part-time for some of his long-time industry clients. During the last 30 years, Jones has been active in Boy Scouts, YMCA and Oak Hill Pony Baseball, as well as in numerous other Austin-area organization. He serves on the college of Engineering Advisory Council, as a trustee of the Lamar University Foundation, and was a member of the Lamar Board of Regents from 1993 until 1996.
Cardinal Applause

Alan Plummer Associates, as part of a consulting team, was awarded a 2011 ACEC-Texas Engineering Excellence Silver Medal Award for their work on the 2011 Region C Water Plan. Congratulations to Alan Plummer, a Lamar University Civil Engineering Alumnus (1964).

Congratulations to Ph.D. Chemical Engineering students, Jie Fu and Qiang Xu, who have won the 1st place award in the student paper contest of 2012 CAPA (Chinese American Petroleum Association) Petroleum and Petrochemical Technical Symposium. Graduate students from Chemical and Petroleum Engineering programs of Lamar, UH, Texas A&M, and UT Austin joined the competition. Jie presented his paper titled "Plant-wide Dynamic Modeling and Simulation for an Ethylene Plant".

The Board of Directors of the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) appointed Jorge Luis Quijano as the new administrator of the entity. Jorge Quijano is a Lamar University Alum with his BS in Industrial Engineering (1973) and Masters in Engineering (1974). Congratulations to Mr. Quijano!

Congratulations to Dr. Alberto Marquez, assistant professor of industrial engineering; Dr. Wilhang Zhu, associate professor of industrial engineering; and Julia Yoo, assistant professional pedagogy-who have received funding for its project, “Multimedia Learning of Engineering Economics Through Role Play Gaming on a Mobile Platform.” The $200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation Enables them to student the effectiveness of mobile technology in promoting deep and lasting learning.

The 2012 Ann Shaw Award went to Garret Duhon, Lumberton junior. Duhon is a civil engineering student and former president of Pi Kappa Alpha and the Greek Council. The Ann Shaw Award was developed by Lamar alumni to honor Shaw for her leadership and contributions to the university and student life as well as to recognize student leadership.

Congratulations to Ms. Preeti Gangadharan, a Chemical Engineering Ph.D. student studying under Dr. Helen Lou, on receiving the 2012 AIChE Sustainable Engineering Forum Student Paper Award. The winning paper, entitled "Sustainability assessment of polygeneration processes based on syngas derived from coal and natural gas,” was published in the Journal of Computers & Chemical Engineering, Volume 39, 6 April 2012, Pages 105-117.

Congratulations to Alberto Marquez, Weihang Zhu and Julia Yoo for receiving a National Science Foundation grant, Multimedia Learning of Engineering Economics through Role Play Gaming on a Mobile Platform. The mobile technology allows a ubiquitous learning environment suitable to student lifestyle constraints. This study has application in a number of STEM education areas and therefore will significantly improve STEM education.

Congratulations to Dr. Helen Lou, a professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering, who has been selected by Shanxi Province of China as one of the “Top 100 Talents” for the province’s economic growth. As part of this award program to forge international collaboration and stimulate economic growth, Dr. Lou will receive one million RMBs (Chinese Yuan) over three years to develop clean coal related technologies in collaboration with researchers at Shanxi University.

The 2012 American Institute of Chemical Engineers Process Development Division Student Paper Award went to Ms. Meiqian Wang, a Ph.D. student in Chemical Engineering. The winning paper was co-authored with her doctoral advisors and is entitled, “Thermodynamic Analysis Based Energy Consumption Minimization for Natural Gas Liquefaction,” and was published in Industrial & Engineering Chemistry Research. This recognition, which includes a plaque and cash award, is sponsored by Eli Lilly, Inc., and only one graduate student or undergraduate student is selected each year from among a large number of international nominations. Ms. Wang’s doctoral advisors are Drs. Ku-Yen Li and Qiang Xu. Lamar University doctoral students have won this award in three of the last eight years.

Jerry Lin honored as 2012 University Professor

Lamar University honored Jerry Lin, professor of civil engineering, as the 2012 University Professor, with officials applauding him as a gifted teacher and one of Lamar’s premier researchers who has made a significant mark on the field of environmental science. The professorship, awarded for life, is the university’s most prestigious faculty award and recognizes an outstanding senior professor for academic excellence, said Stephen Doblin, provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Lamar officials announced Lin’s selection during a program in the University Reception Center of the Mary and John Gray Library. President James Simmons conferred the medallion of University Professor, presented “as a lasting symbol of this high honor and esteemed title” and described as “the pinnacle of academic achievement at our university . . . recognized by all as an emblem of highest merit.” Lin is an admired professor who “has been a great role model to our students,” said Robert Yuan, chair of the Department of Civil Engineering. “His energy and enthusiasm are highly addictive, and he is one of the most renowned mercury researchers in the world.”

The 2012 honoree holds a bachelor of science degree from Tatung Institute of Technology, a master’s degree in environmental engineering from Duke University and a doctor of philosophy in environmental engineering from The University of Cincinnati. His area of professional interest is the atmospheric transfer of heavy metals, especially mercury. In lay terms, Doblin noted, he studies the complexities of mercury contamination in the food supply: “how air pollutants end up in the fish we eat.”

Best known for his research ideas and initiatives, Lin has received more than $5.5 million in funded research. Since 2000, he has been principal investigator or co-principal investigator on 55 funded projects. As Yuan noted, Lin is one of the world’s most renowned environmental researchers, “and this is not a hollow boast,” said Doblin. Lin has published 60 peer-reviewed articles—one included among the “25 Hottest Articles” by a leading research journal. Lin’s research earned Lin Lamar’s 2008 University Scholar award.

During his career, Lin has taught five undergraduate and 11 graduate courses. He has served in more than 300 graduate committees, directed eight doctoral dissertations and 38 master’s theses. He earned the 2008 Chi Epsilon James Robbins Excellence in Teaching Award, was named a 2003 Excellence in Civil Engineering Education Fellow by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), His students placed second in the 2009 state wastewater-treatment design competition, and he has served as advisor for Lamar’s ASCE chapter—a group that has won 42 awards since 2000.

“Dr. Lin has served Lamar extraordinarily well for the past 13 years and has made a significant mark in the discipline of civil engineering and field of environmental science,” Doblin said. “His standard of excellence is apparent throughout the university—in the courses he has taught, the leadership he has provided, the scholarship he has conducted, the funding he has secured, the awards he has received, the international relations he has cultivated and, in big ways and small, the students he has cultivated.”
Industrial engineering major Elizabeth Wu embraces challenges

Like most high school seniors planning to attend college, Elizabeth Wu was faced with important decisions concerning her future. Upon her graduation in 2010, the Lubbock native was considering her options and hadn’t decided on a school — that is, until her mother showed Wu some interesting information in The Washington Post.

“My mom actually sent me an article that said Lamar University students are more well-rounded when they graduate than students who went to Harvard University,” said Wu.

Based on the results of an educational study, the nationally syndicated column advised students to “Forget Harvard and think Lamar.” The column by the Post’s Kathleen Parker recognized Lamar’s “commitment to core subjects deemed essential to a well-rounded, competitive education.”

“That actually kind of cemented my final decision for me,” said Wu, a junior majoring in industrial engineering. “Many people think of Harvard as the pinnacle of education and success, but I’ve always felt that you shouldn’t base everything on a name. Here at Lamar, they don’t just push you in a certain direction they kind of challenge you from several different aspects.”

A proficient violinist since the age of four, fluent in Mandarin and a brown belt in San Shou martial arts, Wu was excited to begin her transition into university life — although she wasn’t overly excited about the major she had settled on.

$69,000 Entergy grant for LU research

Xianchang Li, associate professor of mechanical engineering at Lamar University, will undertake groundbreaking work in modeling complex power generation systems with an eye to increasing efficiency thanks to a $69,000 grant from Entergy Charitable Foundation.

Li’s work, “Gas Turbine/Steam Turbine Modeling and Optimization” will seek to refine the performance and efficiency of a combined power system using both gas and steam turbines. The final goal is to maximize the power output or the thermal efficiency while considering the trade-offs in revenue, Li said.

“We are grateful to the Entergy Charitable Foundation for funding this research,” said Jack Hopper, dean of the College of Engineering and associate provost for research at Lamar. “Dr. Li’s research will increase our understanding of thermodynamics in this important area helping Entergy and other power generators increase efficiency to ultimately save resources and realize savings for their customers.”

“Entergy is dedicated to supporting certain key activities, including education and environmental initiatives,” said Sallie Rainer, Entergy Texas president and chief executive officer. “My predecessor, Joe Domino, was a vital link in obtaining this grant for the university and for good reason. The project clearly deserves a commitment from our company for the value of the work and because the partnership between Entergy Texas and Lamar is important to the welfare of Southeast Texas as a whole.”

A highly published researcher, Li, who holds a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Clemson University, joined Lamar’s faculty in 2006 after serving as a research scientist in the Energy Conversion & Conservation Center at the University of New Orleans.

To meet ever-growing demands for electrical power, highly reliable gas turbine engines are seeing increasing use in power plants. While the bulk of America’s electrical power is produced by steam turbines fueled by relatively cheap and abundant coal, more than 80 percent of power generating capacity installed in recent years is provided by gas turbines. The low efficiency of gas turbines due to high-temperature exhaust has lead to the development of two-stage systems where that exhaust is used to drive a steam turbine. Known in the industry as a heat recovery steam generator, these systems can be quite complex, Li said.

In his research, Li will create computer modeling that will allow detailed thermal analysis of complex systems. Specifically, he will examine gas turbine inlet cooling, gas turbine blade cooling and off-design or partial load operations as ways to optimize designs for greater efficiency. Once Li’s baseline model is completed it can be customized to model specific power plants, he said.
SASOL Donation Kicks Off Unit Operations Lab Renovation

A contribution from South African Coal and Oil, SASOL, is the first to help Lamar University upgrade the aging Unit Operations Laboratory in the Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering. The company’s North American headquarters is in Westlake, La.

“SASOL is the first to step up to the plate to help renovate the Unit Operations Lab,” said Jack Hopper, dean of the College of Engineering. “We are very appreciative of SASOL and this gift of $15,000.”

“We’re glad to make this donation to Lamar because working in the Unit Operations Laboratory is one of the key things to make students successful when they go out into industry,” said David Mullenix, a 1986 Lamar graduate and regional growth and process development manager for SASOL Olefins and Surfactants.

The laboratory created in 1978 has introduced scores of chemical engineering students to various types of industrial units, including distillation, absorption and cooling towers, as well as heat exchangers and gas separation membrane units.

Advances in technology and automation, and the need to simulate the challenges facing the chemical process industry today, make upgrading the laboratory an urgent need, said Thomas Ho, professor and department chair.

Joining Mullenix in making the afternoon presentation were Gary Keers, senior principal engineer, and David Nguyen, a recent Lamar chemical engineering graduate who joined SASOL in 2011. After the presentation, Nguyen and Keers shared insights on working in the industry with senior chemical engineering majors in the chemical engineering seminar room.

“David Mullenix came to an open house in 1981 from Goliad, Texas, and I helped recruit him to Lamar,” said Jack Hopper, dean of the College of Engineering. “He now serves as the chair of our Chemical Engineering Advisory Council and is very supportive of Lamar.”

“I chose Lamar because when I looked around I saw plaques with the names of industry leaders who were supporting the university,” Mullenix said. “When I looked out the back door and saw what was then the Mobil refinery and saw the many other chemical plants in the area I knew that after I graduated I was going to go to work for one of those industries. So, what better place to go to school than the place that already had the support from the industry where you’ll work?”

New processes planned for the lab include a $150,000 distillation system with automated controls to teach mass and energy balance, yield, tray efficiencies, vapor and liquid rate profiles and process control. A new $150,000 shell and tube heat exchanger with steam generator and automatic controls will be used to teach heat transfer coefficients, pressure drops versus baffles, unsteady state behavior and process control. A new $100,000 gas absorption system, with gas chromatograph, is planned for teaching mass transfer coefficients, packed column dynamics, column efficiency and absorption exothermic effects. Modification of the existing fluid flow system with DCS instrumentation, estimated at $100,000, will allow students to explore flow restriction analysis, equivalent pipe lengths, and pump curves versus impeller diameter.

A new $75,000 membrane ultrafiltration system with online oxygen sensor analysis will present studies in membrane permeability, flux, and process variables versus separation efficiency. And a new $75,000 CSTR reaction system with online FTIR analysis will provide lessons in kinetics analysis, residence time and conversion.

SASOL’s global business interests include mining, energy, chemicals and synfuels. In particular, SASOL produces petrol and diesel profitably from coal and natural gas using the Fischer-Tropsch process.

CITGO Scholarships

CITGO Petroleum Corporation has established a scholarship for Lamar University students. These scholarships benefit junior and senior level students pursuing academic degrees in disciplines such as chemical engineering and mechanical engineering.

Thank you to our 2012-2013 Recruitment Partners

For more information on how your company or organization can recruit the College of Engineering finest, contact us at 409-880-7797
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