

August 25: University Senate Report

Office of the Provost

Provost's Initiatives and Updates

Director of the AI Innovation Institute hired

Effective August 1, Lav Varshney was named the inaugural director of the campus wide Artificial Intelligence Innovation Institute, or AI3, and inaugural Della Pietra Infinity chair. Varshney comes to Stony Brook from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he was a faculty member in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. He also held affiliations in computer science, neuroscience, industrial and enterprise systems engineering, digital agriculture, and personalized nutrition, as well as the Institute of Government and Public Affairs. [Read the announcement.](#)

Budget forum

Aug. 14, the Provost's Office hosted its annual budget forum. The provost shared details on trends hiring of faculty and staff over the last several years, changes in enrollment of undergraduate and graduate students, and other key measures as they relate to recruiting and retaining top-tier faculty and staff. A recording of the presentation, slides, and a listing of approved hires are available on the [Provost's Office website](#) (NetID required). The presentation focused solely on budgets and hiring pertaining to units reporting to the Provost.

SUNY Korea delegation visit

A delegation from SUNY Korea, including President Arthur H. Lee, Dean Y. Eugene Pak, Director Dongyeop Yeon, and Team Leader Haena Kim, visited Stony Brook University on May 22–23. The purpose of the visit was to strengthen connections and foster collaboration between SUNY Korea and SBU. The delegation met with deans of relevant academic units, as well as representatives from academic affairs, finance, administration, IT, and enrollment management. On May 23, the delegation attended SBU's commencement ceremony, with President Lee joining the platform party. The visit also included a well-received tour of the Jazz Loft, arranged by Provost Carl Lejuez.

Academic Programs

Recently approved programs:

- Business Analytics and Intelligence MS (Title Change & Revision, 07/25)
- Materials Science and Engineering PhD & MPhil (Revision, 07/25)
- Accounting BS (New Program, 06/25)
- Educational Leadership AGC (Revision, 06/25)

- Philosophy MA (Revision, 06/25)
- Creative Writing MFA (Title Change, 05/25)

Faculty Development

New Faculty Orientation and Navigating SBU

New Faculty Orientation took place Aug. 21. This daylong retreat introduced the 2025–2026 cohort of new faculty to Stony Brook University’s mission, resources, and culture, with sessions on effective student mentoring, AI tools and accessibility practices for teaching, and building scholarly community. Planning is underway for [Navigating SBU](#), a year-round series that offers early-career faculty support and resources. The next event, Sept. 5, is for tenure-track faculty within their first 3 years at Stony Brook.

Excellence in Teaching Program

A workshop series that centers teaching and learning, programming for 2025-2026 launches Friday, Sept. 12, with *Syllabus Redesign*. Additional sessions will explore: the use of AI in teaching, experiential and innovative pedagogies, accessibility, and inclusive teaching practices. Faculty are nominated by their dean to participate in the year-long program.

Chairs Retreat and Workshops

The annual Chairs Retreat took place May 12, and gave academic unit leaders the opportunity to deepen their understanding of key topics that benefit their units, and to foster networking and collaboration. Chairs will be invited to two training sessions, Best Practices for Faculty searches, co-facilitated by the DI3 Office Sept. 4 and Sept. 11.

Emerging Leaders

This program provides development opportunities for the next generation of higher education leaders in research, education, and administration. A new cohort begins Friday, Sept. 12, with a session on Career Opportunities. Participants from last year’s cohort will engage in community and university activities early in the academic year, representing their academic units in a variety of contexts. Faculty must be nominated to participate; nominations for the 2025-26 year are closed.

Provost's Spotlight Talk

This series features outstanding SBU faculty who have recently been recognized for significant contributions to their fields, along with eminent visiting scholars. This fall, the Spotlight Talk will highlight Presidential and Distinguished Professor Rowan Phillips Sept. 25. [Learn more and register.](#)

Generative AI Tools for Teaching and Learning: Departmental and Staff Development Workshops

Academic departments interested in learning and exploring the power of generative AI are invited to request workshops tailored to their needs. In collaboration with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, we are offering a series of workshops tailored to academic departments to explore how to

use Generative AI tools in the classroom and for course preparation, and bootcamps for academic staff about using AI to support administrative tasks, streamline processes, and enhance student services. Contact facultyaffairs@stonybrook.edu or celt@stonybrook.edu for more information or to schedule a workshop.

Distinctions and Awards

Stony Brook Trustees Faculty Awards Recipients

- Rafael D'Andrea, Department of Ecology & Evolution, CAS
- Wenbo Li, Department of Communication, Department of Communication, SoCJ
- Fernando Loffredo, Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature, CAS
- Jack McSweeney, SoMAS
- Vivian Miranda, C.N. Yang Institute for Theoretical Physics and Department of Physics and Astronomy, CAS

Academic Affairs

P&T Webpage Updates

As part of a larger effort to update the Provost's Office website, new pages about the Provost's Office role in [Promotion and Tenure](#) for [assistant to associate professor](#) and [associate to full](#) are available. The updates include information on the [expedited tenure process](#) and resources for developing a strong teaching and service profile. We are always grateful for feedback as we work to clarify and improve the process; email us at provost@stonybrook.edu.

Academic affairs listening tour

This fall, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs team will hold four open sessions for faculty and staff interested in asking questions, expressing concerns, or sharing ideas. Happening during select Mondays from 12:30 - 1:30 pm during Campus Life Time, these sessions are being scheduled in different locations to encourage in-person conversations and engage individuals from different academic units.

- Sept. 22, 12:30 - 1:30 pm: Light Engineering Building, room 250
- Oct. 27, 12:30 - 1:30 pm: Health Sciences Center, OVP conference room
- Nov. 24, 12:30 - 1:30 pm: Social and Behavioral Sciences N-318
- Dec. 15, 12:30 - 1:30 pm: Endeavor 113

Locations may change, but our commitment to these conversations will not and we look forward to hearing from our academic community in this new way. Bring your lunch; we'll bring the coffee and cookies!

New Pop-Up Course

A second pop-up course, AI and You, will launch this fall after a successful spring pilot of our first pop-up, Climate Change and You. These one-credit, online asynchronous interdisciplinary courses are designed to give undergraduate students a broad introduction to complex issues. The AI class features weekly modules created by faculty from CAS, CEAS, SOMAS, Libraries, RSoM, and CELT and will launch Oct. 15. Climate Change and You will run again in the first half of the semester. In the spring, it reached its max enrollment of 50 students. Students interested in the courses or in need of an additional credit can enroll until the end of add/drop Sept. 8.

student success Pilot program

A pilot Student Experience Project (SEP) Community of Practice cohort starts this fall. SEP is an evidence-based program that works with faculty to positively impact retention, faculty satisfaction, and student thriving.

Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Events and Tools

Check our calendar for [upcoming events](#), or [contact us](#) to schedule a program for your department.

In collaboration with DoIT, CELT is launching two new engagement tools for all instructors: Vevox for Polling and Feedback Fruits.

- **[Vevox for Polling](#):** Vevox is a Zoom plug-in available to faculty and staff across the university. The polling solution supports increased engagement in classes and meetings. Students do not have to pay a subscription.
- **[Feedback Fruits](#):** This Brightspace tool is designed to enhance student engagement and learning through interactive activities and feedback tools, including peer review, group member evaluation, and more.

Email celt@stonybrook.edu if you want to discuss ways to integrate them into your classes.

[Lumi](#) is an optional new AI tool in Brightspace that SUNY has made available. Faculty can choose to use Lumi to develop content and assessment. Contact celt@stonybrook.edu to learn more.

Accessibility Services

Keep checking CELT's [Accessibility Webpage](#) for additional resources and support, including training on VoiceThread and multilingual documents.

Do you need to make your PDFs accessible? Submit them to CELT's [PDF Remediation](#).

General Education Advisory Committee

The General Education Advisory Committee has recommended updating the TECH student learning outcome to the following: "Students will demonstrate the ability to engage with and evaluate a technology." Consultation was provided to the Undergraduate Council, University Senate, and provostial leadership. This modification is effective Fall 2025.

Enrollment Management

Office of Financial Aid & Scholarship Services

Recent changes under the *Better FAFSA, Better Borrowing (BBB)* initiative introduced major reforms to federal PLUS loan programs. Most notably, the Graduate PLUS loan program will be repealed starting in the 2026–27 award year, eliminating a key source of federal borrowing that allowed graduate students to cover the full cost of attendance beyond their annual \$20,500 Direct Unsubsidized Loan limit.

Additionally, new annual and aggregate loan limits will be implemented for the Parent PLUS program, which currently allows parents to borrow up to the full cost of attendance. These changes are accompanied by a simplified credit check process, removing considerations such as debts in collections, and the elimination of both the endorser and appeal processes.

The new Parent PLUS loan limits include:

- Annual limit: \$20,000 per dependent undergraduate student
- Aggregate limit: \$65,000 per dependent undergraduate student

The impact on higher education institutions will be significant, particularly for those with large graduate and professional populations. The loss of Graduate PLUS will reduce federal funding options for graduate students, potentially decreasing enrollment in high-cost programs unless institutions expand institutional aid or facilitate access to private lending. This shift could also impact diversity and access in graduate education, as PLUS loans currently provide access to students with limited credit histories. For undergraduates, the new Parent PLUS limits may reduce over-borrowing and parent debt burdens, but may also widen affordability gaps, especially for middle-income families who may not qualify for need-based aid but also cannot cover out-of-pocket expenses. Institutions will need to adjust financial aid strategies, communications, and loan counseling to help students and families navigate a more limited borrowing landscape.

Office of the Registrar

University Catalogs

The Office of the Registrar is on track to publish the Spring 2026 Undergraduate, Graduate and Health Science Catalogs at the end of October, prior to the start of the advance registration period.

Key areas of focus:

- account for all curricular changes approved between the Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 semesters
- continue to develop the Policies and Procedures section of all catalogs, based on feedback from university stakeholders
- create a "How to Use" guide to provide an improved user experience
- update the structure of the catalogs to integrate with the Modern Campus Curriculum software

Modern Campus Curriculum Implementation

Modern Campus Curriculum is set to launch during the Fall 2025 semester. Curriculum allows for course and program changes to be submitted, reviewed and approved using a secure system that integrates with both the PeopleSoft Administrative System and University Catalogs. The Office of the Registrar has collaborated with the following academic units, in order to address specific concerns as we transition to this software:

- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business
- College of Engineering and Applied Sciences
- Graduate Nutrition Program
- Graduate School
- Program in Public Health
- School of Communication and Journalism
- School of Health Professions
- School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences
- School of Nursing
- School of Professional Development
- School of Social Welfare
- University Honors Programs

Testing, training and implementation will occur during the Fall semester.

Undergraduate Admissions

The Spring 2026 and Fall 2026 semester applications opened on August 1. For first year applicants a few questions have been added that will allow us to better manage their applications as well as their data.

A new team focused on Application Review and Academic Engagement is now in place. Already this team has met with academic programs and university honors programs to enhance admission processes for the coming year. We'll be launching our standing meeting of admission-related representatives in September.

Student Recruitment Open House Dates for 2025-2026 include:

- Seawolf Preview Days: Sept. 13 and Oct. 13
- Admitted Seawolf Days: March 28 and April 11

Undergraduate Education

Student Progress Reports

Progress Report dates are set for Fall 2025 and Spring 2026:

- Fall 2025 Progress Reports will run Wednesday, Sept. 17, to Wednesday, Oct. 15.
- Spring 2026 Progress Reports will run from Wednesday, Feb. 18, to Wednesday, March 18.

Faculty feedback through progress reports is a critical component for supporting students. Not all instructors will receive a progress report request every semester but can provide feedback on students at any time. More information can be found in the [progress report FAQs](#).

Assistant Provost for Academic Advising Hired

Dr. Ryan Braun has been hired as the inaugural Assistant Provost for Academic Advising. Ryan was most recently the Director of Undergraduate Academic Success at George Mason University where he focused on academic policy, student retention, advisor development, advising technology enhancement, and learning support. He also taught in GMU's Department of Communication. Ryan was previously at the University of Florida where he led advising, career readiness and experiential learning, where he also earned his PhD in curriculum and instruction. In the role of Assistant Provost, Ryan will provide strategic oversight for academic advising within Undergraduate Education and will be a collaborative partner to other advising areas on campus.

Graduate School

Welcome Back BBQ

The Graduate School will host its third annual welcome back BBQ for graduate students on Thursday, August 28 outside our offices in Old Computer Science. In addition to food and games, there will be tabling by student support offices including SASC, the Graduate Student Advocate, and others. Registration is required.

Optimizing Research Mentoring for New Faculty

[Optimizing Research Mentoring for New Faculty](#) began during the afternoon of New Faculty Orientation on August 21, with a follow-up session on September 26. Incoming faculty members across disciplines will enhance their mentoring skills and develop strategies for inclusive mentoring, aligning expectations, effective communication, and more -- all within their first semester at Stony Brook.

Research Survival Skills for Postdocs

[Research Survival Skills for Postdocs](#) was a two-day workshop on August 14 and 15 that engaged Stony Brook postdocs in topical issues related to responsible research conduct. Through faculty-led sessions, postdocs discuss aspects of research careers, including authorship and publication, safe and ethical research environments, and more. An optional follow-up session on August 20 covered issues relevant to

human and animal subjects in research. The workshop satisfies NIH and NSF requirements for RCR training, while also preparing postdocs for the next steps in their research careers.

National Postdoc Appreciation Week

NPAW is Sept. 15-19 and we have a [full week of events](#) planned, including a Women in Research Pop-Up Mentoring workshop and a resume workshop for postdocs run by the Career Center.

New Professional Development Workshops for Faculty

The Graduate School will offer two new professional development workshops for faculty this fall: [Culturally Aware Mentoring](#) (October 17 & 24) and [Guiding Difficult Conversations](#) (November 7). Both are geared toward preparing faculty with tools to mentor effectively, as part of the Graduate School's mentoring curriculum.

Save the Date: 3MT and Postdoc Spotlight

Save the date for the Graduate School's Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) and Postdoc Spotlight competition Friday, March 13, in the SAC Auditorium.

Global Affairs

Ongoing impact of visa pause, regulatory changes

Visa and Immigration Services has continued to update information via their website and through emails to students regarding the ongoing impacts of the visa pause and regulatory changes.

Upcoming VIS Events

VIS will offer the following services in the opening week of the fall semester:

Social Security Shuttles: In coordination with International Student Success, shuttle buses will run between campus and the Social Security office on Aug. 27 and Sept. 4 for students who need to apply for their SSNs to begin on-campus employment, including TA, RA, and GA positions.

New International Student Ice Cream Social: In coordination with ISS Aug. 26, new graduate and undergraduate international students will be welcomed by OGA staff and have an opportunity to meet other international students while enjoying ice cream and games.

Planning Ahead for Graduation and Employment in the U.S. for Graduate Students: This Aug. 28 workshop is designed for graduate-level F-1 students and will focus on how they can make the most of their time at SBU.

New International Student Programming

26 Intensive English Center summer students will graduate and move on as international degree-seeking students.

International Student Success hosted its first International Student Pre-orientation session where approximately 50 new international students arrived on campus three days early. Students met their academic advisors, learned about campus, and took a trip into Manhattan. This program will serve as a pilot for future consideration and expansion.

Institutional and Educational Effectiveness

2025-26 Program Review Cohort

A special acknowledgment to the eight departments and programs participating in this year's [Department/Program Review Process](#):

- - Art
 - Biomedical Engineering
 - Creative Writing
 - Hispanic Languages & Literature
 - Human Resource Management
 - Linguistics
 - Philosophy
 - Sustainability Studies

2025 Academic Program Assessment Report Process

Academic Program Assessment Reports (APAR) for the 2024–25 cycle are due **Sept. 30**. In our newest assessment initiative, Assessment Coordinators can submit APARs directly through our homegrown Content Management System (CMS). Coordinators can log in, explore the system, and submit their updates. [Additional resources and information are available](#).

OEE Fall Events

New Assessment Coordinators' Orientation – Sept. 4: Meet the OEE team and learn more about your role as an Assessment Coordinator.

Coffee with Coordinators – Sept. 10, Oct. 1, Nov. 5: These monthly networking sessions offer an informal space to connect and share ideas with fellow coordinators.

Assessment Report Data Entry Days – Mondays & Thursdays through Sept. 3: Drop in during OEE office hours for personalized support using the CMS and entering assessment data.

Save the Date: 4th Annual Assessment Symposium – Oct. 30: Join OEE Oct. 30 for the 4th annual Assessment Symposium: Mapping Our Future. Zach Justus, PhD, returns to ask: “Are students learning

what we think we're teaching?" Catherine Scott will co-facilitate a hands-on curriculum mapping session. The event will also incorporate a student panel and fireside chat. Register by 10/15.

[Register](#) for upcoming OEE events and view full event details

Ongoing Events

Invite OEE to join a faculty meeting for targeted assessment support or host a workshop tailored to your program. [Request](#) a consultation, department consultation, or workshop.

Continuing, Professional, and Online Education

Pre-College Summer Program

SBU's [Pre-College Summer](#) (PCS) program hosted 270 participants over three weeks from July 6 to 25. PCS is a (mostly) residential program designed for rising high school juniors and seniors. We offer a series of 1-week and multi-week non-credit programs with participants arriving on campus Sunday afternoon and departing Friday afternoon. The program provides participants with intellectually stimulating academic experiences, college readiness programming, and an opportunity to gain a realistic preview of social and residential life on a college campus. Two-thirds of participants came from NY state and one-third from out-of-state. 30% of students received some form of financial assistance, including 25 students who were fully funded thanks to partnerships with community-based organizations: United Way of Long Island, Uplifting Afghan Girls and the Afghan Women's Council, Noble Summer of a Lifetime in Chicago. We are truly grateful to our participating and innovative faculty, our dedicated peer-mentor staff, and our on-campus partners in Residential Life, Campus Dining, Enrollment Management, ERM, and Student Affairs.

Summer 2026 will offer programming over four weeks:

- - Session 1: 6/28/26-7/3/26
 - Session 2: 7/5/26-7/10/26
 - Session 3: 7/12/26-7/17/26
 - Session 4: 7/19/26-7/24/26

Climate & Sustainability Programming

2025-26 Theme: Earth in the Emergency Room

For the 2025-2026 academic year, the Collaborative for the Earth's (C4E) theme is "Earth in the Emergency Room: Extreme Conservation Efforts." C4E will explore topics such as de-extinction, predator

management, genetically modifying mosquitoes, geoengineering, translocation, and managed retreat of coastlines.

On Sept. 24, in keeping with this year's theme of extreme conservation efforts, C4E and the Lichtenstein Center will co-host a screening of ["Escape from Extinction: REWILDING,"](#) followed by a Q&A with [Resit Akcakaya](#) from the Department of Ecology and Evolution.

Rockaways Field Trip

On Oct. 10, C4E will host a field trip to the Rockaways to meet with organizers working on SuperStorm Sandy recovery efforts, more than a decade after the storm. Participants will visit impacted areas and visit some of the housing complexes built since the storm. It will be an opportunity to talk about coastal infrastructure in the wake of climate change and how it impacts communities, as well as to appreciate some of the projects that aim to mitigate risk to residents.

Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Institutional Memberships in Research Organizations

Stony Brook University's institutional memberships in arts, humanities, and social sciences fields were strengthened during 2024-2025 to include:

- the American Council of Learned Societies,
- Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes,
- Modern Language Association Strategic Partnership Network,
- National Humanities Alliance, National Humanities Center, and the
- Social Science Research Council College & University Fund.

These institutional memberships offer several key opportunities for the research and professional development of SBU AHSS faculty and students. If you have questions related to these membership benefits, please contact [Janet Ward](#), Associate Provost for Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Initiatives.

During 2024-2025, chairs and directors of five AHSS units attended leadership training institutes led by the MLA, and several other faculty members attended conferences and webinars of CHCI, NHA, NHC, and SSRC. The Humanities Institute selected a graduate student and two members of faculty for the National Humanities Center's summer residency programs (including the NHC's inaugural Scholarly Writing Workshop). Additionally, due to SBU's NHC membership, SUNY Old Westbury was nominated for sister institutional membership benefits.

Showcasing SBU's AHSS achievements on Governors Island

The inaugural Climate Arts reception on Governors Island, the first of its kind co-organized by SBU, New York Climate Exchange, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, was held in April during Earth Week, and featured exhibits by SBU faculty, students, and alumni.

A second co-hosted reception presenting SBU research and creative activity across AHSS fields, this time focusing on the theme of Water, will be held in conjunction with the LMCC's Visiting Artists at the Arts Center on Governors Island during Climate Week NYC (September 27, announcement forthcoming).

These reception events presenting the achievements of SBU in climate arts will be held with LMCC and NYCE every year during Earth Week (April) and Climate Week NYC (September) as part of a broader collaborative initiative.

Grantwriting Workshops for AHSS Fields

In February 2025, an AHSS grantwriting workshop for faculty, staff, and graduate students at SBU and regional institutions was led by the ACLS Senior Director of US Programs and was hosted on campus by the Humanities Institute.

Upcoming grantwriting webinar opportunities led by ACLS, NHC, and other organizations in AHSS fields will be announced throughout 2025-2026.