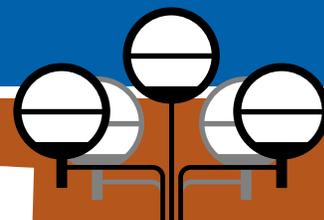


# the **Bridge**

A Magazine for SUNY Polytechnic Institute Alumni, Faculty, Friends & Students



Fall 2020

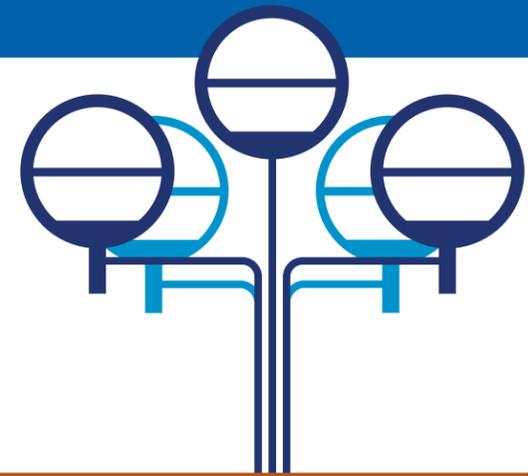
**Introducing  
Mark  
Montgomery '00  
as Chief Diversity  
Officer**



***Hilltop Hall Opens!***



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Fall 2020

The Bridge is published by the State University of New York Polytechnic Institute Alumni Association to keep you informed of campus activities and news.

**Publisher:** Andrea LaGatta  
**Editor:** Kristin Haacker  
**Production:** Michael Aiello '17 G'19  
 Matthew Kopytowski  
 Timothy W. Scee II  
 Lynne Browne '04, G 14  
 Patrick Baker 15

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 E mail: [alumni@sunypoly.edu](mailto:alumni@sunypoly.edu)

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## Alum Dr. Mark Montgomery '00 Becomes Chief Diversity Officer

Dr. Mark Montgomery joined SUNY Polytechnic Institute July 1, 2020, as its Chief Diversity Officer to deploy strategic and sustained approaches to further advance a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for the institution's students, faculty, and staff.

Dr. Montgomery, who brings decades of DEI initiative implementation experience to his new role, is looking forward to campus-wide respectful exchange and cooperation to enhance the SUNY Poly's diversity plan. For over 35 years, he has researched and worked on academic motivation and retention for at-risk students and says his most pressing goal is to make positive impacts at SUNY Poly while "moving the social responsibility needle forward."

"Social responsibility and social change are a result of enhanced dialogue and respectful exchanges through which each member of SUNY Poly values each other's ideas and experiences in an effort to ensure a campus community that is welcoming and supportive, and also values differences and inclusion for all students, faculty, and staff," Dr. Montgomery said.

Most recently he served as Dean of the School of Public and Human Services for Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC), was named educator of the year in 2008, and was nominated for the SUNY Chancellor's Award in 2009 for Excellence in Service. He has received the Outstanding Community Service award, Contribution to Black History award, Contribution to Education and Community Service Award, and in 2017, he was named the Friend of Children of the year for his efforts serving children with cancer.

"I am thrilled to welcome Dr. Montgomery to SUNY Polytechnic Institute. He brings true depth of knowledge in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, student success, and retention, and we are looking forward to his leadership and efforts to further enhance our culture so that everyone, no matter their background, feels safe, valued, uplifted, and welcome on our campuses," said SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang. "Dr. Montgomery is recog-



from MVCC where he received awards for academic excellence. In 2000 he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from SUNY Poly. Dr. Montgomery continued his education at the University of New England, Biddeford, Maine, where he earned a master's degree in education with a focus in academic motivation, specifically related to inmates. He received his Ph.D. in education in February 2014, focusing on how systemic influences impact student motivation and performance.

In 2015, Dr. Montgomery began providing workshops in elementary and high school environments to train teachers, administrators, and others to motivate students across cultural lines. In 2015 received the Outstanding Community Service Award from the Mohawk Valley Frontiers.

A survivor of sarcoidosis, a pulmonary disease, Dr. Montgomery, along with his wife, Lisa, founded, "Joseph's Experience," a non-profit which supports children who suffer from diseases, including cancer and leukemia. In August of 2017, he finished a bicycle ride through all 62 counties in New York State in honor of those who suffer. In 2019, he biked across the Edmond Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, to honor his parents and African American history. Most recently, in 2019, he received the NYS Commendation for lasting contribution to his community. An author, activist, mentor, and role model, Dr. Montgomery's life is dedicated to God and making a positive influence on the lives of others.

nized in the community—and statewide—as a respected diversity speaker and advocate and his passion and commitment for this work is unparalleled."

A native of Bridgewater, NY, Dr. Mark Montgomery isn't shy about sharing how he graduated as a "D" student from Mt. Markham Senior High School and ranked 112th out of 126 students in his class. Along with his poor grades, Dr. Montgomery's finances were challenged, along with his health and speech.

Poised to overcome his obstacles after graduating from high school, he earned his associate degree in Human Services

**You Belong at SUNY Poly is a group of students, staff and faculty volunteers that are passionate and enthusiastic about increasing awareness and creating change around the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. We strive to bring SUNY Poly community members of all races, ethnicity, religions, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities and backgrounds together by providing diverse educational opportunities to learn about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). You Belong also focuses on cultivating learning and work spaces that allow everyone to feel included and welcome to share their voices at SUNY Poly.**



# Nursing Program Alumnae Race to the Front Lines



Graduates of SUNY Poly's College of Health Sciences nursing program have been serving on the front lines against the COVID-19 pandemic, assisting in hospitals and testing sites throughout New York State and across country.

Though each nurse's specialty has drawn them to different areas to serve a diverse range of needs, their determination and preparedness as graduates of SUNY Poly's nursing program has called them to be great leaders and heroes in this fight against COVID-19.

"I feel like one day we just came to work and there was one COVID-19 patient, and the next day there were 15," recalls Ajla Sinanovic '12, BSN, RN, who is the nurse manager for Unit C3 - the temporary COVID-19 treatment area - at the St. Elizabeth Campus of the Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) in Utica.

Amid the surge of COVID-positive patients in the Mohawk Valley, Sinanovic and her team were forced to quickly adjust to their new normal of treating patients based on constantly evolving, sometimes twice daily guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

"In the first couple weeks, every time we had a patient come back positive, there was a knot in my stomach," she said. "Between everything changing every day, putting our own fears aside to take care of these patients and going home and praying we don't spread it to our families, I think those were the biggest challenges."

Despite overcoming the initial shift in their daily routines, Sinanovic and her team of nurses said they never had difficulty with maintaining a supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), thanks in part to donations from SUNY Poly faculty, staff and students who supplied face shields made with 3D printing technology.

Almost as significant as PPE, she said, were donations of items intended to brighten the day of her staff. Sinanovic said gift baskets, including those donated by SUNY Poly's College of Health Sciences in partnership with Utica Coffee Roasting Co., meant a great deal to those working long stressful hours.

"I have never in my life seen such positive support from the community," Sinanovic



Siobhan Conley '17

Ajla Sinanovic '12

said. "My team has become stronger than ever and the nurses, nurse's aides, and secretaries working on my unit have just become even more of a family."

Sinanovic said she was prepared to lead her team through the pandemic with help from the training she received through SUNY Poly's 1+2+1 nursing program in partnership with the St. Elizabeth College of Nursing (SECON) in which students complete 590 hours of clinical time and earn two nursing degrees in four years.

As a new mother during her final year of the program, she was able to resume coursework two weeks after giving birth and complete her degree at her own pace.

"It was just easy to work with SUNY Poly and the local outpatient offices and hospitals to prepare you for what's ahead," Sinanovic said. "You are exposed to things you're going to see so I really enjoyed that part."

Siobhan Conley '17, BSN, worked at the St. Elizabeth campus alongside her twin sisters Sarah and Shannon - also graduates of SUNY Poly's nursing program - before relocating to the Capital District in October 2019.

Utilizing her nursing degree as an employee of a medical hair removal company, Conley's position was deemed non-essential following the New York State on PAUSE executive order and she was furloughed.

Yet, in the face of uncertainty, Conley eagerly reached out to Utica and Albany-area hospitals and testing sites to volunteer to help those recover who are either diagnosed or hospitalized with COVID-19.

She, along with several nurses who are coming out of retirement to volunteer, maintains the desire to improve the health of others who are sick. Conley says it's what any nurse would do even if that means putting themselves in harm's way.

"When my office closed, I thought I should do something as a nurse because there's a pandemic going on," Conley said. "Even without this pandemic, there are a lot of contagious diseases and illnesses we take care of everyday and I knew that's what I signed up for when going into nursing."

COVID-19 testing sites in her area had started to recruit medical and nursing students to volunteer and she hoped to be one of those lucky enough to find a spot on the front lines.

Conley says the fluctuating number of available tests in the Albany area early on challenged would-be volunteers.

"You go there one day and there are lots of people, lots of testing, and the next day they're not testing people because there are no more tests so they didn't need any volunteers," she said.

Conley was hopeful at the time, that efforts by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to increase the availability of testing for both COVID-19 and the antibodies were successful so she would have a chance to treat patients again.

She, like Sinanovic, felt prepared amid the pandemic thanks to the hands-on education she received as part of SUNY Poly's nursing program.

Apart from clinical hours worked as part of the 1+2+1 program, Conley says her most memorable training was received in a pandemic-preparedness presentation through a partnership with SUNY Poly and the Allied Health Partnership New Visions Program through Madison-Oneida Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

"It was very interesting," she said. "They invited the public and they had different actors and everyone had to come in to the Campus Center and it was extremely informative."

For now, Conley is helping others the best way she can.

"I've been going to the grocery store, stopping by my neighbors to ask if there's anything they need so instead of all of them going, it's just me."

# PPE Among Several Institutional Efforts

SUNY Poly used 3D printing technology to help mitigate a national shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers by manufacturing parts for face shields, enabled by funding from Oneida County, in addition to receiving PPE provided by the Walmart Distribution Center in Marcy that was also distributed. It's just one of several ways the institution is assisting to help slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), in addition to donating bedding to support area medical personnel.

"I am extremely proud of the SUNY Poly faculty, staff, and students who, through their talents and generosity, utilized our institutional technology to help protect those who tirelessly work night and day to care for COVID-19 patients," said SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang. "SUNY Poly will continue to assist our communities, state, and country through continued, proactive measures to help those most in need during this pandemic, potentially saving countless lives."

Face shield components were printed 24/7 by SUNY Poly Empire Innovation Professor of Nanobioscience Dr. Nate Cady, who also serves as executive director of the SUNY Applied Materials Research Institute (SAMRI), in Albany. The parts were fabricated based on a design shared by a team at SUNY New Paltz who assembled and distributed the face shields to front medical workers.

"For me, this is a great opportunity to be part of the larger effort against COVID-19, and I am thankful for our partnership with SUNY New Paltz which provided the plans that have been successfully used to print this invaluable PPE," said Dr. Cady. "It means so much to be part of the solution, no matter how small that part may be, and we look forward to helping in any way we can for as long as it's needed."

Dr. Michael Carpenter, Associate Professor and Interim Dean of the College of Engineering, said with current social distancing health guidelines in place, 3D printing labs at SUNY Poly's Center for Global Advanced Manufacturing (CGAM) in Utica prototyped the New Paltz design and produced 50 face shields during normal working hours each day. Using a laser cutter, hundreds of additional face shields can be fabricated per day.

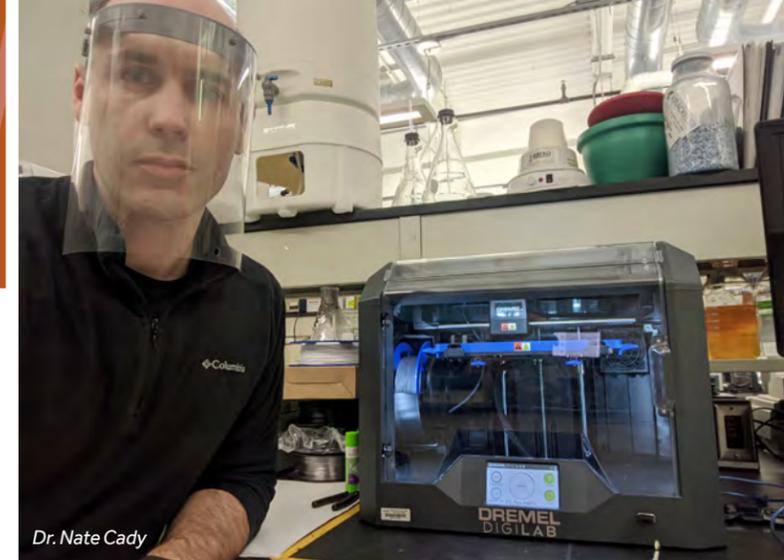
"The CGAM work is a collective effort between students, staff, and faculty, and it is great to see the SUNY Poly team participating in the larger initiative against COVID-19. Furthermore, as an extension of the SUNY Poly effort, we had also invited the New York State network of FIRST robotics teams to participate in the 3D printing of these designs as they are able from each participant's location."

In response to the latter effort, one of the FIRST Tech Challenge teams, Enderbots 5484, based in Corning, New York, 3D printed dozens of PPE components which were sent to SUNY Poly for distribution to healthcare workers.

Additionally, hundreds of face shields were produced with tools being utilized by Brian Taylor, Manager of Engineering Support Services, and his team at the Albany campus.

Oneida County, who had generously provided funding to help with this initiative, distributed face shields where the need was greatest. The Walmart Distribution Center in Marcy not only contributed PPE for the effort, but along with the Compassion Coalition, also donated refrigerators and microwaves for students in need who remained on campus as a result of special circumstances.

SUNY Poly had also donated 140 sets of sheets, blankets, pillows, and towels it had in its inventory to Mohawk Valley Health



Dr. Nate Cady

System for them to use in the Burrstone House as doctors rest between shifts.

On the academic front, students who are enrolled in SUNY Poly's Mathematical Modeling class were working to couple epidemiological models with models of social pandemic responses to analyze and evaluate different possible social responses based on metrics and statistics. Their goal is to ultimately show how certain forms of social distancing can mitigate risks to individuals' mental health.

Faculty and staff also donated additional supplies to help protect healthcare workers, including masks, gowns, and face shields, with all efforts employing social distancing and following other current health guidelines.

View a video of the PPE effort by faculty and students here: <https://youtu.be/L7ojQI-ZfSs8>

View a video of the PPE effort by staff here: <https://youtu.be/1c5aqvc7gmQ>



# Professors Conducting Research Leading to a COVID-19 Test

SUNY Poly announced that Empire Innovation Professor of Nanobioscience Dr. Nate Cady and Associate Professor Dr. Scott Tenenbaum, Head of Nanobioscience, have been awarded funding by SUNY to fabricate a more complex novel coronavirus (COVID-19) diagnostic test that can provide additional data points to arm medical workers with the information they need to potentially improve care.

In partnership with Ciencia, Inc., based in East Hartford, CT, and the Wadsworth Center's Dr. Klemen Strle, the test will not only detect a patient's infection with the virus, which is at the center of today's global pandemic, but it will also provide information about the patient's immune response and disease status. This could potentially help doctors and medical staff better treat those who might require greater care.

This effort will also provide an educational opportunity for a SUNY Poly graduate student, who will work with a team of researchers from Dr. Tenenbaum's lab. Leveraging SUNY Poly's advanced nanobioscience laboratories, this research will also use the world-class on-campus cleanrooms where the detection chips will be fabricated.

"I am grateful to our partners Ciencia, Inc. and the Wadsworth Center, along with our research team who, while employing additional precautions and social distancing measures in the labs, continue their work that we hope can help put critical information in the hands of front-line healthcare workers who could then treat patients in ways that could lead to improved outcomes," said Dr. Cady. "I have also been proud to take part in SUNY Poly's additional efforts, such as 3D-printed personal protective equipment for area healthcare workers; all of which we hope will play at least a small role in 'flattening the curve.'"

"This research is a testament to the powerful progress that SUNY Poly is capable of, and I would especially like to thank Ciencia, Inc., the Wadsworth Center, and our research team, including Frank Doyle and Zach Wurz, for coming together and working toward a more informative diagnostic which can potentially drive impactful, life-saving responses for our most vulnerable patients," said Dr. Tenenbaum. "This

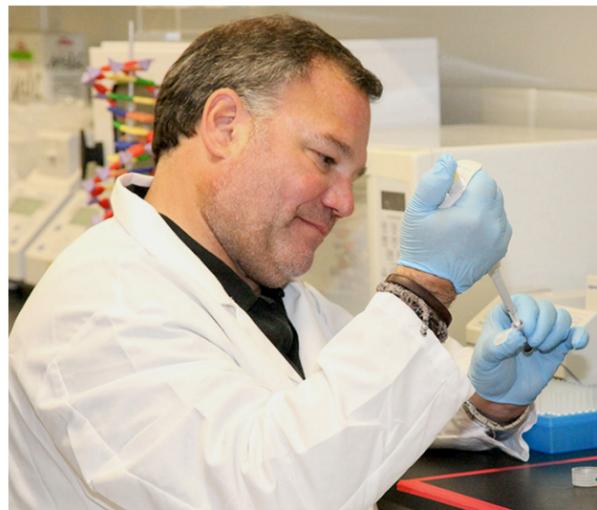
targeted funding is proof that SUNY Poly's resources can help address a number of current critical challenges, and we hope it may inspire improved human health outcomes."

The unique presentation of COVID-19 in patients, such as its long incubation period and its particularly greater impact on those with underlying health conditions makes the research to take place highly relevant; a diagnostic that provides faster detection of COVID-19, with more information about the patient's health status, including, for example, whether they are clear of the infection, and if they have generated antibodies against the virus, could lead to greater understanding of the disease and which patients may need more intensive treatment sooner. By measuring the level of antibodies in a patient's blood, the same test could provide an estimate of how long it has been since they were infected and what stage of recovery they may be experiencing.

SUNY Poly also announced it is using 3D printing technology to help mitigate a national shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers by manufacturing parts for face shields. With funding from Oneida County, the effort is being led by Brian Taylor, Manager of Engineering and Support Services; Dr. Michael Carpenter, Associate Professor and Interim Dean of the College of Engineering; and SUNY Poly Empire Innovation Professor of Nanobioscience Dr. Nate Cady, and has already produced hundreds of 3D-printed face shields. In addition, the Walmart Distribution Center in Marcy provided PPE that will also be distributed.



Dr. Nate Cady

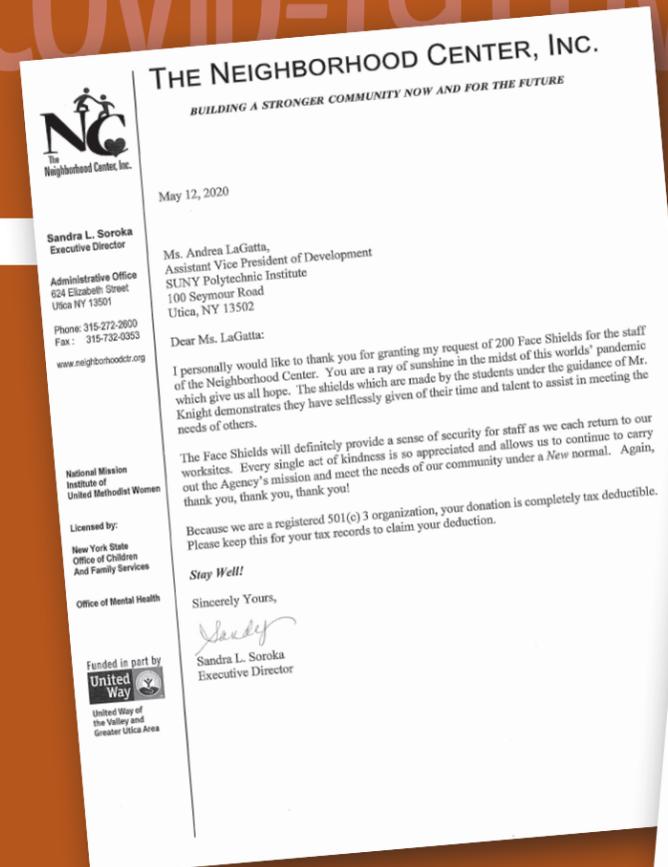


Dr. Scott Tenenbaum

It's just one of several ways the institution is assisting to help slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) beyond its campuses and across New York State and beyond. For more information, visit: <https://sunypoly.edu/news/news-release-suny-poly-faculty-and-staff-begin-manufacturing-personal-protective-equipment.html>.



# Thank You Letters



## College of Health Sciences Delivers Joy to Mohawk Valley Health Care Workers

SUNY Poly's College of Health Sciences helped to spread cheer to Mohawk Valley health care workers through the donation of gift baskets and notes of encouragement.

Utica Coffee Roasting Co. partnered with the college to donate baskets that contained bags of assorted coffees, Hershey's Kisses, pens, and encouraging messages to workers at hospitals in the cities of Rome and Utica. The donations were delivered to Rome Memorial Hospital and John Forbes, vice president of philanthropy for the MVHS Foundation, came to SUNY Poly to pick up the donations on Friday, April 17.

"The College of Health Sciences was proud to assist healthcare workers at Faxon St. Luke's, St. Elizabeth's and Rome Memorial Hospital who are tirelessly working to restore the health of those affected by COVID-19," said Dr. Kathleen Rourke, Interim Dean of the College of Health Sciences. "A little joy can go a long way and we are happy to have partnered with Utica Coffee Roasters who will be matching our donations."



# Alumni Create #PandemicChallenge to Help COVID-affected Individuals

Two SUNY Poly alumni have leveraged the success of their New York City-based, “Gents Remedy Podcast” and Instagram Live show to raise over \$10,000 for charities and those impacted by COVID-19—all while showcasing front-line workers as role models for their viewers.

Rodney Amanfo, '14, and Walter Owusu, '15, who respectively earned Bachelor of Science degrees in Accounting and Biology, live about 40 minutes apart between the New York City boroughs of The Bronx and Brooklyn. They met at SUNY Poly and immediately clicked when they discovered they had something significant in common.

“We were both originally from Ghana, so since the first day I met him on campus, we’ve been friends ever since then,” Amanfo said.

Following graduation, the friends began their podcast in 2018 which features discussions on a variety of topics. Following the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, Owusu and Amanfo could no longer host the podcast together and decided to shift to Instagram Live where they could virtually interview guests.

“Walter had a great idea to invite people doing good things in society to speak as role models for individuals going into different fields,” Amanfo said, noting that guests included police officers, teachers, lawyers, and nurses.

Another friend of the SUNY Poly graduates, David Adu, came on the show and immediately increased traffic, taking things to the next level.

“He actually boosted the ratings,” Amanfo said. “Because he was making people laugh, somebody sent in money to him as a ‘thank you.’”

The group gave the donated money away, purchasing PPE materials like hand sanitizer and masks, and that’s when they began the #PandemicChallenge to encourage listeners to donate money to allow them to help those most affected by the pandemic.

“We’ve turned this into a nonprofit,” Owusu said.

The group, which has assisted 100 families in three months and raised over \$10,000, has partnered with notable nonprofits like



L to R: Rodney Amanfo, Emmanuel Koomson, Walter Owusu, Joseph Attakora, Augustine Fordjour, Louis Ofori and Michael Asante

BLKHLTH, which has allowed them to go out into the streets and educate people on how to slow the spread of COVID-19 while distributing masks and hand sanitizer.

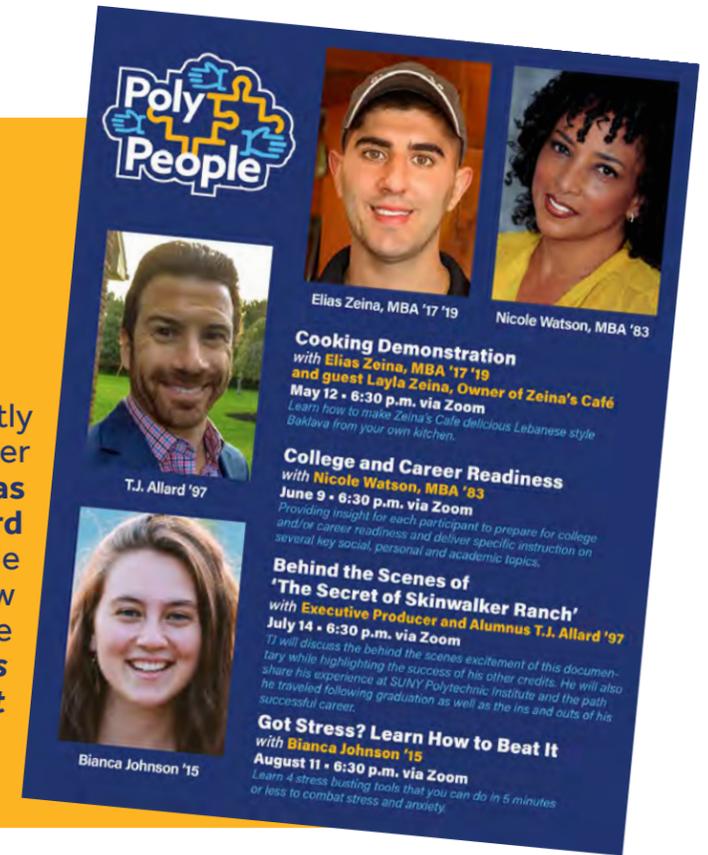
“Even when we were in school, we talked about being able to help people who are less fortunate,” Owusu said. “We want to be able to go as far as we can, even if that means we have to go global.”

If there’s one thing Owusu is just as glad to mention, it’s his alma mater.

I’m proud to be an alumnus, he said. “It’s one of my proudest moments.”

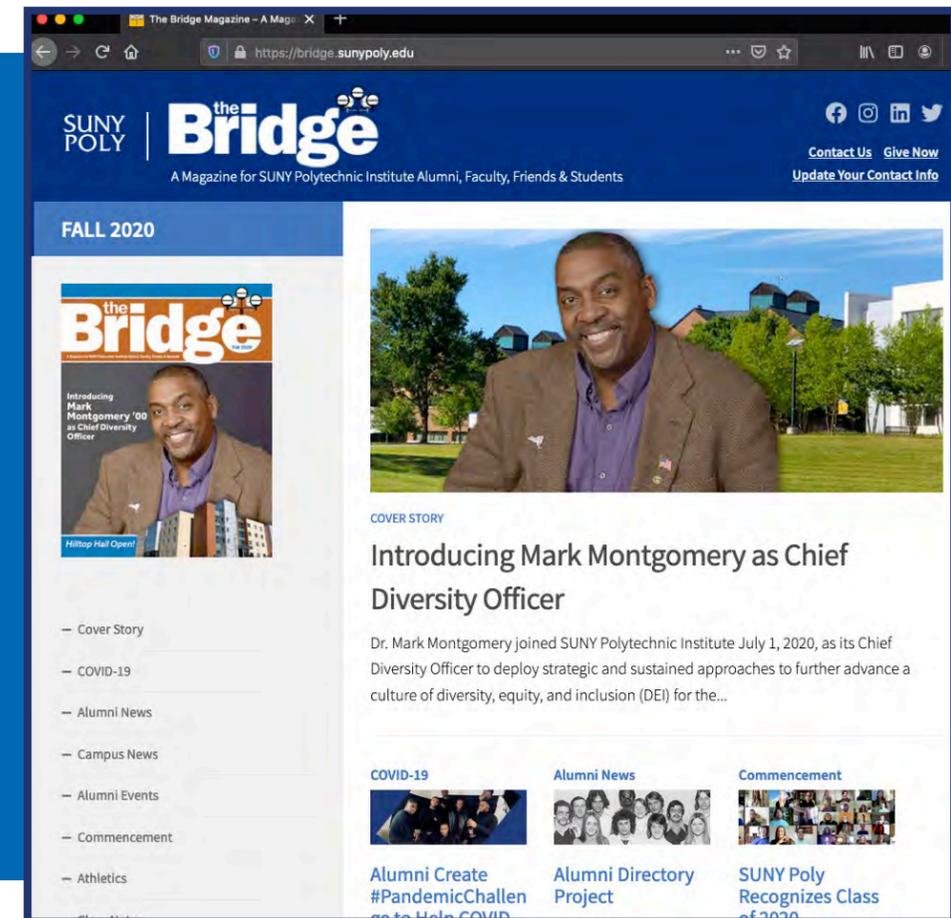


The SUNY Poly Alumni Association recently hosted Poly People Talks, a virtual speaker series, featuring the following alumni: **Elias Zeina '17 '19, Nicole Watson '83, T.J. Allard '97, and Bianca Johnson '15**. Poly People Talks is your chance to learn from fellow alumni, hear about their journeys and make new connections. **You can watch these talks by visiting *The Bridge* magazine website at [bridge.sunypoly.edu](https://bridge.sunypoly.edu).**



## Check out the NEW Bridge Magazine Website!

[bridge.sunypoly.edu](https://bridge.sunypoly.edu)





# Alumni Directory Project

## The Project

The Alumni Association has collaborated with Publishing Concepts, Inc. (PCI), to create an oral history of SUNY Poly that will record our shared connections.

Alumni are invited to share their personal stories for a book that will preserve the rich history of our college, as told by those who have lived it. Don't miss this opportunity to tell your SUNY Poly/SUNYIT story, capture memories of favorite professors or celebrate classmates. These stories will be preserved in a book that celebrates the impact SUNY Polytechnic Institute has had on your lives and who you are today. Our alumni each have their own distinct story and that is what makes the university a special place. This is a collaborative and unique look at the history of our institution, showing how the past helped shape the future.

## Have You Moved?

As part of this project, we are also taking this opportunity to help make it easier for you to stay connected to SUNY Polytechnic Institute. PCI will help us collect updated

contact information from those of you who may have moved and inadvertently lost touch with your alma mater.

## Your Story

What story will you tell? Can you trace your career path back to a defining moment at SUNY Poly? Did a special faculty or staff member have a profound impact on your life? Have connections you made on campus turned into lifelong friendships? Were you on campus during a historical moment?

## PCI Partnership

What better way to recognize our impact as a community than to share our personal narratives? PCI will be contacting you shortly to update your information and ask you to contribute your memories. They will also have a few questions to evaluate your engagement preferences with the college. We hope you will take a few minutes to answer their call and support this important project. Please note, we have shared your contact information with PCI for this project only. We have not sold your contact information, or otherwise used it for outside marketing purposes.

## Do I Have to Buy Something?

No. The collection of stories will be available for purchase from PCI; however, you are under no obligation to make a purchase to contribute your oral history. This project is at NO COST to the SUNY Polytechnic Institute Alumni Association. For those interested, various book packages will be offered along with SUNY Poly branded merchandise. Thank you in advance to everyone who chooses to support this project with your story and/or your purchase.

## What's Next?

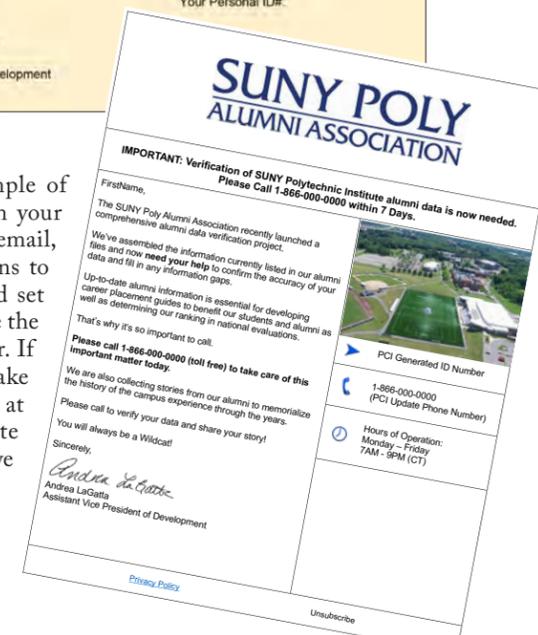
Soon you will be receiving email and postcard communications from the PCI team with instructions on how to participate. We'd like to invite you to share one of your stories with us and take part in this first of its kind project to honor the experiences and voices of our alumni. The PCI team will collect stories until March 12, 2021. After that, they will enter a post-production phase editing the data. We hope to have the book distributed in September 2021. We look forward to hearing from each and every one of you regarding your memories.

## What to Look For

Below is an example of a postcard you will receive in the mail. This postcard is distributed by our partner PCI on behalf of the SUNY Poly Alumni Association. Once you receive the postcard, please follow the instructions to update your information and set up an interview time to share your stories.



To the right is an example of an email you will receive in your inbox. Once you receive the email, please follow the instructions to update your information and set up an interview time to share the memories of your alma mater. If you do not receive it, please take this opportunity to call PCI at 1-888-835-2076 and update your contact information so we can stay connected.



## Raising Over \$60K for Student Emergency Fund

Thank you so much for supporting our students through our Day of Giving with gifts to our Student Emergency Fund and scholarships. Because of your kindness, we raised \$66,775 to ensure our students stay on track with their academic and career goals.

Gifts to the Student Emergency Fund support resources such as housing expenses, food, technology solutions for remote learning and other unexpected expenses. We are very grateful that we were able to help students during their time of need while also supporting their educational endeavors and providing much needed scholarships to offset some of their financial challenges.

Thank you again for stepping up and being a part of our community. We wish you and your family good health and all the best at this difficult time.

YouTube Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZb41xM6YyM&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZb41xM6YyM&feature=emb_title)

# Nursing Scholarship



Kevin Volk '83

I am a 1983 graduate of SUNY Poly and worked for the NYS Senate in Albany for 32 years. Over the years, I have had some health setbacks, but am thankfully well now. Through my many experiences in and out of hospitals, I have come to appreciate how dedicated and hardworking nurses are. For this reason, and given the current events which have put nurses on the front line of the COVID 19 crisis, I am more convinced than ever that the nursing profession is essential.

My wife and I are establishing a nursing scholarship at SUNY Polytechnic Institute, with the idea that we will fund it every year.

**On behalf of the SUNY Poly Foundation, we thank Kevin and his wife for this incredible investment in our future nursing students.**



# Alumni Night at the Comets

# Alumni Events

# Alumni Night at the Utica City FC



# South Florida



# Utica Nonprofit's Generous Donation to 'Poly Pantry' helps SUNY Poly Community

A Utica-area nonprofit joined SUNY Poly this year in the university's ongoing efforts to eliminate food insecurity among students, faculty and staff through "Poly Pantry" - an on-site location which distributes donated food and essential living items at no cost.

Compassion Coalition, Inc., which focuses on community-based giving throughout the Central New York region, made a generous donation of six mini-fridges for residential students as the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact the U.S.

"Compassion Coalition is proud to partner with the administration of SUNY Poly to serve students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Rachel Daughtry, Compassion Coalition's Director of Agency Relations. "Compassion Coalition's donation is just a piece of the larger puzzle of our community coming together during these uncertain times. We are thankful for our partnerships, and the hard work that everyone is doing to bring unity."

"We believe in our community, and partnerships like those with Poly Pantry to get our products directly into the hands of individuals who need it most."

Also, the Walmart Distribution Center partnering with the Compassion Coalition, donated refrigerators and microwaves for those students with a need who remained on campus as a result of special circumstances during the COVID shutdown.

The on-site food pantry, part of an initiative launched by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to help provide SUNY/CUNY students with "stigma-free access" to food and essential living items, was implemented in January 2019.

Since its foundation in 2019, "Poly Pantry" has assisted 968 members of the SUNY Poly community and has given away 8,109 pounds of food and 4,600 pounds of essential non-food items.

"I am extremely grateful for the support from 'Poly Pantry' during this crucial time," said an anonymous student. "The resources are helpful and the delivery of the products is sufficient. The small details, such as nutrients and toiletries essentials, were taken care of very effectively."



## Notes of Thanks From Our Students

*"Since this is the time where we want to avoid going to stores, Poly Pantry has helped us to the best. I did not have hand wash for at least 3 weeks, couldn't find it even in stores like Walmart and Price Chopper. I really thank Poly Pantry for supplying us food and some items which we really needed."*

Thanks & regards,  
**Kesava Kaushik**

*"I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude towards the work you and the Poly Pantry team are doing. I hope you understand the ways in which you are helping students out even during such a crisis, it means a lot when people like you and your team do so much for the international community as well putting forth an example of borderless humanity. I would like to let you know that I respect your team and you for the efforts you are making for the community even when there is such a risk surrounding us."*

Thank you so much,  
**Karan Sehgal**

*"Thank you so much for whoever is behind supplying us the essentials especially in such a crucial situation worldwide. Please continue the great work that you've been doing. Take care."*

Best regards,  
**Surya Vamsi Kolavennu**

*"The service provided by Poly Pantry is marvelous. It actually helped me with all the things which are not available at the stores."*

Regards,  
**Krupali Solanki**

*"I am really grateful for the support from the Poly Pantry during this crucial time. We were unable to purchase the toiletries and other essentials from the stores but the pantry is offering a helping hand. The resources are really helpful and the delivery of the products is sufficient, the small details such as nutrients, toiletries, and essentials are also taken care of very effectively."*

*I really thank all helping bodies for working for a good cause."*

Thank you & regards,  
**Akshara Lagwankar**

*"I would like to thank you for the effort to help reach out to the students and giving us what we need in times like this."*

*Poly Pantry has always been very helpful for us."*

Thanks & regards,  
**Sushmitha Chirumamilla**

*"It's great that you are supplying food and other items especially during this quarantine. Thank you for reaching out to us through the email regarding the items and giving them. We are glad that we are able to utilize the opportunity. Please continue this good work."*

*Thank you. Take care, Stay safe during quarantine."*

Regards,  
**Snigdha Daida**

# SUNY Poly 2020 Chancellor's Award for Excellence Recipients

SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang joined then-SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson to congratulate seven SUNY Poly students, faculty, and staff members who were announced among hundreds being honored at SUNY campuses across New York State as recipients of the 2020 Chancellor's Award for Excellence.

"SUNY's Chancellor's Award for Excellence winners are the champions of their campuses, each showing a tireless devotion to their academics and extracurricular pursuits, as well as their care for their fellow students as mentors and leaders," said SUNY Chancellor Johnson. "They are inspiring, and I have high expectations for how they will contribute to our society as we rebound from this current pandemic that separates us today."

"I am extremely proud of each of the 2020 Chancellor's Award for Excellence recipients who go above and beyond in making SUNY Poly and the world a better place through their individual efforts and contributions," said SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang. "Your hard work and passionate dedication to our institution does not go unnoticed, and, on behalf of the entire SUNY Poly community, we congratulate you for all that you do each and every day."

SUNY Poly recipients of the 2020 Chancellor's Award for Excellence are:

- Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence: Emma Vanderwerken '20 & Gretchen Long '20
- Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service: Sandra Mizerak, NCC, LMHC
- Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service: Dr. Linda Weber
- Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching: Dr. Kathleen Dunn
- Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities: Dr. Yubing Xie
- Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Classified Service: Brian Harris

Established in 1997, the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence recognizes students who have best demonstrated, and have been recognized for, both academic excellence and accomplishments in the areas ranging from leadership and athletics to community service, creative and performing arts, campus involvement, or career achievement.



Dr. Kathleen Dunn

Dr. Linda Weber

Gretchen Long '20



Sandra Mizerak

Dr. Yubing Xie

Emma Vanderwerken '20

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service recognizes those who demonstrate consistently superior professional achievement within and beyond the position who have repeatedly sought improvement of themselves, their campuses, and ultimately the State University, and, in doing so, have transcended the normal definitions of excellence.

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service recognizes the consistently superior service contributions of teaching faculty. Eligible service contributions may occur in a variety of areas, including service to the campus, the State University, the local community, or contributions at the regional, state-wide, national, or international levels.

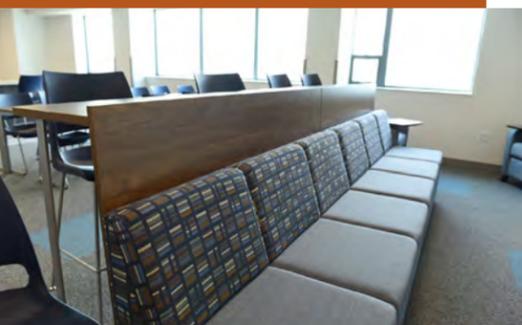
The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching recognizes consistently superior teaching at the graduate, undergraduate, or professional level, in keeping with SUNY's commitment to providing its students with instruction of the highest quality.

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities supports the pursuits foundational to sustaining the

intellectual growth of SUNY institutions by recognizing consistently outstanding scholarly and creative productivity, conducted in addition to teaching, by SUNY's instructional faculty.

The Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Classified Service give System-wide recognition for superior performance and extraordinary achievement by employees in the Classified Service. These awards demonstrate the University's commitment to individuals who provide superior service to its students and the community at large.

To receive the prestigious award, a selection committee established by each SUNY campus president reviews the accomplishments of top-performing candidates. Nominees are then forwarded to the Chancellor's Office for a second round of review and finalists are recommended to the Chancellor to become recipients of the award.



# Hilltop Hall Opens!

## Brand New, State-of-the-Art, Eco-Friendly Dormitory

Construction on SUNY Poly's Hilltop Residence Hall, the first zero-net carbon-certified residence hall in the State University of New York (SUNY) system, was completed on schedule only days before first-year students moved in.

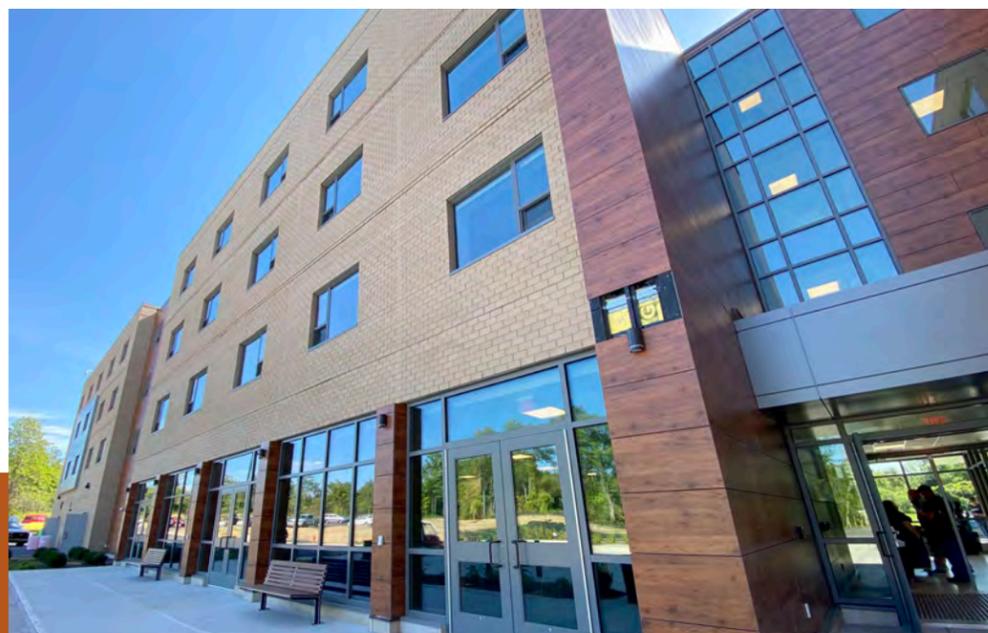
Originally intended for upperclassmen housing, the 257-bed dormitory will house freshmen as part of SUNY Poly's Fall 2020 Plan to reopen campus with new guidelines in place to protect the safety of faculty, staff and students and slow the spread of COVID-19. Upperclassmen will be housed throughout other residence halls on campus while Oriskany Hall has been designated to temporarily house suspected and symptomatic students.

SUNY, in partnership with the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York,

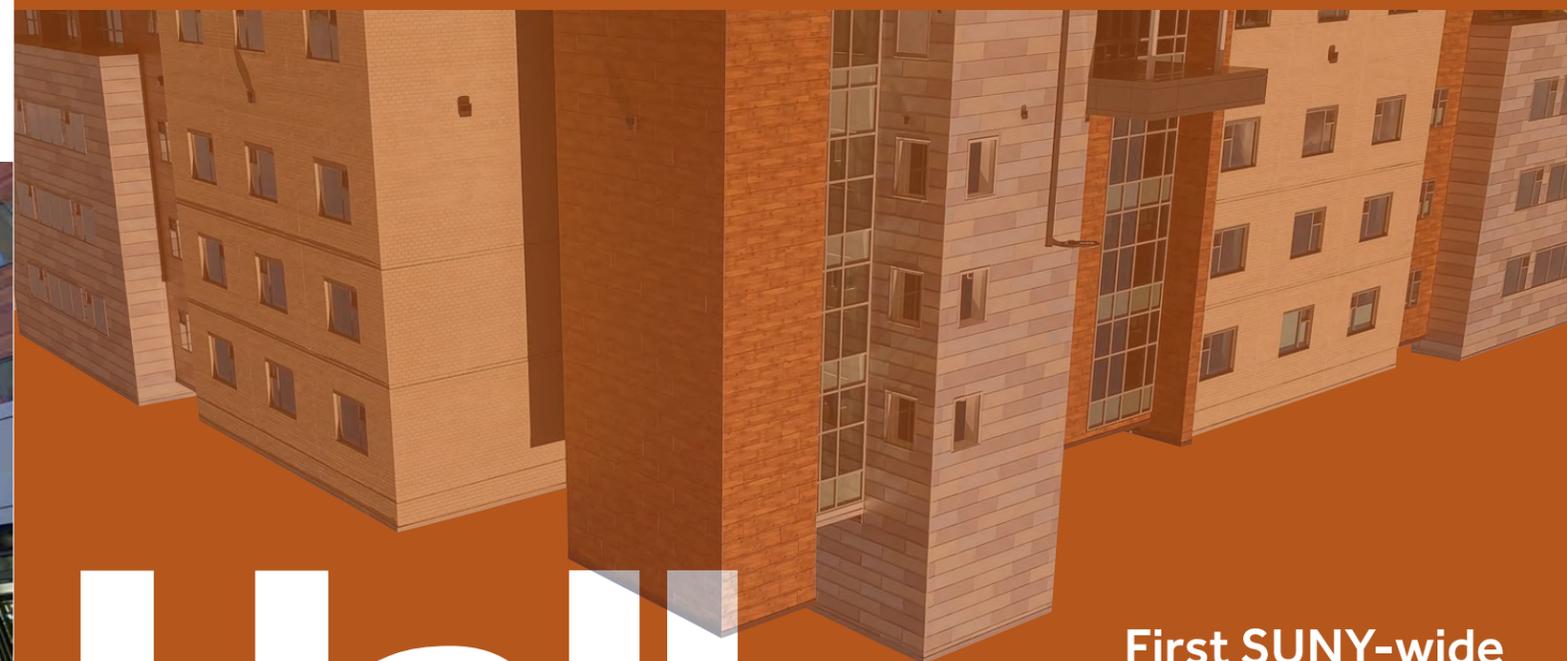
began construction of the \$33.5 million, 257-bed, residence hall project last summer. A groundbreaking ceremony for Hilltop Hall, held in May 2019, was attended by then-SUNY Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson, SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang, elected officials, faculty, staff and students.

The residence hall's zero-net carbon certification means, in addition to exceeding existing energy codes, the infrastructure to add future on-site renewable energy production systems will be in place. Once these systems are installed, the building will use equal to or less than the energy annually it can produce on-site through renewable resources.

The installation of a pergola, appliances and additional interior painting is planned to be completed at a later time.



# Hilltop



# Hall

First SUNY-wide  
Zero-Net Energy-Ready  
Building

# Cree Invests \$3.5M

## In Mohawk Valley Economy & SUNY Poly Scholarship Program

### Cree Invests \$3.5M To Support STEM Education Program for SUNY Polytechnic Institute & Mohawk Valley's Economy

Cree, Inc. and SUNY Poly, in June, announced Cree will donate a total of \$3.5 million as part of the global leader in silicon carbide technology's ongoing, long-term commitment to the Mohawk Valley to help expand the local economy and develop a pipeline of high-tech professionals.

The initiative establishes the "Cree | Wolfspeed Scholarship" program and the Dr. John Edmond and Dr. John Palmour SUNY Polytechnic Institute Endowed Faculty Chairs for the continued expansion of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) opportunities for students at SUNY Poly.

The program is designed to educate the next-generation, high-tech workforce by increasing student opportunities and graduation rates, as well as by providing access to funds to assist students in advancing their education.

"One of the core beliefs we hold at Cree is that every individual should have the opportunity to excel, and equitable access to education is at the foundation of that belief," said Cree CEO Gregg Lowe. "Establishing this education program is another important step in our broader effort to have a substantial positive impact in the local communities where we live and work. This is also a spectacular and well-deserved honor for our co-founders, John Edmond and John Palmour, and it recognizes the innovative spirit and significant contributions they have made – and continue to make – to accelerating the commercialization and adoption of silicon carbide technology. These faculty chairs will allow more students to learn from and work closely with pioneering scholars in the silicon carbide space."

The commitment from Cree includes a \$2 million scholarship program over 10 years and the creation of two endowed faculty chairs through a \$1.5 million fund over five years, beginning in August 2020. The scholarship support will help ensure students who come from historically underserved or marginalized communities, as well as those with significant financial need, have greater access to the educational opportunities that will equip them to excel as part of tomorrow's high-tech workforce.

"SUNY Poly's robust partnership with Cree further enriches the educational opportunities for current and future students," said SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang. "With this incredible commitment to SUNY Poly and the Mohawk Valley, Cree

recognizes the scholarly excellence of SUNY Poly faculty and provides our students with invaluable resources to become tomorrow's leaders in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields."

Named in honor of two of Cree's co-founders, Dr. John Edmond and Dr. John Palmour, the endowed faculty chairs—the highest academic award that a University can bestow on a faculty member—will be used to advance state-of-the-art technology through continued scholarly research and projects in the fields of nanotechnology and engineering. The endowed faculty chairs will allow students to learn from and work closely with the pioneering scholars in the silicon carbide space. Edmond and Palmour were part of the team that founded Cree in 1987 after conducting promising silicon carbide research at NC State University in Raleigh, N.C. Both are honored to make an impact working with SUNY Poly students to conduct breakthrough technology-focused research.

Empire State Development Acting Commissioner and President & CEO-designate Eric Gertler said, "The new Cree | Wolfspeed Scholarship and endowment at SUNY Poly demonstrates Cree's dedication to the region by establishing a robust pipeline for the next generation of high-quality high tech jobs in the Mohawk Valley. We are proud of our positive, productive partnership with Cree and look forward to their continued success."

As previously announced, Cree is developing the world's largest silicon carbide fabrication facility that will be 200mm capable in Marcy, New York—named the Mohawk Valley Fab—and has committed to creating more than 600 new jobs within eight years as well as providing internships for SUNY students as part of its presence. The efforts help to develop an advanced manufacturing-oriented workforce development initiative across the SUNY system to prepare a 21st century workforce for the long-term, high-quality employment and advancement opportunities the new facility will present. Currently, eight students from SUNY Poly are interning with Cree.

The company also donated \$25,000 in November 2019 to the SUNY Polytechnic Institute Foundation to support the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) competitive robotics program.



Dr. John Edmond



Dr. John Palmour



Mohawk Valley Fab—world's largest silicon carbide fabrication facility that will be 200mm capable in Marcy, New York.



**SUNY POLY**  
 Please join us for our  
**Women Who Mean Business**  
**2020 Speaker Series**



You are invited to attend a guest speaker series hosted by Hage & Hage Law Firm and the SUNY Poly Foundation. We would like to provide you the opportunity to be mentored by some amazing female business leaders.

The series will be held digitally via Zoom and an invite link will be sent to all participants who register prior to each session.

**Tuesday, October 20 - Elaine T. Vuong '14**  
 M.S. Clinical Forensic Psychology

**Tuesday, November 17 - Nicole Watson '83**  
 Marketing Communications Consultant/Contractor, UI Media

Please confirm your attendance to [alumni@sunypoly.edu](mailto:alumni@sunypoly.edu).

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**College of Health Sciences**

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\* Fully Online \*\* Hybrid



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Call: 315-792-7347 or 1-866-278-6948

E-mail: [graduate@sunypoly.edu](mailto:graduate@sunypoly.edu)



## Introducing AACSB-Accredited Online Bachelor of Science in Business Degree

In May, SUNY Poly introduced a new 100-percent online Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) degree program, accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), to prepare students to become leaders in the business world at their own pace.

"I am thrilled that SUNY Poly's new online Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program is able to complement SUNY Poly's expansive and growing academic catalog of online opportunities, providing an important opportunity to attain one's educational goals that can act as a launchpad for a lifetime of success," said SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang. "This incredible academic program

applies the same rigorous standards as found in SUNY Poly's traditional Business Administration program with the added benefit of the ability to complete the degree on one's own schedule, which can be extremely valuable in our fast-changing world."

"SUNY Poly's College of Business Management is thrilled to offer professionals and learners an online pathway to earn an AACSB-accredited Bachelor of Science in Business Administration entirely through online learning," said SUNY Poly College of Business Management Dean Dr. Arthur Lu. "This exciting opportunity comes at a time when the flexibility and high-quality of online education are being established and recognized more than ever before, and we look forward to welcoming new students who will

start their fully online study in the fall 2020 semester."

"SUNY Poly's online bachelor's in Business Administration adds to the number of our institution's robust programs designed to meet students where they are, no matter their life circumstance, and it allows them to earn their degree from home," said SUNY Poly Interim Provost Dr. Steven Schneider. "The convenience of the online BSBA program comes at a time when many are at home juggling several tasks, and there's no better way to take your business future into your hands at your own time and pace."

The 124-credit, semester-based BSBA program allows students to log in at their own convenience to accommodate existing family and work commitments.

# Esports Arrives at SUNY Poly



Esports made its way to SUNY Poly in December 2019 when it announced membership with the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) to offer students a competitive alternative to more traditional collegiate sports.

Esports, which has grown rapidly over the past decade, has been adopted by several SUNY institutions and is reportedly expected to soon be a \$1 billion industry.

"We are thrilled to have a great program such as SUNY Poly join us as members," said Lydia Fister, ECAC's Director of Esports. "They have added great competition to the overall continued growth of our esports leagues. We are striving to provide and activate intercollegiate esports competition across college campuses, and we believe SUNY Poly is a perfect fit."

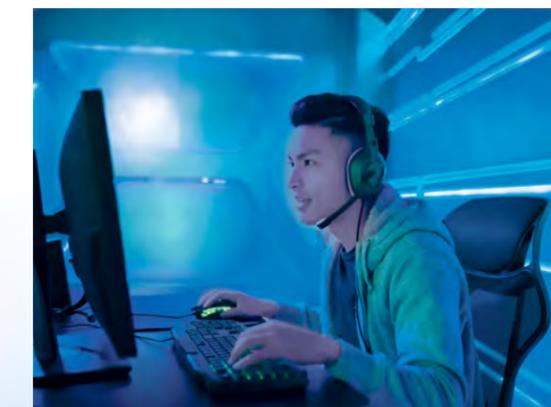
"The Center for Student Involvement is so excited to assist our students in pursuing their passion through esports," said Jennifer George, SUNY Poly's Associate Director of Student Activities. "Through this process, students are learning transferable employability skills to include program development, interpersonal communication, and organizational skills. We can't wait to see where this program goes in the future!"

SUNY Poly's adoption of esports was supported by sophomore Joseph Center, a Computer and Information Science major, who has been involved with esports competitions for nearly a decade.

Check out Joseph Center's video here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ccbe4RsP0Ok&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ccbe4RsP0Ok&feature=emb_logo)

"Not everyone is as interested in traditional sports as they are in esports games, so it definitely attracts a different type of person, especially at a technology-driven institution," he said. "Esports have many of the same aspects as traditional sports, particularly for people who are looking for an environment that still offers competition."

Games offered for students in the spring 2020 semester include Fortnite, Overwatch, FIFA, League of Legends, Super Smash Bros. Ultimate, Hearthstone, and Rocket League.



## Thank you to our donors for their generous support!



The Foundation awarded more than \$352,551 in scholarships throughout the 2019-20 academic year.

For more information on the SUNY Poly Foundation and to support student scholarships, visit:

[www.sunypoly.edu/foundation](http://www.sunypoly.edu/foundation)



## New College of Health Sciences Educational Tool

SUNY Poly's College of Health Sciences, in collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences, was gifted a synthetic cadaver to enable hands-on educational opportunities for students related to anatomical studies.

Known by its brand name, SynDaver, the silicone health sciences educational tool is the result of four generous SUNY Poly Foundation donors:

- Gifted in Memory of a Remarkable Man
- The Dorothy Griffin Foundation
- The M&T Bank/Partners Trust Bank Charitable Fund (a donor-advised fund of The Community Foundation)
- SUNY Performance Improvement Fund
- The donors raised \$74,658 to purchase the SynDaver over the course of several months and after two years of research as to what might be most beneficial to SUNY Poly students.

"The College of Health Sciences and the College of Arts and Sciences are truly grateful to the donors whose gifts have allowed SUNY Poly to offer state-of-the-art technology to students in the College of Health Sciences and beyond in acquiring this unique equipment that allows our students to gain a unique understanding of human anatomy," then-Interim Dean of the College of Health Sciences Dr. Kathleen Rourke said. "We are thrilled to have partnered with the donors in our efforts to advance our teaching resources with state-of-the-art equipment for

education and training of nursing and health science students here at SUNY Poly."

"The SynDaver is a unique tool that we are proud to leverage for our students, and the College of Arts and Sciences is pleased to work with the College of Health Sciences to enable exciting hands-on educational opportunities," said Dr. Andrew Russell, Professor of History and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "We are excited that the SynDaver provides a new opportunity for SUNY Poly students to learn in a collaborative, hands-on environment, and we are thankful to the donors who made this possible."

"On behalf of the SUNY Poly Foundation, we are incredibly appreciative for the generous support of our donors," said Andrea LaGatta, SUNY Poly's Assistant Vice President of Development. "Investments like this enhance our programs and provide our students and faculty with an opportunity to gain as close to a real-life experience as possible."

SUNY Poly's SynDaver life-sized model is one of the only a few in Upstate New York and includes modeling of major skeletal muscles, arteries, veins, and nerves. The education-grade synthetic human also includes bones, joints, organs, and tendons that simulate the size and shape of a real human body. Each of the anatomical structures are exposed to allow students to see the anatomical structures in their proper life-sized proportions.

## Online RN to BSN Program Ranked

SUNY Poly's online program to offer a bachelor's in nursing to current registered nurses (RNs) through the College of Health Sciences was ranked both No. 1 in New York State and No. 4 in the United States by RegisteredNursing.org.

"I am thrilled SUNY Poly's online RN to BSN program has been ranked the best throughout New York State," said SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang. "At this critical time when maintaining educational opportunities, especially online, is vital for future healthcare workers, we look forward to the robust fall enrollment of RNs and nursing students with an energized passion for healthcare."



"As a leader in healthcare education across the SUNY system, SUNY Poly's College of Health Sciences is truly honored this online program has been recognized as the best in the state," said Dr. Kathleen Rourke, then-Interim Dean of the College of Health Sciences. "This program meets students wherever they may be in life and allows them to earn their degree at their own pace, all while providing clinical hours and hands-on learning."

SUNY Poly's online RN to BSN program is designed to allow for nurses to comply with New York State's "BSN in 10" law which requires RNs to attain a bachelor's degree within 10 years of initial licensure. Through a partnership with several local healthcare institutions, students are able to attend synchronous classes virtually and conveniently fulfill clinical requirements.

The latest ranking from RegisteredNursing.com was determined by analyzing data sources from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the Council for Community and Economic Research, and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Total points calculated for each institution includes factors such as tuition fees, graduation rates, and accreditation status.



## SUNY Poly Recognizes Class of 2020

SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang joined faculty and staff in May to virtually recognize members of the 2020 graduating class through a collaborative video shared on the university's institutional website and social media platforms.

On behalf of the entire SUNY Poly family, we congratulate you on your hard work, wish you continued health, and hope you are able to take a moment to reflect on your success. We look forward to seeing you soon to celebrate in person!

**To see the video, please visit the new Bridge Magazine website at [bridge.sunypoly.edu](http://bridge.sunypoly.edu).**

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If you are interested in applying for a BJ's membership or renewing your current membership, please use the forms below.

**Member Application** - <https://sunypoly.edu/sites/default/files/Alumni/BJs-application-new-members.pdf>

**Renewal Application** - <https://sunypoly.edu/sites/default/files/Alumni/BJs-application-renewal.pdf>

**BJ's FAQ** - [www.sunypoly.edu/sites/default/files/Alumni/bjs-faq.pdf](http://www.sunypoly.edu/sites/default/files/Alumni/bjs-faq.pdf)



## SUNY Poly Bookstore

Alumni Association members receive a 10% discount on all purchases at the SUNY Poly Bookstore, excluding clearance items and textbooks. Visit the Bookstore in person or shop online at:

[www.bkstr.com/suny-polystore/home](http://www.bkstr.com/suny-polystore/home)



## SUNY Poly Fitness Center Membership

SUNY Poly Alumni Association members and their families are eligible to purchase a membership for the Fitness Center at the Wildcat Field House. For the membership form, please visit: [sunypoly.edu/sites/default/files/Alumni/sunypoly-field-house-fitness-facilities-application.pdf](http://sunypoly.edu/sites/default/files/Alumni/sunypoly-field-house-fitness-facilities-application.pdf)



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We are continually adding alumni benefits, for the most current list, visit: [sunypoly.edu/alumni/benefits](http://sunypoly.edu/alumni/benefits)



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Contact the Alumni Office for questions at [alumni@sunypoly.edu](mailto:alumni@sunypoly.edu).

# WILDCATS

## 2019-20 Year in Review

The 2019-20 season was full of ups and downs for the SUNY Poly Wildcats. The women's basketball team won yet another NEAC championship, claiming their fourth title in five seasons. Six of the seven teams competing at SUNY Poly qualified for NEAC Championship Events. Twenty-three student-athletes were named to NEAC All-Conference teams. SUNY Poly's student-athletes excelled in the classroom, garnering a 3.19 program GPA. Sixty-eight student-athletes were named NEAC Scholar-Athletes and 121 student-athletes made Academic Achievement Lists. The Wildcats were primed to end their NEAC era with a run at one last President's Cup. But the spring season was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite our heartbreak of a shortened season, our Wildcats looked to the future. Despite our heartbreak and the thoughts of what could have been, Our Wildcats must look to their futures, the future of the department, and the future of our country. The next season will feature an exciting new conference for SUNY Poly and a new group of Wildcat student-athletes to make a career of their own.

This year's Wildcat Athletic banquet, typically held in the Wildcat Field House, was held virtually on the SUNY Poly Sports Network (SPSN). The department gave out 28 awards to Wildcat student-athletes via short video presentations by the coaches and administrators. Among the notable winners were Molly Burdick (Johnson City, N.Y.), who was named the female student-athlete of the year after leading the Wildcats to a second NEAC Title. Josh Gregory (Whitesboro, N.Y.) was named the male student-athlete of the year after his outstanding senior season for the Wildcat men's basketball team. Wildcat cross country runner Joseph Killian (Grand Island, N.Y.) and Wildcat soccer's Felicia Bianca (Guiderland, N.Y.) were named the male and female Scholar-Athletes of the Year. It was Bianca's second consecutive Scholar-Athlete Award. SUNY Poly student-athletes finished with an average GPA of 3.19. Sixty-four student-athletes made SUNY Poly's Dean's List with a GPA between 3.2 and 3.59. Twenty-six made the President's Achievement List with a GPA between 3.6 and 3.79. Thirty-one made the President's Excellence List with a GPA of 3.8 or higher.

### The NAC: A New Place To Compete

The SUNY Poly Athletics Department is excited to transition to a full-time member of the North Atlantic Conference (NAC) in the 2020-21 season. The change in conference alignment became official on July 1, 2020, after a coordinated effort by the administration of SUNY Poly and the NAC.

"I am thrilled to announce SUNY Poly's transition to the NAC as it will offer our students the added benefit of continued, full participation in collegiate athletics while allowing for reduced long-distance travel and fewer occasions of class absence based on the new divisional scheduling model," said SUNY Poly Interim President Dr. Grace Wang. "The NAC's commitment to excellence, integrity, equity, diversity, inclusion, and well-being is also aligned with SUNY Poly's values and we look forward to a successful future and Wildcat Athletics victories."

"Our Wildcats have found an exciting new home with the NAC," SUNY Poly Athletic Director Kevin Grimmer said. "SUNY Poly intercollegiate athletics will now align with like-minded and competitive programs from New York, Vermont, and Maine. We look forward to working with and playing against the excellent institutions which comprise a solid and welcoming conference. NAC leadership and membership are first-rate and we are looking forward to beginning competition with our new association with the NAC this year."

SUNY Poly will join former NEAC members SUNY Cobleskill and Cazenovia in the transition to the NAC. The move creates a 12-member conference, allowing for a largely divisional scheduling model in most of the NAC's sponsored sports. This model is beneficial for the student-athletes of SUNY Poly, cutting down on travel and missed class time while providing a competitive scheduling model with NCAA Auto-Qualifying bids across the board. Eleven of the twelve varsity sports at SUNY Poly will compete in the NAC in the 2020-21 season.

With the addition of the three new members, the NAC will have a total of 12 full-time member institutions. The members of the NAC are SUNY Canton, Cazenovia, SUNY Cobleskill, SUNY Delhi, University of Maine at Farmington, Hus-

son University, Northern Vermont University-Johnson, Northern Vermont University-Lyndon, Maine Maritime Academy, University of Maine at Presque-Isle, and Thomas College.

### Fall Men's Cross Country

The SUNY Poly men's cross country team had a great season in 2019. The Wildcats finished top-5 in five of their nine races and were the runners-up at the 2019 NEAC Cross Country Championship Race. At the NEAC Championship, the Wildcats were just nine points shy of a championship, placing runners 7th, 8th, 9th, 16th, and 18th. SUNY Poly's Garrett Jones (New Hartford, N.Y.) earned a NEAC All-Conference First Team Award for his efforts. He finished the race in 7th place with a time of 28:00.7. Jake Baisley (Dolgeville, NY) and Jonathon Miller (Oneonta, N.Y.) were named to the NEAC All-Conference Second Team after placing 8th and 9th respectively. The men rounded out their All-Conference Selections with Andrew Pfeifer (Lagrangeville, N.Y.) and Joseph Killian (Grand Island, N.Y.) who were named to the Third Team after finishing 16th and 18th in the race.

### Women's Cross Country

The year was a challenge for the defending NEAC Champion women's cross country team. The numbers just were not in favor of the Wildcats who, due to unforeseen circumstances, failed to place in some of their races. The women were able to pull it together when it counted, placing fifth at the NEAC Championship Race in Cobleskill. SUNY Poly's Lauren Phetteplace (Cortland, N.Y.) finished the NEAC Championship race in third place with a time of 25:25.9 leading to a place on the NEAC's All-Conference First Team for the second time in her fantastic two year career at SUNY Poly. Katherine Candels (Tolland, Conn.) was also named to an All-Conference Team after placing 15th overall with a time of 27:39.6. She was named to the NEAC All-Conference Third Team.

### Men's Soccer

The SUNY Poly men's soccer team got off to a hot start, winning all but one of their games in the month of September. Their success continued into October where they would face the bulk of their conference opponents. The team finished the regular season with a 12-7 record and fell in the NEAC Quarterfinal 3-0 to end their season. Seniors Richie Morris (Spanish Town, Jamaica) and Jamar Gayle (Kingston, Jamaica) combined for 44 points. Morris was the scoring leader with 10 goals and two assists. Five SUNY Poly players were named to All-Conference Teams. Richie Morris and Jamar Gayle were First Team selections, Wakeley Banker (Warwick, N.Y.) was a Second Team selection, and Akeem Shelton (Kingston, Jamaica) and James D'Alessio (Yorktown Heights, N.Y.) were Third Team selections.

### Women's Soccer

The Wildcat women's soccer team also earned a NEAC Quarterfinal berth in their 2019 season.

They earned the #5 seed with a record of 7-9-1. The postseason came to an end for the 'Cats in the first round with a tough 4-1 road loss. Shannon Harrison (Holland Patent, N.Y.) had a huge season. She scored a career-high 32 points on 13 goals and six assists. Sarah George had a great first season for the Wildcats with 11 goals and four assists. Junior goalkeeper Felicia Bianca also had a career season. She had a career-high 93 saves, a career-best 2.59 goals-against average, and a career-best .721 save percentage. Two Wildcats earned All-Conference honors for their efforts. Defender Quinlan Gowett was a Second Team selection and Shannon Harrison was a Third Team selection.

### Women's Volleyball

The SUNY Poly women's volleyball team went 10-17 with a 4-7 NEAC record in 2019. The team barely missed the NEAC postseason but had two notable wins over local rival Utica College. The Wildcats also had success against Canton, Cobleskill, Cazenovia, and Delhi, going 4-0 against future conference opponents. The Wildcats will join the North Atlantic Conference in 2020-21 and will compete against the aforementioned teams. SUNY Poly junior Karlie King was named to the NEAC All-Conference Second Team after leading her team in kills with 278. King was also second on the team with 291 digs, second only to Wildcat Libero Shannon McIntyren who had 412. Setter Kaley Pichura had a solid season, collecting 802 assists which ranked 4th in the NEAC.

### Winter Women's Basketball

The winter season was a historic one for the Wildcats. SUNY Poly women's basketball team had the best regular season in their decorated history. The team went undefeated (16-0) for the first time in program history. The Wildcats finished their season 20-8, winning the NEAC Championship over Morrisville State at home by a score of 71-58. One of the more impressive statistical notes from the dominant 2019-20 season was the margin of victory over conference opponents. The Wildcats average conference margin of victory over their 16 game conference schedule was a whopping 25.4 points. Their biggest win was a 50 point win over Wells in February. In the post-season the Wildcats beat Penn State Berks in the semifinal 87-73 and beat Morrisville State 71-58 to hoist their fourth and final NEAC Championship Trophy. After earning the NEAC's NCAA AQ bid with the Championship win, the Wildcats drew the short straw in the NCAA Tournament selection show. They were matched up with Tufts University, the #1 team in the nation. The Wildcats would lose in the first round game to end their season.

SUNY Poly placed four players on NEAC All-Conference Teams. Molly Burdick (Johnson City, N.Y.) and Jaida Washington (Elmira, N.Y.) were First Team selections. Kiersten Leos (Camden, N.Y.) and Taylor Aybar (Woodside, N.Y.) were Third Team selections. Molly Burdick was the Wildcats leading scorer with 397 points and

leading rebounder with 228. She ranked seventh in the NEAC in points and third in rebounding. Jaida Washington had an outstanding offensive season with 360 points, but her biggest strength was on the defensive side of the ball. The senior had 86 blocks, which was the best mark in the NEAC and ranked seventh in NCAA DIII. Washington was the NEAC Championship Tournament MVP. She averaged a double-double with 18.5 points per game and 11 rebounds per game. She also had eight total blocks in the two games. Kiersten Leos and Taylor Aybar finished out their four-year careers at SUNY Poly with their third NEAC Championship. Aybar averaged 7.1 points, a team-best 4.5 assists, and a team-best three steals per game. Kiersten Leos ended her career with 1,349 total points, and a three-point shooting percentage just shy of 40%.

### Men's Basketball

The SUNY Poly men's basketball team had a fantastic run in 2019-20. The team went 16-10 with a 13-3 Conference record. The regular season opened up with the program's first-ever game against a Division I opponent in Boston University. The Wildcats ended their season with a clutch six-game winning streak to secure the title of NEAC North Division Regular Season Champions and earned a first-round bye in the NEAC Championship Tournament. The Wildcats fell to Lancaster Bible 79-75 in a closely contested semifinal matchup to end their season. Josh Gregory had a team-high 466 points, 225 rebounds, 69 assists, and 27 blocks in the 19-20 season. He was named to the NEAC All-Conference First team for his efforts. Caleb Canty was a NEAC All-Conference Third Team selection after averaging 14.4 points, 3.9 assists, and 1.4 steals per game.

### Men's Volleyball

The men's volleyball team at SUNY Poly had their season cut short by the COVID-19 crisis. The team was about two-thirds of the way through their regular season and had just barely scratched the surface of their conference schedule. The Wildcats finished their season with a 5-11 record with a notable win over Elmira. Two Wildcats

Fourth and final Women's Basketball NEAC Championship.



were named to the NEAC's All-Conference Teams despite the shortened season. Garrett Hassard (Oneonta, N.Y.) was named to the NEAC All-Conference First Team after posting career-best 3.81 blocks per match, 7.1 kills per match, and 1.3 aces per match. Connor Schultz (Lancaster, N.Y.) was voted to the All-Conference Second Team after recording 169 kills and a career-high 82 digs. He was well on pace to break his own single season-best 182 kills, a mark which he set in 2017.

### Spring

The spring season started with a bang! The SUNY Poly men's lacrosse team started their schedule with the program's first-ever win over cross-town rival Utica College. Women's lacrosse was 3-1 in their first four games with plenty of season ahead of them. Wildcat softball started their season 2-0 with two big wins over NVU-Lyndon. SUNY Poly baseball was just days away from opening their season in Winterhaven, Fla.

Unfortunately for the hopeful SUNY Poly spring sport student-athletes and the many thousands of student-athletes across the country, the spring season was over before it started. The COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to all SUNY Poly athletic activity on March, 13. Spring break trips were canceled, classes were transitioned to an online environment, and facilities were closed to the public. Seniors lost the chance to have their last-dance in 2020. Thankfully the NCAA issued a blanket waiver to all NCAA spring athletes allowing athletes a re-do if circumstances allow. Some will return to finish their degree next year, some will return as graduate students to pursue their next set of academic goals. Some will never get the chance to finish what they started. Our gratitude for the contributions that our seniors have made to our programs cannot be put into words. They have helped to grow our programs, they have brought home the hardware, and have represented SUNY Poly to the best of their abilities. Thank you to our seniors, we wish all of you the best of luck in your next chapter in life. We hope to see you all back on campus very soon!

# Class Notes

## 1970s

**Edward Ensley '79** retired as an assistant manager from Save-A-Lot after 15 years. He splits his time between Florida and Ecuador.

**Frank J. Germonito '77** is the director of Business Development and Contracts at FermiTron, Inc. in Orlando, FL. He is also a Certified Professional in Contract Management.

**Richard A. Hooker '79** has had eight patents issued in software and Electrical/Electronics Engineering.

## 1980s

**Penney Belcher '81** has been working as an adult unit supervisor at the Interstate Compact Unit.

**Keith Buckingham '81** is an investigator with the New York State Insurance Fund in Liverpool, NY.

**Sandra M. Jones (Winick) '84** is an administrator with the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (NYS OPWDD) and has been employed with New York State for 41 years.

**Robert Robinson '83** is a certified public accountant with Pinnacle Financial in Skokie, IL.

## 1990s

**Michael J. Campos '93** reports he had a great visit to campus recently and was impressed with all of the changes. He hopes his daughter receives as great an education as he did at SUNY Polytechnic Institute. She loves science and technology and wants to be an astronaut like Sally Ride and Christina Koch.

**Teresa Burton '99** is the past class president for URSA Space Systems.

**Brenda (Kenyon) Episcopo '97 '02** received the Hall of Fame award that was instituted as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the merger of the Bridgewater, Leonardsville and West Winfield Central Schools creating the Mount Markham Central School District. The award honors graduates from these schools who have distinguished themselves in a specific field of endeavor including civic affairs, humanitarian affairs or in activities that merit special recognition. Following is part of the induction presentation: Brenda has risen to become the President and Chief Executive Officer of the United Way of New York State. Dedicated to helping those in need, Brenda has provided leadership and support to initiatives that support the impoverished, families and children. Brenda is an outstanding executive, strategic planner and human resource strategist. Brenda has initiated multiple programs in the Mohawk Valley region including advocacy programs, anti-poverty, and connecting needy families to food, emergency supplies and services. Brenda has continued to give back to Mount Markham frequently serving as a guest speaker at career events. Brenda is a popular and powerful speaker and influencer. She has dedicated countless hours to mentoring young people and in particular young women. Brenda was recognized regionally as the Mohawk Valley Community & Humanitarian Woman of the Year. We are honored to induct Brenda into the Hall of Fame.

**John M. Reale, Jr. '95** has been the executive director of the SUNY Polytechnic Institute Auxiliary Services Corporation since 2015.

## 2000s

**Shaun Bowen '01** is currently working as a business analyst for Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield in Utica, NY.

**Lisa Williams '04** is currently a police dispatcher/ticket coordinator for the New York State Park Police in Jamesville, NY.

## 2010s

**Gerard Benton '10** and **Alexandra (Baer) Benton '12** have welcomed a baby boy, Lucas Alexander Benton on June 18, 2020.

**Venkata Leela Aditya Gottapu '14** is a front end developer for Allstate Insurance in Tempe, AZ.

**A. Carol Towers '12** is a community services worker for the Broome County Department of Social Services.

**Jillian Christiano '19** is an assistant lead QA tester at Vicarious Visions in Albany, NY, a video game development company.

**Justin Thomas Firsching '17** continues his education at SUNY Poly this fall while working part-time as a software engineer.

**Colin Henkler '19** is an etch process engineer at GlobalFoundries in Malta, NY.

**Miguel Hernandez '19** is an aerospace design engineer at Quest Global in Windsor Locks, CT.

**Soham Joshi '19** is a full stack Java developer at Florida Power and Light. Soham also achieved the goal of providing results of 100+CICD test cases and received a promotion to a senior post as a release handling.

**Tucker Mogren '19** is a software engineer for IT Room Solutions in Utica, NY.

**Taylor Rahn '19** is a PhD student, research assistant and teaching assistant in Molecular and Cellular Biology at Stony Brook University.

**Elias Zeina '17 '19** is taking his business education to the culinary world where he manages his family's Lebanese restaurant, Zeina's Café. Elias is an aspiring restaurateur with plans to open another restaurant in the greater Utica area.

## 2020

**Kristan Grande '20** is a family nurse practitioner at Mohawk Valley Cardiology, PC in Utica, NY. She also received her ANCC Board Certification.

**Christopher Ham '20** was promoted to electrical engineer at Stainless Design Concepts in Saugerties, NY.

**Connor Schultz '20** is a product engineer at Fulton Thermal Corporation in Pulaski, NY.



**Alex LaGatta '19** has adopted a puppy named Louie and has accepted a new position as an ICU nurse at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center.



**Paul J. Bonczek '16** is an electrical engineering PhD student and graduate research assistant at the University of Virginia. He has also published two papers to world leading conferences in control theory.



**Mike Aiello '17 '19** is the digital outreach specialist at SUNY Poly. As part of his role, he helped create and implement a new program during the COVID 19 pandemic called Poly People Talks, a program that offers learning opportunities for alumni. Mike is also powerlifting with plans to head to a national stage through United States Powerlifting Association (USPA) in 2021 and a proud new member of the SUNY Poly Alumni committee.

To submit your Class Notes please contact the Alumni Office at [alumni@sunypoly.edu](mailto:alumni@sunypoly.edu) or call 315-792-7273.



**Brandon Meszko '13** welcomed a new baby boy named Jameson Joseph Meszko on July 13, 2020, weighing 6 lbs 10 oz and 20" long.

The screenshot shows the SUNY Polytechnic Institute website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'FUTURE STUDENTS', 'CURRENT STUDENTS', 'ALUMNI', 'FACULTY + STAFF', 'RESEARCH', and 'COMMUNITY'. A search bar is on the right. Below the navigation, there is a large banner with the text 'UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION'. Underneath the banner, there are buttons for 'APPLY', 'VISIT', 'GIVE', and 'REQUEST INFO'. The main content area features a 'BENEFITS + DISCOUNTS' section and a 'SUBMIT CLASS NOTES' button. A prominent call to action reads: 'Hey Alumni! Did your info change? Update it Here! sunypoly.edu/alumni/update-info'.



**Stay  
Safe  
Wildcats!**  
**#WildcatStrong**