



Stony Brook University

From the Desk of President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.

I know I have written in the past about how inspired I am by our students, for whom Stony Brook provides the pathway to success.

Incontrovertible proof of the power of a Stony Brook education came this past January, when the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research released its findings on the role of colleges in intergenerational mobility. This study used 14 year of data from 30 million college students to rank the rates of income mobility at each college in the country.

I hope you share my pride in the results which recognized Stony Brook as No. 1 among highly selective public universities, No. 3 in the Association of America Universities and No. 9 among all colleges and universities for moving families from the bottom quintile into the top income brackets.

I believe this accomplishment is a credit to the grit, hard work and perseverance of our alumni. It is also a testament to our faculty and the distinctive ethos and promise that has defined Stony Brook from its beginning 60 years ago, a research university that stands with the finest in the nation.

And with 34 percent of our undergraduates being the first in their family to attend college and 67 percent coming from families who make less than \$75,000 a year, we remain committed to fulfilling the promise of excellence in public higher education. Today, I write to share some of the additional notable achievements of our faculty, staff and students this past academic year.

Impacting Long Island and Beyond

Three of Stony Brook's biggest stories of the year reflect our commitment to respond to pressing needs and issues far beyond our campus boundaries, for specific individuals and entire communities.

Stony Brook reconstructive surgeon Dr. Alexander Dagum performed one-of-a-kind facial reconstructive surgery on a Congolese boy at our Children's Hospital, a story that received extensive media coverage throughout the year. Most importantly, the 8-year-old, who was the lone survivor after he and his brother and cousin were attacked by a group of

chimpanzees near their village in the Democratic Republic of Congo, is now thriving with a host family in Brooklyn.

Through a partnership between the University's campus in Madagascar, our Global Health Institute and a company deploying drones in hard-to-reach areas, Dr. Peter Small, the Jim and Robin Herrnstein Chair and founding director of Stony Brook's Global Health Institute, is pushing the boundaries of how health care is delivered to Madagascar's most remote and impoverished villages.

Using drones to transport lab samples and medications between isolated villages in Madagascar and our research station in Ranomafama has the potential to vastly improve health care diagnosis and treatment in that country. Ultimately this breakthrough can be a game-changer for vulnerable rural communities where delivery of care is hampered by poor or nonexistent roads. The Associated Press broke the story, and in November 2016 an international ABC News crew traveled to Madagascar to cover Stony Brook's involvement in this vital effort.

Starting with Professor Helmut Norpoth, who used his Primary Model to accurately predict the 2016 presidential winner more than nine months before the election, experts from our Political Science Department took center stage as they kept the world informed through national and international news coverage. University faculty members were featured in outlets such as CNN, Fox Business News, BBC News, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and the *Washington Post*.

And Stony Brook's commitment to the East End of Long Island has been making regional headlines. On August 1, Southampton Hospital, a 125-bed facility located on the South Fork of Long Island, officially became part of the Stony Brook Medicine health care system. As a result, Stony Brook Southampton Hospital will offer improved access to specialty care for its patients, including the latest research and clinical trials and the cutting-edge medicine that Stony Brook Medicine provides. Earlier this summer, Governor Andrew Cuomo recognized our School of Marine and Atmospheric Science's Shinnecock Bay Restoration Project in Southampton as a model and pledged his support to the program, which uses science, outreach and partnerships to restore the water quality and fisheries of the bay.

Tackling the Toughest Problems

The W.M. Keck Foundation is well-known for its support of high-risk research with the potential for transformative impact. The Keck Foundation looks for projects that push the edge of the field, present unconventional approaches to intractable problems or challenge the prevailing paradigm. Each year, a select few are chosen to receive funding from the Keck Foundation, so it was a special honor to receive word at the end of June that two of our applications were successful.

A three-year, \$1 million Keck grant will support research led by Lilianne Mujica-Parodi, Ph.D., associate professor of biomedical engineering at our School of Medicine. This work,

in collaboration with the Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging at Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital and Stony Brook's Louis and Beatrice Laufer Center for Physical and Quantitative Biology, could provide a critical first step toward personalized medicine in neurology for aging patients. Dr. Mujica-Parodi and her co-investigators will integrate human neuroimaging data with multiscale biomimetic modeling to test hypotheses with respect to how energy constraints based on diet and mitochondria affect neural efficiency in the aging brain.

The mission of Stony Brook's Discovery Prize echoes that of the Keck Foundation research grants — to generate far-reaching benefits for humanity by supporting pioneering discoveries in science, engineering and medicine — and I was most pleased to award our second annual prize in April. This \$200,000 grant, established with a generous donation from the Stony Brook Foundation Board of Trustees, was awarded to Dr. Thomas Allison. An assistant professor with joint appointments in our Chemistry and Physics departments, Dr. Allison will use the funds to explore how molecules move and behave in real time.

And as a testament to the breadth and excellence of our programs, on the same day that we received word of our Keck research grant, we were also awarded a three-year, \$300,000 grant through Keck's Undergraduate Education Program. The award will fund a National Center for Science and Civic Engagement program titled "Transcending Barriers to Success: Connecting Indigenous Knowledge to Science." The goal of the project is to establish and advance robust partnerships between indigenous populations and educators to improve undergraduate educational outcomes for students and promote cultural understanding.

I am also extremely proud that the Stony Brook University World Trade Center Wellness Program, led by Benjamin Luft, M.D., the Edmund D. Pellegrino Professor of Medicine in the Stony Brook University School of Medicine, has received a five-year federal grant totaling more than \$60 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. This truly interdisciplinary program, which integrates the expertise of 12 of our schools and departments — from medicine to psychology to applied math and statistics to sociology and more — has made a real difference in the lives of 10,000 9/11 responders. Importantly, the World Trade Center Wellness Program has formed partnerships with the Library of Congress, 9/11 Memorial and Museum, 9/11 Tribute Center, American Federation of Teachers' Share My Lesson Program and local public libraries towards its effort to document the impact of 9/11 and its continuing significance on the heroic responders. Dr. Luft is also a principal investigator in the work to create a vaccine to prevent Lyme disease, the most rapidly growing vector-borne disease in the United States. This vaccine was recently fast-tracked for approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

These grants are just a small sampling of the many research awards that our faculty received over the last year. However, these successes do not mitigate my profound concern about the decline in federal funding for basic research. The cuts proposed in the federal budget to key research agencies will have a deep and immediate effect on campus and, by extension, to our Long Island economy. Moreover, research cuts will be devastating to our ability as a nation to maintain our global leadership in innovation and discovery.

A Commitment to Diversity and Access

Our commitment to equal opportunity and access at Stony Brook is reflected by the recent appointment of LeManuel “Lee” Bitsóí, EdM, EdD, as chief diversity officer. Dr. Bitsóí brings more than 20 years of vision and leadership in academia —most recently as director of student diversity and multicultural affairs at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago — and I look forward to working with him on the implementation of our Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across campus.

Recognizing our unwavering commitment to diversity and STEM education, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Inclusive Excellence Initiative awarded Stony Brook a five-year, \$1 million grant this past June to create faculty learning communities focused on developing inclusive practices in the classroom and laboratory. Ross Nehm, Ph.D., associate professor of ecology & evolution, and his team are leading the project, intended to help increase the capacity of higher education institutions to successfully engage students from diverse ethnic, family and economic backgrounds and nontraditional students such as military veterans.

A Passion to Succeed

Stony Brook has long been recognized for our exceptional quality and value. Just this July, Schools.com ranked Stony Brook as No. 1 among four-year colleges in New York based on costs, program availability, graduation rates and more.

Reflecting our reputation, we received both a record number of applications (35,300!) and a record number of acceptances. Our Class of 2021 is 3,150 strong, and this impressive group of young people has a mean high school GPA of 93.2. Some of these students are the first beneficiaries of New York State’s Excelsior Scholarship program, which I hope will motivate more high school students to attend college in-state and allow Stony Brook to attract even more of New York’s best and brightest.

This past May, at a ceremony that conferred honorary degrees on Michael J. Fox and Jon Oringer ’96, almost 7,000 students became newly minted Stony Brook alumni. In his speech, Oringer shared three lessons he learned at Stony Brook: “Stay curious, take calculated risks and embrace diversity.” I am delighted to share stories of three of our new graduates who are already doing just that.

- Janki Patel moved to the United States from Gujarat, India, because of her parents’ desire to give her and her siblings a better life as U.S. citizens. Their sacrifice became a driving force for Janki to do more and achieve more. A member of the University Scholars program, she joined our International Genetically Engineered Machine competition team, became a leader of the Undergraduate Biochemistry Society and was an active member of the Women’s Leadership Council, all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. This fall Janki is a first-year medical student at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

- Jonathan Conyers is the youngest of five children, and his older brother took custody of him when he was 16 because his parents were not in a position to take care of him. Against the odds, he matriculated at Stony Brook when he was 18, a new father and, in his own words, unprepared for the challenging work the University was asking of him. Many others would have found these barriers insurmountable — but not Jonathan. A member of the 2013 EOP/AIM Summer Academy, he immediately became a leader among his peers. He graduated with a 3.5 GPA and a degree in respiratory care and plans to work in respiratory therapy as he pursues his dream of becoming a doctor.
- Lora Webster didn't allow being diagnosed with bone cancer at age 11 to deter or define her. She went on to become an elite athlete and member of her state title-winning high school volleyball team, a four-time Paralympic medal winner and a mother of three. This past May she proudly received her bachelor's degree in sociology.

And with their first appearance in the NCAA quarterfinals, Stony Brook's women's lacrosse team came one step closer to winning a national championship, further testament to Stony Brook students' passion to succeed.

Your Support Truly Matters

SUNY 2020 allowed for predictable tuition increases of just \$300 per year during the 2012 through 2016 academic years, enabling us to hire more than 250 new faculty members and add new sections in key courses to clear obstacles to graduation. We were also able to increase our four-year graduation rate, grow financial aid, increase graduate student stipends, add 19 new academic programs and reduce the faculty/student ratio from 28:1 to 17:1.

Unfortunately, the expiration of SUNY 2020 and predictable tuition increases coupled with the addition of unfunded state mandates now in their third year have created a structural deficit of \$24 million. Please know that as we address these critical budget issues, created by circumstances beyond our control, we will continue to work to minimize their impact on our core mission of teaching and research, continue to strive for the quality for which we have come to be known and continue to make laser-focused and strategic investments in areas of excellence.

By many measures these are challenging times. Yet I remain convinced that we will weather this storm and emerge even stronger. My optimism is shaped by the notable achievements of our outstanding faculty, staff and students and their impact on the world.

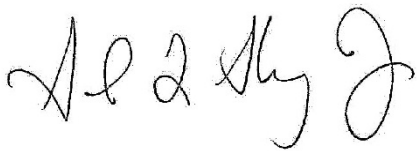
And my optimism is shaped by the loyalty and generosity of our alumni and friends, to whom I am most grateful. As we enter the last year of the \$600 million Campaign for Stony Brook, I am heartened by the support we have received. I am pleased to report that we have already raised \$554 million from over 43,000 donors to benefit students, faculty and programs across campus.

With your philanthropic support, we will solidify our status as a renowned research institution, keep excellence in reach for students — no matter their means — and effect real, powerful change in our community and across the world.

I am aware there are many ways you could invest your time, talent and treasure. However, with the same grit, hard work and perseverance of our alumni and students, we are determined to continue earning your trust and participation.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. L. Stanley Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D.
President

P.S. I truly appreciate your time, attention and commitment to Stony Brook and hope you will join me for the annual State of the University Address by visiting stonybrook.edu/webcast on Wednesday, September 27, 2017 at 1 p.m. (ET).