



Stony Brook
University

CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
in the Graduate School

Newsletter

Spring 2015



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As a sponsor of the "GSO 35th Anniversary: Neil deGrasse Tyson" event held on April 27, the Center for Inclusive Education was given a unique opportunity to host Dr. Tyson for a brief Q&A with CIE scholars.

Leading with Diversity

The use of the word "diversity" in higher education is often misconstrued for being synonymous with affirmative action. However, diversity signifies a much more integrative approach to creating a culture where individual and group differences are recognized as assets. In his widely acclaimed book "The Difference", University of Michigan Professor, Dr. Scott E. Page said, "progress depends as much on our collective differences as it does on our individual IQ scores." Therein lies the very essence of diversity – it is about the future, not the past. Therefore, forward-thinking and forward-looking organizations understand that diversity is synonymous with excellence.

A powerful illustration of leading with diversity in higher education is how programs focused on promoting the success of diverse scholars benefit the broader community. Stony Brook University, for example, has long been committed to the outreach and engagement of historically underrepresented and underserved groups. In response, the CIE has identified and addressed key barriers along the academic pathway, expanded our outreach efforts and developed valuable mentoring networks to bridge gaps and breakdown obstacles on the route to success. Through these efforts, we achieve a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the challenges scholars face and, as a result, we create multiple avenues to higher education opportunities that in turn benefit all groups. Placing diversity as a priority within the organizational structure prevents its outcomes from being too narrow in scope.

Through the diversity efforts of the CIE, we have witnessed the tremendous power of a strong community and how it creates a sense of belonging which combats feelings of isolation. Social science research has shown that creating a sense of belonging with one's academic domain is important for academic engagement (e.g. Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, & Salomone, 2003; London, Rosenthal, Levy, & Lobel, 2011) and performance (Good, Rattan, & Dweck, 2012). Toward

that end, the CIE community has been a major catalyst to some meaningful interventions aimed at fostering a strong sense of community and belonging among the students it serves. For instance, the CIE's Peer-Led Study Network in the biological sciences has been instrumental in demonstrating the value of learning communities for core courses at the graduate level. We have taken the lessons learned from this effective intervention and worked with the Academic Success and Tutoring Center to apply them to the undergraduate community through our new Biomath Learning Center. The CIE Research Café series has fostered valuable cross-disciplinary exchanges that have led to rich discussions on a wide variety of scholarly and scientific topics, as well as the development of long-term interdisciplinary research projects. Additionally, the long standing CIE Community of Student Mentors (peer mentoring) program has provided insight into challenging roadblocks to advancement, be they academic, personal, social or career-related, as well as timely opportunities for intervention and sponsorship. Supporting the importance of such retention efforts, a recent study by the Council of Graduate Schools (2015) recommended the adoption of peer mentoring programs to foster a sense of community and help students to persist in their degree programs. These evidence-based interventions have been combined with departmental-level best practices and adopted by our institution, making them a permanent set of academic enrichment activities for student retention and success.

Leading with diversity is a platform for a more inclusive approach to strengthening our policies and practices for the benefit of everyone. With this in mind, I invite you to take time this summer to consider how we as an institution can work to integrate diversity and inclusion into the very core of our pursuits - for the benefit of all members of Stony Brook University.

Nina Maung, Director

Is There a Doctor in the House?

Congratulations to all of our CIE Scholars graduating this spring and summer!

Emmanuel Noble Asare, PhD in Genetics
Dissertation: Structural and genetics analysis of poliovirus protein 2CATPase in viral morphogenesis

Emiliano Diaz, PhD in Philosophy
Dissertation: Body and Horizon: Kant, Husserl, and the Nonconceptual Content of Experience

James Herrera, PhD in Anthropological Sciences
Dissertation: Phylogenetic systematics and biogeography of lemurs from Madagascar

Elizabeth Julia Hershman, PhD in English
Dissertation: Beyond Compare: Nineteenth Century Poets and the Stigmatization of Genre

Jennifer Martinez, PhD in Molecular & Cellular Biology
Dissertation: Gap Junctional Conductance Produced by Cx50, but not Cx46, is Regulated by the PI3K Signaling Pathway

Jasmine R. Valentin-Albanese, PhD in Marine and Atmospheric Sciences
Dissertation: Reserve effects, behavioral interactions and trophic relationships of upper and mid-trophic level grouper species (F. Serranidae) on the Belize barrier reef

Yamil Velez, PhD in Political Science
Dissertation: Fight or Flight: Mobility, Political Behavior, and Nativism in the United States

Alexander Davis, MM in Music Performance

Courtney Jade Ensslin, MD

Jacinth Greywoode, MA in Music

Ammar Morgan, MS in Mechanical Engineering

Camilo Salazar, MS in Marine and Atmospheric Sciences

Emma Velez, MA in Philosophy

Andrew Zamora, MA in Anthropology



Special Congratulations to Our CIE Graduate Assistants

The CIE extends special congratulations to Vincci Tai, MBA in Marketing, and Jinwei “William” Ge, MBA in Accounting and Finance, on their graduation this May. Vincci and William have worked with the CIE as Graduate Assistants since the 2013 fall semester and we will miss them dearly.

Best of luck with your job search and future endeavors, from your CIE family!

LSAMP Bridge to the Doctorate and Turner Fellow, Melissa Sims, introduces the Secretary of Energy



Melissa Sims, PhD student in Geosciences, introduced the Secretary of Energy, Ernest Moniz, at the dedication of the National Synchrotron Light Source II (NSLS-II) at Brookhaven National Laboratory on February 6. Sims shared details about her research and how she will continue to study geological samples at the new cutting-edge NSLS-II. “Our work will be conducted at the NSLS-II X-ray Powder Diffraction (XPD) beamline,” said Sims. “We should be able to take measurements that are about a thousand times brighter than what was possible at NSLS (the now-shuttered predecessor). It will yield much better data than NSLS could.” Through this work, Sims hopes to ultimately gain a better understanding of how our solar system formed. The original article can be found [here](#).

CIE Scholars, Jesse John & Lyl Tomlinson, Invited to Dinner with Neil deGrasse Tyson

CIE Scholars, Jesse John and Lyl Tomlinson, were among a select group of Stony Brook students who were invited to dinner with Neil deGrasse Tyson at the Simons Center on Monday, April 27. “It was inspiring to hear Dr. Tyson’s personal stories and thought-provoking insights, which were all delivered with his classic emphatic eloquence,” said Tomlinson. “He truly surpassed the high expectations his reputation sets for him.”



Congratulations Corner

AGEP-T FRAME and Bridge to the Doctorate Fellow, **Emmanuel Asare**, PhD candidate in Genetics, participated as a mentor in the 6th Annual Monroe College Male Empowerment Seminar on April 23.

BNL AGEP-T FRAME Fellow, **Dr. Paulo Castillo**, and his wife Sonya welcomed baby girl, Noelia Sua, to their family on March 31.

CIE Postdoctoral Associate, **Dr. Sheri Clark**, won a travel award to attend the 7th annual conference on Understanding Interventions that Broaden Participation in Sciences Careers in San Diego, CA in May.

Mel Pilar Espailat, PhD student in Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, AGEP-T FRAME Scholar and Turner Fellow, got engaged to Justin Latorre on April 18.

Turner Fellow, **Lori Gallegos De Castillo**, PhD student in Philosophy, received a Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship. Only 30 were awarded nationwide and across disciplines. **R. Emilio Fernandez**, PhD candidate in Technology, Policy and Innovation, AGEP-T FRAME & Turner Fellow, was granted Honorable Mention. **Emma Velez**, PhD student in Philosophy, Turner Fellow was granted Honorable Mention for the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship.

Dr. William Gillis, IRACDA NY-CAPS Scholar, accepted a tenure-track position in the biology department at SUNY Old Westbury. As an Assistant Professor in Organismal Biology, Dr. Gillis will be teaching courses in introductory and developmental biology, as well as comparative anatomy. He will also be starting a research lab with undergraduate students studying cell signaling and embryology.

Turner Fellow, **Jacynth Greywoode**, graduated with his MA in Music and will be transitioning into the PhD program in music composition. He also won the Duino Prize for Composition from the International Music Festival of the Adriatic, which entails a scholarship and a performance of the work in Italy.

James Herrera, PhD, was selected for a postdoctoral position at the American Museum of Natural History.

IMSD-MERGE Scholar, **Maryam Ige**, received the Undergraduate Recognition Award for Academic Excellence at the 33rd annual ceremony on Monday, April 13.

The Chemistry of Materials Journal accepted an article written by **Crystal Lewis**, PhD student in Chemistry, AGEP-T FRAME & Turner Fellow: ‘Correlating Size and Composition-Dependent Effects with Magnetic, Mössbauer, and PDF Measurements in a Family of Catalytically Active Ferrite Nanoparticles’.

Dr. Javier Monzón, IRACDA NY-CAPS Scholar, accepted a tenure-track position at Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA. In March, he had a second-authored paper accepted in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS): ‘Hypercholesterolemia and ApoE deficiency result in severe infection with Lyme disease and relapsing fever Borrelia’.

IRACDA NY-CAPS Scholar, **Dr. Marianne Moore**, accepted a tenure-track position at Arizona State University where she will be an Assistant Professor in Animal Ecology, a member of the Science and Mathematics group on the Polytechnic campus, and will mentor undergraduate and masters students in the Applied Biological Sciences Program. She will also have the opportunity to mentor PhD students through the main Tempe campus.

Ariel Negron, PhD student in Neuroscience, AGEP-T FRAME Scholar and Turner Fellow, gave an oral presentation at Endocrine Society meeting in San Diego, CA in March.

Lyl Tomlinson, PhD candidate in Neuroscience, received a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award grant from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. His project, The Effects of Voluntary Exercise on Oligodendroglia and Myelin in Developing and Cuprizone-Treated Mice, has been funded for the next three years.

In January, Turner Fellow, **Dewayne Wrencher**, of the MFA program in Studio Art, participated in his first ever Pop Up Art Gallery in Patchogue, NY.

Congratulations to the Winners of the 2015 Faculty and Scholar Awards for Excellence

For the first time, the CIE awarded two scholars and two Stony Brook faculty members at the May Graduation Celebration. The 2015 Faculty & Scholar Awards for Excellence honored four individuals in recognition of their mentoring, leadership, service and commitment to the Center for Inclusive Education. These outstanding members of the community have made significant impact on the quality of diversity and/or mentoring and were presented with an honorary plaque at the event held on Thursday, May 21 at the Hilton Garden Inn.



Dr. Cindy Leiton

IRACDA NY-CAPS Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Cindy Leiton has been a dedicated and active member of the Center for Inclusive Education community since she first stepped foot on the Stony Brook University campus as a SUNY-AGEP Summer Research Intern in 2006. “From the moment we met Cindy, we knew that her intelligence, enthusiasm and energy would make her a force to be reckoned with in graduate school and beyond,” recalls CIE Administrator, Kathyne Piazzola. Her outstanding research work in the lab of Dr. Holly Cognato resulted in her recruitment to the the doctoral program in Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology and enrollment as a Dr. W. Burghardt Turner Fellow in 2007. In her first year as a doctoral student, Cindy jumped right into the CIE community, signing up for the Community of Student Mentors program (CSM) and participating in the Writing to Win Workshop. After winning the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (GRFP) in 2008, Cindy gave back to the CIE community by serving as an annual presenter at the Writing to Win information session - sharing her knowledge and experience with the GRFP Fellowship application process with future CIE applicants. Her commitment to her fellow CIE scholars continued, as she served as a mentor in the CSM program and an instructor for the SUNY AGEP Summer Research Internship.

Even now, as an IRACDA- NYCAPS Postdoctoral Fellow, Cindy makes time to serve the CIE community through assisting GRFP applicants with their fellowship applications and continuing to mentor in CSM. “I have no doubt that Cindy will continue to shine as a researcher, educator and leader committed to diversity and inclusion as she advances in her research career,” said CIE Director, Nina Maung-Gaona. For these reasons and so many more, we award Dr. Leiton the 2015 Scholar Award for Excellence.

Jennifer Martinez

CIE Administrator Kathyne Piazzola can recall several occasions in which a CIE scholar has said, “Jennifer, I would have never survived Biochem without her.” After three years serving as the Center for Inclusive Education’s peer instructor for supplemental instruction in Biochemistry there are few biological and biomedical CIE scholars who have not been impacted by Jennifer’s CIE service.

Jennifer joined Stony Brook University’s PhD program in Molecular and Cellular Biology in 2010 as a SUNY AGEP Summer Bridge participant and has continuously been an active SUNY AGEP and AGEP-T FRAME participant in CIE activities including socials, charity events, and local and national conferences. In addition to her commitment to her fellow CIE scholar’s success through tutoring, Jennifer was both a mentee in the Community of Student Mentors program, and has served for the past few years as a mentor.

This fall, Jennifer will be relocating to The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington where she has accepted a one year teaching fellowship in the Natural Sciences. CIE Director Nina Maung-Gaona noted, “Without a doubt, Jennifer’s research talents, academic achievements, commitment to student success and ability to teach even the most challenging biological science subject matter will serve her well in this new opportunity and the career that will follow.” Thank you Jennifer for all that you have done for the CIE community. You are truly exemplary and deserving of the 2015 Scholar Award for Excellence!

Dr. Eduardo Mendieta, Department of Philosophy

Dr. Mendieta was nominated for the Faculty Award for Excellence by two Turner Fellows in the Department of Philosophy, Lori Gallegos de Castillo, PhD candidate, and Emma Velez, PhD student. “Professor Mendieta has been my mentor since I began my studies at Stony Brook in 2009,” said Gallegos de Castillo. “When I think of what I have accomplished since then, it becomes apparent how significant Professor Mendieta’s mentorship has been for me.” Dr. Mendieta has been Velez’s mentor since she joined the department in 2013.

Dr. Mendieta has served as the Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Stony Brook University since 2012. His teaching experience spans over 18 years and his areas of specialization include global ethics, discourse ethics, critical theory (in particular Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas), theories of modernity, postmodernity, postcolonialism and Latin American philosophy. “It is because of Dr. Mendieta and his excellent scholarship that I am here studying at Stony Brook today,” said Velez. “His philosophical work in Latin American philosophy and his social commentaries on political issues were inspiring to me as a prospective student and are a large part of what drew me to the department at Stony Brook.”

Recently, Gallegos de Castillo received the 2015-2016 Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship. Only 30 were awarded nationwide and across disciplines. She credits Dr. Mendieta for helping her to develop a “feasible and exciting dissertation project” that led to her obtaining such prestigious recognition. Velez was granted Honorable Mention for the 2015-2016 Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship. Both scholars credit Dr. Mendieta and his encouragement, support and coaching that led them to pursue these opportunities.

“I would call Dr. Mendieta’s mentoring style a ‘feet-to-the-fire method,’” said Gallegos de Castillo. “The only way to transition from a graduate student to a professional academic is by actually performing the tasks that a professional academic performs. Dr. Mendieta has provided me, personally, with countless opportunities for professional development. The most important thing I have learned from Dr. Mendieta’s mentoring style is the virtue of generosity. Dr. Mendieta gives of himself tirelessly in order to expand and ameliorate the field of philosophy.”

“He truly goes above and beyond to serve and motivate underrepresented graduate students to be successful scholars and teachers,” said Velez. “It is this kind of attention and generosity that makes Dr. Mendieta such a valuable mentor and a deserving recipient for this award.”

Dr. Styliani-Anna E. Tsirka, Department of Pharmacological Sciences

Nine individuals from the Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology Graduate Program nominated Dr. Tsirka for the Faculty Award for Excellence. “Dr. Tsirka’s reputation in the CIE precedes her, and she is deserving of this award both as an outstanding mentor and a champion for diversity at Stony Brook. As Pharmacology Graduate Program Director, Stella developed multiple initiatives to increase representation of underrepresented students and had a transformative influence: during her tenure, pharmacology became one of the most diverse graduate programs on campus (25% of the department’s current students have an underrepresented background).”

Dr. Tsirka joined the pharmacology faculty in 2000. She has a record of long-standing and dedicated University service. She is committed to graduate education, serving for 11 years as director for the graduate program. In 2014, she was appointed as the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

“Dr. Tsirka’s influence on students does not finish with their recruitment. Her commitment to the success of students has made it possible for many underrepresented students to overcome difficulties associated with graduate education. Both by helping connect students with different resources on campus and through her direct mentorship, Dr. Tsirka has made a huge difference. As a mentor, she has helped countless students, caring about each one of them with dedication and passion.”

The student contributors emphasized Dr. Tsirka’s openness, accessibility and advocacy. “In addition to constantly encouraging students to look for opportunities to increase knowledge by suggesting different conferences, Dr. Tsirka also follows up on progress. Her open-door policy and her welcoming personality have also made her a phenomenal mentor. Knowing that someone like that is readily available whenever the need may arise makes this whole graduate school experience better.” Dr. Tsirka’s exemplary leadership on behalf of diversity at Stony Brook, as well as her personal investment in mentoring, make her a deserving recipient of this award.

Dr. Tsirka’s Nominators:

Vincent Alford, PhD candidate; Amber Bonds, PhD candidate; Dex-Ann Brown, PhD candidate; Stephanie Chapelliquen, PhD candidate; Luisa Escobar-Hoyos, PhD candidate; Miguel Garcia-Diaz, Graduate Program Director; Odalis Hernandez, Graduate Program Coordinator; Lynda Perdomo-Ayala, Departmental Administrator (Pharmacology); Jason Quinones, PhD candidate

Topic Based Lunches with Senior Leadership - Dr. Frances L. Brisbane

The Center for Inclusive Education proudly welcomed the longest sitting dean of social work in the country to present on March 26 for the spring Topic Based Lunches with Senior Leadership series. Frances L. Brisbane, PhD, Dean and Professor of the School of Social Welfare at Stony Brook University, shared her insights about the “Value of Relationships in Developing & Sustaining Effective Leadership”. Her wealth of experience, extensive volunteer efforts and professional accomplishments have positioned Dr. Brisbane as a senior leader at the institutional, local and national levels. In 2007, she was recognized by the president as being the “Conscience of the University”.

Dr. Brisbane presented and expanded upon professional relationship tenets as they pertain to leadership - specifically because influence matters. Drawing upon the 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership by John Maxwell, Dr. Brisbane shared that “the true measure of leadership is influence.” Good relationships make influence possible and leaders cannot do anything alone. Among many key take-aways for the audience, Dr. Brisbane discussed how:

- Leaders consider the consequences of their behavior for the group;
- Leaders know how to use the strengths of those around them; and
- Leaders are in tune with other’s undeveloped talent.

During the open Q&A time, moderated

by host David Ferguson, PhD, Associate Provost for Diversity & Inclusion; Chair, Department of Technology & Society; Distinguished Service Professor, CIE scholar Jesse John asked, “What is your advice for graduate students who aspire to be leaders but are in a chain-of-command?” Dr. Brisbane responded, “Let them (the current leaders) know your aspirations so they will think of you when opportunities arise. Make yourself memorable and do something that has connectivity.” Each relationship can potentially impact your future leadership skills and positions. “Find people and resources - who you need to help you advance.”

Another CIE scholar followed-up with his question, “How do you work with people within your cohort who are insistent on hindering your success?” Dr. Brisbane quickly acknowledged that leadership will become colored with the way someone treats people he/she does not get along with. “Develop personal strategies to be civil because you cannot reciprocate,” said Dr. Brisbane. “Your behavior and your response get noticed, so practice being forgiving and compassionate. Eventually, you won’t have to fake it.”

Dr. Brisbane concluded her talk with a quote from the Paradoxical Commandments of Leadership by Dr. Kent Keith, made familiar by Mother Theresa, “If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies: Succeed anyway.”



TBL with Dr. Frances L. Brisbane



Dr. Brisbane with CIE Scholar, Dex-Ann Brown



CIE Director, Nina Maung-Gaona, Dr. Brisbane and Dr. David Ferguson



Left to right: Kayode Ekwunife-Orakwue, Andres Rivera, Edward Turner and Emilio Fernandez

2015 MoMath Masters Tournament

After a competitive process, CIE scholars Oluwakayode (Kayode) Ekwunife-Orakwue, Emilio Fernandez and Edward Turner were selected to participate in the MoMath Masters Tournament on February 24 at the Tribeca Rooftop in NYC. They spent the evening solving puzzles and competing in challenges at the annual charity benefit hosted by New York Times Puzzlemaster, Will Shortz.

Ekwunife-Orakwue appreciated the exposure and networking opportunities that came with meeting high-profile attendees who, “upon engagement in conversations, discovered (they) shared a common passion for increasing access to education through online and blended learning.”

The scholars would like acknowledge the event chairs, Suzanne and Kresimir Penavic, for making them feel like “the most important guests at the event”.

For a list of winners and more information, click [here](#).

First Year Mixer

This winter brought an abundance of snow and cold weather, but that did not stop IMSD-MERGE Scholars and Turner Fellows from joining together to celebrate their first year in their respective programs. “The First Year Mixer was a fun opportunity to connect with each other,” said Jinelle Wint, PhD student in Molecular and Cellular Biology and IMSD-MERGE Scholar. “I enjoyed the opportunity to relax outside of school while getting to know what other people are doing in their programs.” Despite many different departments being represented within the CIE, each scholar is tethered together by community and his/her pursuit of research.

Golden Key Honor Society

The Stony Brook chapter of the Golden Key International Honor Society invited CIE staff Sheri Clark, Toni Sperzel and Karian Wright to speak with members about “Getting into Graduate School”. The presentation highlighted basic considerations for graduate school - from the application process, to choosing an institution, to a typical day in the life of a graduate student. Clark, Sperzel and Wright explained how to decide if graduate school is the appropriate next step and the PhD path to success.

“Members wanted us to expand upon obtaining letters of recommendation,” said Clark when reflecting upon the presentation outcomes. “They wanted to know who to ask and how to get what they need.” Within the presentation, Clark, Sperzel and Wright shared the importance of securing three letters of recommendation, at least two being from faculty who can speak to specific class or research accomplishments. “It is imperative to give faculty enough time and information to write a strong letter,” said Sperzel. “Providing a CV and/or personal statement will serve as an excellent resource.”



Dr. Sheri Clark and Karian Wright presenting on April 8. For more information about the Golden Key International Honor Society, click [here](#).

“While it was a mixed group of majors, we found that members were overall concerned about their professors knowing them well enough to write the letter,” said Wright. Building relationships with faculty is essential to fostering a professional network that can advance one’s education and career. “Take advantage of office hours,” said Clark. “The more time you spend exploring the topics and processes, the stronger your relationship will be.” This may only be one part of the graduate school application process, but it is vital to success.

Golden Key recognizes the top 15% of all juniors and seniors based upon cumulative grade point average. Students who have completed at least one semester at Stony Brook, earned at least 50 credits toward graduation and have a 3.30 cumulative grade point average (Stony Brook courses only) are eligible to join. Membership is offered at the beginning of the fall semester based upon all prior completed Stony Brook coursework (including winter and summer sessions). In mid-September, all invitations to join Golden Key are communicated via a SOLAR message and a printed letter.

Faculty Diversity Search Information Session

The fourth annual information session with Cathy Cramer, Executive Director of Interschool/Faculty Diversity Search (FDS), was held at the CIE in January. To date, Cramer and her team have placed six CIE scholars and alumni in faculty and leadership positions in the independent schools of New York City.

In addition to providing information about a career in K-12 education, Cramer invited participants to attend the New York Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) Job Fair on Saturday, February 21 at the Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School in New York City. “I am always thrilled to make the connections between CIE applicants and prospective employers,” said Cramer. “The students’ wealth of knowledge and extensive research experience is extremely marketable and desirable to schools for which I am recruiting.”

Twenty years ago, the independent schools decided to promote diversity in faculty to reflect increasing diversity in students. The FDS team works to recruit and select outstanding candidates of color and other underrepresented minorities who demonstrate excellence or future promise as independent school educators. Since its inception, approximately 350 teachers have found and accepted positions through the FDS program. Cathy and her team are eager to continue their work with CIE scholars. If you are interested in learning more about FDS or would like to visit an independent school, please contact the CIE team directly.

Stony Brook Team Recruits in Puerto Rico

This March, a team of representatives from Stony Brook engaged in a three day university recruitment tour of Puerto Rico - visiting three institutions to speak with undergraduate students about graduate school opportunities, with doctoral students about postdoctoral training opportunities, and with faculty about possible grant collaborations. During the three campus visits to the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) Rio Piedras, the UPR Medical Sciences Campus and Universidad Metropolitana (UMET), the team met with 160 undergraduate students, 50 doctoral students and 20 faculty and administrators. Team members toured each of the campuses and were given the opportunity to visit several research facilities, including UPR's new Molecular Sciences Research Building. The team also met with several campus deans and leaders in STEM disciplines and participated in a research symposium.

Student and faculty interactions took place through a series of formal talks and small group discussions about research activities, funding opportunities and the application and admissions processes at Stony Brook. Students and faculty alike expressed significant interest in Stony Brook's partnerships with Brookhaven National Laboratory and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. The Stony Brook team highlighted the funding opportunities available via the programs of the Center for Inclusive Education in the Graduate School: for example, the NIH-funded IRACDA NY-CAPS program's three year blended research and teaching postdoctoral fellowship; the NSF-funded AGEP-T FRAME program's preparation for research intensive faculty careers; the IMSD-MERGE program and the prestigious Dr. W. Burghardt Turner Fellowship. There was also great interest expressed in the Research Experience for Undergraduate programs in Nanotechnology (Materials Science and Engineering) and Energy Applications (Chemistry). While in San Juan, the team also reconnected with Stony Brook doctoral alumni (Turner Fellows) from the 1990s who are currently tenured faculty in the UPR system.

The team's ability to connect with the students and garner enthusiasm for study and research at Stony Brook was greatly enhanced by two important factors. First, that a member of the team, Dr. Gretchen Lopez-Hernandez, was a UPR Rio Piedras alum who was able to immediately connect with students about the excitement and fears associated with "leaving the island". Faculty that taught her in class and mentored her in research played a role in hosting our visit, and expressed their mutual pride in her accomplishments with the team's audience in meetings and presentations. Second, the majority of the recruitment team was bilingual - capable of both conversing and presenting research in Spanish and English. In fact, both faculty members gave their research talks in Spanish. The hosts and organizers at the institutions commented on the unique value that this dual language exchange brought to the interaction. While students in Puerto Rico are bilingual, the opportunity to engage in dialogue in either language put those students who may feel less confident in their English language abilities at ease. More importantly, the Stony Brook team's willingness and ability to engage the students in a bilingual manner sent a strong message regarding Stony Brook's commitment to the Hispanic community. The resulting experience for both students and team members was a flexible ease of communication as well as a sense of mutual respect and support when engaging one another in either language.

The students were impressive in their eagerness, research preparation and thoughtful questions. Two are already scheduled to come to Stony Brook for an interview. Based on the immediate measurable outcomes (i.e., an immediate influx of applications to the REU programs from Puerto Rico), as well as the long term plans to collaborate on a grant proposal in the area of diversity and STEM education, the expectation is that the return on investment will bear fruit for many years to come.



Stony Brook team with representatives from Rio Piedras



CIE Director, Nina Maung-Gaona, presents at UMET

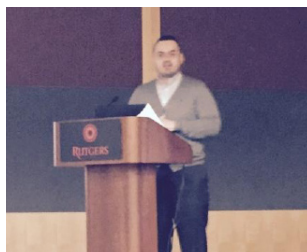


Drs. Gretchen López-Hernández and Thomas MacCarthy discussing opportunities for study and research with UPR Medical Science Campus students

Stony Brook Team Members

- Nina Maung-Gaona**, Lead Organizer - Assistant Dean for Diversity, the Graduate School; Director, the Center for Inclusive Education
- Toni Spertz** - CIE Program Manager (Turner & GEM Fellowship Programs)
- Karian Wright** - CIE Program Manager (NIH IRACDA & NSF AGEP-T Programs)
- Miguel Garcia-Diaz**, PhD - Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacological Sciences; Director, Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology Graduate Program
- Thomas MacCarthy**, PhD - Assistant Professor, Applied Mathematics and Statistics
- Gretchen López-Hernández**, PhD - IRACDA NY-CAPS Postdoctoral Scholar Research Scientist, Department of Neurobiology and Behavior

Dr. Angel I. Gonzalez and Kathryn Piazzola “Represent” at Rutgers University



Dr. Gonzalez presenting at Graduate Primer

On Friday, April 3, CIE team members, Dr. Angel I. Gonzalez and Kathryn Piazzola, participated in the Garden State Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (GS LSAMP) Graduate Primer at Rutgers University. This half-day workshop presented Rutgers LSAMP participants with critical information on key aspects of pursuing a doctoral degree - from preparing graduate school applications to securing institutional and external funding for the doctorate. Dr. Gonzalez served as a morning panelist, discussing opportunities at Stony Brook University as well as externally funded programs (such as LSAMP-BD, AGEP, and IMSD) for underrepresented STEM graduate students pursuing their PhDs. Dr. Gonzalez and Piazzola also participated in a lunchtime breakout session to speak with prospective Stony Brook PhD students about their research interests and potential application to Stony Brook.

Events like the Graduate Primer are part of the CIE’s recruitment activities, which focus on supporting STEM doctoral degree programs at Stony Brook in building pathways and recruitment pipelines with New York area institutions to bring underrepresented doctoral scholars in STEM to Stony Brook. If you are interested in participating in events like the Graduate Primer, please contact the CIE.

CIE to Host Stony Brook GEM GRAD Lab this Fall

The CIE is delighted to announce that we will be hosting Stony Brook’s first ever GEM GRAD Lab this fall on Saturday, October 24. Getting Ready for Advanced Degrees (GRAD) Lab is a full-day, interactive workshop that focuses on building underrepresented students’ toolkits for pursuing research, graduate study and careers in technology and science.

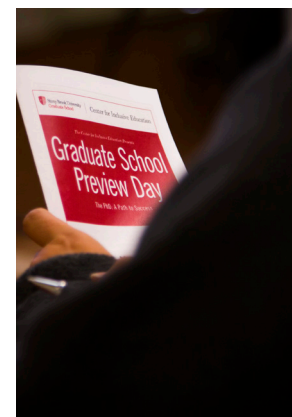
Speakers from the National GEM Consortium will lead this series of four workshops, each of which will focus on a key aspect of choosing to pursue a graduate degree: The benefits of getting an advanced degree, deciding if an advanced degree is right for you, funding your graduate education and hearing experiences of other underrepresented students pursuing graduate study. The GRAD Lab also encourages underrepresented minority students to consider applying for the GEM Fellowship, which offers a combination of funded graduate study and paid internship experience at industry partners of the GEM Consortium. Focusing on the global importance of research and innovation, life-long career benefits and real world role models, the symposium will help each student envision his or her future as a technology leader.

The GRAD Lab is a fantastic opportunity for underrepresented Stony Brook undergraduates, particularly those in their freshman, sophomore and junior years, to get a head start on planning for their research careers. Because it is open to the public and pulls participants from other GEM institutions and universities in the New York Metro area, the GRAD Lab is also an incredible opportunity for Stony Brook to recruit underrepresented scholars for its graduate degree programs. Opportunities are available for programs to cosponsor the event and reserve recruitment booth space for the lunchtime networking session.

The CIE is currently seeking volunteers to serve on its GRAD Lab planning committee as well as event cosponsors. If you are interested in learning more about the GRAD Lab, please contact Toni Sperzel in the CIE.

“Save the Date” for the Second Annual Graduate School Preview Day

The CIE will present the second annual Graduate School Preview Day, “The PhD: A Path to Success”, on Friday, November 20. All undergraduate and master’s-level students who want to pursue a PhD are invited to attend the full-day event. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with current graduate students and postdocs to learn about what “the other kind of doctor” really means. They will network with graduate program faculty and learn about the admissions process. Underrepresented minority students are encouraged to attend to learn about the funding opportunities, academic support, professional development and vibrant community at the Center for Inclusive Education. More details are forthcoming in the fall semester. If you are interested in learning more about Graduate School Preview Day or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Kathryn Piazzola in the CIE.



Second annual event to be held on Friday, November 20

Student Spotlight - National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships Program

CIE scholars received a total of five awards and one honorable mention in the most competitive National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships Program (NSF GRFP) competition ever. In total, ten Stony Brook students were awarded the grant and five received honorable mention. We are incredibly proud of this esteemed accomplishment for their outstanding research and contributions to STEM.



Elizabeth Marie Berrigan

PhD student in Physics and Astronomy
Turner Fellow; AGEP-T Scholar
Research: The connection between spacetime and information is an unavoidable consequence of the holographic principle. Using tensor networks and holography I hope to show how the bulk geometry encodes the entanglement structure of numerous dual systems.

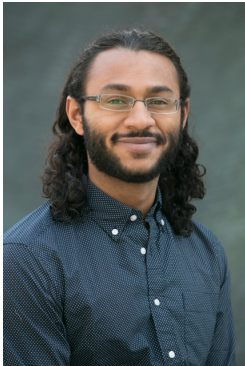
Award Recipient



Jesse Aaron Brizzi

PhD student in Computer Science
Turner Fellow; AGEP-T Scholar
Research: Computer Vision, Affective Computing and Machine Learning. I want to design computers that can see, and teach them to understand human faces and their expressive states.

Award Recipient



Wilka T. Carvalho

MS student in Computer Science, USC
IMSD-MERGE mSI Leader
Research: I currently model a particle detector, simulate particles traversing through it and attempt to use resultant particle radiation information to identify the particles. Last semester, I worked with a computational neuroscientist at Stony Brook to perform spectral analyses on neural data in order to find their behavioral correlates.

Award Recipient



Ashleigh Lussenden

PhD student in Neuroscience
Turner Fellow; AGEP-T Scholar
Research: My work is focused on Neuregulin 1, a protein which has been shown to play a role in many developmental processes. I am looking at how Neuregulin 1 affects the development of neurons in different brain areas, specifically how the neurons grow and make connections.

Award Recipient



Spencer Saraf

PhD student in Marine & Atmospheric Sciences
2014 Doctoral Diversity Fellowship in STEM awardee; AGEP-T Scholar
Research: My research in the field of biological oceanography will determine the physiological and cellular effects of the toxic algal blooms of *Microcystis aeruginosa* on fish embryos and larvae under natural bloom conditions, while also looking at the effects of various nutrients and temperature on the toxicity of the bloom.

Award Recipient



Nicole Alexis Bender

PhD student in Ecology & Evolution
Turner Fellow; AGEP-T Scholar
Research: I plan to monitor the avian recolonization patterns of South Georgia Pipit, after eradication of invasive species, using bioacoustics and modeling techniques.

Honorable Mention

Student Spotlight - Maryam Ige

IMSD-MERGE Scholar, Maryam Ige, was accepted to the UCSD MSTP Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF). The program is designed for motivated undergraduate students who are interested in learning about a career in biomedicine and the medical sciences. Ige, along with other participants, will conduct an 8-week research project in the laboratory of a faculty member in the biomedical sciences, attend weekly seminars and present her work at the UCSD Summer Research Conference.



Alumni Spotlight - Jean Christian Brutus

During the BEYA STEM Conference held in Washington on February 6, CIE alumnus (AGEP and Turner Fellow) Jean Christian Brutus received a Most Promising Engineer award. Brutus graduated from Stony Brook in December 2014 with a Master of Science degree in Biomedical Engineering and is currently a mechanical engineer at US Army Communications-Electronics Research, Development and Engineering Center (CERDEC).

“Science, technology, engineering and math education has allowed me to work in research and development, manufacturing, test and evaluation, and life cycle sustainment, said Brutus, “Most importantly, it has allowed me to support the front line of defense, our warfighters. I would recommend a STEM-related field to anyone I mentor.” The original article can be found [here](#).



Jean Christian Brutus (middle) receiving the award

Alumni Spotlight - Dr. Christopher Martinez



Former Turner Fellow, Dr. Christopher Martinez, was featured in the Alum Spotlight section of the Winter 2015 edition of SBU Magazine online. Martinez earned his PhD in the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences in 2014. When reflecting upon his Turner Fellowship and graduate research support, Martinez said, “The CIE offered me a support system and a sense of family. The overall level of research among faculty and graduate students at Stony Brook is really impressive.” Martinez has been awarded dual Fellowships with the American Museum of Natural History. The original article, written by Joanne Morici, can be found [here](#).

Scholars from Various Disciplines Present for CIE Research Café Series

The CIE Research Café series continued with five scholarly talks over the spring semester. Each month, a CIE scholar is selected to present his/her research to fellow scholars, lab associates and, on occasion, his/her advisor or committee member(s). “This is where the magic happens,” said Nina Maung-Gaona during the March event. Research Cafés offer a unique opportunity to collaborate with fellow researchers and sometimes see one’s own research in a new light. The selected scholars are also featured as the “Researcher of Distinction” in the month they present, which highlights their path into research, current accomplishments and future goals.

Jesse John, Geosciences - ‘Investigations of a Functional Nano Mineral for Remediating High Level Nuclear Waste’

Emmanuel Asare, Genetics - ‘A Poliovirus Cold Case: A Mutation in the Vicinity of a Capsid Interacting Site of Poliovirus 2CATPase Results in a Defect in Viral Encapsidation’

Jennifer DeLeon, Molecular and Cellular Biology - ‘PI3K p110 β Maintains Bioenergetic Homeostasis by Regulating Endocytic Turnover of the Glucose Transporter GLUT1’

James Herrera, Anthropological Sciences - ‘The History and Mystery of Life on Madagascar’

Vanessa Lynn, Sociology - ‘Collective memories of the War on Drugs in NYC: Toward a discourse of responsibility and victimhood’



Jesse John presenting his research



Left to right: Dr. Aniko Paul, Emmanuel Asare, Dr. Eckard Wimmer



Jennifer DeLeon presenting her research



James Herrera being introduced by his Faculty Advisor, Dr. Patricia Wright

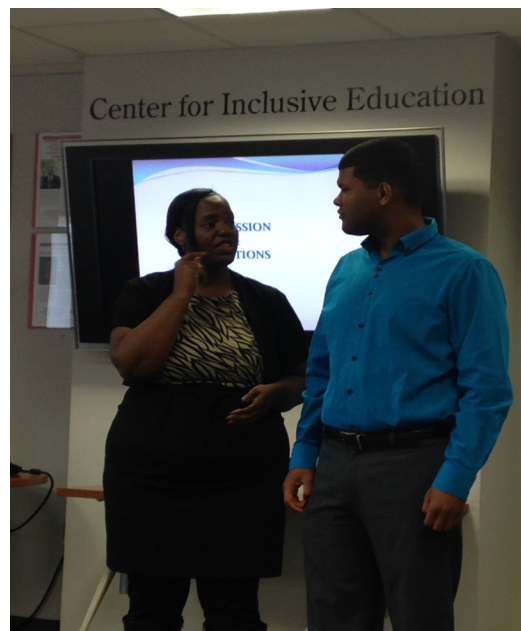


Vanessa Lynn (left) with her departmental colleagues

Faculty Career Week Offers Participants the Insider Perspective to Faculty Careers

The second annual Faculty Career Week kicked-off on Tuesday, April 28 with “Chalk Talks: Communicating Your Research in Five Minutes or Less”. Presenter, Dr. Antoinette “Toni” Stroter, Director of Research, Evaluation & Assessment and Assistant Professor at Liberty University, provided insight to communicating ideas quickly and effectively - particularly as they pertain to research. “If you aren’t in a position to ‘chalk’ it, you need to know how to ‘talk’ it,” said Dr. Stroter.

Dr. Stroter’s strategies for presenting research in five minutes or less included tips on effective communication, awareness of the audience, engagement with the topic and proper use of time. She encouraged participants to practice their research aloud and gave them the opportunity to present to their peers for constructive criticism. When preparing the participants for the exercise, Dr. Stroter offered three important questions for them to ask themselves about their research - “What is it about?, Why is it important?, How is it accomplished?” One participant, Dr. Jaime Ide, Assistant Director at the Laboratory for Computational Neurodiagnostics and Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, reflected upon his experience and said, “It was helpful to get feedback after the talk and to watch others give theirs. Sometimes we see things that we may even do ourselves. The practice component of the workshop was valuable.”



Presenter, Dr. Stroter, with R. Emilio Fernandez, PhD candidate



“Interviewing Skills” workshop panelists answer questions about the different stages of the onsite interview

The panel offered different perspectives on the faculty interview process - ranging from a human resources recruiter, to a new hire, to senior faculty. Overall, the common theme was “be prepared”. “Know your curriculum vitae,” said Buck. “It is fair game and you do not want to stumble over questions about your own experience.” Dr. Tsrirka expanded on the importance of preparing in advance to learn details about the audience and institution. “Know what (the faculty members) are working on so that you can relate what you are doing to what they are doing,” said Dr. Tsrirka. “Show that it is not your first time learning about the institution and be able to engage in intelligent conversation about (the interviewers’) work.” Moderator Dr. Taber added to this point, “if you do not have a schedule in advance, ask for one. It will help to know exactly who you will be meeting with and how much time you will have.”

Dr. Samuel echoed the other panelists in the importance of “knowing and owning your data”. The job talk should be designed to “engage the broad audience, but

On Thursday, April 30, the series continued with “Interviewing Skills”. A distinguished panel of speakers included: Terrence Buck, Principal Human Resources Representative at Brookhaven National Laboratory; Dr. Marianne Moore, IRACDA NY-CAPS Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of Ecology and Evolution; Dr. Arthur Samuel, Department Chairperson and Professor in the Cognitive Science Department of Psychology; and Dr. Styliani-Anna (Stella) Tsrirka, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Professor in the Department of Pharmacological Sciences. The panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Charles Taber, Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education & Dean of the Graduate School.



“Interviewing Skills” workshop audience

continued on page 13

to impress the narrow,” said Dr. Samuel. “You are only entitled to one ‘I don’t know’, so be sure you know your research, slides and timing. Also, remember to anticipate questions and work them into your presentation.” As a new hire, Dr. Moore shared her recent interview experiences and what worked well. She encouraged workshop attendees to use available resources when preparing for the faculty interview process. This included mentors, others currently in the process, the job description, the CIE and the Internet. The best advice she received as she embarked on her job search journey was to perceive the on-campus visit as a social goal. “You are already competitive for the position, but you want to be someone they want to speak with in the lunch room,” said Dr. Moore. “Do the outstanding science, but your personality is also an important indicator as to whether they will want to collaborate with you.” The interview process is designed to assist the candidate and hiring institution with determining who will be a best fit. The better prepared you are for the interview, the easier it will be to let your personal attributes shine through.

The third and final workshop, “Negotiations”, was moderated on Friday, May 1 by Dr. Dave Ferguson, Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, Chair for the Department of Technology and Society, Distinguished Service Professor. Three panelists addressed facets of the new faculty negotiation process including salary, teaching load, start-up funds and lab space: Dr. Julia Bear, Assistant Professor in the School of Business; Dr. Robert (Bob) Haltiwanger, Department Chairperson and Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Cell Biology; Dr. Eduardo Mendieta, Department Chairperson and Professor in the Department of Philosophy.

Dr. Bear’s research focuses on the influence of gender on negotiation outcomes and she opened the discussion with a summary of research gathered over the past 25 years. According to Dr. Bear, men are more likely than women to initiate negotiations. For both men and women, however, Dr. Bear suggested three primes to prepare to enter into the process: “1) recall situations when you were assertive; 2) imagine negotiating for someone else; 3) think on an event when you had power or control”. She concluded with a quote from Mary Sue Coleman, president of the University of Michigan, to be “relentlessly pleasant”.

Dr. Haltiwanger, shared tips for preparing to negotiate start-up packages based on his hiring experience. “Think about things before you get to the negotiation stage of the process,” said Dr. Haltiwanger. “Consider: What do you plan to do when you get to the institution?; What will you need to perform your research?; What is the standard teaching load?”. Dr. Haltiwanger suggested to make a spreadsheet of all line items to be able to quickly respond to the offer when it comes.



“Negotiations” workshop audience



“Negotiations” workshop panelists share insights about the hiring process

“Do not be afraid to ask for what you need, but be able to justify it.” - Dr. Haltiwanger

“Negotiate from a position that the department wants you,” said Dr. Mendieta. “It is imperative to do your preliminary homework about the cost of living, clock to tenure, retirement plans and leave so that you understand what the complete package will be.” Like Dr. Haltiwanger, Dr. Mendieta encouraged attendees to make a list of monetary ranges associated with each to have baselines ready for negotiation.

After a Q&A session, the panelists concluded the workshop with some final thoughts. “Throw out a wide net,” said Dr. Bear. “The strength of your negotiations will be tied to how many offers you have, so it is wise to increase your chances.” Dr. Haltiwanger added, “do not be afraid to ask for what you need, but be able to justify it.” When you secure a faculty position, the arrangement should be mutually beneficial and successful.

The CIE would like to thank the speakers, panelists and moderators who helped make Faculty Career Week an invaluable wealth of information and resources for attendees.

Stony Brook Hosts NASA Sponsored International Science Communication Competition - FameLab

The NASA sponsored international science communication competition, FameLab, came to the Wang Center at Stony Brook on April 16-17. The Center for Inclusive Education proudly co-sponsored this US regional heat in which three CIE scholars - Jesse John, Jasmine Valentin and Dr. Taylor Schoberle - advanced to the final round of competition. Contestants were challenged to share their engaging research topics with non-specialist audiences. A record 30 participants signed up for the event, 18 progressed and 10 were selected as finalists.

The final round of the competition was held on April 17 and open to the public - think American Idol, but for scientists. The 10 finalists were tasked with conveying their research in only three minutes each. A panel of science communication experts judged the presentations, but the audience was also invited to laugh, learn and vote for their favorite.

Congratulations to the CIE Scholars who advanced to the final round:

Jesse John, PhD candidate in Geosciences, AGEP-T FRAME & Turner Fellow - 'Nano-Alcatraz'

Jasmine Valentin, PhD candidate in the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, AGEP-T FRAME Scholar & Turner Fellow - 'Stable isotope analysis: A tool for studying diet'

Taylor Schoberle, PhD, Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, IRACDA NY-CAPS Scholar - 'Infection by injection: How plague bacteria can silence our innate immune system by injecting bacterial proteins directly into our innate immune cells'

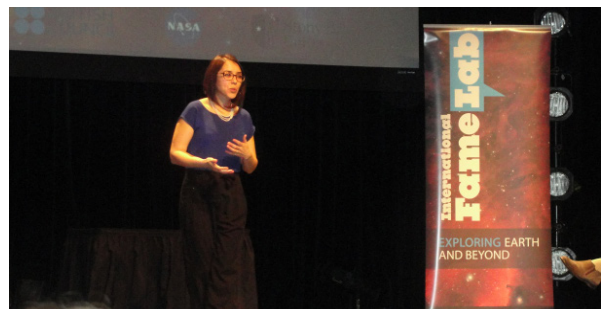


CIE scholars Lyl Tomlinson, Dr. Taylor Schoberle, Jasmine Valentin and Jesse John

Jesse John was chosen as a wildcard and will have a chance to compete in the national finals to be held next spring at the National Geographic Headquarters in Washington, DC. A group of judges will compare him to the other selected wildcard winners at a later date. "My favorite and most memorable part of the competition was hanging out with the contestants," said John. "Everyone was extremely intelligent and personable and it was great to cheer for them from the stands."

Last year's national winner and AGEP-T FRAME and Turner Fellow, Lyl Tomlinson, PhD student in Neuroscience, served as the moderator for the event. "Were it not for him, I wouldn't know that FameLab existed," said John. Tomlinson was excited about having three out of 10 finalists affiliated with the CIE. "There were a lot of inspiring talks about complex science topics that were made fun and accessible," he said. "Having the CIE well-represented showed that we are not only diverse in background, but have a diversity of skills to offer as well."

Special congratulations is also extended to Colin West (winner) and Steven Jaret (wildcard).



Click [here](#) for more information

2015 Turner Summer Research Grant Cohort

Sixteen Turner Fellows were selected as recipients of Summer Research Grants:

- **Nicole Bender**, PhD student in Ecology & Evolution - Acoustic methods for tracking pipit recovery following rat and reindeer eradication
- **Michael Cortes**, PhD student in Applied Math & Statistics - Lambda phage lysis-lysogeny switch and the multiplicity effect
- **R. Emilio Fernandez**, PhD candidate in Technology & Society - The mathematics regents course enrollment and advanced placement mathematics course access of Bronx County public high schools: Amix-methods policy analysis
- **Pedro Fernandez**, PhD student in Anthropology - The functional morphology and quantification of metatarsophalangeal joint shape and congruence in anthropoids
- **Jacinth Greywoode**, PhD student in Music Composition - International music festival of the adriatic
- **Briana Locicero**, MD student - Leadership and education program for students in integrative medicine
- **Vanessa Lynn**, PhD student in Sociology - Collective memories of the war on drugs: Towards a discourse of responsibility and victimhood
- **Carrie Mongle**, PhD student in Anthropology - Dental topography and the alpha taxonomy of australopithecus africanus
- **Allison Nesbitt**, PhD student in Anthropology - Morphological integration between the face and dentition throughout ontogeny
- **Johnathan Nieves**, MD student - The atahualpa project: A population based study of peripheral artery disease and frailty in rural coastal Ecuador
- **Celest Okoli**, PhD student in Materials Science - Doped carbon nanotube as electrode material for energy conversion and storage systems
- **Jason Quinones**, PhD student in Molecular & Cellular Pharmacology - Exploring the ubiquitination status of oxidative DNA-Polymerase Beta in vivo
- **Sasha Rodriguez**, PhD student in Sociology - Creative alternatives for transnational LGBTI organizing
- **Melissa Sims**, PhD student in Geosciences - Identification of plagioclase phases and phase transitions by time resolved fast compression powder diffraction
- **Oli Stephano**, PhD student in Philosophy - Immanence and ecological ethics
- **Steve Tsotras**, MS student in Genetics - Regulation of protein sumoylation by adenovirus

Turner Spotlight



In addition to his February 25 on-campus poetry reading, Turner Fellow Jordi Alonso (MFA, Creative Writing) was interviewed in April for WOMR radio (Provincetown, MA). You can hear Jordi's complete interview [here](#).



In addition to his pop up art gallery in Patchogue, first year Turner Fellow Dewayne Wrencher (MFA, Studio Art) was a featured artist in two spring events hosted by the Fine Arts department: The April 29 Open Studios event and the May 4-15 First Year Student Exhibition that took place in the Alloway Gallery of the Melville Library.

Turner Welcome Dinner to be Highlighted in ODEI Newsletter

This year's Turner Welcome Dinner is set to be a feature article in the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion's Spring 2015 newsletter, "Diversity Counts." It is not yet available for download, but should be available soon. Click [here](#) to access the link.

Pictured: ODEI Program Staff Assistant, Edelmira Reynoso; Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Carlos Medina; Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Dr. Charles S. Taber



Left to right: Reynoso, Medina, Dr. Taber

Practical Professional Skills Series

The Practical Professional Skills Series concluded this semester with the final two workshops: “Time and Energy Management - Achieving Peak Performance” on March 3 and “Strategic Professional Growth: Planning Your Path to a Satisfying Career” on May 7. This interactive series was presented by the Center for Inclusive Education and the Office for the Integration of Research, Education and Professional Development (IREP) in the Graduate School to promote dialogue around key issues affecting today’s professionals.

The “Time and Energy Management - Achieving Peak Performance” workshop, helped participants assess their time perspective and energy peaks and valleys to construct a new plan for moving forward more productively. Speakers, Marianna Savoca, Director, and Dr. Alfreda James, Assistant Director, at the Career Center at Stony Brook addressed that there is no one secret to being

highly productive and efficient - everyone has their own formula.

Dr. Nancy Goroff, Associate Provost, IREP; Professor of Chemistry, and Dr. Kathleen Flint Ehm, Director, IREP, guided the final workshop on “Strategic Professional Growth: Planning Your Path to a Satisfying Career”. They addressed learning strategies to explore a range of careers and helped participants develop an action plan to strengthen skills to pursue their ideal career.

The four topics within the Practical Professional Skills Series explored navigating complex organizations, giving and receiving constructive feedback, time and energy management and strategic professional growth. The CIE and IREP would like to thank the speakers who shared invaluable information and provided guidance to the graduate students and postdocs who participated in the series.



Workshop attendees collaborating on a task



Dr. Kathleen Flint Ehm presenting on “Strategic Professional Growth”

College Teaching Seminar Series

The College Teaching Seminar Series featured a plethora of teaching and learning workshops held on Tuesday afternoons throughout the spring semester. Topics ranged from writing a teaching philosophy, to evidence-based instructional practices, to creating powerful presentations to engage students. Attendees were given the opportunity to explore topics and integrate the information to the development of their own pedagogy. The series concluded with a Micro-Teaching session where scholars presented a short lesson incorporating the skills they learned throughout the course to a group of their peers for feedback.

Included within the College Teaching Seminar series were three workshops led by the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science. The first workshop, titled “Improvisation for Scientists,” began laying the foundation towards developing science communication skills. Through a series of improvisation exercises, participants learned how to speak more spontaneously, responsively and directly with their audience. As a follow-up to the first workshop, the “Distilling Your Message” workshop focused on learning how to speak clearly and vividly about your work and why it matters - in terms non-scientists can understand. The three-part series concluded with a “Media Interviews: Extreme Distilling” workshop, which focused on learning how to prepare for a media interview. This included shaping clear and crisp answers, fielding difficult questions and reinforcing the fundamental message. Participants were interviewed on video by a professional journalist and the interviews were reviewed and critiqued during the session. After the workshop, participants were able to download their interviews for their personal or professional use.

Dissertation & Fellowship Writing Boot Camp

The Dissertation & Fellowship Writing Boot Camp continued in the winter intersession. CIE scholars spent their Friday mornings in January working on their dissertation, thesis, fellowship and/or grant proposals in the quiet environment setup in the CIE space. Access to a Wi-Fi network, printer and copier was provided and writing support offered upon request. “It is important to use ‘downtime’ effectively when you are pursuing your graduate education,” said Karian Wright, Program Manager, AGEP-T FRAME & IRACDA NY-CAPS. “We are eager to host this series again in the summer and will announce dates once confirmed.”

Biomath Learning Center Launches Modified Supplemental Instruction Program



mSI Leaders, Robert Maloney & Kevon Pekchi

The IMSD-MERGE Biomath Learning Center: Modified Supplemental Instruction (mSI) program launched on February 12. Throughout the spring semester, 40 MAT125 (Calculus A) students had the unique opportunity to participate in peer-led review sessions for calculus prerequisite courses. The students were divided into two groups that met on Thursdays or Fridays throughout the semester, respectively.

The Thursday mSI program was led by Robert Maloney (junior, mathematics major) and Kevon Pekchi (senior, biology major). With the goal in mind to help participants apply the material, Maloney and Pekchi tried various strategies to determine the best way to engage them in collaborative work. "We start each session with a game that uses review material," said Pekchi. "The idea is to boost their confidence and then incorporate what they know

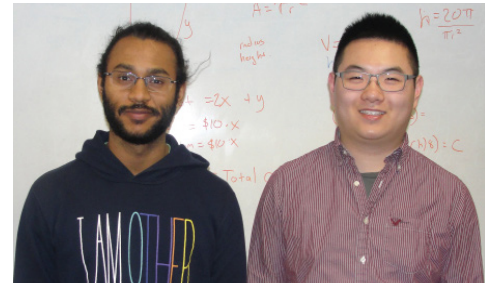
into more difficult work." Maloney added, "This strategy has been most effective because participants become comfortable working as partners or in groups. We also have them come up to the board to present to their peers." Towards the end of the semester, Maloney and Pekchi were pleased to see the participants improve as they worked together. "Of course we are always available to guide them when needed," said Maloney.

mSI Leaders, Wilka Carvalho (senior, physics major) and Michael Lam (sophomore, biology major) took a different approach to their Friday mSI program. After trying different strategies throughout the semester, they determined that calling students to the board to work out problems with the rest of the class was the most effective. "At the start of the semester the students were definitely extremely hesitant and unsure of themselves on how to even approach something as seemingly unapproachable as calculus," said Lam. "By the end of the semester though, we noticed the students have come out of their shells academically and are definitely more willing and confident in their skills. They may not get the problems 100% right, but it's the fact that they even attempted the problem and were able to grasp the concepts

and apply them as well as they do now." Carvalho added, "Teaching the material seems to be a good way to both engage students and have them develop their skills."

The mSI program has been an excellent resource for students. Students in the Thursday mSI program have mentioned that they would like to meet twice a week - once to review the material and once to work on application. According to Lam and Carvalho, students in the Friday mSI program have improved in their ability to perform mathematical computations and to generalize mathematical frameworks. "There are strong candidates that we can see as future mSI Leaders," said Pekchi.

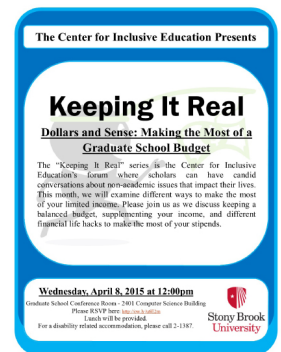
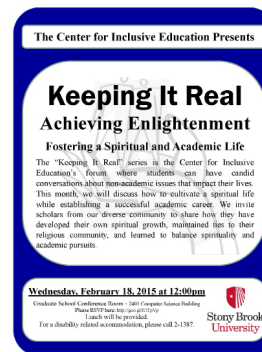
The CIE and IMSD-MERGE would like to thank the the four Student Supplemental Instructor Leaders who dedicated time to assist with the MSI program: Wilka Carvalho, Michael Lam, Robert Maloney and Kevon Pekchi.



mSI Leaders, Wilka Carvalho & Michael Lam

Keeping It Real Series Addresses Topics that May Impact Academic Pursuits

There is more to life during graduate school than research and teaching assistant positions. "Non-academic issues can impact academic pursuits and we want to provide an opportunity for scholars to regularly talk about these issues in an informal setting," said Dr. Angel I. Gonzalez, Postdoctoral Associate, LSAMP-BD & IMSD-MERGE. Scholars gathered for two discussions in the Keeping it Real series - "Achieving Enlightenment: Fostering a Spiritual and Academic Life" in February and "Living on a Graduate Student Budget" in April. "We hope that the social support and insight into different ways to deal with these issues will build community and encourage scholars that they are not alone," said Dr. Gonzalez.



CIE Director, Nina Maung-Gaona, Wins Prestigious Award

CIE Director, Nina Maung-Gaona, was awarded the 2015 Public Service Award by the Suffolk County Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission at their annual award luncheon on January 16. “When you are in the work of diversity in higher education, which is essentially equity in education, winning an award that has the name ‘Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’ is really the highest honor,” said Maung-Gaona. The Public Service Award recognizes individuals from various community, education and law enforcement positions for their work which serves to invigorate the ideals for which Dr. King is revered.

For the past 18 years, Maung-Gaona has developed educational opportunities and career pathways for diverse groups and has served a wide range of underrepresented populations. As the Director of the Center for Inclusive Education, Maung-Gaona manages a team who together brought in \$7 million of externally funded grants in the last three years from government agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) [\$4 million to support 132 graduate students and \$3 million to support 15 postdoctoral students]. The CIE designs and executes over 80 activities each year to enhance the academic performance, mentoring experiences and career competitiveness of underrepresented or disadvantaged graduate students and postdoctoral trainees, most of whom are in the STEM disciplines.

During her address to the luncheon attendees, Maung-Gaona quoted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s acceptance speech, on the occasion of his award of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo: “I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture of their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.” Maung-Gaona posed the question that, “if he was here today, would Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. say that we have made meaningful progress?” To which she affirmed that, “as a people we are moving with determination in the right direction. For me specifically, and for the work we do in the Center, the issue really is that we need to think about increasing the pipeline at all levels (K-16), to grow exponentially the number of underrepresented scholars, educators and researchers so that we can achieve a more diverse population of doctoral degree recipients in America and continue to make Dr. King’s audacious hope a reality.”



Congratulations, Nina!



Members of the Stony Brook and CIE community attend the annual award luncheon

Toni Sperzel, Program Manager, is Here to Stay



Kathryne Piazzola, Toni Sperzel & Nina Maung-Gaona

The CIE hosted a very special monthly social in honor of Program Manager, Toni Sperzel, and her newly appointed permanency at Stony Brook University. Members of the CIE and Stony Brook community gathered to celebrate Toni’s accomplishments and reminisce about their interactions with her through the years. It was fitting that the social was held in March during Women’s History Month as Toni is the first CIE team member to become a permanent employee.

Congratulations, Toni!
We look forward to many more successful years together and are happy to know you are “here to stay”.

REU Summer Program to Kickoff on June 1

The fifth cohort has been selected for the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU): Nanotechnology for Health, Energy & the Environment residential summer program. Under the direction of PI Dr. Gary Halada, nine interns from seven different undergraduate institutions will participate in the program. This year, participants will again be accompanied by IMSD-MERGE scholars.

Cara Gannett, SUNY Geneseo - advised by Dr. Amy C. Marschilok, Chemistry

Arielys Mendoza, SUNY Fredonia - advised by Dr. Wei Yin, Biomedical Engineering

Carmenn Ooi, SUNY Stony Brook - advised by Dr. Tae Jin Kim, Chemical and Molecular Engineering

Yunesca Rivera, Universidad Metropolitana - advised by Dr. Gary Halada, Materials Science & Engineering

Chloe Rojas, Suffolk County Community College - advised by Dr. Tae Jin Kim, Chemical and Molecular Engineering

Nicholas Romero, SUNY Binghamton - advised by Dr. Gary Halada, Materials Science & Engineering

Coralys Sanchez-Martinez, Universidad Metropolitana - advised by Dr. Wei Yin, Biomedical Engineering

Samantha Weber-Fishkin, SUNY Stony Brook - advised by Dr. Molly Frame, Biomedical Engineering

Rebecca Wyborski, Cal State, Long Beach - advised by Dr. Jason Trelewicz, Materials Science & Engineering

REU Summer Program Leads to Big Opportunities for Alumnus

A successful mentoring relationship can have significant impact on the mentor and mentee's future career goals and achievements. Most recently, this was exemplified in the maintained connection between Kevin Knockenhauer (SBU '10, REU '09) and Dr. Katarzyna "Kasia" Sawicka (SBU '04, '05, '14). As a graduate student, Dr. Sawicka was Knockenhauer's direct mentor during his undergraduate research in Dr. Sanford Simon's lab at Stony Brook. They collaborated to incorporate a protein from bacillus anthracis into a transdermal patch to create an anthrax vaccine. This work eventually contributed to Dr. Sawicka being featured as "one of ten brilliant innovations from the 2015 Invention Awards" for her development of the vaccine patch.

What was it like working with Dr. Sawicka?

Dr. Sawicka was an excellent mentor because she struck this balance between micro and macro-managing. She understood that as an ambitious, hard headed, and young researcher I needed the independence to drive a portion of the project forward myself. It is very important as a scientist to take ownership over your project. She also gave me the independence to make my own mistakes. I remember very clearly a particular experiment that she suggested I perform one way, but I stubbornly wanted to do it differently and carried it out my way (with her approval). The experiment failed.

How has your experience working with Dr. Sawicka influenced you?

This experience taught me two important points that have helped me throughout graduate school: 1. While it is good to do things your way, it is prudent to listen to the advice of those more experienced than you; 2. The mark of a scientist, and how well you will survive in this field, depends not on how you deal with success but how you deal with failure. The majority of your experiments will fail and it is important to learn to be emotionally detached from this seemingly inevitable result. This took me years to learn. It does make the successes that much sweeter, though. Back to my experience with undergraduate research and working with Dr. Sawicka, I have to say it had a very positive impact on me and my decision to go to graduate school!

The article featured by Popular Science can be found [here](#).

Scholars Attend Soledad O'Brien's Black in America Tour

CIE scholars and administrators came together to attend the Black in America tour featuring Soledad O'Brien in the Staller Center on February 16. The tour focused on the most recent installment of O'Brien's multi-part CNN documentary series, Black in America, titled "Black & Blue". This installment delved into the recent and growing national issues of race and police brutality across the country.



O'Brien was joined by several panel presenters who each spoke to this growing national issue from a different perspective: as a journalist, a parent of African American sons, as a victim of police brutality and as a national advocate for social justice. The panel raised many poignant issues about how racism presents itself in modern America, and left many attendees desiring a deeper conversation on these issues. In response, the CIE hosted a lunchtime discussion on Friday, February 20. Open only to CIE scholars, the conversation was an opportunity for attendees to share their thoughts, experiences and feelings about the presentation within a community of supportive and compassionate peers.

To learn more about the CIE and its hosted programs, please visit our website at: www.stonybrook.edu/CIE

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THE CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS A DIVISION OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AND AFFILIATED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY IN THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCES.

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