OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

TO: University Senate
FROM: Dennis N. Assanis, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
DATE: March 3, 2014

REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

The Office of the Provost is committed to supporting SBU’s academic mission and the institutional vision for excellence in research, education and discovery articulated in the University Strategic Plan. Excellence is key to SBU’s success and rests on five pillars: (i) faculty, (ii) undergraduate education, (iii) graduate education, (iv) research and scholarship, and (v) global and regional engagement. Our overriding objective is to strengthen each of these pillars. In detail, our core goals in each pillar are:

• faculty – recruit, support and retain a growing world-class faculty;
• undergraduate education and student success – recruit, educate, and graduate a diverse and highly-qualified student population prepared for 21st century career- and life-skills and for life-long learning;
• graduate education – increase the number, quality, and diversity of our graduate students;
• research and scholarship – engage in discovery, research, creative and artistic endeavors of the highest standards that advance knowledge and address society’s most important challenges; and
• global and regional engagement – provide economic, technological and cultural growth opportunities for students and our regional and global communities.

Consistent with the goals in the University Plan, the Strategic Plan for Academic Affairs provides goals, strategies and actions to strengthen each of the pillars underlying academic affairs. These goals, strategies and actions will inform the continued development and implementation of detailed strategic plans for the schools, colleges, departments, centers and institutes reporting to the Provost. The draft of the Strategic Plan for Academic Affairs is being disseminated to our academic community for comment. As new ideas and opportunities arise, the Office of the Provost is committed to working closely with the Office of the President and our stakeholders to enhance these strategic plans in alignment with SBU’s quest for excellence.

2014 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE HOWARD HUGHES MEDICAL INSTITUTE INVESTIGATOR AWARDS

In order to make a concentrated effort to pursue high-profile investigator awards, such as the HHMI investigator award, the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Office of the
Provost are requesting nominations of faculty to target for this award. We invite researchers to apply who investigate significant biological problems in all of the biomedical disciplines, including plant biology as well as in adjacent fields such as evolutionary biology, biophysics, chemical biology, biomedical engineering, and computational biology. Physician scientists are encouraged to participate in the competition. This specific call requires a tenure/tenure-track position as an assistant professor or higher academic rank having a professional appointment that began no earlier than June 1, 1999, and no later than July 1, 2009 and who is a PI on one or more active, national peer-reviewed research grants with a duration of at least three years (e.g. NIH R01). Mentored awards, career development and training grants do not qualify. Multi-investigator grants may qualify. There are no limits on the number of applicants an institution can put forward. More information about the HHMI Investigator Program and this competition may be found on their website at http://www.hhmi.org/inv2015. Please send names of faculty in your area who would be strong nominees directly to Marsha Pollard, Associate Chief Academic Officer, at marsha.pollard@stonybrook.edu. We will encourage such faculty to apply and work with them to develop a competitive application. Eligibility for the competition must be established no later than May 1, 2014. The deadline for submission of all application materials is June 3, 2014, at 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time.

**MCCORMICK FOUNDATION AWARDS $300,000 GRANT TO STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY’S CENTER FOR NEWS LITERACY**

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation has announced a grant of $300,000 to Stony Brook University’s Center for News Literacy in the School of Journalism that will continue support of training and materials for News Literacy courses during 2014-2015. The Foundation gave the School of Journalism its first grant of $330,000 in 2012-2013 to help launch a summer training program for high school News Literacy teachers in Chicago, develop a richer Digital Resource Center stocked with free materials for News Literacy teachers, complete the nation’s first online for-credit training course for News Literacy teachers, and create News Literacy “Innovation Grants” for programmers and classroom teachers. The latest grant will enable Stony Brook to facilitate the following initiatives: run a third summer workshop in 2014 to train City College of Chicago (CCC) faculty to teach the News Literacy course that has been adopted there; design and test a Latino-oriented News Literacy curriculum in English that is customized to students whose families depend on Spanish-language; run a two-day training, webinar and follow-up program for 25 adult educators from Chicago interested in news literacy; and use the Chicago Defender archives to build a full semester of lesson plans that will engage Chicago students in the remarkable history of America’s oldest and most respected African-American-owned newspaper, from the Civil Rights movement to the present day.

**SUNY LEARNING NETWORK ONLINE LEARNING SUMMIT**

On February 26-28, 2014, at the State University of New York Global Center in New York City, the SUNY Learning Network held its 15th Annual Online Learning Summit, which is a SUNY-wide conference specifically for online instructional designers, directors of online learning, and those interested in online learning environment support, services, and best practices. The first Summit was held in 1998 as an annual face to face meeting of the SLN faculty development and instructional design team and the online campus-based SUNY instructional designers whose campuses participated in the SLN program. Today, the Summit is open to anyone regardless of
their CMS, SUNY, or SLN affiliation in order to foster increased inter-institutional online collaborations.

**18**TH **ANNUAL SWARTZ FOUNDATION MIND/BRAIN LECTURER**

The Department of Neurobiology and Behavior will host the 18th Annual Swartz Foundation Mind/Brain Lecture on Monday, March 31, 2014 at 4:30 p.m. in the Staller Center. William Newsome, Director of the Stanford Neurosciences Institute and the Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee for President Obama’s BRAIN Initiative, will present his latest research findings in a presentation entitled “Perceiving and Deciding: From Single Neurons to Population Dynamics.” Newsome, who began his academic career at Stony Brook University 30 years ago, is a leading investigator in sensory and cognitive neuroscience and has made fundamental contributions to our understanding of the neural mechanisms underlying visual perception and simple forms of decision making. For more information, visit stonybrook.edu/sb/mind.

**MARCH 2014 PROVOST’S LECTURE SERIES**

On March 5, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. in the Wang Center Theater, Michael van Walt van Praag will present a lecture entitled “The Importance of History in Peacemaking.” Michael van Walt van Praag is a Visiting Professor in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study. He is an international lawyer specializing in intrastate conflict resolution and has served as advisor and consultant to numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations in peace talks in regions ranging from Chechnya to Papua New Guinea. In this lecture, Michael van Walt van Praag will discuss how perceptions of history affect both the substance and process in peace negotiations and why it is important to seriously address them. Whether history is invoked explicitly or not in negotiations, the parties’ perceptions of history is a fundament on which many base their sense of entitlement, build their claims and expectations and develop their positions. He will draw on examples from his own experience as a third-party mediator and as an advisor in peace processes in Asia, Africa, the South Pacific and the Caucasus.

On March 6, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the Wang Center Theater, and as part of the 19th Annual Leadership Symposium at Stony Brook University, Dr. Trudy W. Banta will lead a discussion on “Academic and Student Affairs Collaboration on Assessment: Lessons from the Field.” Dr. Banta is a Professor of Higher Education and Senior Advisor to the Chancellor for Academic Planning and Evaluation at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Dr. Banta has written extensively on this topic and is the founding editor of Assessment Update, a bi-monthly periodical published by Jossey-Bass since 1989. As part of this symposium, she will discuss the conditions and contexts that foster institutional assessment. Dr. Charles Taber, Dean of the Graduate School and co-chair of the University's Committee on Academic Assessment, along with the Division of Student Affairs' Director of Planning and Staff Development, Ahmed Belazi, will respond to Dr. Banta's remarks. Their perspectives will aid our consideration of issues facing us as we engage in establishing an institutional culture of assessment. This lecture is co-sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the School of Social Welfare. This year's symposium is also part of the Division for Student Affairs’ Professional Development Series.
DELLA PIETRA LECTURE SERIES

The Simons Center for Geometry and Physics will host Dr. Frank Wilczek on March 4-5, 2014. On Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the Simons Center Auditorium, Room 103, Dr. Wilczek will give a public talk entitled “Expanding the Doors of Perception.” Modern physics has taught us that our unaided senses perceive only an infinitesimal portion of physical reality. Within that theme, Frank Wilczek, a Nobel Laureate and professor of physics at MIT, will especially emphasize color vision. A wine and cheese reception will follow at 5:00 p.m. He will also lead a faculty and graduate student colloquium entitled “Majorana Neutrinos, Electrons, and Neutrons (Neuterons)” on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. in the Simons Center Lecture Hall, Room 102.

On Tuesday, March 25, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the Simons Center Auditorium, Room 103, the Simons Center will host Dr. John H. Schwarz, who will give a lecture entitled “String Theory: Past, Present, and Future.” String theory connects the microscopic quantum world of elementary particles to the large-scale world of gravity and geometry. Physicists believe that it may have the potential to achieve two very ambitious goals: (1) to provide a complete mathematical description of the physical laws that determine the properties of elementary particles and the forces that act on them and (2) to describe the origin and evolution of the universe. This talk will give a historical overview of the subject and discuss some of the problems that remain to be overcome. A wine and cheese reception at will follow at 5:15 p.m. Dr. Schwarz will also present a technical colloquium for faculty and advanced graduate students on Thursday March 27, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. in the Simons Center, Room 102.