

A Letter to the Community

From Stony Brook University President

MAURIE McINNIS



Writing this letter, I'm filled with many different thoughts and emotions. It's an understatement to say that I'm proud to take on the role of Stony Brook President and grateful for the outpouring of support you have shown our University and the healthcare heroes who call it home. But there's also a part of me that's disappointed; I wish I could meet you all in person, shake your hands and celebrate the start of a new semester together.

Working from my office on campus, I'm still searching for the words to describe this new reality — one that, at least for now, has quieted our normally vibrant University and emptied the footpaths outside my window. Soon, we will all start to make sense of this period together: grieve those we've lost, marvel at what we've overcome and narrate this collective experience.

COVID-19 has changed the landscape of Stony Brook and Long Island. Stony Brook University Hospital has treated more than 6,500 friends and neighbors for potential COVID-19, and the New York State testing facility at the South P Commuter Parking lot has administered more than 41,000 tests. Our Hospital stands ready should there be a spike in cases later this year.

Our clinical and research faculty and staff have innovated treatments, developed clinical trials and research initiatives, and implemented telemedicine communications for our patients. The community made overwhelmingly generous donations of nearly 1 million pieces of personal protective equipment, 18,000 meals, 33,500 comfort care items, and hundreds of iPads and video messages of support. Stony Brook and its community have a big-hearted, symbiotic relationship.

Though the COVID-19 crisis has many of us quarantined in our homes, over the past few months a social movement has gained inspiring momentum. The activities and conversations around racial and social inequality in our country are making room for broader actions on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. Under the leadership of Vice President of Equity & Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer Judith Brown Clarke, our campus community is working to set actionable goals for a just, equitable and humane campus for all through our Stony Brook University Diversity Plan.

Faculty and staff have also been diligently working on designing our return to campus. The State University of New York and the Department of Health have approved our plan to move forward, though we are aware that this situation is fluid and we must be flexible. We are instituting a range of new safety measures — including social-distancing protocol and required testing — and will end our on-campus semester before Thanksgiving for the majority of our students.

The spread of the virus also has had a great impact on local businesses. We want to help drive change — and solve current economic challenges — on Long Island. We continue to partner with the area's chambers of commerce, and our College of Business is offering free workshops to community members on how to adapt professionally during the pandemic.

This great community partnership drives Stony Brook's interdisciplinary approach to solving the world's most complex challenges and building a bright future. Even in the face of adversity, we continue to innovate, treat patients, experiment, push boundaries, debate, read, write, analyze, create and support one another. I look forward to leading this next era of Stony Brook's history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maurie McInnis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maurie" being larger and more prominent than the last name "McInnis".

Maurie McInnis, PhD
President, Stony Brook University



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