

# NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

*magazine*

FALL 2020

## **THE ETIC: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN**

New York Tech's business incubator spurs entrepreneurship and innovation, both on campus and off.

## **ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**

Three alumni launch an online contribution platform to help first responders in need.

How New York Tech is keeping the community's health and safety a priority while providing a quality educational experience.

The Road to  
**Reopening:**  
Fall 2020

### MAGAZINE STAFF

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**Vice President, Strategic Communications and  
External Affairs:** Nada Marie Anid

**Executive Director, Strategic Messaging:** Bobbie Dell'Aquila

**Senior Director, Communications and Public Relations:**  
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Casey Pearce, Michael Schiavetta (M.A. '07), Alix Sobler,  
Kimberly Tucker Campo

**Copy Editor:** Kathleen Scheiner

**Designer:** Eson Chan

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### CONTACT US

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Update your contact information or mailing address:  
[alumni@nyit.edu](mailto:alumni@nyit.edu) or 516.686.7800.

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## DEAR FRIENDS,

As the world, higher education, and this magazine take on new digital personas, we are happy to share transformations that have taken place at

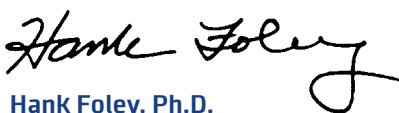
New York Institute of Technology because of and in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic—and how we continue to fulfill our promise to students while we ultimately enhance the value of a New York Tech education and degree.

While the pandemic presented unanticipated challenges and prompted us to make some very difficult decisions, it did not deter us from following our primary goals of providing the highest-quality education possible for our students while ensuring their safety. We're on the same path, a path that is taking us in the right direction—as we've received affirmations and

validation from third parties recently that underscore our sustained efforts are both paying off and being recognized.

In September, we received word that we jumped another eight places in the *U.S. News & World Report* institutional rankings and received top rankings in mobility, diversity, veterans' support, and in programs in engineering and computer science. We also continued our ascent in the *Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education* annual rankings and were spotlighted in the *Wall Street Journal's* September 18 special issue as one of the most diverse campuses nationwide, at No. 8 among the top schools for environment, a pillar in the rankings that measures inclusion, diversity, and international student representation.

And as we look to the future and continue our laser focus on student engagement and success, we are developing new curricular programs to answer market needs, new partnerships and initiatives that leverage our historic strengths, and new ways to serve our students better wherever they are—moves that will sustain the university far into the future that we will, together, reinvent.



Hank Foley, Ph.D.

President, New York Institute of Technology

## LET'S BE FRIENDS

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## 2 Campus Buzz

**Aspiring Filmmakers Take Flight:** Twelve students captured the fifth anniversary of JetBlue's trip with students with special needs from the Henry Viscardi School in the short film *Ready for Takeoff*.

**Interdisciplinary Bio Lab Opens in Long Island:** New York Tech unveiled the new Biomedical Sciences and Bioengineering Laboratory in Theobald Science Center on the Long Island campus.

**A Big Thank-You!** The 2020 annual Big Give campaign raised \$301,470 to support the New York Tech Student Emergency Fund.

**Simulating Shaken Baby Syndrome:** Assistant Professor Milan Toma, Ph.D., and student Alfonso Dehesa Baeza developed computational simulations to help clinicians better understand the impact of abusive head trauma.

**Virtual Success:** New York Tech's 59th Commencement: Students, faculty, family, and friends tuned into a livestream of the university's 2020 graduation ceremony.

**Architecture Alumnus Supports First Responders:** Erik Fred (B.Arch. '11) developed a series of designs for multipurpose, mobile medical units constructed of recycled shipping containers in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

## 26 Alumni Spotlights

Meet John Eichhorn (B.S. '09), Robert Garland (B.S. '08), Michael LaLuna (B.S. '08), Chaya Levin (B.S. '19), Evan Goldenberg (B.Arch. '84), and Hallie Frederick (D.O. '20).

## 30 Alumni Notes

**Connections and Notes:** Check out the year in photos and catch up with classmates.

## Features



12

## Road to Return to Campus

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced classes to remote instruction, New York Tech spent the next few months preparing to ensure a safe and successful start to the fall semester. On September 9, almost six months to the day classes moved to remote learning, they resumed, with a focus on keeping the community's health and safety a priority and providing a quality educational experience, whether in person or remote.



20

## The ETIC: Making Things Happen

By Renée Gearhart Levy

New York Tech's business and technology incubator, now five years old, continues to spur entrepreneurship and innovation, both on campus and off.

**Right:** New York Tech students Hafsatou Balde (B.F.A. '19), Gilary Ramirez (B.F.A. '19), and Paul Wasneski taking footage at the Henry Viscardi School.

**Below:** Paul Demonte and Paul Wasneski filming before the flight.

## MAKERS

# Aspiring Filmmakers Take Flight

Students at the Henry Viscardi School in Albertson, N.Y., are encouraged to look beyond their disabilities and recognize that they can achieve whatever they set their minds to. For the past five years, the Henry Viscardi School of The Viscardi Center—a network of nonprofit organizations that provides a life span of services that educate, employ, and empower people with disabilities—has been partnering with JetBlue to take its students on a flight to Boston, where they not only experience the joy of flying but also set their sights on their highest aspirations through experiences they might not otherwise have.

All of this is captured in the short film *Ready for Takeoff*, which is produced by New York Institute of Technology students, which made its debut in October 2019 as part of National Disability Employment Awareness

Month. The five-minute video takes viewers on the flight and, along the way, enlightens them about this unique endeavor.

New York Tech has collaborated with The Viscardi Center on other projects, including collaborative courses between the university and students of the Henry Viscardi School. “Once you step foot in Viscardi, you want to stay involved,” says Terry Nauheim, M.F.A., former associate professor of digital art and design and executive producer of the film. “It is such an enriching and effective place for people with disabilities.”

She pitched the idea of having students from the university make a video about the fifth flight that Henry Viscardi School students would be taking on JetBlue. “And then we had a year and a half to figure it out,” Nauheim says. “It was a huge undertaking for many of us and a very fulfilling one,



MICHAEL HOSENFELD

including JetBlue’s effort to bring our team of students and faculty into an already multifaceted project.”

The project got underway in the spring of 2018, when Paul Demonte (B.F.A. '07, M.A. '09), adjunct instructor of communication arts, and Michael Hosenfeld, associate professor of digital art and design, traveled on the fourth JetBlue flight. “This led us to understand the type of story that needed to be told,” Demonte says. Since a shorter version of the film would also be shown on the seat backs on JetBlue planes, the trip helped Demonte and Hosenfeld grasp the technical challenges that the students might encounter.

New York Tech students were carefully selected for the project and got to work in spring 2019. They used that semester for developing preproduction, doing a lot of collaborative work between New York Tech students and Viscardi students, and concluded with the actual flight and shooting the video. Select students stayed on over the summer to continue the project. In total, 12 New York Tech students participated in the film project.



COURTESY OF JETBLUE

New York Institute of Technology students and faculty at JetBlue headquarters in Queens, N.Y.



PAUL DEMONTE



PHILLIP RETUTA

Demonte and Hosenfeld may have served as supervising editor and faculty director, respectively, but this was the students' production. "They were fantastic," Hosenfeld says of the students involved with the film. "They signed up for one course, but the time on the project was about two and a half to three times that much. They were able to put it all together and work as a team, which demonstrated the relevance of what they have been learning in the classroom."

Working on the film provided real-world lessons, including how to overcome challenges. "The biggest challenge was narrowing the scope and zeroing in on our narrative," says digital film and television production major **Paul Wasneski (B.F.A. '19)**, who worked in preproduction and was a lead cameraman during filming. "At first, we just had scattered bits and pieces, but we weren't sure how to tie the whole thing together or if we should be expanding the focus of the film with things like going to the kids' houses and interviewing their families." In the end, the New York Tech student team landed on the right amount of background to tell the story of JetBlue, the Henry Viscardi School, and the students who took the flight. >> [bit.ly/AspiringFilmmakers](http://bit.ly/AspiringFilmmakers)

## INNOVATOR

# 100 Years Ago Today: New York City in 1920

If you traveled back in time to New York City during the Roaring 1920s, you would see the first traffic signal installed on 42nd Street and Prohibition in full effect. Jonathan Goldman, Ph.D., associate professor of English at NYIT

College of Arts and Sciences, paints a vivid picture on his website, *New York 1920, 100 Years Ago Today*, at [ny1920.com](http://ny1920.com). Almost daily, Goldman adds historical content to the site, which is funded through an Institutional Support of Research and Creativity (ISRC) grant from the Office of Academic Affairs. Three New York Tech students also help to maintain the website.

>> [bit.ly/100YearsAgo1920](http://bit.ly/100YearsAgo1920)



JONATHAN GOLDMAN

## Morgan Stanley Executive Shares Tips for Success

On March 9, Carla Harris, vice chairman of wealth management and senior client advisor at Morgan Stanley, shared with students helpful tips on how to start a successful career. Harris has a degree from Harvard University, wrote a best-selling book, was a spokesperson at TEDWomen, and was appointed chair of the National Women's Business Council by President Barack Obama.

Harris highlighted the importance of building relationships with executive management, directors, and shareholders in a company and finding mentors who will have a positive impact on one's success. Role models will motivate you and make you believe that achieving greatness is possible. "No one can be you, the way you can be you! It is your distinct competitive advantage," said Harris. "Use the lessons learned and the playbooks offered by role models and then tailor them to your own authentic styles, strengths, and context."

Recent graduate **Ashley Dent (B.F.A. '20)** said the lecture hit home for her as she navigates internships and job interviews. "Showing your different facets, being your own authentic self—that is what will make you stand out to employers," she said.

>> [bit.ly/Tips\\_For\\_Success](http://bit.ly/Tips_For_Success)



The 1,000-square-foot interdisciplinary laboratory brings together life scientists from NYIT College of Arts and Sciences and engineers from NYIT College of Engineering and Computing Sciences to tackle some of today's toughest scientific problems.

INNOVATORS

JAMES TROICI

## Interdisciplinary Bio Research Lab Opens in Long Island

In January, New York Tech unveiled the new Biomedical Sciences and Bioengineering (BSB) Laboratory in Theobald Science Center on the Long Island campus.

The 1,000-square-foot interdisciplinary laboratory brings together life scientists from NYIT College of Arts and Sciences and engineers from NYIT College of Engineering and Computing Sciences to tackle some of today's toughest scientific problems. Faculty and students, including undergraduates, will work on research ranging from early detection of HIV and Zika virus to reducing negative environmental impacts from stormwater to optimizing genetic tools for classifying animal behavior.

"This integration can offer tremendous opportunities for solving important problems in health sciences and medicine as well as enabling a broad range of applications in diagnostics, sensing, therapeutics, and tissue engineering," said Babak Beheshti, Ph.D., dean of the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences.

In 2018, New York state awarded New York Tech \$150,000 to create the \$750,000 BSB Laboratory through its Empire State Development (ESD) agency. The project was spearheaded by Nada Anid, Ph.D., vice president for strategic communications and external

affairs in her previous role as dean of the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences.

"Students are an integral part of our researchers' work in their labs. We offer special advanced courses...so that students can earn credit while working with faculty on their research," added Dan Quigley, Ph.D., dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The BSB Lab will foster collaboration within the university and beyond. "Our region is primed to become a center for research and innovation in life sciences, which will lead to great jobs for our graduates and wonderful opportunities for us to partner with leading life sciences companies and top scientists," said New York Tech President Hank Foley, Ph.D.

Lab opening attendees included ESD Administrator Barry Greenspan; Nassau County Executive Laura Curran; and **Karen Magovern (B.S. '79)**, senior director of lab services at McKesson Laboratory Services.

"Combining engineering and life sciences research is really critical," said Curran. "This is a region that is becoming more robust when it comes to research. You're training for jobs we don't even know exist yet. Thank you for staying ahead of the curve."

>> [bit.ly/BSBLab](http://bit.ly/BSBLab)

## Students “Boot” Up With Cyber Leader

**New York Tech cybersecurity students** in Vancouver recently helped combat security threats by working with China-based GOWIN Semiconductor, the world’s fastest-growing programmable logic company.

As part of their graduate capstone project, the students worked with GOWIN to develop a Secure Boot for its SecureFPGA system. Secure Boot is an industry security standard that ensures any device boots using only software that is digitally signed and verified by the original equipment manufacturer.

GOWIN posed the project via Riipen, a web platform designed to engage faculty and students

with companies seeking assistance on specific projects. The partnership was a win-win, providing students with industry experience while solving a need for the company, which didn’t have to devote employee resources to the project.

Student Duo Xu says the experience improved both his technical and communication skills. Working through “massive challenges” helped Xu develop a procedure to solve future coding and programming questions. “Self-learning is really important in real-world production,” he says. “I think this experience will help a lot with my future study.”

>> [bit.ly/Cyber\\_Students](https://bit.ly/Cyber_Students)



COURTESY DUO XU

## A BIG Thank-You!

**Amid battling the COVID-19 pandemic,**

New York Tech alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends paused for 1,955 minutes (a nod to the year the university was founded) from April 1 to 2 to come together for the school’s second Big Give campaign. The annual event, held virtually this year, was a big success, raising \$301,470, \$83,356 more than last year, and well over the \$225,000 goal.

“I would like to say thank you to everyone who supported our students,” said Patrick Min-

son, M.B.A., M.P.A., vice president for development and alumni relations. “They are lucky to have such great alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends in their corner at this time.”

This year, \$129,341 was raised for the New York Tech Student Emergency Fund, the NYITCOM Student Emergency Fund, and the NYITCOM-Arkansas Student Emergency Fund. Ahead of the start of the campaign, New York Tech’s two American Association of University Professors (AAUP) faculty chapters immediately reacted to the

announcement of the Student Emergency Fund and collectively designated \$50,000 toward students with high need.

“After careful consideration, we decided to move forward with the Big Give,” said Minson. “We believed our students needed our help more than ever, and it was our responsibility to help bridge the gap between what they have and what they need. The New York Tech community never ceases to amaze me in its generosity and spirit.”

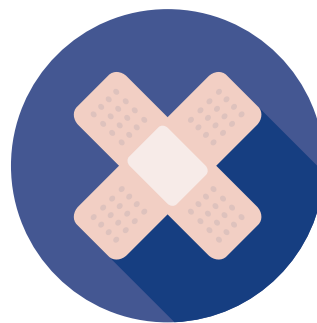
>> [bit.ly/BigGive\\_2020](https://bit.ly/BigGive_2020)



**\$301,470**  
RAISED

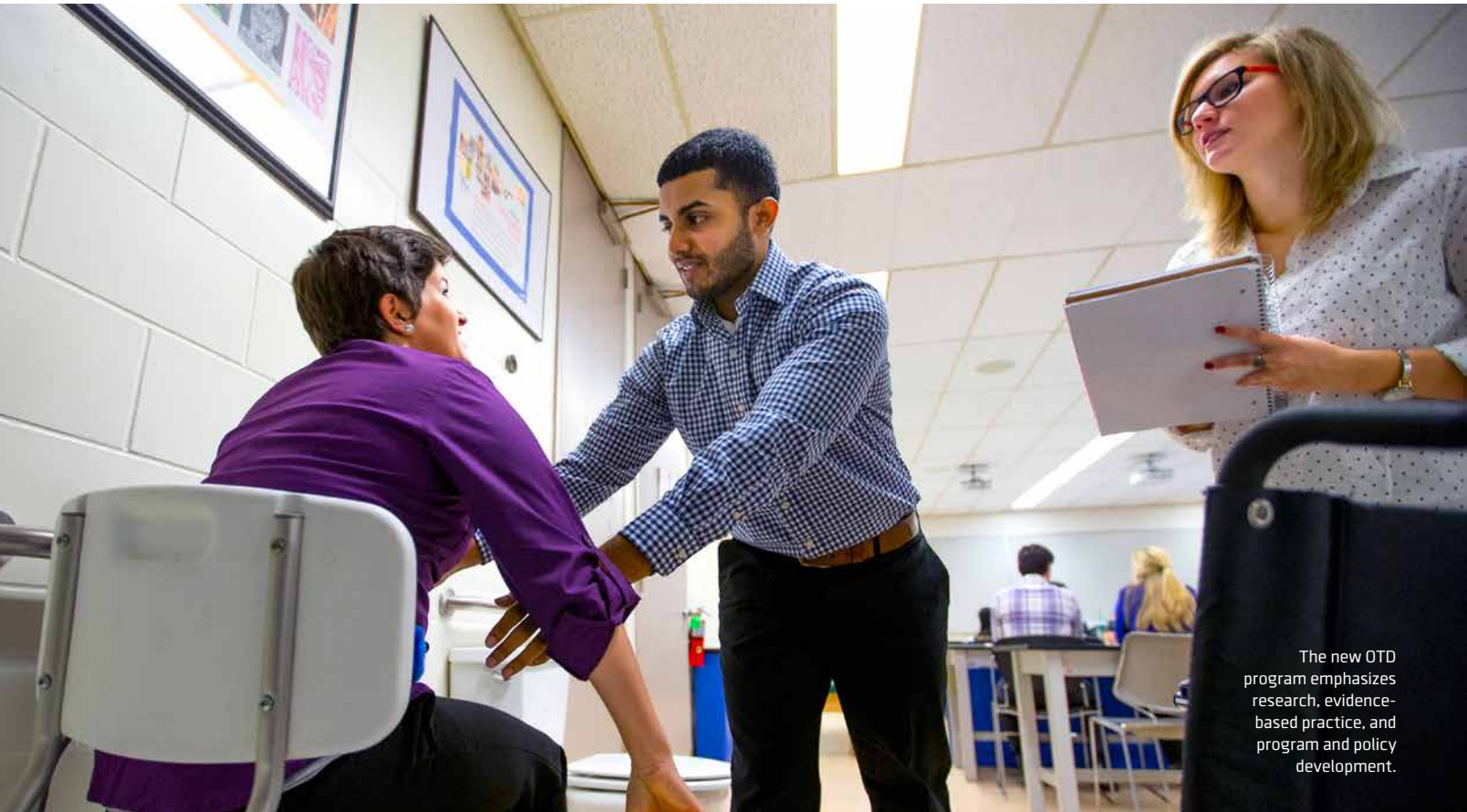


**1,100**  
DONORS



**\$129,341**  
RAISED FOR  
THE NEW  
YORK TECH  
STUDENT  
EMERGENCY  
FUNDS

**SAVE THE DATE** for the third annual New York Tech Big Give, March 24 -25, 2021.



The new OTD program emphasizes research, evidence-based practice, and program and policy development.

BOB HANDELMAN

## New Degrees Prepare Students for In-Demand Careers

**N**ew York Institute of Technology's exciting new degree programs are poised to train the next generation of talent to solve global challenges in health, wellness, computing, and engineering and to meet current COVID-19 crisis needs. The university's new academic offerings, which will prepare students to enter some of today's fastest-growing occupations, include:

- **Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (OTD):** The OTD program will equip future healers to deliver care in a variety of clinical settings, including in-person and telehealth modalities. The program emphasizes research, evidence-based practice, leadership, program and policy development, and advocacy.
- **Computer Science, Ph.D.:** This program will offer students an advanced

research-oriented education. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 13 percent nationwide increase in computer and information technology jobs by 2026. This new program aims to fill the region's demand for highly trained scientists, researchers, and computer science professionals.

- **Applied and Computational Mathematics, B.S.:** This program will provide a rich mix of applied and computational mathematics courses and prepare students for myriad careers in industries ranging from health to engineering to data science, as well as advanced graduate work.
- **Construction Engineering, B.S.:** The only degree program of its kind offered in the New York tristate area. Graduates

will be equipped to apply skills in building much-needed health-related and other infrastructure, such as highways, bridges, ports, tunnels, dams, power plants, rails, and underground utilities.

The new School of Architecture and Design master's degrees will prepare students for the architecture careers of the future.



JAMES TROICI



## INNOVATORS

• **Exercise Science, B.S.:** The curriculum includes courses in kinesiology, aerobic conditioning, movement analysis, and survey of athletic injuries. Graduates are not only prepared to enter entry-level jobs within the exercise and fitness industry but are also prepared to take additional certifications and consider graduate programs in exercise physiology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and medicine.

• **Architecture, Computational Technologies, M.S.:** This post-professional degree integrates critical relationships between science and culture, developing new technologies with a focus on the history and theory of representation, robotics, and cybernetics. In this degree program, students will learn how to design and build models and prototypes using the latest technologies in computational design, robotics and fabrication, and new materials.

• **Architecture, Health and Design, M.S.:** Students will learn how to design and build medical/health care spaces for treatment, convalescence, and recovery. In this post-professional master's degree program, courses will concentrate on computational design, prototyping, augmented and intelligent materials, and environmental systems.

• **Physics, B.S.:** In this program, students will learn advanced mathematical skills to analyze complex physical systems and solve tough problems in physics and other quantitative fields like data science and finance. They will apply knowledge to research in the university's well-equipped laboratories, featuring state-of-the-art optical microscopy, imaging technology, robotics, and rapid prototyping.

"These degrees not only contribute to our continued goal of offering in-demand programs to a talented, dynamic, and diverse student body but they also underscore our commitment to providing the expertise needed to boost and sustain tomorrow's workforce needs," said Junius Gonzales, M.D., M.B.A., provost and vice president for academic affairs.



CHRIS APPOLDT

Milan Toma, right, and Alfonso Dehesa Baeza developed computational simulations to help clinicians understand the impact of abusive head trauma like that of shaken baby syndrome.

## Simulating Shaken Baby Syndrome

**Abusive head trauma (AHT)**, like that of shaken baby syndrome, is the leading cause of fatal brain injuries in children under two. Assistant Professor Milan Toma, Ph.D., and undergraduate mechanical engineering student Alfonso Dehesa Baeza developed computational simulations to help clinicians better understand the impact of these injuries.

Shaking produces an accelerated force similar to whiplash that causes a baby's head to undergo multiple cycles of hyperextension and hyperflexion—snapping backward and rebounding to its original position. During head injury, the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) found in the central cavities and space surrounding the brain and spinal cord, cushions the brain and protects it from hitting the skull. Despite this protection, one in four shaken babies dies, and 80 percent of survivors suffer permanent brain damage.

Computational simulations can help physicians visualize the true impact of AHT and assist them in making a prognosis. However, existing simulations are insufficient, as they portray the fluid as an elastic solid and fail to replicate intricate brain anatomy and the interaction between the CSF and the brain. The researchers address these deficiencies with more precise simulations, as reported in the *Journal of Pediatric Neurology*, that reveal the fluid's protection may last for only a single shake.

The researchers replicated the fluid's cushioning effect for multiple cycles. In the first shake, CSF traveled to the sites of hyperextension and hyperflexion, providing the anticipated cushioning effect. However, during hyperflexion on the second shake, the fluid did not have enough time to reach the affected areas. In other words, following the first shake, the CSF was unable to prevent the brain from colliding with the skull, suggesting that the fluid offers no protection at repeated frequencies.

>> [bit.ly/Shaken\\_Baby\\_Syndrome](http://bit.ly/Shaken_Baby_Syndrome)

## New York Tech Debuts Podcasts

**New York Tech** debuted two podcast series in 2019, featuring alumni, as educational tools for students and others in the university community and beyond.

NYIT School of Management debuted *In Reality: Lessons from Leaders and Entrepreneurs*. Hosted by **John Rebecchi, Ph.D. (M.B.A. '83)**, it features guests from startups to multinational companies offering unique perspectives on problem-solving, decision-making, and confronting the challenges of running a business. It is designed to help students, budding leaders, and entrepreneurs learn from the experiences of others as well as gain insight into the business world.

In one episode, Rebecchi spoke with James P. Breslawski, vice chairman of the board and president of Henry Schein Inc., distributor of health-care products and services, about running a multinational corporation and gaining the trust of customers and clients. *Subscribe on SoundCloud, Podbean, or iTunes.*

>> [bit.ly/PodcastInReality](https://bit.ly/PodcastInReality)

NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) also launched its first podcast, called *The Scope*.

“Through podcast episodes, our listeners will learn about exciting new health and wellness initiatives, cutting-edge medical research

and technology, and how to effectively navigate medical school,” said Jerry Balentine, D.O., dean of NYITCOM and vice president for health sciences and medical affairs, who envisioned the series.

The first episode featured an interview with NYITCOM alumna

**Jacqueline Segelnick**

(D.O. '19). While a student, Segelnick created a cookbook to help future physicians easily prepare healthy meals while juggling the demands of medical school. The episode focused on culinary medicine, a new evidence-based field that blends the art of food and cooking with the science of medicine.

*The Scope* regularly features new hosts and guest speakers, including NYITCOM students, alumni, faculty, and staff. *Subscribe on Apple Podcast, Podbean, Spotify, or SoundCloud.*

>> [bit.ly/TheScopePodcast](https://bit.ly/TheScopePodcast)



ERIK FRED

## Architecture Alumnus Supports First Responders

**As critical responses** to the COVID-19 crisis ramped up in March 2020, architect **Erik Fred (B.Arch. '11)** was called upon to support the front lines when a former client asked him to create a three-dimensional rendering of a structure that could support first responders during the global pandemic.

One design led to others, and Fred has now developed all of the architectural plans for the project, called Hermetic Mobility, which has morphed into an entire series of designs for multipurpose, mobile medical units constructed of recycled shipping containers. The first series of structures was developed to respond to the outbreak, creating clean rooms for

examining patients, running test results, and isolating those who are symptomatic.

While Army tents can be used in these situations, climate-controlled shipping containers provide more secure enclosed spaces with negative and positive air pressure, HEPA filters, air curtains, and vestibules that prevent cross-contamination while still being mobile.

“There are trains, ships, and cranes to move them already in place,” says Fred. “If there is a future outbreak of COVID or anything else, instead of shipping goods from China, these units can be put into the system effortlessly and moved across the country or across the seas.”

>> [bit.ly/Mobile\\_Medical\\_Units](https://bit.ly/Mobile_Medical_Units)

## Virtual Success: New York Tech's 59th Commencement

On June 21, graduates, families, friends, and New York Tech faculty and staff tuned in to a livestream of New York Institute of Technology's 59th annual commencement. The ceremony featured celebratory speeches by university administration, this year's student orator, **Ashley Dent (B.F.A. '20)**, and the singing of the national anthem by **Emily Tafur (M.A. '20)**; the conferral of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees; and individual school and college ceremonies honoring each graduate and recognizing student awards and honors.

The virtual commencement saluted more than 1,700 candidates for graduation who attended the Long Island, New York City, and online degree programs.

With nearly 2,000 unique page views, the stream was viewed by graduates throughout the United States as well as China, India, Europe, and other international locations. The main ceremony included speeches and a montage of students that incorporated inspiring messages from government officials, including Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul, Sen. Chuck Schumer, and Congressman Tom Suozzi.

During the main event, President Hank Foley, Ph.D., conferred degrees on this year's class. "The overwhelming majority of you may feel uncertain about your near and longer-term future, and that is



understandable, even if we weren't in the aftermath of a global pandemic. I am confident that your New York Tech education and credentials position you well and that a brighter future is just around the corner for you...and because of you," Foley told the graduates.

On May 18, a virtual graduation ceremony was held for more than 300 medical students who earned a D.O. from NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) in Long Island and received their doctoral hoods. With each name called, the student's photo and "thank-you" displayed, culminating in a poignant exhibition of gratitude. On May 21, NYITCOM-Arkansas held a virtual graduation ceremony for its inaugural class of about 100 students.

>> [bit.ly/Virtual\\_Commencement](https://bit.ly/Virtual_Commencement)

### MAKER



COURTESY DOMINICA JAMIR

## A Winning Proposal

**Dominica Jamir**, a graduate student in New York Institute of Technology's UX/UI (user experience/user interface) design and development program, has created a virtual reality (VR) application to immerse students in their biology and chemistry lessons, allowing the molecules to come to life before their eyes. Her project, *Intellect VR: Learning in VR; the VR Experience in the Classroom*, was named Best Practitioner Poster Proposal at this year's international conference of the Immersive Learning Research Network.

Jamir approached her project with the intention to use VR technology as a tool to enhance current teaching and learning methods through immersive- and activity-based experiences using VR headsets. "In VR, a molecule can be viewed

as a larger-than-life 3-D image. Minute details are enlarged for clarity, and certain sections of the subject molecule are clickable to obtain additional information on that topic," explained Jamir.

The goal is to measure students' memory retention and learning performance. "Audience members, after experiencing molecules in an immersive and enhanced learning environment, can understand and retain complex scientific concepts that have been brought to life in VR," she said. "Potential benefits to academic institutions could be that professors enhance their lesson plans to facilitate stronger student comprehension of subject matter and retention for better test results."

>> [bit.ly/Winning\\_Proposal](https://bit.ly/Winning_Proposal)

## Student Veteran Efforts Saluted



VICTORY MEDIA

**The results are in**—New York Institute of Technology has been named a Military Friendly® School for 2020-2021. The annual Military Friendly® Schools survey is issued by veteran-owned Victory and is the longest-running, most comprehensive evaluation of U.S. college and university investments to serve military and veteran students. Institutions are recognized for their efforts to help veterans transition from the military to the classroom and ultimately secure successful careers in the civilian world. This year, 1,693 post-secondary schools completed the survey, with 695 earning Military Friendly® designation.

More than 150 veterans are currently enrolled at New York Tech, which participates in the Yellow Ribbon program and Troops to Teachers; provides financial aid, prior learning credits, and exclusive events/priority registration specifically for veterans; and offers additional services through the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs. In addition, the New York Tech Student Veterans Organization provides peer-to-peer support for fellow veteran-related events.

>> [bit.ly/NewYorkTechMilitaryFriendly](http://bit.ly/NewYorkTechMilitaryFriendly)

### HEALERS

## Perfect Matches

As health-care professionals took to the front lines in the fight against COVID-19, on March 20, NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine’s (NYITCOM) future physicians accepted their next mission in healing: their medical residencies.

On Match Day, NYITCOM students join fellow medical students across the country in learning their “matches,” or where they will spend the next several years completing their medical residencies. Matches are determined by a computerized algorithm and kept top secret from both the future doctors and the matching hospitals until they are opened.

While Match Day is typically celebrated with large, in-person gatherings, this year’s event was held via livestream. However, the virtual nature did not dampen spirits. Students took to social media to share their at-home celebrations and cheer on classmates. Among the Class of 2020’s impressive matches are the Mayo Clinic, the Cleveland Clinic, Rutgers, and Penn State Hershey, as well as specialties in orthopedic surgery, dermatology, psychiatry, pediatrics, emergency medicine, otorhinolaryngology, and others.

The event was especially exciting for NYITCOM-Arkansas, which celebrated its first Match Day. Nearly half of its participating medical students received positions in Arkansas or a Delta state, supporting the NYITCOM-Arkansas mission to help medically underserved and rural areas.

>> [bit.ly/TechMatchDay2020](http://bit.ly/TechMatchDay2020)



KAYLA ARTHUR

NYITCOM-Arkansas student Kayla Arthur (D.O. '20) proudly displays her match.



GETTY IMAGES

## Boosting Immunity Through Diet and Exercise

**According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,** patients with conditions such as heart disease and diabetes are at higher risk for COVID-19 and other potential infections. Research also shows that consistent healthy eating and exercise can fight inflammation and improve immune system response.

NYIT School of Health Professions nutrition expert Mindy Haar, Ph.D., RDN, clinical associate professor and chair of interdisciplinary health sciences, and exercise expert Alex Rothstein, M.S., instructor of interdisciplinary health sciences, who is heading up New York Tech's new exercise science program, explain how incorporating sound dietary and fitness guidelines can improve immunity and overall well-being.

### **How can making better food choices and exercising help to ward off illnesses like COVID-19?**

**Mindy Haar:** While research is continually increasing our understanding of COVID-19, nutrition and exercise can optimize our ability to fight off this disease. The goal is to improve our immune system and reduce inflammation. Individuals with high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity are at higher risk for COVID-19 due to the associated increased inflammation. Lifestyle changes that lead to even moderate changes in weight, blood pressure, and blood glucose can decrease inflammation for people with these conditions, as well as for the general population.

**Alex Rothstein:** A regular exercise program will reduce body fat, which can reduce vulnerability to infection, increase lean

muscle, strengthen the cardiovascular and muscular skeletal systems, improve sleep quality, and reduce stress and anxiety. In the short-term, a bout of exercise can reduce the effectiveness of one's immune system until that person gives the body the necessary time to recover. After recovery, we experience an adaptation known as "supercompensation." A benefit of this is enhanced immune function, including a decrease in overall body inflammation.

### **How can people improve immunity through nutrition?**

**MH:** Eat nutrient-dense and less-processed foods. Avoid foods filled with sugar, white flour, and fat, which often result in weight gain. Eat fruits and vegetables, especially those high in vitamin C, and garlic and herbs not only enhance foods' flavor but also may have immune-boosting properties.

You can also consume foods high in probiotics that improve intestinal function. Add nuts in moderation for vitamin E, an antioxidant that can protect against infection. And drink plenty of water to eliminate waste products from the body.

### **What advice do you give to beginners looking to implement an exercise routine?**

**AR:** Develop both long- and short-term goals. Focus short-term goals on specific parts of an exercise program, like "I will run three times this week," and long-term goals on specific outcomes you want from exercise, such as "I want to reduce my weight three to four pounds over the next four weeks."

>> [bit.ly/Boosting\\_Immunity](https://bit.ly/Boosting_Immunity)



# ROAD TO RETURN TO



When the COVID-19 pandemic forced classes to remote instruction, New York Tech spent the next few months preparing to ensure a safe and successful start to the fall semester. On September 9, almost six months to the day they moved to remote learning, classes resumed, with a focus on keeping the community's health and safety a priority and providing a quality educational experience, whether in person or remote. // Photographs by Bob Handelman

**A**lmost six months to the day that New York Tech moved to virtual instruction for the remainder of the spring semester, the university reopened its campuses in New York City and Long Island for the start of the fall semester. While medical students returned to campus to begin their academic year in early August, the official start of the fall semester on September 9 for undergraduate and graduate students was the result of months of preparations to ensure a safe and successful start, regardless of whether students would be studying on campus, virtually, or a blend of both.

New York Institute of Technology President Hank Foley, Ph.D., kept the community up to date on plans and developments relating to COVID-19 via frequent emails throughout the spring and summer, noting that the university's overarching goal would "reflect our commitment to ensuring the health and safety of the university community while fulfilling our mission of providing the highest-quality educational experience for our students."

# CAMPUS



Supplementing his communiqués were regular emails from Chief Medical Officer and Academic Health Care Centers Director Brian Harper, M.D., regarding COVID-19 and precautionary measures for the entire community and from Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Junius Gonzales, M.D., M.B.A., to faculty members, offering important updates, guidance, and resources for virtual teaching and learning.

And as 1,500 class sections successfully pivoted to a virtual learning environment during the spring, an executive committee—including Harper; Suzanne Musho, chief architect and vice president for capital planning and facilities management; and Jerry Balentine, D.O., dean of NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine and vice president for health sciences and medical affairs—was formed to develop plans to respond to local, state, and national guidelines for a safe reopening.

The [reopening plans](#) (one for New York City and one for Long Island) addressed the short-term challenges of bringing students and educators back to the campuses this fall while taking the opportunity to forge university partnerships and address longer-term issues like sustainability, pedagogical practices, and university operations.

New York Tech's road to reopening included many faces and phases.

## LEADing the Charge on Campus

You could say that having two New York campuses that required distinctive reopening plans provided Musho and her team "double the fun."

"We're preparing for the future at a time when the present is extremely present," says Musho. "The question we keep asking is, 'What can we be?'"



The present necessitated addressing facilities via Musho’s four-point LEAD strategy, which included an integrated emphasis on health and communication:

**L**ayout requirements for campus entry, which includes an online health screen (coordinated with developers in the Office of Information Technology) as well as the physical layout of indoor and outdoor space to ensure physical distancing.

**E**quipment adjustments such as hands-free operations in restrooms and mechanics for air quality and filtration.

**A**cademic considerations to support a blended educational environment.

**D**isinfection strategies including sprays, UV light, and electrostatic cleaners.

In retrospect, she observes that the pandemic has crystalized humanity’s reliance on the natural environment for physical, emotional, and mental health. “At both campus locations, we’re doing anything we can to help people be outdoors.”

## A COVID-19 TIMELINE: **NEW YORK TECH RESPONDS**

### January 9

World Health Organization (WHO) announces mysterious coronavirus-related pneumonia in Wuhan, China.

### January 21

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirms first case of COVID-19 in the United States.

### January 24

**New York Tech Chief Medical Officer Brian Harper, M.D., issues the first in what will become a regular series of informational updates on COVID-19 to the campus community.**

### January 25

The first Canadian case of the novel coronavirus was reported by Health Canada in a Toronto man who had recently traveled to Wuhan, China.

### January 30

WHO issues global health emergency.

### January 31

The Trump administration restricts travel to the United States from China.

### February 2

First COVID-19 death reported outside China, in the Philippines.

### February 3

United States declares public health emergency.

### February 14

France announces first COVID-19 death in Europe.

### March 1

First diagnosed case of COVID-19 in New York state.

### March 3

CDC lifts federal restrictions on testing for COVID-19.

### March 4

**Chief Medical Officer Brian Harper, M.D., shares public health expertise regarding growing COVID-19 concern with *Newsday*.**



### March 5

First diagnosed case of COVID-19 on Long Island.



### March 10

**New York Tech suspends in-person classes at all New York campuses. University’s emphasis on technology aids near-seamless transition to online learning.**

New York state orders nation’s first containment zone in Westchester County’s New Rochelle.

### March 11

WHO categorizes COVID-19 as a pandemic. President Donald Trump blocks most United States travelers from Europe.





Campus maps highlight new outdoor and indoor spaces for studying, meeting a friend, or attending classes online and indicate check-in points where anyone entering campus must show their health screen and required face coverings. Colorful “Bear Care” signs remind community members of policies, best practices, and safety precautions to #ProtectTheDen.

At the Long Island campus, students now enjoy safely distanced spaces that include outdoor “pop-up parklets” with planters, seating, tables, and umbrellas for shade. Expanded WiFi and portable A/V units offer faculty the option of holding classes outside. And while dining options are limited to two locations this fall, a food truck will soon roll on to campus for grab-and-go service.

Options for outdoor gatherings and dining on the New York City campus provided more of a challenge, but the proximity to Central Park allows space for studying and gathering and there are countless dining options nearby. Musho and her team also needed to use different approaches because of the vertical nature of that campus, including multistory buildings that required the use of elevators and a different approach to ventilation and accessibility.

### March 12

New York state closes schools, houses of worship, and large gathering facilities.

**March 13**  
Infectious disease expert Carl Abraham, M.D., assistant professor of clinical medicine at NYITCOM-



Arkansas, publishes [op-ed](#) in *Arkansas Business* on the importance of containing the COVID-19 outbreak via social distancing and personal hygiene.

### March 15

President Trump declares a national emergency.

### March 16

Health Canada instructed all travelers entering Canada from anywhere in the world to quarantine for 14 days.

### March 17

New York Tech extends deposit deadline for incoming first-year students to June 1.

### March 18

National guidelines issued to avoid restaurants and bars, to limit gatherings to 10 or fewer people, and work and engage in schooling from home when possible.

### March 20

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo orders all nonessential businesses closed statewide.

### March 21

New York Tech faculty groups announce [\\$50,000 gift](#) to COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund.

### March 23

NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine holds first-ever [virtual Match Day](#) via livestream for graduating medical students to learn residency placements.



[OPEN House](#), a solar home constructed by New York Tech students and donated to the city of Hempstead, becomes an emergency operations center where



the town doctor monitors the health of the town’s workforce and EMTs during the pandemic.

New York Tech suspends in-person classes through the end of the semester.

### March 25

Supply chain expert Purushottam Meena, Ph.D., associate professor of operations management, is [interviewed by City & State New York](#) about COVID-19’s impact on regional and national supply chains.



### March 26

United States leads the world in confirmed COVID-19 cases.



## Leveraging a Legacy in Teaching With Technology

While New York Tech's expertise and experience in teaching with technology gave the university an edge in pivoting to the remote learning environment, some heavy lifting was necessary to quickly provide technology support and resources to faculty and students, including training and supplemental software.

The Center for Teaching and Learning mobilized efforts to offer workshops and training, along with online resources, and worked with faculty to create a series of videos that shared successful practices. Meanwhile, the Technology-Based Learning Systems (TBLS) provided additional support via myriad teaching activities, including the "I Wish I Could" workshops.

"We, as so many other institutions of higher education, were successful in transitioning more than 1,500 sections into remote teaching and can now highlight many successes, lessons learned, and some cautionary reflections," notes Gonzales, who also shared results from a survey answered by nearly 2,000 students. This allowed the university to better understand the impact of the pandemic on students' lives and learn what they value in instruction going forward. An unexpected bonus: 60 pages' worth of comments praising individual faculty members' efforts during the spring semester.

## A COVID-19 TIMELINE: NEW YORK TECH RESPONDS



### March 31

Interdisciplinary team of student and faculty innovators led by Suzanne Musho, AIA, NCARB, begins meeting weekly to strategize the creation and distribution of 3-D printed PPE and ventilator equipment for local facilities in need. Faculty and students construct and donate more than 500 face shields.



### April 1

*Forbes* and *Bloomberg* feature NYITCOM research on the TB vaccine and its potential impact in combating COVID-19.

### April 2

New York COVID-19 cases hit 92,381, surpassing China.

### April 6

New York Tech faculty respond to PPE shortages by donating masks, gloves, and goggles from campus labs to local hospitals.

### April 7

Microbiologist Bryan Gibb, Ph.D., assistant professor of biological and chemical sciences, shares home disinfection tips in newspapers including the *Manhattan Times*, *The Bronx Free Press*, and *News Break*.

### April 8

New York Tech's Student Veterans Organization raised \$725 to purchase PPE and other medical supplies and food for the New Rochelle Community Action Program and Soulful Synergy, a socially conscious consulting company.



First-year medical student Willis Lin spearheaded efforts to provide supplies to local health-care facilities and hospitals. Using resources of Serenilite, a company he previously formed, Lin created and supplied critical PPE to city hospitals and local health-care providers, including the Academic Health Care Centers.



### April 10

New York Tech showcases new personalized efforts to engage potential students virtually.



### April 15

118 members of the NYITCOM Class of 2020 graduate early under an emergency order from Gov. Cuomo allowing them to volunteer in the fight against COVID-19.



Over the summer, new and improved technology was added to benefit students and faculty. In early June, New York Tech transitioned its learning management systems to the industry-leading platform, Canvas. And in July, the offices of Academic Affairs and Information Technology announced the establishment of Academic Technology Services (ATS) “to support the strategic use of technologies and make significant, coordinated investments in the digital tools and resources needed to enhance teaching, learning, research, and scholarship,” according to Gonzales.

### Students First

At the core of every plan and initiative was to underscore the university’s ongoing commitment to its students. And at the core of that were support services, engagement activities, and new resources to provide students the tools for success.

In the spring, the university launched the Student Emergency Fund to assist students impacted financially by unforeseen circumstances during a disaster or crisis as well as a comprehensive set of resources and information on the website including an online “question box” to address specific issues; telehealth medical and counseling services; and supplemental online programming, advisement, forums, and more.

### April 29

College of Engineering and Computer Science launches weekly STEAM Outreach Happy Hour to connect students and faculty on a variety of research and technology topics.



### May 14

New York Tech cancels fall 2020 study abroad programs and prepares to offer all summer courses remotely.

### May 20

In an article in *Le Monde*, School of Architecture and Design’s Jeffrey Raven [provides insights](#) on how climate-resilient urban design can play a significant role in deterring major health challenges and refutes the notion that blames urban density for the spread of COVID-19 in cities.

### May 28

U.S. COVID-19 deaths pass the 100,000 mark.



[A story](#) about architect Erik Fred (B. Arch. '11) details how he was called upon at the start of the pandemic to develop all of the architectural plans for a project called Hermetic Mobility, which has morphed into an entire series of designs for multipurpose, mobile medical units constructed of recycled shipping containers.

### May 18

[Virtual hooding ceremony](#) celebrates the NYITCOM-Long Island Class of 2020.



### May 27

Virtual ceremony celebrates the [inaugural graduating class](#) of NYITCOM-Arkansas.



### June 2

Mascot Roary and members of the Office of Admissions led a [car parade](#) across seven Nassau County towns to deliver lawn signs to members of New York Tech’s newest class.

### June 8

New York marks 100th day since first confirmed case; Gov. Cuomo announces the first phase of reopening of New York City.



# Community Spirit

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the New York Tech community provided sustenance and personal protective equipment (PPE) to front-line workers and technology devices to patients who were isolated from loved ones.

## HELPING OUR HEROES

Sarah Korn, a student at NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine, led efforts to launch Help Our Heroes, a volunteer program to provide health-care workers with items and services, including PPE, hospital food deliveries, grocery shopping, childcare, and pet care. More than 150 NYITCOM students participated in various committees and their initiatives included:

- The PPE committee raised funds, and together with medical student Ian Persits, who led another initiative called Meditation4Medicine, purchased 2,000 KN95 masks that were distributed to local hospitals, along with 50 face shields created by Gregory Kurgansky, a medical student who used his own 3-D printer.

- Meals from Med Students organized the delivery of more than 4,200 meals to health-care workers in hospitals throughout Long Island and New York City via fundraising efforts and coordinating donations from restaurants.

## FEEDING THE FRONT LINE

New York Tech’s Student Veterans Organization, in partnership with student-athletes, NYITCOM, Campus Dining, and Student Life, also answered the call. The Feed the Frontline initiative raised more than \$42,000 to provide food platters to front-line staff at nine New York area hospitals.

Campus Dining used funds raised to provide the food, and New York Tech student veterans assisted in the unloading and delivery of more than 1,900 meals.

## TECHNOLOGY DRIVE

Brandon Burg, a medical student and Academic Medicine scholar, collected used iPads, iPhones, and chargers for hospital patients who had no means to contact their loved ones during the pandemic. Burg; Linda Darroch-Short, NYITCOM director of student life; and **Hallie Zwibel (D.O. ’11)**, assistant professor and medical director, spearheaded the tech drive.

## ESSENTIAL TREATS

In early May, the New York Tech Doctor of Physical Therapy Student Association raised \$2,300 in one week to provide treat bags to essential workers in local area hospitals. Staff and students filled more than 300 bags with sweet treats that were delivered to local hospitals.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY INITIATIVE

As COVID-19 ravaged supplies of PPE and ventilators in local hospitals, New York Tech innovators implemented a strategic and collaborative approach to arm front-line workers and patients with the necessary gear.

Facilitated by Suzanne Musho, chief architect and vice president for capital planning and facilities management, the interdisciplinary initiative maximized the ingenuity and resources from the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Engineering and Computing Sciences, NYITCOM, and School of Architecture and Design. Beginning in March, the team met weekly to strategize the creation and distribution of 3-D-printed PPE and ventilator equipment to facilities in need.

## A COVID-19 TIMELINE: NEW YORK TECH RESPONDS

### June 12

Kevin LaGrandeur, Ph.D., professor of English, gives a lightning round discussion on the promise and peril of [using artificial intelligence to fight COVID-19](#) as part of an international “Zoom-posium.”



### June 20

Southern and Western states experience surge in COVID-19 cases.

### June 21

New York Tech holds [virtual commencement ceremony](#) for the Class of 2020.

### June 30

New York Tech announces reopening plans for fall 2020 as a mix of in-person and remote classes.

### July 1

European Union reopens borders to travelers, bars visitors from the United States. New York state guidelines allow for reopening of research labs.



The Office of Student Life activated a robust online orientation program featuring interactive and multimedia content, which proved to be a hit with incoming students and boasted a 94 percent completion rate. The aptly named Students First webinar series kept new and current students informed of what to expect in the fall.

And at the onset of the new semester, a tradition was born: New Student Academic Convocation, which introduced incoming students to key university leaders and programs as well as current students and alumni.

### Focusing on Reinventing the Future

Musho notes how many of the changes being made align with longer-term university strategic plans. One sustainability initiative currently underway relates to the 300,000-gallon wastewater treatment plant on the Long Island campus. Built in 1963 and updated in 1996, the plant treats the majority of the campus's sanitary water. The future expansion of the plant will allow the university to reuse water for irrigation, among other things, representing a huge step forward in water conservation, while also providing curricular offerings and research opportunities.

"In the big picture, we're interested in decreasing our use of fossil fuels, using less artificial lighting, increasing our use of solar energy, and engaging more in the outdoors," she explains. ■

### July 2

Christine Hartford, M.D., assistant professor of clinical medicine at NYITCOM-Arkansas, urges Americans to wear face masks to stop the spread of COVID-19.

### July 9

New York Tech launches weekly Students First Series webinars to discuss topics relevant to the student experience, including their health, return to campus, and more.



### July 13

Virtual orientation begins for all new first-year, transfer, and graduate students.

### July 23

Reopening plan for Long Island campus submitted to New York state. President Foley shares numerous enhancements to campus, including facilities and technology upgrades, new open study spaces and parklets on the Long Island campus, and plans for implementation of the new Canvas learning platform.



### August 6

NYITCOM students begin classes in person in Long Island and Arkansas.

### August 11

New ATS division established to support faculty and student teaching and learning with technology.

### August 13

The World Health Organization [reports](#) that the COVID-19 pandemic is costing the global economy over \$375 billion per month, citing International Monetary Fund research.

### August 19

NYITCOM-Arkansas reached an agreement with the Arkansas State University system to conduct [COVID-19 contact tracing](#) for each of the system's campus locations across the state.

The U.S. College Board cancels the SAT test for nearly half of the students scheduled to take it in August.

### August 31

President Foley shares the final plans for reopening with communications including a daily online health screen, requirements of face coverings on campus, and COVID-19 testing for all students returning to campus in the fall.



### September 3

Annual [convocation](#) for faculty and staff is held virtually for the first time ever.

### September 8

[New Student Academic Convocation](#) is held via Zoom for incoming students on the Long Island and New York City campuses.

### September 9

Fall semester begins at New York Tech!



E . R . R . S . E . L . A . E . R . R . S . E . L . A . E . R . R . S . E . L . A . E . R .



E . L . A . E . R . R . S . E . L . A . E . R . R . S . E . L . A . E . R . R . S . E . L . A .



E . R . R . S . E . L . A . E . R . R . S . E . L . A . E . R . R . S . E . L . A . E . R .



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# THE ETIC: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

By Renée Gearhart Levy



E.R.R.S.E.L.A. is a web-based robotics project, which allows students to contribute from any location based on their skill level and interests. Above: Early prototype of E.R.R.S.E.L.A.

**A**s a high school senior, Robert Doxey created his first app, a game for the iPhone that he made available through the iOS App Store.

Three years later, the New York Tech computer science major is flexing his entrepreneurial muscles as the founder of DevTeam\_One, a company that develops apps to meet the needs of other startup companies.

Doxey, a third-year student in the accelerated five-year bachelor/master's program in computer science, credits New York Tech's Entrepreneurship and Technology Innovation Center (ETIC), a campus-based business incubator, for helping him make his business a reality. "The ETIC is a huge benefit to students," says Doxey. "A student may have an idea for a company or product but not have all the skills needed to develop it. That's where the ETIC comes in, helping students obtain real-world experience as an entrepreneur."

Partially funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration and the New York State Empire State Development Corporation (ESD), the ETIC was established in 2015 by Nada Anid, Ph.D., New York Tech's vice president for strategic communications and external affairs in her former role as dean of NYIT College of Engineering and Computing Sciences with a team of faculty and a

**NEW YORK TECH'S  
BUSINESS AND  
TECHNOLOGY  
INCUBATOR, now  
five years old,  
continues to spur  
entrepreneurship  
and innovation, both  
on campus and off.**

## THE ETIC: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

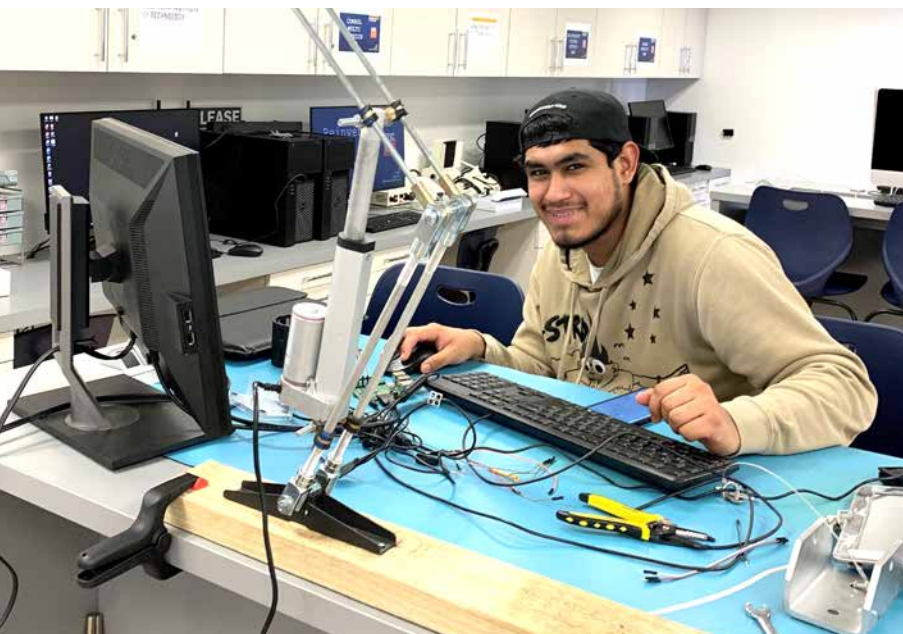
**Right:** Graduate student Alex Atrachji's app, UtiliWaste Connect, focuses on motivating people to separate food waste so it can be diverted from landfills. He is leveraging ETIC resources to develop his network software application and is using fellow student Robert Doxey's company, DevTeam\_One, to develop his app.

25-member executive advisory board. Its mission is to foster innovation and promote collaborations between industry, the academic community, professional organizations, and government. As a source for talent, entrepreneurship, and innovation in technology, engineering, and applied science, the Center will spur economic growth and ensure greater competitiveness for Long Island and the broader metropolitan region, and support the region's economic development by focusing on the three critical areas: information technology and cybersecurity, bioengineering and health analytics, energy, and green technologies.

"The vision behind the ETIC is to encourage creation and invention, confidence and risk-taking, and empower any business partner or student currently enrolled at New York Tech, or at any affiliated high school, to turn 'an idea into a company' with onsite and virtually accessible tools, equipment, mentoring, faculty expertise, business, legal, marketing, and outreach advice that includes a green room for sharing success stories with the wider community via short video clips," says Anid.

In its 8,000 square feet of state-of-the-art labs and facilities on the Long Island campus, including a machine shop, class 10,000 clean room, nanofabrication facility, materials lab, and a cybersecurity lab funded in part by the ESD, the center serves two vital purposes: providing partner companies with technical support, business development, and commercialization guidance and access to potential funding through its investor networks. In the process, it also helps stu-

**Below:** Computer science major Alex Vazquez-Zavala has spent much of the past year configuring electronics and code for E.R.R.S.E.L.A.'s robotic arms.



MIKE NIZICH

dents become entrepreneurs and engage in transformative research and development in their fields.

Doxey got involved in ETIC activities as a first-year student, after learning about it from fellow student and physics tutor **Mateusz M. Ardito-Proulx (B.S. '20)**. They joined forces on an entry for the 2017 ETIC Design Challenge, taking third place for their app, One Earth, a game to educate kids about climate change. They subsequently competed in a second design challenge with an app to help citizens of developing countries locate drinkable water, food, and other resources, taking second place. Shortly after, Doxey founded DevTeam\_One, which recently finished Phase I development of an app for UtiliWaste Connect, another ETIC company started by **Alex Atrachji (ACERT '20, M.S. '20)**.

"Having my own company has enhanced my engineering education," Doxey says. "I now know what it's like to work with clients and make apps for them for pay."

### HANDS ON

While there are other business incubators in greater Long Island, the ETIC provides more than just business development and investment guidance. "Our differentiator is the technical support we can provide a startup company—from our students and faculty," says Babak Beheshti, Ph.D., dean of the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences, home to the ETIC.

Indeed, creating an atmosphere for "high-impact entrepreneurial learning" was a major goal when ETIC Director Mike Nizich, Ph.D., was hired in 2016 by Anid.

"The original concept was that we were going to attract outside companies to come and live and breathe here," says Nizich, who brought 20 years of industry experience in information technology and cybersecurity with him. "We don't have the resources to provide year-round, 24/7 business support and campus access so that proved difficult."

So Nizich focused on developing a prototyping and innovation center to give partners resources and students hands-on experience in software design, computer-aided design (CAD), software development,

MIKE NIZICH



robotics, cybersecurity, and other in-demand areas. “We built out these areas so we could have students work on projects and build their expertise and skill sets.”

“It’s a maker fabrication space in the fullest sense,” adds Beheshti. “Students can engage in projects in any of the technical areas they are interested in.”

Students use the facilities to develop their own projects and sometimes even tackle ETIC projects for partner start-up companies. Nizich also maintains internal ETIC initiatives so that interested students, regardless of their major, have an opportunity to get involved.

The biggest project at the moment, and one that was ideally suited to the pivot to virtual learning in spring 2020, is the ETIC Research Robot for Student Engagement and Learning Activities, or E.R.R.S.E.L.A. A web-based robotics project, E.R.R.S.E.L.A. allows students to contribute from any location based on their own skill level and technology interests.

**Michael Campisi (M.S. ’19)**, for example, wrote the original Python operating system for E.R.R.S.E.L.A. Fellow computer science major Alex Vazquez-Zavala has spent much of the past year configuring electronics and code for the robotic arms. “I’m new to Python, so I’ve been learning as I go,” he says. “Working in phases makes it simpler. You need to make the arm move, so you do the research and make the arms move. Then you add the next step. This keeps building and making the robot better.” This experience ultimately helped Vazquez-Zavala secure an internship opportunity with Motiva, one of the ETIC’s supporters.

Another project involves developing health-care applications for the robot, such as pushing a wheelchair or delivering medication in a sterile hospital environment. “We have an intellectual property program and are starting to file provisional patents,” says Nizich.

The robot’s application programming interface (API) allows students, faculty, or teams of students to add capabilities to the robot’s sensors, actuators, software, or artificial intelligence, either on site at the ETIC or remotely from their homes or classrooms.

The remote operation also allows E.R.R.S.E.L.A. to function as a community outreach project. Nizich has engaged several high school teachers and their students on Long Island to develop E.R.R.S.E.L.A.-related applications. “We are introducing them to New York Tech and the ETIC, but the real point is to get them thinking that they could do this as a career,” says Nizich.

During the COVID-19 crisis, as many research programs were forced to disband, E.R.R.S.E.L.A.’s remote capabilities allowed students to continue their “hands-on” research. In April, Nizich launched



Mike Nizich, director of the ETIC.

**“When students work in an environment like this, they’re already working at a commercial level, so we’re really servicing the business community.”**

the iNTEREST program (New York Tech’s ETIC Remote Engagement Sessions in Technology), twice-weekly Zoom seminars to help train new and current participants in skills related to the project, from developing software and web applications to creating databases. And in June, Nizich began a summer program for students and recent graduates with majors in computer science, electrical and computer engineering, mechanical engineering, and graphic design. That same month, E.R.R.S.E.L.A. also played a starring role in commencement, greeting new graduates, faculty, and guests at the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences virtual graduation ceremony.

“These uncertain times have provided us with the unique opportunity to transcend our traditional areas of expertise and coalesce around larger community-based initiatives,” says Beheshti. “This inherently multidisciplinary initiative around our robotics platform is precisely one that addresses this opportunity.”

#### **FROM LAB TO MARKETPLACE**

The ETIC Design Challenge Series was launched in 2018, fostering student motivation from a U.N. global development program to tackle socioeconomic challenges by developing new technologies that support

**Opposite page:** Students Michael Campisi (left) and Zarina Spandiya in the ETIC. Campisi wrote the Python operating system for E.R.R.S.E.L.A. as well as the operating code for Grub Guard.

clean air and water, human rights, and other issues known as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Using the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals gives all inventor-participants a similar focus and provides a mechanism for scoring and judging performances. During three levels of competition, participants are asked to explain their idea, make a whiteboard presentation, and then deliver a prototype and pitch video.

In addition to spurring innovation, Nizich says the competition is among several initiatives available for students to bolster their skill sets and résumés. Another, specifically for undergraduate researchers, is the Undergraduate Research and Entrepreneurship Program (UREP), providing students opportunities and fund-

ing to work on research or entrepreneurship projects in a group setting, under the guidance of faculty mentors.

"When students work in an environment like this, they're already working at a commercial level, so we're really servicing the business community," he says. "When industry needs computer scientists, or cybersecurity experts, or engineers, they know where to come."

Employers are already taking notice. "The ETIC has become an instrumental interface between our students and industry," says Beheshti. Computer science major Campisi was offered a full-time position with Cybersafe Solutions; Northwell Health hired computer science major **Salman Malik (M.S. '19)**; and electrical and computer engineering major **Nicholas Cariello (B.S.'18)**,

## A Stop on Long Island's Tech Corridor

In addition to bridging classroom learning to real-world applications at New York Tech, the ETIC builds on the university's decades-long effort to develop Long Island's tech corridor. Other area research institutions joining this initiative include the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research, Northwell Health, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and Stony Brook University, which also houses a New York state-certified business incubator.

"We're contributing to the cluster of institutions and organizations focused on building a culture of innovation and economic development in the region," says Nizich.

The ETIC, a designated START-UP NY tax-free zone and Empire State Development Division of Science, Technology and Innovation (NYSTAR) business incubator, allows businesses located there to operate free of state and local taxes for 10 years in exchange for job creation and regional investment commitments. Currently, 10 companies have signed space-use agreements and are benefiting from ETIC facilities and services. The ETIC also collaborates with more than 50 regional companies and organizations in various ways, including holding/co-hosting events, recruiting students for internships, sourcing subject matter experts for conferences, and acting as advisors and volunteers for the ETIC.

Another important role of the ETIC, which will be honored at the Long Island Summit Awards this October, is helping fledgling companies demonstrate, test, and advance new ideas and technologies, capitalizing on the talent and expertise of New York Tech's students and faculty as well as ETIC's equipment and state-of-the-art facilities.

Currently, Nizich is supervising graduate students working on a prototype and initial software for local start-up company, Grub Guard, which has developed a patented hardware and software solution to protect food deliveries from being compromised. New York Tech students Michael Campisi (M.S. '19) and Akshay Dev (M.S. '19) developed the electronic components, wrote the operational code for the prototype, and created the various physical device prototypes using 3-D printers located at the ETIC.

"Before news articles reported that one out of four delivery drivers admitted to eating customers' food, and well before the COVID-19 pandemic, we had an idea for a product and software that would allow customers to know if their food had been tampered with during the delivery process," says company CEO Zachary Jones. He was referred to the ETIC by the Empire State Development Corp., and says that while he could have gotten assistance developing his prototype and software elsewhere, it might have cost upward of \$500,000, money his new start-up didn't have at the time.

"They assisted in creating our functional electronic prototype, including the web application, which collects critical data and provides specific details of a potential packaging breach," said Jones. "Grub Guard is on track to be an industry disruptor. I can attribute a portion of that success to the assistance we received through the ETIC. [Our experience there] forced us to think outside the box and push the endless boundaries of where our brand and technology can go."



JASON JONES

**M.S. '19**) and computer science major **Vignesh Harish (M.S. '18)** are working at IBM's cybersecurity division.

**Peter Curtis (B.T. '83, M.S. '95)**, CEO of PMC Group, associate professor of energy management, and a member of the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences Executive Advisory Board, regularly recruits ETIC students. "I look for motivated students who want to make a difference," he says. "The students involved at ETIC come in with a solid background and are able to jump pretty quickly into the things I need them to do," he says.

The ETIC's Technology Internship Prep Program (TIPP) was specifically designed to showcase ETIC students to potential employers. It challenges students to present a proven technology-creation portfolio and hosts showcases where employers can experience the creations and meet the creators.

From there, the next steps vary. At PMC, for example, after completing a series of professional development modules, students enter a paid internship program that teaches them the basics of mission-critical systems and operations. "ETIC is creating a culture where students are thinking out of the box, which is a really important skill set for the next generation," says Curtis.

Other ETIC-led activities offer real-world challenges. Twice a year, the ETIC sponsors daylong "hackathon" competitions, where students compete in a cybersecurity cryptography challenge. "Working with experts in

the field and actually getting their hands dirty enriches students' learning experience and broadens their knowledge base past the classroom," says Nizich. And if they perform well, it's a great addition to their résumé. "I've had top performers offered jobs on the spot," he says.

Other students are using the ETIC to start their own businesses. "We've basically become the launchpad to commercialize their ventures," says Beheshti.

Take UtiliWaste Connect, launched by Atrachji, which focuses on motivating people to separate food waste so it can be diverted from landfills. Atrachji is tapping ETIC resources to develop his network software application.

"The ETIC was the main reason I became a graduate student at New York Tech," says Atrachji. "Its resources bring incredible opportunity to gain practical, hands-on experience to innovate. Being surrounded by other students working on cool projects and being able to learn and grow from one another has been an incredible experience." ■

## Partner Companies

Chroma Projections LLC  
DevTeam\_One\*  
Excelsior Business Development  
Galaxy Gate\*  
Grub Guard  
Marc Antoni Racing Corp.  
Sautech\*  
TG Innovations (LIU Post)\*  
U.S. Commercial Services  
UtiliWaste Connect\*  
Mindless, Inc. \*

\*STUDENT-FOUNDED COMPANY



INNOVATORS

COURTESY OF JOHN EICHORN; COURTESY OF ROBERT GARLAND; COURTESY OF MICHAEL LALUNA

## John Eichhorn (B.S. '09), Robert Garland (B.S. '08), Michael LaLuna (B.S. '08)

In 2005, John Eichhorn and Robert Garland met on the first day of baseball practice and became fast friends. “We were inseparable,” says Eichhorn. “We worked out together, hung out together, attended the same classes, and trained together.” Eichhorn and Michael LaLuna, an accounting major, had met the year before and became roommates in 2006.

The three men would go on to create many memories and a lifelong bond. But their time at New York Institute of Technology didn't only foster a friendship, it also gave them the foundation to jump-start their careers—Eichhorn, a criminal justice major, and Garland, a behavioral sciences major, pursued careers in law enforcement and LaLuna became a certified public accountant.

“The School of Management has some fantastic professors that really helped me understand the inner workings of a business,” says LaLuna. “Most of that education is certainly paying off today.”

About one year ago, Eichhorn, Garland, and LaLuna came together to start a new venture, and

on July 22, 2020, they launched FundtheFirst.com, an online-verified crowdfunding contribution platform that enables anyone to host a campaign for first responders in need, including fire, emergency medical services, law enforcement, military, and medical. Garland got the idea for the platform after his New York Police Department (NYPD) colleague needed assistance to help pay for his daughter's rising health-care costs as she battled a rare neurodegenerative disease. Garland, an NYPD detective, created an online contribution campaign that raised \$14,000.

“I came up with the idea three years ago and thought this could change the lives of thousands of people,” says Garland. When he was thinking about who he could partner with on this venture, he went back to his baseball days and reached out to his good friends Eichhorn and LaLuna. The three alumni developed FundtheFirst.com with the goal of helping those in need and putting an end to scammers and criminals who use first

responders' stories to collect online contributions that never go to the intended recipients.

"Our first responders need help to deal with losses due to injury or illness. Their families need assistance when first responders make the ultimate sacrifice and die on the job," says Garland. "Our nation's first responders put their lives and livelihoods on the line every day for all of us. That has been no better displayed than during the coronavirus crisis."

Before any campaign launches on FundtheFirst.com, the identity of the first responder or family in need (in the case of a death) is verified. Fund the First partnered with ID.me to verify all campaigns in a first responder's name to prove their identity. Fund the First then directly remits

payments to the campaign beneficiary. No third parties are involved in the process.

"We are here to make sure that first responders in need are not exploited. We are here to make sure they are helped," says Garland.

In its first 60 days, Fund the First has raised \$200,000. The trio credits New York Tech for giving them the foundation to start their venture. "It all grew and stemmed from Tech," says Garland.

"Business starts with relationships of your most trusted peers," adds LaLuna. "If you are a responsible, trustworthy person in college, your peers will remember you that way, and when it comes time for reconnecting, they will have strong memories of how you were as a person based on their college experience with you." >> [bit.ly/FundTheFirst](https://bit.ly/FundTheFirst)

## DOER

# Chaya Levin (B.S. '19)

**C**haya Levin says that growing up with a strong female role model fueled her interest in computer science and engineering. "My mother taught me how to fix cars, build radios, and create circuits from a young age," she says. "I learned how to be independent and a critical thinker."

At New York Institute of Technology, Levin excelled in her field of study. During her final year, she took second place in the Student Technical Paper and Presentation competition at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Region 1 Student Conference. She and fellow computer science majors **Ariel Steinlauf (B.S. '19)** and **Panagiota Merron (B.S. '19)** presented their senior project "A Secure Password Management System Based on SPHINX." Working under the guidance of Associate Professor Paolo Gasti, Ph.D., the team built a new password management system that can theoretically resist some of the attacks that so frequently plague people and corporations.

"I worked on the encryption algorithm that we used," she says, "I learned a lot about encryption methods and cryptography from Dr. Gasti. It added fuel to my interest in learning more about cybersecurity in general."

Levin is taking what she learned in the classroom to her job at Grubhub, where she works

as a software engineer. She began working for the company as an intern in her junior year and stayed on through her senior year. Grubhub was so impressed with her skills, they offered her a job after graduation. "I am a backend developer and work with various tools and programming languages," says Levin. "I spend my day brainstorming and learning from team members, writing code as well as participating in learning sessions geared toward teaching the newest technologies."

The small class size at New York Tech was one of the things that drew Levin to the school, and she appreciated the close bonds she was able to form with her classmates. "During senior year, I took an Introduction to Networks class with a lot of electrical and computer engineering and computer science majors, and it was really amazing how everyone helped each other," she says. "This community of students is one of the best parts of being a student at New York Tech."

Outside of the classroom, Levin took on roles with several organizations on and off campus. She served as an executive board member for the New York Tech chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. "I was able to network with a lot of distinguished engineers from many different fields and companies and participate in proj-



COURTESY OF CHAYA LEVIN

*Continued next page.*

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ects that helped to bolster my résumé and career options,” says Levin.

Transitioning from college life to the “real world” was bittersweet, she says. “I missed my friends, classes, and extracurriculars, but it was also extremely exciting to start working full time right after gradu-

ation. I felt that I was able to apply many of the concepts I learned throughout college to the workplace. There was also an incredible amount of support from faculty, who helped with determining which path would be the best option for me and encouraged me to seek out a challenging and rewarding career.”

MAKER

## Evan Goldenberg (B.Arch. '84)

**F**or Evan Goldenberg, being an architect is all about building relationships. With his specialty, it's essential. Through his firm, Architectural Artistry, he specializes in private home renovation and specifically in designing and building personal wine cellars. “I love my clients,” he says. “Eventually your client is your friend, and I think you end up with an exceptional project when you have a relationship like that.”

This niche of architecture is one that Goldenberg has inhabited for nearly three decades, creating private “wine environments” for clients ranging from amateur wine enthusiasts to professional collectors. Born and raised in Stamford, Conn., Goldenberg still calls the area home, and most of his work is centered in the tristate area. However, having bonded with many of his clients over the years, he is often asked to build wine cellars in their second and third homes, taking him on jobs all over the country.

“At the moment, my furthest project is in El Paso, Texas, and the closest is about a mile and a half from my house,” he says. Goldenberg has become known as the go-to architect for these specific projects among wine aficionados, and word of mouth has helped his business boom.

“Like everything else, the more experience you have, the more time you have to perfect and hone your skills,” he says. “I’m probably the only architect and designer of wine cellars who engineers his own refrigeration systems.” This specific skill allows his designs to be elegant and streamlined in a unique way.

Goldenberg wanted to be an architect since he was a teenager, and the years he spent getting his bachelor’s degree in architecture at New York Institute of Technology prepared him well for the realities of the work. “The professors were always trying to provide direction without directly pointing you there,” he says. “If you give someone an answer by asking them 10 other questions, that stimulates them to think of 10 more things they may have forgotten.”

He has carried this approach throughout his career. Goldenberg attributes his habit of examining a problem from multiple angles to preparing him for this unusual field of architecture—a field in which no two projects are ever the same. “Every home poses unique challenges,” he says. “Each one of my clients knows what they want. It’s my job to extract that from them, take the space that they give me, and deliver to them a breathtaking experience.”

Goldenberg says helping clients renovate their homes is very intimate. “They are allowing you into their heart and into their home. Their home means a lot to them. When they let me make changes to their home to affect how they live, that’s kind of special.”



PETER KRUPENY

## Hallie Frederick (D.O. '20)

**G**rowing up in Jonesboro, Hallie Frederick's family was a close-knit, sports-loving crew. Despite having traveled a lot, she never felt the need to wander too far for too long, staying near home for both her undergraduate studies and medical school. She sat down with *New York Institute of Technology Magazine* to talk about her medical school journey and what it means to be a part of NYITCOM-Arkansas' first graduating class.

### **Congratulations! You are a member of the first graduating class of NYITCOM-Arkansas. How does it feel?**

It is the best feeling in the world. I'm so proud of my school, my classmates, and my Jonesboro community for supporting a brand-new medical school and committing to its success.

### **Why did you choose New York Institute of Technology?**

The year I was applying to medical school, I found out that New York Tech would be opening a satellite campus at Arkansas State University. The medical school is located in Wilson Hall, a historic building on campus where I took classes during my undergraduate years. I always tell people that it was "meant to be" for me to go to medical school in my hometown.

### **What made you choose a career in medicine?**

Math and science were always my favorite subjects, and I excelled at them in school. I also really enjoy building relationships with people. I knew I wanted to do something that could utilize both of these skills, and that was to become a physician. My dad was in an accident when I was in the 10th grade and had an emergency above-the-knee leg amputation. Witnessing his initial medical care and recovery also really drove my interest in medicine.

I'm fascinated by science and especially how the human body works. I chose internal medicine as my specialty because of the broadness of the field. It is also the steppingstone to subspecialties like

cardiology, nephrology, pulmonology, gastroenterology, and many more. During my internal medicine rotation as a third year, I heard a neurosurgeon say: "I only have to know a lot about a little; as an internist, you have to know a lot about a lot." That comment stuck with me. I love to learn, and as a physician, I will be a student for life.

### **Did you always want to pursue osteopathic medicine?**

To be honest, I didn't know much about osteopathic medicine before starting medical school. I didn't realize how much the principles and treatment methods would enhance my education. Looking back, I couldn't imagine medical school without the hundreds of hours of hands-on osteopathic manipulation training.

### **What is next for you?**

I am planning to practice medicine in Northeast Arkansas because it's home. The Jonesboro community has been a huge part of my family's life since long before I was born. Part of my school's mission is to "improve access to health care for the underserved and rural populations in Arkansas and the Mississippi Delta region." Arkansas ranks 46th in the country in the number of active physicians per capita. I want to practice in Arkansas to change this statistic and to serve the community that has done so much for me.

### **What is one thing about you people might be surprised to find out?**

I have maintained my love for country music throughout medical school. I know the lyrics to just about every song. I can say all 50 states in alphabetical order and say the alphabet backward!

MICHAEL PIRNIGUE





STEPHANIE HO (M.S. '93)

1

BARRY SLOAN



3

ALONA TIMOFEEVA



4



OF ARCHITECTURE  
DESIGN  
CONTACT

STEVE FENN RYAN BROWN

2



5

STACEY BOGDEN



6

7

SABRINA POLIDORO

1. Homecoming 2019
2. Pictured from left: FRIENDS Chair Domenick Chieco, honorees Denise M. Berger and Joseph A. Chiarelli, and Dean Maria Perbellini at the 11th Annual Alumni and FRIENDS of the School of Architecture and Design Reception.
3. Alumni dinner in Beijing
4. Dinner with the Dean in Vancouver
5. NYITCOM dinner in Florida
- 6./7. *West Side Story* on Broadway

## A Year in Photos

**New York Tech alumni and friends connected** near and far over the last year, from New York City to as far as Beijing and Tel Aviv. Snapshots of a few celebrations include Homecoming and Family Weekend 2019, the 11th Annual Alumni and FRIENDS of the School of Architecture and Design Reception, the Cybersecurity Alumni Dinner with the Dean in Vancouver, dinner in Beijing, *West Side Story* on Broadway, and the NYITCOM Alumni Dinner in Florida. Although this year will keep us physically distant, we hope you will join us at virtual events.



Learn more at [nyit.edu/alumni/events](https://nyit.edu/alumni/events).

### 1960s

**George Marks (B.S. '65)**, based in San Diego, Calif., is a licensed commercial pilot. He and his wife, Bette, have run a photography business for over 25 years, with a focus on drone photography for real estate and movies.

### 1970s

**John Bibas (B.S. '70)**, now retired, wrote to share his memory of the Northeast blackout of 1965: "I left the Manhattan campus (70th Street between Broadway and Columbus) and got into the subway at 72nd and Broadway. The doors closed and then opened, and then the lights went out. People just sat there for

a while. Someone lit a newspaper torch, and we all went back up to the street. There were no lights anywhere. It was an interesting night."

NICSA, an industry association for global asset managers, awarded **Richard Daly (B.S. '74)** the Fund Industry Lifetime Achievement Award. Daly is the executive chairman for Broadridge Financial Solutions and has held titles such as chief executive officer, chief operating officer, and senior vice president, during his decades in the financial industry. A former New York Tech trustee, Daly is also a director of the SIFMA Foundation and the founding treasurer of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Suffolk County, N.Y.



Award-winning author **George A. Encizo (B.S. '76)**, creator of the JD Pickens Mysteries, recently published another novel, *Murder Knows No Boundaries*. All seven of his books are available for purchase online. [bit.ly/GeorgeEncizo](http://bit.ly/GeorgeEncizo)

Former Bears baseball player **Marty Gibson (B.S. '77)** relocated to Ahwatukee Foothills, Ariz., just south of Phoenix, in the 1980s. He ended up playing with several former Major Leaguers in the Arizona Men's Senior Baseball League, and he published two books on local history: *Phoenix's Ahwatukee Foothills* (2006) and *Historical Tales from Ahwatukee Foothills* (2019). He returns to Long Island once or twice a year.

## 1980s

**Greg Martinez (B.S. '80)** reflects on how his career relates to his childhood interests. "I loved the old black-and-white Sherlock Holmes movies, plus police detective and private eye TV shows like *Mannix* and *Columbo*." Martinez had a 30-year career as an investigator for New York state and is now a private investigator on Long Island.

**Minister Dr. Calvin E. Robinson (B.S. '80)** has published his second book, *God Given Sermons for the Whole World, Volume 1*. Robinson has degrees and licenses in cosmetology, medical laboratory technology, and Gospel ministry.



## NOTES TAKEN

We welcome all kinds of news for Alumni Notes. Submit your latest accomplishments—and remember to attach the pics!

[nyit.edu/alumni\\_notes](http://nyit.edu/alumni_notes)  
or [magazine@nyit.edu](mailto:magazine@nyit.edu)

*A Taste of Dawn* magazine featured **Ed Butera (B.F.A. '82)** in an article that highlights his achievements and pursuits as a graphic designer, artist, and photographer. The magazine calls him "a truly unique designer." [bit.ly/EdButera](http://bit.ly/EdButera)

After 10 years as medical director for the Community Hospice of Amsterdam, N.Y., **Michael Sheridan (D.O. '82)** is now the medical director of palliative care at St. Mary's Healthcare in Amsterdam. Sheridan also has a private practice in family medicine/geriatrics. He and his wife Debbie have three children and three grandchildren.

**Elisa Cusimano (B.S. '83)** had two small children when she began her journey at New York Tech. To help cover costs, she took a job in the counseling office. After earning her degree, she went on to start her own group and worked for 25 years as a counselor at the Child Care Council of Suffolk County.

**John Rebecchi (M.B.A. '83)** has debuted a new podcast, *In Reality: Lessons from Leaders and Entrepreneurs*. The podcast, co-produced with NYIT School of Management and hosted by Rebecchi, features one-on-one interviews and aims to help listeners turn their passions into businesses. The second season kicked off in October. [bit.ly/PodcastInReality](http://bit.ly/PodcastInReality)

**Jeff Morosoff (B.F.A. '83, M.A. '01)** is serving as chair of the Department of Journalism, Media Studies, and Public Relations at Hofstra University's Lawrence Herbert School of Communication. He began teaching at Hofstra in 2010 after a 27-year career in public relations and media. Morosoff was New York Institute of Technology's director of alumni relations in 1998 to 2006. "New York Tech played such a huge role in my professional and personal life," he said, "and I'm eternally grateful."

# Alumni CONNECTIONS

## Dear Alumni & Friends,

Over the last three quarters of 2020, we have all dealt with something unprecedented. It has kept us geographically and socially distant. To say that it has been a challenge is an understatement. Each of you had to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic in your own way.

After a recent conversation with a trio of alumni, I paused to reflect on the magnitude of the reach our alumni network had during these nine months. Many of our alumni were and will continue to be on the front lines as medical professionals, educators, law enforcement, EMTs, dispatchers, and active military personnel. Many of you also had to assume new responsibilities, like becoming your child's teacher while perhaps working from home as well.

You are the doers, makers, innovators, inventors, and healers of this "new normal." You are leading the way for future Bears to reinvent the future. I simply must take a moment to applaud you and say THANK YOU!

To the Class of 2020, I know your last semester was not the easiest, but you are a unique group who is able to adapt quickly and persevere. On behalf of the Alumni Association Board, we are excited to have you join this amazing group of 107,000+ alumni worldwide. Welcome to the Alumni Association!

In that spirit, we continue to create new virtual ways for you to feel and stay connected. Join us for Virtual Homecoming 2020 the week of October 19 through 25. And for our School of Architecture and Design alumni, since we can't see you in person at the Annual FRIENDS of the School of Architecture and Design Reception, we hope you'll join us for the upcoming FRIENDS Reimagined Virtual Reception on December 3.

Please continue to visit [nyit.edu/alumni](http://nyit.edu/alumni) and follow us on social media for updates and ways to stay connected with New York Tech. You can email suggestions to [alumni@nyit.edu](mailto:alumni@nyit.edu).

Lastly, for those we have lost in our community or to the alumni who have lost a loved one to this terrible virus, our hearts and thoughts are with you and your families.

Stay safe and healthy.

Go Bears!

Sabrina Polidoro  
Director, Alumni Relations



ANDRE KOPINSKI

**Joseph Hayes (D.O. '83)** earned a master's degree in medical management from USC Marshall School of Business in 2017. He is currently Omni Family Health's Chief Medical Officer, based in Bakersfield, Calif. The health center works to care for uninsured and underinsured patients, which Hayes calls "a rewarding mission." He is board certified in internal medicine, pediatrics, and sleep medicine and still provides medical services for a few hours each week.

Core BTS, a national IT solutions consulting and managed services provider, appointed **Virginia Gambale (B.S. '84)** to its board of directors. Gambale is the managing partner and founder of Azimuth Partners LLC, a strategic advisory firm in the field of technology innovation and growth strategies for early-, mid- and late-stage companies. [bit.ly/VirginiaGambale](http://bit.ly/VirginiaGambale)

Tired Earth talked with **Selva Ozelli, Esq. (B.S. '85)** in an interview available at [tiredearth.com](http://tiredearth.com). Ozelli, a CPA and lawyer, offered insights on the effects of tax laws on the environment.

The state of Missouri's new director for operational excellence is **Mark Waight (B.S. '85)**. Waight left Edward Jones Investments to undertake the task of developing and improving the state's performance management program.

**Thomas Baio (B.Arch. '87)** of New Jersey is an architect, father, and now a Boy Scouts of America Distinguished Citizen of the Year. He was honored by the Patriot Path Council in late 2019.

After 32 years with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, **Denise Berger (B.Arch. '86)** joined AECOM as the Northeast Region chief operating officer, which includes Metro New York and is based in

the city. Berger is a board member of WTS International (which gave Berger its 2019 Woman of the Year Award), and Professional Women in Construction.

Litigator **Richard Fama (B.S. '87)** co-authored an online article in *Cannabis Business Executive* magazine, "With Storm Clouds Brewing, Marketers of CBD Products Can Seek Shelter in the Lessons Learned by Food, Beverage and Dietary Supplement Manufacturers." Fama has experience in class action lawsuits touching on questions of liability and regulation in food, alcohol, and chemicals.

**Ronald Stafford (B.S.A.T. '87)** has taken a position as senior architect at the Office of General Services of New York state. In his new role, he works on facilities across the state from his office in Albany.

**M. Lee Stanley (B.S. '87)** has spent his life covering sports via print, radio, and television, and he now runs a blog and hosts a radio show, *Sports in Depth with Doc Stanley*. He recently posted pictures to his website of athletic items and relics donated to the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

*Modern Healthcare* named Encompass Health Chief Medical Officer **Elissa Charbonneau (D.O. '88)** as one of 2019's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives. [bit.ly/ElissaCharbonneau](http://bit.ly/ElissaCharbonneau)

**John Mack (M.A. '88)** of Newtown, Penn., served as the secretary and assistant treasurer on the Newtown Township Board of Supervisors. Mack has emphasized the importance of creating a five-year financial plan for the city, which experienced financial challenges due to loss of earned income tax revenue. Mack holds four degrees from three universities.

**Bob Tiballi (D.O. '88)** joined Mercyhealth as an internal medicine physician. Tiballi's areas of focus are Lyme disease, infections humans get from animals, tropical medicine, fungal infections, and parasitology.

**Tom Vecchione (B.Arch. '88)** has taken a new position as global firm-wide partner and principal in the New York City office of architecture and design firm Vocon. Vecchione brings expertise in architecture, real estate planning, and design. He serves on boards of the Center for an Urban Future, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Foundation, and the Cornell Baker Program in Real Estate.

**Charles (Chuck) Vanek (B.S. '88)** has taken the reins as the new chief administrative officer of Catholic Health Services of Long Island's Maryhaven Center of Hope, where he has worked for more than 30 years. His most recent position was as chief operating officer. In his new role, Vanek aims to expand Maryhaven's fundraising, staff retention, and community outreach.

**Donna Maria Blancero (M.S. '88)** has been selected as Bentley University's provost and vice president for academic affairs. Founding editor of *The Business Journal of Hispanic Research*, Blancero is of Puerto Rican ancestry and has a long record of supporting Latinos and people of color in business education. She holds a Ph.D. in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University.

Physician **Patrick Murphy (D.O. '88)** is working at Partners in Safety, a professional medical services provider headquartered in Middletown, N.Y. He lives in Peekskill, N.Y.

With 29 years' experience at Verizon Communications, **Stephen Trincerri (B.S. '89)** is now a Lead Outside Plant engineer, responsible for telecommunications infrastructure

throughout Queens, including tens of thousands of miles of fiber-optic cables. As one of his responsibilities, Trincerri oversees services (new and existing) to the redeveloped LaGuardia Airport during ongoing construction. The airport project is "a challenge, to say the least," he says.

**Dennis Dowling (D.O. '89)** went to Guatemala in February on a medical mission through DOCare. He and a group of medical students he supervised from Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences provided care to more than 200 patients in a period of only four days. The overall mission focused on osteopathic manipulative care in underserved areas, and participating physicians and students treated over 1,000 people.

## 1990s

**Ani Changelian (B.F.A. '90)** serves as a director of the Armenian Youth Federation Camp Haiastan. The camp provides young Armenian Americans with cultural and educational experiences in a beautiful, natural environment.

**Joseph Duhamel (B.F.A. '90)** was promoted to associate vice president of creative operations for Quest Corporation of America. Duhamel combines his design graphics background with a solid understanding of architecture to create maps that the public can understand.

Mente Group appointed **Kenneth Hart (B.S. '90)** as vice president of transactions. He will be responsible for managing aircraft acquisition and disposition transaction activities for the company's Gulfstream and turboprop clients. Most recently, Hart was the executive vice president of Hagerty Jet Group as well as associate broker with Welsch Aviation.

[bit.ly/Ken\\_Hart](http://bit.ly/Ken_Hart)

**Thomas G. O'Brien II (B.S. '87, M.S. '90)** has been a busy man. In



COURTESY OF EDWARD VIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE - CAROLINAS CAMPUS

## SCOMS Appoints NYITCOM Alumnus as President

**Ronald Januchowski (D.O. '93)** was appointed president of the South Carolina Osteopathic Medical Society (SCOMS) 2020-2021 board of trustees. SCOMS, comprised of more than 500 physicians, residents, and medical students, seeks to improve and promote public health in the state of South Carolina by the advancement of the science and profession of osteopathic medicine. Januchowski is associate dean for curriculum, assessment, and medical education

at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine-Carolinas Campus. He serves on the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners and is a member of the South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners. Januchowski, who served more than 30 years in the U.S. Army, completed his family medicine residency at Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, N.C., and his family medicine faculty development fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

addition to producing his television show, *Ask Dr. Tommy O.*, last year he published a book, *Medical Marijuana: Real-Life Success Stories*. O'Brien also established the non-profit organization Health Education Learning Program (HELP) and creates podcasts to expand his reach and educate the public.

**Humayun J. Chaudhry (D.O. '91)** spoke to WCBS NewsRadio 880 about "What Roles Will Health Care Retirees Play in the Fight Against Coronavirus?" [bit.ly/HumayunChaudhry](https://bit.ly/HumayunChaudhry)

**Andrea Correale (B.P.S. '92)** was featured in *Authority Magazine* in a series about the leadership lessons of accomplished business leaders. Correale is the founder and president of Elegant Affairs, a catering and event company. She has served celebrity clients and has become a top-booked caterer in Manhattan and the Hamptons. In addition to serving celebrities, Correale has worked for clients including Amazon, Cirque du Soleil, and Jimmy Choo.

**Vincent Maiello (B.P.S. '92)** is CEO of One 8 & Company, LLC, a boutique professional services firm focused on transforming small to mid-sized businesses.

Fork Lane Elementary principal **Christopher Scardino (M.S. '92)**

won a National PTA Recognition Award for Excellence. His dedication to bringing noteworthy speakers to the school inspires the students, and the school recently hosted several athletes, including Tim Green, Boomer Esiason, and Nick Markakis.

Chief Information Officer of 1-800-Flowers.com **Arnie Leap (B.S. '93)** appeared on the CIO Talk Network podcast, where information technology experts offer insights into customer care and corporate operations. Leap's episode, titled "Delivering Smiles Every Time: A Case Study," discussed how the floral company uses information technology, artificial intelligence, and voice-operated software to enhance and expand business.

**Walter Martinez (B.S.A.T. '93)** spent much of his career as a partner at a prominent building envelope consulting firm, where he worked on building projects in North and South America. Now he has launched Walter L. Martinez Architect, PLLC, an architecture and consulting practice focusing on building envelopes.

Greek American artist **Elena Kariyannis (B.F.A. '94)** was featured in *Hellenic News of America*. Kariyannis, also known as Elena Kay, has

held art shows in New York and Athens, and has performed live paintings that delight her audiences. While her medium of choice is paint, she experiments with a variety of surfaces, including her own body. [bit.ly/ElenaKariyannis](https://bit.ly/ElenaKariyannis)

**Joseph Saladino (B.S. '93, M.S. '95)** won a second term as an Oyster Bay town supervisor. Saladino is proud of his efforts in cutting taxes and in making information about local sex offenders publicly accessible. His goals for this term include advocating for the environment and for safe drinking water.

**Robert Tudisco (B.T. '95)** has joined NYIT College of Engineering and Computing Sciences as an adjunct instructor, teaching Technology and Social Issues. Tudisco's career has centered mainly on supporting the power and critical cooling infrastructure of mission critical facilities such as data centers, hospitals, banks, financial houses, and trading floors. He is currently the operations manager for Donnelly Mechanical, a subsidiary of ENGIE, one of the largest energy services and energy producers in the world.

**David Goldstein (B.F.A. '96)** has joined New York Institute of Technology as a financial aid analyst at the Long Island campus.

Lawson Companies' new marketing director is **Daniel Hankin (B.S. '96)**. Hankin moved to this position after serving as the product development director at ForRent.com.

**Jacob Yahiyani (M.B.A. '96)** is working to found a tech center in Glendale, Calif. His company, Urban Logistic Advisory Services Inc., is collaborating with Rebel Base and Locus to complete this project.

**Peter Grzybowski's (M.S. '96)** Triode Wire Labs received awards from *Mono and Stereo* for speaker cables and power cords. Triode Wire Labs is located in Massapequa Park, N.Y.

**Michele Reed (D.O. '97)** has been named Discover Long Island's Official Health and Wellness Ambassador. In this newly created role, Reed will act as an advisor on health- and safety-related protocols to tourism industry leaders, provide safe travel tips to visitors, and share her recommendations on how to enjoy Long Island's tourism attractions.

**Golan Shaked (B.S. '97, M.B.A. '00)** joined online travel booking platform Kiwi.com as chief commercial officer. He looks forward to using his branding expertise to advance the travel industry.

Born in Kumasi, Ghana, **Kwame Agyeman-Budu (M.S. '99)** has

brought success and innovation to both countries he has called home. In both Ghana and the United States, he has won awards, dedicated himself to service and political organization, and led a variety of energy engineering projects that have brought him notoriety. Now he leads the Electricity Company of Ghana after 28 years in the energy field. True to his expertise, Agye-man-Budu also authored the book *Energy Efficient Lighting*.

## 2000s

Primary care provider **Rema Sanghavi (B.S. '00, D.O. '03)** has joined HSHS Medical Group in O'Fallon, Ill. She treats patients in all age groups and specializes in family medicine.

**Jonathan Scinto (B.F.A. '00)** uses food to ease grieving families' pain. In his Amazon Prime Show *Family Kitchen Revival*, Scinto comes to Long Island families' doors, listens to their stories, and then cooks with them. This isn't the first time he's been onscreen; the chef has competed on *Chopped*, *MasterChef*, and in Walmart's *World Food Championships*. He will compete in the latter again this year.

**Joseph Palumbo (B.S. '03)** began work as the new village administrator for Port Jefferson, N.Y. He left the New York Liquidation Bureau after 16 years to take responsibility for the village's municipal departments, reporting directly to the mayor and board of trustees.

**Omur Kemal (M.B.A. '03)** is general manager at Troychem DMCC. He says, "New York Institute of Technology is a place of self-development for foreign students like me, where you can learn the U.S.A. in the heart of the Big Apple. I have been working in the petrochemical industry for almost 15 years, and I always notice important things I learned at New York Tech."

**Barry Dahl (M.B.A. '05)** has an impressive history as a chief financial officer, with more than 30 years' experience in accounting and finance. He served as chief financial officer at Argonaut Gold, then Klondex Mines, then Excelsior Mining Corp. Now he assumes that role yet again at RNC Minerals.

Chief Technology Officer **Tiwanna Hayes (M.B.A. '05)** attended the Data Center Investment Conference and Expo as a panelist covering Atlanta's achievements as a national tech hub. Hayes has developed a reputation for her service in Georgia's school districts, her IT expertise, and her role as a United States Navy officer.

Screenwriter **Peter Hoare (B.F.A. '05)** created the script for the film *Standing Up, Falling Down*, a comedy-drama starring Ben Schwartz and Billy Crystal. The film is set, and was largely filmed, in Long Beach, N.Y., where Hoare has lived and where Crystal grew up. It premiered at last year's Tribeca Film Festival and was recently released with a limited run in select theaters.

Seasoned business professional **Sean Grasby (B.S. '06)** has made the leap from Xperigo's president and chief executive officer to EECOL Canada's new president. With 20 years of experience, Grasby has proven his ability to grow businesses across a variety of industries, and he serves on the boards of the Young Presidents' Organization and the Global Assistance Alliance. His new company, EECOL Canada, is an electrical supplier.

Treehouse Foods, Inc., has brought on **Kevin G. Jackson (M.B.A. '06)** as senior vice president and president of Snacking and Beverages. His experience in packaged goods management and sales in the food service industry makes him an asset to the company.

*Continental Who's Who* named **Mikhail Korogluyev (D.O. '07)** a "Top Doctor." The bilingual doctor is a family practitioner at Medical Health 4 All. Korogluyev has worked as an anesthesiologist and reanimatologist and has claimed numerous awards for his service and compassion with patients.

**Eddie L. Copelin (B.S. '07)** is a gastroenterology fellow at NYU Winthrop in Mineola, N.Y. He completed a residency in internal medicine at Roger Williams Medical Center in Providence, R.I., after earning his M.D. at American University of Antigua School of Medicine. His focuses are in liver disease and endoscopic bariatric procedures. A decorated veteran (U.S. Marine Corps) of Operation Iraqi

Freedom, Copelin is passionate about service to others, personal development, and leadership.

**Tommy Murray (B.S. '07)** was inducted into Paul D. Schreiber High School's athletics hall of fame. "My coaches didn't just coach baseball and wrestling," Murray said on the occasion. "They taught me to prepare for life ahead." Murray was a police officer in New York City for 10 years and then, in recent years, joined the police force in his hometown of Port Washington, N.Y.

**Dan Spivak (B.F.A. '07)** joined MGH Advertising's digital department. As a digital strategy manager, he manages client accounts. Spivak previously put his

## BIRTHS

**Deepa Bhalla Schneider (B.S. '03)** and husband Michael welcomed a daughter, Mia Rani.

**Mohamed Abbas (B.S.A.T '13)** of Consigli Construction, and his wife Dina welcomed their daughter, Leyla into the world in November 2019.

**Nicholas Sebastian (B.S. '15)** and wife Morgan welcomed son Jacob Taylor.

## MARRIAGES

**Dane Hardy (B.S. '12)** to Angela Merola

**Robert Isme (B.S. '12)** to Zaibis Munoz

**Yehuda Mann (B.Arch. '19)** to Sarah Casteel

## PASSINGS

**Michael Simon (B.S. '71)**

**James William Johnson (B.S. '79)**

**Murray Jacobs (B.S. '76)**

**Joseph Intermaggio (B.S. '77)**

**Carol Ligouri (B.S. '77)**

**Hilary E. Wowak (B.S. '77)**

**James Witkowski (B.S. '78)**

**John M. Quigley (B.S. '79, M.S. '83)**

**Arleen Gillen (B.S. '84)**

**Larry Edgeworth (B.F.A '85)**

**Matthew McDevitt (B.S. '10)**

**Wilson Joao Carvajal (B.S. '15)**

**John C. Thoms (faculty)**

## Engineering a Successful Career

**Sean Spence, D.Eng. (M.S. '11)** was named the 2020 Black Engineer of the Year (BEYA) Most Promising Engineer in Government. The award was presented to Spence by the U.S. Secretary of the Army Honorable Ryan D. McCarthy and the U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville. Spence has maintained a successful military career as an engineer officer with the U.S. Army Reserve, performing engineer missions or deployments in Korea, Kosovo, Honduras, Kuwait, Iraq, and other locations around the country. In 2018, he deployed to Iraq with the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as the task force strategic plans officer. Besides holding the rank of major in the U.S. Army Reserve, Spence, who holds a doctorate of engineering from George Washington University and a master's of business administration from the University of Virginia, is a business consultant with Booz Allen Hamilton and holds appointments as an adjunct professor at the University of Maryland and George Mason University. Spence lives in Virginia with his wife, Autumn Spence, DNP, ANP-BC, and their two children, Madison and Monroe.

COURTESY OF BLACK ENGINEER OF THE YEAR CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS



e-commerce and communications background to work at Jos. A. Banks and Men's Wearhouse.

Springs Window Fashions of Ladysmith, Wisc., appointed **Tim Oswald (M.B.A. '08)** as senior vice president of human resources. In addition to overseeing cultural development among American HR professionals, he leads HR teams in Mexico. Oswald has also handled labor relations and human resources for General Motors and Regal Beloit Corporation.

**Edgar Zephyrine (B.S. '08)** studied electrical and computer engineering at New York Institute of Technology after earning an associate's degree at Queensborough Community College. He went on to get a master's degree, passed the Professional Engineering exam, and started his own firm. In addition to running his firm, Zephyrine now teaches as an adjunct instructor at Queensborough Community College, where his story inspires his students.

EMU Health, a medical center in Glendale, Queens, has brought **Diana Barayeva (B.S. '09, D.O. '12)** on to their psychiatry team. As a physiatrist, Barayeva helps

patients with all kinds of disabilities. She has a reputation among her patients for being friendly and knowledgeable, and she prides herself on treating each patient as a whole instead of addressing their problems in isolation.

**Jane M. Hermansen (M.B.A. '09)** published an article in *Medical Lab Management*, "Creating a Patient-Centered Laboratory." Hermansen boasts over 25 years of clinical laboratory experience. She now works as Mayo Medical Laboratories' outreach and network manager in Rochester, Minn.

### 2010s

**Steven Brown (D.O. '10)**, a pediatric orthopedist, started working at Saint Francis Health System's Warren Clinic, in Oklahoma. Prior to this appointment, Brown pursued his specialty via a residency in Riverside County, Calif., and a fellowship in Columbus, Ohio. Brown focuses on youth sports medicine, hip injuries, and pediatric trauma.

As part of his 2019 comedy tour, **Chris Distefano (D.P.T. '10)** of Comedy Central headlined Sacramento's Punch Line Club. Distefano

has his own one-hour special, *Chris Distefano: Size 38 Waist*, and creates content for his YouTube channel, *History Hyenas*.

New York's *Commercial Observer* named **Joseph Scarinci (B.Arch. '10)** one of the Top Young Architects of 2019 on its "20 Under 35" list. Finalists were chosen based on their ambitious projects and "environmentally conscious initiatives."

**Mikhail Varshavski (B.S. '11, D.O. '14)**, better known as Dr. Mike, has been using his social media fame to share best practices in fighting COVID-19. He posts homemade videos offering virus updates on Instagram and YouTube, providing his followers with accurate, easy-to-understand information using the hashtag #AlertNotAnxious. As of this writing, his virus updates have amassed more than 30 million views.

New Jersey's *Courier Post* published a lengthy article on local baseball-star-turned-chiropractor, **Dane Hardy (B.S. '12)**. Hardy became acquainted with chiropractic health care while playing baseball for New York Tech, and he now owns Professional Sport and Spine in Cinnaminson, N.J. [bit.ly/DaneHardy](http://bit.ly/DaneHardy)

**Mohamed Abbas (B.S.A.T. '13)** received Consigli Construction's "Consigli Arch" Award of the New York City office. Abbas is a construction project manager with the company.

**Lucie Barbier-Dearnley (B.F.A. '13)** joined Sim, the film and content creation company, as senior colorist. The French native's impressive background includes working on films such as *Wonder Woman* and television shows including *The Show About the Show* and *Death in Paradise*. She looks forward to the variety that Sim provides.

**Han (Anna) Ma (M.B.A. '13)** is now an assistant professor of marketing in the Sidhu School of Business and Leadership at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Penn. She holds graduate degrees from New York Tech and the University of Texas at Arlington, where she also taught.

*Long Island Business News* named **Brennen Forster (B.S. '13, M.B.A. '17)** to its "30 Under 30" list, which recognizes young professionals who contribute to the Long Island community through

## Using Architecture to Create a Better World

**Gabrielle Redding (B.Arch. '19)** always wanted to be an architect. As soon as she was old enough to hold a crayon, she was drawing houses. Currently pursuing a Master in Design Studies at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, she's studying inclusive public spaces and how urban design might have an influence on assault and harassment. She recently was featured as a speaker at Leading Innovation at Work's online conference, discussing the architecture industry's responsibilities in creating equality and safety for women in public spaces.

At New York Tech, "I learned a lot about how tough I am," she said. One way she demonstrated that, beyond her rigorous five-year undergraduate program, was applying for and being selected as the student orator at New York Tech's 2019 Commencement, addressing a crowd of about 7,500 people.

In her remarks, she noted that one of the biggest things she learned at New York Tech is that it's OK to ask for help. "It's in those moments when we have the greatest chance to grow," Redding shared. "Help is a beautiful thing. Never be afraid to ask for it and never be afraid to offer it."



CRAIG WALLACE DALE

Gabrielle Redding speaking at New York Tech's 2019 Commencement.

public service and who have made significant strides in business. [bit.ly/BrennenForster](http://bit.ly/BrennenForster)

**Andrew Tisser (D.O. '14)**, has started a podcast called *Talk2MeDoc*. The show focuses on communication across health-care teams and includes interviews with a variety of staff members. "No role is unimportant when it comes to giving patients the best care and experience possible," he says. Tisser has recently accepted the role of medical director at Rochester Regional Health Urgent Care—Batavia (N.Y.), and he continues to work as staff emergency physician at United Memorial Medical Center, also in Batavia.

**Justine Tinari (B.S. '15)** has pursued a career as a graphic designer and considers herself a "creative problem solver." Having a family member with autism, Tinari was pulled to work for social good. She is now an in-house designer at Easterseals New Jersey, where she recently contributed to its 100th anniversary advertising campaign to create community conversation about supporting those with special needs.

Wondershare, a Canadian software development company, promoted **Faisal Khan (M.B.A. '16)** from business development manager to global marketing director. Khan has worked for Wondershare since earning his degree at New York Institute of Technology's Vancouver campus.

**Favour Akinjiyan (B.S. '16)** was awarded the Thomas Arkle Clark Scholar-Leader of the Year Endowed Scholarship, named in honor of the founder and first Grand President of Phi Eta Sigma. The \$10,000 Clark Award is presented annually to the member who best exemplifies the ideals of Phi Eta Sigma and is selected from among the entire pool of graduate scholarship applicants.

**Eric Ascher (D.O. '16)** was featured on CBS2 for his research on body temperature. Ascher states that in the current era of health-conscious living, our body temperatures are slightly lower than in the past, thanks to anti-inflammatory medication and increased nutritional awareness. Ascher works at Lenox Hill Hospital as a family medicine physician.

Startup leader **Arjun Rai (B.S. '16)** was featured as one of *Startup Talky's* "Youngest Entrepreneurs of India." Rai began startups of his own when he was still in school. After finishing his degree, he built BizDen and FuelBrite.com, and he has plans in the works for more businesses.

**Mireille Rofail (B.F.A. '16)** was recently promoted to intermediate designer at IA Interior Architects, a large architecture firm that focuses exclusively on interiors.

Fiber artist **Soraya Navia (B.F.A. '17)** of Queens recently led an embroidery workshop for beginner students.

The Brooklyn Cyclones' pitcher **Frank Valentino (B.F.A. '17)** was the runner-up for the team's Top Pitcher of 2019. Valentino played ball at Suffolk Community College and New York Tech, followed by the Vallejo Admirals, in California, after graduating. He then moved on to the Florence Freedom, which earned him the Mets' attention. The pitcher signed on to the team last June.

**Jonathan Agarrat (B.S. '18)** was featured in Trinidad and Tobago's

*Newsday* for his accomplishments in technology at a young age. The 24-year-old hails from Trinidad and impressed high-end tech companies with his app WhereDPump and his success at hackathons. Agarrat now works in the IT department of an investment bank, in addition to his entrepreneurial endeavors.

**Fadi Dadis (B.F.A. '18)** won the King Student Medal 2019 for Excellence in Architectural + Environmental Research. The award, sponsored by the Architectural Research Centers Consortium, recognizes integrity, innovation, and scholarship in design research.

MJM+A Architects welcomed **Henry Ramirez (B.S. '18)** to their team. Ramirez boasts expertise in luxury projects.

**Arooj Zulfiqar (M.S. '19)** is one of New York City's impressive force of public school teachers. Zulfiqar says her program at New York Institute of Technology prepared her to "teach in an environment full of compassion and love to foster students' growth and learning." She reminds students and fellow alumni to "work hard to reap the benefits."

# COMING TOGETHER . . . FROM A DISTANCE

COVID-19 may keep us physically apart, but New York Tech continues to find fun and creative ways to get together. From virtual discussions to new takes on student activities, including an outdoor movie night, the community remains united. Here are a few highlights.



## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Series

Alumni **Chantel Diaz (B.F.A. '13, M.A. '15)**, **Christopher Frumusa (B.S. '14)**, and **Michelle Shinder (B.S. '19)** joined students in conversation during the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) series panel discussion, "Intersectionality: Embracing and Leading with Your Identity," the first installment of a four-part series that celebrates student diversity, provides opportunities for career development and education, and creates platforms for open dialogue. The discussion focused on how intersectionality provides a framework for diversifying knowledge across academic, personal, and professional spaces and for understanding overlapping identities to create more inclusive environments where people of marginalized identities can succeed at all levels.



## New Student Academic Convocation

On September 8, New York Tech held the first-ever New Student Convocation. Developed and emceed by Associate Provost for Student Engagement and Development Tiffani Blake, the event featured remarks from members of New York Tech's leadership team, including President Hank Foley and Provost Junius Gonzales, as well as Ismael José, Student Government Association (SGA) president for the New York City campus, and Akil Bobby, SGA president for the Long Island campus. Students also heard from alumni **Maylan Studart (B.F.A. '18)** and **James Marsanico (B.S. '12)**.



## Drive-in Movie Night

On September 17, more than 250 students gathered (at safe distances) in the SAC parking lot for a showing of *Avengers: End Game*. In true drive-in fashion, attendees munched on snacks, including pizza, tacos, and Kona Ice. The event was hosted by the Office of Student Life, the Student Government Association, the Inter-Fraternity Sorority Council, and the Campus Programming Board.



## Bear Bytes

To ensure that students have access to healthy food, New York Tech has established the [Bear Bytes](#) initiative on the Long Island and New York City campuses. It includes the Smart Meals program, offering individualized assistance by advisors, who help identify and explore financial resources that can be used by students to purchase food items. The Grizzly Cupboard, New York Tech's food pantry, launched on October 1. It is free of charge to all enrolled undergraduate and graduate students who register for the program.

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