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## Establishing a SACNAS Chapter at Stony Brook University

by Sixto Taveras Lopez, BA '21 (Boston College), PhD '27

Being a college student can be an overwhelming experience and one filled with many questions about what life after graduation looks like. Finding people that you can lean on or a community that you can call home is a challenge in itself. This is especially true for a first-generation Afro-Latino college student like myself. In 2020, as a junior at Boston College, all of these issues were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many other students around the world, I had to move off-campus and isolate at home away from professors, graduate students, and other faculty who were sources of knowledge and advice. All of a sudden, I felt like I was on my own as I prepared to take on either a job market in a global pandemic or a graduate school application process that no one in my family had ever experienced.

Thankfully, one of my undergraduate advisors sent me an email mentioning that a small group of faculty were interested in starting a SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans/Hispanics in Science) chapter at Boston College and needed some students to lead the effort. Without knowing much about SACNAS, I decided to take on the responsibility of meeting new people and having the opportunity to take on a position of leadership. This ended up being one of the best decisions as an undergraduate student. SACNAS is a national scientific society directed toward underrepresented and underserved communities and allies. SACNAS provides leadership and mentorship opportunities in STEM careers and assists with the advancement of college undergraduates and graduate students as well as professionals. As a SACNAS member, I made great connections, acquired time management and effective communication skills, and found a community that I could count on. I was also fortunate to be elected as vice president of the chapter and was excited to contribute to the growth of the chapter however I could. Meetings with SACNAS members throughout my senior year led to great friendships and conversations with affiliated faculty were so helpful in my decision to apply to graduate school. The application process was so much smoother talking to people who had gone

through the process themselves and their willingness to share their experiences as graduate students was very beneficial and something that I will always be grateful for. As a SACNAS member, I was able to host events such as Q&As with scientists in both academic and non-academic careers. Hearing about their experiences was important for all the undergraduates who attended as well as the SACNAS members who organized it. Even with the pandemic making it difficult to collaborate, we were able to host social events such as virtual game nights and socially-distanced lunches which was great for community-building.

Overall, my experience as a SACNAS member was unforgettable as I made lasting connections and learned many valuable skills through unique educational experiences. SACNAS was an important part of my time as an undergrad and coming into Stony Brook University, I knew that I wanted other undergrads, graduate students, and professionals to reap the benefits of being a SACNAS member as well. I, along with Dr. Dianna Padilla and Dr. Elizabeth Watson, began our efforts to establish a SACNAS chapter at Stony Brook as soon as the semester started. Our first meeting was held at the Center for Inclusive Education (CIE) and we had a full room of people interested in contributing to the effort and excited about what the future holds for the SBU SACNAS chapter. We are currently in the process of recruiting both undergraduate and graduate students and becoming an official Stony Brook club by gaining institutional recognition. On October 19th, we received great news that our submission for step 1 of the New Club/Organization Process was approved! We have also begun discussing potential activities we could host at SBU such as an Art & STEM showcase, science communication workshops, lab tours, and visiting K-12 schools for teaching and mentoring opportunities. The SBU SACNAS community looks forward to making a positive impact on the Stony Brook community and beyond.

If you are interested in joining SACNAS, Sixto can be contacted by email at [sixto.taveraslopez@stonybrook.edu](mailto:sixto.taveraslopez@stonybrook.edu).

## Professor of the Month

Professor Susan Somerville, RN, MA  
Program in Public Health



by Allie Moore, ECE Graduate Program PhD '27

Professor Susan Somerville, RN, MA is the Associate Director of Health Practice Management in the Master of Healthcare Administration Program at Stony Brook University. She has previously served as the Executive Director of North Shore University Hospital, President of Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital, Vice President of Clinical Transformation at Peconic Bay Medical Center, and Vice President of Strategic Initiatives for Northwell Health's Eastern Region. As the recipient of November's Professor of the Month, we met via Zoom to discuss her still-evolving career trajectory, approach to mentoring, and appreciation for the sun.

**Professor Somerville** shows her bundle of raw wood pencils to the camera as she delves into her nursing background unprompted. This inclination to connect and tune into the unspoken signals of the moment has woven a thread through her career, leading her from nursing to executive roles in hospital management.

A quick highlight reel of her professional life would start straightforward: a five-year-old certain about being a nurse becomes an RN at twenty. For fifteen years she works in critical care, tending to cardiovascular patients. It's the early 90s, the healthcare system is evolving and the work in the hospital outpaces individual facilities and evolves into healthcare systems. In her own words, her path begins to zig-zag. There are no formal titles, but she begins to fill gaps in an administrative structure that does not yet exist. No one's told her to do this, but she begins routinely visiting other system hospitals asking, 'need anything?' This evolves to the role of VP of Cardiac services across a health system. She adds degrees, a BS and MA along the way. Next, she is offered the role of Executive Director of North Shore University Hospital.

'You're never fully prepared for your next job until you're in it' is a trade secret she shares with students each semester. They're in the last year of their master's program and she's guiding them through their hundred-hour field placement to gain health management experience. Her method: answer two fundamental questions and engage in self-reflection. One, what are you passionate about? Two, what scares you? That is what you should spend your hundred hours on. Her teaching style centers around leadership theory, case studies, and professional development. She encourages her students to connect their theoretical knowledge with their real-world observations and experiences during their fieldwork. Throughout the semester, the emphasis is on helping each student cultivate their unique brand of leadership, a skill they will continue to refine throughout their careers.

Retired from her executive career, she now has more time for the sun. Her hiking boots wait in the back of her car in case the day is exceptionally beautiful. She's taken up photography, with sunrise and sunset as her favorite subjects. She has more time to learn through Mother Nature, about how location impacts the visual of the sunrise and sunset. She continues to mentor outside of her role as a professor. She states that she learns as much from her mentees as they learn from her. "I'm not finished," she promises, alluding to zig-zagging, to gaining knowledge and to sharing it.

## Upcoming Events Across Campus

**Jubilé Latino:**  
 "Jubilé Paint n' Sip"  
 October 30; 7-8pm  
 Alan S. deVries Center  
 Join Jubilé Latino for a Latin themed Paint n' Sip. Snacks will be provided.

"Latin Dance Night"  
 November 1; 9:30-10:20pm  
 Union Ballroom  
 Dance the night away with LA FAMILIA! Join us for our annual dance social in the Union Ballroom November 1st from 9:30 to 10:30pm!! Come learn new moves from the best of Jubile Latino that will be sure to have your dancing skills on point! Bring a friend or come alone, it doesn't matter! We want to see YOUR moves 😊  
 NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED 💬 Co-sponsored with LASO.

**Psychology Student Alliance, Neuroscience Axis, and Psi Chi:**  
 "Psychology Research Fair"

November 1; 12:30-2pm  
 SAC Ballroom B

The Psychology Student Alliance, NeuroScience Axis and Psi Chi Honor Society will be collaborating to host a Psychology Research Fair. We will be having 6 research labs present, we hope to see you there! Funded by USG.

**Pagan Student Society:**

"Spirit World Holidays"  
 November 6; 5:30-8pm  
 SAC 305

Join Pagan Student Society in learning about the origins of Halloween and how it connects to other spiritual holidays like Samhain, Dia de Los Muertos, and All Saints day! Come for FREE snacks, learn about the movie Coco, see a Samhain altar, get education about various cultures & how they celebrate spirits around this time (complete with Mexican chamoy candy and Halloween candy) and make your own Halloween wall decoration! All are welcome, we encourage you to wear spooky makeup or outfits! Funded by USG.

**Taiko Tides:**

"Fried Oreo Fundraiser"  
 November 8; 1-2:30pm  
 SAC Lobby

SBU Taiko Tides will be selling homemade fried Oreos in the SAC Lobby to help raise funds for the club! Funded by USG.

"Fall Showcase x Paper Lantern Workshop"

November 8; 6-8pm  
 DeVries Center- 200

Come watch SBU Taiko Tides at our electrifying Fall Showcase taking place on the second floor of the DeVries Center! Be prepared to be mesmerized by our jaw-dropping performances and unleash your creative side at our Paper Lantern Workshop (no previous skills required). Complimentary snacks and beverages will be provided. Funded by USG.

**Undergraduate Student Government:**

"Light the Brook"  
 November 8; 4pm  
 Admin Fountain

The Undergraduate Student Government at Stony Brook University is hosting their annual Light the Brook event, continuing the tradition of lighting of the Academic Mall. The ceremony will include performances, guest speakers, club tabling and a countdown special before we light the academic mall with vibrant, beautiful lights. Please join us as we begin the festive season as we will have giveaways, hot chocolate and desserts. Sponsored by USG and SBU Eats.

**LGBT+ Alliance:**

"TOD Talks"  
 November 9; 7-8pm  
 SAC 306

Make a fun, silly, or way too in-depth five minute presentation and force all of us to listen to it! We will be in SAC 306 from 7-8PM on November 9th to be subjected to your presentation. Please join our mailing list or check our social media (@sbulgbta on instagram) to submit your presentation!

**WolfieTank**

November 8; 6pm  
 Wang Center Lecture Hall 1  
 RSVP (<https://lnkd.in/geKZj4VJ>)

WolfieTank, like the popular TV show Shark Tank, presents a unique opportunity for members of the Stony Brook Community to showcase their talents by presenting ideas to an esteemed panel of Judges. Through this event, contestants will receive valuable feedback and expert advice from established individuals in the industry. The accepted submissions will have the chance to present their ideas to a panel of professionals and the Stony Brook community to encourage entrepreneurial spirit and professional networking. <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/business/wolfietank/>

**Hidden Treasures:**

"Dog Toy Making"  
 November 10; 10am  
 Chavez Hall

On November 10th at Chavez Hall starting from 10 AM, we will be collaborating with Chavez Hall to turn donated shirts into dog toys, a great way to upcycle clothes.

"Origami Star Jars"

November 10; 6-7pm  
 SAC 305

This event entails teaching people how to use strips of scrap paper and turn them into tiny 3D stars. These stars will be used to fill up mini jars and can be taken home! In collaboration with Origami Club at SBU, and funded by USG.

"Paint Night"

November 15; 4-5pm  
 REC Multipurpose Room

We will use donated jars and paint them as we wish! All materials will be provided and the jars can be taken home.

"Thrift Shop"

November 21; 2-4pm  
 SAC Ballroom A

We will be hosting a thrift shop with various types of clothing and accessories at extremely affordable prices!

**Actor's Conservatory:**

"Night O' Skits & Songs"  
 November 11; 6-8pm  
 November 12; 3-5pm

Tabler Arts Center Blackbox Theater Welcome to Actors Conservatory's annual Night o' Skits & Songs! This is an event showcasing the many talents of the students within the Actors Conservatory. We have actors, singers, dancers, writers, crew and directors who all worked together to produce this magical two-night event. Our cast of 30+ students has worked over the course of this semester to bring a phenomenal, side-splitting, never-seen-before show to life. Be prepared to listen to exciting musical numbers, and some brilliant student-written short plays and hilarious skits. Ticketing information can be found on our event link. We can't wait to see you there!  
 Funded by USG.

**The Skincare and Wellness Club:**

"Wellness Fair"  
 November 13th; 6-8:30pm  
 SAC Ballroom B

This event is hosted by the Skincare and Wellness Club, Alternative Spring Break Outreach, Environmental Club, Psychology Student Alliance, UNICEF at SBU, Planned Parenthood Generation Action at Stony Brook University, Project Sunshine, Graduate Student Organization, Foraging and Mycology Society, Pagan Student Society, Middle Eastern Student Association, The Brook Corner, The SAM Club, and the Portuguese Language Club. We will have a free-to-enter raffle, healthy snacks and drinks, and lots of wellness-related activities including homemade face masks.

**Stony Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps:**

"National Collegiate EMS Week"  
 November 13th-17th  
 SAC

Stony Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps (SBVAC) will be hosting a series of EMS workshops covering topics such as CPR, bleeding control, vitals, and splinting during National Collegiate EMS Week from November 13th-17th. All workshops will take place in the SAC between 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM. Check out our page on SBEngaged, our website [www.sbvac.org](http://www.sbvac.org), or our Instagram @stonybrookems for additional information!

**Brook Bhangra:**

"Samosas, Chai, and Rose Milk Fundraiser"  
 November 15; 2-4pm  
 SAC Lobby

The fundraiser is to support the Brook Bhangra team. At our fundraiser, we'll be selling samosas, chai, and rose milk.

**LGBT+ Alliance:**

"Transgender Day of Remembrance Craftivism Night"  
 November 16; 7-9pm  
 SAC Ballroom B

We will be making crafts and gathering as a community to honor and celebrate trans people everywhere.

**Future Healthcare Leaders of Stony Brook:**

"HPA 580 Guest Speaker-Robbie Freeman"  
 November 16; 7-8pm  
 Meeting ID: 942 1423 4326  
 Passcode: 755158

Robbie is currently the System Vice President and Chief Nursing Information Officer at the Mount Sinai Hospital. Along his career, Robbie has consistently embraced change and opportunities. Come join us as Robbie shares how his passion for healthcare innovation fueled his remarkable journey from the bedside of patients to the top of the Mount Sinai Healthcare System.

**The Ballroom Dance Team at Stony Brook:**

"Fall Practice Schedule"

All levels are welcome.

Wednesdays: Student led lessons 8:30-10pm at REC 216.

Thursdays: Advanced lessons 6:45-7:45pm

at Benedict lobby, Beginner Lessons 8-9:30pm at REC 216.

**Grad & Postdoc Professional Development:**

"Research Mentoring for Grad Students"  
 November 17; 9:30Am-1:30pm  
 December 1st; 9:30Am - 1:30pm  
 RSVP: [bit.ly/ResearchMentorTraining](http://bit.ly/ResearchMentorTraining)  
 Wang Center Room 201

Join us for this series of two half-day interactive workshops and build your skills in being an effective mentor and in "mentoring up" with your advisors. Grounded in the evidence-based CIMER curriculum, this training is a great way to establish evidence of your mentoring skills for fellowship/grant proposals.

Graduate students from all disciplines are welcome for these cross-cutting discussions!

**Stony Brook's Gospel Choir:**

"Annual Fall Concert"  
 Nov 19; 6-10pm  
 SAC Auditorium 6-9

Admission is completely FREE, and free food will be served immediately afterward. Come ready for your ears, heart, and soul to be blessed by various selections from your fellow students and outside performers as well. Sponsored by USG.

"SBGC Rehearsal"

Sunday Night Sanctuary in M0113; 7-9pm  
 Wednesday Night Worship in A3218; 8-10pm

Have a passion for ministry? Enjoy singing? Join the gospel choir for rehearsals at these dates and times. No experience required.

**Science Fiction Forum:**

"Festivus"  
 Nov 27; 6-10pm  
 Union Ballroom

Come join the Science Fiction Forum in their annual holiday party! There will be free food and drink as well as fun music and lots of games! Funded by USG.

**NAACP:**

"A Decade of Dedication: NAACP's 10th Anniversary Bash"  
 November 29; 7-9pm  
 SAC Ballroom A

We're not just celebrating the past; we're setting the stage for the next 10 years of impactful change. It's a night of music, delicious food, and the joy of coming together. Whether you've been part of our journey from the start or you're joining us for the first time, we welcome you to this unforgettable evening. Don't miss out on this historic celebration. Join us as we honor our legacy and look forward to a future filled with continued dedication to justice and equality. Together, we'll make the next decade even more extraordinary.

**Have an upcoming event? Advertise with us! Fill out the following form:**

[tinyurl.com/EventsGradMag](http://tinyurl.com/EventsGradMag)

Interested in getting involved in our Spring Magazine? Come to our Magazine Q&A on Wednesday, November 8th in SAC 311 at 2pm! We are looking for writers, editors, artists, and layout designers!

**Executive Board**

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