

MEMORANDUM

TO: University Senate

FROM: Maurie McInnis, President

DATE: May 3, 2021

SUBJECT: President's Report

I. LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Fotis Sotiropoulos, Dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and SUNY Distinguished Professor of Civil Engineering, was recently named Provost and Senior Vice President at Virginia Commonwealth University, effective August 1, 2021. He is expected to wrap up his responsibilities at Stony Brook by the end of June.

In six years, Dean Sotiropoulos has made an indelible impression on his College and on our institution. During his time here, he led a 55 percent increase in funded research over the past five years, to an all-time high of \$47 million. He helped the University join and support the Vertically Integrated Projects Program, a leading interdisciplinary research effort. Diversity, equity, and inclusion became a top priority under his leadership, and in 2019, the College was recognized for its efforts by the American Society of Engineering Education.

II. SBU RECEIVES \$5M TO SUPPORT OFFSHORE WIND RESEARCH

Joint venture partners Ørsted and Eversource — developers of New York's offshore wind farm, Sunrise Wind — have launched a research partnership with Stony Brook University. The \$5M commitment funded by the project will underwrite research initiatives specific to the advancement of offshore wind through Stony Brook's Advanced Energy Research and Technology Center (AERTC) in connection with the Sunrise Wind Project. The funds will support multiple research projects to improve and advance offshore wind energy development and grid integration.

III. ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

Since the start of the 2021 fiscal year, \$54.5 million has been generously pledged or contributed by 9,900 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:

- \$750,000 grant toward the School of Dental Medicine Mobile Van Program
- \$419,574 raised with 3,393 donations benefiting 95 areas across campus on our third annual Stony Brook Giving Day
- \$145,200 to date toward the 2021 Stars of Stony Brook Gala
- \$125,000 realized bequest toward Stony Brook University Hospital
- \$100,000 toward the Staller Center Dance Initiative
- \$70,000 toward the Georgica Pond research project at SoMAS

Upcoming Advancement Events:

- May 6 at 5:30pm - Stars of Stony Brook Gala (virtual)
- June 5 at 6:30 pm – 50th Reunion Virtual Social - Classes of 1970 and 1971
- June 10 at 5:30pm – Frey Investiture Virtual Broadcast
- June 28 at 10:30am – Alumni Scholarship Golf Classic at the Huntington Country Club

IV. STRATEGIC BUDGET INITIATIVE UPDATE

We are in the midst of wrapping up Phase 2 of the Strategic Budget Initiative, which launched last October. More than 250 faculty and staff were engaged in the project along with subject matter experts from across the University. Significant work has been accomplished over the past seven months by our 16 working groups and five task forces with hundreds of ideas and opportunities uncovered.

The Financial Sustainability Committee spent the past several weeks distilling the number of recommendations to approximately 40 formal proposals that were recently forwarded to SBI executive leadership for consideration. I will outline next steps at the upcoming Campus Conversation scheduled for May 13. Paul Goldbart, David Gray, and Rose Martinelli will join me in that conversation. Following the Campus Conversation, we will begin the implementation phase (Phase 3) of our Strategic budget Initiative.

I am inspired by and deeply grateful for the commitment and dedication of so many of our faculty and staff who devoted time and energy working on our behalf.

V. COVID-19 UPDATES

Below are noteworthy updates related to our COVID-19 efforts:

- **Vaccinations**
 - Stony Brook has administered more than 350,000 vaccines at our various Point of Distribution (POD) sites, including Stony Brook University Hospital, the Stony Brook Union, the Stony Brook Advanced Specialty Care offices in Commack and other community locations. Nearly 200,000 of those were administered right at our Innovation and Discovery Center (IDC), located in the Research and Development (R&D) Park on campus, in partnership with our New York State colleagues. We continue to hold pop-up vaccine PODs (Points of Distribution) across Long Island to ensure access for elderly and underrepresented minority communities.
 - As of April 6, New York State announced that eligibility for COVID-19 vaccines are open to individuals age 16 and over. This is an important step in our battle against the virus and our plans to return to a primarily in-person campus this fall.
- **Fall 2021 Planning**
 - Stony Brook University plans to return to primarily in-person learning, working, and research in the fall 2021 semester. Recent developments on several fronts, including vaccination availability and evolving state, federal, and CDC guidelines, have made it possible to begin to restore the traditional campus experience.
 - There is much to plan, and we will do so with a focus on our university mission and a responsibility to create an atmosphere most conducive to the kind of creativity, reciprocity, interdisciplinary dialogue, and discovery that will define Stony Brook's future and best serve our students. Returning to in-person experiences will not be immediate. Instead, we will proceed in gradual steps that transition us from primarily virtual to primarily face-to-face activities, consistent with evolving guidance from the CDC and state officials.

- Our current schedule of classes for fall 2021 reflects offerings that are more than 80 percent in person. Courses that will remain online for 2021 include those that were designed to be online during the scheduled renovation of the Jacob K. Javits Center lecture hall, which will be ongoing from 2021 to 2023.
- The vast majority of researchers have already returned to labs at lower density following a [phased plan](#), and will soon move to the final phase. Many employees have begun to come back to their campus offices during [Phase 5](#) of our plan to return to in-person work. We anticipate substantially easing our restrictions on density for the fall semester consistent with CDC and NYDOH guidelines.
- Our residence halls will return to near full capacity, and athletics and student activities will be restored, consistent with state and federal guidance. As we have learned during the past year, we will continue to be responsive and adaptable to the evolving public health guidance related to physical distancing, masking, and vaccinations.
- All members of the campus community should check the [Coming Back Safe and Strong website](#) regularly to stay up to date on evolving plans and requirements.

VI. UNIVERSITY ACCOLADES

Stony Brook’s commitment to equity earned the University a No. 17 placement in the education industry and No. 138 overall on ***Forbes* list of America’s 500 Best Employers for Diversity 2021**. *Forbes* partnered with market research company Statista to survey 50,000 Americans working for businesses with at least 1,000 employees.

VII. INDIVIDUAL ACCOLADES

- Stony Brook Computer Science Professor **Aruna Balasubramanian** has been selected to receive a Google Research Scholar Award for her research on accessibility using wearable devices. Her research focuses on mobile systems and networking.
- **Esther S. Takeuchi**, the William and Jane Knapp Chair in Energy and the Environment, was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Takeuchi, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry in the College of Arts and Sciences and in Materials Science and Chemical Engineering in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Stony Brook University, is also Chief Scientist of the Energy Sciences Directorate at Brookhaven National Laboratory.
- Two Stony Brook students were winners of the Rockefeller Institute of Government’s first annual “Future Leaders in Policy” competition, which showcases the best of SUNY undergraduate and graduate research in public policy. The two winners were:
 - **Gabby Mayers** for their presentation “Addressing the Racial Disparities and Homophobia in Mental Healthcare.”
 - **Stephanie Taboada** for her presentation, “Potential of Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) to Decarbonize New York’s Energy System.”

VIII. RECENT EVENTS

A **solidarity vigil** in support of the **Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community** was held on Wednesday, March 31. The vigil was co-hosted by the Interfaith Center, the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, the Office of the Dean of Students and the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Maggie Haberman, White House correspondent for *The New York Times*, delivered a virtual lecture in the **My Life As Speaker Series** on April 7. Haberman, a 2018 Pulitzer Prize winner, discussed her political reporting career and work covering the White House.

Tarana Burke, activist, advocate, founder of the ‘me too’ movement and *Time* magazine’s 2017 Person of the Year, engaged in a virtual conversation on Wednesday, April 21, as part of the

University's **Presidential Lecture Series**. Ms. Burke answered audience questions about her career and history of advocacy and reflected on this past year and matters of racism and policing. The discussion began by bestowing upon Ms. Burke the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters for her prominent role as an activist who helped to break the silence for sexual assault victims all over the world.

The **Discovery Prize** competition was broadcast virtually on April 28. Finalists and their research projects were:

- **Eszter Boros**, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry “Activation of anticancer drug molecules with a radioactive light switch”
- **Eric Brouzes**, Associate Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering “Enabling platform for high-resolution spatial -omics to reveal cell-cell interactions within tissue by sequencing”
- **Gregory Henkes**, Assistant Professor, Department of Geosciences “A rare oxygen isotope recorder of continental aridity”
- **Kevin Reed**, Associate Professor, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences “Attribution of the human influence on the 2020 and 2021 hurricane seasons”

The winner of the competition was **Eszter Boros**.

IX. UPCOMING EVENTS

2021 Stars of Stony Brook Gala

The 22nd Annual Gala will be held virtually on May 6th, from 6:00-7:00PM, and will feature a conversation between 2013 Gala honoree Alan Alda and President Maurie McInnis. Proceeds from the event will benefit student scholarships.

Commencement ceremonies will be held on campus in person in May. Ten individual ceremonies will be held Wednesday, May 19 through Friday, May 21, hosted by individual schools and colleges. All of the ceremonies will be held outdoors at the LaValle Stadium, rain or shine, and all ceremonies will be live streamed and recorded. We will follow all relevant COVID safety guidelines.

X. ATHLETICS UPDATE¹

- Ashley Langford was named as the new women's basketball head coach. She was most recently the associate head coach at James Madison and has also served as an assistant coach at Old Dominion, Navy, Bucknell and Denver. She played collegiately at Tulane and is the program's career leader in assists. Langford takes over for Caroline McCombs, who recently left to become the head coach at George Washington after leading Stony Brook to the program's first appearance in the NCAA Tournament in March.
- Women's Soccer defeated Binghamton 1-0 to earn the team's third America East title in the last four years. The team advanced to the NCAA Tournament where they drew a first-round matchup against Ohio State on Wednesday, April 28.
- The four spring sports for Stony Brook - Baseball, Softball, Men's Lacrosse and Women's Lacrosse - all entered the weekend of April 23 with a combined conference record of 31-2.
- Women's Lacrosse is currently ranked No. 6 and Men's Lacrosse is ranked No. 14.
- Stony Brook supporters came out strong on behalf of the Seawolves on the recent Giving Day that occurred on April 23. More than 330 individual donors contributed in excess of \$32,000 toward causes within the athletic department.

¹ As of April 26, 2021

