

# THE STATESMAN

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## USG chief justice removed from position

By Brianne Ledda  
Assistant News Editor

The Undergraduate Student Government (USG) judiciary announced its decision to remove Chief Justice Aravinth Pushparaj from his position on Thursday, April 25.

The ruling came in response to a case filed against Pushparaj and two members of the USG Executive Council by USG Sen. Andrew Machkasov. Machkasov wanted to overturn the USG Senate's Feb. 14 confirmation of the chief justice because it was held over a year after his initial appointment, which is in violation of the USG Constitution.

"We found five to zero that Aravinth, they did not follow the proper procedure for Aravinth's nomination and confirmation as chief justice," Associate Justice Eric Wagner, a sophomore economics and political science double major, said. "So the Supreme Court of the USG currently does not have a chief justice."

Associate Justice Isaiah Momplaisir was elected vice chair when the judiciary took on the case. He's expect-



SARA RUBERG / THE STATESMAN

**Undergraduate Student Government Executive Vice President Abdelrahman Salama speaking at the vigil held on Thursday night in front of the Humanities fountain.**

ed to act as chief justice for the rest of the semester. The judiciary unanimously decided that, as dictated in the USG Constitution, a Senate confirmation within the academic year the chief justice was appointed is a prerequisite to continue in the position. Pushparaj was nominated by former President Ayyan Zubair in the 2017-18 academic year without Senate confirmation. He did receive the required two-thirds Senate approval during his Feb. 14 confirmation in the Spring 2019 semester, but the judiciary wrote that they were unsure whether current President Justas Klimavicius's email asking the Senate to vote on his confirmation counted as

a nomination within the current academic year. "Nowhere in this email does it express, either explicitly or implicitly, that President Klimavicius is himself nominating Mr. Pushparaj to be Chief Justice," Wagner wrote in the final decision.

Klimavicius — one of the executive council members named in the case filing — argued later that he would have nominated Pushparaj had he known it would be an issue, according to the final decision. Because he did not claim the email itself was a nomination, the justices decided in the majority opinion that his email did not implicitly nominate the chief justice.

The concurring opinion, written by Momplaisir, argued otherwise.

"Since the constitution states ... the President shall appoint a person to fill said vacated position, the method in which the President appoints a Justice is clearly ambiguous," Momplaisir wrote. "For that reason, the email that President Klimavicius sent to the Senators stating, '... I am asking the Senate to rectify this issue by officially confirming Aravinth Pushparaj as the Chief Justice at tomorrow's Senate meeting' suffices the requirement of presidential appointment."

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## Scientist discusses climate change denial

By Maya Brown  
Staff Writer

Dr. Michael E. Mann, a prominent climate scientist, geophysicist and professor of atmospheric science at Pennsylvania State University, came to Stony Brook University's Earthstock celebration on Friday, April 19, where he was the university's keynote speaker.

Mann met with *The Statesman* and other student journalists for an interview, where he talked about climate denial in the age of President Donald Trump.

"When it comes to environmental policy, Trump and his administration have pushed it aside," Mann said. "The people who have been appointed to his cabinet have been doubling the reliance on fossil fuels."

Mann called the Trump administration's environmental work a "horror and absolute disaster." He went on to say that Trump's personal agenda caters to his own gratification and appeasing a base concerned over issues like immigration.

Mann advised Hillary Clinton on environmental policy for her 2016 presidential campaign. As a part of her climate council, he urged her to incentivize clean energy, put a price on carbon emissions and work with international partners to lower carbon emissions.

Mann said there's been a significant change in the political debate over climate change since the 2016 election. He added that Republicans have become fearful of large scale changes like the Green New Deal.

He explained as President Trump tries to dismantle the environmental policies of previous administrations, there is a strong youth movement battling his efforts.

"Young people, in particular, should vote because elections do have consequences and they matter, so we should make sure we elect politicians who will do our bidding, instead of interests in fossil fuel," Mann said.

Mann admits that speaking out is not always easy. He said that he's been harassed by the fossil fuel industry and some conservative foundations for his work in

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## Students honor victims of Sri Lanka terror attacks

By Cindy Mizaku  
Contributing Writer

On a chilly Thursday evening, the sound of the Humanities fountain's rippling waters felt louder than ever, as they were underscored by the overwhelming silence of students, faculty and staff coming together to pray. Gathered around a trail of candles, the Stony Brook community listened to Amrita Sathasivam and Aravinth Pushparaj, members of the Sri Lankan Student Association, as they remembered the lives of the victims of the Easter terror attacks in Sri Lanka.

"I think it is a gracious act that everyone has gathered here despite the cold and rain," Pushparaj, who is originally from Sri Lanka, said. "All of you have gathered here in solidarity to stand with our friends and the lives that have been lost in Sri Lanka and of the lives that are suffering," he continued.

Sathasivam and Pushparaj shared their fears of growing up in Sri Lanka where the nation was plunged into a civil war for decades.

"I hope that the last of the attack is the last of it because we are a nation that has been recovering from a 30-

year war," said Pushparaj. "We grew up amidst these crises. We grew up scared, running under the beds or tables every time we heard a blast."

Sathasivam, whose mother woke her up to share the horrifying news, said, "My first question was: is my grandma okay, is my family okay? The church that first got blasted was a church that was frequently visited by my family."

A crowd of Stony Brook University students representing the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), as well as various Muslim and Catholic organizations on campus, came together amongst local Sri Lankan mothers and children to show support for the grieving nation, which has reported about 100 dead so far in the aftermath of the attacks.

The USG-sponsored vigil also remembered the lives of over 130 killed in an attack on a village in central Mali.

Sathasivam, a junior health science major, recited an original poem titled, "Together."

"We were together praying before evil descended upon us. A bomb was blasted. Our hearts stopped beating and there was silence. Everyone stayed silent," she read. "But our fu-

ture won't fall apart. We won't bow down to terrorists. Our words will bind in unity. The world will hear about us."

Sathasivam and Pushparaj reminded the mourning crowd that love and support triumphs hate and that pointing fingers is never the solution in times of great sorrow. They said that fear can be overcome when it is met with lending hands within the community and distant ones.

Catholic Campus Minister, Felicia Viscusi, led a prayer in honor of Sri Lanka's victims who died while attending church on one of the most important holy days for Christians around the world. The prayer was accompanied by a moment of silence, thinking of the lives lost to such a devastating attack, communal sacrifice and the power that resides in togetherness.

"We ask you to bring peace to our families and friends who are grieving at this time and throughout the whole world," she read.

Representing Stony Brook University's Muslim community, Hammaad Shah, a second-year dental student, condemned the religious extremists who committed the acts of violence.



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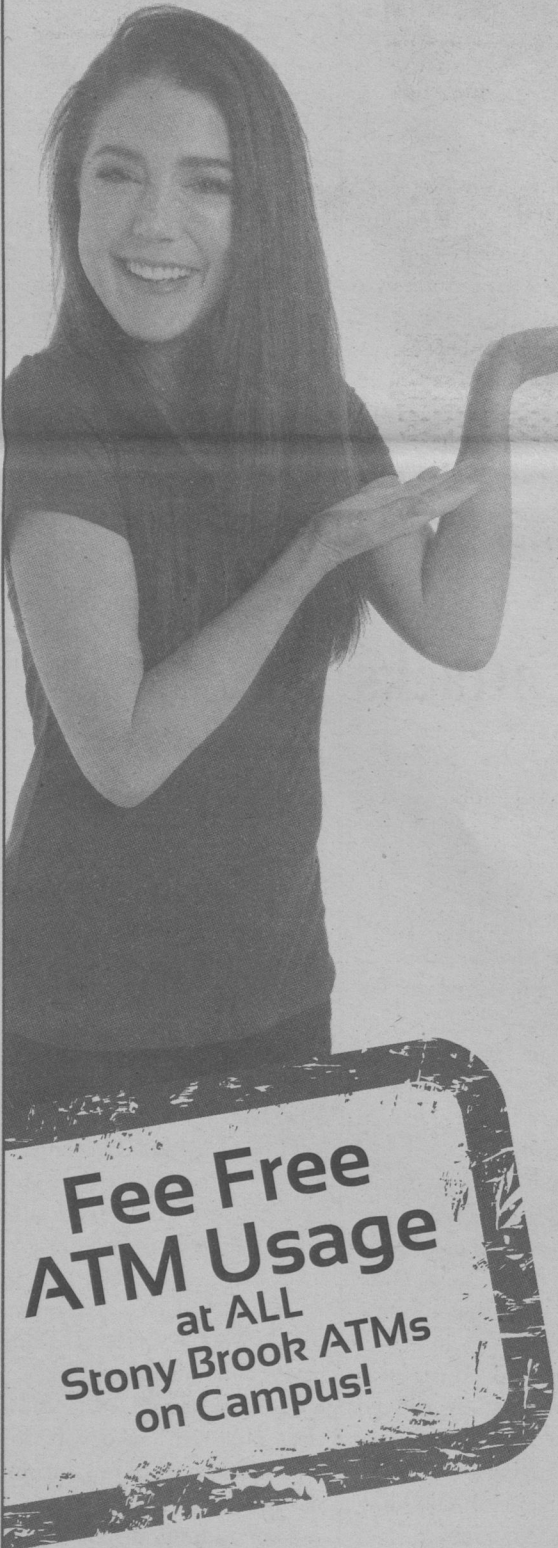


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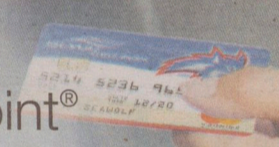
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## SBU student publishes science fiction novel

By Elisha Asif  
Contributing Writer

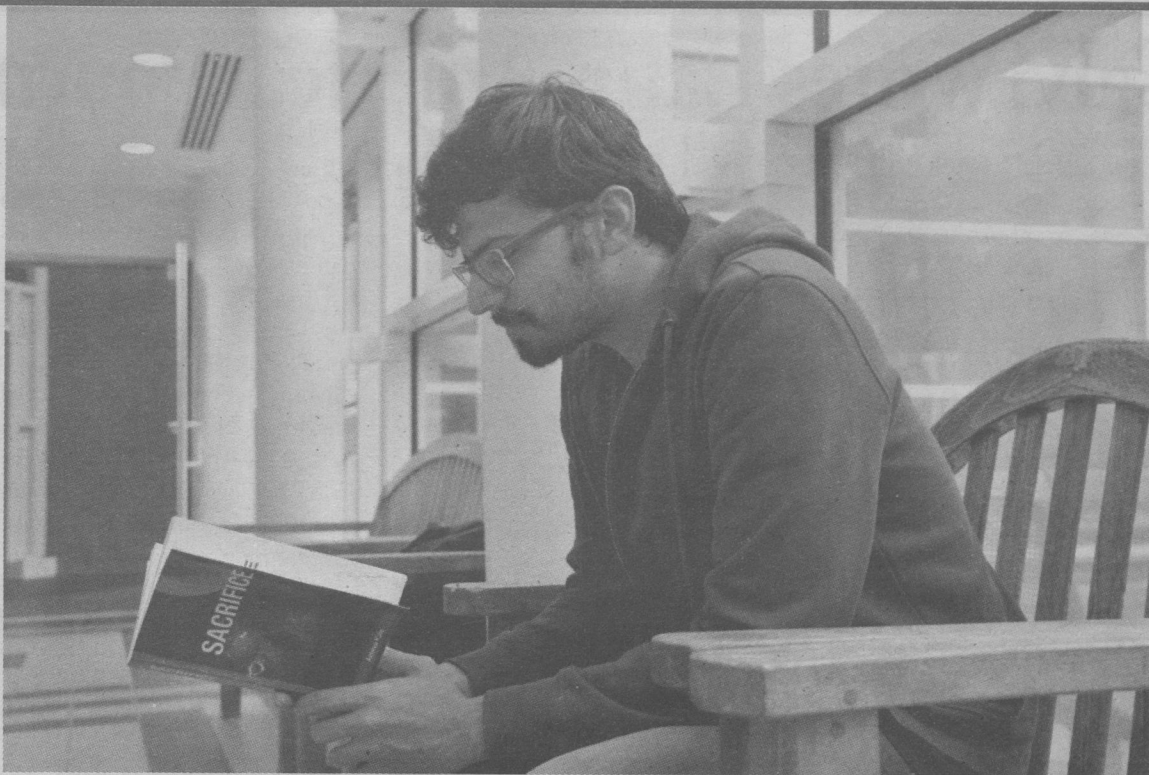
Long before Ameya Kale, a graduate student at Stony Brook University, started writing characters with philosophical problems, it was the simple picture books that his mother would give him that sparked his interest in reading. This hobby became a passion that followed him into his early teens as he discovered the mystery genre.

Kale published his debut novel, "Sacrifice," in 2016 before he arrived to America two years ago from Pune, India, to work on his master's in mechanical engineering at SBU. He hopes to continue to work in engineering and build a literary career in New York.

The plot in "Sacrifice" surrounds the protagonist, Henry Ashford, who is a scientist living happily with his wife. Due to a series of incidents, Ashford finds himself in a spiral of history, philosophy and physics and soon he begins to unravel secrets about the human race.

"It all comes down to a decision the protagonist has to make," Kale said. "The only way to save mankind is to destroy it first."

"Sacrifice," which turned out to be 298 pages and approximately 65,000 words, started out as an idea that Kale posted on his Facebook for discussion. He noticed that, as the posts became



ALEEZA KAZMI / THE STATESMAN

**Stony Brook University graduate mechanical engineering student Ameya Kale reading from his novel, "Sacrifice." He published his 298 page sci-fi novel in 2016.**

longer, people were losing interest in the post after looking at the "read more" icon under the Facebook status. Thus, he began his first book.

"The core idea was the same, but many different concepts came together and I had a plot out of nowhere," Kale said.

"Sacrifice" doesn't only have a sci-fi audience; it gained readers from SBU's engineering department, including students and faculty.

"Engineering is an art ... you take these rigorous courses, you learn the material and it's very rote and you don't get the chance to exercise your creativity," Jon Longtin, a mechanical engineering professor at SBU and one of Kale's readers, said. "Even a little taste of things creative I think would be an incredible experience for them."

While Enid Blyton, author of teen adventure novels like "Famous Five," paved the way for

Kale's curiosity, authors like Dan Brown and Steve Berry introduced him to the mystery genre that kept him tossing and turning at night. Kale couldn't get enough of their plots, in which he sought secret societies and treasure hunts.

Among all the authors that Kale has read, he said that Ayn Rand influenced him the most.

"That just hit me," Kale said regarding the mark "Atlas Shrugged" by Rand left on him. Kale recently moved on from mysteries and thrillers to more philosophical fiction.

Engineers working as artists are fairly common in India, Kale said. He pointed to artists like author Chetan Bhagat and actors Sushant Singh Rajput, Kriti Sanon and Vicky Kaushal who all pursued their choice of art only after they received their college degrees in engineering.

"It's a general demographic in India," Kale said. "If you have a

hobby that isn't supposed to earn you big money, your parents won't give you the freedom to pursue it."

Abhilash Kulkarni, an SBU alumnus and a friend of Kale, said Kale is as interested in engineering as much as reading and writing. But being a full-time student and a writer adds a twist to Kale's social life.

"He carries his laptop around," Kulkarni said. "We can be having a conversation while he edits and writes ... he's always busy."

For now, Kale plans on graduating in May with his mechanical engineering degree and finding a job within the field. As for writing, he plans on staying just as busy as he continues working on his short story series, "Chronicles of Death" which focuses on the conversations that take place between Death (an entity in a human-like figure) and the deceased humans as Death leads them to the underworld.

## Scientist discusses climate change under Trump

Continued from page 1

environmental advocacy. Climate change deniers have even tried to discredit his famous hockey stick graph, a visual that shows how human activity has led to unprecedented changes in our global climate.

Mann pointed out that those who proactively deny climate change are only a tiny minority of the population. "There is a danger if we allow them [climate change deniers] to have too much of a role in this situation," he said.

**"Tiny actions will still get you involved and it tends to lead you down a path towards higher engagement."**

-Michael Mann  
Professor of atmospheric science at Pennsylvania State University

He said that this minority group is not aware that there is a scientific consensus on climate change, and he believes they're simply victims of a misinformation campaign.

Although climate change is a global issue, Mann said it is important to focus on both the individual and collective actions we can take to save the planet.

"Tiny actions will still get you involved and it tends to lead you down a path towards higher engagement," he said. "Most importantly, we need to elect politicians who will act on this problem and create public awareness."

Despite the challenges posed by climate change, Mann said that he remains optimistic. He said much of his positive outlook stems from the conversations he has with college students and other young people who have played a significant role in fighting against climate change. He pointed to young environmental activists like Jolante Vogel and Greta Thunberg.

Mann urged the group of students interviewing him to work to make a difference.

"Students demand and seek change, and it always starts with college campuses."

## Judiciary unanimously votes to remove chief justice

Continued from page 1

In his case filing, Machkasov asked whether or not voting to confirm a chief justice candidate without a hearing from a Senate committee first is a violation of USG code. The judiciary found that, according to the USG code, the Vetting and Legislative Review Committee must review anyone appointed to a paid USG position. The chief justice receives a stipend, so anyone appointed to the position would need to go through the vetting committee. Pushparaj did not.

The judiciary also found that, according to the USG code, any member appointed to the judiciary or executive branches must be vetted by an ad-hoc committee outside of the Vetting and Legislative Review Committee. The judiciary said they believe that USG hasn't been observing this provision when confirming any position.

In order to avoid delegitimizing a large number of executive and judicial members, the judiciary decided to observe past procedure and set it aside for this case. The final court decision, however, requires USG to

follow the provision when making future appointments.

"This is a very important case for appointments and the proper procedure," Associate Justice and senior political science major Thor Hawrey said. "You guys of course can revise the code, revise the constitution to change the procedure, outline a new procedure, but until that happens this is the proper route."

One other issue discussed in the case was the short notice given to the USG Senate about Pushparaj's confirmation vote. The USG code dictates that any business requiring quorum, or a vote, needs to be added to the meeting's agenda at least 48 hours in advance. The vote was added exactly 22 hours and 54 minutes ahead of the meeting, according to Machkasov's case filing.

Executive Vice President (EVP) Abdelrahman Salama, the other executive council member named in the case, argued that the EVP has final say over procedures. The judiciary disagreed, writing that this power doesn't extend to judicial appointments.

"Article V, Section 4, Clause 1, Subclause b states 'Said appointment [to the Judiciary] shall be in compli-

ance with Article V, Section 3 of the Constitution, and any and all legally binding documents of the USG,'" Wagner wrote in the final decision. "This provision specifically grants the USG the authority to craft regulations for the appointment of members of the Judiciary."

During the case, Pushparaj argued that some justices could not sit on the case because they faced a conflict of interest. Associate justices, however, said that they weren't aware of the judicial bylaws that discuss conflicts of interest before Pushparaj brought them up during the case. These judicial bylaws are not posted online.

Associate justices Hawrey, Wagner and Imad Chaudhry sent Pushparaj an email in January arguing that he wasn't fit to lead the judiciary branch. Among other things, the email claimed that Pushparaj let other USG members meddle in a case regarding the impeachment of two E-board members in the Muslim Students Association. It also claimed that he violated the Constitution by acting on his own without following decisions made by the whole court. It concluded that

Pushparaj did not show that he understood the USG Constitution or supporting documents and asked him to leave the court. They found that he had not been officially confirmed and pointed out that he didn't legally hold the chief justice position.

"If you read the minutes when they are hopefully sent out, that we deliberated this for literally hours on end, I think upwards of five hours, and we went over the specific code," Wagner said. "We had one meeting after the hearing. We went back, looked over the laws, the code, the constitution. We came back. We deliberated more. And then we wrote the opinions afterwards. So it wasn't something that was decided right after and I think that goes to show that we were able to look at this with an open mind."

Momplaisir added that none of the justices' issues with Pushparaj's leadership were factors in the case. Associate justices said that the case results and their meetings' minutes discussing the case were sent to the USG Vice President of Communications, Ian Ouyoung, to be posted online.



# ARTS & CULTURE

## Professor Calvi writes Latin American journalism book

By Cindy Mizaku  
Contributing Writer

Pablo Calvi, an assistant professor at Stony Brook University's School of Journalism, explored the relationship between Latin American journalism and the socio-political identities it embodies. Fittingly, the event took place in a room covered with photographs of an exhibit highlighting the Bracero program, a labor exchange agreement between Mexico and the United States from 1942 to 1964.

Calvi's recently published book, "Latin American Adventures in Literary Journalism," maps out the progression of Anglo American journalism and how it is juxtaposed with Latin America's gradual, rising literacy. In addition to a book reading, Calvi touched on the ways the writing process reflected his identity as a journalist who carries his Latin American roots in the field.

"When I came here, first for a masters and later for a Ph.D., one of the things that caused a bit of a cognitive dissonance in my head was how Latin American journalism was perceived from the point of view of Anglo American journalists," Calvi said.

Colleagues' preconceived notions about Latin American writing and reporting muddled their understandings of Calvi's long-form journalism. Latin American journalism has been reduced to a



PHOTO COURTESY OF BENJAMIN GOLDMAN

### Pablo Calvi, journalism professor, publishes a book called "Latin American Adventures in Literary Journalism."

type of news writing that was "riddled with opinion" and drenched in polarizing ideologies, he said.

The non-partisan and neutral style of Anglo American reporting was in stark contrast with Latin American journalism that valued a storytelling approach seen in "crónicas," narrative

writing that uses elements from the novel, interview and essay.

"There was a certain kind of distance that I could recognize," Calvi said. "And so that, in turn, threw me into a rabbit hole of trying to find out where my roots for this type of writing were from."

Calvi discussed differences in religion, print capitalism, the realms of journalism, fiction and statesmanship writing to identify when and how Latin America branched away from today's English-influenced journalism ethics.

North America democratized knowledge by circulating written ideas like the Bible and newspapers, while the literary sphere in Latin America was controlled by the state. The printing press, according to Calvi, brought journalistic freedoms of independence and accountability that were not yet exercised by Latin Americans during the 1800s.

"In order to have a national identity, you need literature," Calvi said. South America's low literacy rates hindered not only the production and spread of knowledge but also the ability to create a network between communities that could cultivate the nation's multifaceted identity.

When print capitalism began to emerge in Latin America in the 20th century, Calvi stressed that the few people who could read and write were "not enough to cover all the administrative positions of the state, be journalists, fiction writers or novelists."

The production of newspapers and other manifestations of literature served small audiences that, consequently, could not support the

progression of literary institutions where the division of labor was poorly divided, he said.

Calvi associated Latin America's intertwined academies, journalism, fiction writing and statesmanship to an "interruption in the democratic-market continuum." This arises when national tyrants mold regulations within the market to fit their political agendas while producing a growing uncertainty for journalists.

"The narratives that you find in those moments of interruption of the economic, democratic order usually become heavily moralizing," Calvi said. "People do not engage in the idea of distance, obstruction, objectivity with the law."

When legality was blurred, Calvi highlighted that the primary outlet for South American journalists was to adapt to a style of writing that touched people's emotions through colorful narratives.

"This is an incredibly rich topic yet one about which there is very little written," Eric Zolov, an associate professor in the department of history, said. "The way in which Professor Calvi historicized his subject, by locating the roots of journalistic difference with the Anglo model of 'fact-based journalism' all the way to the colonial period, was especially illuminating."

## Africana Studies department hosts talk on masculinity

By Cindy Mizaku  
Contributing Writer

The Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities and the Department of Africana Studies at Stony Brook University invited two South Bronx natives, Mark Anthony Neal and Joan Morgan, to discuss their relationship with feminism while navigating the realms of toxic masculinity.

Neal, who is the chair of the Department of African and African American Studies at Duke University, led the discussion, talking about his own upbringing as a young, black boy from the Bronx learning to embrace black feminism.

"Black feminism is not your enemy," Neal said. "Black feminists are thought as building a wedge within black communities and for me, this becomes important because I have to think about the places and spaces where I was raised."

When mapping out a progressive masculinity, one that embraces vulnerability and gender equality, Neal stressed the importance of coming to terms with black male privilege. Although black men are racially marginalized in society as a whole, he explained that people cannot ignore the gender privilege within black families and communities.

From the time he spent in black women's beauty parlors waiting for his mother to get her hair done, to stumbling upon feminist writers like Patricia Hill Collins on his mother's bookshelves, to fathering his own daughters, Neal explored how different types of feminism have shaped his identity.



CINDY MIZAKU/THE STATESMAN

### South Bronx natives, Mark Anthony Neal and Joan Morgan, discuss toxic masculinity and their relationship with feminism.

By sharing anecdotes of the people who taught him values of accountability, "like the men who weren't necessarily nurturers but they valued education for their children," Neal said, "they knew if a partner or baby mama or wife wasn't going to be there, they had to take on those roles."

Although these acts do not generally fall under conventional feminism, Neal sheds light on the impacts one's cultural background has on their alignment with feminism and their awareness of gender relations. Despite their rejection of the feminist label, members of the South Bronx community adopted progressive gender roles.

Neal explained that the reason many in communities like the South

Bronx reject feminism is because black feminists are often portrayed in a negative light in popular culture and the media. Neal called for a discussion-led education where members of an already-deprived community can create a language where black feminist thought seeps in.

Morgan, a feminist author and a pioneering hip-hop journalist, and Neal, have been lifelong friends since living in the same apartment building in the South Bronx. The two had a dialogue about how to tackle and make sense of feminist movements that aim to dismantle oppressions rooted in patriarchy.

"I feel like we're in a very self-congratulatory moment about progressive politics when really this is where

we should have always been," Morgan said about the aftermaths of celebrating cultural accomplishment like the Me Too movement.

Morgan highlighted that because the movement has placed its attention on Hollywood, feminist thinkers need to talk about how underprivileged communities are disembodied by it. As a feminist thinker, she pushed towards a re-education process that voices the impact of the Me Too movement meeting "cancel culture," the idea of calling out people who are ethically problematic and refusing to support them in the future.

"After we call everyone out, how do we define what accountability looks like?" Morgan said. "How do we give justifiable rep-

arations to people who have been harmed and rehabilitate the people who have done the harm? If we are not having those conversations simultaneously, we are in big trouble."

Together, Morgan and Neal raised questions about the privileges in being exposed to women's and sexuality studies, progressive gender politics that are unacknowledged and the conversations that could promote change in societies where toxic masculinity is reinforced.

The uncertainty of recognizing whether people are "participating in toxic masculinity or that they're victims of toxic masculinity," Morgan stated, "contributes to the ongoing problem where inclusivity and gendered freedoms are not prioritized."

Like Neal, she used her platform to talk about black feminism like the theory of intersectionality, which is the understanding overlapping identities, and its constructive influence in diverse feminist spaces.

"Black feminism is, so in our freedom, no one gets left behind," Morgan said.

Emilio Castillo, a junior sociology major said the talk gave her a new perspective on how to approach toxic masculinity.

"They were building on accountability and call-out culture that doesn't have to be about: 'alright, we are canceling them, they're gone.' It's about a conversation and getting to that level of maybe I can talk to this person, and we can get somewhere."



# SPOILERS: Endgame is an emotional rollercoaster

By Alexander Bakirdan  
Contributing Writer

THIS IS A WARNING TO ANYONE THAT HAS NOT SEEN "AVENGERS: ENDGAME." DO NOT, I REPEAT DO NOT READ PAST THIS POINT IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO SEE SPOILERS FOR THE FILM. I WILL BE SPOILING THE EVENTS OF THE FILM IN THIS REVIEW AND AM NOT RESPONSIBLE IF YOU CHOOSE TO IGNORE THIS WARNING.

Okay, now with that out of the way: OH. MY. GOD. What a movie. I laughed, I cried and then I cried some more. I thought there was no way the movie would be able to live up to the hype it had generated and I have never been so happy to be wrong. It was everything I wanted and more. The movie has already crushed records in the box office, making \$641 million for its opening worldwide.

Right out of the gate they come for your throat with emotional attacks. Hawkeye, the former Avenger who retired to be with his family, played by Jeremy Renner, starts the heartaches. It's a beautiful scene of his family right before they all get snapped away by the events of Infinity War. We see the survivors of the snap gathered together, trying to come up with a plan and we feel their desperation through the screen. Then, immedi-



The official poster for "Avengers: Endgame." The movie premiered domestically on April 24, 2019.

ately some of the survivors decide to take the fight to Thanos. Thor, played by Chris Hemsworth, finally "goes for the head." But it's too late and he knows it. The damage has already been done and Thanos has destroyed the infinity stones.

The Russo brothers do an excellent job of crafting a world that truly feels hopeless, using a time skip to jump to 2023, five years after the events of Infinity War. It's a world where you can tell each character is doing

whatever they can to cope. Most haven't given up, but some, like Natasha, seem to be almost at their breaking point. And then in comes Ant-Man.

The only character not to have experienced the events of Infinity War and the ensuing fallout having been trapped in the Quantum Realm at the time, Paul Rudd's Ant-Man is the perfect catalyst to bring a much-needed spark of hope back to a grimmer, darker Marvel Cinematic Universe

(MCU). With his hopeful optimism, a touch of pseudo-science and a very convoluted explanation of time travel, the Avengers are back in action. Even Tony, played by Robert Downey Jr, who now has more to lose than anyone. He now has a family with his wife Pepper played by Gwyneth Paltrow and five year old daughter Morgan, can't resist getting involved.

Time travel it seems was the very best engine for the MCU to close out the Infinity Saga before Marvel's Phase Four starts and pay tribute to the movies that got it to where it is today. From beautiful homages to the original Avengers movie to little jokes that show how much growth these characters have experienced over the years, the Russo brothers managed to take one of the most complicated and dangerous sci-fi topics and make it work almost perfectly.

The movie dealt me another brutal emotional gut punch about halfway through, when Natasha played by Scarlett Johansson and Hawkeye fight each other in a parallel of the first Avengers movie — only this time, they are fighting to sacrifice themselves for the Soul Stone. Natasha ends up throwing herself from Hawkeye's grasp and I felt the pain he felt as the first of the original Avengers died.

The movie had some nice moments of comic relief, but more often it chose to use time travel

to make me feel emotions that I wasn't necessarily expecting to feel during a superhero movie — at least not so frequently.

Thor meets his now deceased mother again in an emotional reunion that he clearly needed in order to get back on track. Even more unexpectedly, Tony's run-in with his father is such a touching and heartfelt moment that my eyes actually watered.

Now of course with time travel you always run the risk of making past antagonists into bigger current threats and boy do they ever, as a Thanos from 2014, played by Josh Brolin, makes his way to 2023, seeking to destroy the Avengers and claim all six infinity stones in one fell swoop. But in Endgame, the Thanos we meet is younger and much more arrogant, not yet tempered by the pain and frustration of the betrayals he experiences in future films. His greed is clear from the beginning, and this makes him the villain we truly deserve for this final film in the saga.

It was everything I have ever wanted from this franchise right up to the final moments in which Tony does what he knew he had to do to win the day. The minutes that follow had me shook to the core, and a beautiful and heartfelt ending really sent the tears rolling down my cheeks. Now, if you'll excuse me I'm going to go have a cheeseburger.



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*The Statesman* is a student-run, student-written incorporated publication at Stony Brook University in New York. The paper was founded as *The Socolian* in 1957 at Oyster Bay, the original site of Stony Brook University. In 1975, *The Statesman* was incorporated as a not-for-profit, student-run organization. Its editorial board, writers and multimedia staff are all student volunteers.

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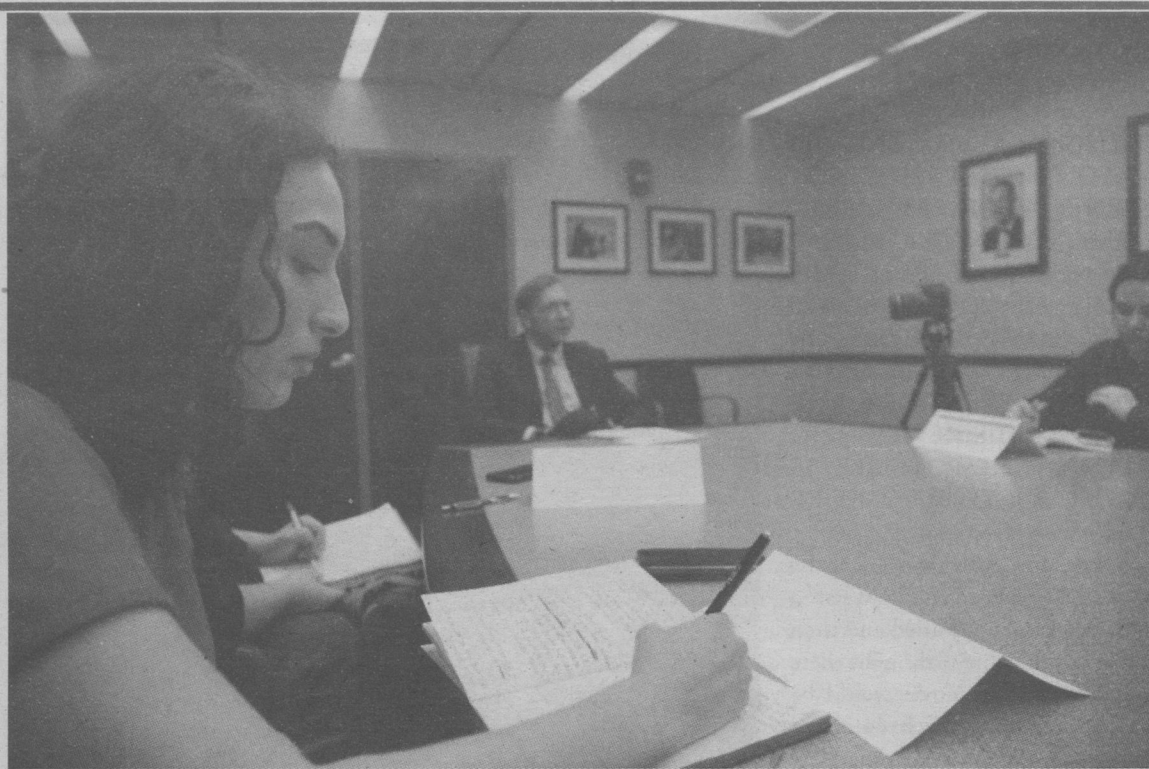
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ALEEZA KAZMI/THE STATESMAN

Rebecca Liebson, news editor for *The Statesman*, jots down notes during a Student Media Roundtable with University President Samuel L. Stanley Jr. on Friday, Feb. 22.

## Media Relations was a nightmare for me

By Rebecca Liebson  
News Editor

As I made my way down to the moldy, windowless office of *The Statesman* in the basement of the old Union Building for the first time my freshman year, I had no idea what a big role this organization would come to play in my life.

Over the next two years, I covered my share of important stories, but I guess you could say my “big break” came in September of my junior year when I covered my first Faculty Senate meeting. The resulting story gave readers a glimpse into what would become an ongoing saga of budget cuts, departmental closures and faculty layoffs.

In the weeks after the article was published, it was shared around a thousand times. But not everyone was so enthusiastic about the story.

On Sept. 17, 2017, I woke up to an email from University Media Relations Officer, Lauren Sheprow. Most students have probably never heard of Sheprow, but within the School of Journalism (SoJ), she’s somewhat of an infamous character. That’s because Sheprow is in charge of responding to student journalists’ requests for interviews, quotes and additional information.

Well, at least that’s her job in theory.

In practice, Sheprow is there to shut stories down. It doesn’t matter if the story is negative or positive — Sheprow’s office seems to operate under the theory that no news is good news.

According to her email, Sheprow wanted to meet in her office so she could “fact check” some things in my story. But when I went to chat with her, it turned out that there were no factual inaccuracies.

The meeting could be used as a case study in intimidation tactics. Sheprow, along with one of her subordinates, spent the next hour questioning me about my tone and word choice.

They seemed particularly annoyed that I had described University President Samuel L. Stanley Jr. as having his head down for the majority of the meeting.

“Even if that did happen, you should understand the perception that might give the reader, that the president wasn’t listening,” Sheprow told me. “Those who know the president know that he often puts his head down when he is listening.”

My meeting with Sheprow was not an isolated incident, but part of a pattern of university officials trying to suppress student journalists at Stony Brook — the only SUNY institution with a journalism school.

Media Relations tries to stonewall students with a “Journalism Student Inquiry” form. If students want a response from Media Relations, they have no choice but to fill out the form. Faculty and staff are also advised to refer student journalists who reach out to them to media relations. Aside from asking students to provide the names of their sources, the form requires students to send their questions in advance — a practice that is strictly forbidden by professors within the School of Journalism.

Even after the form is submitted, there is no guarantee that Media Relations will respond to your request on time, or at all for that matter.

Last year, a news writer wanted to do a feature on President Stanley’s office hours, an initiative that gives students the chance to talk with the president one-on-one in hopes of increasing transparency. After filling out the form, the writer was told that they would not be allowed to ask the president any additional questions about this program and all the information they needed could be found on his website.

Another time, a writer reached out to Media Relations to get more information on a new endowed professorship in the ancient Tamil language. Even after reaching out to Media Relations, their requests were never fulfilled. A week later, that same story appeared in *Newsday*.

In the cases where Media Relations responds, they usually send students pre-written statements rather than help them set up face-to-face interviews.

More often than not, these statements consist of empty platitudes instead of actual answers.

When students choose not to use these canned statements, they run the risk of being chastised by Sheprow and her associates. One particularly egregious example of this took place in 2017, after my colleagues and I wrote a story about the university’s decision to let go of 20 professors in the Program in Writing and Rhetoric. Leading up to the publication of that article, I spent nearly a month trying to score an interview with then-College of Arts and Sciences Dean Sacha Kopp. In the end, the only response I got was a meaningless statement sent to me by Kopp’s press secretary, Rachel Rodriguez. Instead of using the prepared message, I made the executive decision to include a quote that Kopp gave at a town hall meeting, which I felt was more revealing.

This did not sit well with Sheprow and Rodriguez. Rather than approaching me directly, the two went over my head, scheduling a meeting with *The Statesman*’s then editor-in-chief. According to an anonymous article penned by a reporter from *The Press* who witnessed the meeting, “They spent almost an hour questioning the journalistic ethics of the paper and harping on the unpublished statement from the Dean.”

I’ll be leaving Stony Brook in a couple of weeks, so my own problems with Media Relations have hopefully come to an end. Still, it’s crucial that the campus community understands that there is a team of university staff that has not only prevented student journalists from completing their classwork but also put a chokehold on their first amendment rights. Keep in mind these are public employees working at an institution of higher education. Their primary goal should be to nurture the students who pay their salaries, not guard Stony Brook at all costs as if it is some sort of corporation. In a time when fake news is rampant, giving journalists the freedom and access to do their jobs well has never been more important. It’s not just SoJ students that get hurt by these obstructive policies, it’s the whole school that’s suffering from a lack of accurate information.



# Stony Brook is segregating its disabled students and needs to be held accountable

By Mike Adams  
Opinions Editor

Stony Brook University Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Richard Gatteau spoke at an Undergraduate Student Government Senate meeting on Thursday, April 18, to address concerns about accessibility issues on campus brought to light by student activists. Gatteau claimed that every handicap accessibility button on campus had been repaired in the weeks following the student-led campaign.

"When we became aware of the concern about the accessibility buttons three weeks ago, I was informed that the facilities team did a check across the entire campus, and at

That claim is categorically false. Anybody who spends even a small amount of time on campus can recognize that.

Many of the handicap accessibility buttons around campus are busted, in addition to a legion of other violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) around the school.

We've written about it; there's been a demonstration.

In all fairness, that door may well have been broken after Gatteau made his claim, but there's plenty of other buttons, like the one at the bottom of the stairwell in the back of Frey, that have been broken for far longer.

I walk past that button twice a week to get to one of my classes. It's

completely non functional, and it's been busted for a month at least. It's not the only one.

If this seems like a minor issue, it's important to remember that what might be a small convenience to an able-bodied student is a major obstacle to anybody in a wheelchair or walking with crutches. For people with a physical disability, a door without a working handicap button might as well not be there.

This issue is much, much bigger than just one button.

Whether the dean knew his statement was untrue and lied or merely did not do the requisite amount of research to find out is

irrelevant. It would be easy to fling blame at him or his office, to call them callous or careless. But this issue isn't about one man who may not have been properly armed with the facts when he set off to defend his employers. It's about a broken system at a university that likes to talk the talk about inclusivity, yet so often falls short.

A lot of people are privileged enough that they can ignore what this problem really is: a civil rights issue.

The whole purpose of the ADA is to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. If the facilities and resources available to disabled students, like handicap-ac-

cessible doors and parking spaces, aren't working properly, then those students are being treated like second-class citizens.

Take West Apartments' new J building, for example. West J has a row of handicapped parking spaced right by the front entrance, but doesn't have a single elevator to bring students to its upper floors. If your first thought is "students with disabilities can just live on the first floor" then you're part of the problem.

What if a disabled student has a friend on the second floor? What if their classmates are meeting to study for a test?

We tend to use the word "segregation" as shorthand for racial segregation in this country. But that's exactly what SBU's failure to provide accessible facilities and resources creates: a system of segregation by mobility.

This is a moral outrage, not to mention a legal landmine that's led to lawsuits at colleges across the country.

So the question that Stony Brook has to answer is simple: do you want to treat disabled students with dignity before the shame of a lawsuit, or after?

Falsehoods spoken to the student government will not do. Empty platitudes designed to defend and mitigate rather than acknowledge and treat will not suffice.

There is one solution to the problem the school faces: deal with it.

"A lot of people are privileged enough that they can ignore what this problem really is: a civil rights issue."

that time, repaired those that were malfunctioning and reported that all were operational at that time," Gatteau said.



EMMA HARRIS/THE STATESMAN

Students and activists march across campus to protest issues with accessibility and violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on Wednesday, April 10.

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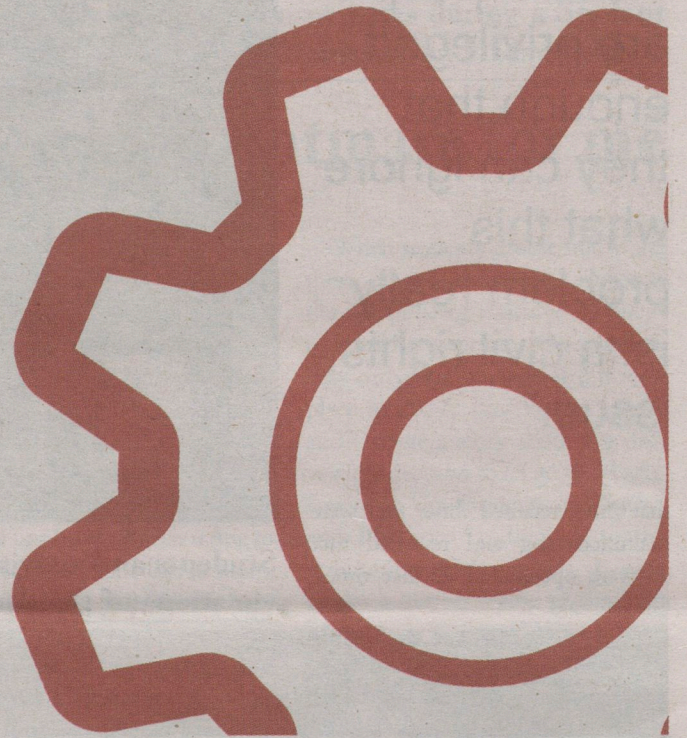
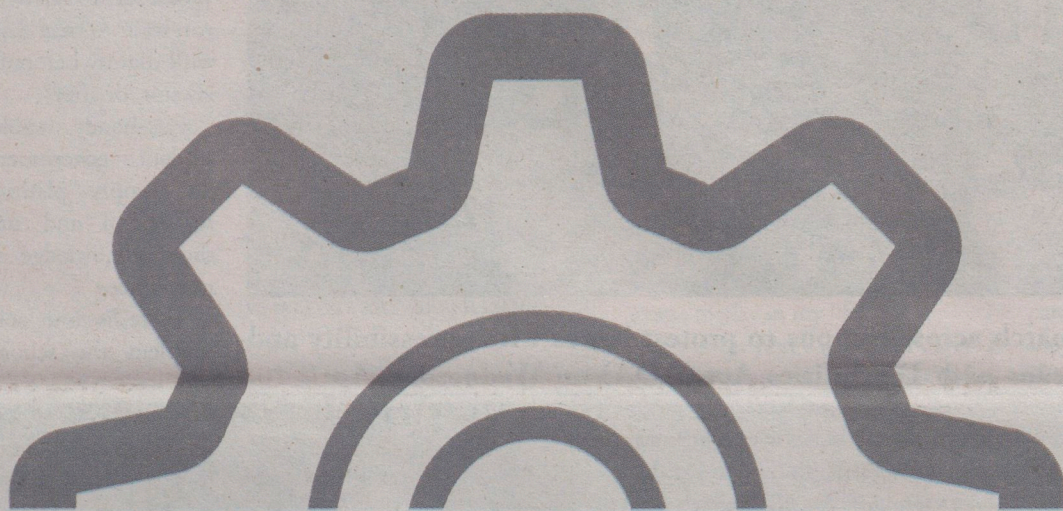
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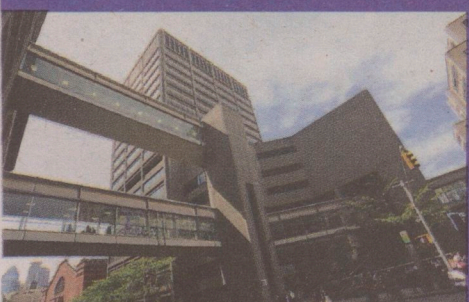
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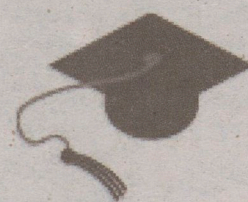
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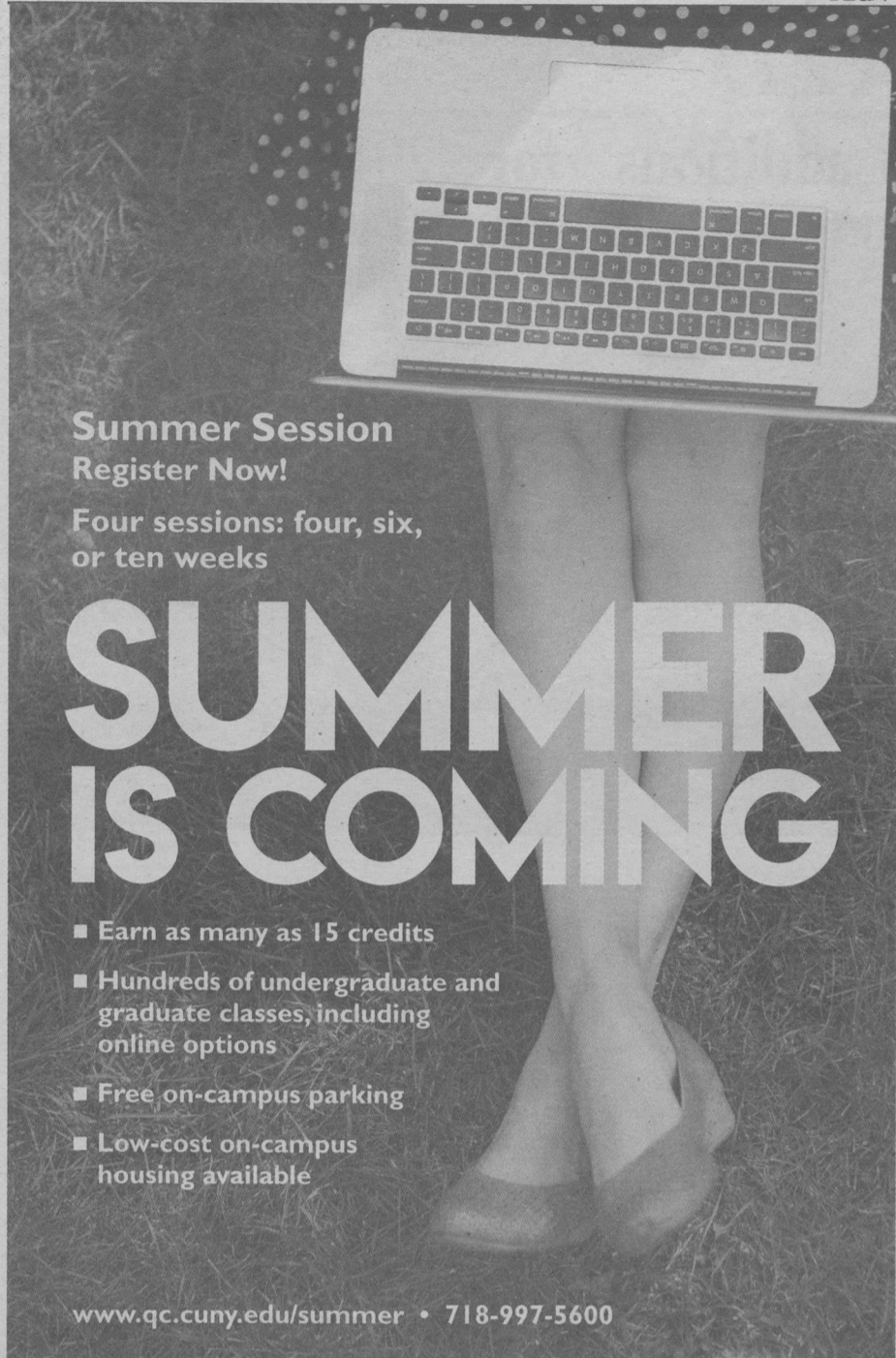
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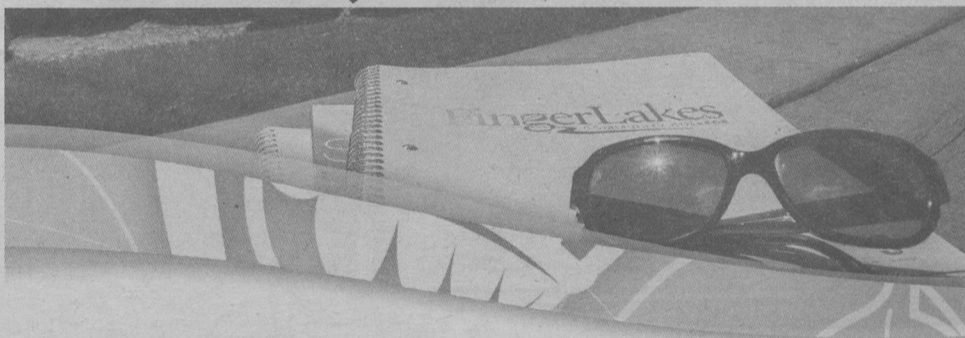
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# SPORTS

## Men's Basketball brings on new additions for 2019-20 season

By Ethan Tam  
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, April 17, Stony Brook Men's Basketball announced the signing of two players, Mouhamadou Gueye and Tyler Stephenson-Moore, as new additions to the team's roster for the upcoming 2019-20 season.

"We are very excited to add such quality students and players to our program," head coach Geno Ford said in a press release. "We wanted to continue to emphasize acquiring high-character guys who happen to also be good basketball players. Both of these guys have had major success in the classroom and on the basketball court."

April 17 is the initial date in the regular period for Division I college basketball players to sign a National Letter of Intent, officially binding student-athletes to their institution for the upcoming season. Stephenson-Moore had verbally committed to Stony Brook in February after receiving offers from other schools such as Bryant and Robert Morris, while Gueye announced his verbal commitment in early April. Both signed their National Letters of Intent to join the Seawolves' roster for next season.

Gueye is a 6'10", 190-pound forward from Staten Island, New York who is transferring from Monroe College, a junior college in the Bronx. Making 21 starts for the Monroe Mustangs last season, Gueye led the team with 53 blocks while averaging less than 22 minutes per game. Gueye averaged 6.9 points per game while shooting 45.6%, ramping up his offensive output in the final games of the season. Currently a redshirt-sophomore, Gueye will have two years of eligibility left with Stony Brook.

"Mo is a very talented player who can play at multiple positions," Ford said of Gueye. "He is a great defender and rim protector but also played point guard in high school. He has a very high ceiling and continues to grow into his body after being 5'9" as a sophomore in high school."

Stephenson-Moore is a 6'3", 170-pound guard from Port Washington, New York. Hailing from Long Island Lutheran High School (LuHi) in Nassau County, the current high school senior averaged 14.1 points per game this season, guiding LuHi to the New York State Class AA State Federation championship title. Ste-



COURTESY OF STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

**Head coach Geno Ford at a Stony Brook Men's Basketball game. The team signed two new players for next season, Mouhamadou Gueye and Tyler Stephenson-Moore.**

phenson-Moore was named by Newsday's All-Long Island team and earned the MVP of the 2019 LuHi Postseason Invitational. He shot 42% from beyond the arc in his senior year, converting 53 three-pointers.

"Tyler will add some offensive versatility to our program," Ford said. "He has good lateral quick-

ness and long arms and is also a terrific shooter, making him dangerous on both ends of the floor. He has a high upside and is an excellent perimeter defender, while also possessing tremendous athleticism and shooting touch on the offensive end."

Both Gueye and Stephenson-Moore will look to provide

an immediate impact for the Seawolves next season. With roster spots open as a result of senior guard Jaron Cornish's graduation and the outgoing transfers of sophomore guard Corry Long and freshman guard Jules Moor, there is an opportunity for Stony Brook's newest players to shine.

## Kennedy named Player of The Week

By Sasha Podzorov  
Staff Writer

For the past month, junior midfielder Ally Kennedy has been on a hot streak, helping Stony Brook win 10 of their last 11 games — and the higher-ups in women's collegiate lacrosse have certainly taken note.

On Monday, April 22, Kennedy received America East Offensive Player of the Week honors for the second straight week.

toughest week of play (against then-ranked Johns Hopkins, conference rival Albany and 19th ranked USC), she once again shone.

Kennedy recorded 22 points off 16 goals, including a career-high seven against Albany. The performance included six assists and rounded out her stat sheet with two caused turnovers, six ground balls and 20 draw controls.

For Kennedy, playing at this level has become the norm. She is among the nation's best in most offensive stats, including fifth in the country in total goals with 64, sixth in goals per game with four, fourth in shots per game with nine and first in shots on goal per game with seven.

A member of the U.S. National Women's Lacrosse President's Cup roster this past November, Kennedy has cemented herself among the best players at the collegiate level.

She was named to the 2019 Tewaaraton Award watch list, an honor given to the most outstanding men's and women's players at the end of each season.

Kennedy's leadership will be integral in the Seawolves' quest to win their seventh straight conference championship and secure a top-tier seed in the NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship Tournament.

Stony Brook Women's Lacrosse's next matchup comes against the University of New Hampshire on Sunday, April 28 at Wildcat Stadium in Durham, New Hampshire. This is the team's final regular season matchup. The Seawolves look to extend their conference record to an undefeated 7-0. The team has finished their season undefeated in conference play since 2014. Their last conference loss was against Vermont 8-7 in overtime.

## Yeboah exploring options

By Chris Parkinson  
Sports Editor

Redshirt-junior guard Akwasi Yeboah has visited Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, according to college basketball insider Jon Rothstein. The English guard is also expecting to visit Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas this weekend as well.

Yeboah led the team in multiple categories last season, including a 16.7 points average in 32 games played. His 66 three-pointers, 102 free throws and 245 rebounds also were team-bests. Yeboah has played a vital role in the Seawolves' offense, accumulating 1,317 points in his three-year career with a total career

average of 13.9 points per game. He sits at sixth all-time in points at Stony Brook.

Rutgers head coach Steve Pikiell was a former head coach at Stony Brook and led the Seawolves to their first NCAA Tournament berth in the 2015-2016 season. His Rutgers team posed a 14-17 overall record and a 7-13 record in the Big Ten Conference. He recruited Yeboah during his tenure at Stony Brook and brought him to the team.

The possible departure of Yeboah could mark the fifth change for the team next season, following the departure of head coach Jeff Boals, the transfer of freshman guard Jules Moor and sophomore guard Corry Long and the graduation of senior guard Jaron Cornish.



EMMA HARRIS/THE STATESMAN

**Junior midfielder Ally Kennedy in a game against Stanford. She was named the A.E Player of The Week.**

In the Seawolves' only game last week, a 20-4 routing of Binghamton, Kennedy scored five goals along with one assist while also winning five draw controls and securing two ground balls.

The week prior, in what could be considered the Seawolves'

National media caught wind of her performance. Not only did Kennedy win the America East Offensive Player of the Week, but she also was named both the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA) and Brine Lacrosse/US Lacrosse player of the week.



EMMA HARRIS/THE STATESMAN

**Redshirt-junior guard Akwasi Yeboah against Binghamton. Yeboah has visited three DI programs.**

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