

# NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



## SCIENCE FOR ALL

Faculty use  
unconventional  
approaches to  
teach their areas  
of expertise

—  
Campus upgrades  
designed with  
students in mind



Dear Friends,

The dawn of a new academic year always brings the anticipation of new challenges and the excitement of reconnecting with our wonderful campus community. And though this fall is not without some obstacles thrown at us by the Delta variant of COVID-19 and the need to institute some important guidelines for the safety and well-being of our students,

faculty, and staff, we are optimistic about the near and longer-term future of New York Tech.

As you'll read in the pages of this issue, we've prepared new spaces to welcome our students back and we've prioritized their academic success and on-campus experiences via new support and degree programs, technology, facilities, teaching and learning approaches, advanced research opportunities, and other initiatives. We're continuing to focus on sound financial investments while limiting our expenses. In addition, a long-term institutional strategic plan is currently in the works that will support a thriving, future-focused university prepared to take on the next challenge that comes our way. [Rankings](#) by *U.S. News & World Report*, the *Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education*, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, and other third-party agencies confirm we are on the right track and outpacing many peer institutions.

And as we focus on creating the best student experience on our campuses, we've developed a new ad campaign, "A Place for You," to let prospective students know that we've created places and safe spaces for our diverse student body to thrive and succeed. We'd like to extend that message to you, our alumni, to encourage you to connect with faculty, staff, and fellow alumni for learning, networking, or career services.

Be well and please stay in touch.

Hank Foley, Ph.D.  
President, New York Institute of Technology

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**On the cover:** ASSISTANT PROFESSOR SOPHIA DOMOKOS, PH.D.  
**Cover Photo:** BY RICK WENNER

# CAMPUS BUZZ

Stay up to date on the latest New York Tech news. Check out our alumni and student profiles, research updates, campus happenings, and more. [👉](#)



## Does Chronic Stress Lead to Depression?

In a new study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Weikang Cai, Ph.D., assistant professor of biomedical sciences at the College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM), will examine how chronic stress impacts brain chemistry and contributes to clinical depression. The research project, which is estimated to receive \$1.6 million in NIH funds over five years, could help identify breakthrough treatments for clinical depression, which affects more than 260 million people worldwide.

Dopamine, which is often referred to as “the motivation molecule,” is released from nerve cells when the brain anticipates a reward, signaling it to command behaviors that ensure a pleasant experience or avoid harm. When the brain associates a behavior with this reward, dopamine is also released in future scenarios, reinforcing the behavior. Dopamine signaling is often suppressed in patients with clinical depression, suggesting that dopamine imbalance causes certain behavioral symptoms, including lack of motivation. However, little is known about how the brain regulates dopamine.

During stressful situations, Cai posits that astrocyte-nerve cell communication may be lost, hindering dopamine production and

contributing to the development of major depressive disorders. If his theory holds, the findings could help to find new treatments for these conditions.

NYITCOM’s Randy Stout, Ph.D., assistant professor of biomedical sciences, and Emmanuel Pothos, Ph.D., associate professor at Tufts University School of Medicine, are working with Cai on the research. They contend that brain cells called astrocytes play a key role in dopamine regulation. Unlike some other brain cells, astrocytes do not emit electrical signals, but the team theorizes that they pose a critical role in setting the stage for dopamine release. They hypothesize that astrocytes release the energy-carrying molecule adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which delivers messages to nerve cells, enhancing dopamine production.


“We hope these studies provide new insight into the neural processes that contribute to major depressive disorders, as well as identify novel therapeutic treatments to help prevent and treat clinical depression,” says Cai. “Identifying new treatments is particularly important because not all available medications are effective for patients living with depression, despite the prevalence of the condition and its tremendous social and economic burden.” [👉](#)

# New Dean's Atelier Studio Hosts World-Renowned Architect

In spring 2021, the inaugural School of Architecture and Design Tommaso and Franca Chieco Dean's Atelier Studio hosted world-renowned architect Alberto Campo Baeza as distinguished guest professor. Campo Baeza collaborated with Adjunct Assistant Professor Brad Engelsman in the school's third-year architectural design studio, where students were engaged in the development of two projects: a "dream house" and a skyscraper in Manhattan where Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building is located.

In addition to hands-on work and presentations by expert guest lecturers, the students enjoyed theory classes on fundamental subjects that distinguish the poetic work of Campo Baeza: beauty, light, gravity, time, wisdom, and intellectual enjoyment among them. Students learned how their initial ideas can be implemented in a design process that includes relevant understanding of composition, structural elements, materials, construction logics, and building systems.

The program is supported by **Domenick Chieco (B.S.A.T. '89)**, chair and executive member of the FRIENDS of the School of Architecture and Design, who enthusiastically embraced naming the Dean's Atelier Studio for his parents.

"I called this studio the Dean's Atelier Studio to promote a special opportunity among our most talented, high-achieving students as an 'award' for their academic success, offering them the exposure to a distinguished professional architect," said Maria Perbelleni, M.Arch., dean of the School of Architecture and Design. 





## Faculty Win Impressive Research Grants

New York Tech's original and innovative research enterprise comprises expert faculty and staff who seek to provide a student experience that inspires critically creative thinking through fundamental or applied experiences. This is achieved in large part through faculty and staff research and initiatives that are supported by grants and awards from external funding agencies and partnerships.

Major grants also announced during the third quarter of 2021 include National Science Foundation (NSF) funding awarded to Eve Armstrong, Ph.D., whose EAGER grant is seeking to solve how the [universe formed from stardust](#); Jerry Cheng, Ph.D., for his research to advance [mobile edge computing](#); and Pejman Sanaei, Ph.D., for his research using math to improve and optimize [membrane filter performance](#).

### Following are highlights of grants:

- Babak D. Beheshti, Ph.D., College of Engineering and Computing Sciences, and his team received a Xilinx WIT University 2021 Grant award of \$25,000, plus 20-25 semiconductor boards in-kind, to support the creation of a summer academy to recruit and engage middle and high school female students in computer science, engineering, and technology disciplines.
- Michael Nizich, Ph.D., and the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences' faculty team of Huanying Gu, Ph.D., Kiran Balagani, Ph.D., and Xueqing Huang have been awarded \$71,262 for continued funding of the [Department of Defense \(DoD\) Cyber Scholarship](#). In 2020, two College of Engineering and Computing Sciences students were awarded the scholarships given by the DoD as a grant to designated Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education (CAE-CDE) schools like New York Tech.
- Randy Stout, Ph.D., College of Osteopathic Medicine, has been awarded an American Thyroid Association research grant of \$50,000 for his project "Single-Cell Optical Detection of T3 Availability." The research will use bioengineering and microscopy to identify new therapies for brain and heart dysfunctions that occur in hypothyroidism.
- Jessica Varghese, Ph.D., School of Health Professions, received a \$10,000 grant from the American Nurses Association to provide education and training focused on infection prevention and control in order to protect the nation from infectious disease threats, such as COVID-19. [🔗](#)

## Vancouver Welcomes New Cyber Advisory Board

The College of Engineering and Computing Sciences on the Vancouver campus has announced the Cybersecurity Program Advisory Board members for the 2021–2023 term.

The board provides guidance to academic departments within the school and promotes a continuing relationship between New York Tech students, faculty, alumni, and industry

experts. "The advisory board provides a vital link between the program and the local community, including government, corporate, and academia," said Tokunbo Makanju, assistant professor of computer science.

During the tenure of the previous advisory board, several initiatives were undertaken to improve the visibility of the program to the

Vancouver community and to improve the employment readiness of the program's graduates. "In the last year, three of the program's graduates have found employment with Fortinet, a multinational cybersecurity company with a strong presence in Vancouver," said Makanju.

See the full list of the new board members. [🔗](#)

# COM Influence: Health Education, Resources for the Underserved



NYITCOM-Arkansas faculty Christine Hartford, M.D., assistant professor, and Jennifer Conner, Dr.PH., associate professor and deputy director of the Delta Population Health Institute (DPHI), have received a \$10,000 Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) implementation grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics to address the health of mothers and infants living in rural Arkansas through education, connection to services, and collection of data.

"Infant mortality rates in Arkansas are among the highest in the nation, and the Delta has the highest rates of any region in our country, making this one of the most pressing child healthcare issues in our part of the state," said Hartford.

Hartford and Conner, along with volunteer medical students from



NYITCOM-Arkansas, will conduct group prenatal visits in an underserved community. Visits will include interactive educational sessions covering important topics for pregnant women and new mothers, with a focus on improving infant health, such as breastfeeding, safe sleep, maternal depression, healthy maternal behaviors, and vaccinations.



## New Degree Programs Address Market Needs



Boosting New York Institute of Technology's identity as a polytechnic++, the university has launched four new degree programs that will prepare students to enter some of today's fastest-growing occupations and in-demand fields.

### New degree programs include:

- [Business Analytics, M.B.A.](#) (offered in Long Island and New York City)
- [Engineering, Ph.D.](#) (offered in Long Island and New York City)
- [Public Health, M.P.H.](#) (online)
- [Risk Management, M.S.](#) (offered in Long Island and New York City)

"These future-focused academic offerings underscore our continued commitment to educating the next generation of highly trained professionals, problem-solvers, and visionaries. In addition, these programs will ensure our students' success by equipping them with the knowledge and experiences required to innovate, heal, and lead in our ever-changing world," said Junius Gonzales, M.D., M.B.A., provost and vice president for academic affairs.

## BIG GIVE 2021

→ Save the date for the fourth annual New York Tech Big Give, **March 30 – 31, 2022**



Pictured at left: Professor Claude Gagna with Peter Alexander Stanciu, center, and Adnan Alladin. Pictured at right: Marieke Santema

## Doers, Makers, Innovators, and More

Ten New York Tech alumni and students have been recognized for their achievements and innovative works.

**Ariel Lorenzi (B.Arch. '21)**, **Jacqueline Pileggi (B.Arch. '21)**, **Nicole Wolert (B.F.A. '21)**, and **Aleksandra Zatorska (M.Arch. '21)** [were named](#) to *Metropolis* magazine's Future100 list. The list recognizes the top 50 interior design and 50 architecture students graduating in North America. The magazine called for the next generation of architects and designers to envision public spaces, share breakthrough concepts in sustainability and wellness, and tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

**Risa Kiernan**, a student in the College of Osteopathic Medicine's (NYITCOM) Academic Medicine Scholars program, has secured a competitive Scholarship in Cardiovascular Disease from the American Heart Association (AHA). Working under the mentorship of Maria Alicia Carrillo Sepulveda, Ph.D., BSN, assistant professor of biomedical sciences at NYITCOM, Kiernan will study the link between obesity and hypertension, specifically how obesity leads to hypertension in females.

**Ilaha Jalilova**, a student ambassador and international student from Azerbaijan enrolled in the Life Sciences, B.S./Physician Assistant Studies, M.S. program, won a \$5,000 scholarship from HelloCampus, an organization that connects prospective students with schools. The scholarship program celebrates the storytelling skills of campus tour guides based on their originality in speech, ability to evoke emotion, and clarity in presentation. Jalilova's video, which touts New York Tech's safe campus environments, student diversity, and supportive faculty and staff, was one of two winners chosen.

[Three students and one alumnus](#) are working to build innovative companies to disrupt traditional business models in the healthcare and jewelry industries. On May 7, they competed against dozens of teams from more than 60 New York colleges and universities at the New York Business Plan Competition.

**Peter Alexander Stanciu (B.S. '12, M.B.A. '17)**, **Adnan Alladin (B.S. '21)**, and **Lina Elkoulily (B.S. '21)** presented their company VitaSanus, a health services company offering a new treatment for migraines. **Marieke Santema (M.S. '21)** presented her plan to disrupt the jewelry sector by driving consumers to recycle their jewelry when they are looking for a change. By using an app on their mobile devices, buyers of jewelry from Mindless LLC will receive a credit when they return their used items. Mindless then sanitizes the item's stones and melts down the metal to be reworked into another piece of jewelry.

## Tech Joins White House College Vaccine Challenge

On August 4, New York Tech participated in the White House and U.S. Department of Education's COVID-19 College Vaccine Challenge. The university joined forces with hundreds of colleges around the country to help put an end to the pandemic.

Students, faculty, staff, and their family and friends received the first dose of the Moderna vaccine at NYIT de Seversky Mansion on the Long Island campus and 1855 Broadway on the New York City campus. Each event featured music, giveaways, and refreshments.

"Offering the COVID-19 vaccine at our New York campuses for our community members and their family and friends is New York Tech's way of helping to end this pandemic," said Tiffani Blake, M.Ed., assistant provost for student engagement and development. "We hope that the vaccination, along with our sharing of health and safety information and resources, can help reduce the risk of COVID-19 and lead us to safely engaging in person again." [👉](#)






## Sensors and Sensibility: Making Radar Smarter

An ever-increasing number of wireless devices and users is creating congestion in the radio frequency (RF) spectrum. As a result, radar systems are experiencing increasing levels of interference from other wireless systems.

Batu Chalise, Ph.D., assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, has been awarded \$240,000 from the Army Research Laboratory as part of a subcontract from Alion Science and Technology to conduct research in a project titled “Distributed Sensing, Estimation, and System Configurability in Cognitive Radar Network.”

“The objective of this project is to ensure that radars achieve the required performance in the highly congested RF environment,” said Chalise, who is sharing the funding with Moeness Amin, Ph.D., professor and director of the Center for Advanced Communications at Villanova University. “This will ultimately enhance the safety of both civilian and military applications and propel the convergence of radar sensing and communications to meet the objectives of emerging 6G communications systems that will be vital for economic growth in the near future.” 



## Alumni Take Helm of Board of Trustees

Two New York Tech alumni have been named chair and vice-chair of New York Tech’s Board of Trustees. [Peter J. Romano \(B.Arch. ’76\)](#) has been named chair of the university’s Board of Trustees, and board member [Daniel Ferrara \(D.O. ’86\)](#), northeast regional president of Alteon Health, was elected to his first term as vice-chair.

Romano succeeds Kevin D. Silva, executive vice president and chief human resources officer at Voya Financial, who fulfilled his 14-year term limit on the board in August and became a trustee emeritus.

Romano is the president and founder of Peter J. Romano & Co., a project development and management consulting firm located in Bellport, N.Y. He has served


as vice-chair of the university’s board of trustees for six years and as a trustee since December 2011.

“My New York Tech education served as the foundation for my success and rewarding career,” said Romano. “I look forward to helping guide the mission of the university and to ensuring that it continues to provide exciting and fulfilling opportunities to students, preparing them for personal and professional prosperity.”

Ferrara is the founder, president, and chairman of the board of Island Medical Management. One of the company’s goals is to provide the highest level of care to patients—no matter what hospital or ER they’ve been admitted to. Ferrara’s passion

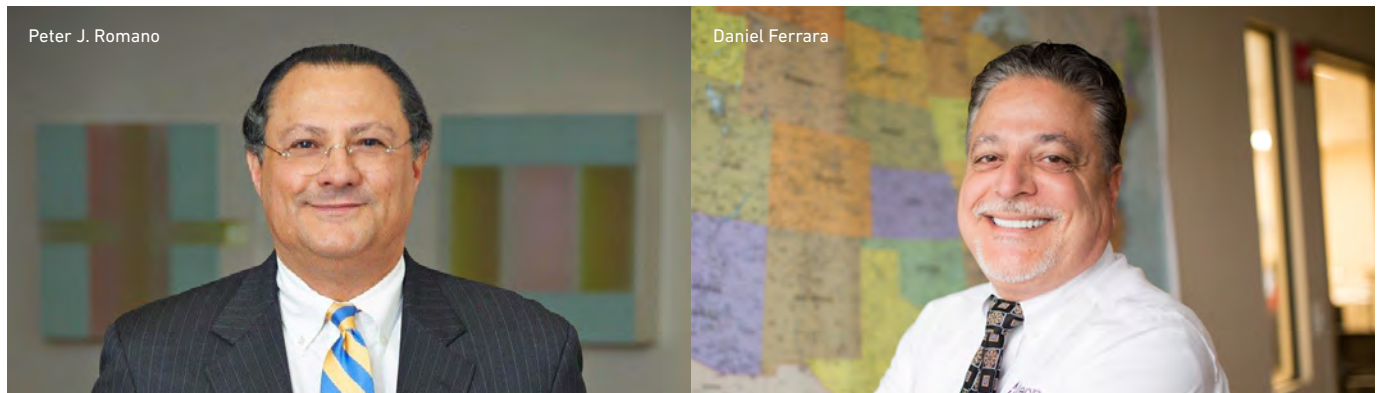
for emergency medicine harkens back to his days as a student at the College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM). “I tried out everything, and emergency medicine stuck,” says Ferrara.

In addition, Michael Merlo, former chief credit officer of Signature Bank, was reelected to a term as vice-chair. Santhosh I. Keshavan, executive vice president and chief information officer at Voya Financial, has been elected as a new trustee.

“This orderly transition of roles will provide the board and the university with continuity in the years ahead,” noted New York Tech President Hank Foley, Ph.D. 

Peter J. Romano

Daniel Ferrara





## Meet Our New Leaders

### **Deborah Y. Cohn, Ph.D. (M.B.A. '89)** Interim Dean, School of Management

Deborah Y. Cohn has been named interim dean for the School of Management.

Since joining New York Tech in 2009, Cohn has been committed to student success, organizing and coordinating more than 100 Professional Enrichment (PE) seminars annually in support of student learning. She is also a member of the School of Management's Impact Committee, director of its PE platform, and former chair of its Personnel Committee.

She is actively involved in efforts to recruit students, including the introduction—in collaboration with colleagues—of free virtual boot camp sessions that prepare high school students for the business school experience. To help retain and engage students, Cohn supports dialogue and sharing of knowledge and experience on global business issues by organizing faculty-student engagement lunches, including sessions on innovation in retail, branding strategies, and enlisting employees as social media brand ambassadors. She sits on the committee to help recreate the university's core requirements and frequently collaborates with other departments, schools, and colleges.

Cohn has published several high-quality, widely recognized peer-reviewed journal articles as well as secured grants with colleagues, including a Fulbright-Hays Program Grant funded by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Consulate of São Paulo, Brazil, in 2020. In recognition of her accomplishments, she was presented with the 2019 School of Management Distinguished Faculty Award and the 2018 New York Tech Presidential Engagement Award for Student Success by Faculty.

### **Felipe Henao, Ed.D.** Dean of Students

As a key member of the student affairs leadership team, Felipe Henao is responsible for championing New York Tech's goals to be an institution that promotes inclusion and diversity, stimulates innovation and entrepreneurship, and promotes personal and professional student growth and development. Additionally, he will work closely with faculty and staff to enhance the New York Tech experience for students through shared programs, services, resources, and initiatives.

"As the landscape of higher education continues to shift and our institutions become more diverse, educators must be prepared to be student-ready. It's exciting to help students navigate their transition, build a sense of belonging, and create a culture of care in a community that supports their development and achievements," Henao said.

Henao joins New York Tech from Mercy College, where he spent seven years, most recently as assistant dean of student affairs since 2020. Before that, he was executive director of Mercy's student life and health and wellness programs. He also served as associate director of student affairs and residence life and as assistant director of student life at Chatham University in Pittsburgh.

### **Patricia Napolitano, MEd.** Associate Dean of Students

Patricia Napolitano supervises the offices of Residence Life and Student Engagement. She will coordinate traditions, events, resources, and experiences for students, including new student orientation, the Bear Bytes initiative, and the Leadership Develop-

ment program to enhance the overall New York Tech student experience.

Napolitano joins New York Tech from Alfred University, where she served as associate dean of students since 1996. During her tenure, she supervised student activities, student diversity and inclusion, the student leadership center, new student orientation, academic support and disability services, and career services.

"I am honored to join a community of caring faculty and staff who are working to provide an outstanding student experience that empowers them to change the world, solve challenges, and reinvent the future," Napolitano said. I am thrilled to be working in an environment that is fostering future makers, doers, inventors, and innovators!"

### **Michaela Rome, Ph.D.** Associate Provost

Michaela Rome liaises with the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) to gain approval for new degree programs, ensure submission of high-quality deliverables to meet accreditation standards, and drive implementation and outcomes assessment in relation to New York Tech's new three-year strategic plan, among other responsibilities.

She also collaborates with deans, faculty, and the offices of Information Technology and Enrollment Management, among others, to develop digital learning processes and incorporate high-impact practices (i.e., service learning opportunities) into the curriculum, as well as facilitate partnerships with other schools for articulation agreements and more.


Rome has nearly two decades of experience in higher education. Prior to joining

New York Tech, she served as associate provost for institutional effectiveness and accreditation at The New School, assistant vice provost for assessment and evaluation at New York University, and assistant provost for institutional research and effectiveness at Manhattanville College.

In addition to her experiences in higher education, Rome conducted program evaluations in New York City public schools as well as the nonprofit Harlem Children's Zone, where she covered a variety of areas, including comprehensive school reform, sports and arts after-school programming, parenting programs, community development programs, and health initiatives, among others.

## New York Tech Hosts Inaugural Esports Camp

From June 23 through 25, New York Tech held its first virtual esports camp for current and prospective students. Attendees learned about the business and competitive sides of the esports industry, as well as New York Tech's esports program, the university's Center for Esports Medicine, and the recent successes of the school's team, the Cybears.

Attendees also heard from internal and external esports experts, including Brooklyn Nets esports Head Coach and General Manager Ivan Curtiss, also known as OG King Curt. Curtiss spoke about his journey from the U.S. Navy, where he first began playing video games at sea to his current role leading the Nets' NBA 2K League team, Nets Gaming Crew. On the last day, attendees participated in an online Overwatch tournament. 




## Architecture Students and Faculty Make a Grand Showing in Venice

After more than a year of crisis and change, the 2021 Venice Biennale Architecture has prompted designers, architects, researchers, and industry professionals to ask themselves, "How will we live together?" With ambitious answers to this important question, a delegation of School of Architecture and Design faculty and students are among the 112 participants from 46 countries at this prestigious event, which opened May 22 and runs through November 21, 2021.

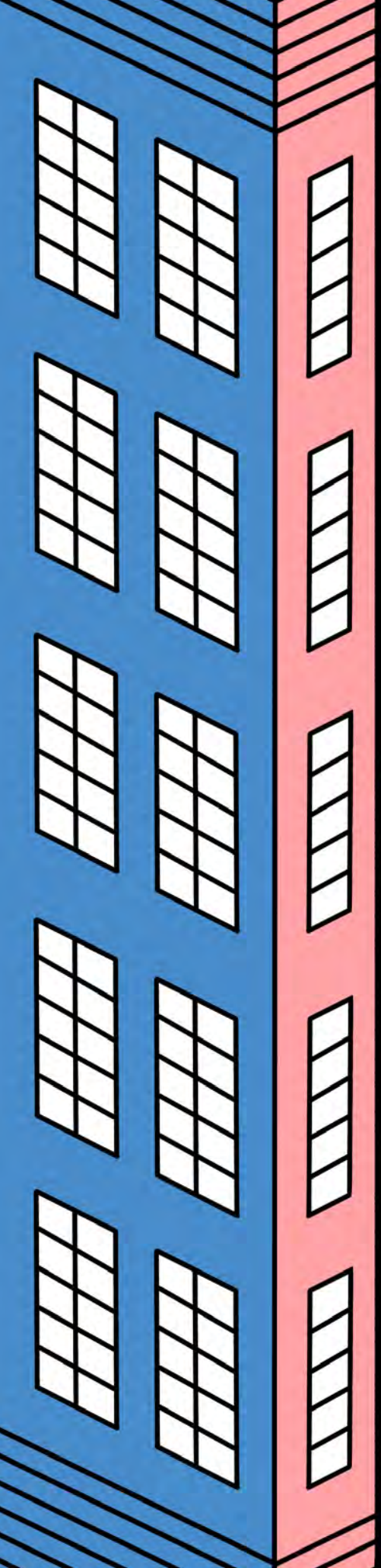
Originally scheduled to take place in 2020, the event was delayed a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "It was incredible to see the swift transformation in the approach of the class," says **Ari Begun (B.Arch. '20)**, whose work is showcased at the event. "The question wasn't if we would be doing the installation, rather how. By staying focused on the same goals, we were able to reimagine our purely physical installation. The lesson for me was life is not about what happens to you, it's about what you do with what happens to you."

According to Maria Perbellini, M.Arch, dean of the School of Architecture and Design, postponing the opening for one year allowed the participants to reflect on the challenges of this unprecedented time and translate experiences and design ideas with empathy and humanity.

"COVID, climate change, questions of social justice, the gender gap, and a call for more inclusion are all interlocking issues we are facing simultaneously," says Perbellini. The New York Tech community has already demonstrated a commitment to addressing these themes through studio projects, virtual conversations with invited guests, and dedicated symposia and panels. These challenges are also core themes of New York Tech's specialized graduate master's degrees, placing the School of Architecture and Design at the forefront of the discourse. It is a critical turning point for practice and education." 

◀ "Assessing the applicability of Kevin Lynch's framework of 'The Image of the City' in the case of New York City," by Jay Patel (B.Arch. '21) is focused on the perception of "an image" of a city, which is based on Lynch's (an urban planner) idea of how individuals make mental maps of urban spaces.

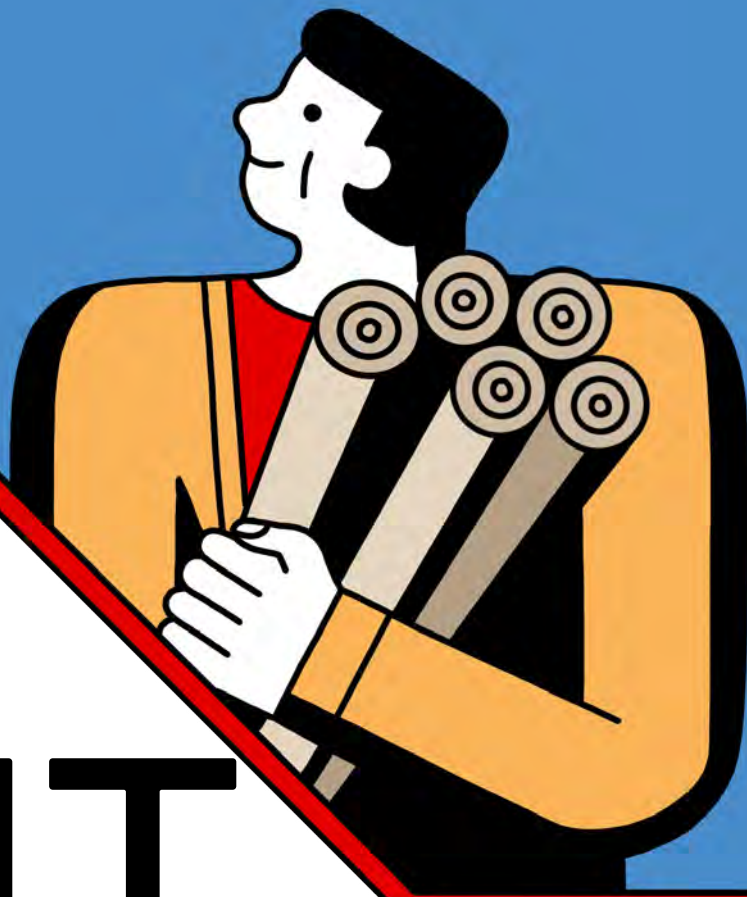




THE  
**RIG**  
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# THE GHT UFF



From providing entry-level training programs for the under- and unemployed to offering advanced certifications for those with graduate degrees, New York Tech is meeting employer needs with a skilled and inclusive workforce.

**BY  
RENÉE  
GEARHART LEVY**

**ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY  
CRISTINA SPANÒ**

**AS AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDYING ARCHITECTURE**, it's not the norm to be designing custom millwork for a New York City penthouse apartment. But that's just what fourth-year New York Tech architecture student Julia Andor is doing, in collaboration with **Maria Di Natale (B.Arch. '88)**, senior architect and assistant studio director at H2M architects + engineers and an adjunct professor of architecture at New York Tech.

The joint project evolved out of their relationship, forged through New York Tech's [Women's Technology Council \(WTC\)](#) mentoring program. The WTC is a group of successful women in tech fields organized to support female students, alumni, faculty, and staff in advancing their careers, assuming leadership positions, and building an inclusive and diverse workforce. In February, the WTC launched a mentoring program to further support and guide students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields from college to career.

"Our degree programs put students on the road to a profession, but the classroom doesn't provide all of the skills, guidance, and networking that it takes to be a successful professional," says Nada Anid, Ph.D., New York Tech's vice president for strategic communications and external affairs and the driving force behind the WTC, along with Catherine A. Allen, member of New York

—  
\*THE INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED PRIOR TO THE PASSING OF NADA ANID. SEE PAGE 39.

Tech's Board of Trustees. "It's particularly important for women because they are in the minority in STEM fields. They're usually the only one in the meeting room, and they need that extra support."

"I always knew I wanted to be an architect, but I wasn't really sure where to go with it," says Andor. "Maria has been very helpful in providing me direction. She's helped me look for jobs she thought would foster my interests and spent almost a month helping me with an application for a fellowship program."

"Our goal is that through these programs and our successful female alumni, our female students get a feel for what the workplace in tech is like, the hurdles these women have faced, and how they climbed the echelons in their careers," says Anid.

### Industry Partnerships

Workforce development is a catchall term to describe efforts to boost employee skills to meet industry needs—whether that's the development of soft skills, new certifications for working professionals, or entry-level job training for low-skilled workers or the underemployed.

And workforce needs are continually changing, fueled by technological developments, automation, medical advances, and particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in how and where employees perform their work.

As a university focused on career-oriented education, investing in workforce development initiatives is a natural extension for New York Tech, both to support students and alumni and the economic success of the region.

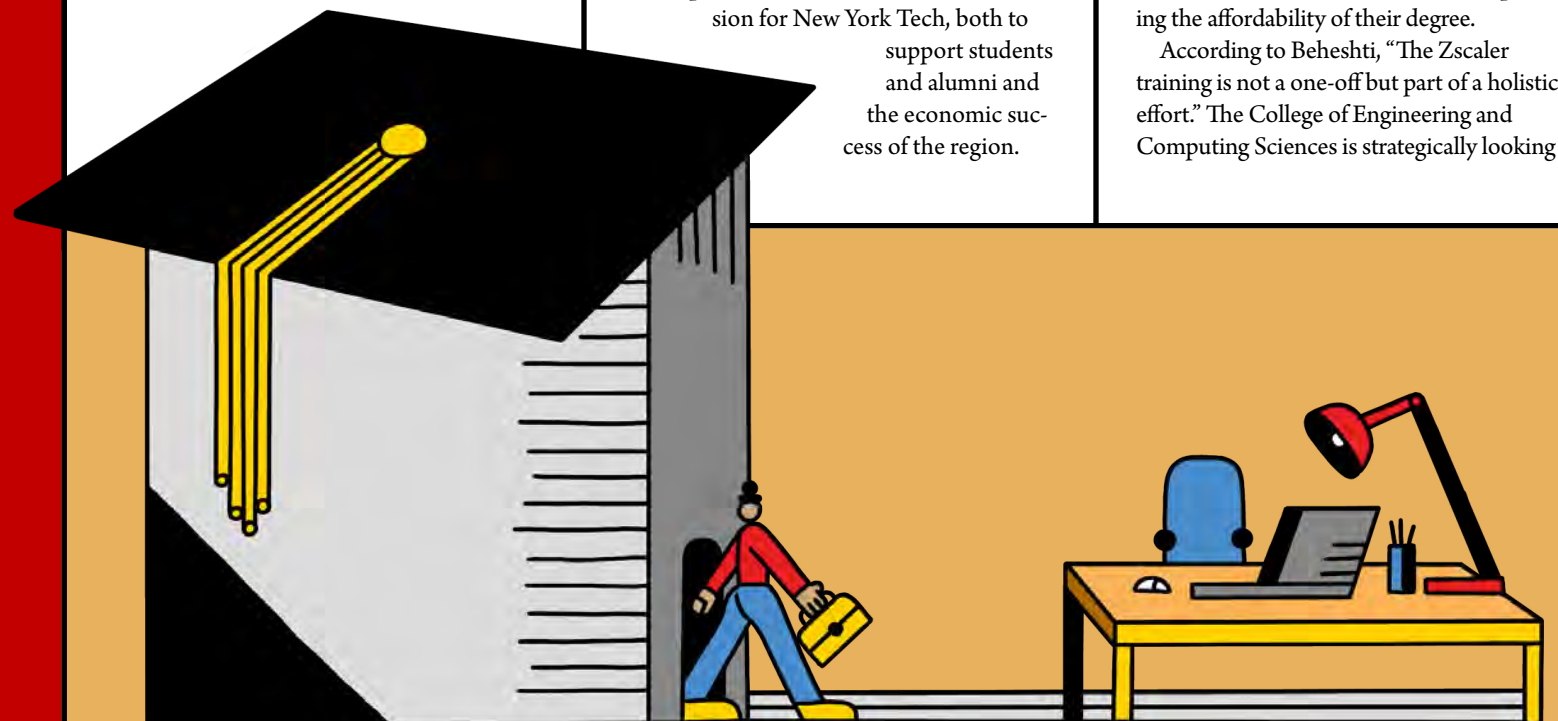
"Fields are changing very rapidly, and it's important to stay on top of things like new coding languages and certifications emerging from all directions to determine what's most relevant," says Junius Gonzales, M.D., M.B.A., provost and vice president for academic affairs. "In preparing students at both the undergraduate and graduate level, we're looking strategically at what students want and what the workforce and employer sector are asking for."

What better way to provide this training than through industry partnerships? Zscaler provides cutting-edge cybersecurity for cloud computing and offers a series of online courses on zero-trust cloud services, leading to an industry-recognized certificate in cloud security skills. Through a [unique partnership](#), the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences is offering these courses at no charge to anyone with a New York Tech email account—students, alumni, faculty, or staff.

"The first benefit is that they can take these courses for free," says Babak Beheshti, Ph.D., dean of the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences. "Having the certification is going to be a great item on the résumé for students heading into the job market or for our alumni who may be looking into a career shift or upskilling."

But computer science students may get an extra benefit—passing the certification test can provide three credit hours toward their graduation requirements, reducing their overall course and tuition load and improving the affordability of their degree.

According to Beheshti, "The Zscaler training is not a one-off but part of a holistic effort." The College of Engineering and Computing Sciences is strategically looking



for partnerships at the college level to provide professional skills training and certification to students and alumni.

Gonzales endorses the expansion of partnerships. “This is a way to add to our curriculum without replacing courses or having to invest in additional faculty,” he says.

## Grants to Enhance Skills

But New York Tech’s efforts extend beyond students pursuing its career-focused professional degrees. The university sponsors numerous skills training and certificate programs to diverse populations in the wider community, many supported through grants.

Working with the organization Girls Who Code, the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences launched a [Python programming workshop](#) in April designed specifically for women and single parents, a target audience disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and the market downturn. “We wanted to provide a gateway, however modest, into the STEM fields and decided that a basic fundamental understanding of programming would open up a lot of doors,” says Beheshti.

The six-week course met virtually twice a week, with a third session available with a teaching assistant for questions and review. The course was designed for people with zero background in any technical area and received rave reviews from participants.

Karissa Garner saw a notice for the course in a newsletter for an after-school program her 15-year-old son participated in. “Being home during the pandemic, the time frame was just right to try and learn something new. I would like my son to get interested in tech and thought it would be good for him to see me trying something that’s completely different from what I studied,” she says.

Garner says the course was very well crafted, and the fact that it was geared toward women made it less intimidating for her. “Amy Bravo, senior director of career success and experiential education, was just amazing in showing different things we can work on to go further, so I do plan to try to see what comes next from this,” she says.

Another participant, Angela Harris, also took advantage of the course as a productive activity during the COVID-19 shutdown.

Harris previously participated in a commercial energy auditing training run by New York Tech in conjunction with the Willdan Group through a [\\$250,000 grant](#) from the New York State Energy Research and Development

Authority (NYSERDA) at The Pillars in Harlem in New York City.

“This is another industry partnership, training both the existing workforce and new students in the growing area of energy efficiency,” says Gonzales.

“The course was very intense due to the amount of material we had to cover in five weeks and the weekly testing,” says Harris. Nonetheless, she was tapped by New York Tech Assistant Professor John Misak to intern as a teaching assistant when the course was repeated. “I am forever grateful to Professor Misak and The Pillars for seeing the potential in me,” says Harris, who hopes to work in building operations management.

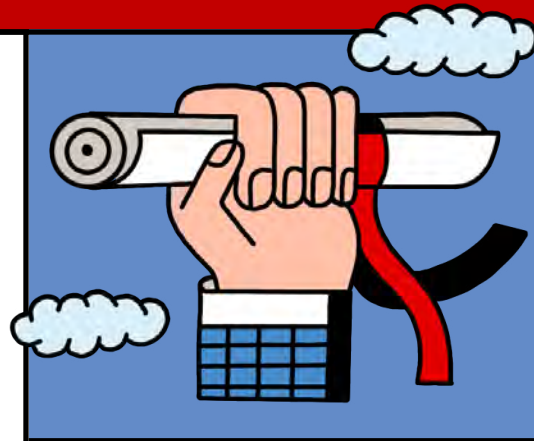
## Initiatives to Boost the Local Economy

The School of Health Professions received a [\\$200,000 grant](#) from the New York State Department of Labor and aligned with the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to develop a series of free health certificates for the general population that are aimed to support regional efforts to expand talent pipelines and meet short- and long-term workforce needs.

“This is really an attempt to reach out in service to unemployed and underemployed individuals in our community,” says Gordon Schmidt, Ph.D., dean of the School of Health Professions. This fall, the school will be offering five certificate programs—Basic Life Support, Home Healthcare Aide, Medical Coding, Personal Trainer, and Rehabilitation Therapy Aide—that will be offered tuition-free. The courses range in time commitment from four hours to 90 hours.

Schmidt says there are three target populations for the programs. The first is military veterans interested in healthcare careers. The second group is people with autism. The third is unemployed people interested in healthcare who don’t know how to get started. “These are entry-level certificates, but it gets people into a university environment, so who knows where these certificates might lead them.”

More than \$3.75 million from New York State Department of Education’s (NYSED) [Smart Grant program](#) is funding professional development for K-8 teachers at school districts across Nassau County. The goal is to train more than 600 teachers through 2026 to engage young learners in science and technology and put more students on the path to high-tech careers.



The programs are overseen by Department of Education Chair Robert Feirsen, Ed.D., and Professor Stan Silverman. One program, led by Nassau BOCES, is Students Soar with STEM Success (4S), which received a grant of \$2.5 million for the next five years. Feirsen will work with a group of 16 school districts (67 schools and more than 500 teachers) to tailor offerings to the needs of specific districts to improve outcomes in computer science, educational technology, and engineering.

“To improve Long Island’s economy, we need highly skilled, educated workers,” says Feirsen. “But too many students, even in successful schools, are graduating without enough knowledge of STEM subjects. That’s because to be successful in high school math, science, engineering, and technology courses, students need a strong elementary and middle school background in these subjects.”

With a grant of \$1.25 million, a second program—the Freeport Public Schools Consortium—targets 22 schools in three districts. Silverman and other New York Tech experts will provide face-to-face professional development in teaching and classroom modeling and after-school Zoom rooms for teachers to ask questions and seek support. This program’s core content will be computer science and computational thinking. “By training teachers and improving STEM instruction, we’re helping students lay a solid foundation in STEM,” says Silverman. “In years to come, they will have a real chance to prepare them for high-level STEM-based jobs.”

“I think we have an unwritten focus on community engagement,” says Gonzales. “These initiatives not only support workforce skills development but, in some cases, may ignite the pipeline for the degree programs we offer.”



**SCIENCE**  
— FOR —  
**ALL**





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**John Misak**

Assistant  
Professor of  
Humanities

# NEW YORK TECH PROFESSORS GET CREATIVE WHILE SHARING THEIR EXPERTISE, DRAWING ON SEEMINGLY UNRELATED TOPICS TO REACH THEIR STUDENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICK WENNER BY ELISA SHOENBERGER**

# WHILE WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET IS A REQUISITE FOR MOST LITERATURE CLASSES, STUDENTS CAN EASILY GET LOST IN THE VERNACULAR. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ACADEMIC SPECTRUM—THE SCIENCES—UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS IN PHYSICS, BIOLOGY, AND ANATOMY CAN BE EQUALLY AS CHALLENGING.

To address the daunting task of engaging students in complicated subject matter, four New York Institute of Technology faculty members are leveraging creative approaches and drawing on improvisation, video games, and popular culture to teach their areas of expertise. They've also found ways to integrate these innovative methods into their research and scholarship.

## MARRYING THE VIRTUAL WORLD WITH SCIENCE AND LITERATURE

Most people would not dare mention Shakespeare and video games in the same sentence. Not John Misak, assistant professor of humanities, who recently developed the game [Perchance: An AR Hamlet Mystery](#) (AR stands for augmented reality) with Kevin LaGrandeur, Ph.D., former New York Tech professor of English.

After noticing his students' lack of engagement with *Hamlet* during class, Misak saw a unique opportunity to take his passion for video games to the next level while enhancing his students' in-class experience. He taught himself some basic coding and animation skills, then brought in undergraduate students from the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences to help integrate more advanced technology into his new-age approach to literature.

"We saw an opportunity to create a high-impact classroom exercise. Having theorized based on student sentiment toward Shakespeare, it was time to put our thoughts into practice. *Perchance* is the result of this desire to actively engage students in texts they

often have an aversion to. Their response has been overwhelmingly positive," he says.

In 2018, Misak and his team developed a beta test for students to experiment and provide feedback. Since then, a mystery component has been added and improvements have been made. "Students indicated a preference for a traditional game with AR sprinkled in," he says.

Misak also has students collaborate on design, having them provide coding, writing, and graphic support. Ultimately, he wants students in New York Tech's science technology, engineering, and math (STEM) majors to use these recognizable skills in his classes, another move that could help to remove the barriers created by preconceived notions about classic literature and students' abilities to enjoy these works. "I see our work as a balance between traditional and cutting-edge technology. Our app is designed to encourage reading—not replace it."

Akinobu "Aki" Watanabe, Ph.D., assistant professor of anatomy in the College of Osteopathic Medicine, is also taking his research into the virtual realm. As part of a [National Science Foundation \(NSF\) Faculty Early Career Development Program \(CAREER\) award](#), Watanabe plans to integrate virtual reality into his world—an ideal marriage because of the 3-D aspects of anatomy that virtual reality (VR) can convey.

Using VR, Watanabe is working to develop a fun learning experience that combines birding and anatomy. In the program he proposes, people would match bird skulls with bird brains to highlight differences between bird species and their brain sizes and skulls. When there's a match, the player "collects" the bird—similar to how birders record the birds they see on their life list—and learns more about the bird species. His target audience is middle and high school students as well as the general public interested in VR and science. Through this game, he also hopes to make science more inclusive. "Science is overwhelmingly communicated through sound and images, which tend to exclude individuals who are deaf and/or blind," he explains. "The VR experience is an immersive and portable way that can engage individuals who have hearing disabilities." Watanabe and his lab will also be harnessing the 3-D printers at New York Tech's [Center for Biomedical Innovation](#) to build a tactile puzzle game using bird brains and skulls that could be enjoyed by vision-impaired individuals.

And just as Misak brought art to technology, Watanabe—who minored in music during his undergraduate years and performs violin with the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra in New York City—also has plans to integrate science into art by using some of the NSF funding to create a musical composition using scientific data. He notes that while there are compositions in music, dance, and other disciplines that are inspired by science, he plans to use different data and metrics to guide the musical composition. For example, he will transform the diversity of anatomical structures and shapes into the pitch and geological time into the beat of the music. Ultimately, Watanabe hopes to debut his musical score with the help of a string quartet.

And when he's not composing music from science data or making VR games with skulls and brains, Watanabe also likes to draw on popular culture, such as films and shows. When crafting his presentations and manuscripts, he often looks for ways to deviate



**“ALTHOUGH THE MEDIA TEND TO BE BRUSHED ASIDE AS DISTRACTIONS, THEY ARE A CONSTANT SOURCE OF FRESH IDEAS FOR ME WHEN IT COMES TO HOW I APPROACH AND COMMUNICATE MY RESEARCH.”**

—AKINOBU “AKI” WATANABE, PH.D.

from standard presentations, which typically include a familiar sequence of a title slide, background, materials and methods, results, and conclusions. However, some studies may be presented more effectively if the conclusions come first, like how some films and shows reveal the ending first and then tell the story of how they got there. For example, the presentation can open with a striking image to invite the audience to wonder how the study will be introduced. Watanabe believes that incorporating aspects of one’s favorite pieces of media into a presentation significantly expands the potential of scientific communication. “Although the media tend to be brushed aside as distractions, they are a constant source of fresh ideas for me when it comes to how I approach and communicate my research,” he says. In his lectures, Watanabe also likes using popular culture and instantly recognizable media like *Jurassic Park*, because it’s “another kind of strategy you can use to pull people into learning about science.”

### **LEARNING THROUGH COMMUNICATION**

While Misak and Watanabe are leveraging the virtual realm to reframe their disciplines, Sophia Domokos, Ph.D., and Eve Armstrong, Ph.D., both assistant professors of physics, have been taking different approaches to help students improve their science communication skills.



**Sophia Domokos, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor  
of Physics

Domokos’s nontraditional method of allowing students to work together and solve physics problems as a group has yielded positive results. Students learn to communicate with one another on a high level as they tackle problems and collaborate to turn their findings into a final report. “I think it’s very important for all scientists to be able to communicate about their work to other scientists and the public,” Domokos says. “Also, learning how to communicate about your subject is integral to actually understanding it deeply.”

In her former role as editor in chief of *The Cooper Square Review*, Domokos worked to demystify the world of science so that scientists are seen as human. “Humanizing scientists is one of my goals as an instructor,” she says. “I want students to understand that science is done by human beings because it increases the chance that they

will become scientists themselves one day.” In one series she edited, scientists spoke about their doubts, passions, and failures, including a piece by Justin Moscarello, assistant professor in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Texas A&M University, who wrote about his realization that he may not be suited as a therapist but found neuroscience instead.

“I think nonfiction science writing (or telling stories) is a way to link science to everyday experience that makes it both more interesting and easier to absorb. I use similar principles in class,” says Domokos. In one of her classes she introduced the concept of acceleration—the rate of change of position. “I started by talking about Usain Bolt’s record time in the 100 meter. We watched a video of Bolt running the race; then I asked students to sketch a graph of

his velocity as a function of time. We all agreed that sometimes his velocity is changing (like at the start and end of the race), which means he was accelerating.”

In addition to her work with *The Cooper Square Review*, Domokos finds lessons in science communication when she learns the Argentine tango. “The instructor tells you what you’re supposed to be doing with your body, and you’re trying to make it happen with your brain, but it’s just not happening,” she says. This experience helps her better understand her students who are learning new concepts. “It takes some time to incorporate a new skill, and physics is really a new way of using your brain. I think dance makes me more conscious of trying to use physical experience to help cement concepts for students. Anything you can feel in your body sticks with you. For example, the feeling of being pushed against the side of a car when the car takes a sharp turn. Students know what that feels like, and it’s a gateway to understanding the physical phenomenon, the centripetal force that keeps them moving on their circular path.”

Domokos also makes a point of incorporating real-world physics problems into her lectures, some of which are practical while others are pure fun. For instance, to teach static electricity, she has students rub balloons on their heads to show how electrical charges transfer to the balloons, which then creates “this cool effect, kind of like Van der Graaf generator, crazy scientist hair,” Domokos explains.

But Domokos’s approach is not limited to the classroom. Together with Armstrong, who is also a research associate at the American Museum of Natural History, she organized the [Math and Physics Student Research Symposium](#), a science communication program for New York Tech students in 2020. The virtual symposium gave students who completed research in physics and math the opportunity to present their work.

“We started this program because knowing how to give a talk is a key skill for any scientist,” says Domokos. “It’s often through talks that other scientists first learn about your work. Explaining your own research to others is also a great way to understand it better yourself. There are so many topics in my own research that I only understood clearly while preparing my own talk.”

## THAT’S ENTERTAINMENT

While helping students learn how to communicate about science is key to both Domokos’s and Armstrong’s work, Armstrong also brings a bit of theater and art into the mix. Swearing off science as “boring” as a student in grade school, she was overcome by emotion after watching the 1996 movie *Apollo 13* and was mesmerized by how humans found a way to travel into space. She also realized her science classes were not telling some important stories that needed to be told.

Throughout her career, she has worked to bring the worlds of science and theater together in unexpected ways. Before she finished her Ph.D., she and her now-husband started Reality Aside Theatre, developing science education sketch comedy and performing at schools. They once used comedy to teach the structural differences between graphite and diamond in a [sketch](#) where a man proposes to his girlfriend with a hunk of graphite rather than a diamond ring.

While Armstrong stepped away from the theater group in 2009 to finish her doctorate, she has not abandoned the theater. She began teaching at New York Tech in 2019, and when the pandemic

**“I THINK NONFICTION SCIENCE WRITING (OR TELLING STORIES) IS A WAY TO LINK SCIENCE TO EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE THAT MAKES IT BOTH MORE INTERESTING AND EASIER TO ABSORB. I USE SIMILAR PRINCIPLES IN CLASS.”**

—SOPHIA DOMOKOS, PH.D.

hit in 2020 and teaching went virtual, she started to use innovative techniques to get students to talk more during classes. She returned to her theater days and incorporated improv techniques to help students connect and share their thoughts. Notes Armstrong: “Everyone is afraid to make mistakes or ask a stupid question, but the improv game is intended to get people to be as ridiculous as you possibly can.” While she was initially nervous about how students would react, they took to it well. She had students play the classic improv game Yes, And! One person comes up with an idea, such as “We’re at the farmer’s market,” and the second participant says, “Yes, and the kale is expensive,” and so on. So each person acts out the story as it evolves from person to person.

But improv games are not just about making classes more interesting. For Armstrong, it’s important to foster connections between students because “it’s really, really hard to learn alone. Science itself is a collaborative endeavor, and you work with other researchers.”

She also likes to bring satire and parody into her work. Armstrong has written stories about science topics, some for general readers and others for more technical audiences. She usually publishes something for April Fool’s Day on Archive.org and recently wrote an article parodying machine learning—a subset of artificial intelligence—and got some great feedback from people in the field.

Armstrong uses this technique in the classroom as well and asked her summer research students to do both a scientific write-up and a spoof of their work: “If you can make fun of something, then that means you understand it.” She looks forward to the time when she can hold an in-person showcase with creative performances by students about science using sketch comedy, stand-up, or parody talks.

Inserting humor into science is “kind of like tricking people into learning something. Making them loosen up, making them laugh. It just makes learning easier and more enjoyable,” Armstrong explains.

Whether it’s using VR or AR, satire, storytelling, or staged improv, these educators have all discovered creative connections with their disciplines and with their students. Domokos sums up why it’s important to do things just a little bit differently: “What’s important is to engage students [and the general public] through different projects and learning strategies to help them learn new skills.”

# A NEW SENSE OF PLACE

Over the past two years, improvements on New York Tech's campuses have spanned facilities upgrades in response to COVID-19 protocols to thoughtful new campus spaces that support students' academic and extracurricular experiences. Here's a look at what has been happening on our campuses.





Salten Hall Student Commons on the Long Island campus



OPENING AND PRAYER ROOM: BOB HANDELMAN

Interfaith Meditation and Prayer Room on the Long Island campus, which was been replicated on the New York City campus





A rendering of enhancements planned for the outdoor spaces near NYITCOM on the Long Island campus

## ALUMNI ADD VALUE

New campus spaces incorporated the expertise of New York Tech alumni, including:

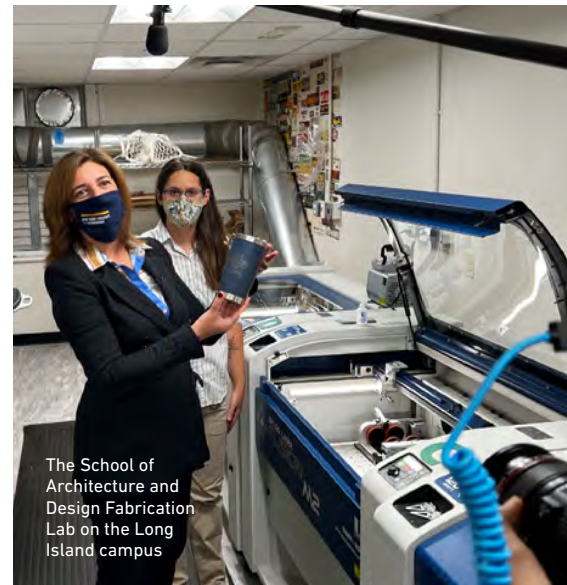
- Joe Chiarelli (B.S.A.T. '92), Sean Payton (B.S.A.T. '03), Paul Sheridan (B.S.A.T. '04) with Consigli Construction Co., Inc.
- Arthur Sikula (B.Arch. '79) with Ghirardi Stone
- Brian Redlein (B.S.A.T. '94) with MBE Code & Zoning Consultants



NYITCOM opened a medical clinic on its Arkansas campus in 2021



Orso Café on the Long Island campus



The School of Architecture and Design Fabrication Lab on the Long Island campus



A campus lounge at 16 W. 61st St. on the New York City campus



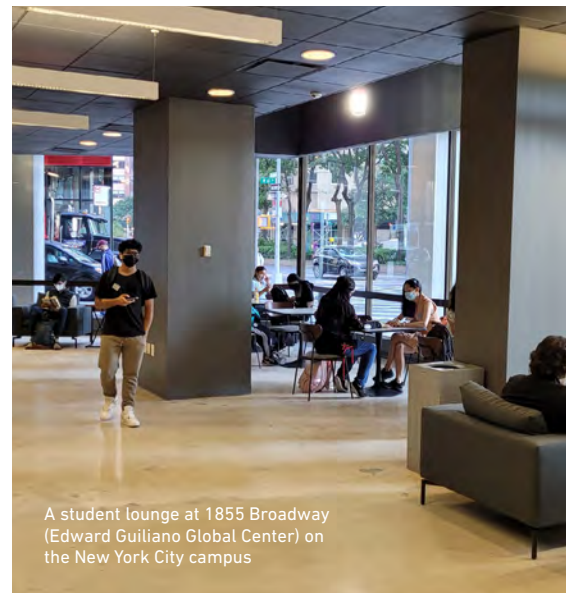
Anna Rubin Hall on the Long Island campus



Recharge Café on the New York City campus



Salten Café on the Long Island campus



A student lounge at 1855 Broadway (Edward Guiliano Global Center) on the New York City campus



BOB HANDELMAN

Outdoor gathering spaces abound on the Long Island campus

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

New York Tech graduates are going places. In every issue, we look at alumni who are making an impact on their professions, communities, and beyond. Read on to find out how your fellow Bears are doing, making, innovating, healing, and reinventing the future.

DOER



## Keesha Burke-Henderson

(B.F.A. '96, M.A. '98)

Keesha Burke-Henderson's work never ends. In fact, it's only just begun. As chief diversity officer for Randolph College in Lynchburg, Va., and director of the college's Office of Identity, Culture, and Inclusion, Burke-Henderson's mission is to facilitate a culture of community among the student body, employees, and everyone involved in the school and confront the impact of equity disparities within an educational setting.

A first-generation student, Burke-Henderson graduated with a B.F.A. and M.A. from the College of Arts and Sciences at New York Tech. She believes if the past year, and uprising of racial injustice, has revealed anything, it's that there is still more work to be done. Randolph, which was traditionally an all-women's college until it shifted to "co-educational" in 2007, has a more diverse student body than ever before and is shaping a culture to match the students it serves.

"Within our institution last year, we had 40 percent of our students who were of color. Our incoming class now will be 50 percent students of color, and we need full-time faculty of color here. That's one of the major things that I would like to get accomplished during my tenure here, to get more faculty

of color or help to create a network to bring in candidates and diversify,” says Burke-Henderson.

In the meantime, Burke-Henderson is designing means for students to have more access to scholars and intellectual ideas exploring African, Indigenous/Native American, Latino, and other diasporas. Recently, an African American Studies minor was approved for the upcoming school year, which she is also scheduled to teach.

Starting her college career at the University of Maryland on a track scholarship, Burke-Henderson moved to New York Tech after spraining her ankle freshman year and shifting her focus to communications. Upon graduation, she moved to Atlanta briefly, working at a marketing and advertising firm, nonprofits, and teaching—eventually settling at Morehouse for 10 years—all while starting a family and working on her Ph.D. at the University of Georgia. She transitioned to Kennesaw State for its international conflict management program, spent some time in Iowa at Mount Mercy University, and later into her role at Randolph in February 2021.

Still working on her comprehensive diversity plan at Randolph, Burke-Henderson hopes she can make a difference with her JEDI plan, which stands for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. “This comprehensive plan will tell us where we are, how we’re going to move forward, and ensure that everyone is held accountable for where we’re going. And recognizing that there is racism, which is important,” says Burke-Henderson.

## Jason McGrade

(B.S. '02)

In 2002, Jason McGrade, M.B.A., PA-C, was part of the second graduating class in the undergraduate physician assistant (PA) program. “New York Tech really gave me the structure that I probably needed as a 23-year-old,” he recalls. “I buttoned down and studied for a good two, three years. It’s a rigorous two-year process, so your family becomes the others who are going through the same academic rigors of material as you.”

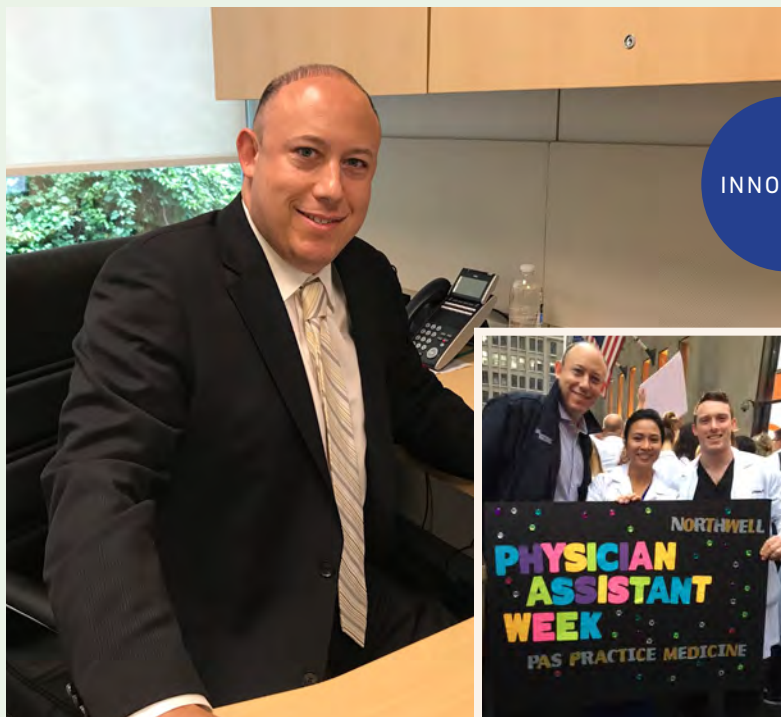
Now assistant vice president for advanced clinical providers at Northwell Health, one of New York’s largest healthcare providers, McGrade worked to safely mobilize frontline healthcare workers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. “This crisis was challenging, but in the same respect, very rewarding,” he says. “We were able to see what an impact and difference we made by being able to deliver the highest level of healthcare.”

Part of McGrade’s job also involves educating the

public about COVID-19. “We continue to push the message that vaccines are important and that vaccines are safe,” says McGrade. This includes adding updated links to news and research, expert advice on vaccines, answers to frequently asked questions, and direct links to make appointments at Northwell facilities on the organization’s website. Additionally, within the Northwell system, McGrade has been keeping its students up to date on guidelines and protocol for best PPE (personal protective equipment) practices.

McGrade says he always feels inspired to give back to the university and the profession. He has returned to New York Tech to teach and give lectures, sit in on numerous academic affairs committees, and interview PA candidates. For nearly 10 years, McGrade has been part of the New York Tech PA program admissions committee where he interviews prospective PA student candidates and helps decide on admissions.

Almost 20 years into his career, McGrade has seen the healthcare industry go through many changes. And when the pandemic hit, that was more apparent than ever. Medicine moved to a virtual environment, with many patients requesting telehealth services. “These young PA graduates are amazing and outstanding academic and clinical providers,” says McGrade. But beyond that, he believes that helping them to better understand the business side of healthcare, including



areas such as quality of care and billing, and how they all come together, is important.

Because of this shift, McGrade says the medical profession needs to partner with universities to prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals. He sits on the Educational Affiliations Governance Board at Northwell, where he works on strategic partnerships across more than 40 disciplines, including PA, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing, and more. “We need to partner with schools to update the curriculum so that it aligns to consumer needs.”

## Claudia Coplein

(B.S. '87, D.O. '90)

Working in the food-processing industry, specifically during a worldwide pandemic, has its challenges.

When Tyson Foods created the new position of chief medical officer to help address employee health and safety and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, Claudia Coplein was the person for the job. Joining Tyson in January and based at the company headquarters in Springdale, Ark., Coplein is focused on expanding the culture of employee health, safety, and well-being, in addition to helping lead the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The COVID pandemic has had a big impact on our company, in that our team members are front-line workers, and we’re part of the global food supply chain,” says Coplein. “In the early days of the pandemic, when nobody really knew a lot about the virus or how it spread, we had outbreaks at some of our plants causing many of our team members to get sick. And as we learned more, we quickly invested in consulting resources, increased medical staffing, developed testing protocols, and implemented significant mitigation efforts that continue to this day.”

New challenges continue to arise with COVID-19 variants, and Coplein is working to educate team members on the benefits of vaccination. “We’ve held many mass vaccination events at our locations,” she says. “It’s been a very interesting learning experience for me because Tyson is a very diverse company. Our employees come from all over the world, and many of our locations are in very rural areas. Addressing vaccine hesitancy and issues of health equity has broadened my public health experience.”

Working in the corporate environment came naturally for Coplein, who also spent time in the military.

Upon graduating from New York Tech, earning her medical degree from the College of Osteopathic Medicine, Coplein served as a flight surgeon for the U.S. Air Force. “I appreciated the diversity of the curriculum in the B.S./D.O. program,” says Coplein. “I ended up in a specialty that is relatively small, but there was one lecture that we had in our second year of medical school that got me very interested in occupational medicine. If I had not been exposed to that, I would not be where I am today, which is really spending my entire career focused on employee health and well-being.”

Prior to joining Tyson, Coplein says her career gave her experiences across the healthcare ecosystem, including leadership positions at a health plan, as well as at MassMutual, MetLife, United Technologies, and General Electric. “I was fortunate to have various opportunities presented to me,” she says. “I’m a lifelong learner, and I have several additional academic degrees that I’ve collected over the years, but each one of them has come with a career opportunity that gave me the chance to learn something new and to grow both as a leader and as a physician.”

HEALER



MAKER



## Eze Small

(B.S. '03, M.S. '11)

Everything started on the track for Eze Small. Now president and chief operating officer of Elite Construction of NY, the root of his career began in track and field at New York Tech. “I’m a big fan of athletics and education,” says Small. “Being an athlete teaches you how to strive for excellence by improving yourself daily, being organized, being focused.”

He chose New York Tech for its track and field program but shifted his focus to his other love, engineering, after catching pneumonia, which prevented him from ever running again. However, he continued assisting the head coach Peter Zinno even though he couldn’t participate.

Small, who has a bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies and a master’s in energy management from New York Tech, landed a position following graduation at Turner Construction, where he worked for five years on site-specific projects at the Fulton Fish Market, Citi Group, and Brooklyn College before moving on to Triton Construction. The company’s leaders included former Turner Construction senior personnel who brought him on board. At Triton, he developed additional skills as a project manager and project engineer.

“I wanted to do construction management and engineering in a more personal way, where we represent the client, but we also go into communities and help

the community,” says Small, who co-founded Elite Construction in 2011. Through the company, Small works with local schools, providing scholarships and mentorship. He also speaks at high schools to students in athletics.

Small continues to use all the lessons he learned at New York Tech, remembering the advice from one professor to “carry a notebook.” Small always gifts new hires at Elite with a book. “I tell my staff, if you’re working on a project, take notes. A dull pencil is better than a sharp mind. Keep your notes, and track yourself, so that’s what we do—all the basic principles of engineering and building.”

Throughout the past decade, Elite has hired a number of New York Tech alumni. And to this day, New York Tech is forever engrained in Small’s life. His sister-in-law was also a track and field runner, and he met his wife, also an All-American, at the university. And the legacy continues: His daughter is currently in the nursing program in the School of Health Professions, and one of his two sons wants to follow in his footsteps.

“I would tell him to go to New York Tech tomorrow,” says Small. “It’s a school that focuses on the development of a professional and enables them to manage high-stakes, high-opportunity situations. You have your labs, your teachers taking the time to explain things to you thoroughly, so it’s foundationally put into your system. And when you go to work in a fast-paced environment, you’re able to process the information calmly and make some decisions. Tech means the world to me.”

# Alumni Notes







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# Calling All 1972 Graduates

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**KEEP MAY 2022 OPEN** to celebrate your 50th anniversary. But we need your help now: We're looking for volunteers to join the Golden Anniversary Planning Committee. This group meets monthly to reconnect and catch up on what's new at New York Tech, reach out to classmates, and assist with the arrangements for your special celebration. Email Sabrina Polidoro, director of alumni relations, at [spolidor@nyit.edu](mailto:spolidor@nyit.edu), for more information.

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## 1960s

**Donald Ross (A.A.S. '60, B.F.A. '62)** is president emeritus at Lynn University and former president of Wilmington University. While serving as dean of student services at New York Tech, he met his wife, Helen Landgren, who was an assistant to the president, on the Long Island campus. They celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on July 23.

**Roy Student (B.S. '64)** is the president and founder of Applied Management Strategies and executive advisor to Clarion Gaming. He is also an advisory council member of Mars World, University of Nevada Las Vegas, Global Gaming Business, and the Mob Museum.

## 1970s

After discovering the New York Tech radio station WNYT, **Ken Kohl (B.F.A. '71)** began a 50-year journey into American media, managing content and on-air talent at radio and TV stations in Long Island, Denver, Seattle, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Francisco. In Los Angeles, he was a senior producer/operations director at DIRECTV for 12 years. In June 2020, Kohl retired and settled in Seattle.

**Michael Solomon (B.S. '77)** has published his novel, *Under The Divi Tree—True Love*

*Needs No Reason.* It is a love story entwined around a medical mystery and has been written for the Hollywood screen.

**Eugene Garnes (B.F.A. '78)** is a recipient of the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award from Marquis Who's Who, the world's premier publisher of biographical profiles.

## 1980s

**Crescenzo Notarile, ASC, AIC (B.F.A. '80)**, recently published a book of fine art photography, entitled *Nude*. In his 40 years as a cinematographer, he was a camera operator for Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984). Notarile was among a team of cinematographers on the Michael Jackson project *Moonwalker* (1988), filmed Pink Floyd's A Momentary Lapse of Reason tour (1987–1988) for director Larry Jordan, and has worked on the series *Gotham* and *Star Trek: Discovery*.



Before retiring in 2020, **Kurt Youngmann (B.F.A. '80)** spent his career in television, working for MTV, MSNBC, and ABC. He now resides in southwest Florida.

After 34 years working as a special education teacher, **Eric Joseph Canova (B.S. '84)** has retired.

**Virginia Gambale (B.S. '84)** has been elected chair of the board of Nutanix, a leader in private, hybrid, and multicloud computing. She also recently joined the board of Jamf, the standard in Apple Enterprise Management. Gambale is an experienced technology advisor and investor with deep knowledge of financial and business services. She has served on public company boards for more than 20 years across a variety of industries and is managing

partner of Azimuth Partners LLC, a strategic advisory firm focused on the use of disruptive technologies to assist mid-market and large corporations in their growth. Prior to founding Azimuth Partners in 2003, she held senior management positions at Deutsche Bank Capital and ABS Ventures.

**George Jehn (B.S. '85)**, a retired airline pilot who flew for two major airlines for

more than 30 years, has published his first mystery novel, *Flying Too Close to the Sun*. In addition to his nonfiction book, *What Really Happened to Eastern Airlines*, Jehn, a fishing enthusiast, was an editor for *Fisherman* magazine and has had articles published in *Sport Fishing* and *Salt Water Sportsman* magazines. [👤](#)


**Patricia A. Young, Ph.D. (B.F.A. '85)**, has published a new book titled *Human*



## An Ideal Summer Evening

Alumni from the Classes of 2015 through 2021 gathered at Central Park in Burnaby, B.C., Canada, on August 22 for the Vancouver campus's first alumni event since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in the province. The reunion picnic featured lawn games, such as ladder toss and cornhole, as well as group sing-alongs, pizza, and ice cream. "Thank you to everyone who came out. It was such a fun time reconnecting, and we are looking forward to future alumni events," said Shannon Svingen-Jones, director of student affairs at New York Tech-Vancouver.

# Alumni Connections

*Specialization in Design and Technology: The Current Wave of Learning, Culture, Industry and Beyond*, which explores the emerging trends in learning and training with a unique focus on innovations specific to human needs and conditions. She holds several titles, including special assistant for strategy and innovation with the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science as well as program director of elementary education and professor in the Department of Education at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. 

**Bill Sotomayor (B.S.A.T. '86)** has been promoted to principal in the New York office of Ware Malcomb, an award-winning international design firm. He is responsible for the overall leadership and growth of the New York office, as well as regional leadership of the interiors practice in the Northeast. Before joining Ware Malcomb in 2014, Sotomayor ran his own company, providing architectural and interior design services to corporate, retail, publishing, media, and law firm clients. He expanded his New York City-based firm to a second location in New Jersey and later sold and merged with a large architectural design firm.

**Elissa Charbonneau (D.O. '88)**, chief medical officer at Encompass Health, has been recognized by *Modern Healthcare* magazine as one of this year's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives. This is her second consecutive year on the list. The recognition program acknowledges clinicians working in the healthcare industry who are deemed by their peers and an expert panel to be the most influential in terms of demonstrating leadership and impact. As chief medical officer, Charbonneau oversees the medical operations for 140 inpatient rehabilitation hospitals across the country.

**Brian Reichert (B.S.A.T. '88)** is proud to share his son Nicholas is an architecture student in the School of Architecture and Design.

**Patti Ann Browne (M.A. '89)** retired from television news in 2018. During her 30-year career she worked for Fox News Channel, MSNBC, News 12 Long Island, WSJV-TV 28 South Bend, and TV 55 NY. She is currently working on her memoir.



Dear Alumni and Friends,

With the arrival of fall comes a sense of renewal—the start of a new academic year and the welcoming of the newest members of our Bears family. While this fall may seem more familiar to us as students walk through the corridors and populate the newly renovated open spaces on campus, we are still vigilant in our response to COVID-19, providing a safe space for students, faculty, and staff.

As such, we may not be hosting as many in-person events or traveling to see you as soon as we'd like. However, we are still here as a resource and point of pride. One of those resources is access to career support for life through our newly formed Office of Career Success and Experiential Education. Whether you just graduated and are navigating the job market or are looking to make a career change, we encourage you to schedule an appointment (virtual or in person).

We'd also like to welcome our newest benefits partner, EmPower Solar, whose CEO is our very own David G. Schieren (M.S. '05). Through this opportunity, New York Tech alumni, faculty, staff, and students can receive an exclusive \$500 home solar rebate. More information may be found at [empower-solar.com/alliance/nyit](https://empower-solar.com/alliance/nyit).

And don't forget to check out [nyit.edu/alumni](https://nyit.edu/alumni) to see everything we have to offer, and as always, if you have ideas for us to consider, I invite you to let us know. We want your suggestions on how we can best ensure that the New York Tech alumni experience is positive and that what we offer remains interesting, meaningful, and useful to you.

Wishing you continued safety and wellness,



Sabrina Polidoro  
Director, Alumni Relations

## Nominate a Trailblazer!

The New York Tech Trailblazers awards program is launching soon to recognize the diverse talents and accomplishments of our alumni. The annual awards ceremony will bring alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends together to celebrate those who have made an impact on their industries, their communities, their alma mater, and the lives of others. The inaugural ceremony will take place in fall 2022. Learn [more](#) about the program and [nominate someone](#).



**George Llado (B.S. '89)**, senior vice president and chief information officer at Alexion Pharmaceuticals, participated in the 2021 Forbes CIO Summit Series, Episode 3, which was held virtually. Llado is responsible for building Alexion's global information technology (IT) function that enables the company to develop life-transforming treatments for patients with severe and life-threatening diseases. He is an industry veteran with 30 years of pharma business and IT experience. [👉](#)

### 1990s

**Stephen Cannizzaro (B.S. '90)** has written several articles for his lodge newsletter, the *Cellini Lodge*, about his vacations to several Sicilian cities, including Palermo, Agrigento, Syracuse, Monreale, Selinunte, and Marsala.

**John Diehl (B.Arch. '90)** has been nominated to serve as the Democratic

candidate for first selectman of Southbury, Conn. He is the Northeast U.S. Technical Sales Representative with SmartLam, Mass Timber Solutions, creating efficient spaces, innovative buildings, and stronger communities.

**Ken Hart (B.S. '90)** has been promoted to vice president and group lead, Transactions, at Mente Group, which provides market-leading consulting, transaction, and asset management services to all segments of business aviation. Hart joined the Frisco, Texas-based company in 2020. "Ken will continue to provide excellent transaction and market support as well as now lead the Mente transaction team in further developing processes in the pursuit of excellence," said Brian Proctor, Mente Group president and chief executive officer.

**Edward Sierra (M.S. '91)** presented "Lise Meitner: A Physics Love Story" at the

Cranston (R.I.) Public Library. The virtual presentation focused on the life and science of Meitner, an Austrian and later Swedish physicist.

**David Gonzalez (B.T. '92)** works as a communications technician for Ocean County N.J. Wireless Technology Division.

As president of her company, Notary Public Central, Inc., **Dina DiRoma (B.S. '96, M.B.A. '02)** works with a growing list of clients that includes Fortune 500 companies, governmental institutions, and community businesses and organizations throughout Long Island, the greater New York metropolitan area, and Westchester and Buffalo counties. Through her company, she also teaches notary public prep courses. She was selected as a special honoree by the National Notary Association for her courses, research, and activism at the legislative level. DiRoma has been featured in several media outlets, including the Women's Radio Network and *Working Mother* magazine.

**Thomas Murphy (M.A. '94)** has joined Velocity, a managed services company that provides telecommunications services and digital and media solutions, as director of channel and strategic relationships. "Thomas brings with him an extraordinary level of technical thinking when it comes to creating a unique end-to-end solution for customers. He also has extensive core sales experience in enterprise and emerging markets. His reputation as a strategic partner and his network of industry leaders will bring significant value to our customers and support Velocity as we expand our offerings into untapped markets," said Greg Kiley, chairman and chief executive officer.

**Wing Y. Yu (B.T. '95, M.S. '06)** has been promoted to the rank of colonel in the New York Army National Guard. Yu, who has been a member of the Army National Guard since 1987, is the commander of the New York Counterdrug Task Force and served in Afghanistan. According to the New York State Division of Military

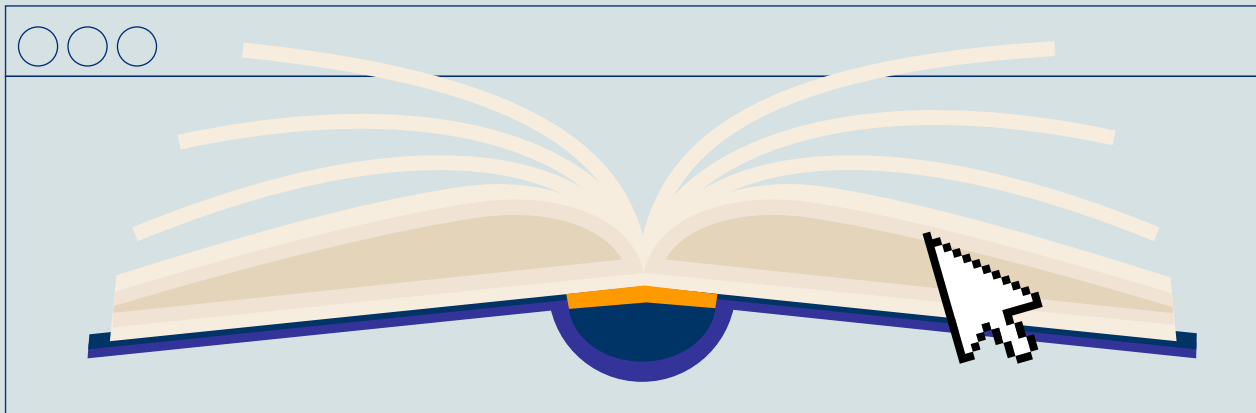
and Naval Affairs, Yu first served as an enlisted soldier and was commissioned in 1994 through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at New York Tech.

**Gina Colon-Bumbalo (B.F.A. '95, M.A. '96)** has been in the television industry for 25 years. She worked for MTV Networks/Viacom for 21 years. For the last four years, Colon-Bumbalo has been a producer for

Catholic Faith Network and received her first Emmy nomination for *CFN Live*, the network's morning magazine show.

**Keith Saunders (M.S. '98)** has been named assistant principal at Southampton (N.Y.) High School. Previously, Saunders was with the Uniondale Union Free School District, where he served as assistant principal of the district's high school since 2019. He also

worked as the dean of academic services at the same school and as administrative dean of students and summer school assistant principal at Alverta B. Gray Schultz Middle School in the Hempstead Union Free School District. In addition to earning an M.S. in elementary education at New York Tech, he also earned a professional diploma of Educational Leadership and Technology.



## Building Extraordinary Relationships

In September and October, through a collaboration with Alumni Learning Consortium, the Office of Alumni Relations offered four white-label professional and personal development webinars featuring guest speakers, including best-selling author Tom Vanderbilt; Michelle Tillis Lederman, also known as “the Connection Creator,” an expert on workplace communications and relationships; *Harvard Business Review* author Dorie Clark; and Hendrie Weisinger, Ph.D., co-author of *The Unlikely Art of Parental Pressure*. The webinars focused on building extraordinary relationships, sharpening strategic thinking, as well as tips on how to support children to succeed and find happiness in a challenging world. [View](#) past webinars and register for upcoming webinars.

Here are the topics that were covered:

[Beginners: The Joy and Transformative Power of Lifelong Learning](#)

[Get Known, Get Connected, Get Ahead: Personal Connections for Professional Results](#)

[How to be a Long-Term Thinker in a Short-Term World](#)

[Level Up Your Parenting: Using Parental Pressure for Children's Success Instead of Disaster](#)

**Milan Savanovic (B.Arch. '98)** has been promoted to an associate at storied design firm RKT Architects. He joined RKT in 2008, bringing with him design studio experience from countries including Greece, Italy, Turkey, and Spain. With more than 20 years of professional experience, Savanovic is responsible for all phases of design and construction on a wide range of projects, from multifamily residential to boutique commercial, as well as private homes, historic town house renovations, transportation projects, and educational facilities. Recently, he managed the rehabilitation of 21 buildings for the Fifth Avenue Committee, eight buildings for the Mutual Housing Association of New York, and nine buildings for the New York City Housing Authority.

**Guy Bloch (M.B.A. '99)**, chief executive officer of Bringg, recently published an article in [Retail Touchpoints](#) addressing why scaling delivery operations is about much more than adding drivers. Bloch has nearly 20 years of experience leading large organizations in the global enterprise software market and transforming them into highly successful hyper-growth environments. He joined Bringg after spending six years in senior leadership roles at Splunk, most recently as chief operating officer EMEA. [🔗](#)

[WXY Architecture + Urban Design](#) has named **Colin Montoute, AIA, LEED AP, NOMA (B.Arch. '99)**, as its new director of architecture. In this role, Montoute will bring his extensive experience and leadership in high-profile architectural projects. Throughout his career, he has led a wide range of award-winning projects both domestically and internationally, including an acclaimed prototype school campus for a rural community in Haiti. [🔗](#)

## 2000s

**Jason M. Golbin (D.O. '00)** has been named executive vice president and chief medical officer for Catholic Health. He most recently served as the healthcare system's senior vice president and chief quality and chief patient experience officer. In this

new role, he will oversee quality, safety, regulatory, risk management, and the experience of care across Catholic Health. Previously, Golbin was in private practice as a pulmonary and critical care physician. In 2013, he joined the health system as vice president and chief medical officer at St. Catherine of Siena Hospital.

**Yolanda Bridges (M.B.A. '01)** published two children's books. *Ari's Special Train* was released in 2020 and *God Made Me This Way*, co-authored with her niece Ashlee Anderson, was released in 2019.

**Qi Sun (M.B.A. '01)** started a new position with Tronex International, Inc. Sun is the senior manager of global product sourcing and development.

**Vincent Razzano (B.P.S. '02)** is a retired chef but will continue to work five days a week to prepare gourmet meals for priests.

**Deanna Olton (M.B.A. '06)**, a CPA, has been promoted to partner at Antares Group, Inc. in Conyers, Ga., an accounting and tax advisory firm. Olton has been with Antares Group for 17 years and most recently served as director of the Business and Tax Advisory Group. She is an active member of many professional organizations including the Georgia Society of CPAs, the American Institute of CPAs, and the National Association of Black Accountants.

Cross Country Healthcare, Inc., a provider of advisory and workforce solutions, including contingent staffing, permanent placement, and other consultative services for healthcare clients, promoted

**Gerald Purgay (M.B.A. '06)** to chief marketing officer. "Gerald's promotion reflects the ongoing evolution and transformation of marketing as a strategic business partner focused on adding value and driving business performance at Cross Country," said Kevin C. Clark,

co-founder and chief executive officer of Cross Country Healthcare.

Six years after graduating with an M.B.A., **Richard Waring (M.B.A. '06)** attended law school. "I appreciated my time at New York Tech," he said. "As a young executive during my time there, I was able to develop my thoughts in a more mature, results-oriented manner. I was able to work with other great minds, and it truly renewed my desire for learning."

**Tim Glowa (M.B.A. '07)** has joined Grant Thornton LLP as a principal and leader of its employee listening and human capital services offerings. Prior to this, he served as managing director at Ernst & Young LLP.

**Steven Salyer (M.B.A. '07)** has been named chief executive officer of Watsonville (Calif.) Community Hospital. Salyer, who has 14 years of hospital leadership experience, joined Watsonville Community Hospital from UP Health System – Marquette, a 222-bed specialty care and Level 2 trauma hospital in Marquette, Mich., affiliated with Duke University School of Medicine. In 2010, he led a joint venture acquisition of Starke Regional Medical Center in Starke, Florida,



## 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)

## All Aboard!

On September 17, New York Tech alumni, students, faculty, staff, and family and friends set sail for a sightseeing cruise around Manhattan. Views included the Statue of Liberty, the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges, and the USS *Intrepid*. Guests also enjoyed a buffet dinner, dancing, and photo booth fun. The event was part of New York Tech's annual Week of Welcome, which kicks off the new academic year.



in conjunction with Shands University of Florida. Before beginning his career in healthcare, Salyer served as a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps for five years, both in peacetime and in combat support operations in Iraq.

Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB), a leading financial institution, has appointed **Bushra al Shehhi (M.B.A. '09)** as the head of human resources for the United Arab Emirates. In this new role, she will be championing strategies to attract, develop, and retain talent while elevating the bank's progressive Emiratization initiatives. The appointment comes in line with ADIB's ongoing commitment to empower Emirati women, as well as grow and develop its local workforce.

**Nneka Adichie (D.O. '09)** joined Goodwin Community Health, a professional outpatient home with a family-medicine residency program, as a resident physician. She and the other residents will spend three years training at Goodwin at Portsmouth Regional Hospital and at specialty practices on the seacoast, all in New Hampshire.

**Emily Putney (M.S. '09, D.O. '09)** was featured in *Becker's Spine Review's* "50 Surgeons to Know." She completed her residency at Broward Health Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and specializes in a variety of spine conditions from cervical and lumbar stenosis to scoliosis and disc herniation. [🔗](#)

## 2010s

In 2020, **Eduardo Arrufat-Reboso (B.S. '10)** premiered his first documentary short film *SPACE: Knowledge Frontier*, which explores the impact and benefits that space exploration brings to humanity. He worked in collaboration with international researchers and scientific institutions to produce the film, which will be released by Tenerife Motion Picture Studios. The film was partly funded by local public funds and it will serve as the blueprint episode for a TV series currently in development.


## DID YOU KNOW?

New York Tech grads rank among the top 10 percent in the United States for return on investment (ROI) over 20, 30, and 40 years, according to a study by Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. [See more.](#)


In June 2021, **Julia Coello Gallagher (B.F.A. '10)** had a solo exhibit of her work at the Park Circle Gallery in North Charleston, S.C. The exhibit, *Free Form Wanderings*, featured a series of abstract expressionist paintings in acrylic and mixed media. "Abstract Expressionism dwarfs the capacity of words to capture the inherent nature of my subjects," she explained. "Each work is created by allowing thinking

and rationality to be suspended and subordinated to emotional expressivity."

**Daisy Connor Robinson (M.B.A. '10)** obtained status under the Federal Management Registration and GSA Small Business Administration as a contract recipient, making her eligible to bid on federal and government contracts.

**Paul Ulezko (B.S. '11)** started his own company, [ChargifyEV](#), which manufactures electrical car chargers. The company is based in Austin, Texas. 

**Sasi Kesani (M.S. '13)** is a software architect for Booz Allen Hamilton, an information technology consulting firm. "I learned a lot at New York Tech and look forward to assisting upcoming graduate students," said Kesani.

**Karthik Maniam (M.S. '12)** authored an article in [Nutritional Outlook](#) addressing best practices in manufacturing dietary supplements. An independent good manufacturing practices and environmental health and safety consultant, Maniam is a licensed professional environmental engineer in New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts. 

**Chris Carlisle (B.F.A. '13)** left New York Tech in 1979 to take a job at NBC. He went on to work for ABC, Warner Bros., FX, Fox, New Line Cinema, and more. He returned in 2013 to complete his degree. During the pandemic, Carlisle became a grandfather.

**Pascale Deseide (B.S. '18)** is a critical care nurse at St. John's Episcopal Hospital. Deseide's daughter is studying exercise science at New York Tech.

**Josh Eagan (ADIP '18)** has been named head coach for wrestling at Niagara Falls High School. He had served as an assistant for the last decade on the staff of the former head coach.

## 2020s

**Karthik Vemula (M.B.A. '20)** was promoted to senior logistics analyst with ACV Auctions in New York City.

**Dominica Jamir (M.A. '21)** is the co-founder and creative director of [AR-VR & UX-UI Enterprises](#). Jamir's company, which launched on June 1, focuses on collaborating with clients for empathic solutions resulting in the best user experiences for their services and products.



## MARRIAGES:

Amanda Brideson (M.S. '15) to  
Nicholas Perovich

Averie Schroeder (B.S. '15) to  
Iziah Sherman-Newsome

Olivia Janssen (D.O. '15) to  
Andrew Perra

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

## PASSINGS:

Louis Anthony Pharao (B.S. '77)

Peter Carlo (B.S. '79)

David G Loveday (BFA '79)

Sandra Rose Michael (M.S. '92)

Gary Masi, Jr. (M.S. '01)



# In Memoriam

## Remembering Nada Anid, Ph.D.

Nada Anid, Ph.D., vice president for New York Tech's Office of Strategic Communications and External Affairs, passed away on September 28.

She joined New York Tech in 2009 as the first female dean of the School of Engineering and Computing Sciences (now the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences). In that role, she spearheaded the creation of New York Tech's National Security Agency/Department of Homeland Security National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education, its federally and state-funded Entrepreneurship and Technology Innovation Center (ETIC), and its Empire State Development's Division of Science, Technology and Innovation (NYSTAR)-certified business incubator. She also oversaw the overhaul of the school's academic offerings and research facilities and the recruitment of outstanding faculty in the areas of cybersecurity, bioengineering, and clean energy and water.

Under her tenure, the school forged new community ties and partnerships, created undergraduate honors and research programs, increased its enrollment, and produced an unprecedented research output. Globally, she led the U.S. State Department-sponsored U.S.-China EcoPartnership with Peking University and the Pathways for Cleaner Production projects with seven higher education institutions across Latin America.


An advocate for the advancement of women in the STEM fields, she joined Catherine A. Allen, founder and CEO of The Santa Fe Group and member of the New York Institute of Technology Board of Trustees, to establish the Women's Technology Council in the spring of 2019 to help empower women throughout their careers, beginning with their time as college students.

She is survived by her husband and two daughters, who have established a [scholarship](#) for women in STEM.



## Remembering Jack Kaley

Jack Kaley, former head coach of the New York Tech men's lacrosse team, passed away on August 19. He was 83. Kaley, who retired as head coach in 2009, led the Bears to four NCAA Division II championships in 1997, 2003, 2005, and 2008. He set the team's long-term success in motion in 1994, his second year as head coach, when the lacrosse team went undefeated in the regular season and reached the NCAA II finals.

"His pregame speeches were a thing of pure inspiration," noted former Athletic Director **Clyde Doughty (M.P.S. '98)** in a Facebook post tribute to Kaley. "When he got rolling, you could hear him through the entire facility firing up da Bears. He demanded excellence on and off the field." 



## 'Strolling' Toward the Future

In the weeks leading up to New York Tech's [60th Commencement ceremony](#) in May 2021, the university found ways to bring students and families together, given that an in-person commencement was not feasible due to the pandemic. On both the Long Island and New York City campuses, graduates participated in a "Stroll Across the Stage" event as their names were announced and guests cheered them on.

Congratulations to New York Tech's newest alumni!

**NEW YORK INSTITUTE  
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