

***REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY SENATE***

TO: University Senate

FROM: Michael A. Bernstein, Professor of Business, Economics, and History  
Provost and Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs

DATE: Monday, February 4, 2019

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***Appointment of Laura Lindenfeld as Interim Dean of the School of Journalism***

Dr. Laura Lindenfeld, Professor of Journalism and Executive Director of the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science, has assumed additional new duties as Interim Dean of the School of Journalism, effective 1 January 2019. Dr. Lindenfeld joined Stony Brook University as Executive Director of the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science and Professor in the School of Journalism in 2016. Previously, she served as Professor of Communication and Director of the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, a nonpartisan, independent research center at the University of Maine. In 2015, she received the University of Maine Presidential Public Service Award. As a scholar and a leader, Dr. Lindenfeld is deeply dedicated to supporting growth and innovation in higher education, a commitment she has brought to her work at Stony Brook's Alda Center. As the Alda Center Director, she oversees a dynamic organization that has trained over 14,000 scientists worldwide and introduced over 50,000 people to the Alda Method®. The Center provides international leadership in conducting and connecting research and practice to advance clear science and medical communication.

***Reaffirmation of Stony Brook University's Religious Holiday Policy***

Stony Brook University is committed to ensuring that every student has the right to pursue their education while practicing their faith. All faith-related absences from class are thus 'excused absences.' Such absences should entail no negative consequences in class grading. Faculty should avoid scheduling examinations, papers, presentations, or other assignments on any of the major listed holidays on the Provost's Office website ([https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/provost/faculty/handbook/employment/list\\_of\\_religious\\_and\\_university\\_holidays.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/provost/faculty/handbook/employment/list_of_religious_and_university_holidays.php)). When a conflict is unavoidable, faculty must provide the opportunity for an equivalent make-up exam or assignment to be completed. Per New York State law, faculty may not require students to receive a "0" on an exam if a student missed the exam missed for religious reasons, even if it is a course practice to drop the lowest grade on an exam or assignment when calculating the course grade.

For more information, please review Stony Brook's full religious holiday policy at [https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/provost/faculty/handbook/employment/religious\\_holidays.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/provost/faculty/handbook/employment/religious_holidays.php)

ys\_policy and the New York State Education Law 224-A at [https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/calendars/\\_ucalcontent/\\_ucalpdf/224a.pdf](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/calendars/_ucalcontent/_ucalpdf/224a.pdf).

### ***February Provost's Lecture Series***

#### **The Evolution of Beauty: Darwin's Really Dangerous Idea**

Richard Prum is the William Robertson Coe Professor of Ornithology at Yale University. He is an evolutionary biologist and ornithologist with broad interests in avian evolution, behavior, systematics, color production, color vision, the evolution of feathers, the theropod dinosaur origin of birds, and more. Prum has received the MacArthur, Guggenheim, and Fulbright Fellowships. His 2017 book, *The Evolution of Beauty: How Darwin's Forgotten Theory of Mate Choice Shapes the Animal World – and Us*, was named a Top Ten Book of 2017 by the *New York Times*, and was a 2018 Pulitzer Prize Finalist in General Non-Fiction. Prum's writing has been published in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Natural History*, and *Scientific American*. A life-long birdwatcher, Prum has done fieldwork on every continent.

**Abstract:** Mate choice in animals is commonly thought to select for the evolution of honest signals that indicate objective information about mate quality. This seminar will explore the authentically Darwinian alternative that animals select their mates based on their subjective preferences— i.e. what they like. Consequently, ornaments are neither honest, nor manipulative; they are *merely beautiful*. This aesthetic perspective on evolutionary process places the subjective experience of animals at the center of scientific explanation, and may provide insight into change aesthetic marketplaces for fine art, music, and commercial arts.

This event will take place on Friday, February 8 at 7:30 PM in Earth and Space Sciences, Lecture Theater 001. It is co-sponsored by the Department of Ecology and Evolution and Living World Lecture/Science Open Nights.

#### ***Ken Dill to Receive the Max Delbrück Prize in Biological Physics***

Ken A. Dill, Distinguished Professor in the Departments of Chemistry and Physics & Astronomy and the Louis and Beatrice Laufer Endowed Chair of Physical and Quantitative Biology, has been named co-winner of the 2019 American Physical Society's (APS) Max Delbrück Prize in Biological Physics. The award represents the highest recognition of contributions to physics and outstanding achievement in biological physics research. Dr. Dill is receiving the award, which includes half of a \$10,000 prize, for his independent work on protein folding in the evolutionary process of life, including his development of models and detailed experiments and theories. Dr. Dill will be recognized and receive the award at the APS annual meeting in Boston in March.

#### ***Heather J. Lynch Awarded Microsoft/National Geographic AI for Earth Innovation Grant***

Heather J. Lynch, Associate Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution, has been awarded a Microsoft/National Geographic AI for Earth Innovation Grant that will support her use of artificial intelligence to track Antarctic penguin populations. Dr. Lynch's project will couple AI with predictive-population modeling for real-time tracking of Antarctic penguin

populations using satellite imagery. Through the grant, Dr. Lynch and Dimitris Samaras, Associate Professor of Applied Sciences, will receive approximately \$96,000 in direct support and about \$75,000 in computing support.

### ***Opening of the North Atlantic Industries Engineering Teaching Lab***

The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences has officially opened the North Atlantic Industries Engineering Teaching Lab, a new engineering teaching lab in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Focused on increasing the opportunities for STEM education, the new Lab will offer the opportunity to help Stony Brook University and Long Island students alike reduce the gender gap in STEM fields, educate young students and teachers in underserved schools and districts in STEM, and provide hands-on experience designing, building, and testing student innovations. Funded through a partnership with North Atlantic Industries Inc., the Lab will provide enhanced facilities for middle school and high school students from Long Island communities who may not have access to similar resources for STEM education. The Lab will also serve as a space for the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Honors program, as well as for undergraduate and graduate course instruction.

For more information, please visit

[https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/electrical/news/2018/nai\\_engineering\\_teaching\\_lab.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/electrical/news/2018/nai_engineering_teaching_lab.php).