The Undergraduate Community

The first universities were founded in Europe, in the Middle Ages, by students who wished to form communities in which they could live and learn together. The modern university continues this tradition. Faculty, students, and staff together have one central goal: learning together in a community.

The Stony Brook Campus

Close to 35,000 people work and study at Stony Brook, making it larger than the capital cities of several states. Like many small cities, Stony Brook is not only a community in itself; it is a community of communities. Most people who work and study here belong to more than one of the University’s many communities.

Students at Stony Brook belong to academic communities, co-curricular communities, and social communities, and many of our communities encompass all three aspects of university life. All undergraduates are required to complete an academic major, which is itself a community, but many majors have clubs to provide further opportunities for students to connect with other students who have similar interests.

An undergraduate student, for example, may be a member of a sports team or one of our many social clubs, be a resident of a Living Learning Center, and have an academic major. Stony Brook has launched a variety of efforts to build a strong sense of community within the University. The capstone is a new effort to create a comprehensive system of Undergraduate Colleges organized around themes of general interest to incoming undergraduates. This college system has transformed the way in which students experience the University. The Colleges provide the core for an array of opportunities for students to live, laugh, and learn together.

Undergraduate Colleges

Stony Brook’s Undergraduate Colleges have transformed the way in which undergraduate students experience University life. Every first-year student enters Stony Brook as a member of one of six Undergraduate Colleges, each of which is centered around themes of general interest.

The Undergraduate Colleges are designed to support and develop the interests of students and to assist them in taking advantage of the vast resources Stony Brook has to offer.

Faculty members participate in the Undergraduate Colleges through various events organized within the College, through College dinners, and through special one-credit seminars. These seminars, required for all first-year students, are designed to introduce students to the University community and to explore their role in this community of learners. Each seminar addresses some aspect within the broad theme of the college, based on the faculty’s expertise and interests, and is limited to no more than 20 students. As a result, the Colleges provide opportunities for students and faculty to meet both inside and outside the classroom.

All Undergraduate Colleges include individualized advising and support, special educational and social programs, and opportunities for close interaction with faculty, staff, and fellow students centered around themes of common interest.

Each Undergraduate College has both a commuter and a residential focus. First-year resident members of each College are housed together in the same residential quadrangle. First-year commuters have a centrally located home on the Academic Mall.

Once admitted, students are asked to indicate their College preferences, but most students will find that every College resonates with some area of the student’s own interests. For instance, a student might be a fan of computer games, so the College of Information and Technology Studies might be of interest; but if that student also is concerned about environmental issues, the College of Science and Society also will be appealing. The academic themes of the colleges are described below.

College of Arts, Culture, and Humanities

The College of Arts, Culture, and Humanities is designed for individuals who are interested in the wide scope of human activity—the making of art; the study of behavior; the varieties of language, society, and culture that make up our world. Through programs that point the way to opportunities to think, make, do, and perform, the College is intended to encourage students to stretch their imaginations, hone their skills, and enrich their minds. The College also boasts a newly refurbished arts and cultural center, The Tabler Quad, which includes a performing arts space and facilities for digital media, broadcasting, music, and art.

College of Global Studies

Through courses and activities in languages, government, international affairs, and more, students in the College of Global Studies examine the complex issues of our contemporary global culture. Programs take advantage of the knowledge and insight of Stony Brook’s diverse community; our faculty and students hail from all over the world.

College of Human Development

This College is designed around the investigation of the physical, social, and cultural aspects of human evolution and human development. Programs lead to a wide range of careers that focus on human development, from anthropology and education to psychology and the health professions.

College of Information and Technology Studies

The College of Information and Technology Studies is designed for students interested in the growing areas of technology development and information processing and management. The College seeks to infuse students with a sense of wonder as they discover the power of information and technology and consider their own role in shaping the future. The College provides an enriched first-year experience through a learning community focused on leadership, scholarship, integrity, and creativity.

College of Leadership and Service

Whether it’s politics or the Peace Corps, this College engages students who are interested in public service and leadership. Courses and programs emphasize teamwork and problem-solving as students learn about the roles of business, government, and nonprofit organizations in bringing about progress and social change.
College of Science and Society
http://www.stonybrook.edu/ucolleges/sso/
The College of Science and Society emphasizes imagination, research, and discovery in a social context. Students explore the power of creativity to transform the environment in which we live. Students are given opportunities to visit laboratories at Stony Brook and other locations where cutting-edge research is carried out. The College focuses on developing a well-rounded student who is intellectually prepared to meet the challenges of today’s complex and changing world.

Other Communities
Academic Peer Advising
This is an upperclass internship program in which interested juniors and seniors are trained to serve as peer advisors to other students. Academic Peer Advisors earn three upper-division credits each semester. For more information about the Academic Peer Advising program, visit the Academic and Pre-Professional Advising Center Web site at http://www.stonybrook.edu/aadvising.

Academic Majors
Academic majors allow students to take courses in common and to develop a shared sense of knowledge and understanding with a core of faculty and students. For information about each major, see the chapter “Majors, Minors, and Academic Programs.”

Academic Minors
Minors often enroll smaller numbers of students than majors. In minors, students can explore a field other than their major specialization. This gives them the opportunity to broaden their understanding and to connect with students from diverse intellectual backgrounds. For information about each minor, see the chapter “Majors, Minors, and Academic Programs.”

Living Learning Centers (LLCs)
http://www.stonybrook.edu/linc
Each LLC offers the opportunity to complete an academic minor while taking courses with others living in the same residence hall. Residence hall events are also geared to the theme of the LLC. These are typically upperclass programs. For more information about LLCs, see the entry in the chapter “Special Academic Opportunities,” on page 100.

Peer Career Advising Internship
This is an upperclass internship for credit through which juniors and seniors serve as peer career advisors to other students. Peer Career Advisors (PCAs) have a faculty sponsor, attend weekly professional development meetings, complete reflection journals, and earn three upper division credits each semester. For more information, visit the Career Center, W-0550 Melville Library, or http://www.career.sunysb.edu.

Residential Tutoring
This is a program in which upper division students are trained to assist other students in developing study skills and succeeding in particular courses. Visit http://www.studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/rtc for more information.

Other Social and Academic Clubs and Organizations
The academic programs listed above, while primarily organized around an academic theme and with an academic purpose, usually include a social aspect. For instance, major and minor programs often host social get-togethers for students to meet other students and the faculty in the program. Similarly, Stony Brook’s many social clubs and organizations often have a related academic theme, and Stony Brook also offers clubs specifically dedicated to learning. The following is only a sampling of the many communities available to students:

Asian Students Alliance
Badminton Club
Buddhism Study and Practice Group
Caribbean Students Organization
Club India
Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance
Golden Key International Honor Society
Math Club
Minorities in Engineering and Applied Sciences
Minorities in Medicine
Musicians’ Alliance for Peace
Native American Cultural Club
Science Fiction Forum
Shelamu, a student newspaper
Sigma Beta Honor Society
Social Justice Alliance
Sororities and fraternities
Statesman, a student newspaper
Stony Brook Gospel Choir
WUSB, the campus radio station
A more extensive listing of Stony Brook’s clubs and organizations is available at http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/Clubs.

Years of Community
In 1999, Stony Brook launched the Campus Community Initiative as a direct result of discussions that emerged during the Student/Faculty/Staff Retreat, an annual event which brings together members from all parts of the University to look at ways to improve where we live and learn.

The theme for the first year of this program was Year of Community. The Campus Statement of Community was developed that year by a group of students, faculty, and staff. Each year since then a new theme is chosen with community at its core and events are organized around the theme. These themes have included the Year of Community Service; Year of Community Leadership; Year of Community: Ethics in Leadership; Year of Community: Mentoring for Success; and Year of Community Giving: Action, Compassion, Time, Support.

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