

MEMORANDUM

TO: University Senate
FROM: Maurie McInnis, President
DATE: March 1, 2021
SUBJECT: President's Report

I. NEW PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

I recently announced my intention to designate \$1 million to establish a new presidential award for doctoral students to assist with dissertation completion, critical research funds and postdoc extension. These awards will provide support for selected qualified students to complete their dissertations without taking on additional teaching assignments, cover the direct costs of completing their research, and sustain a select number of postdoctoral scholars for six months following degree completion. With over 200 graduate students past year six in their progress to degree completion – in part due to adverse impacts caused by the pandemic – we have an obligation to help them get back on track.

II. SPRING 2021 ENROLLMENT

Despite the challenges of the global pandemic, spring 2021 enrollment reached a record high of 25,867 -- a growth of 1% over last spring and 13% over the past ten years. This represents record spring enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, with spring 2021 undergraduate enrollment of 17,432, compared to 17,166 in spring 2020 and spring 2021 graduate and professional enrollment of 8,435 compared to 8,410 in spring 2020.

While we had early concerns about retention of entering undergraduate students, the retention rate of first-time students was 96.2%, less than half a percentage point below the historical average of 96.6%. Other cohorts of undergraduates had retention rates similar to historical averages.

The most significant enrollment change is in our payer mix. With 21,226 students paying NY State tuition rates, the University now enrolls about 1,000 more students with NY State tuition residency than last spring and almost 2,000 more than three years ago. Conversely the University has 710 fewer students paying out-of-state rates than in spring 2020. This will have significant financial implications related to tuition revenue and instruction and services expenses.

Finally, we saw the lowest number of new transfer students enter this spring in a decade, with 671 new transfer students in spring 2021, compared to 795 in spring 2020 (the 10-year average is 739). This change reflects the enrollment challenges in neighboring community colleges that send us almost half of our transfer students. We expect to see fewer of these students until enrollments in those institutions recover.

III. COVID-19 UPDATES

Below are noteworthy updates related to our COVID-19 efforts since my last report to the University Senate:

- **Vaccination**
 - Stony Brook University reached a major milestone in the COVID-19 vaccine distribution process on February 18 when it administered the 25,000th vaccine at our state-run mass vaccination site. The on-campus point of distribution (POD) opened on January 18.
 - The State also turned to Stony Brook University Hospital to assist in successfully developing community PODs as pop-up sites in underserved communities on Long Island, to reach communities of color and the elderly.

- **Department of Health Issues Revised Guidelines for Higher Education**
 - The New York State Department of Health recently issued supplemental guidance for COVID-19 containment at higher education institutions, available [here](#). All higher education institutions in New York are subject to the State's reopening guidance and are required to comply with this supplemental guidance in order to operate during the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.
 - Based on these guidelines, since Stony Brook tests at least 25% of our total on-campus population for COVID-19 each week, we are not required to transition to remote learning or to limit on-campus activities unless 5% of the total on-campus population test positive using a 14-day rolling average. At this time, the University remains well below the 5% threshold.

- **Testing Requirements - Reminder**
 - **Employees and commuter students:** Pooled saliva testing required once a week. [Find details and our full spring semester pooled testing schedule here](#). Southampton has expanded its hours to Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 am – 2:00 pm.
 - **Resident students:** PCR (nasal swab) testing required twice a week.
 - **Hospital employees and clinical faculty members:** All Stony Brook University Hospital staff, FSA hospital colleagues and School of Medicine clinical faculty are required to participate in weekly anterior nasal swab COVID surveillance testing in the Health Sciences Galleria on Level 3. Testing hours are Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:45 am – 3:15 pm, and Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:45 am – 5 pm. No appointments or pre-registration required.
 - **ALL employees and students:** To help ensure the continued safety of our campus community and ongoing in-person learning opportunities this semester, you are still required to participate in surveillance testing, as outlined above, *even if you are fully vaccinated for COVID-19*.

IV. **ADVANCEMENT UPDATE**

Since the start of the 2021 fiscal year, almost \$42 million has been generously pledged or contributed by 8,500 donors. Their investments in our students, research, healthcare and campus programs provide critical support, helping to elevate the University.

Generous contributions since the last update include:

- \$200,000 toward student scholarships
- \$200,000 toward research in the Laboratory of Chemical Biology
- \$100,000 toward Renaissance School of Medicine scholarships
- \$50,000 toward the College of Business Educational Programs
- \$50,000 toward Department of Pathology research

V. **STONY BROOK PART OF STATE PROGRAM TO HELP MORE EOP STUDENTS GET INTO SUNY'S MEDICAL UNIVERSITIES**

SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras announced the first-ever statewide initiative to help more Educational Opportunity Program students get into SUNY's medical universities. Under the SUNY for All initiative, the Pre-Med Opportunity Program (Pre-OP) will help address persistent income disparities found among the nation's medical schools. The SUNY Pre-Op is set to begin in summer 2021 with 25 students and could be expanded based on initial results and further funding. To be considered for the program, candidates must be a SUNY EOP sophomore or junior on a pre-medical track, have a grade point average of 3.2 or higher, and have successfully completed two semesters of general chemistry and two semesters of biology.

VI. **PRESIDENTIAL MINI-GRANTS FOR DEPARTMENTAL DIVERSITY INITIATIVE**

A call for nominations was sent out to the campus community on February 9 for the Presidential Mini-Grants for Departmental Diversity Initiative. Designed to foster new projects, test out ideas and determine what may be seeds of growth for the University, this long-standing program supports selected proposals that promote awareness, skills, and knowledge about issues related to race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic status, abilities, age and/or religion. Preference will be given to proposals that are tied to the goals of the [Stony Brook Plan for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity](#). The deadline for [applications](#) is Wednesday, March 10.

VII. **UNIVERSITY ACCOLADES**

- [Stony Brook University Hospital](#) has been named one of America's 100 Best Hospitals™ for 2021 by Healthgrades – the only hospital on Long Island to receive this distinction for the past three consecutive years. The honor places Stony Brook University Hospital in the top two percent of nearly 4,500 hospitals assessed nationwide for its consistent, year-over-year superior clinical performance as measured by Healthgrades, the leading resource that connects consumers, physicians and health systems. Only five hospitals in New York State were named among America's 100 Best Hospitals this year.
- [Stony Brook University Hospital](#) and [Stony Brook Southampton Hospital](#) have been named leaders in LGBTQ health care equality for 2020 by the National LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Index of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. The hospital system recently announced that with a top score of 100 on a nondiscrimination survey, the two facilities were featured as

"Equality Leaders" in the 13th edition of the foundation's health care equality index last August.

- **Stony Brook University** has been named to the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* 2020-21 list of top producers of Fulbright U.S. Student Program recipients for the first time ever — one of only two SUNY institutions recognized this year. The list, which recognizes doctoral institutions whose students have won the most Fulbright awards, is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

VIII. INDIVIDUAL ACCOLADES

- **Distinguished Professor Iwao Ojima elected to European Academy of Sciences**
Iwao Ojima, distinguished professor in the [Department of Chemistry](#), has been elected as a fellow of the [European Academy of Sciences](#) (EurASc). Dr. Ojima, is founding director of the Institute of Chemical Biology & Drug Discovery and president of the Stony Brook University Chapter of the National Academy of Inventors.
- **Roger Rosenblatt, author and Distinguished Professor of English and Writing**, launched a new weekly literary series, *Write America*, in collaboration with Book Revue. The series features renowned and emerging writers in weekly readings and conversation about how books and art might bridge the deep divisions of our nation. The series is available on Book Revue's Crowdcast channel.
- **Distinguished Professor [Scott McLennan](#) and Associate Professor [Joel Hurowitz](#)** both worked on the PIXL (Planetary Instrument for X-ray Lithochemistry) that is attached to the arm of NASA's Mars2020 Perseverance rover. The PIXL is a micro-focus X-ray fluorescence instrument that rapidly measures elemental chemistry by focusing an X-ray beam to a tiny spot on the target rock or soil, analyzing the induced X-ray fluorescence. Both professors have been working on Mars missions with NASA since 2004.
- **Associate Professor Stephanie Dinkins' [Secret Garden](#)** was one of the featured works at the Sundance Film Festival, January 28 – February 3. *Secret Garden* is an immersive web experience that highlights the power and resilience in Black women's stories. In it, interactive audio vignettes tell a multi-generational narrative that incorporates past, present and future, inspired by Dinkins' own autobiographical and ancestral experiences.
- **Ann Nasti, DMD**, associate dean for Clinical Education in the Stony Brook University [School of Dental Medicine](#), has been selected as the 2021 recipient of the Stephen H. Leeper Award for Teaching Excellence by Omicron Kappa Upsilon (OKU), the National Dental Honor Society.
- **Estrella Núñez '21**, a Stony Brook University psychology major from the Bronx, New York, is among a group of Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) students from across the SUNY system to receive the [Norman R. McConney Jr. Award for Student Excellence](#). The academic achievement award recognizes students who have exhibited academic success, perseverance and leadership qualities.

IX. RECENT EVENTS

On January 27, 2021, internationally renowned visual artist **Shimon Attie**, MFA, was formally installed as the inaugural holder of the *Charles C. Bergman Endowed Visiting Professor of Studio Art*. This reflects an enhanced partnership between the Pollock-Krasner Foundation and Stony Brook University and will enable distinguished artists to mentor the next generation of creative visionaries.

Black History Month

Throughout February, Stony Brook University celebrated **Black History Month** with a variety of cultural events coordinated by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Department of Africana Studies, and the Black History Month Committee. This year's theme was Sankofa! Black Creativity – reflecting on past and present innovation, resilience and beauty that uniquely characterizes people of the African Diaspora.

SBU Fitness Challenge

Campus Recreation and Wellness, FSA and Healthier U launched a Fitness Challenge that ran from February 1 – 14. Open to all students, faculty and staff, the challenge promoted exercise as a way to strengthen individuals, both physically and mentally.

The annual WolfieTank Competition – Stony Brook's premier pitch competition that sparks the innovative and entrepreneurial minds of our students – was held on February 24. Contestants presented their ideas to a panel of judges including Dipita Chakraborty, Client Partner at Fractal Analytics Inc.; Derek Peterson, CEO and Founder of Soter Technologies; and Bob Williams, President of IV Matters Inc.

X. UPCOMING EVENTS

The annual **Academic Achievement Ceremony** will be held virtually on March 18, honoring students who have achieved a 4.0 semester GPA while taking 12+ graded credits, with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.85 overall.

The **Staller Center's** spring season will continue to be virtual, offering 13 films over 12 weeks, February 11 – May 2, 2021. Free to students, the powerful set of films has already engaged the campus and broader communities.

XI. ATHLETICS UPDATE¹

- Five Stony Brook teams were picked first in the America East preseason rankings: Men's Lacrosse, Women's Lacrosse, Baseball, Softball and Women's Soccer.
- Women's Basketball entered the America East Playoffs as the No. 2 seed. The team is looking to repeat as conference champions after winning their first title in program history last season.
- Men's Lacrosse opened the season 2-0 and is currently ranked No. 17 in the national polls.

¹ As of February 22

- Senior women's lacrosse standout Ally Kennedy scored her 200th career goal in a 20-10 win over Boston University. Kennedy became the third Seawolf in school history to reach the 200-goal mark. The women's lacrosse team is ranked No. 5 nationally.
- Softball opened the season 4-0 after competing at the Winthrop Kickoff Tournament in Rock Hill, SC.
- Football opens the 2021 spring season at home against Villanova on March 6. The team will play a six-game conference-only schedule this spring.