

REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

TO: University Senate

FROM: Fotis Sotiropoulos, Interim Provost

DATE: Monday, November 2, 2020

Appointment of Shelley Germana as Interim Vice Provost for Curriculum and Undergraduate Education

Rachelle “Shelley” Germana as Interim Vice Provost for Curriculum and Undergraduate Education, effective November 1. Dr. Germana will serve in this capacity until a permanent Vice Provost is identified.

Dr. Germana has been an indispensable member of the Division of Undergraduate Education team since her arrival at Stony Brook in 2014. Her various accomplishments include enhancing strategies to support student retention and graduation; co-developing Stony Brook's gender inclusion curriculum required for all students; and fostering a collaborative partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. As Associate Provost for Academic Success, Dr. Germana oversees the Undergraduate Colleges, Academic and Transfer Advising Services, Student Orientation and Family Programs, and Pre-Professional Advising. She is also responsible for central academic support services in Undergraduate Education, including Finish in 4, academic integrity, and academic exceptions and appeals. She previously served as Assistant Provost for Academic Success and Assistant Dean & Director of the Undergraduate Colleges.

Preparing for the 2020 Presidential Election

Below are tools, resources, and guidelines to help faculty and staff manage classes and support students, colleagues, and each other.

Get Out the Vote and Non-Partisanship

Faculty are encouraged to reach out to their students and stress the importance of voting. However, please be aware that the Stony Brook community spans the entire political spectrum, and remember that there are policies and rules on the use of university facilities, resources, and time for partisan political purposes and that state and federal laws preclude the granting of a benefit in exchange for voting (e.g. extra credit). More information about policies can be found here: https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/government_relations/political-activity-on-campus-2019.php

All members of the community--faculty, staff, and students—should be mindful of the full range of emotions and opinions that are likely to emerge in the coming weeks. Some tempers may be high, attention low, distractions omnipresent, and patience thin. As faculty plan for assignments and exams over the coming weeks, they might consider moderating expectations and demonstrate empathy and patience with students and each other.

As we process election results, whatever they may be, we ask that all members of the community--faculty, staff, and students-- be mindful of the full range of emotions and opinions that are likely to emerge in the coming weeks. We expect some tempers may be high, attention low, distractions omnipresent, and patience thin. As you plan for assignments and exams over the coming weeks, we encourage you to moderate some of your expectations and demonstrate empathy and patience with your students and each other.

Fostering Inclusive Classroom Conversations

Faculty are encouraged to allow students to process their experiences in the classroom in a manner that is respectful to all members of the community. The university has long been, and should be, a space for the discussion and debate of political ideas. Faculty should remember the line between “political” and “partisan,” and the shared responsibility not to stray across it. Faculty may consider adopting strategies to create an inclusive classroom culture and ways to center the student experience. Faculty should also revisit Stony Brook’s recommendations for managing disruptions in the online classrooms at <https://news.stonybrook.edu/diversity/university-issues-message-re-incivility-in-online-classrooms/>.

Faculty who are teaching on the day after the election are encouraged to acknowledge the election and that it may be a source of stress and anxiety for many. They should find opportunities to reiterate Stony Brook’s core values of civility and respect. Faculty may also consider drawing on the Our Caring, Respect, Civility guide (<https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/civility/>), which provides resources and support.

Taking Care of Yourself

Healthier U, Stony Brook University’s employee wellness program, is offering a series of Wellness Wednesday events beginning on Nov. 4 in the Stony Brook Union and streamed on the Healthier U Facebook page. The series will include mindfulness, yoga, a labyrinth walk, and more. Healthier U and the Employee Assistance Program are also hosting facilitated fireside chats on Zoom for employees to gather virtually and share in a nonjudgmental, nonpartisan setting.

Supporting Our Students

Student Affairs offers an extensive array of resources and events, both educational and mental-health focused, to support our students. A virtual Community Dialogue, *We Voted, Now What*, is scheduled for Wednesday, November 4 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

If faculty are concerned about any of your students, please draw on these resources and direct people to them. For significant concerns, the Stony Brook Red Book (<https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/studentaffairs/redbook/>) offers a comprehensive directory based on the type of concern or situation they may encounter. For more minor concerns and to have a brief informal conversation with a counselor, faculty may want to direct students to Let's Talk (https://stonybrookuniversity.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cBersq0PhqVYwpD) for individual hangout space or to Let's Talk About Election Tension, a group discussion space focused on managing one's emotions and navigating relationships post elections. Student Affairs will host a Community Dialogue (<https://stonybrook.campuslabs.com/engage/event/6564296>) the night after the election and follow up with other events afterwards. Also, remind students that counseling services are available from CAPS in virtual (Zoom or phone) formats, including the 24/7 CAPS After Hours phone line.

Honorlock Proctoring Service Now Live

Stony Brook University has secured a contract with Honorlock and the proctoring service is now available. Honorlock will provide direct support via 24/7 live chat, email, and phone. Webinars will be available live and on-demand for those who would like additional help: <https://calendar.stonybrook.edu/site/it>.

Honorlock requires internet access and students must have an enabled web camera. Honorlock will work on any device that can run the full Chrome browser, including Windows, macOS, and Chrome OS computers and tablets. However, iOS devices, iPads, and Android are not compatible with Honorlock because they do not support the full Chrome browser. Instructors should identify students who cannot meet those requirements and work with them to find alternative solutions.

Honorlock's AI monitors and records the test-taking. Once an exam session is completed, instructors may review flagged recordings to determine if there was a possible academic integrity violation.

Honorlock provides options for SASC accommodations such as proctor-assisted login and authentication, extra time, readers and scribes, etc. For more information and instructions about testing accommodations, as well as information about other features to protect test integrity, visit: <https://honorlock.KB.help> or <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/honorlock>.

Mid-Semester Assessment

In light of the ongoing challenges posed by the current semester, the University is administering additional mid-semester assessments to all students. This evaluation will provide instructors with direct feedback about their current courses and give them an opportunity to make any modifications before the semester's end. The assessment consists of two open-ended questions and was emailed to students through the Campus Labs platform on Wednesday, October 28. Feedback will be available Thursday, November 5. The survey will ask:

1. What has been most helpful for your learning in this class so far?
2. What has caused you the most difficulty in this class so far?

While this feedback is intended for the course instructor, it will also be shared with department chairs or deans for the purpose of identifying any institutional changes that may be warranted. This assessment is not intended to evaluate faculty, but rather providing the best possible learning experience for our students, to support our faculty, and adjust to the needs identified in the assessment.

Virtual Stony Brook Film Festival

The Stony Brook Film Festival, presented by Island Federal, showcases the best in independent film premieres. The Festival usually lasts for ten days, and all films screen in Staller Center's main stage theatre at Stony Brook University. This year, to ensure the continued health of their community, patrons, staff, and students, the Stony Brook Film Festival partnered with IndieFlix Festivals and is available virtually in the comfort and safety of your home.

The Film Festival offers talented performances by stars of the future and familiar faces. The Stony Brook Film Festival invites filmmakers to represent their films and participate in question and answer sessions after screenings, which will still be offered in this year's virtual Festival. Attendees hear from directors, actors, producers and crew from all over the world. So far over 850 passes have been sold.

Seven Stony Brook AI Papers Make Prestigious NeurIPS Conference

Stony Brook University's Institute for AI-Driven Discovery and Innovation has been working tirelessly to study and present new research to the world. As a result, this year the Institute had seven papers accepted at the most distinguished conference for machine learning in the world: The Conference and Workshop on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS).

As a global cornerstone of the artificial intelligence community, NeurIPS annually selects the most exceptional AI research papers. This year the Conference received almost 10,000 full paper submissions, with an acceptance rate of only 20.1 percent. NeurIPS has become increasingly more competitive. To have seven papers selected puts Stony Brook among the top universities internationally for AI research.

Stony Brook researchers of these accepted papers are:

Department of Computer Science

Minh Haoi Nguyen, Michael Ryoo and Dimitris Samaras

Department of Biomedical Informatics

Chao Chen

Renaissance School of Medicine, Department of Neurobiology and Behavior

Il Memming Park

\$2.1 Million Awarded for Sea Grant Research on NY's Coastal Environment

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) has awarded more than \$2.1 million to support six coastal science research projects —three of which are being led by Stony Brook University faculty — that explore topics relating to and benefiting New York's coastal environment, communities and economies. The projects are sponsored by NYSG and funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Sea Grant's federal parent agency.

Project Summaries

Identification of Superior Diploid and Triploid Oyster Lines for Aquaculture Operations in New York

Oyster aquaculture represents a sustainable industry that contributes to the economies of local coastal communities. Marinetics Endowed Professor Bassem Allam, from Stony Brook's School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (SoMAS), is leading a team including Research Associate Professor Emmanuelle Pales-Espinosa and Professor Robert Cerrato, also of SoMAS, in a study comparing the performance of different oyster lines derived from different genetic backgrounds. Further, the team will contrast the performance of locally derived triploid oysters with that of their diploid counterparts. Superior oyster lines identified during the study will be maintained and broadly distributed to the aquaculture industry in the state and beyond. New York consumers will benefit from an increased availability of high quality and competitively priced oyster products.

Erosion and Recession of Coastal Bluffs: Characterizing Erodibility of Bluff Materials under Various Land- and Sea-Based Conditions

Coastal bluffs comprise a significant percentage of shorelines in the Great Lakes, U.S. Atlantic and Pacific Coasts. Erosion and recession of bluffs are an issue of concern to coastal communities and are being more frequently and extensively impacted by rising sea levels, extended droughts, heavier rainfall, and coastal storms. Assistant Professor Ali Farhadzadeh, from Stony Brook's Department of Civil Engineering and also SoMAS, and Distinguished Service Professor Henry Bokuniewicz of SoMAS will conduct a study to identify and quantify some of the underlying processes, both sea- and land-based that lead to coastal bluff erosion. With an enhanced understanding of the factors involved with bluff recession gained through this project, a modeling framework that improves prediction of bluff erosion is expected. The developed model could also be used to identify risk areas where shoreline protection measures, including natural and nature-based features, could prevent or slow further recession. The results will be useful for resource managers and property owners to better predict and respond to future erosion under varying climate changes.

The Use of Macroalgae to Expand Aquaculture and Prevent, Control, and Mitigate Harmful Algal Blooms in New York's Coastal Zones

During the past several decades, harmful algal blooms (HABs) have had significant environmental and economic consequences in New York's coastal waters. Endowed Chair of Coastal Ecology and Conservation Christopher Gobler and Senior Research Support Specialist Michael Doall of SoMAS will conduct a study to assess the ability of cultivable macroalgae to inhibit the growth of HAB species common to NY waters while also expanding potential aquaculture opportunities. Previous studies have shown that macroalgae can inhibit the growth of HAB species through several mechanisms, including pH elevation, competition for nutrients, algicidal bacteria associated with macroalgae that produce allelochemicals that inhibit HABs species. The study will develop and assess cultivation techniques and test the feasibility of co-culturing HAB-combative seaweeds with bivalve shellfish at commercially viable scales on shellfish farms. The expected results of this project are the development of seaweed cultivation best practices and guidance materials that can be used by aquaculture operators and will create an opportunity to both expand the scope of the New York aquaculture industry and introduce a cost-effective method for mitigating HABs.