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Scientific Research of SBU Faculty on the Stage

by Ava Nederlander

The *Science on Stage* project highlights cutting-edge research on Stony Brook's campus to theatre. It's not watching cells tango and molecules waltz, but rather a scripted stage-reading of research presented by the scientists performing these experiments.

Led by Ken Weitzman, associate professor in the Department of English at Stony Brook University and affiliated faculty member of the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science at Stony Brook, this initiative harnesses Stony Brook's research endeavors as a creative and substantial means to ensure theatre maintains an important presence on campus. This will be the second rendition of the project, the first of which took place over livestream in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This project is partnered with the Alan Alda Center, renowned for incorporating improvisational theatre techniques into its science communication training programs. It seeks to make Science accessible and captivating beyond the confines of laboratories. In an email reflecting on his motivation, Ken said, "I wanted the first two iterations of this project to be local. There's ground-breaking research being done here, and I wanted to engage with my home community."

Professional playwrights were commissioned and paired with scientists to produce three scripts to be performed consecutively in a staged reading format, where actors hold their physical scripts. This format can provide playwrights with a first live rendition of their work. The Stony Brook researchers were chosen through an open call in 2020, facilitated by the Alda Center, where interested scientists answered questions about their research, including potential play themes. The three professional playwrights reviewed the responses and chose Stony Brook research that intrigued them. Initial responses were then revisited, focusing on engaging with research different from what was originally depicted. The scientists ultimately chosen were Heather Lynch, Suparna Rajaram, and Nilanjan Chakraborty.

"There's a great deal of empirical evidence supporting story as a potent way to communicate research. It connects facts with emotions to make them stick, reach[ing] both hearts and minds,"

Weitzman wrote to us. "As a theatre artist, I'm obviously a believer in the live event. There's nothing like a live audience, experiencing a story together that's told live by live actors; it carries a power that, in my mind, other mediums simply do not."

Stony Brook MA student Abigail Bender has been working on the project with faculty members. "I have been trying to work on combining scientific research and theatre performance since undergrad, and I am just so honored to be able to work with [Weitzman], who is just as excited about combining these two fields." In early November, she will attend the Theatre About Science Conference in Portugal to discuss what it means to translate research into a theatre setting in the future. Even more meaningful for her is that the conference lands on her birthday.

"It's also important to me that SBU, despite the theatre major being suspended, continues to have live theatre. We have prominent professional playwrights coming to SBU with plays that will be performed by professional actors directed by a professional director. Our Theatre minors, English majors, and the community at large will get to experience these top professionals."

Weitzman also has plans of combining the scripts from this year and the last rendition into a book that can be used by other universities to promote science communication. "My hope is that both professional and academic theatres do these plays and hold discussions based on the research with which these plays engage. I'd also like to expand the program nationally and continue to commission professional playwrights but with scientists across the country. This might include partnerships with professional theatres and/or other universities," Weitzman wrote to us. This production is being funded with a Provostial Seed Grant for Interdisciplinary Work: Creative Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities, with assistance from the Department of English in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Alda Center.

Science on Stage will take place from 4pm to 6pm on Monday, October 30th, in the Staller Center Theatre #2. The staged reading will be followed by a panel including the scientists to answer questions.



Professor of the Month

Roy A. Lacey
Professor of Chemistry

Professor Roy Lacey is a distinguished scholar with a rich academic background. He earned his Ph.D. in Chemical Physics from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1987, marking the beginning of a remarkable journey in nuclear science.

Returning to Stony Brook University in 1991, Professor Lacey assumed the role of assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry. A deep commitment to research and education has marked his academic journey.

In the realm of research, Professor Lacey's laboratory is a hub of innovation, focusing on relativistic heavy-ion reaction studies. These studies delve into critical areas such as the nuclear equation of state, phase transitions, and the transport properties of high-energy-density, strongly interacting nuclear matter. A pivotal aspect of his research involves collaborative efforts with an international team of scientists. It is primarily conducted at the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider, nestled within the campus of the prestigious Brookhaven National Laboratory. Professor Lacey's work has made invaluable contributions to nuclear science, expanding our understanding of the fundamental properties of matter under extreme conditions.

Beyond the laboratory, Professor Lacey is a passionate educator. His dedication to teaching is exemplified by his longstanding involvement in teaching the high-enrollment Freshman Chemistry course at Stony Brook University. This commitment to education has not gone unnoticed, as he has received both the President's Award and the Chancellor's Award in recognition of his teaching excellence.

Professor Lacey's impact extends beyond the classroom and laboratory. He played a pivotal role in creating the "Head Start" summer Chemistry program for Stony Brook's long standing Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). This program provides access to higher education for economically disadvantaged students who possess the potential for success in college but may lack adequate academic preparation. Since its inception in the summer of 2010, the chemistry program has yielded measurable improvements in EOP student performance

in General Chemistry, underscoring Professor Lacey's commitment to inclusivity and educational equity. Additionally, Professor Lacey has been an active contributor to the Summer School in Nuclear and Radiochemistry hosted by Brookhaven National Laboratory since 1992. This vital educational endeavor, sponsored and administered by the Division of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology of the American Chemical Society and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, is a cornerstone of workforce development in the nuclear sciences. It aims to cultivate expertise in nuclear science and equip the next generation of professionals to meet national needs in nuclear research, the nuclear power industry, and nuclear medicine.

Nominate a Professor here:
<https://tinyurl.com/NominateProfessor>

Upcoming Events Across Campus:

The Graduate School's PHD Career Ladder Program at Stony Brook University:

"Planning Your Path to a Satisfying Career"
October 4; 3-5pm
RSVP: <https://forms.gle/zwflvaBQL7m1e69EA>
Online via Zoom

A guided workshop for Postdocs & Graduate Students on goal setting, career planning, and career exploration. Participants at this workshop will: Learn strategies for exploring a range of careers; Identify interests and skills relevant to their career goals; Develop an action plan for strengthening skills and pursuing their ideal career; and Leave with a draft or expansion of their Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Planned Parenthood Generation Action at Stony Brook:

"Sex Toy Trivia with LGBTQ+, oSTEM, RA Kim and V"
October 4; 7-8pm
Union Auditorium

"Halloween Painting with PPGA and Spooky Sex Stories!"
October 18th; 7-8pm
SAC 305

"Trick or Treat Safe Sex Kits with PPHPI!"
October 25; 7-8pm
Location TBD

SBU Graduate Arts & Sciences:

"General Body Meetings"
October 11/18/25; 2-2:50pm
SAC 311

Come to our meetings to learn more about how to get involved and learn about our organization's upcoming events!

Future Healthcare Leaders of Stony Brook:

"MHA Alumni Panel"
October 12; 7-8pm
Meeting ID: 969 6618 7628
Passcode: 989214

Explore the possibilities after graduating the MHA program with alumni Alexandra Wright, MHA, CRC, CEMC, Class of 2021, Candice Hulse, MHA, PCMH CCE, Class of 2022, Jessica Maguire, RN, MHA, Class of 2022, Alisa Raju, MHA, Class of 2022, and Camelle Chen, MHA, Class of 2023

"HPA 530 Health Operations Management Open Lecture, Featuring:
Maxine Legall, MBA, MSW, CPXP"
October 24; 6-7pm
Zoom Meeting ID: 913 9579 9466
Passcode: 712148

Maxine is currently the Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer at Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. Her commitment to collaborative work, enhancing the patient experience and driving overall organizational transformation has led her to become an expert in program development, crisis intervention and community outreach. Come join our open lecture as Maxine shares her perspective on the topic of: "Workforce Engagement and Health Equity"

Chávez Hall:

"Bachata Social"
October 12; 7:30-9pm

The UNITI Cultural Center - Union 113
Come learn how to dance Bachata with the only Latinx-African infused dance team on campus while also learning about the origins of the once forbidden dance. Food and refreshments will be provided.

The Ballroom Dance Team at Stony Brook:

"East Coast Fireball"

October 22; Doors Open at 8am
SAC Ballroom A

East Coast Fireball is a ballroom dance competition hosted by the Ballroom Dance Team at Stony Brook and the Rochester Dancesport Team. The event will take place on October 22. Doors will open at 8am and the competition will officially begin at 9am and end at 4pm. USG will be sponsoring this event and it will take place in SAC Ballroom A. Spectators are welcome to watch the event in its entirety, hope to see you there!

"Fall Practice Schedule"

No experience needed!! All levels are welcome.
Wednesdays: Student led lessons 8:30-10pm
at REC 216.

Thursdays: Advanced lessons 6:45-7:45pm
at Benedict lobby, Beginner Lessons 8-9:30pm
at REC 216.

SBU Philosophy Club, Chess Club, and RA Sasha and Brian:

"Yang Cafe: Chess Tournament"
October 20; 5pm-7pm
DeVries 200

Come play chess (no experience needed), bond and connect with other chess players, and get some free snacks. Funded by USG.

Fill out this Google form to participate:
<https://forms.gle/8WBSwALpJ4EESQX18>

Cat Network:

"Cheshire Cat's Wonderland"
October 23; 6-8pm
Union Ballroom

Step into Cheshire Cat's Wonderland to be transported into a world of enchantment and fun like no other 🐱🐾 Join us for a fantastical tea party filled with delightful surprises, whimsical mini games, and mesmerizing glow-in-the-dark painting 🎨 Funded by USG.

"Kiki's Halloween Party"
October 30; 6-8pm
SAC Ballroom B

🎃👁️ Join us for a Magical Night at Kiki's Halloween Party! 🍷🍹 You are invited to an event inspired by the heartwarming "Kiki's Delivery Service" Channel your inner witch or wizard as you concoct your very own mysterious potions, design magical bracelets 🧙‍♀️🧙‍♂️, paint pumpkins 🎃🍬, and enjoy delicious treats and mocktails! Kiki can't wait to share the magic with you! 🐾❤️ Funded by the USG.

Stony Brook Gospel Choir:

"SBGC Rehearsal"

Sunday Night Sanctuary in M0113; 7-9pm
Wednesday Night Worship in A3218; 8-10pm
Have a passion for ministry? Enjoy singing? Join the gospel choir for rehearsals at these dates and times. No experience required.

Greek & Cypriot Student Association:

"OXI Day Celebration"
October 27; 7-10pm
SAC Ballroom B

In this event we will be celebrating the day that marks when the Greek prime minister rejected an ultimatum given by the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini during World War II. Enjoy traditional Greek dancing performances by our members and free food! Open to family and friends. Friday, October 27th 7:00 pm in SAC Ballroom B. Sponsored by the USG.

Have an upcoming event? Advertise with us! Fill out the following form:
tinyurl.com/EventsGradMag

Our First SBU GradMag Event: A Success!



On September 8th, we held our first in-person meeting with great enthusiasm. We had 62 total members join us in discussion of the future of our organization and leading active communication among the graduate community at Stony Brook.

As we look ahead, we are thrilled to announce a regular series of in-person General Body Meetings (GBMs) that will become a cornerstone of our organization's activities. Commencing on October 11th, and continuing every Wednesday thereafter, these gatherings will be held in SAC 311 from 2:00 PM to 2:50 PM. GBMs are not exclusive to graduate students; everyone is invited to join us. So mark your calendars and be prepared to immerse yourself in engaging conversations and collaborative endeavors that will shape the future of our organization and the graduate community at Stony Brook.



Executive Board

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