



CAPITOLS *and* COMMUNITIES



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Stony Brook Awarded AAU Grant to Supplement STEM Education



WISE Biology major Swati Gupta

The Association of American Universities ([AAU](#)) has selected Stony Brook University to receive an AAU mini-grant that will advance its newly designed [Women in Science and Engineering \(WISE\)](#) honors curriculum, which has been created for undergraduate education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

The WISE program in the [College of Engineering and Applied Sciences](#) offers educational and professional STEM opportunities for female students at all levels, as well as partnerships with academic and industry professionals by facilitating individual, institutional, and social change. The new undergraduate WISE curriculum requires coursework in

society and gender, research, service learning, and leadership, as well as credit-bearing practicum in teaching, mentoring, research, and internship.

Made possible by a [five-year, \\$1 million grant](#) from the Northrop Grumman Foundation, the AAU mini-grants will help to create learning communities for STEM faculty members involved in reform efforts, to establish programs for training graduate students and undergraduate teaching assistants or peer advisors in active learning practices, to renovate classrooms into collaborative learning spaces, and to create inclusive and welcoming learning environments for all students.

[Read the full story](#)

[Up In Albany
On the Hill
In Our Community](#)

Up in Albany

LIE Engineering CEOs join in Advocacy to fund new Engineering Building

The Office of Government Relations arranged for [Dean Fotis Sotiropoulos](#) to meet with New York State [Senator Todd](#)



(l-r) Dean Sotiropoulos, Senator Todd Kaminsky, Richard Humann and John Cameron

[Kaminsky](#) (D-Long Beach) to discuss the University's efforts to construct a new Engineering building on campus. Dean Sotiropoulos was joined by leaders of two of Long Island's leading engineering firms, John Cameron, P.E., CEO, Cameron Engineering and Richard Humann, P.E., President and CEO, H2M Architects and Engineers. They outlined for the Senator the need for a state-of-the-art engineering facility at Stony Brook to fill workforce demands. NYS currently ranks among the lowest in the nation for engineering degrees. SBU has seen a surge in enrollment (71% increase) in the engineering and computer science fields. The new building would support growth and provide space for experiential learning, industrial quality labs and entrepreneurial space. It would also support Stony Brook's focus on engineering-driven medicine, energy systems for sustainability, resilient cities and ecosystems, cybersecurity and

AI-driven discovery.

During the last legislative session, [Senator John Flanagan](#) and [Senator Ken LaValle](#) secured \$25M to begin the planning phase of the new building. Senator Kaminsky and [Assemblyman Steve Englebright](#) have submitted requests to their respective leadership to include additional funding in this year's budget.

SBU Advocates for Budget Priorities

The legislative budget process is heating up as the calendar moves closer to the April 1st deadline. President Stanley and Judy Greiman, Chief Deputy to the President and Senior VP of Government and Community Relations, have met with key Long Island legislators as well as with [Senator Toby Ann Stavisky](#) and [Assemblymember Deborah Glick](#) chairs of the Assembly and Senate Higher Education Committees, to discuss Stony Brook's budget priorities.

SBU key priorities include:

- Funding the contractual salary increases
- Maintaining the Executive budget's funding to cover part of the mandated retroactive salary increases
- Restoring SUNY hospital operating aid
- Providing the final round of funding for a new Engineering building
- Supporting the [Stony Brook Cancer Center](#) bid to become a [National Cancer Institute](#)
- Providing a reasonable funding level for critical maintenance for a campus of SBU's size and age

[SBU Government Relations](#) staff are also working with representatives across the state to boost economic development by increasing funding for each of the NY's Centers of Excellence and Centers for Advanced Technology. For a listing of some of Stony Brook University's legislative and budget priorities, please click [here](#) .

For information about any of the above or other questions about the budget process, please call Michael Arens in the Office of Government and Community Relations at 631-632-6302 or e-mail michael.aren@stonybrook.edu.

On the Hill

SBU Professor Testifies at EPA Hearing on Capitol Hill

On Tuesday, February 26, [Dr. Christopher Sellers](#), a professor in SBU's [Department of History](#) and Director of the [Center for the Study of Inequality and Social Justice](#) at SBU, testified at a hearing held by the Subcommittee on [Oversight and Investigations](#) of the Committee on [Energy and Commerce](#). During the hearing, entitled "EPA's Enforcement Program: Taking the Environmental Cop Off the Beat," Dr. Sellers explained how over the past two years EPA enforcement has declined significantly.

[Read Dr. Sellers' full testimony](#)



Christopher Sellers

Engineering Professor Lands NSF Funding to Teach Robotics to Kids



An SBU Engineering student assists an elementary student in building a compact wheeled robot using the SnappyXO.

Robotics is part of nearly all fields of science and has helped to transform work ranging from manufacturing to vehicle technology to surgery. To help students from elementary school through high school to advance their knowledge and creativity using robotics in STEM fields, [Anurag Purwar](#), PhD, Research Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering in the [College of Engineering and Applied Sciences](#) at Stony Brook University, has received a \$225,000 grant from the National Science Foundation ([NSF](#)) to conduct research and development of [SnappyXO](#), a robotics education platform.

[Read the full story](#)

AAU and APLU Call on Congress and Administration to Raise Discretionary Spending Caps

On February 22, [AAU](#) and [APLU](#) submitted a [letter](#) calling on congressional leaders and the administration to negotiate a new bipartisan budget agreement that raises discretionary spending caps for FY20 and FY21. Congress in FY18 and FY19 reversed the Budget and Control Act's (BCA) damaging sequestration cuts, but new cuts are slated for FY20 and FY21 without a deal from congress and the administration. Such cuts would harm scientific research, higher education, and America's position as a leader in global innovation. "Raising the caps," the letter says, "will provide relief from harmful cuts to critical federal investments in scientific research, student aid, and other higher education programs that contribute to our nation's economic and national security."

Stony Brook's [Office of Government Relations](#) supports this association letter and will continue to work with the higher education and research community to urge Congress to raise crucial discretionary spending caps.

In Our Community

Do Animals Think and Feel?

What, if anything, are your pets thinking? Do they value you beyond your reliability as a source of food? What cognitive traits do we share with the elephant, the wolf, primates and other so-called "higher species"? Are human beings in some sense "superior," and does that justify ill treatment of animals?

Stony Brook's [Carl Safina](#) can answer these and related questions with authority. A marine ecologist, esteemed author and endowed professor in the [School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences](#), he has spent considerable time living among the elephants of Kenya, following the day to day activities of wolves at Yellowstone Park and observing the behavior of killer whales and dolphins in the Pacific Northwest.



Carl Safina with Erica Cirino and friends

[Read the full story](#)

Novel Battery Undergoing Tests at AERTC

Stony Brook University energy researchers will be testing a prototype storage battery called a [vanadium flow battery](#) that is designed to be more energy efficient than existing flow batteries used in industry and have added commercial value and residential applications. The battery, developed by [StorEn Technologies](#), is being tested through the end of next month by Unique Technical Services under the supervision of the Advanced Energy Research and Technology Center (AERTC), a New York State Center of Excellence at Stony Brook University.



StorEn Battery

[Read the full story](#)

Simons Foundation President Marilyn Hawrys Simons to be Honored at Stars of Stony Brook Gala



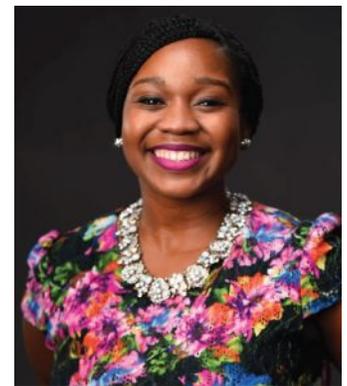
Marilyn Hawrys Simons, BA '74, PhD '84

Stony Brook University will honor alumna and Simons Foundation President Marilyn Hawrys Simons, BA '74, PhD '84 at its 20th Stars of Stony Brook Gala, Wednesday, April 10 at Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers. Hosted annually by the Stony Brook Foundation, this year the celebration will recognize Dr. Simons for her leadership as president of one of the nation's premier philanthropic institutions devoted to driving progress in basic science as well as her contributions to improving educational opportunities for the underserved. As a philanthropist, advocate and volunteer for Stony Brook University, Marilyn has been a champion for one of New York State's outstanding public universities.

[Read the full story](#)

Michelle Mbekeani '11 Works Towards a Better World

Michelle Mbekeani '11 is ready to turn 30. However, nine years into what she calls "the most uncertain decade," Mbekeani has a lot to show for her twenties. As a Policy Advisor for Juvenile Justice at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and an elected official in the Oak Park Township of Illinois, she is working hard to improve the criminal justice systems for youths - and her work extends beyond the United State's justice system. In 2015, Mbekeani led a service initiative to Africa to combat sexual violence and address women's health issues. Her hard work hasn't gone unnoticed.



Michelle Mbekeani '11 was recently named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 - Law & Policy list.

[Read the full story](#)

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, March 5, 2019

[Family Orchestra Concert](#) (University Orchestra)

This annual one-hour concert is geared toward families and young children. This year's concert will include music from well-known classical composers and orchestral favorites in the world of dance and ballet. Featuring Viviane Kim, piano.

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

[Literary Karoke in Honor of Women's History Month](#)

Read a passage from your favorite text written by a female author, or stop by to listen and get inspired.

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

[From Mecca to Sufi Shrines: Islamic Poster Art from South Asia Exhibit: Opening Reception](#)

Exhibit runs March 13 through May 5, 2019.

Curated by Yousuf Saeed, an independent filmmaker and researcher based in India, From Mecca to Sufi Shrines showcases the ephemeral objects and devotional art produced for popular consumption in the Islamic world, in particular in South Asia. Included are mass-printed Islamic posters and calendar art from India and Pakistan, which often depict images of the Hajj pilgrimage; South Asian Sufi shrines and saints; and calligraphy and talismans linked to other religious faiths found in the region.

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

[Leading Your Business the Marine Corps Way](#)

Co-Sponsored by the Stony Brook University Alumni Association and Teachers Federal Credit Union, "Leading Your Business the Marine Corps Way" is part of the CM&M Business Breakfast Series presented by Joe Campolo, managing partner at the law firm of Campolo, Middleton & McCormick.

Friday, March 29, 2019

Friday Night Films at the Staller Center for the Arts

[If Beale Street Could Talk](#) - 7pm

[Vice](#) - 9:30pm

Contact Information:
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