

BUILDING ADMISSIONS OFFICE CULTURE

NJNYACRAO Spring 2026 Conference
Mark A. Cortez

ABOUT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

State University of New York

Top-Ranked Flagship

27,000+ Students

71,288 First Year & Transfer Applications
for 2026 YTD – record breaking, again-
with more to go!



ABOUT ME

Admissions Counselor, assistant director

Progression through associate director – large, public, flagship institution

Policy Director – state agency

Director – large, public flagship institution

Executive Director – mid-size, public flagship institution



My staff/office culture is...

Join at menti.com | use code 5131 3739



Mentimeter



menti.com
5131 3739

0 of 1 responded

Responses are hidden X



Menti

Staff Culture PPT Q5



Select which slide to add

My staff/office culture is...



→ Show responses



ORGANIZATION & ALIGNMENT



Stony Brook University

It's easy to count people.
It's hard to measure
impact.

WE'VE ALWAYS DONE IT THAT WAY, BUT... WE DON'T HAVE MONEY, TIME, TOOLS



INVESTMENTS



APPRECIATION & RECOGNITION

Join at menti.com | use code 6176 0105

What does providing a first day gift help with?

0 ✓

Belonging

0 ✗

Impressio

0 ✗

Retentio

0 ✗

All of these



Mentimeter



menti.com
6176 0105

0 of 1 responded

Responses are hidden X



Menti

Staff Culture PPT Q1



Select which slide to add

What does providing a first day gift help with?

0:00 0:11 0:16 2:11

Belonging Impressio Retentio All of these



Show responses

NEW TEAM MEMBERS



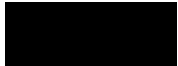
MILESTONES



MILESTONES

Thank You! Team x

S



Mon, Mar 23, 11:27 AM (1 day ago)

Good Morning Mark,

Just wanted to say thank you so much for the birthday treat! The cookies were delicious!

Thank you!



to me ▾

Fri, Oct 10, 2025, 4:48 PM



Hi Mark,

Thank you very much for the work anniversary card and gift! I greatly appreciate it!

I am very grateful to officially be part of the admissions team and am excited to continue working with everyone here. It is an extremely rewarding and engaging chapter of my career, and I look forward to the future here with the team!

Best,

RECOGNITION



Transfer Champion Spotlight

Transfer and Special Populations Admissions Team

In honor of #transferstudentweek, I am proud to recognize the Transfer and Special Populations Admissions Team at Stony Brook University. These folks work hard every day with transfer, second-degree, non-matriculating, joint-admits, veterans, and other special populations through the admissions process.

Learn more about them at stonybrook.edu/undergraduate-admissions/contact/meet-the-team.php.

Stony Brook University

 <p>Marie Campanella Director, Transfer and Special Populations Admissions</p>	 <p>Caroline Mierzwa Admissions Counselor</p>	 <p>Kevin Wroblewski Admissions Counselor</p>	 <p>Tracy Arto Assistant Director, Transfer Admissions</p>
---	--	--	---

National Transfer Student Week

October 20-24 2025

 NISTS
National Institute of Transfer Students

#transferstudentweek

Join at menti.com | use code 7411 7639

Mentimeter

Does my university offer templates to use for social media?



menti.com
7411 7639

0 of 1 responded

Responses are hidden



→ Show responses



Menti

Staff Culture PPT Q2




Select which slide to add

Does my university offer templates to use for social media?

Yes	No	Not sure
0	0	0

RECOGNITION

 **Mark Cortez** <mark.cortez@stonybrook.edu>
to Admissions ▾ Thu, Feb 12, 3:24 PM ☆ 😊 ↶ ⋮

Colleagues,

Please join me in congratulating [REDACTED] who has recently been approved by the SUNY Chancellor and Campus President for permanent appointment! This appointment reflects [REDACTED] strong contributions to our team and university.

To celebrate this accomplishment please join us for donuts on February 25 from 9:15a-10:00a in Conference Room A.

Be well,

Mark
--

Recognition of Service!

Team x



Christina [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]

As some of you know, Stony Brook University employees who have devoted 25 years or more of service to the institution were honored on February 11 at the annual Service Recognition Luncheon. What some of you may not know, is that our very own [REDACTED] was recognized for her years of service!!

[REDACTED] takes great care in assisting our EOP applicants, and helping to select our incoming class of EOP/AIM students every year. She helps out any of the teams in our office with anything that needs to get done, and is always there to support the office in our efforts, even as a part-timer. I am so proud to have [REDACTED] in the NYS and privileged to have worked with her for the past 6 1/2 years. We are so lucky as a department to include [REDACTED] and her years of wisdom and experience.

Congratulations and thank you for your dedication over the past 40 years [REDACTED]

Read more here: <https://news.stonybrook.edu/university/service-recognition-luncheon-honors-stony-brook-employees-for-decades-of-dedication/>



APPRECIATION



Nacho Average Team!

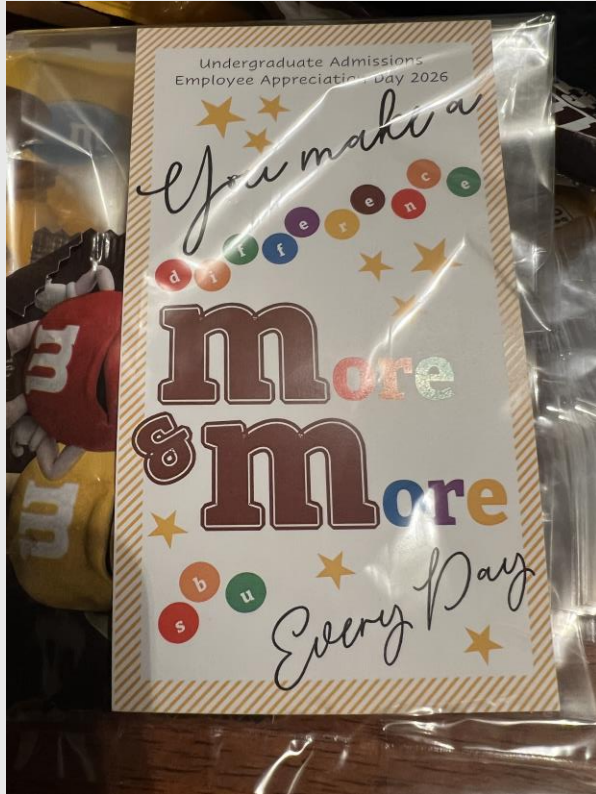


IN RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY PLEASE JOIN UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS FOR A NACHO BAR, SINCE WE ARE NACHO AVERAGE TEAM! QUESO, GUACAMOLE, SALSA, AND CHIPS WILL BE PROVIDED FOR AN AFTERNOON SNACK.

MARCH 5
CONFERENCE ROOM A
2:00 PM

JOIN US!

APPRECIATION



Thank You Team x

to me ▼

Thanks so much for the treats for Employee Appreciation Day! It was very thoughtful of you.

All the Best,

SOME REDIRECTION

Team shout outs

Regional team: we can't just send gift cards, right?

In country representatives

Recognizing accomplishments as success

Promotions/Re-classifications

Weekly team meetings initially, new model now

MONEY TALKS, SO DOES TRANSPARENCY

- Negotiated annual merit based on union contract
- Discretionary, new model
- Equity reviews

Thank you so much for this generous salary increase. I'm very appreciative and grateful for the way you look out for our team.

Hope you all had a nice long weekend. Happy Monday!

Thank you so much for this news! I really appreciate the transparency within our office and I truly love my position here at Stony Brook and the work we as a team do. I look forward to being a team member for many years to come. Please let me know if you need anything from me. Have a wonderful day and a fantastic week, and thank you again.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NOT (JUST) A COMMITTEE, A COMMITMENT

On the job

Conferences

Across campus

Conference Learning/Sharing Day



OFFICE COMMITTEES

THREE REQUESTS, TWO(ISH) ACCOMPLISHED

Original Request:

- Staff Engagement
- Professional Development
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Define each

Set clear expectations for progress and outcomes

Chair/Co-Chair model

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

- Pi Day
- Thanksgiving Potluck
- Holiday Gathering
- May 1 Celebration
- Service Activities
- Ice Cream Social
- Step Into the New Year
- Halloween Costume Contest
- Heart Health Month



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Indigenous Exhibit
- Alumni Author
- Healthy Cooking
- LGBTQ+ Session
- Ombudsman Program
- Wellness in the Workplace
- Sustainability
- Student Accessibility and Support



Join at menti.com | use code 1816 4098

I currently have office committees that include staff from each area of my office.



Mentimeter



menti.com
1816 4098

Waiting for participants

Responses are hidden X



Menti

Staff Culture PPT Q3



Select which slide to add



→ Show responses



RETREATS & STEP-DOWN MEETINGS

COLLABORATION

Retreat: Annual, fall kick off

- mandatory attendance
- mandatory engagement
- no tech

‘Step-Down’ Meetings

- Once a semester
- Follow Up/Review



PROGRESSING IN OUR WORK

VALUES AND ALIGNMENT

- Led by two staff members from separate teams
- Year long project
- What is important to our office?
- Engaging conversations
- Unified document
- Implementation



Stony Brook University

VALUES

Which 3 values do you resonate with the most?

Which 3 values reflect our team the most?

How do these values guide your work and actions?



**Stony Brook
University**

**Office of
Undergraduate Admissions**

118 Administration Building
stonybrook.edu/admissions
(631) 632-6868
enroll@stonybrook.edu

Our Mission

The mission of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions is to recruit, admit, and enroll a student body that is academically accomplished, distinguished in leadership and service, and diverse on many levels.

UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

ENGAGING AND PROGRESSING IN OUR WORK

Colleagues,

I am pleased to welcome you to Undergraduate Admissions at Stony Brook University. As a unit of the Division of Enrollment Management, we work to achieve our office mission while also supporting the goal to develop and deliver first-rate programs and services for prospective and current students, parents, teachers, counselors, faculty and staff. Mindful of ethical responsibilities, we recruit and enroll students reflective of our 21st century society and support them to succeed so they will contribute to improving our communities and our world through their education, research, and service.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, a small committee of staff was charged with engaging team members to develop Shared Values, Skills for Colleagues, and Skills for Managers and Leaders that supported the Stony Brook University Strategic Plan. Through multiple rounds of in person conversations, these sections, that follow in this document, were created. I recognize and share with you, too, that these are intended to be both values and skills we act on and aspire to build. In addition to these sections, I've added additional sections that will also help us to engage and progress in our work.

Thank you for the work you will do to contribute to our team.

With Seawolf Pride,

Mark A. Cortez

Executive Director of Admissions

Our Values

Community and Collaboration

- We foster inter-office and interdepartmental community. This support system allows us to put students first, and better assist students and their families.
- We operate as close-knit teams where staff members collaborate across different functions.
- We promote a culture of teamwork, problem-solving, and mutual support.

Integrity, transparency, and respect

- Both internal (among staff) and external (with students, families, and other departments) communication should be clear, transparent, and consistent. Regular updates and discussions help align everyone's efforts and ensure all parties are well-informed.
- We foster a well-coordinated and effective team. A commitment to communicating in a clear, timely manner regarding office priorities, changes in policies, or updates about deadlines helps staff stay on the same page and adapt quickly to any shifts in responsibilities or processes. Staff should always know where to focus their efforts and how their work aligns with the larger objectives of the admissions office.
- Respect is foundational, as it creates an environment where everyone feels valued, whether they are staff members or applicants.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

- We foster a dynamic environment where staff come from various backgrounds and expertise. This diversity can lead to an enriching work environment where team members learn from each other and work toward common goals.
- We promote a collective team environment where staff support one another regardless of position and across different functions. We maintain mutual respect amongst staff members as well as students and their families.
- We ensure a holistic examination and review of applications across all populations.

Innovation

- We encourage staff to maintain an open-minded approach to their work and continually strive to adapt and grow along with higher education as a whole.
- We encourage innovation to enhance efficiency in all aspects of our work. By embracing and exploring new ideas, technologies, and approaches, we aim to streamline processes and create more effective solutions that drive progress and enrich our outcomes.
- We strive to offer staff opportunities to learn new skills as a group and collaborate in office committees to promote new means by which to learn and grow as a team.
- We create an environment where staff are encouraged to bring new ideas and creative problem solving to the table.

Skills for Colleagues

Communication

- Verbal - Ability to communicate effectively with students, their families, staff, faculty, and external stakeholders.
- Written - Strong skills in writing clear, professional, and persuasive emails, letters, reports, and other documentation.
- Demonstrates clarity and thoroughness when expressing ideas, information, and instructions.

Public Speaking

- Comfortable with presenting information to groups, whether in an information session, public event, or internal/external staff training.
- Ability to represent the institution's brand and values professionally.

Interpersonal skills

- Demonstrates empathy, patience, respect, and cultural sensitivity when working with diverse student populations and each other.
- Relationship-building with students, families, and high school counselors.
- Collaborate with colleagues, university partners, and external partners.
- Practices active listening to fully comprehend and attend to questions and concerns.

Technological Proficiency

- Comprehensive understanding of CRM software (e.g., Slate, PeopleSoft), Microsoft Office, and virtual meeting platforms.
- Willingness and ability to learn new technologies.

Customer-Service Oriented

- Provides timely and helpful support to students throughout the admissions process.
- Manages inquiries and concerns with professionalism and care.

Adaptability

- Exhibits flexibility and open mindedness when faced with changing or updated policies and procedures.
- Demonstrates a willingness to learn and meets challenges with a solution-oriented approach.
- Demonstrates problem-solving skills whether working independently and/or in collaborative environments.

Skills for Managers/Leaders

Leadership & Team Management

- Leading, mentoring, and supporting the team.
- Being an advocate for your staff.
- Delegating tasks, providing timely performance feedback, and fostering professional development.
- Determines priorities and allocates self and team time and resources effectively.

Strategic Planning

- Developing and implementing admissions strategies to meet enrollment goals.
- Analyzing data and trends to inform office operation efforts.

Communication

- Communicates effectively and transparently with internal teams and external partners.
- Motivates and builds trusting relationships with staff they supervise.
- Maintains an open line of communication with staff.
- Maintains effort to regular staff engagement.

Budgeting & Resource Allocation

- Manages departmental budgets and resources efficiently to support initiatives.
- Alignment of work responsibilities leading to equitable expectations of job performance.

Compliance & Ethics

- Ensures staff members have knowledge of FERPA, NACAC guidelines, and other regulatory standards affecting admissions.
- Review and update processes and procedures and consistently inform staff members of updates or changes to admissions and/or university policies.

Office Hours, Telecommuting, and Dress

Standard office hours (Monday-Friday) fall between 9:00a-5:00p. These hours reflect a 7.5-hour workday while also adhering to the minimum meal period of at least one-half hour duration. Failure to take a meal period does not permit employees to shorten the workday. If a longer meal period is taken for a non-business-related reasons, employees should consult with their direct supervisor for guidance. Additional breaks throughout the day are discretionary. Early morning, late night, and weekend work hours may be required throughout the year.

As of September 2025, the Division of Enrollment Management permits a 1-day telecommuting option (work from home) which may be permitted based on business and operational needs. Undergraduate Admissions may extend this at various times throughout the year in support of office initiatives and priorities.

All out of office (vacation, sick, work from home) dates/times should be noted on the shared calendar for Undergraduate Admissions.

Additional guidance about university absences can be referenced with University Human Resources.

Standard office dress guidance is business casual. Business casual may include khaki pants, slacks, skirts, dresses, as well as short-sleeved polo shirts and long-sleeved shirts and sweaters. Business casual does not include t-shirts*, sweatpants/shirts, shorts, jeans*, or workout clothing.

*On Fridays the team is permitted to dress in work appropriate jeans and work appropriate Stony Brook spirit wear, which may include Stony Brook t-shirts. The campus community is encouraged to wear red in support of building community and campus spirit.

For special events or programs, business dress or specific office issued attire may be required.

Office and University Engagement

The office hosts two primary office committees, the Staff Engagement Committee and the Professional Development Committee. These committees are staff led and include a chair or co-chair model; employees are encouraged to engage as chairs, co-chairs, and committee members as their schedule permits. A call for committee members occurs on an annual basis. All staff are expected to engage in planned activities each month.

Staff Engagement: The goal of the Staff Engagement Committee is to plan, coordinate, and implement activities throughout the year focused on team building and team engagement. Sample activities this committee will be tasked with coordinating could include team happy hours, holiday celebrations, team retreats, team member of the month, and team newsletters.

Professional Development: The goal of the Professional Development Committee is to plan, coordinate, and implement professional development activities for the benefit of our team throughout the year. Sample activities this committee will be tasked with coordinating include a monthly development session on varying topics, e.g. LinkedIn Learning, maximizing Google software for efficiency, and developing a session proposal for a conference.

Staff should engage across the university community in service and volunteering as representatives of Undergraduate Admissions. University engagement may include but is not limited to; teaching SBU 101, volunteering as part of Welcome Week, or volunteering at a 5K.

Professional Development

Professional development opportunities, outside of those offered by our standing office committee, are supported throughout the year. Professional development may take place internal and external to the office and may include conference attendance (budget permitting), on the job learning, committee service, and Wolfpack Learning.

Resources

CSEA New York: <https://www.csealocal614.com/>

Division of Enrollment Management: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/erm/>

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/finaid/>

Registrar's Office: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/>

Slate: <https://enroll.stonybrook.edu/manage/>

Undergraduate Admissions: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/admissions/>

United University Professionals (UUP): <https://www.uupsbu.org/>

University Human Resources: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/human-resources/>

NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND WHAT'S NEXT



Stony Brook University

**SCALE.
SAVE.
SUCCEED.**

Join at menti.com | use code 8169 1877

I understand that I can scale ideas based on my team size and utilize free or low cost resources to impact culture.

0 ✓

Yes

0 ✗

No

0 ✗

Not sure

→ [View responses](#)



Mentimeter



menti.com
8169 1877

Waiting for participants

Responses are hidden X



Menti

Staff Culture PPT Q4



Select which slide to add



THANK YOU!

mark.cortez@stonybrook.edu