

President's Report to the University Senate

May 5, 2025

Executive Summary

State Budget Advocacy

- **State Budget Deadline:** The State Budget was due on April 1, and budget approval is going to be later this year than prior years.
- **Agreement announced April 28.** The Governor announced that a broad agreement had been reached on April 28, with spending about \$2 billion over the spending proposed in the Executive Budget
- **Expectations:** We still anticipate the State will cover contractual salary increases and operating aid that would equate to revenue realized from a modest tuition increase. We also anticipate there will be a capital appropriation made available to SUNY University Centers for investment in research facilities, but we still have no indication if the amount will be closer to the Governor's proposal of \$200 million or the House's proposal for \$800 million.

Federal Challenges

- **International Student Visas:** Eleven Stony Brook international students had visas revoked during the month of April, all of which were restored by April 28. During the cancellation period, the Office of Global Affairs provided individualized counseling, communication, and outreach to meet students' needs. The campus provided significant support in multiple ways for academics, basic needs, housing, and other needs during this trying period. Throughout this process we were working with SUNY and the NY Attorney General. Had the visas not been restored, the State of New York was poised to make a legal challenge to this action
- **Terminations of Federal Research Grants:** The number of Stony Brook's federal grants that have been cancelled remains below twenty, and a couple have been restored or will be restored soon. The University is working to support graduate students who were supported on these grants so they can continue their studies and support for postdocs on these cancelled grants will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Advocacy efforts continue through the Office of Federal Relations and other groups. Notably the University has been working with Rep. LaLota to restore a grant supported by ONR that was erroneously canceled.

- **Big Picture:** The big picture, however, is that we need to change public opinion about higher education so that we recover the political clout we need to defend ourselves.
 - The public has key areas of concern about access, affordability, skewed viewpoints, and relevance.
 - Senator Cassidy, Chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, told the group of AAU Presidents last week that his colleagues think that our universities are not sufficiently pro-America.
 - The solution is more effective advocacy. This includes explaining the relevance of our research, demonstrating clear impacts, and better digital communications, better explanations and justifications of costs for research and for education.

Stony Brook Future Scholars

- **The Program:** Focused on leadership development, the Stony Brook Scholars Program facilitates community service initiatives and provides valuable college readiness workshops and networking opportunities for the student participants from five participating school districts: Bridgehampton, Hampton Bays, Southampton, Tuckahoe, and Riverhead.
- **Student Recruitment:** The five schools are currently getting MOUs signed by their respective Boards of Education, with the respective principals, teachers and counselors actively selecting the seventh-grade students that will participate in the first cohort.
- **Program Launch:** Event to be held Friday, June 13 on Southampton's campus in the Avram Theatre auditorium. President McCormick and President-Elect Goldsmith will attend and welcome the students and their families.
- **Programming:** We are currently hiring the Future Scholars Program team, with all staff expected to be in place by June. The first cohort of Stony Brook Scholars, consisting of 100 rising eighth graders individually nominated by their schools, will attend the summer academy bridge program on the Southampton campus held August 11-15 for a week of team building, career exploration and fun activities.

Science Futures Initiative

- **Advancing Research Excellence:** In my Fall 2024 State of the University address, I spoke about the exciting challenge that Stony Brook faces in the coming decade. While we are a strong research university, Stony Brook has the potential to become a preeminent research university, a true flagship, by doubling its research expenditures and focusing on the impact and reach of our scientific discoveries. The research landscape is rapidly

changing. Emerging trends offer significant opportunities to advance our understanding and attract crucial government and philanthropic support. Stony Brook must position our research enterprise to capitalize on these trends.

- **Science Futures Report:** With that in mind, I convened many of our university's leading researchers to engage in an important strategic visioning exercise. The goal was to define the critical steps Stony Brook must take to solidify its position as a flagship research university. The group was asked to imagine it was 2035 and to identify the major scientific contributions they would like Stony Brook to have achieved during the preceding decade. The group drew upon many studies of Stony Brook's research enterprise that have been conducted over the past five years. Their thoughtful assessment resulted in the Science Futures Report that I will be sharing with the campus community. The report offers critical insights and recommendations to help shape Stony Brook's strategic direction, and it highlights the investments in our scientific infrastructure that would be needed to unleash a transformative future for science at Stony Brook. I am deeply grateful to the cross-disciplinary team of researchers and faculty who have prepared this report.

East-West Campus Collaborations

- University address was the creation of a cross-campus task force focused on new ways to encourage more collaboration in teaching and research between our East Campus health science programs and schools and colleges on the West Campus. I am grateful for the tremendous work of this group, co-chaired by Executive Vice President for Stony Brook Medicine, Dr. Bill Wertheim and University Senate President, Professor Brenda Anderson. I am reviewing the task force's recommendations that include the following areas:
 - Recommendations for **Internal Incentives** propose encouraging cross-campus initiatives through various means, including seed grants for collaborations, ensuring physical access to HSC, and incentivizing chairs to collaborate across campus.
 - Recommendations for **Internal Environmental Improvements** suggest increasing opportunities for interaction and integrating cross-campus work, including organization of regular events, development of training materials, and recognition of cross-campus collaboration in tenure and promotion criteria.
 - Recommendations for **Internal Support** detail resource development for education and research activities, including inventorying cross-campus programs,

combining all bulletins into a single one and building research support structures that encourage collaboration across campus.

- Additional recommendations cover **Marketing/Communication**, **External Incentives**, and potential **Barriers** and included advice to promote initiatives widely, prioritize cross-campus fundraising, and recognize potential barriers.

Further detail and additional recommendations appear in the full report.

Nassau Community College

Stony Brook Courses at Nassau Community College (NCC): Stony Brook will pilot delivery of three courses at NCC in Fall 2025 to Stony Brook students who live in the area. Courses will be taught by Stony Brook faculty members. This arrangement has the potential to allow students who live in Nassau County and Brooklyn to commute less to our main campus, lowering their carbon footprint, reducing impact on housing and parking, and facilitating academic progress. If the pilot is successful, the program may expand in future years.

NY Law School

Strengthening Our Presence in NYC: As the state's flagship public university, Stony Brook is establishing a visible, flexible hub in Manhattan through a collaboration with New York Law School. The space will support academic offerings, high-profile events, alumni and donor engagement, and strategic partnerships with city-based institutions. The School of Social Welfare will anchor the site with its MSW program, with other academic units encouraged to explore offerings through a phased cost-sharing model. MOU under review, working to finalize responsibilities and cost allocations.

NYCE: Programming and General Updates

- **General Updates:** In March, I sent out a community-wide email to update on NYCE progress and there is a detailed report on the President's webpages. A strategic planning process that would more clearly articulate the New York Climate Exchange Goals and focus points is underway. We have received new drawings for The Exchange's physical campus—called the Hub, also on the website. Fundraising is underway to secure the resources for the facility.
- **April Activities:** Stony Brook University faculty and staff have participated in various activities on Governors Island and with The New York Climate Exchange in April. On April 23-24, The New York Climate Exchange hosted the inaugural Climate Solutions Summit NYC on Governors Island focused on research in coastal urban environments. It provided opportunities to explore climate science and emerging research, build relationships, and develop collaborations with other Exchange partners.

- **Second Annual SB Environmental Forum:** Stony Brook's [Collaborative for the Earth](#) in partnership with [The New York Climate Exchange](#) hosted the Second Annual SB Environmental Forum on nuclear energy, held at Governors Island on April 24. The event brought together more than 100 participants from Stony Brook, the Georgia Institute of Technology, New York University and members of the public who had attended The Exchange's Climate Solutions Summit NYC earlier in the week.
- **Summer Interns:** Stony Brook will also have four undergraduate students participating in The New York Climate Exchange's summer internship program this year.
- **Past year's programming:** **The AI Innovation Challenge**, in which The Exchange invited [student teams to develop AI-driven solutions](#) for urban stormwater management; **The Undergraduate Internship Program**, which placed 11 students from The Exchange's university partners at local community organizations where they gained hands-on experience in climate-related fields; **A Climate Tech Showcase**, a celebratory Climate Week NYC event that provided a stage for startups and climate entrepreneurs on Governors Island, and; **Collaborative Ideas Labs**, [in-person and virtual events](#) that convened students, researchers and professionals across disciplines and geographies to brainstorm innovative climate solutions.
- **Political Landscape:** The Exchange continues to navigate the strategic and financial consequences of the evolving decisions in Washington. There are immediate financial impacts as well as broader ones, including a potential need to fundraise more philanthropic support to compensate for shifting tax laws. The Exchange is moving forward with the center design as planned. The Exchange does not currently receive any funds directly from the federal government, but of course its partners do, so they will move forward intentionally with this programming and keep a close and strategic eye on shifting policies in Washington.

Advancement

- We have secured **\$85.5 million in gifts and pledges** (+31%) this fiscal year to-date, including **148 major- and principal-level gifts of \$100,000 or more** (+64%). Controlling for last year's \$500 million Simons Infinity Investment and Bloomberg Philanthropies' \$50 million gift to the New York Climate Exchange, we recorded **\$65.5 million in gifts and pledges at this time last year, 90 of which were \$100,000 or more.**
- This year's \$85.5 million in gifts and pledges includes **\$50.1 million in endowment commitments**, earning \$25 million from the New York State matching program and an

additional \$75.1 million in unrestricted endowment funds from the Simons Foundation and New York State combined.

- Since the New York State and Simons Infinity Investment matches were announced in FY23, we have raised a total of \$105.2 million in endowment gifts. The final deadline for recording qualifying pledges for the NYS match is April 1, 2026.
- Notable gifts closed since the last update include:
 - \$500,000 to support the BookEnds Faculty Endowment
 - \$100,000 to support an endowed scholarship for medicine
 - \$108,000 to support an endowed scholarship for undergraduate students

Athletics

- The House vs. NCAA settlement is expected to be finalized in the coming days. This settlement will usher sweeping changes, including Division I schools being able to provide direct payments to student-athletes.
- Women's Lacrosse won the CAA regular season title for the third consecutive year and is currently ranked No. 19 in the nation. The team hosted the CAA championships this past weekend and will be seeking its 12th straight NCAA Tournament appearance.
- Men's Lacrosse scored a program-record 28 goals in its regular season finale against Hampton on April 26.
- Softball clinched a spot in the CAA Tournament after winning its weekend series over Hofstra. The team has won 15 of its last 16 conference games and will compete next weekend at the conference tournament in Buies Creek, North Carolina.
- Sophomore baseball student-athlete Erik Paulsen was named to the John Olerud Two-Way Player of the Year Award Watch List. Last season he became the first player in program history to be named a semifinalist for the award.

Human Resources

- As part of the HR Now Transformation effort, we are continuing to implement embedded HR Business Partners that are fully dedicated to supporting the HR needs for Divisions and Colleges.

- Central HR is also continuing to expand support and services as part of HR Now, including:
 - Bolstering recruiting support by expanding talent acquisition and recruiting services, resources, tools and expertise
 - New training programs and resources, Wolfpack Learning, which include new supervisory and leadership development programs
- This March we will also be launching Stony Brook's first ever staff and faculty engagement survey, which will be administered by our external partner ModernThink. This survey will provide us with valuable insights on our work environment, total rewards, and levels of employee satisfaction and engagement, which will be used to help shape future strategies and efforts to retain and support faculty and staff.
- The university has launched a national search for a permanent VP of HR.

Marketing/Communications

- Developed a multichannel communication strategy for Climate Month that will drive awareness of Stony Brook as a leader in the fight against climate change while reinforcing our role in leading the New York Climate Exchange.
- Executed a targeted digital advertising and marketing campaign to reach legislators with messaging about the value of supporting Stony Brook during budget season. Working closely with Government Relations to craft the most effective messaging and placement and continue to leverage the power of the new Dare To Be Brand positioning.
- Ongoing management of communications to support campus climate issues as needed including all presidential communications.
- Continuing to collaborate on marketing strategy execution to support Enrollment Management's decision season while beginning to reach prospective students for 25-26 school year.
- Daily content management of all SBU social media channels and daily management of the University website content and infrastructure included the now underway reskinning of the design to align with the new brand.
- Daily management of incoming media calls and proactive multichannel story telling.

Research

- The federal environment remains very dynamic with daily changes in the landscape of federal grants and contracts. The Office of Research and Innovation continues to provide guidance and support to navigate this challenging time for our faculty and in collaboration with SUNY central and RF. Our university relies heavily on federal grants and contracts to support our research enterprise that creates economic development, develops critical technologies for the security of the US, saves and improves lives, and ensures the US leads the world technologically. Research is also closely related to graduate education which provides the advanced technological workforce for businesses here on LI and throughout NYS. We are holding bi-weekly town halls for the research community to keep them informed
- We have seen a number of grant terminations for various reasons. The total count as of today is 17 grants terminated or that stop work orders have been received. NIH awards have been the majority of these but most agencies and most colleges have been impacted. One of the major impacts from these actions has been loss of funding for graduate students and postdocs. The current count of those who have lost their funding is 12 PhD students and 23 postdocs. We have put into place an emergency funding plan to help support students and postdocs as they get re-aligned with new sources of extramural support and are working with advancement to help support this important effort to not lose these students at a critical juncture in their education and training.

Student Affairs

- The second annual “And Still I Rise: Empowering Women of Color in Higher Education” High Tea & Conference was held on April 10. The event was attended by 50 mid to senior-level women of color and allies in Higher Education across Long Island and the Metro New York area.
- We had a very successful Earthstock, Stony Brook’s Earth Day week-long celebration, which featured a wide variety of events focused on sustainability and environmental awareness and conservation. This year’s keynote speaker was Dr. Dino Martins, Director of Stony Brook University’s Turkana Basin Institute.
- Counseling and Psychological Services was awarded a national grant from the American College Counseling Association for their research study that applies a modified Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) model to college student populations.

- Many educational and cultural events were hosted throughout April to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and recognize the rich and diverse culture of people of Asian descent such as lectures, dance performances, culinary demonstrations, music performances and more.
- On April 28, Commuter Student Services and Off-Campus Living hosted its annual Off-Campus Living Expo featuring representatives from 12 local apartment complexes and various off-campus living-related services such as LIRR, 511 NY RideShare and others. The event attracted approximately 450 attendees, encompassing students across all academic levels, faculty and staff — including East Campus professionals.

Events to highlight:

Roth Regatta - Friday, May 2, 12 pm-4 pm. Roth Pond

<https://stonybrook.campuslabs.com/engage/event/11118553>

Student Life Awards - Monday, May 5, 6:30 pm. Student Activities Center, Ballroom A

<https://stonybrook.campuslabs.com/engage/event/11253923>

Cap and Gown Brunch - Tuesday, May 20, 1 pm-4 pm. The Shore Club

<https://stonybrook.campuslabs.com/engage/event/11275823>

Memorial Day Wreath Laying - Thursday, May 22, 12 pm. Location: Stony Brook main entrance

SBU Landmark Letters - Thursday, May 22, 4:30 pm. Location: Northwest corner of the Stony Brook Union