Visit the Scholars website at uaa.stonybrook.edu/university-scholars
Greetings, Scholars:

Thank you for a wonderful academic year here at Stony Brook. We want to start our message by congratulating all of our graduating seniors. Thank you for being part of the Scholars community, and for having worked so hard and having done so well here at SBU. Good luck and have fun with your future studies and career plans!

University Scholars students have indeed done extremely well in many areas this year: Three Scholars were recently awarded the Provost Award for Academic Excellence; three Scholars were winners of the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence (this is the highest award SUNY can present to an undergraduate student for academic excellence and leadership, and only 14 Stony Brook students receive the award each year); and 15 University Scholars were recipients of the prestigious Undergraduate Recognition Awards in mid-April. The Scholars Council, our three amazing committees (academic, outreach, and social), and our current, future and forever Scholars Fellows have done a fabulous job of planning, promoting, and facilitating a record number of events and new service initiatives, including the University Scholars Book Drive. Our student-produced program newsletter, The Torch, continues to win recognition as one of the best publications at Stony Brook. And finally, many University Scholars have been profiled on the SBU main web page, where they were recognized for their outstanding achievements (with more profiles to come). We are very proud of all of you.

There are some exciting changes coming next year to the Scholars program—stay tuned for these announcements!

We wish all of you a fun, rewarding, and productive summer, and we look forward to seeing all of the continuing students in August for the Fall 2015 semester.

Warm regards,
Brian Colle, Jeremy Marchese, and David Maynard
Saturday, April 4th, was the yearly Scholars Camp Clean Up, organized by the Outreach Committee! Bright and early, the group of volunteers met at the SAC Loop to drive to Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck, a camp for children with disabilities, in Center Moriches. This year the weather was beautiful: the Scholars enjoyed the sun, the clear air, and the cool breeze as everyone made their way through the camp. Ben, the camp’s maintenance advisor, informed the group that they would be raking leaves to prepare the camp for this upcoming season. Gathering their gear—bright orange gloves, rakes taller than one volunteer, and two leaf blowers—they headed to work.

When Scholars are given a job they do it to the fullest; the volunteers raked an innumerable amount of leaves, working through gusts of wind that blew the piles across the camp and onto the lake. Inevitably, as soon as the group piled leaves atop a tarp so high that the tarp nearly burst open, a gust of wind would blow across the camp, and everyone would watch their hard work blow across the grass that had just been cleared, spotting it with brown patches. But Scholars never give up, no matter how much Mother Nature works against them: they sighed, laughed, and raced after the leaves, intent on clearing the entire field before they had to head back to campus.

The day wasn’t all work, though. When the group broke for lunch, they were shown where the campers played, where they paddled in specialized kayaks, and the memorial for the campers who had passed away. But the group was most excited to see the animals living in the camp—chickens, goats, rabbits, and even a llama. Freshmen, and other Scholars who had never been to the camp before, were told throughout the day that they had to see the “Dr. Seuss wall.” The back of one cabin was painted deep blue with a picture of the Cat-In-the-Hat. Painted atop this deep ocean is a famous quote by Dr. Seuss about being oneself. Campers are reminded that their differences are what make them amazing and that they should embrace those differences.

Scholars never leave a job unfinished. After the group had cleared the field nearest the entrance to the camp, Ben informed the volunteers that they needed to clear all the leaves on the strip of grass riddled with trees between the first house in the camp and the entrance, or push them over towards the house. The group was supposed to head back to campus before they would have been able to clear the grass. But the group chose to remain in the camp, raking faster than ever, pulling tarps that grew ever heavier, and slowly grass emerged from beneath the blanket of leaves. Rakes broke, leaf-blowers burned through gas, and blisters emerged even under the thick orange gloves. The group broke into factions: one sect raked leaves into piles knee high and the second group came a few minutes after and pushed the piles onto tarps and loaded them into the truck to take them away. As the minutes ticked by the team sweat more and began to fear that they wouldn’t be able to clear all the leaves before they had to depart for campus. Muscles burning, hands sore, and out of breath, they did finally manage to get all the leaves cleared. Looking out at the ocean of leaves and the stretch of land they had spent all day clearing, the volunteers smiled with relief and pride.

It was an enjoyable and incredibly rewarding day. Ben thanked us as we took our traditional photo by the lake; and Bridget Costello, the executive manager of the camp, said that the group’s efforts were “a testimony that there is still good” in a world that focuses so heavily on the negative. We hope that this tradition continues for as long as the camp will have us; that ever more Scholars clean, build, and sweat with us; and that you will join us this fall when we return to Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck for the Spooky Walk!

~Kathryn Eckartt
The University Scholars Research Panel on April 6th drew many students eager to learn about delving into research. Research is not just something that sets students apart in application pools for graduate programs and the workplace. Rather, it has become so common that it is almost expected in most fields that undergraduates have some exposure to research during their college years. University Scholars who attended were curious about the process of getting a research position and how exactly it can help them in their future endeavors.

The panel consisted of current University Scholars, including: Brandon Cuadrado, Maryam Ige, Janki Patel, Victoria Ly, April Slamowitz, and Bryan Szeglin. Each student shared a different story of how they found research opportunities. The panelists varied across class standing and academic interests.

Cuadrado, a Sophomore Computer Science major, talked about his interests in computer-human interactions. While he does not work directly within the computer science department, he took his interests and put them to great use in a psychology lab, where he wrote code for the lab’s programs that read their data. This allows the lab to save time and energy. The research looks at GPS technologies and ways they can be streamlined. Cuadrado is glad he was able to apply his computer science background to a different field. He talked to a psychology professor via email before the Fall semester began, and was able to secure a position for this academic year.

Ige, a Biomedical Engineering major, first got her start in research working with the iGEM team. iGEM is a research competition that looks to challenge teams with devising a genetically engineered feat that will benefit society. After gaining experience through iGEM, Ige felt confident to seek out other opportunities. She read professors’ summaries of their various projects and currently is a research assistant in a biofluids lab that looks at heart disease. Ige stressed that everyone is new at research at some point, and that even if you do not have previous experience, “dedication” and “time” must be on your side. Patel also got her start with iGEM, and currently works within the department of Biochemistry. She will be looking at protein binding to mRNA this summer. Patel talked about how research has given her true life skills, including “critical thinking and time management.”

Ly, a Junior Biochemistry major, talked about her research at the Stony Brook Medical Center, which deals with diabetes. Since it is Ly’s first time working with research, the beginning was a lot of “grunt work,” like learning the protocols and procedures of the lab. Ly emphasized how research is good at “giving you a taste” of what to expect for graduate programs.

Slamowitz, a Senior who will be graduating with a degree in Biology and attending Hofstra’s Medical School in the Fall, talked about how her research experience has tremendously helped her through the process of applying to M.D. programs. She discussed how the type of research, the duration of your project, and your ability to sophisticatedly discuss it “heightens” your application. Slamowitz has been exposed to research through different labs. She has worked at Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center as well as Stony Brook. Slamowitz emphasized that attaining a research position was a matter of “who [she] talked to” and “how [she] talked to them.”

Szeglin, a Junior Biochemistry major, could not agree more with Slamowitz. He talked about sending genuine emails to faculty as well as visiting faculty in office hours. Szeglin discussed how reading a professor’s research before emailing or talking to them is essential. Having a sense of familiarity with their work shows authentic interest and willingness to learn, and may very well separate one candidate from the next. Szeglin has worked at Stony Brook as well as Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. His focus has been on brain imaging with help from tractography, MRIs, and PET scans to see the probability of psychiatric disorders and how effective the imaging tools are. Szeglin is in the process of possibly becoming published for this work.

Slamowitz and Szeglin showed brief PowerPoint presentations demonstrating their research endeavors; and audience members asked the panelists a series of questions including how long to stay in a research lab, whether it was possible to conduct research within social sciences, and the importance of networking. The event gave a glimmer into what life is like as an undergraduate research assistant and its true value moving forward in academia and beyond.

~Taylor Brant
Rape culture: the word implies a cult, a coterie, a central intelligence—and if only it were, jokes Christine Szaraz, Prevention and Outreach Counselor for CPO, at the beginning of her interactive presentation, because then sexual assault activists’ jobs would be much easier. There would be a door to knock on, a number to call. Yet as we know, sadly, and as Szaraz reminded us at the “Ending Rape Culture” event on April 6th in the Tabler Black Box Theater, brought to us by Dewey RAs Masooma Kazmi and Murtaza Jaffarji, actual rape culture is much more pervasive, unexpressed, and underlying—not so much a single smoking gun but rather an entire environment of attitudes and beliefs in which rape, sexual assault, and victim-blaming are normalized and condoned. It’s Bud Light bottles that boast of being “the perfect beer for removing ‘no’ from your vocabulary for the night.” It’s a Yale University fraternity, gathering near the women’s freshmen dorms and chanting “No Means Yes, Yes Means Anal.” It’s when people are taught “don’t get raped” instead of “don’t rape,” Szaraz says, and “it’s the water we’re swimming in.”

And what makes these waters particularly perilous is the way in which rape jokes—in the media, in films, in our conversations—normalize and trivialize sexual assault. Hence, the title, and goal, of Szaraz’s presentation, “What’s So Funny—Deconstructing Rape Jokes,” the point of which was to build a narrative that seeks to answer questions like: How do rape jokes reinforce and contribute to rape culture? Can humor be used against perpetrators and their attitudes instead of victims and their experiences?

To this end, the presentation began with an explanation of what Szaraz calls the “Philosophy and Theory of Funny.” Funny things have an intent on impact: they seek to amuse or produce laughter. And yet at the same time, laughter and humor are not an exclusive relationship; people also laugh when there is tension, anxiety, or expectation (a “nervous laugh,” for example).

The mechanics behind why people laugh and what makes something funny, Szaraz explains, operate under three theories: the Incongruity Theory (something is funny because it is incongruous), the Relief Theory (humor by way of tension relief) and the Superiority Theory (laughing at the misfortune of others). Seen through this lens, rape and sexual assault jokes become especially harmful and unsettling: we laugh because the victim is not us. These jokes are not only “cheap and easy laughs,” then, but also normalize violence and trivialize sexual assault victims, regardless of the intention of the joke.

A complete understanding of the damaging effects of rape and sexual assault jokes requires a complete understanding of sexual violence and the rape myths that superintend it, Szaraz says. Sexual violence is a spectrum of unwanted sexual attention, contact, harassment, and stalking that ranges from visual and verbal harassment to more egregious forms of violence like rape and sexual assault.

Sexual violence often involves some kind of power dynamic (professor/student) as well as a pattern of escalation that reveals an aggressive intention. Beyond this, these forms of sexual violence are amplified and exacerbated by the many rape myths that pervade our society and culture—myths like “men can’t be raped”; “the victim asked for it or wanted it by dressing provocatively or drinking too much or going out alone” (and to this Szaraz would reply “is rape the penalty we apply for not-smart choices?”); and “silence = consent.” This last myth is especially dangerous, Szaraz says, because even if we define consent as “no means no” or “yes means yes,” where does this leave a traumatized victim who perhaps cannot vocalize consent?

And by the same token, where do we leave sexual assault and rape victims when we joke about sexual violence? “I got raped by that test,” “That exam violated me”—these are false comparisons that not only minimize and trivialize the damaging effects of rape but also undermine serious efforts to talk about and combat sexual assault, Szaraz says.

So what can a bystander do—besides, obviously, not making jokes about rape? There are three, easy-to-remember options, Szaraz says: Direct, Delegate, Distract. Bystanders can directly intervene (speak up when someone makes a rape joke); or they can delegate (get someone with social influence or official status to help); or lastly they can distract (intervene indirectly).

For example, if you’re with your sibling’s group of friends, and someone makes a rape joke but you’re not the most outgoing or confrontational person, you might choose to delegate by asking your sibling to intervene (the sibling in this case would have more of an influence with their friends). Or let’s say one of your friends makes a rape joke, and instead of confronting them you’d prefer to distract by changing the subject (“Is that Lady Gaga over there?!”). And if you’re worried that your jokes might be normalizing perpetrator behavior or contributing to rape culture, Szaraz’s advice is classic and simple: mean what you say (did the exam really violate you?), and say what you mean.

~Brian Mazeski
Each April, Stony Brook University hosts Admitted Students Day, where newly admitted students and their families can come to campus and learn about the different programs and resources that are available to them here, should they choose to become a Seawolf. Students who have also been offered a spot in the University Scholars Program were able to attend a reception on the afternoon of April 11th, where they learned about the Scholars Program from Faculty Director Brian Colle, and engaged in an interactive discussion with a panel of current Scholars that spanned all four class years.

The Ballroom was filled with close to 500 attendees, which made for a very lively event. After doing this for a number of years, we know there are certain questions that are always going to be asked by prospective families: “What’s the difference between Scholars and the Honors College?”; “What do you like best about the Scholars Program?”; “What’s the biggest benefit you’ve received being a Scholar?” While the questions are the same each year, the answers that the panelists give are always different, which is what makes this event such a pleasure to attend.

Several panelists talked about the benefit of the advising structure within the Scholars Program. What they noted was how they didn’t realize how special and personalized it was until they talked with their friends outside of the Program. “With Scholars, you literally get to see your advisor immediately. I’ve never had to wait more than ten minutes, which is such a huge advantage.” Another panelist commented on how the Scholars Program was what first made him feel a sense of connection and belonging to Stony Brook.

For a few Scholars, this was their first experience being on the panel at Admitted Students Day. When asked about his thoughts on the day, freshman Noah Young said, “It was a bit intimidating at first, both sitting up there in front of a room full of prospective Scholars and also being on a panel with upperclassmen who had so much more experience than me. The parents and students seemed genuine, and I recognized a lot of their questions as ones I heard when I attended the Scholars panel during orientation. My favorite part of the whole experience was after the formal panel ended and the panelists got to mix with the audience. Talking one-on-one with prospective Scholars gave me a serious feeling of deja vu, since only a year ago I was on the other end of conversations like that. It was satisfying being able to lay to rest concerns that I remembered having myself as an incoming freshman.”

At the other end of the spectrum was graduating senior Olivia Rodrigues, who had served on the panel at this event for three years. When asked to comment on the record number of attendees at this year’s event, she said, “I was amazed to see such a big turn out and so much interest in our Program. I think listening to the panel helped students and families understand what a Scholar truly is.”

For those who do decide to come to Stony Brook in the Fall, one thing is certain: they can look to each and every student who was on that panel at Admitted Students Day as someone to strive to be like. Their academic records, co-curricular involvement, and levels of on-campus leadership are truly remarkable; but what is even more impressive is that each of them has a genuine desire to help others, showcasing what amazing people they really are, and how lucky we are to be able to call them University Scholars.

~Jeremy Marchese
On April 29th, crowds of Scholars filled the Tabler Black Box Theater to secure a seat for what many would consider a golden opportunity for prospective medical students: the Med School Panel, back by popular demand for the third year in a row. Featuring 3rd-year medical students at Stony Brook Medicine Ashwin Malhotra and Bilal Asif (graduates from the University Scholars Program here), the panel promised to answer two simple but crucial questions: how do you get into medical school, and, once you do, what is medical school really like? The audience’s curiosity and interest were palpable, and understandably so: what better way to get the insider’s perspective on medical school than by asking two med students currently navigating it?

Malhotra and Asif began with the undergraduate career and what undergraduates should do to prepare for medical school. “Make sure you plan your semesters out,” Malhotra says, “and take your Gen Chems and 200-level Biology courses early on.” As for general education requirements, Malhotra recommended picking up a minor that would also help to meet those requirements. That way you can study something you enjoy—Malhotra minored in English—and satisfy your elective requirements at the same time.

Equally if not more important for freshman and sophomores, Asif and Malhotra explain, is research. “Undergraduate students are trained for two years before they can actually work in a lab,” Malhotra says, “so you want to secure a research position when you’re a freshman or sophomore so that by the time you’re a junior or senior you can actually start working in a lab.” If your interests don’t quite lie in research, fear not: “One med school candidate,” Asif remembers, “didn’t do any research. Instead she went the EMT route and worked as a paramedic.” This is a terrific skill to have, says Asif, and the two panelists said they wished they had had that clinical experience when they applied.

What about classes, extra-curriculars, and internships, though? Asif and Malhotra emphasized the way in which taking different undergraduate classes can make different parts of the medical school experience easier. “Biochemistry,” they explain, “will help you when you take the MCAT, but won’t necessarily help that much in medical school.” Cell physiology, on the other hand, was something he found immensely beneficial in medical school, the two panelists said: “you need to know the correct bodily processes in order to know the aberrations,” Asif wisely explains. Beyond classes, Asif says, extra-curriculars (depending on what you choose) can help demonstrate three things about you: that you know about your respective field; where your “intellectual curiosity” lies or what interests you; and if, or to what degree, you have any clinical experience or involvement. Specific internships, too, Asif says, can prime you for medical school.

Yet how could prospective students know whether med school is right for them if they don’t know what medical school is really like? The two panelists addressed some of the myths and misconceptions about medical school before concluding that medical school, much to the dismay of many students, is “nothing like Grey’s Anatomy.” What med school will instead ask of you, Asif says, is that you develop your social and study skills: social skills for the group environment and collaborative nature of the program; and study skills for the high volume of work and reading (‘get used to reading alone all day,” Malhotra says).

Toward the end of the panel, Asif and Malhotra fielded some audience questions and made some of their final remarks. One audience member asked about the best way to get close enough to a professor so that they feel comfortable enough to write a letter of recommendation. “Don’t go to office hours with bs questions,” Ashwin says; “they can tell and may find this annoying.” Both panelists stressed the option of getting a letter of recommendation from a professor for whom you TA or from an advisor.

“Another option,” Asif added, “is to take upper-division classes with professors who normally teach large lecture classes. The classes will be smaller and it will be easier to make a connection with them.” What, another audience member asked, should one do if they do not get into medical school the first time? “Take a year off,” Malhotra advises, “and do NIH research, or URECA, or work at a hospital as a scribe, or work as an EMT—just don’t have an empty gap year.” Don’t forget, both panelists emphasized, “your undergraduate degree is powerful”; “the goal is not to get into med school but to be a physician,” Malhotra says, “and there are multiple paths for this that don’t follow a linear trajectory from undergrad to career.”

At the end of the day, Asif says, “being a good doctor is so much more than grades. How do you tell someone, for instance, that a loved one has died and how do you do it in a way that is respectful and passionate and makes sense to them and doesn’t get them angry?” Malhotra ended on a similarly wise note: “Med school is like a marathon, but keep in mind that learning to become a doctor will give you an extraordinary set of skills that, no matter where you are, will allow you to help people.”

For both panelists, the key comes down to having a game plan; an approach. There are multiple routes to the same endpoint, the panelists assure; it’s not so much which approach that matters—just that you have an approach in general. As long as you do that, Asif and Malhotra say, you will be well on your way to becoming a successful and fulfilled med student, and a still more successful doctor. Even if the world ends tomorrow.

~Brian Mazeski
One of the bittersweet realities of working in higher education is that all of our students will, eventually, leave us and move on to the next chapter in their lives (if we’ve done our jobs correctly, that is). If we’re lucky, we’ve been able to get to know them on a deeper level than just the casual “what classes are you taking?” conversation each semester. If we’re really lucky, we get to call them friends and know, in our hearts, that we will always remain in contact, no matter where they go. I’m fortunate enough to have April Slamowitz in the latter category.

April was one of the very first students I met when I moved over to the University Scholars Program in January 2013. She was one of the members of the planning committee for the Sandy Hook Benefit Concert that was being planned, and I knew instantly that she was a very special individual. When the time came to rethink, and revitalize, our newsletter, April (along with Bryan Szeglin) stepped up to help lead the effort. As a co-editor, she has helped to designate article assignments, and keep our contributing writers on schedule, lifting the quality of this publication to wonderful new heights. This is no small undertaking, especially when one considers the workload that April has as a Biology major following the pre-med track.

In addition, though, April is also a student athlete, a member of the University Choir, a vocalist in the Stony Brook Improvisational Jazz Combo, and has still managed to find time to participate in a multitude of undergraduate research opportunities both on-campus and at Memorial Sloan-Kettering. April’s efforts and dedication have more than paid off, and she will be attending Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine at Hofstra University this fall, where she will, no doubt, make as strong a name for herself there as she has here.

Aside from being an exceptional student academically, April possesses a kindness and compassion that are palpable when you are around her. Her contributions, not only to the University Scholars Program but also to the University as a whole, have been immeasurable; but more than that, she has enriched the lives of all of us who have been lucky enough to know her. What is most exciting, though, is that we know this is only the beginning of the long list of accomplishments she will have. She has made us proud, and will always continue to do so. So while “thank you” is not nearly enough, it is all we can say, though we really mean so much more.

~Jeremy Marchese

Best of luck in Medical School!
In high school, Steven Adelson was not the man he is today. He was not as social and highly involved. He was not a member of the Undergraduate Student Government, and he did not sit on any advisory committees. He did not have many friends and did not organize any events. This is not the Steven Adelson that we all know. This description seems to be of a different person. Nevertheless, that is who Steven Adelson was—a shy kid.

Now, it is Steven’s third year at Stony Brook, and he is graduating a year early. He has been a member of the Undergraduate Student Government since his first year, and is currently the Vice President of Academic Affairs. He has been to five different continents, including Antarctica. Everyone—teachers, advisors, and fellow students—knows his name. He has many friends and supporters. He is social and has an uncountable number of achievements under his belt. So what happened to Steven? What has caused this drastic change?

The University Scholars Program was one of the main catalysts behind this extraordinary transformation. The program has contributed to Steven’s success and has helped him become the person he wanted to be—someone who can have an impact on the community. “I think [the University Scholars Program] helped me in more ways than just one,” he said. “Having a good relationship with our advisors has been amazing, and I know I can always count on them if I’m ever down in the dumps. And they have always been the first resource that contributed to my growth. If I had an idea and I wanted to pursue it, they would always give me directions.”

Steven continues to impress his advisors to this day. Whenever he comes up in conversation, the Scholars advisors always say that they have never met a student who is more passionate and driven than Steven. During his career at this University, Steven has changed his major several times. He came to Stony Brook as an electrical engineering major. Then, as he continued to discover what his interests really are, he changed his major to history, and ultimately to political science. Yet even though he is graduating with a degree in political science, politics is not something he wants to do in the future. “I want to go into higher education—specifically, student leadership development,” he says. “My long-term goal in life is to create an office of civic engagement and service-based learning that really encompasses everyone’s efforts around the campus, and brings everyone together in order to amplify those efforts.”

Steven has already begun to search for ways to dive into the field of higher education. With the support of the Office of the Dean of Students, Steven is bringing to campus the Andrew Goodman Foundation, which was founded to increase awareness of the importance of voting and to support conversations about social issues. Steven’s goal is to register as many people as possible to vote and to help explain to people how much their votes matter. “Every decision that we make is a vote. And if you’re really passionate about something, bring it to the table.”

The impact the University Scholars advisors’ support has had on Steven Adelson’s life is incredible. It has changed him in so many ways, and has contributed to his realization of what truly matters to him. Steven has looked up to his advisors and has seen how important their advice and support can be to a driven and passionate individual like himself. He hopes that he, too, will be able to positively affect his students’ lives.

As Steven talks about the Andrew Goodman Foundation, he says, “I am really excited to see how this will impact our community. This is the first time that I’ve really been able to develop something from the ground up and have a significant amount of autonomy and responsibility. And that is why I am really excited about going into higher education, because you get to develop what you believe is right for your community, with your community.”

When looking at Steven Adelson’s astonishing transformation from a shy kid to someone who can bring people together and have a positive impact on the community, one cannot be ambivalent. His transformation is inspiring, but it was not easy. It required a lot of hard work and patience. As a message to his fellow students, Steven says, “Change can be scary, but it can be the best thing that ever happens to you.”

~Alex Tsurikov
Senior-Senior Prom
Everyone remembers their senior prom—dancing, music, a night out with your closest friends from high school. It is one of the best nights of high school, so one of the previous Outreach Committee co-chairs, Alisa Rybkin, thought that the committee could bring senior prom to a group of senior citizens. A group of Scholars will visit an elder-care facility near campus, set up decorations and desserts, and recreate a senior prom. This semester the Outreach Committee started planning this event: contacting facilities near campus, finding resources, searching for the perfect date, and seeking out volunteers. The committee contacted DJs to rent equipment to bring so that the residents would be able to dance. Additionally, they have been in contact with a band that would play a few songs at the senior center.

The committee plans to continue organizing this event and host it one weekend next fall. Outreach needs to confirm the location; place orders for decorations and desserts; and find volunteers to drive, setup, run the event, and clean up afterwards. As always, finding drivers is imperative, as many students without cars on campus would be unable to attend the event if someone didn’t drive them. Without enough volunteers the Senior Senior Prom can’t run. Outreach hopes to make a wonderful, fun-filled night for the senior citizens and have a great time doing it. We hope to see you there!

~Kathryn Eckartt

Scholars Book Drive Year 2
The University Scholars Book Drive has met overwhelming success over its first year. Working with four school districts and major departments on campus, the drive has netted over 7,000 books thus far, and is still counting away while their storage space bursts at its seams. This May 15th, the group will be donating 2,000 books to the Wyandanch School District, the first of many donations to be made over the next few months. However, this group of enthusiastic scholars refuses to back down after a successful start.

Coming this fall, the Book Drive Committee plans to expand its efforts to ten Long Island school districts and increase campus awareness of the initiative. Organizers are actively working to collaborate with a local non-profit charity called the Book Fairies and is exploring even more ways to donate books to underprivileged areas on Long Island and abroad.

The group’s primary goal is to provide the resources that underprivileged children need to succeed, which fundamentally begins with a access to books. Furthermore, the group hopes to expand Stony Brook into the local neighborhoods, strengthening our ties with our neighbors and forming a true Long Island Community that helps those less fortunate in their own backyard.

For more information regarding the Scholars Book Drive, feel free to visit us on our website and social media accounts. Check back frequently for updates on our collections and donations!

This fall, the Book Drive Committee will be accepting applications for dedicated Scholars to join our team. We are looking for individuals interested in making a significant commitment to the program. We do stress that this is a large commitment and requires constant attention. We are looking for the best of the best that the Scholars Program has to offer. If you have questions, feel free to email the committee’s coordinator at bryan.szeglin@stonybrook.edu.

~Bryan Szeglin

Left to right: Namprit Kaur, Eya Setsu, Gabrielle Khalife, Bryan Szeglin, Joe Cullen, Brent Freestone, and Rakia Syed

you.stonybrook.edu/bookdrive
Many students associate the Dean as the authoritative figure whose office you go to in middle school when you have done something bad: the disciplinary figure that shells out punishment and many, many hours of detention. However, at Stony Brook, this is not the case. The Dean is actually a position at Stony Brook that is the “director” of each college we have here: College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, etc. They oversee the curricula of all of the majors and minors within that department, hire the faculty, plan the budgets, collaborate with Admissions, and much more.

Dr. Kopp is the man behind the emails all of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) students have been recently receiving in their inboxes. Haven’t heard of them yet? They are a bit of Dr. Kopp’s thoughts on life and school. He states that the “point of college is to figure things out…I understand…and I’m here to talk.” This dean has broken the authoritative figure shell to the extreme. He connects with students through his inspiring emails, and even has weekly Friday lunches at the SAC with students.

Dr. Kopp’s goal as new Dean of the College of Arts and Science is to bring the Stony Brook community together, to make the campus become stronger as a whole. This is a large goal, but he has a plan. Dr. Kopp hopes to make sure that all Stony Brook students are aware of the campus they chose: showing them the resources they now have access to and making them feel proud about their choice to come to Stony Brook. These efforts are aided by his famous emails, his lunches, and his rapid response to any inquiry.

Dr. Kopp has a few words of advice for the University Scholars. “Be done trying to prove yourself. You got into a major college and an Honor’s program! Don’t limit yourself. Be bold and ask what you want to do and demand everyone help you do it. Do it! … [Get involved] with something so interesting that you can’t put it down. It’s not a distraction, make something of it.”

Interested in more that Dr. Kopp has to offer? Sit down with him at lunch on Friday at noon in the SAC. Come ask him questions, talk about school, about life, get to know somebody new. Believe me, it’s worth it.

~April Slamowitz
We wish all University Scholars the best of luck on their final exams and look forward to seeing everyone in the Fall Semester! Enjoy your summer!

Academic Deadlines and Upcoming Events:

Spring 2015 Semester
May 9-11  Reading Days
May 11  End of Year Banquet, 6:30-8:30pm, SAC A
May 12-20  Finals for Monday through Friday Classes
May 16  Saturday Finals held during regular scheduled class time
May 20  End of Term
May 21  Doctoral Graduation & Hooding Ceremony; Baccalaureate Honors Convocation
May 22  University Graduation Ceremony

Fall 2015 Semester
Aug. 21  Credit limit increases to 19 for the Fall 2015 semester
Aug. 24  First day of the Fall 2015 Semester
Aug. 26  Credit limit increases to 23 for the Fall 2015 semester
Aug. 28  Last day to enroll in a class on a wait-list
Last day for all students to submit a major/minor change
Aug. 30  Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the university without tuition liability
Sept. 4  Last day to add classes and/or process a swap
Last day to drop or withdraw from the university without a “W”
Sept. 7-8  No classes: Labor day

Want to help out with The Torch? Email us at sbuscholars.torch@gmail.com!