

UVSC SUCCESS!

D. Michael Hansen



After earning a bachelor's degree in business management from UVSC, D. Michael Hansen '04 from Payson, Utah, headed to Rochester, New York, to pursue a master's degree in print media from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) – an international leader in imaging, the digital capture, storage, manipulation and delivery of ancient documents. For his senior thesis at RIT, Hansen participated in the decoding of a 1,000-year-old manuscript, the Archimedes Palimpsest.

The 10th-century manuscript Hansen is helping decode contains several long-lost theories from one of the world's greatest mathematical minds from ancient Greece – Archimedes. Archimedes' treatises, recorded more than 200 years before Christ, were lost in 1204 A.D. when a monk erased the writings and ripped apart the parchment to reuse for a prayer book. It survived as such for the next 700 years. In 1906, a Danish scholar discovered a hint of Archimedes' faded writings beneath the prayers. Soon after, the manuscript disappeared again. After passing through the hands of several private owners, the prayer book resurfaced at an auction in New York, where it was purchased for \$2 million. The present owner brought the writings to the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Md.

Immediately the museum received proposals from scientists around the world offering to conduct imaging and unlock Archimedes' writings. Three were chosen, including, Dr. Roger Easton, Jr., professor of imaging science at RIT. That's where Hansen comes in.

After images of the parchment are scanned, via x-ray fluorescence, the photos are sent to Dr. Easton at RIT, where Hansen analyzes them and tries to separate Archimedes text from the other layers of writing, watching history re-appear right before his eyes.

“I enjoy knowing that I could be seeing something for the first time after it has been hidden for so long,” Hansen said. “I think it's a little ironic that it takes state-of-the-art imaging systems to discover hidden mathematical theories from one of the ancient founders of calculus.”

Recently, Hansen was hired full-time working with Archimedes Palimpsest. An opportunity he credits his experience at UVSC for. “UVSC taught me how to see the big picture – to take a step back and see where I fit in the industry,” he said. “There are great opportunities in the field of imaging science, but succeeding in the industry requires strategy.”