



University Scholars Newsletter

Spring 2023



The Torch

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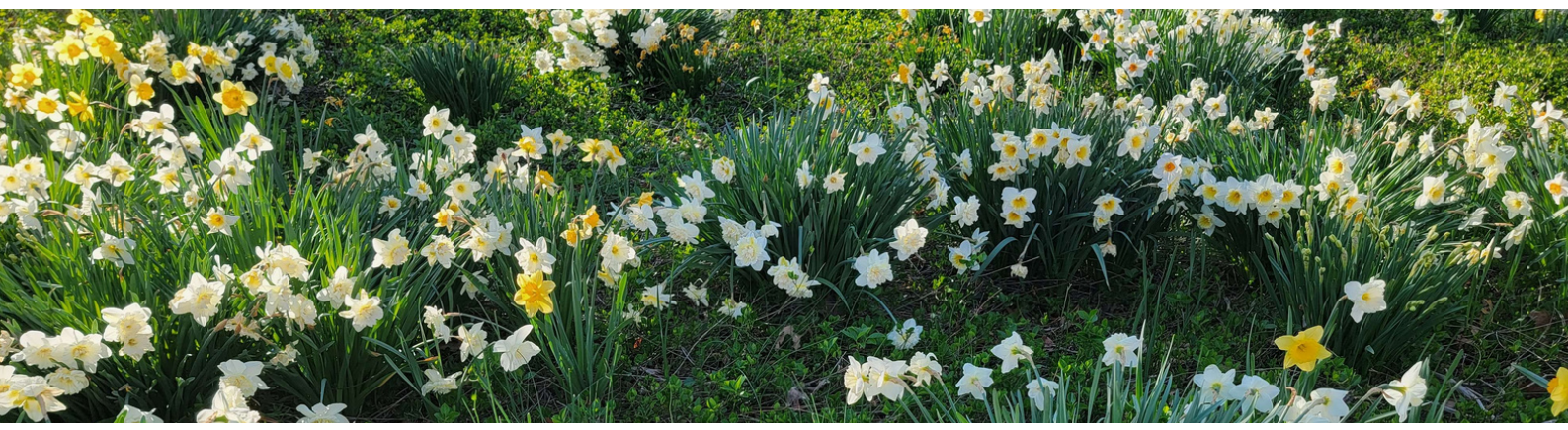


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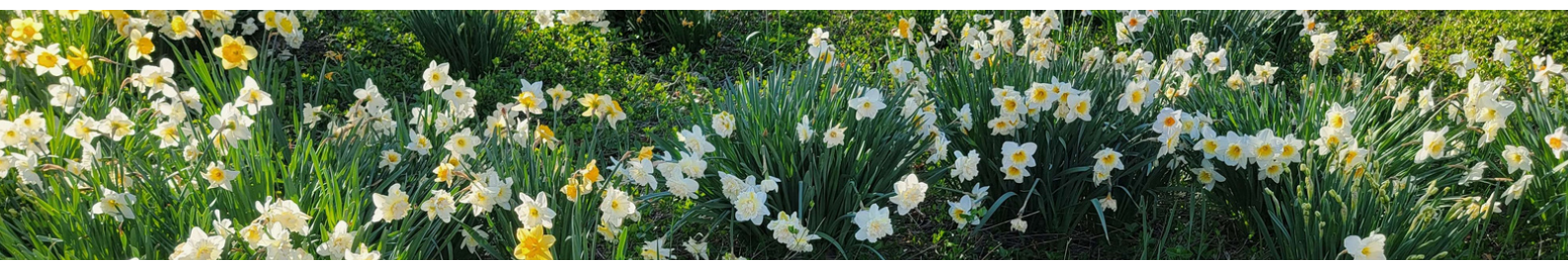


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Director's Message



Greetings:

It is with mixed emotions that I write this message, as it will be my last as Director of the University Scholars Program. After more than a decade with the Program, I have accepted another position on campus.

There is much to be proud of this semester. Six of our graduating seniors received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence (the highest recognition the SUNY system bestows). A very big congratulations to Jordyn Christophides, Quinten DeMan, Joshua Gershenson, Benjamin Joffe, Marcela Muricy, and Purva Shenoy for receiving this honor. We also had a record SEVEN seniors receive the "Bryan Szeglin Senior Scholar of the Year Award" for their extraordinary

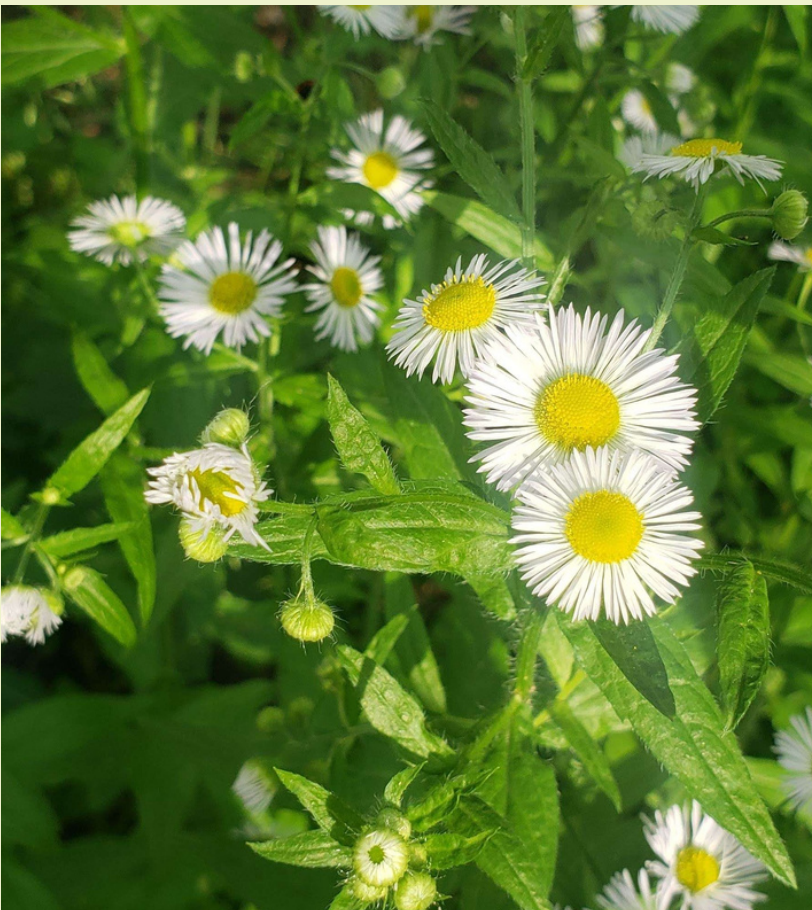
dedication and commitment to the Scholars Program throughout their time at Stony Brook. You can read about their achievements in this edition, as well as those of one of our alumni.

Forgive me for going in a personal direction, but I would be remiss if I did not mention the many faculty, students, and staff, who have helped to turn this Program into what it is today. From the Committee Co-Chairs and members; the Peer Assistant Leaders; the Course Review Facilitators; the amazing members of The Torch; our intern, Ashley Indictor; and, to all of my current and Forever Fellows...I am exceedingly proud of you, and know that you will continue to represent the Program in the best light possible. Our SCH 101 and 102 Instructors have been so dedicated to teaching for this Program, that I really cannot find the words to express my gratitude. Just know the impact you have had on these students, and the appreciation they have for you.

A big thank you to the team I have worked with...Stephanie Caban, Alexa Rinaudo, and, particularly, to Jessica Klare, who will be acting as Interim Director for University Scholars (in addition to her role as Director of the Honors College) until a permanent replacement is found. You have been such a joy to work with and get to know, and the respect I have for all three of you is immense; and your dedication and support will never go unappreciated. Scholars, you are in WONDERFUL hands with these three.

Lastly, to all of the Scholars...it has been my absolute honor and privilege to be a part of your journey here at Stony Brook. Seeing your academic and personal growth from the day you first arrived on campus to now, has been nothing short of astounding. I have seen introverted students turn into some of the most outgoing and strongest leaders, who then go on to be extremely successful in their careers. I have made lasting bonds, which I know will continue when you are alumni, and for this, I am forever grateful. You've been my driving force during rough times, and this was the most difficult part of my decision to leave...not being there with you all. Please know how much I (and Charlie) will miss all of you, and I hope to continue to see you around campus.

My very best,
Jeremy (and Charlie)



Editor-in-Chief:

Isabel Hernández
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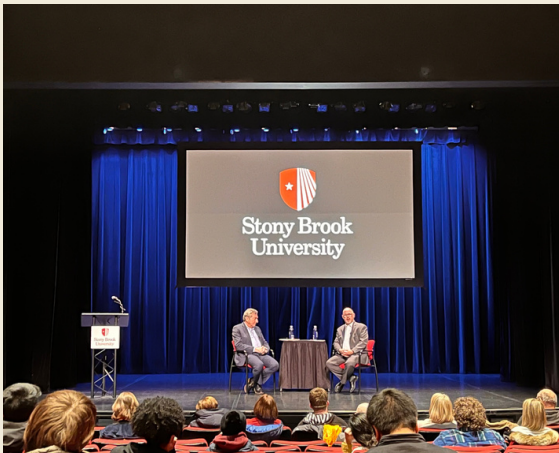
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Scholars' Events

SPRING 2023



Fred Guttenberg: One of America's foremost voices for gun safety



Alumni Panel of the 60s and 70s



Profiling a Serial Killer Lecture: Jeremy Marchese

Alumni Panel of the 60s and 70s

By: Zakariyah Hanir

In honor of Black History Month, the “Alumni Panel of the 60s & 70s: Black Student History, Student Activism, and the formation of the Black Studies Program” was organized on the evening of February 7th in the Student Union Ballroom. A tour



Howardena Pindell (1970)

of Zuccaire Gallery’s Revisiting 5+1 exhibit ran just before the panel, highlighting America’s black community, empowerment, and storytelling through decades of art.

The major of Africana Studies was established by Stony Brook University during the year of 1968, only years after the school’s commencement. It is the culmination of diligent, inspiring activism done within the university and nationwide by black students and other activists in the 1960s. Emphasizing the importance of diversity, the panel features Deborah Britton-Riley (Management and Public Policy Analysis, class of 1981), Mitchel Cohen (class of 1974), Dwight Wesley Loines (class of 1973), Dr. Linda Hazel Humes (Africana Studies, 1977), and Dr. Leslie H. Owens (Africana Studies professor, 1978-2015).

Before attending Stony Brook, Britton-Riley spent her childhood in Harlem. At the time, drugs plagued the city she called her home. Stony Brook University was a refuge for her and others migrating from the city. She talks about the camaraderie within the minority Latino and Black community on campus and how that became a haven in college life. Despite entering college as a first-generation student and a high school dropout, Britton-Riley flourished in her first year, earning a 3.75 GPA and ranking on the dean's list. She went on to gain her master's and worked as an administrator in maternal child health and education.

Another panelist speaker, Mr. Cohen, defined leadership during his time here at Stony Brook, writing for *The Statesman*, engaging as an active member of Students for a Democratic Society, and creating the Red Balloon Collective activist group. As a student, he worked to bring peers together to protest against conflict, including the Vietnam War and student military recruitment. One of the central takeaways from Cohen's presentation is that "without organization... we are nowhere".

Speaker Loines, JD, is involved with anti-poverty programs to empower and organize the black community. Upon entering this school, there was no substantial black studies program available. As a spokesman and Minister of Information of Black Students United, Loines advocated for campus resources and programs for black students. Within the panel, he connects his experiences and achievements in promoting opportunities for minorities to today's current conflict of black representation within this country's education system. The destruction of black history education, such as the opposition to the College Board's AP African American Studies class, is still prevalent today.

Dr. Humes continues this conversation about the structural alteration and erasure of black history in America. Her family home became a second classroom, where she offered a supportive and understanding environment for Americans to tell her

their "concealed stories" of historically accurate black history. These were the stories of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. that her schools in Harlem brushed aside, deeming them unimportant to teach despite their integral part in American history. There was no school where she would hear the real stories of Christopher Columbus and Fidel Castro. After finishing high school, Dr. Humes became a first-generation student studying Africana Studies with a Theatre minor at Stony Brook. She started the first Black Theatre club, giving the black actors and actresses



Vivian Browne (1972)

on campus a space to act in meaningful roles to tell their stories. After college, this passion grew into a non-profit arts education program, allowing Dr. Humes to teach restorative justice through the arts. Sending a message to the audience, she urges students to “let [Stony Brook] be your experimental playground” and to “stay true to who you are.” Dr. Humes acknowledges Black World Magazine as an example of this combination of experiment and authenticity. Founded in 1974 and recently reactivated in 2018, Black World is a voice for all Black and Hispanic students on campus. Notably, Black World is celebrating its print release this semester. We appreciate the Journalism and Africana Studies departments supporting Black World’s print edition.

The panelists filled the night with empowering discussion and humor that recognized and honored the local black history at Stony Brook. This presentation was made possible with the support of the Alumni Association, the Black History Month planning committee, the Department of Africana Studies, and the Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery. Thank you to moderators Dr. Abena Ampofoa Asare, Julio Taku, and Mariama Diop for ensuring the panel ran smoothly. Lastly, thank you to Deborah Britton-Riley, Mitchel Cohen, Dr. Linda Humes, Dwight Loines, JD, and Dr. Les Owens for enlightening the audience with their experience and wisdom.

"It's what you do next that matters": Fred Guttenburg's Powerful Advocacy Taking the Next Steps Towards Gun Safety

By: Sara Giarnieri



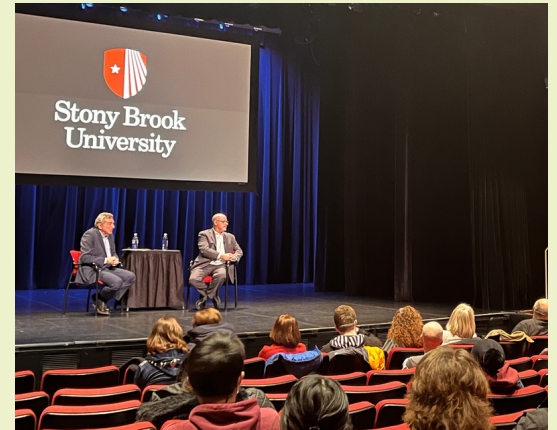
Fred Guttenburg and Dr. Charles Robbins, pictured

On February 14, 2018, a mass shooter entered the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. A brother and sister, Jesse and Jamie, were in the building during the shooting. Jesse escaped; however, 14-year-old Jaime did not. Fred Guttenburg, the father of Jesse and Jaime, is a gun safety advocate, pushing for change in legislation to create a safer America and to prevent future mass shootings. For instance, he proposed “Jaime’s Law”-- a law that enforces universal background checks for the sale of gun ammunition. Guttenburg and his wife run a 501(c)(3) organization, “Orange Ribbons for Jaime.” Guttenburg also runs a 501(c)(4) organization, “Orange Ribbons for Gun Safety.”

In the Wang Center Theater on February 28, 2023, a mere five years after the Parkland shooting, attendees listened to the powerful words of Guttenburg in his panel, “Fred Guttenburg: One of America’s Foremost Voices for Gun Safety.” First, Dr. Charles Robbins of the Stony Brook School of Social Welfare and Executive Director of the Center for Changing Systems of Power opened for the panel before introducing Guttenburg. He highlighted the issue of gun violence, and emphasized

how it is a “uniquely American problem.” Additionally, he mentioned the disturbing number of U.S. mass shootings reported by the Gun Violence Archive so far this year, 80, to which he says there were “more mass shootings than days in 2023.”

When Guttenberg took the stage, by personal choice, he did not read from a script. He looked upon the audience and spoke from his heart. “I won’t let people get away with doing nothing or saying the wrong thing, because when I look out here, and I see all of you young people, your lives matter to me,” he says. “And fighting to stop the next [shooting] matters to me.” Throughout his speech, Guttenberg emphasized the importance of taking the necessary steps to end gun violence. He urged everyone to go to the polls, vote, and be heard. “What happens to you in life doesn’t matter- all the good stuff, and all the bad stuff,” says Guttenberg. “It’s what you do next that matters. It’s how you react [and] it’s how you respond, because ultimately, what you do next is going to define the outcome.” After Guttenberg’s speech, the panel transitioned into a discussion between Robbins and Guttenberg, along with a short Q&A that followed. One of the most significant messages that Guttenberg shared during the discussion was the idea that gun violence isn’t only manifested through mass shootings, but also through the taking of one’s own life. According to Guttenberg, the “majority of gun violence is self-inflicted.” Guttenberg relayed the importance of checking up on those around you, even when you aren’t sure that it’s a good idea. “The one thing we can do for one another, is to look out for one another,” says Guttenberg. If you know someone who’s struggling, if you suspect there’s somebody at risk, don’t stress whether or not it would be the right idea to approach it, because you may save that person’s life.”



Guttenberg left a lasting impression that will hopefully encourage everyone to take the next steps to end gun violence. Thank you to Fred Guttenberg for sharing such an important message, and to Dr. Charles Robbins for his introduction and additional input on the subject of gun violence. If you or someone you know is struggling, Stony Brook University has Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) on campus.

Profiling the Serial Killer

Lecture

By: Jack Zhou

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes of a serial killer investigation? Many aspects of the investigation and analysis process can be quite confusing and



Jeremy Marchese, pictured

blurry for a lot of people, particularly when it comes to terminology and the thought processes relating to investigation, and hopefully capturing, a serial killer. With this in mind, Mr. Jeremy Marchese, Director of the University Scholars Program, designed and presented his own lecture for the students of Stony Brook University that delved into the psyches of detectives, psychologists, and other criminal justice personnel, when conducting this type of criminal investigation. In an exciting presentation, Mr. Marchese passed along some of the knowledge he acquired during his undergraduate studies in Criminal Justice at St. John's University, and his graduate studies in Psychology (with a specialization in Forensic Profiling) at Adelphi University's Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies, in a fun and engaging manner for University Scholars students.

Titled "Profiling the Serial Killer," Mr. Marchese's lecture explained the terminology, history, and early beginnings of forensic and criminal cases of infamous serial killers in history. Many students enjoyed this event, as it was a very unique and informational lecture describing a topic that gauges the interests of many students, particularly those studying psychology, law, criminal justice, or who gained a newfound interest while binge-watching true crime shows during the COVID lockdown. The versatility of information Mr. Marchese chose to share

made for an interactive event for students of various academic backgrounds. Scholars were taught the ways in which law enforcement creates profiles for potential suspects, as well as how they look for key signatures and patterns left by the killer to potentially connect the dots on what, at first glance, may seem to be unrelated incidents.

The Student Activities Center buzzed with excitement as students learned fascinating historical facts. For example, the first ever serial killer to be documented was Locusta of Gaul, or “Locusta the Poisoner,” as she later became known. In Ancient Rome, she was responsible for poisoning emperor Claudius, and many many others, during the 1st century of the Roman Empire. Taking a leap across the globe into North America, the first serial killer documented in the United States was H. H. Holmes, who owned a hotel designed, by his own hand with the architect, to trap and murder hotel patrons in the 1800s (the architect denied any knowledge of Mr. Holmes’s plans) . This may be gruesome, but it does yield exciting insight into the mind of killers, and explores the idea that the case of each killer is not stagnant, requiring detectives to keep an open mind when exploring the narratives presented by each killer, and not allowing one case to cloud judgment, or influence their work, on another. Mr. Marchese stated that his initial interest in profiling began when he was learning about the details in the investigation of the now infamous serial killer, “Jack the Ripper,” in his first elective course in graduate school. “The Ripper” tormented, and basically held the entire town of London hostage in the late 1800s. His signature was the extreme mutilation and hacking of his victims’ bodies that characterized his crimes. Each of his victims had been prostitutes, so not much attention was initially given to the murders since these women were not considered “significant” members of society; but the link in their profession was one of the first times a “signature” became important in serial killer cases, as they helped establish a connection between multiple murders and the murderers themselves. Moreover, signatures also highlight that the killers stray from normal human behavior, each trying to present themselves as unique to the general public.



Sadly, the majority of serial killer cases prior to the 1970s are “cold cases,” meaning they were never solved by law enforcement and investigators. Though disheartening at first, Mr. Marchese noted the importance of understanding the role technology now plays in investigative work where, prior to recent decades, fingerprint analysis, trace evidence detection (gun powder residue, etc.), DNA databanks, and universal criminal databases were unavailable to detectives to utilize; these now play a critical role in helping to identify and capture suspects. For this reason, the signature of a killer along with their method of operation (“Modus Operandi”) are imperative keys of knowledge to help detectives further understand the thinking of the offender - they help create a psychological profile to narrow down the search for suspects, alert certain demographics of the potential risk for danger, and can link multiple incidents to a single perpetrator; which is of utmost importance when bringing murder charges against a defendant.



Jeremy Marchese, pictured

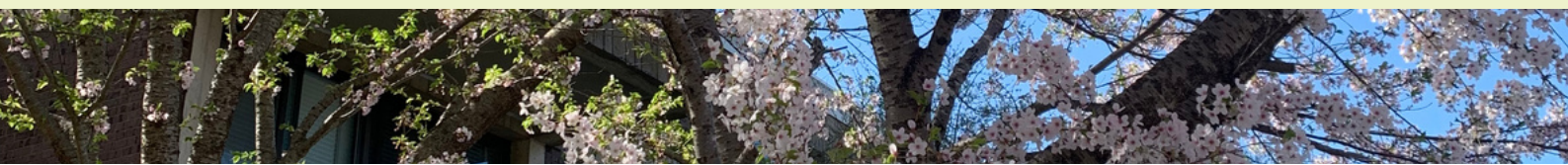
Mr. Marchese also covered some important terminology and definitions during the lecture. For instance, serial murder is defined as the act of committing unlawful homicide of at least two people, by the same perpetrator(s), over a somewhat extended period of time. “Classical murders” are most-often

motivated by stalking, or sexual tendencies, while with “spree murders” the motivation is the thrill the offender gets when committing the act of violence. Adding onto the idea of spree murders, many serial killers who kill for the thrill also enjoy the feeling of being chased by law enforcement, which is why they leave signatures or patterns for law enforcement. It should be noted, however, that the vast majority do not actually want to be caught...they just enjoy toying with law enforcement, which makes them feel superior and more intelligent. There are also many instances where individuals would assume the identity of a serial killer to gain notoriety and attention for themselves. This is a primary factor why some information about murder investigations (pieces of evidence, method of killing, etc.) is held back from the public, to weed out those seeking fame by falsely confessing to the crime.

There is also a difference between mass murder and serial murder. Mass murder refers to numerous people killed in a single event - for example, the shooting that took place in Las Vegas in 2017 by Stephen Paddock, who fired more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition from the window of his hotel room into a crowd of about 22,000 concertgoers attending a country music festival on the Las Vegas Strip. 60 people were killed in that incident (61 if you include Paddock, who took his life before law enforcement was able to apprehend him), and approximately 867 were seriously wounded. Serial murder, on the other hand, involves a period of rest between killings - of which there must be at least two - and the murders must be separate from one another (in terms of the date/time at which they took place). However, the 'time between murders' isn't specified by the law, meaning the gap in time can be anywhere from several hours, to weeks, months, or even years. It should also be noted that political assassinations, professional gang murders, and terrorism, do not classify as serial murders.

At the end of his lecture, Mr. Marchese also discussed his motives for this event, and how it came to fruition. He had said that whilst studying Criminal Justice, and then Psychology, he had learned about countless cases of profiled serial killers and wanted to share his interesting findings with the Stony Brook community. The atmosphere was attentive, with the only chatter being from students discussing with each other the material Mr. Marchese taught, or eagerly answering questions he posed. Not only was this an amazing event to break some of the stress accumulated by midterms and studying, but it also provided an amazing segue into Spring Break, as many students would be sharing their newfound knowledge with their family members and friends during their well-deserved week-long break.

As a community, we Scholars want to extend our massive appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Marchese for taking time out of his day, and his extensive work in being our Director, in order to provide this amazing opportunity to the students here at Stony Brook University!



Medical School Applications Panel Blueprint Webinar

By: Ashley Valenton



We've all been there: it's two in the morning, and you're on Reddit /premed again. What extracurriculars should I do? What do admission committees look for in applicants? Any 1.9 GPA med school success stories (the answer to this would be 'no,' since a minimum 2.0 GPA is required to graduate from Stony Brook)? As the questions pile up, it becomes an understatement to call the medical school application process overwhelming.

Pablo Gonzalez is a current medical school student working at Blueprint Medicines, a global precision therapy company that invents life-changing therapies for people with cancer and blood disorders. This month, Gonzalez was a guest speaker at our University Scholars event, the Med School Application Webinar. At the event, Gonzalez addressed several common mistakes and misconceptions students have about medical school.

One theme remained constant throughout his talk: be true to yourself. He emphasized the importance of being uniquely you, instead of trying to impress

the committee. Only you are able to be the best version of yourself, so don't try to be the best version of someone else.

He started off the webinar by acknowledging common misconceptions, such as the need to pick the “best” major. Truth is, he stated, that there isn't an ideal major to take to appeal to the recruiters. The ideal major would be one that you genuinely enjoy and will excel at. The admissions committees are looking at your growth from experiences, which don't necessarily have to be science-related at all! Lesson learned - do you. Don't take a hard major just to impress the committee, take it because it interests you and ignites passion.

This brings us to his next point: the recruiting committee is looking at you as a whole. The numbers coming from your grades and MCAT scores won't be the only thing they're looking for - they're looking for substance. What extracurriculars have you done and what have you learned from those experiences?

To our next point, many students ask, what experiences do I even need? How many do I need? Gonzalez shared, not as many as you may think. Sometimes, it's difficult for us to determine whether we should prioritize a diverse number of experiences, or if we should focus on only one thing. Truth is, overloading yourself is not the way to go. Taking on too many responsibilities could cause severe burnout by the time you get to medical school, which isn't the healthiest option. As Scholars, we may want to explore our options, but it's important to prioritize what's actually important to us. Don't spread yourself too thin, respect your time and energy, and dedicate yourself to what you do. Gonzalez emphasized the importance of long-term commitment - show that you value longevity in what you do.



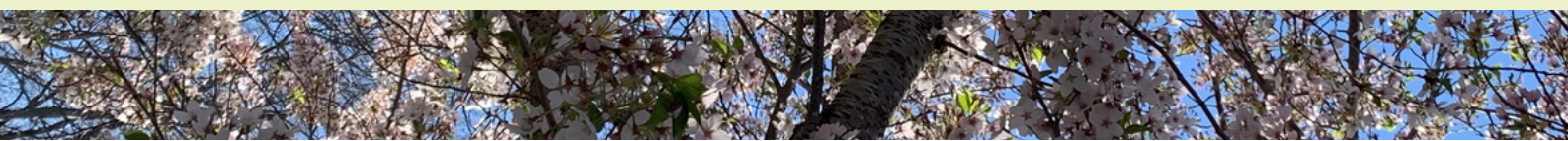
You might be wondering, what if my experiences are not very unique? Don't worry! Gonzalez's main point was to be true to yourself. Your activities reflect you as a person, so just make sure you're enjoying yourself and your commitments, so naturally, your reflections of them will be personalized

and unique.

MCAT time! How does one study for that? Gonzalez states that 4-5 months is the general amount of time you'll need with 3-5 hours of studying a day. Sounds daunting, right? He shared that you must adapt your preparation plan to your schedule and your needs. Remember: do what's best for you, not for someone else.

Regarding the actual application process, Gonzalez displayed a detailed timeline of the entire process from start to finish. For a general idea of what to expect from year to year, Gonzalez then shared a few tips on how to proactively get started on secondaries before the prompt is even provided. Gonzalez also touched on the idea of gap years. He stated that the committees won't judge an applicant for taking a gap year. In fact, the majority of applicants take a gap year or two. During a gap year, he stated, it's important to build on your strengths and experiences.

Gonzalez finished off the webinar with Blueprint's resources, including prep courses, question banks and sample tests, a free MCAT bundle, live courses, and more. So, next time you're scrolling through /premed or /MCAT, remember not to be swayed by the upvotes.



Introduction to Undergraduate Fellowships



With the end of the semester fast approaching, the Introduction to Undergraduate Fellowships event proved incredibly valuable to Scholars, allowing them to prepare for their futures at Stony Brook. On Wednesday, April 12th, University Scholars joined Ashley Staples, the Director of External Fellowships Advising and Scholarly Development in the Student Union as she introduced the intriguing value of external fellowships to students. This event targets freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, as the opportunities mentioned require long-term consideration and planning. With that being said, seniors were more than welcome to attend, as some of the opportunities presented also fund graduate studies in the U.S. or abroad.

Staples started this insightful and informative event by defining fellowships and contrasting them from grants, which are simply a funding source for a person's project. Fellowships, on the other hand, provide funding for a project's "potential", requiring students requesting funding for that project to take part in engaging experiences to build their character and mastery of the topic they are pursuing. These immersive experiences allow students to learn more about themselves and gain tremendous skills that extend from learning how to master interviews to networking outside of a campus community. Not only are students funded for the fellowship, but they also gain research opportunities, intensive language study, teaching experience, and cultural immersion. Moreover, after giving students a clear understanding of what fellowships are, Staples introduced external fellowships, which are sources of funding that come from outside Stony Brook University. Though these fellowships are wonderful to pursue, students were strongly advised to consider that other applicants extend

not only from students in the University, but also students from other academic institutions as well.

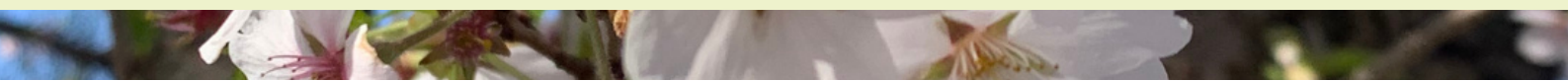
Once Staples finished explaining to students the meaning of fellowships, she graciously explained the application process to help students interested in applying for a fellowship themselves. The first step in the process is to explore opportunities by considering constraints, creating a list of options that may be of interest, organizing categories, including research experiences and language learning as examples, and getting some advice by asking professors or mentors. The second step is to identify and strategize. In other words, Staples mentioned taking note of the requirements to be eligible for the chosen fellowship and then deciding what can get done in time to ensure that a deadline is not missed. For first and second year students, these experiences typically involve summer opportunities, while for third-years, there are graduate school cohort experiences or full-year language learning experiences. Finally, for students in their last year of college, there are independent research projects or opportunities to teach languages abroad. Since the opportunities become more timely and immersive for older applicants, it's important for the student to recognize that they need to plan accordingly with the time commitment and ensure they have the time necessary to complete the fellowship. The third step is to develop components of one's application. This may include an essay or short answer questions, letters of recommendation, attending informational sessions, and making editable templates. Furthermore, because fellowships can be selective, it is crucial for the interested student to be aware in advance if there is a campus nomination required, as the campus' deadline for extending nominations can be earlier than the deadline of the fellowship. This process may be long and complicated depending on the fellowship, so Staples reminded students the importance of having a support team, people such as family and friends who will stand by your side and review your material as you engage in the application process. At last, after the extenuating, but worthwhile process, the final step is to submit the application while ensuring all materials are submitted.

Staples also discussed the importance of being a stellar student when considering fellowships. If a student is considering applying to an external fellowship in the future, they should keep in mind building strong relationships with faculty

mentors whom they admire, maintaining their GPA by being committed to their studies, and keeping their resume updated. This process requires a lot of time and effort, with most application preparations starting a year prior to the deadline. Thus, if they are already performing well in their academics, and working hard to be well-rounded students, they will not be as stressed about the rigor of their achievements by the time they apply. Nonetheless, even in the case that the applicant is not selected for the award, they still gain a lot of experience in learning to manage interviews, networking, and can also use their written pieces for other applications that they might consider applying to in the future. To put it simply, nothing is a waste!

Once the core components of the application were understood by the students, Staples introduced to the Scholars some programs she encouraged them to apply to. Before proceeding to mention a few, as a Scholars community, we want to thank Staples for taking her time to look into these programs for us. Some programs to keep in mind include summer programs such as UK Summer Institutes, Rangel Summer Institute, and Humanity in Action. For those who are interested in language immersion, the Critical Language Scholarship, Boren Scholarship, or other foreign language and area studies fellowships will be good to take into consideration. Ensuring she found something for every Scholar in attendance, Staples lists even more fellowships for Scholars to consider: the Barry Goldwater Scholarship, the Truman Scholarship, the Beinecke Scholarship, and the Fulbright US Student Program. To give a little more information about the Fulbright US Student Program, this is a great fellowship which funds an academic year of teaching English, conducting research, or graduate study overseas.

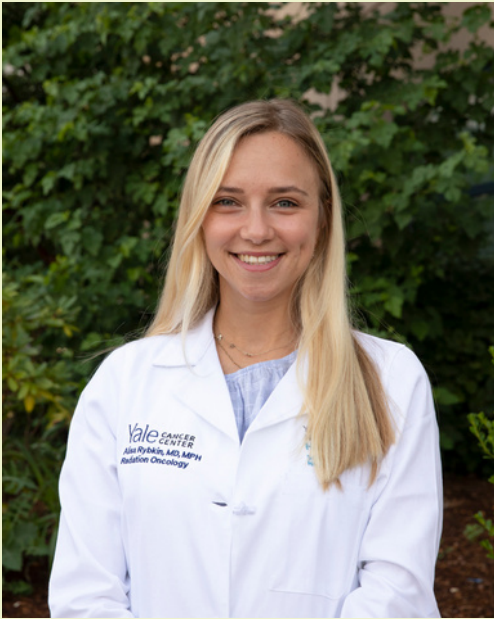
Overall, fellowships are an amazing way to broaden one's horizons and explore the world while gaining lifelong skills and experiences.. On behalf of the Scholars community, we would like to thank Ashley Staples for taking the time to introduce and encourage these programs to Scholars in such an informative manner. As a Scholars community, we always strive to put our best foot forward and want to show our gratitude to Staples for helping guide us in many ways we can do so. If a Scholar is further interested in fellowships, they should view the office's website at <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/fellowships>.



| ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT |

Alisa Rybkin, MD, MPH

By: Aneesah Khandaker



Dr. Alisa Rybkin, pictured

The Alumni Spotlight is designed to inform our current students (as well as campus administration, faculty, and staff) about what some of our Scholars alumni have been up to since they graduated. Dr. Alisa Rybkin, who graduated from Stony Brook in 2016 with a major in Biochemistry and a minor in English, is currently in her second year of residency in Radiation Oncology at the Yale School of Medicine. Alisa's journey is quite distinctive from the typical pre-med track as she utilized the resources available to her at Stony Brook

by exploring many different options. For instance, she was actively involved in the Arts and Humanities as an English minor, while also taking part in Japanese theater, as well as classical Indian dance. Despite having no previous lab experience, she also obtained a position working in a lab at Columbia University to expand her interests and discovered a secret affinity for being a lab scientist. She even joked about often holding up her dog to her camera during her medical school interviews! Recognizing the importance of being human in the healthcare field, Alisa refined her skills and immersed herself in her work with an emphasis on empathy and authenticity.

Given her interest in pursuing medicine, Stony Brook University soon became her home due to the various amounts of programs available for those planning to pursue a career in healthcare. After earning her Bachelor's degree, she went on to obtain her Master's degree in Public Health, before ultimately pursuing medical school. After her initial decision to follow the pre-med track, Alisa changed her major from chemistry to biochemistry during her



sophomore year as she felt it to be more challenging and engaging. She also made the decision to take on a minor in English after this adjustment for the opportunity to step back from the onslaught of STEM classes. When asked what she thought of the arts, she spoke of how critical it is to understand human expression in order to interact with people and the many situations they present. She mentions that "in medicine, we encounter individuals everyday on the worst day of their lives," shining light on how important it is to learn how to engage with people in order to properly assist them in health care.

Seeing as she grew up in New York City, she cherished the Scholars Program for providing her with a place she could consider home. The Program's emphasis on fostering a supportive community, devoid of any sense of competition, left a lasting impression on her, as she mentions her appreciation for having access to advisors and upperclassmen who were always available to offer guidance during challenging times. Alisa states, "It really made me sad when I heard that Jeremy was resigning as Director of the Program. The influence he had on my Stony Brook career, and even now, is something I will never forget; and I wouldn't be here without everything he did for me. The way he raised the level of prestige of the University Scholars Program on campus is remarkable. I honestly can't imagine the Program without him, but the department he is moving to will be gaining an exceptional talent."

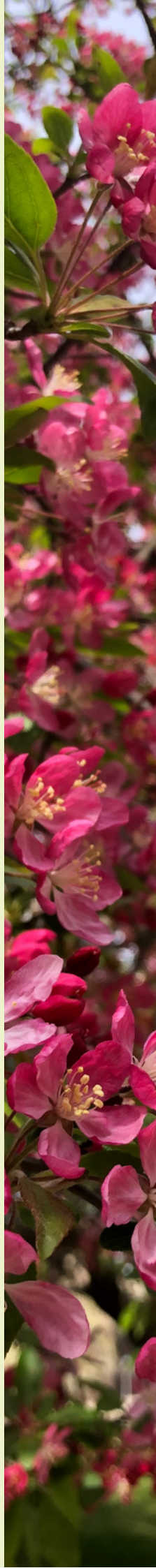
She also recalls how two upperclassmen specifically played a significant role in shaping her as the person she is today. One introduced her to the field of radiation oncology while the other pushed her towards minoring in English, but both individuals provided her with invaluable connections and support throughout the hectic application process for medical school and residency. Additionally, she was an active participant in several Scholars committees, including serving as the Chair of the Outreach Committee, which gave her the opportunity to identify, and properly address, issues in the community. When asked for advice regarding students struggling to connect to a career path, she emphasizes the importance of trying many different options without the fear of failure. She recalls her summer working at the Columbia lab to

explore the possibility of pursuing a Ph.D and although she quickly realized it wasn't the correct path for her, the experience she gained was invaluable and it allowed her to develop a deeper appreciation for lab sciences. However, she tried a clinical position the following year and found it to be a much better fit. Given her own experience, Alisa suggests that students should be more open to approaching professors as they can offer valuable advice and connect students with individuals who share the same interests as them.

Considering that many classes at Stony Brook have become online synchronous or asynchronous, I asked her for advice on managing the challenges that come with it. She suggested adding a "human element" to these virtual meetings, such as using ice-breakers or giving people the space to share personal moments. Approaching the matter this way keeps the sense of respect and professionalism while also providing a break from the academic pressures that people experience. Additionally, she encouraged students to take advantage of the proximity of Stony Brook Hospital to campus, sharing how she volunteered on several floors there, which provided her with valuable experience in the healthcare setting.

Alisa emphasizes four key points in her advice to students: first, the value of hard work and the reward is unmatched. Second, the importance of asking for help and admitting when you don't know something - "the amount of help you have available to you through this Program is unmatched, which you may not realize now, but very soon will." Third, to embrace uncertainty and find a supportive community who will help guide you (which you have in Scholars, so you should take advantage of it). Lastly, she encourages people to build their own vision and not feel obligated to follow others in their path.

I would like to thank Alisa Rybkin on behalf of the Scholars community for sharing her story and providing us with valuable information. It was encouraging to see how she embraced the program and used it to further her path towards becoming a medical professional, culminating in her residency at Yale School of Medicine. We appreciate the advice and stories she shared and wish her the best in all her future endeavors!



Senior Scholars of the Year

————— SPRING 2023 —————

The "Bryan Szeglin Senior Scholar of the Year Award" is a very special achievement, awarded to students who have not only excelled academically, but who have also been consistently engaged members of the University Scholars Program throughout their time at Stony Brook. We'd also like to congratulate the six of our graduating seniors who received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, the highest recognition the SUNY system bestows. We are incredibly proud of each and every one of these students and wish them nothing but the best in their future endeavors!

• SENIOR SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR •

Jordyn
Christophides



Jordyn is a senior Political Science and Linguistics double major in the University Scholars Program on the pre-law track. In her pursuit of a career in international law, she has interned with the International Rescue Committee as both a resettlement and immigration intern and with the Department of State in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. At Stony Brook, she served the Scholars Program as a Fellow in 2021 (and is now a Forever Fellow), and served as

The Vice President of Friends of MSF, and as Secretary of the Political Science Society. She also was a member of the SBU Advocacy Corps and is writing her senior thesis on improving relations between the US and Iran. Off-campus, she volunteers with her local ambulance corps as an EMT and an ambulance driver.

• SENIOR SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR •

Frank Di Caro



Frank Di Caro is an aspiring physician majoring in Biomedical Engineering (BME). During his time at Stony Brook University, Frank sought to learn about how to further bridge the gap between technology and medicine. He strove to educate the younger generation by being a lead instructor for the “Biomedical Engineering Academy”, a STEM program designed to introduce local middle school students to the fundamentals of BME through

hands-on activities. In the past year, Frank has worked on an innovative senior design project with some of his peers involving the creation of a small sensor system to enhance the safety of ECMO, a device that offers cardiopulmonary support for ICU patients. He had the pleasure of presenting the project at the 49th Annual Northeast Bioengineering Conference last month.

Frank has continued his pursuit of medical learning through interning in clinics at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. His experience engaging with oncologists and meeting cancer patients has built his perspective on the role that trust, empathy, and compassion plays in nurturing the sacred patient-physician bond. Seeking to further explore his interest in studying disease mechanisms, Frank also conducted chronic lymphocytic leukemia research in Dr. Nicholas Chiorazzi’s laboratory at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research.

On campus, Frank has actively been a part of helping students succeed academically and discovered a passion for teaching through serving as a TA for applied calculus IV and the organic chemistry series. After being inducted into Alpha Eta Mu Beta, the National Biomedical Engineering Honors Society, Frank

took on the leadership role of professional outreach chair followed by vice-president. Here, he provided students with opportunities to partake in outreach and networking events while strengthening his collaborative skills.

Outside of his studies, Frank is a staunch advocate for people with disabilities and is part of the Inclusion in Innovation VIP Team. He is currently working on a project to improve the accessibility of spaces and buildings on college campuses through the development of an “accessibility score”. His devotion to targeting accessibility limitations and barriers through policy reform has opened the eyes of many to the need for a more inclusive and integrated campus environment.

Perhaps the most sentimental part of Frank’s time at Stony Brook University has been his involvement in the University Scholars Program. Upon entering as a freshman, Frank felt the overwhelming presence of being part of a large undergraduate student body, but his affiliation with the close-knit community of Scholars grounded him from day one. Frank was selected to become a Fellow at the end of his first semester and thrived as a mentor for incoming freshmen students. Through this role, he not only became more connected to Scholars, but grew into a person who is unafraid of the unexpected and stepping outside of his comfort zone. Frank also volunteered as a Peer Assistant Leader for the program, and continuously sought to pay forward the support that he received to others. In addition to the camaraderie of Scholars, Frank is deeply going to miss one of his biggest supporters, Jeremy Marchese. Frank credits much of his personal growth and passion for helping others to Jeremy, and he hopes he knows that his experience at Stony Brook University would not be the same without him. He is beyond grateful for the lessons that Jeremy has taught him, and wishes him all the best as he embarks on this next chapter.

• SENIOR SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR •

Joshua Gershenson



Josh is a senior double-majoring in Biology and Psychology with a minor in Writing and Rhetoric. He is currently the president of SBU Chabad, a large Jewish organization on campus, and the president of Speaking STEM, an on-campus club promoting the importance of rhetoric in science-based fields. He works as a writing

consultant for the Stony Brook University Writing Center. Josh is also a veteran Biology and Biochemistry teaching assistant, having served as head-assistant on multiple occasions. Josh co-lead an ethnographic study in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he worked in a public hospital and underprivileged community. Josh currently conducts analgesic research at Stony Brook Medicine, and plans to continue his career as a researcher by earning an MD, and specializing in psychiatry. In his free time, Josh reads, writes, cooks, and surfs. Josh believes that his accomplishments would have been substantially hindered without the ongoing support from his peers and mentors within the Scholars community.

• SENIOR SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR •

Isabel Hernández



Coming to Stony Brook felt like the first big step towards Isabel Hernández's goals. She felt as though she was given a monumental opportunity to make the change she always talked about, and it immediately felt overwhelming. She grew up dreaming in the stars, and they suddenly felt so far away. In these moments, however, Isabel remembered the words of her family, and the hope they saw in her. She remembered all the new-found support surrounding her within the Scholars community. The things she believed as flaws within herself, for the first time, were seen as strengths. And she was inspired.

Isabel's time at Stony Brook offered her invaluable knowledge and experience in many facets of life. Isabel is a Biology major with a concentration in Neuroscience, with a minor in Spanish Language and Literature. Her love for science began in grade school, and continued to grow throughout her time at SBU. She began an independent research project within the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior, focused on autonomic function. She participated in Explorations in STEM and, through this, she received funding to continue her work through the Ellen Geis Undergraduate Research Award, propelling the project to culminate in an honors thesis. She has also conducted cognitive neuroscience research within the Department of Neuroscience at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, focused on administration and analysis of human brain activity in conjunction with behavioral performance in childhood leukemia survivors.

Beyond neuroscience research, Isabel has also found a great interest within public health, with SUNY Downstate Medical School providing her the opportunity to explore this. There, she conducted a systematic review and analysis regarding

maternal mortality rates in NYC, culminating in a research paper and presentation. The work allowed her to learn the intricacies of health disparity within NYC and the detrimental effects it has on minority people. The topic felt close to home, and further motivated her to pursue medicine as a pediatrician, to ensure Latino New Yorker's receive comprehensive, equal access to healthcare.

Isabel's minor in Spanish Language and Literature provided her the opportunity to begin this work, and she focused her minor on understanding the histories of indigenous South American and Caribbean people and health disparity within Latin American communities. Isabel received Undergraduate Departmental Honors for her essay focused on the language barrier and how it affects rates of maternal mortality for Hispanic women in New York City. She hopes to facilitate change in NYC and become a healthcare provider who can communicate, in Spanish, with Latino patients and reduce the barriers that prevent Latino people from receiving equitable medical care.

Isabel wishes to thank many people for their support in her these last four years. To Jeremy Marchese, the Director of University Scholars, a Program she has considered home the last four years, she says, 'being a Scholar meant the world to me, allowing me to find love in peer mentorship through being a Fellow. It also gave me the opportunity to lead The Torch, a newsletter I will always hold dear to my heart, as it gave me the courage, as a freshman, to attend events. From the beginning, Jeremy saw a leader in me, and this support became a light allowing me to move forward fearlessly.' She also wishes to thank Dr. William Collins, her mentor throughout her independent research, leading her to graduate with an Honors Thesis at Stony Brook University. To Professor Lilia Ruiz-Debbe, Director of the Spanish Language Program, who inspired Isabel to continue pursuing medicine to make change within our healthcare system for the millions of Hispanic people in New York City. To her family, who is her perpetual source of inspiration and love. Isabel is incredibly grateful for every opportunity she has been given, and hopes to continue on inspiring positive, equitable change.

• SENIOR SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR •

Marcela Muricy



Marcela is a Biology and Women's Studies double major on the pre-med track. She served as the co-chair for the University Scholars' Outreach Committee for 2 years and is a Forever Fellow. She also founded Speaking STEM, a club devoted to improving students' ability to use rhetoric effectively in their future careers. She is committed to using her knowledge for public health purposes, which she supports in her women's studies thesis, *Understated and Overlooked: How Antenatal Stress Contributes to Cyclic Poverty and Why Pre-*

conceptual Treatment is the Solution. She also conducted sociological research abroad in Brazil through the Giuliano Global Fellowship program, volunteering in underprivileged hospitals and non-profit organizations. She has two years of biochemistry research experience at Dr. Steven Glynn's lab studying mitochondrial proteins, and is working to complete her honors thesis, *Investigating Barth Syndrome Mutations on Tafazzin Membrane Binding.* Marcela was one of the inaugural fellows for the Frances Velay Women and STEM Program, allowing her to devote her summer of 2022 to conduct biochemistry research full-time. She is currently conducting clinical research at the Perinatal Pathways lab at Columbia University Medical Center, which focuses on the impact of stress on birth outcomes. She hopes to attend medical school and pursue her interest in psychiatry and global health in the future. Marcela has been a member of University Scholars throughout all of her undergraduate career, and she attributes much of her professional and personal development to the Scholars community and support system. They have allowed her to thrive through leadership experiences, mentorship from successful students, and through connecting with other students and feeling at home at Stony.

• SENIOR SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR •

Anika Porwal



Anika Porwal is a Biology major and Spanish minor who will be beginning medical school this summer. She hopes to translate her passion for health equity and translational medicine into her career as a physician scientist. During her time at Stony Brook she has been heavily involved in diagnostic and

prognostic markers research for pancreatic cancer in Dr. Kenneth Shroyer's lab, presenting at multiple conferences and symposia. Integrating her interest in language, she has been a volunteer Spanish interpreter for SB HOME, a free health clinic serving Long Island's underserved communities, and a volunteer English tutor for the nonprofit organization Paper Airplanes, mentoring and tutoring refugees and conflict-afflicted individuals around the world. On campus, her involvement extended to leading and serving on the e-board of the Spanish Language Club, co-chair of the University Scholars' Outreach Committee, a Fellow, and as a founding member of the Scholars' course review groups. The emphasis on service was a large part of what attracted her to the University Scholars Program to begin with, but the community she found within Scholars is what she is most grateful for. The Fellows class her freshman year is what she cherishes the most- the laughs, the people, and the camaraderie. That community persisted throughout the pandemic, in fact became stronger than before, and is what she will miss the most.

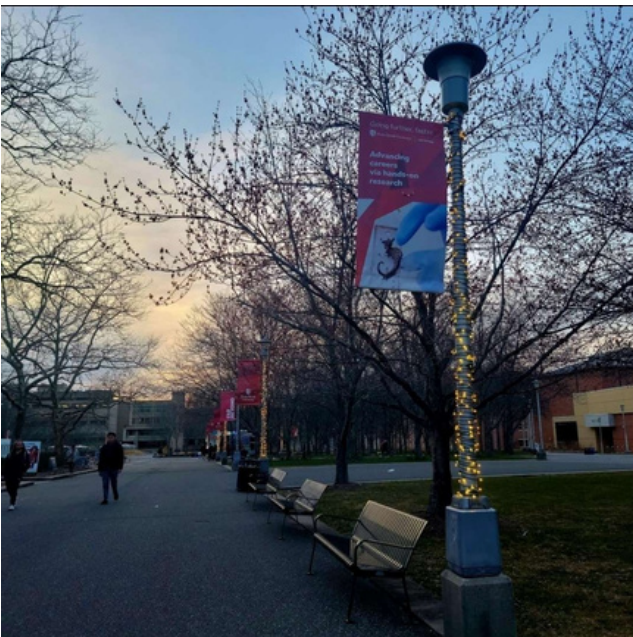
• SENIOR SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR •

Valerie Thomas



My name is Valerie Thomas. I'm a Psychology major and a Health, Medicine and Society minor on the MBA fast track. Throughout my time at Stony Brook I've been a Scholars Fellow, a Skills Based Tutor at the ASTC, a Research Assistant, an Intern at the Psychology Undergraduate Advising Office, an Employer Relations Assistant at the Career Center, and the President of Psychology Student Alliance. I was recently inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, a prestigious, national honors society. Being a Scholar has truly impacted the trajectory of my entire college experience. Without Jeremy's encouragement, I wouldn't have been able to accomplish as much as I did in just three years. Being a Scholar opened up the opportunity for my first leadership position, being a Fellow. Being a Fellow was the most valuable part of Scholars for me, as it allowed me the opportunity to teach classes and speak on panels, which is something I never thought I would be able to do as a shy high school student. I also gained some of my closest friends from becoming a Fellow. I will miss them, Jeremy, and the opportunity to see the eager new freshmen each year!

Campus Spotlight



Stony's Spring



Stony's Spring



Stony's Spring





Goodbyes to Jeremy from the Fellows

Jeremy is hands down the best Advisor I have ever encountered at SBU. His dedication to his students and the Scholars Program goes beyond purely academic regards, but those that are personal as well. He reminds us of what it means to be truly passionate about something. We hope that we can emulate the same dedication and passion in the rest of our studies, and put our hearts and souls into the remainder of our careers as Forever Fellows, Stony Brook students, and everything that is ahead of us. Thank you, Jeremy, for all that you did for us, and we wish you nothing but the best as you continue with your journey. We hope that whoever gets to work with you knows how lucky they are to work with someone so inspiring.
-XOXO The Fellows-

On behalf of the Forever Fellows, and members of University Scholars, I would like to thank Jeremy for all that he has done for us. Whether we just wanted to talk about the stresses of our day, take some time to visit Charlie, switch majors or minors, or discuss how to balance extracurriculars with coursework, or anything else you can think of, Jeremy was there to guide us through it all. He has even helped many of us by providing opportunities to get more involved in the University and Scholars communities. From reading our admission applications, to giving us the vast array of support we need until graduation, Jeremy really has his students' best interests in mind at all times.
Jeremy, we wish you the best in your new position!

