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Messiah University  
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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Emma Lytle '23

Alumni answer the question, “How did the Collaboratory prepare you for life after college?”



### Erik Hornberger '12

I learned countless lessons from the Collaboratory, but one that stands out is the practice of learning by pushing forward despite imperfect understanding. In class, you'll never be asked to solve a problem that requires understanding a concept that hasn't been introduced yet, but that's not how the real world works and that's not how the Collaboratory works.



### Jean Zipagan '13

Something I learned was from my firsthand interactions with our partners. This emphasized the importance of listening and understanding the customer's true pain points, rather than assuming on their behalf. One other important lesson from Collab is acknowledging that, 99% of the time, you'll fail and break something along the way.



### Jessica Kline Kunkle '18

The Collaboratory taught me that you can't find the best solution unless you're willing to put in the work to truly understand the problem.



### Erin Brenneman '20

I learned the practical design experience while being guided by mentors with vast knowledge of my chosen engineering field prepared me for joining industry better than anything I could have imagined.

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 The Collaboratory for Strategic Partnerships and Applied Research

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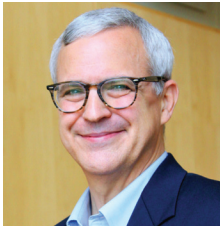
“Approved Workers” — II Timothy 2:15

# DOKIMO I ERGATAI

SPRING 2021

## THE COLLABORATORY'S GENESIS

Clayton Holmes '22



David Vader



Don Pratt

Drs. Don Pratt and David Vader both came to Messiah University in the fall of 1993, searching for a way to integrate their faith and work in a way that encourages students to do the same. They initiated projects as options for students outside of the academic program, but they underestimated the student demand for such opportunities. “The idea was, we’d bring students and faculty together across campus to work on real projects, not stuff from the back of a book, that address significant problems,” Pratt said. As membership expanded, Vader and Pratt decided it was necessary to make these extracurricular activities into an established organization. Pratt served as the first director, reporting to Vader, who was department chair. Vader then served as the director for almost two decades.


After experimenting with a few names for the group over the years, they settled on The Collaboratory for Strategic Partnerships and Applied Research—better known today as the Collab. Over the years, it developed into an interdepartmental research and development organization that was led by key principles and core values shared amongst the believers that founded it—values such as discipleship, humility, servant leadership and reflection.

Vader stated that he sees these values evident today in the Collaboratory, mentioning how grateful he is for the pioneers who started with him. He expresses his love for the program and

how proud he is of his students and colleagues who have shown their character through their work and the lives they lead beyond their work. “My greatest memories all revolve around relationships,” he said. He encourages everyone to live a life that is for the kingdom, and for “treasure that will last.”

When asked to share favorite memories from his time with the Collaboratory, Pratt recalls having students that were so excited to work on a project building a solar-powered car, he found them spending the night sleeping on the floor in Frey Hall. “I remember one night they dragged their mattresses into the lab, I had to chase them out of the shop,” he chuckled.

The faculty and students at Messiah are grateful for their devotion and passion for vocational development. The engineering department at Messiah University will look a bit different in the coming fall. Vader will be transitioning from his full-time faculty role, but plans to stay involved with the Collaboratory. Pratt recently announced his retirement from education after he finishes the spring semester of 2021. “I will be retiring in May, planning to go full-time into missions,” Pratt shared. He plans to do prayer ministry with his wife, while also continuing the work he started in the Collaboratory, such as finding new ways to safely dispose of landmines and other highly explosive artillery. He explained the importance of this by pointing out the fact that “here in America, we don’t have to worry about kids walking to school through a minefield. In many places, that is their experience.”

As they move from their full-time work at Messiah University, we express our gratitude to Drs. Vader and Pratt for almost 30 years of faithful leadership. 



Vader, above, on site team trip and, below, pictured as director of the Collaboratory



Pratt with Collaboratory project students

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MESSIAH UNIVERSITY

THE COLLABORATORY

## WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

## MISSION

The Collaboratory is a center at Messiah University for applied research and project-based learning, in partnership with client nonprofit organizations, businesses, governments and communities in our region and around the world. Areas of engagement include engineering, science, health and information technology. Our two-fold mission is:

- To foster justice, empower the poor, promote peace and care for the earth through applications of our academic and professional disciplines.
- To increase the academic and professional abilities of participants, their vocational vision for lifelong servant-leadership and their courage to act on convictions.

## VISION

Increasing hope and transforming lives through education, collaboration, innovation and service.

## IDENTITY

The Collaboratory is an organization of students, educators and professionals affiliated with Messiah University. We are Christians who aspire to obey the instructions of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to love neighbors as ourselves and to share his Gospel. As God enables us to serve others today, we seek to grow as disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to serve as God's stewards over the resources of our academic disciplines and to bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

## STUDENT STAFF

STUDENT DIRECTOR: Mikayla Eyster  
 ASSISTANT STUDENT DIRECTOR: Katie Bunch  
 STUDENT PROGRAM MANAGER: Matt Collman  
 STUDENT ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Paige Campbell  
 MARKETING TEAM STUDENT LEADER: Jane Mylin

## PROFESSIONAL STAFF:

DIRECTOR: Darren Hercyk  
 PROGRAM MANAGER: Lori Zimmerman  
 SECTOR LEADERS: Darren Hercyk, Dereck Plante, Andy Erikson, Tim Howell  
 MARKETING TEAM ADVISOR: Alyssa Heberlig

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## DARREN HERCYK




Reflecting on the Collaboratory's early years and solid foundation reminds us of God's abundant blessings and encourages us to continue God's work on earth. Although there have been a number of changes like the name, the hours they meet and how it is now part of the curriculum, what has not changed is the focus on integrating learning and service in a God honoring way.

In a recent interview with Dr. Don Pratt, one of the Collaboratory co-founders, he shared that one day they looked at what they were doing and realized "we are attracting lots of students who are really wanting to do something important with their lives." It has been a blessing to meet so many of these alumni and hear their stories. God is faithful (Hebrews 10:23) and we still attract students that could have gone anywhere to school but came to Messiah University to be part of the Collaboratory.

With Drs. Vader and Pratt moving on from full-time teaching, we also see that God has been faithful in bringing in new faculty with the same passion to integrate learning and service as our founders. Dr. Philip Tan, assistant professor of engineering, came to Messiah in 2018. Prior to this, Tan combined his engineering and physiology interests through biomedical research at the University of Virginia. In the Collaboratory he is utilizing his many gifts as the project manager for the Mechanized Percussive Well Drilling, Egg Incubator and SkinSafe teams. Tan, his wife Julia, and their baby son Joel live in Carlisle.

This fall, Dr. Ryan Farris, assistant professor of engineering, will join Messiah University. Coming from Cleveland, Ohio, where he spent the last nine years developing and commercializing wearable medical robots. He cofounded the Human Motion & Control division at Parker-Hannifin Corporation. As a licensed professional engineer, Farris brings an entrepreneurial energy and strong industry experience to the biomedical engineering program. We look forward to having Dr. Farris, his wife Audrey and daughter Cora joining the Collaboratory family.

The last 20 years of the Collaboratory have been impactful for our students, faculty and communities we serve, and it is clear we are well positioned for the next leg of the journey. **Through all of this, we give God the Glory!** 

## ALUMNI CONTINUE SUPPORT OF THE COLLABORATORY

*Hye Lim Jung '23*

Many students have passed through the Collaboratory over the years, and sometimes those students stay involved as alumni. Three Messiah alumni who have been a part of the Collaboratory since their student years were asked about their past and current involvement.

Tony Beers, '06 joined the Collaboratory as a junior mechanical engineering major and has stayed involved for the past 15 years. Today, he is a partner of the Collaboratory while working as a Brethren in Christ missionary in Zambia. When Beers was a student, he worked on the pumps and well-drilling teams. Beers explained that Collaboratory site trips helped shape his professional life, refining his calling to work on water projects in developing nations. When asked about who from the Collaboratory made an impact on his life, he answered without hesitation—professor of engineering Dr. David Vader. "David's my mentor. . . and he's certainly one of my heroes of the faith," said Beers. He offered important advice for the current students working in the Collaboratory: "Treat it like a sport. . . you're never going to regret putting more into a project because it's going to make you a sharper engineer. Take your senior project seriously and see where it will lead you."

Alyssa Heberlig, '09 majored in business and joined the Collaboratory marketing team during her first year. She mainly worked for the newsletter, interviewing people and writing articles, and served as a student project manager for a while. She is now the professional program manager for the marketing team, volunteering for many years in this role.



Alumni Continue Support of the Collaboratory continued from page 2

Heberlig reflected on how her involvement with the Collaboratory and the two site team trips to Burkina Faso affected her. "It opened my eyes to the world and gave me a different understanding of how God works in it," said Heberlig. She added that the site team trips acted as the starting point of her cross-cultural experiences and ministries, as she now teaches English as a second language at her church. One of her favorite Collaboratory memories was watching one of her student project managers mature in her leadership, marketing and customer relations skills over time. "It was really rewarding to see her work hard and develop a lot as a young person and a professional," she said.



Tom Austin, '97 majored in engineering with concentrations in electrical and mechanical engineering and was part of the Collaboratory before it was fully formed. Austin was on the solar car racing team that designed, built and raced a solar car, a project that was a 3- to 4-year process. Austin admitted that he was one of the students with his mattress in Frey Hall, referenced by Professor Pratt. He reconnected with Messiah University in 2011 and has been the project manager for the Energy Monitoring and Management System (EMMS) team ever since. He also has led several site teams in this role. "I wanted to give back to the program that gave me so much," he said. Austin values the real-world experience that the Collaboratory offered to him and to current students. "As a student, building the solar car was a real-world experience. My friend's life (the driver) was in that car. It went way beyond classroom teaching." When asked about his favorite memory while working with the Collaboratory, he answered with a smile. "There are so many. It's hard to pinpoint one memory, but overall, it is seeing the students' eyes get opened when we went on site team trips." ◆

Above: Tony Beers '06, bottom left: Alyssa Heberlig '09, bottom right: Tom Austin '97

## COLLABORATORY SITE TEAMS THROUGH THE YEARS

1998	2000	2004	2007
			
Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso	Honduras
2008	2009	2011	2013
			
Zambia	Mali	Nicaragua	Burkina Faso
2015	2017	2018	
			
Panama	Kenya	Ghana	Nicaragua

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*(The goal is to reach \$5M in the next 10 years. Messiah University has issued a \$2.1M Endowment Challenge Match. Between now and December 31, 2022, Messiah will match, dollar-for-dollar, every gift for the Collaboratory Endowment Fund up until the \$2.1M challenge has been met.)*