



NYIT



NYIT MAGAZINE

FALL
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Like what you see? Share your updates and feedback at nyit.edu/alumni_notes and connect at [@NYITalumni](https://twitter.com/NYITalumni), facebook.com/mynyit, and nyit.edu/linkedin.

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First Byte

By Hank Foley, Ph.D.
President



Alexander Berg

DURING MY FIRST MONTHS AT NYIT, I've spent a lot of time thinking about how NYIT can move forward and focus even more on the people who make up our great community—students, faculty and staff members, and of course, alumni. We've started that process, but there are some important items on my to-do list that I want to share with you.

The future of the NYIT community is important to all of us, but I know it is especially important to our alumni. I'm committed to ensuring that we grow our reputation for academic excellence, scholarship and research, and industry partnerships that enhance hands-on learning. (You can learn more about partnerships in this issue. See pp. 12 and 18.) I know fulfilling that commitment is directly related to the value of an NYIT degree.

One of my first priorities since becoming president is updating our strategic plan. Over the summer, retreats with members of the faculty and administration included discussions on updating our vision and mission statement to better reflect NYIT's renewed commitment to student learning through technology, research, and professional development.

Recommitting ourselves to providing high value and career preparation are uppermost in my mind. Soon, we will be reaching out to you, our stakeholders, for input; you may have recently received a revised vision and mission statement for NYIT along with a link to an online portal to solicit comments. I welcome your feedback and look forward to hearing your thoughts. Together, we can ensure that the value of an NYIT education continues to rise—for alumni, students, faculty, and everyone else who benefits from the great accomplishments of our global community. ■

Potential Treatment Breakthrough May H-ALT Cancer

DONG ZHANG, PH.D., associate professor at NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM), and a team of researchers are one step closer to a more effective—and less toxic—treatment for cancer. The team discovered new lethal interactions that could inhibit the growth of tumors initiated from mesenchymal cells, which develop into connective tissue found in such areas as bones, soft tissues, and the central nervous system.

The treatment would target alternative lengthening of telomere (ALT) cancers. Healthy human cells continuously divide until their cycle ends. Each time they divide, the caps at the end of DNA, called telomeres, get shorter. These caps are controlled by the enzyme telomerase. If the cap gets too short, the cell stops dividing and eventually dies. However, telomerase can be reactivated, causing the cell to continue to reproduce and form tumors. “Eighty-five to 90 percent of all cancers reactivate telomerase,” explained Zhang.

Various therapies and treatments exist for these types of cancers. However, ALT cancers, which account for only an estimated 10 to 15 percent of cancer cases and include some of the most deadly cancers such as glioblastoma, osteosarcoma, and pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors, do not use telomerase. The result is that they are much more difficult to treat, and the only current treatment option is chemotherapy, which is known to injure healthy cells and cause unpleasant side effects.

To better understand what conditions could inhibit the growth of ALT cancers, Zhang and the team, which includes students at NYITCOM, investigated three human genes associated with cancer development: FANCM (mutations of which are associated with blood cancers and breast cancers), BRCA1 (mutations of which are commonly found in patients with breast and ovarian cancers), and BLM (mutations of which cause a variety of cancers).

What they discovered is that a new synthetic lethal interaction could inhibit the growth of the ALT tumors if you eliminate FANCM and BRCA1 genes or FANCM and BLM genes simultaneously. The process ultimately prevents the cancerous cells from reproducing. “When the DNA damages pass a certain

The team investigated three human genes associated with cancer development:

FANCM Mutations associated with blood cancers and breast cancers.

BRCA1 Mutations commonly found in patients with breast and ovarian cancers.

BLM Mutations causing a variety of cancers.

threshold or there is too much unrepaired DNA, the cell will then activate the cell death process and eventually die. Now you kill the cancer,” Zhang explained.

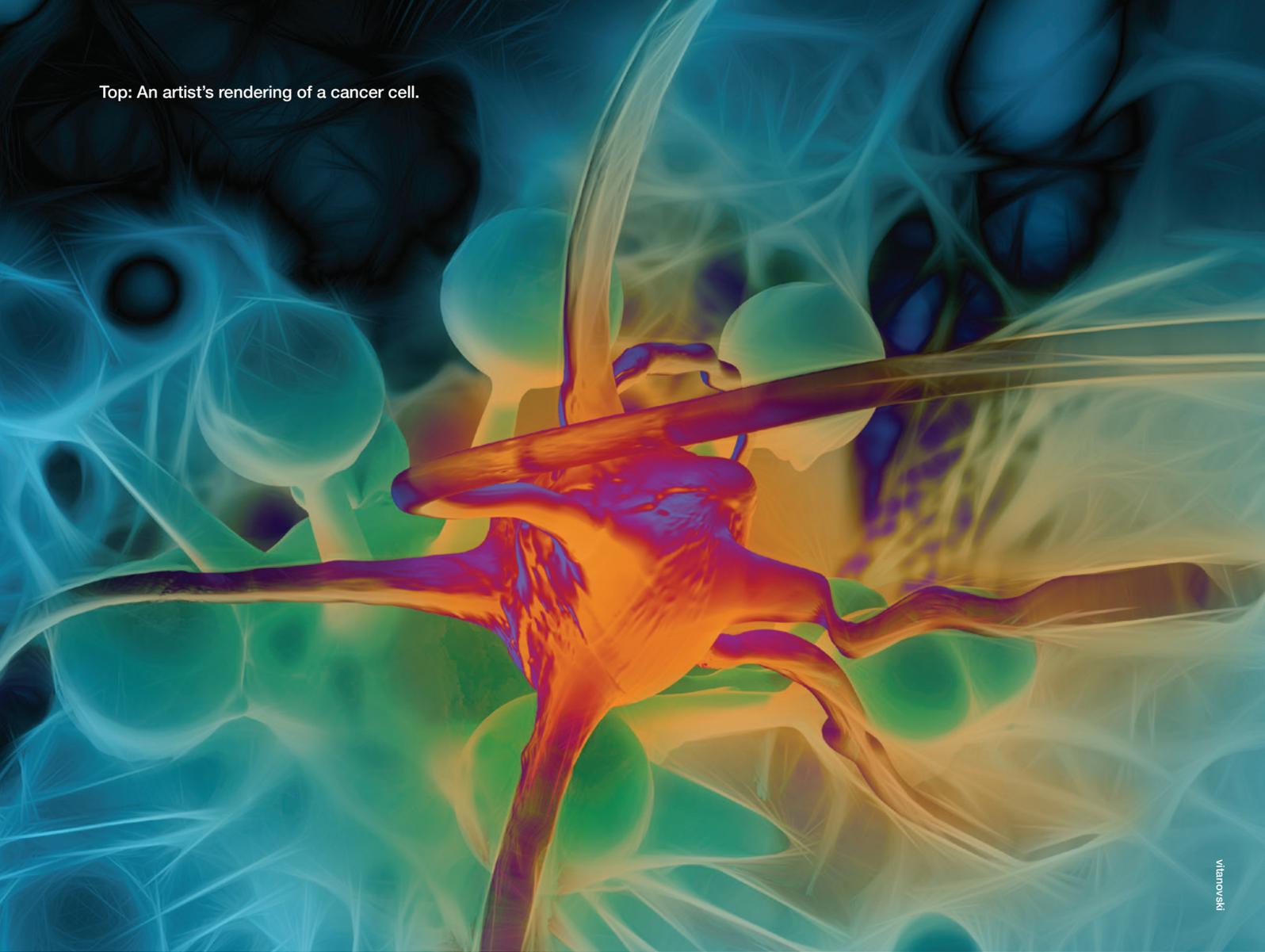
Next, Zhang plans to develop drugs that will target only the unhealthy cells by inhibiting BLM and/or FANCM, with the hope that the drugs will not cause the toxic side effects associated with conventional chemotherapy drugs.

“Cancers are very sneaky and complicated, and there is no one single magic drug that will kill all cancers,” Zhang said. The hope is to develop treatments that battle a specific type of cancer; this breakthrough has the potential to knock out some of the most lethal cancers. ■

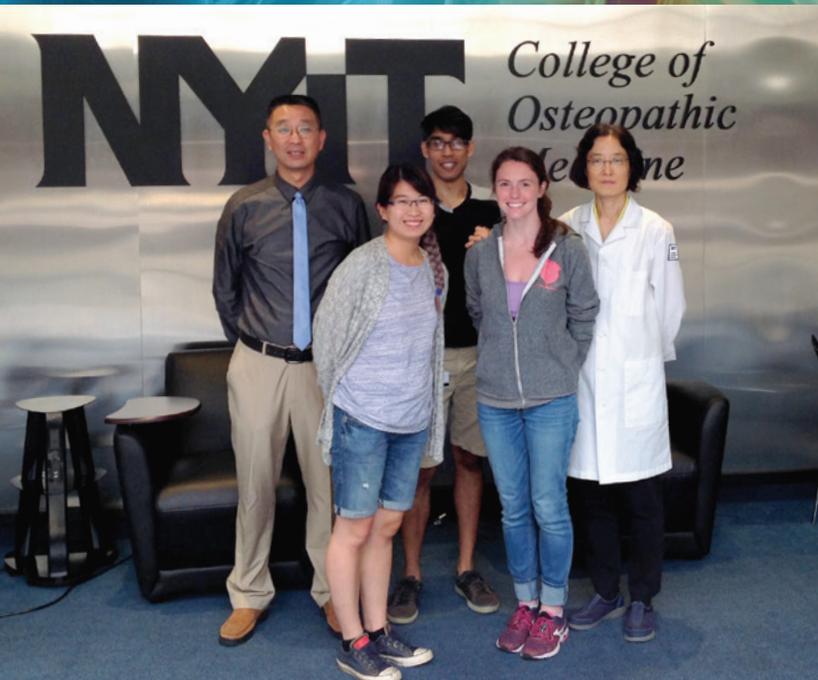


Read more about Zhang's findings:
bit.ly/Zhang-Research

Top: An artist's rendering of a cancer cell.



vitanovski



Zhang Lab

Zhang plans to develop drugs that will target only the unhealthy cells by inhibiting BLM and/or FANCM, with the hope that the drugs will not cause the toxic side effects associated with conventional chemotherapy drugs.

Dong Zhang, Ph.D., left, with NYITCOM students Joyce Kong, Naveed Ahmed, and Marti Goldenberg, and Xiaolei Pan, Ph.D., staff scientist and first author on the paper.

Buzzland

Students harness wind power in the east and take to the sea in Vancouver. In Old Westbury, a new path combats stress and students uncover where the bodies are buried. Read more below and on nyit.edu/box.

Miranda Cabiladas



MAKING WAVES Students at NYIT’s Vancouver campus took advantage of their “backyard” this summer by exploring the Deep Cove area by kayak (pictured above and on the cover). M.B.A. student Miranda Cabiladas documented the trip. Read about Cabiladas (who serves as the official photographer for the Vancouver Office of Campus Life) online and see more pictures on Instagram [@nyit_vancouver](https://www.instagram.com/nyit_vancouver).

bit.ly/Miranda-Cabiladas

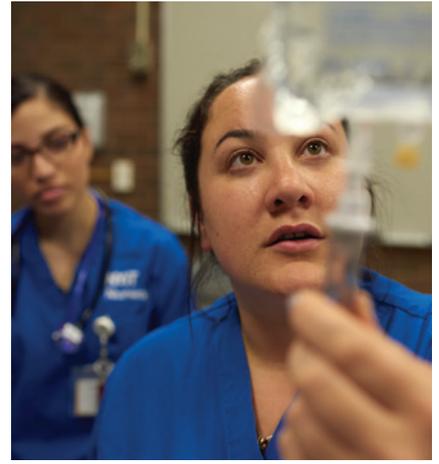
Andre Kopinski



WELCOME NEW FACULTY

Where can you find an expert in machine learning and optimization algorithms and an architect devoted to imagining scenarios for future environments and cities? Look no further than the new faculty members who joined NYIT this year.

bit.ly/2017-Faculty



Martin Seck

THE NURSE SHORTAGE ISN'T A PARTISAN ISSUE In an op-ed in *The Hill*, Sheldon Fields, dean of NYIT School of Health Professions, writes that without a sustained effort to train enough nurses, America’s health system may be pushed past the breaking point. However, solutions can be found. “Commonsense reforms to avert a nursing shortage deserve the support of both parties—and are essential to cope with our coming demographic upheaval,” he wrote.

bit.ly/Nurse-Shortage



Courtesy of Maksim Aginskiy and Ilya Tsitron

WIND POWER Maksim Aginskiy and Ilya Tsitron, two master’s candidates in environmental technology and sustainability, developed a new vertical axis wind turbine that may just change wind power as we know it. Learn more about their design and how it differs from existing turbines.

bit.ly/NYIT-wind-power



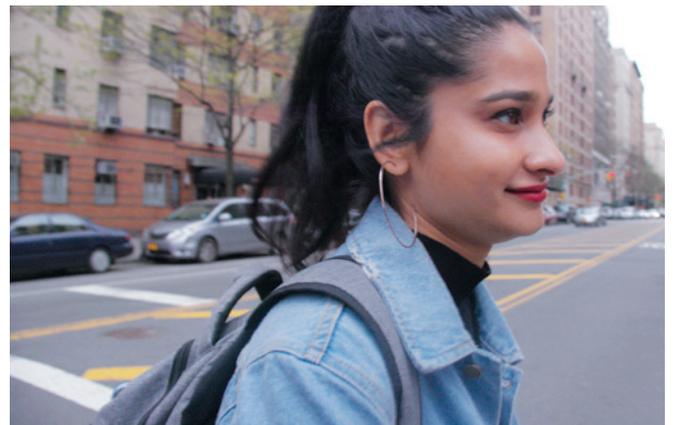
MYSTERY AT ED HALL Andrew Costello, assistant professor at NYIT College of Arts and Sciences, knows where the bodies are buried. Drawing on details from actual cases, he created a murder for his students to solve as part of the course Organized Crime. He even hid a “body” in the field near Education Hall in Old Westbury and enlisted former NYPD colleagues to assist with the forensic aspects of the dig.



ARCHITECTURE ACCREDITATION In July 2017, the directors of the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) granted the Bachelor of Architecture program at NYIT School of Architecture and Design with an eight-year term of accreditation. The committee was impressed by a number of factors, including that the students visited real sites as part of their studio work and that they were able to incorporate environmental systems into their design studies.



HEALING PATH In August, students, faculty members, and leadership broke ground on a new “healing path” to be installed on the Old Westbury campus. The path is designed to help future health care professionals and other students deal with stress. Physicians in particular often neglect their own physical and emotional health—a habit that can lead to physician burnout.



THE FUTURE IS OURS A biomedical engineer is ready to prove herself, a finance major is aced on the court, an infantryman wants to help others recover from injuries, and a budding journalist believes storytelling can change the world (pictured). Watch videos of four current students at NYIT who are ready to take on the future



Once Upon a Game

Hamlet, meet *Grand Theft Auto*.



Courtesy of C-M

Above: Assistant Professor John Misak incorporates the video game *The Wolf Among Us* into his coursework to help students understand the consequences of character decisions and connect them closer to the story's narrative.

Right: An image from *The Wolf Among Us*. Photo courtesy of Telltale Games.

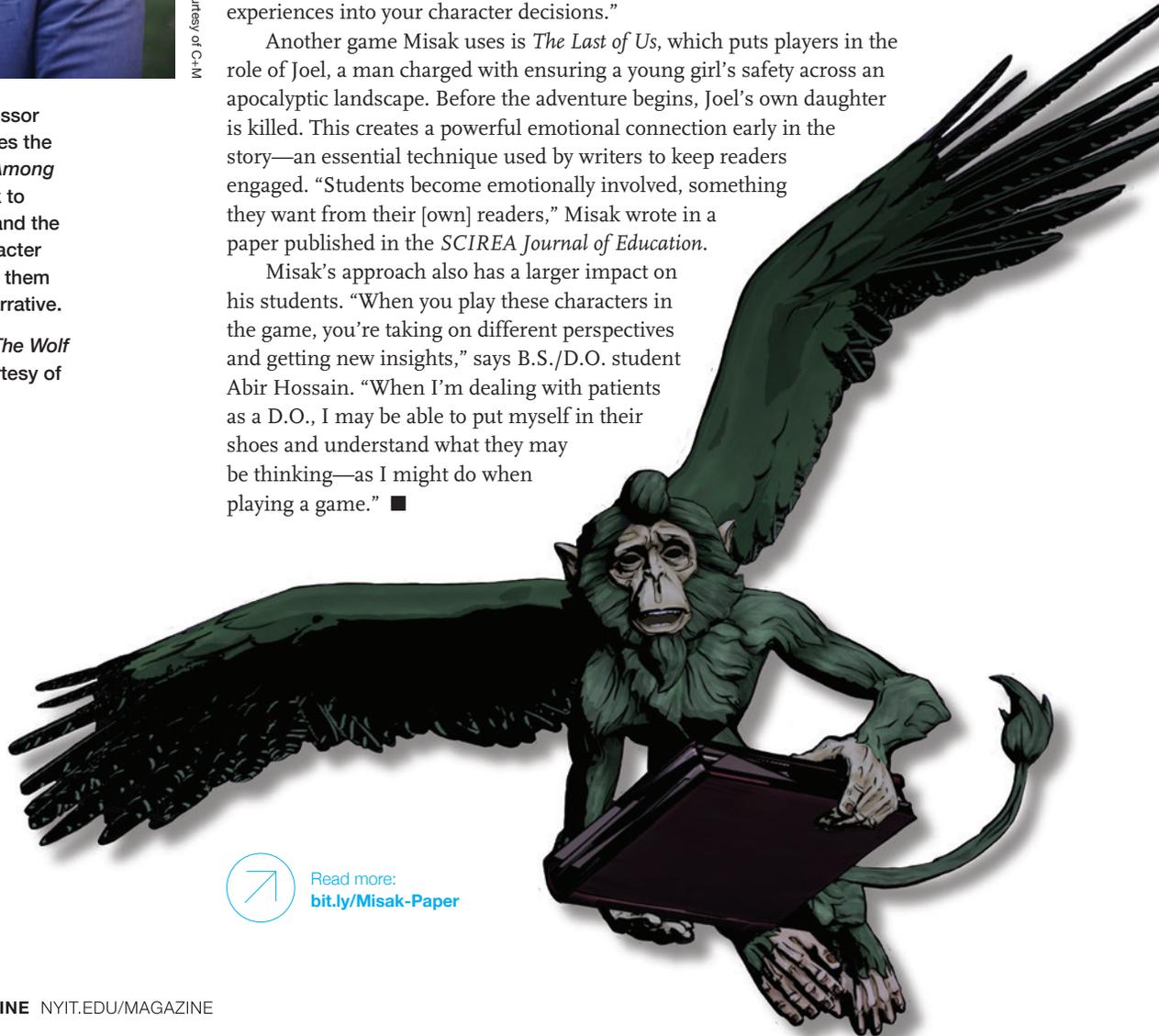
THAT'S THE APPROACH Assistant Professor John Misak takes to teach the power of storytelling. By using the interactive nature of video games to

complement the more traditional study of literature and cinema in his writing classes, he is helping students broaden their understanding of character. "Video games can bring students closer to the personal narrative of the protagonists, enabling them to better experience different perspectives, emotions, and factors that weigh into character decisions that propel a story," Misak says.

For his Detective Fiction class, Misak turned to the game *The Wolf Among Us*, which stars a detective investigating a murder in a dark fairy tale world. Players control the narrative and their interactions by choosing different dialogue options. Architecture student Taylor Casey, who rarely plays video games, appreciated the way the game added to her understanding of a character's journey. "Whatever choice you selected would give you a different outcome," says Casey. "So, you have more investment in the story. As opposed to what we passively read or see on a TV show, you bring your own life experiences into your character decisions."

Another game Misak uses is *The Last of Us*, which puts players in the role of Joel, a man charged with ensuring a young girl's safety across an apocalyptic landscape. Before the adventure begins, Joel's own daughter is killed. This creates a powerful emotional connection early in the story—an essential technique used by writers to keep readers engaged. "Students become emotionally involved, something they want from their [own] readers," Misak wrote in a paper published in the *SCIREA Journal of Education*.

Misak's approach also has a larger impact on his students. "When you play these characters in the game, you're taking on different perspectives and getting new insights," says B.S./D.O. student Abir Hossain. "When I'm dealing with patients as a D.O., I may be able to put myself in their shoes and understand what they may be thinking—as I might do when playing a game." ■



Read more:
bit.ly/Misak-Paper



Pictured: Two *Coronodon havensteini*. The species may help scientists discover how baleen whales lost their teeth.

Anatomy Professors Sink Their Teeth Into Whale Research

A SCUBA DIVER is looking for shark teeth in South Carolina’s Wando River. Instead, he resurfaces with an entirely different discovery—an ancient species of whale that may provide evidence to show how baleen whales lost their teeth.

Coronodon havensteini, named for Mark Havenstein, the diver who found the fossil in the early 2000s, is an early species of toothed mysticete (the scientific name given to precursors of baleen whales that retained teeth) believed to have lived 30 million years ago. It has also become a clue in a prehistoric mystery, one that researchers at NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) are eager to solve: How did baleen whales, the world’s largest vertebrates, evolve to become filter feeders, preying almost entirely on tiny saltwater crustaceans, such as krill? A recent study by NYITCOM Associate Professors Jonathan Geisler, Ph.D. (chair of the Department of Anatomy) and Brian Beatty, Ph.D., aims to show that *Coronodon havensteini* provides key evidence in the search to learn how the baleen evolved.

Modern cetaceans do not chew to eat their food. Instead, they rely on one of three methods: sucking food through the mouth, securing prey with teeth, or

opening their mouth and thrusting the body and mouth forward. Baleen whales use the last method.

But the evolution of the baleen is a matter of much debate. When baleen whales are in utero, they begin to form teeth but later stop. In addition, the earliest fossil cetaceans, which existed 50 million years ago, also had teeth, leading scientists to believe that baleen whales have toothed ancestors. However, researchers have debated whether whales passed through an evolutionary stage of toothless suction feeders or if they used teeth for filtering until baleen evolved.

The NYITCOM team advocates the second theory. “The transition from teeth to baleen is widely contested, but our research indicates that ancient toothed whales relied on the spaces between their complex and enormous teeth for filtering,” said Geisler. “It appears that over millions of years, the teeth were retained until baleen became sufficiently large and complex to take over the role of filter feeding.” After studying *Coronodon havensteini*, the team realized the new fossil species could offer important evidence about the teeth-to-baleen transition. *Coronodon havensteini* is a transitional species on the evolutionary

time line: It sits between earlier whales that snagged fish with their teeth and modern baleen whales. When the researchers compared *Coronodon havensteini* to other ancient whales, they also noticed that it had remarkably large molars, the size of an average human palm, which suggested uncommon feeding behavior.

“Unlike its front teeth which were used to snag prey, the wear on *Coronodon havensteini*’s unusually large molars showed no evidence of shearing or cutting food,” said Beatty. “This suggested that the whale’s molars were used to filter food.” Their theory was further supported when the researchers discovered wear on the hidden cusps bordering these openings.

Coronodon havensteini currently resides in the Mace Brown Museum of Natural History at the College of Charleston. The researchers will continue their investigation by examining closely related species from the Charleston, S.C. region in search of further evidence. ■



See more coverage:
bit.ly/baleen-whale

Space Sensorship

NYIT IS HEADING TO SPACE. Or at least a device developed by a faculty member is.

Fang Li, Ph.D., assistant professor at NYIT School of Engineering and Computing Sciences, is working on an embedded sensor system for NASA that is capable of measuring temperature, pressure, and strain on various rocket propulsion engine components. “The device will be used to prevent imminent and catastrophic failures in rocket engines,” explained Li.

The technology is being developed with X-wave Innovations, Inc. (XII), a research and development firm specializing in the defense, homeland security, transportation, and energy fields. The 12-month venture is part of a project funded by a \$125,000 NASA Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Phase I grant.

The innovative sensor will provide a highly flexible instrumentation solution to monitor remote or inaccessible measurement locations for NASA’s rocket propulsion test facilities. This sensor system is a hybrid product of passive Surface Acoustic Wave Radio Frequency Identification (SAW-RFID) technology and high-temperature piezoelectric materials and devices. (Piezoelectricity is the ability of certain materials, such as lithium niobate and aluminum nitride, to generate an electric charge when subjected to mechanical stress.)

According to Li, conventional sensors pose challenges to engineers. For example, they are neither cost-effective nor do they provide a reliable assessment of the health of propulsion engine components in harsh, high-temperature environments. The technology being developed at NYIT may solve those problems. Sensor tags are embedded in measured components

and powered by a radio frequency (RF) signal that requires no power supply or external circuits. Because the sensors are passive, they are able to work in harsh environments inherent in space travel that would normally destroy conventional electronics.

“The sensor system can operate for long periods, maintenance-free, providing valuable data about the structural health and operation conditions of the engine components,” she explained.

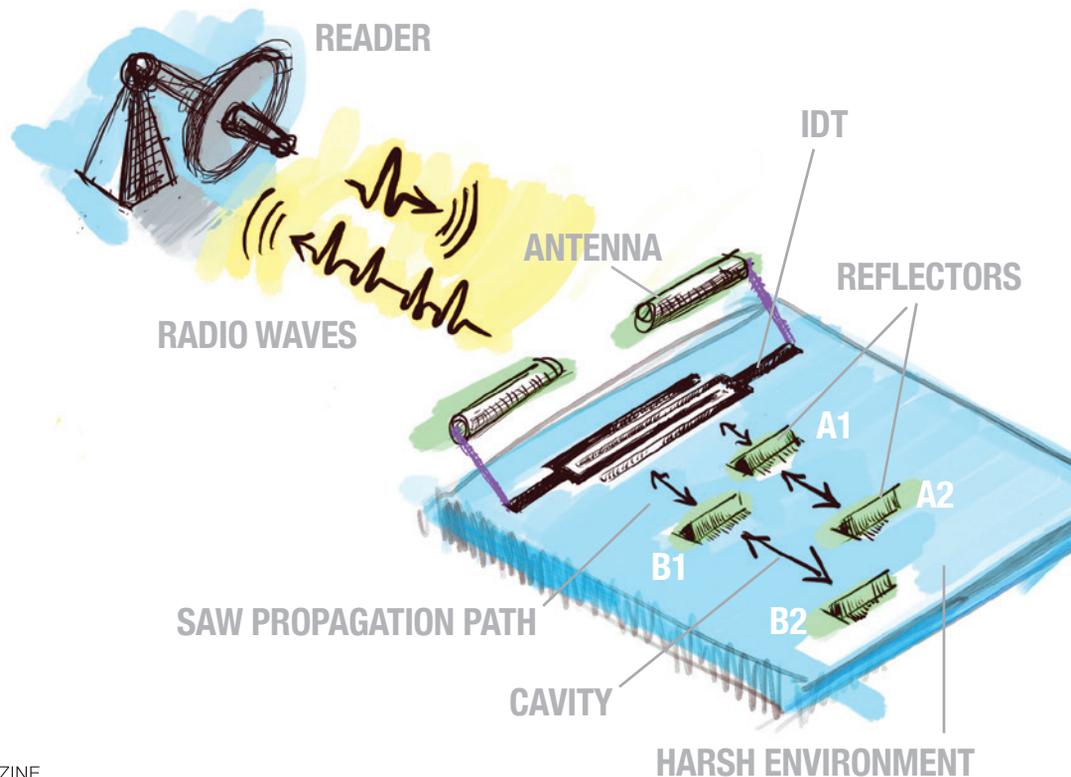
Li is working with **Jonathan Furniss (B.S. '17)** and **Abhay Dilip Patil**, two NYIT mechanical engineering graduate students, to model, design, and develop passive SAW sensors at NYIT-Old Westbury in its class 10,000 clean room, which is part of the university’s materials science and microscopy lab.

“Our mission is to provide high-quality education and support faculty research and student learning in high-tech focus areas,” said **Nada Anid, Ph.D.**, dean of the School of Engineering and

Computing Sciences. “This prestigious NASA grant is a perfect example of collaboration between our faculty and industry on important technological advances. It offers a tremendous growth opportunity for both Professor Li and her students.”

Li, Furniss, and Patil will create a prototype of an embedded sensor system with XII. Once the results demonstrate the feasibility of this technique, the team will apply for Phase II funding, which will allow them to build the SAW-RFID system that will be used at the Stennis Space Center testing facilities. And then, perhaps, one day it will head to space. ■

(Below) The system consists of sensor tags and a remote RF interrogation system. The sensor tags are embedded in measured components, powered by an incident RF signal that requires no power supply or external circuits. It remotely collects data from multiple sensors and converts data into values of temperature, pressure, and strain.



Rethinking Refugee Housing

In addition to visiting a refugee camp made up of containers (left), students toured the Bauhaus in Dessau, the New National Gallery by Mies van der Rohe, and the offices of David Chipperfield Architects (below).

THIS SUMMER, nine students from NYIT School of Architecture and Design traveled to Germany to study refugee housing in Berlin. Led by Associate Professor Farzana Gandhi, the international design workshop also included eight students from the Brandenburg University of Technology (BTU) in Cottbus. The journey was the second half of an international collaboration with BTU students. In the spring, the group joined NYIT students in New York for a design workshop that examined housing solutions for homeless populations as well as those displaced by climate change events, such as Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

The focus on refugee populations in Berlin gave NYIT students the unique opportunity to visit a “container village” in Berlin that was home to more than 600 residents from Syria, Africa, Turkey, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The housing solutions in these makeshift environments consisted of shipping containers stacked three high, suitable for two people per unit, which included

water and electricity. “Seeing [refugee] living conditions makes you, as an architect, want to do more,” says Gandhi, who explained that refugees can live in the camps anywhere from a few weeks to more than two years as they await paperwork confirming their identities.

Interacting with refugees directly was an incredible educational opportunity for the team. “Our students were exposed to socioeconomic conditions and cultures that they wouldn’t normally encounter,” says Gandhi. “They rethink the norm and consider a variety of alternative solutions for housing.”

NYIT students drew on these experiences as they worked with their BTU peers in Berlin to create innovative design solutions for temporary, affordable housing for displaced, homeless, and migrating populations.

“Collaboration in a multicultural group invites countless iterations of ideas,” says Matthew Acer, one of the NYIT students who traveled to Berlin. “The BTU students were able to conceive of urban concepts and housing details that I was never exposed to before.”

But the key takeaway for Acer was realizing how easily preconceived notions disappear once you meet people face-to-face. “Once we encountered refugees from all over the Middle East, all preconceptions began to dissipate and we learned about the individual and their journey,” he says. “The experience was eye-opening.” ■



“Seeing [refugee] living conditions makes you, as an architect, want to do more,” says Gandhi.

Courtesy of Farzana Gandhi



Dan Vélez to Lead NYIT Athletics

2001 2004 ★ 2014
2002 2005 2017
2003 2008
★ Regular Season

NYIT has a new director of intercollegiate athletics and recreation. At a press conference that included student-athletes, NYIT President Hank Foley announced that Dan Vélez has been appointed to the new role, effective September 1.

VÉLEZ, WHO HAS SERVED as the interim athletics director since June, now oversees NYIT's 13 NCAA Division II intercollegiate sports programs and robust recreation program.

"Elevating and enhancing our athletics program is an institutional priority, as we recognize how important athletics is to our community, students, alumni, and beyond," said President Foley, who noted that no other candidate for the position could match the vision and strategic fit that Vélez offers. "We're going to work really hard to try to make athletics a jewel in the NYIT crown."

Athletics has thrived with Vélez as part of the leadership team. During the 2016–2017 academic year, the department added a women's lacrosse team; the volleyball, women's basketball, softball, women's lacrosse, and both tennis teams reached NCAA tournaments; and the men's lacrosse team won the East Coast

Conference (ECC) regular season and postseason titles.

NYIT student-athletes also continue to excel academically. In the 2016–2017 school year, they achieved an average GPA of 3.21. Furthermore, 125 student-athletes received a GPA of at least 3.25, which earned them spots on the ECC Commissioner's Honor Roll.

"I am honored and thrilled to have been chosen as the director of intercollegiate athletics and recreation at NYIT. Today marks the realization of a dream for me personally and is just the beginning of what will be a wonderful journey," said Vélez. "President Foley has outlined a vision that is easy to get behind, and I look forward to working with the NYIT community to reach unparalleled success for the Bears."

That vision also involves the entire community—including graduates. "Alumni will be an integral part of what

we do," Vélez said. "My charge to the alumni is: Become engaged." To foster that engagement, Vélez plans to ensure that student-athletes are successful while still at NYIT. "I will work every day to make sure that our student-athletes are able to have the best experience possible," he said. "We will win on the fields and courts of competition, we will win in the classrooms and be national leaders in academic success, and we will win in life by making sure that student-athletes have all of the tools necessary to grow, mature, and become integral members of society once their time at NYIT is over."

Vélez, who serves on the NCAA Division II Women's Soccer Regional Advisory Committee, joined NYIT two years ago as associate director for intercollegiate athletics and chief of staff. Prior to joining NYIT, Vélez was the associate athletic director for operations at Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y. He also served as Seton Hall University's assistant athletic director for facilities and

Sports Briefs

WATCH NYIT GAMES AT HOME

Can't make it to the Old Westbury campus to root for your favorite team in person? You now can watch all NYIT home games streamed live for free and in high definition. The upgraded Bears Sports Network includes announcers, as many as four camera angles per telecast, replays, and a scoreboard graphic that is synchronized with the clock at the event. ■



Watch now:
NYITBears.com/BSN

operations. He has a B.S. in Education from Kutztown University and an M.S. in Sports Management from West Virginia University.

"I'd like our student-athletes to feel like they're D-I student-athletes—that what we're collectively doing matters and that they help to carry the NYIT banner everywhere they go," said President Foley. "Dan will be integral in helping to make this happen." ■



Follow the Bears:
nyit.edu/athletics

(Facing page) Dan Vélez speaks at the press conference.

(Right) Members of the 1997 men's lacrosse team gather at the 2017 Hall of Fame Enshrinement Dinner.

That Championship Season

NYIT has won four men's lacrosse national championships in program history. And it all started with the first title back in 1997. That event marked the beginning of an 11-year run that led to national titles in 2003, 2005, and 2008. In July of this year, the group reunited at the Woodside Club in Muttontown (N.Y.) where they were inducted into the NYIT Athletics Hall of Fame at the 12th Annual NYIT Athletics Golf Outing and Hall of Fame Enshrinement Dinner. "It brought everything back to reality after 20 years," said **JOE BROCK (B.S. '98)**, who was named United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association Player of the Year after the 1997 season.

In 1996, the team suffered only one loss all season and seemed to have earned an invitation to the NCAA Tournament, but was left out of the bracket. The players used that oversight as motivation in 1997. In addition to returning players like Brock and **ADAM WOR (B.S. '99)**, new players, including **ROB BROWN (B.S. '97)**, **GAVIN WYNOT**, and defender **BRIAN DUNN (A.O.S. '03)**, helped the team win the first of the program's four championships. "Rebounding from the year before with a few key acquisitions really solidified our team," said Brock, who is now a New York City police officer.

Also inducted into the hall of fame during this year's banquet were former NYIT baseball student-athlete **CHRIS BRILLER (B.S. '97)**, who is now the owner of Merchant Pro Express, a credit-card processing company, and baseball ambassador Rita Smith Hirschfield, the wife of legendary former NYIT baseball coach Bob Hirschfield. The recipient of the Big Bear Award, presented annually to those who "demonstrate effective leadership and dedication to advancing athletics in their local communities," went to Michael Ryan, LandTek Group, Inc. ■



Learn more:
bit.ly/2017-Hall-of-Fame



Courtesy of NYIT Athletics

FEATURE

BY ANDREA CHAPIN

Global Perspectives and Partnerships

Students and faculty members who traveled to Osiem, Ghana, with the Center for Global Health took a cultural tour of Lake Bosumtwi in Ghana.

Photos by Larry Rubin, Justin Morris, courtesy of EFAP

What kinds of meaningful global experiences does NYIT offer? And how is NYIT developing these global partnerships, particularly at a time when many countries and organizations are undergoing periods of unrest? *NYIT Magazine* went to the sources to find out.

GHANA



In JUNE, NYIT staff and faculty members hosted educators from around the world at NYIT's first Global Partnership Summit. Organized by the Office of Global Engagement, the three-day summit invited participants to discuss potential partnerships that could provide the most robust opportunities for students, including dual degree programs and student exchange.

Attendees represented Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, the United States, Lebanon, Turkey, and Sweden. "We invited these institutions because we can help each other through student exchange, research collaboration, or both," said Emily Rukobo, executive director of Global Academic Programs and NYIT's English Language Institute. "We want to roll up our sleeves and get to work on real collaborations."

That kind of work is already underway at NYIT, where a commitment to providing a global education for students remains a top strategic initiative.

A CENTER FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

IN JUNE in Oslem, Ghana, and 16 students and faculty members from NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine and School of Health Professions are stationed at Hawa Memorial Saviour Hospital conducting health screenings and community outreach for local residents. Over the next two weeks, the group will provide medical services to more than 500 patients, donate medical supplies, work alongside local healthcare professionals, and ultimately learn how medicine is practiced in areas with limited resources. It's an experience that has the potential to shape the careers and lives of these physician trainees.



Watch more: bit.ly/Global-Health-2017

The Ghana trip, now in its sixth year, is one of several service learning initiatives hosted by the Center for Global Health. Established at NYIT in 2007, the center aims to provide opportunities for students and faculty members to engage in global health research, policy, and practice. This year, Lillian Niwagaba, Ph.D., who was named director of the Center in 2016, traveled to Ghana for the first time with the group, which included faculty members Michael Gindi, M.D., Janet Grotticelli (D.O. '88), and Zehra Ahmed (B.S. '04), M.B.B.S., PA-C. "It was



In Ghana, the Center for Global Health team was stationed at the Hawa Memorial Saviour Hospital. (Left) Faculty member Michael Gindi shares American culture with Ghanaian school children. (Facing page) A student tests the blood sugar levels of a community member.

a wonderful experience, especially seeing the excitement among the students—some of whom had never traveled outside the United States,” says Niwagaba. Originally from Uganda, she has dedicated her career to developing global health programs and

collaborations in higher education. The center currently offers programs in countries including Ghana, Haiti, and Costa Rica, and students can travel to more countries through the Institute for International Medicine. At NYIT, she invites experts to speak to students so they will “dig deeper” and “not only apply what they’ve learned about healthcare on these service trips but also use their empathy and compassion when treating patients locally.”

The Center for Global Health helps students with pre-trip orientations, but Niwagaba cautions that “we pay particular attention to prepare students, but it’s one of those lived experiences that students have to go through themselves to really get.” As part of the Ghana experience, for example, students worked at a women’s health clinic where they took patient histories and vitals and did breast exams. “Their enthusiasm was infectious,” says Niwagaba. “I could see them becoming doctors.”

MASTERING BUSINESS IN THE SHADOW OF MOUNT KILIMANJARO

AS STUDENTS in the Center for Global Health wrapped up their trip, another group was preparing to head across the Atlantic Ocean. In August, six M.B.A. students, along with faculty and staff members, traveled to Moshi, Tanzania, in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, to teach a business-focused curriculum to 44 female entrepreneurs. The women own a variety of businesses, including salons, farms, and day care services, which cater to locals and tourists in the area. The program was organized in collaboration with local Tanzanian NGO Excel Education Foundation (EEF).

Through the Business Development Institute, conceived of and run by Amr Swid, Ph.D., assistant professor and director of experiential education at NYIT School of Management, the women learned how to develop their skills as managers and entrepreneurs, create and implement a business plan, and more. Participants also took an intensive English language course taught by Rukobo and Jennifer Rubin, while students served as mentors and group leaders throughout the trip. “It was a

TANZANIA





(Below) M.B.A. student May Sefin and local entrepreneur Beatrice Temba discuss business plan development at the Excel Education Foundation in Moshi, Tanzania.



transformative experience for the students, the women they worked with, and for the faculty,” says Rukobo. “It’s one thing to study business concepts in a classroom, and it’s quite another to teach women about them in a second language. With a trip like this, students have a chance to leave the safe environment of NYIT and investigate the world.”

“The Tanzania trip is a perfect example of how to learn by doing,” adds Swid. “These M.B.A. students gained experiential education when they invested their time and effort in teaching and applying their knowledge and skills to real-world problems.”

Last year, Swid organized three additional study abroad experiences for School of Management students, including first-time trips to Dubai and Barcelona. The Barcelona trip, which took place over spring break, was a joint venture with Işık University in Turkey. More than 20 students from NYIT campuses in New York and Abu Dhabi and Işık University signed up to learn about doing business in emerging markets from guest speakers from the Universitat de Barcelona. Dubai also proved to be a place where students could learn about business in an unfamiliar setting. “Dubai has emerged as one of the world’s leading international business centers with easy accessibility, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and modern venues,” says Swid, who partnered with Multinational Business Academy in Delhi to launch the trip. The students went to the markets, visited Google and other multinationals, and, according to Swid, “fell in love with Dubai.”

M.B.A. student May Sefin, who went on the Tanzania trip, sums up the importance of these kinds of experiences perfectly: “The opportunity to assist people who are in need has made my experience visiting Tanzania unparalleled with any other. Something about being immersed in a foreign, unknown world puts absolutely everything into perspective.”

PARISIAN PROWLERS

FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES, students from France have been coming to NYIT to study for a semester through EFAP (the French school L'école des nouveaux métiers de la communication). For the first 15 years, the program was one-sided, with French students studying in New York. Then, in 2015, Patricia Chaban, director of the EFAP program at NYIT and adjunct instructor of French, expanded the partnership; NYIT began sending students to France for a month to study documentary filmmaking and integrated marketing, visit creative agencies, and earn college credit. “This year, we brought 15 students from NYIT’s campuses in New York and Abu Dhabi and





“[Institutions] can help each other through student exchange, research collaboration, or both,” said Emily Rukobo. “We want to roll up our sleeves and get to work on real collaborations.”

NYIT students studied in Paris this summer, thanks to a partnership with EFAP. As part of their experience, they visited locations including Montmartre, Galeries Lafayette, Louis Vuitton, the Palais Garnier, and Fragonard Perfume (pictured).

from NYIT’s M.B.A. program in China. We also had students from European universities,” says Chaban. “It was a mix of cultures and nationalities.”

As with any travel, there are always surprises. This past summer, a student from NYIT-Manhattan and a student from NYIT-Abu Dhabi turned out to be from the same town in India. They found each other, thanks to a mutual desire to study in Paris. “They were inseparable,” says Chaban. “They were studying at two campuses on the opposite side of the world but came from the same town. It is a nice story about the program. We wanted it to be really global, and it was.”

And Chaban is not done. She would like to grow the Paris program from a month to a semester, and she’s planning a two-week wine management course, which she thinks could appeal to NYIT students in the hospitality management program.

ENGINEERING ACROSS BORDERS

SOON AFTER THE GLOBAL SUMMIT, an initiative was launched between the Instituto Tecnológico de las Américas (ITLA) in the Dominican Republic and NYIT School of Engineering and Computing Sciences. With the help of an Innovation Across Borders grant of \$25,000, which supports an exchange program where students collaborate on design and innovation projects while experiencing new cultures, six ITLA students traveled to New York this fall and teamed up with NYIT students to respond to a design challenge based around medical devices. The grant was one of 14 awarded by the 100,000 *Strong in the Americas* Innovation Fund in honor of NAFSA’s retired Executive Director and CEO Marlene M. Johnson. “Working together, they will propose innovative solutions, develop prototypes, and work on business plans,” says Marta A. Panero, Ph.D., director of strategic partnerships at the School of Engineering and Computing Sciences. In the spring, the teams will continue to work on their project designs via virtual collaboration, and then in the summer, NYIT students will attend ITLA to finalize plans and identify marketing opportunities.

More opportunities are in development at the school. “We have just started to collaborate with FACENS’ Smart Campus in Sao Paulo, Brazil,” says Panero. “And in terms of other global partnerships, we are now working closely with the University of Applied Sciences at Hochschule für Technik Stuttgart, as well as the Austrian Institute



of Technology on research of urban systems and related data and modeling frameworks.” Ultimately, the goal is to design more efficient ways to manage critical infrastructure systems, leading to better water, energy, and food in cities across the globe.

GLOBAL EDUCATION IN A TIME OF UPHEAVAL

WHILE FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS are sending their students out into the world, the Global Partnership Summit successfully brought people from different institutions to NYIT to reinforce the importance of developing higher education opportunities at a time when many places are experiencing great unrest. Among the millions of people displaced from their homes are those who would be pursuing a university education under normal circumstances.

That issue was the topic of discussion at the summit’s culminating plenary session, “Perspectives on Global Education,” which was held in partnership with the Institute of International Education (IIE), one of the world’s foremost organizations for helping displaced people find an institutional home.



Read more: bit.ly/global-summit-session

According to a report by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, just one percent of refugees attend university compared to 34 percent globally. In his keynote speech at the session, IIE President and CEO Allan Goodman said, “We don’t need further research to identify our problem or potential solutions. We know what the disease is, and we know what the cure is: The disease is a lost generation of young people between 18 and 24 who are qualified for higher education. Education is the cure.”

Continuing the conversation about refugees is important to Rukobo, and she sees ways for departments and schools across NYIT to help. For example, NYIT School of Architecture and Design students recently traveled to Berlin, Germany, where they developed refugee housing (see story p. 9). And there are more partnerships to explore. “We have strong relationships with Jordan, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, and we have a strong connection with countries supporting refugees,” says Rukobo.

Fostering these connections with institutions and organizations will continue to be a top priority for NYIT. Whether students are in the United States or abroad, and whether they are treating patients, helping refugees, or building better businesses, they want to do so in a way that has real impact. By developing global partnerships, faculty and staff members will help ensure their success—now and in the future. ■



M.B.A. student Panfeng Liu (right) helps local entrepreneur Renalda Materu learn about conducting business in English at the Excel Education Foundation in Moshi, Tanzania.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR MOU?

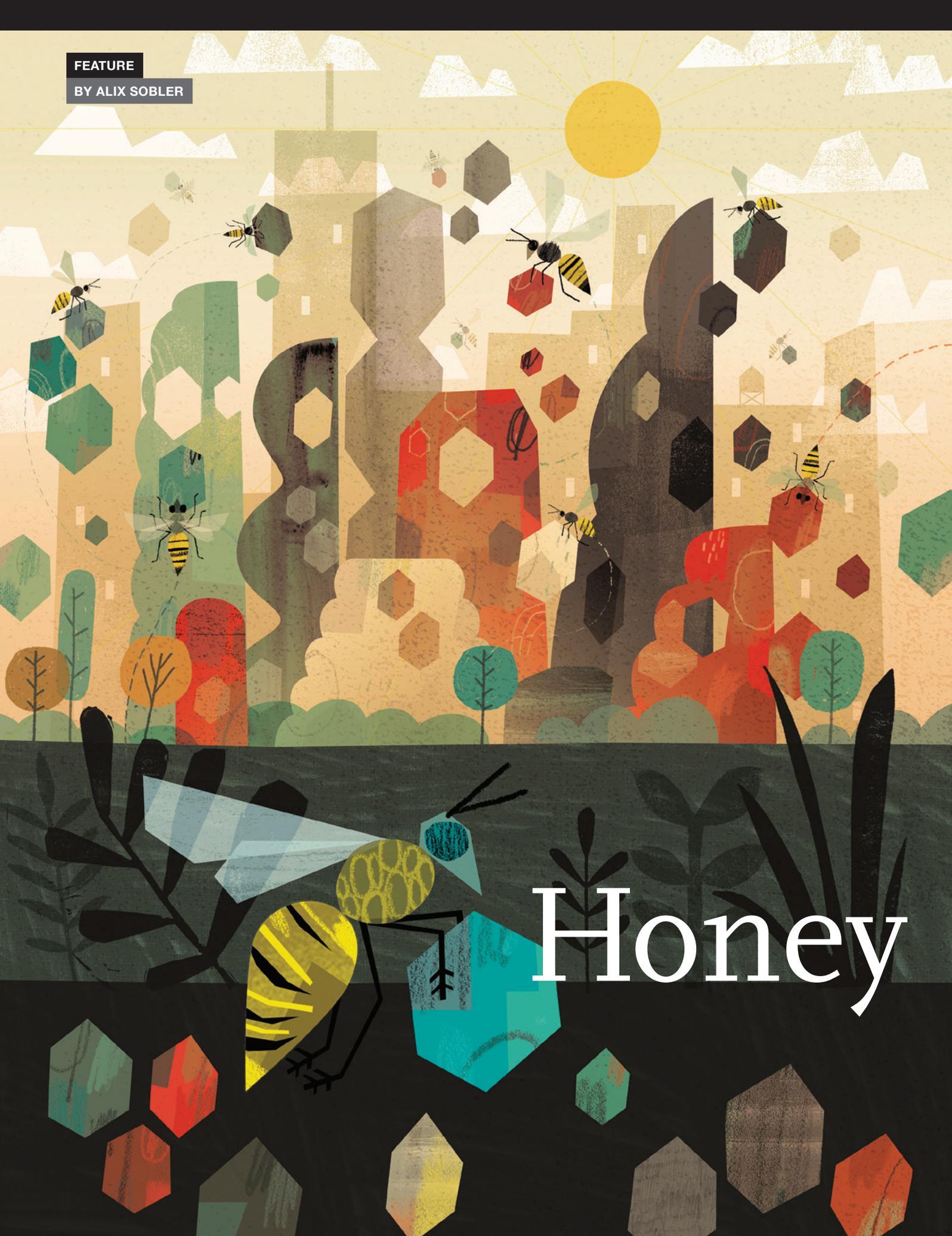
An MOU (memorandum of understanding) is often the first step two organizations—such as two universities or a university and a public or private institution—will take in forming a partnership. For example, NYIT School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Education recently signed an MOU with the Bangladesh government Access to Information (a2i) program, which will establish academic exchanges between Bangladesh and NYIT and teacher training in Bangladesh in information and technology education.

JUFE: NYIT’S LONGEST GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

In 1998, NYIT took its brand of American-style education overseas with an M.B.A. program at Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics (JUFE) in China. The NYIT-JUFE M.B.A. program now enrolls more than 100 students each year, with classes offered in Beijing, Shenzhen, and Shanghai.

FEATURE

BY ALIX SOBLER



Honey

Through collaborations with government, nonprofits, and other organizations, NYIT School of Management is creating a new standard for students to engage with industry partners.

HIDDEN AWAY ON THE ROOF of the building that houses the NYIT-Manhattan café and bookstore, an entire industry is hard at work. Every day, thousands of female worker bees emerge from two beehives to commute to nearby Central Park where they gather pollen and nectar. Managed as part of a hospitality management project at the School of Management, the beehives have become a favorite among NYIT students and faculty and staff members. “I come up here almost every morning to drink my coffee and check on them,” says Robert Koenig, Ed.D., associate professor, chair of the Department of Hospitality Studies, and associate dean of the School of Management. “Everyone loves the bees. The security guards ask me when they see me, ‘How are the girls?’”

Just as the bees are building honey from expeditions to Central Park, the students who tend to them are building core skills. The hospitality department is using the hives in courses including Purchasing, Procurement, and Supply Management; Experiential Based Learning; Practicum Sustainability in Hospitality Management; and Food Culture and Contemporary Issues.

Students will focus on everything from managing, marketing, and distributing the honey to studying how hotels incorporate sustainability in their business models to seeing firsthand the effects that the beehives have on the community and the environment.



See the bees in action:
bit.ly/NYIT-beehives

This experiential-based educational venture is just one of the many that the School of Management has launched in order to get creative about providing students with a real-world education. “Historically, higher education has been for training researchers, but over the years it has morphed into something a bit more diverse,” says School of Management Dean Jess Boronico, Ph.D., who made engagement with industry a top priority when developing the school’s most recent strategic plan. “The wisdom has changed, and we asked ourselves, ‘Isn’t higher education there to do more than train researchers? Shouldn’t part of the goal be to train youth to become industry leaders?’ The answer is, ‘Yes.’”

Out of the Hive and Into the Garden

Using New York City as a classroom

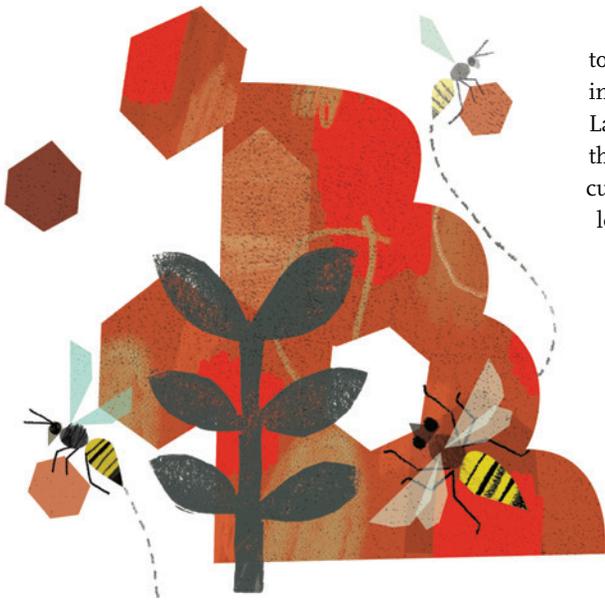
According to Rakesh Mittal, assistant professor of human resource management and chairman of the School of Management Industry Engagement Committee, which initiates and monitors a number of the school’s partnerships,



From the Hive:

Management Students Gain Experience Through Industry Partnerships

Illustrations by Dante Terzigni



engaging with industry is vital to students' training. "It is essential that we are in sync with what is happening in the field of business, what the companies are doing, what their priorities are, and what their challenges are," he says. "This helps to take concepts out of the classroom and into the real world." He is helping students do just that. Last year, Mittal launched a partnership with the Queens Chamber of Commerce. Students and faculty members worked with the nonprofit organization to help revise their bylaws, which were not up-to-date with current needs and trends. (Not your typical course project!)

The effort was so successful that the team repartnered to help the chamber increase membership and improve retention. They developed a survey, interviewed recruiters who work for the chamber, and asked local business owners what kind of benefits they would be interested in as members. They also met with the president and manager of the Chamber of Commerce to help pinpoint areas that needed the most attention. The students shared their interim recommendations with the chamber, and they are currently working on their final report.

"I really got excited to talk to the business owners and cold interview them," said Joseph Lao, a student who worked on the project. "By doing a practicum, you're going to learn a lot more than you would have learned in class. Sitting in the room, face-to-face, talking with clients, brings up new questions that wouldn't have occurred to you just writing a paper."

Engaging with top-level management and industry leaders is not an unusual occurrence for students in the school. Each year, Koenig partners with some of the

city's most respected hotels as part of his Hospitality Sustainability course. Students meet with general managers and assess the sustainability practices. Over the course of the semester, they review each department based on best practices put forth by Green Key Global, an international environment certification body. So far, students have worked with the Benjamin Hotel, Gardens NYC, and Hilton Times Square. "Each hotel has been a unique project. They all have different strengths," says Koenig.

At the end of each project, the students write up a report (based on the Green Key Global assessment parameters) outlining recommendations

for how the hotel can improve sustainability. "The Hilton Times Square won an award for sustainability after the NYIT students did their assessment," says Koenig. "All the hotels stay in touch and want to build programs, internships, come in as guest speakers. It's a win-win for students and businesses."

Cross-Pollination

Mutually benefiting from engagement

Like the bees, who help flowers and trees flourish through the act of pollination, students gain experience from working with local industry and contribute to the businesses that are hosting them. This is especially true for organizations that are just starting out and can't necessarily afford the high costs of PR firms and consultants.

Assistant Professor of Marketing Colleen Kirk says the focus on industry engagement was one of the things that drew her to NYIT in 2016. "At one time, professors were accustomed to just standing up in front of a class and giving a lecture to share their knowledge," she says, "but today, the world has changed so much, so our teaching practices are changing dramatically, too. We're trying to take this philosophy of engaging with industry and having a real impact and bring it right into the classroom."

To do that, Kirk partners with businesses that can gain the most from her marketing students' contributions, such as startups. "Most of the businesses we talk to have very limited marketing

(Left to right) Robert Koenig; hospitality students Alina Richard, Peggy Chiang, and Yuhan Jiang; and Sean Flynn from Silvermine Apiary LLC take care of the beehives.



backgrounds and they need us to help them, even it's just with articulating what their product does," says Kirk.

When Greg Egan, the founder of Bamboo Science Group, came to Kirk's International Marketing class, he needed help marketing the company's services in foreign countries. His invention, the Pyrolyzer, can convert bamboo into a high-purity carbon (charcoal) right in the field, which can then remove impurities in air and water. The invention has the potential to be a game changer in developing countries, but Egan is an entrepreneur, not a marketing agency.

Students took on the challenge by identifying countries where they thought the product would do well and developed marketing plans.

"One team came up with the idea of marketing the product in Colombia, which had never occurred to Greg," says Kirk. "It is a huge area for bamboo growth and has the right climate, and with new political agreements in place, there's new potential there."

The project also had an immediate effect on the students. M.B.A. student Priyesh Dani explains, "I was heavily applying concepts not only from marketing but also from economics, supply chain management, industry research, and strategy fields. Even though I am not pursuing marketing as my major, I have benefited academically and professionally from the project." Four students went on to do a practicum with Egan to explore the bamboo tea market, and one was even hired as an intern.

"The businesses benefit hugely from the knowledge, new ideas, and latest thinking about marketing, social media, and digital marketing the students bring," says Kirk. "Businesses also get a lot from feeling like they're contributing to the next generation of business leaders." Kirk has more partnerships in the works, including one with Custom Collaborative, which provides immigrant women in New York City the tools and support to start a small business.

Beyond the Buzz

Measuring results in meaningful ways

On the roof of 1849 Broadway, students are learning to become expert beekeepers under the supervision of Andrew Coté of Silvermine Apiary, LLC, a family beekeeping operation in existence since the 1800s. They're also becoming entrepreneurs. As the hives mature, they are expected to yield 50 to 100 pounds of honey a year, which will be packaged and marketed for distribution throughout NYIT's campus.

Not every project results in something as tangible as honey, but measuring the results and impact of



these initiatives is another important part of the plan. "When we wrote our strategic plan in 2015, two of the strategic initiatives were to engage in meaningful ways with industry and also to move from a tradition of measuring quality to measuring impact," says Boronico. "It is great to do quality work, but if you're not going to actually apply it in the market, does it really make a lot of difference?"

Director of Internal Operations and External Relations Steven Haines is in charge of tracking the outcomes of projects launched through the Industry Engagement Committee. "Sometimes, impact can be measured by a testimonial from a company saying that a project resulted in a certain amount of profit or clicks on their website," says Haines. Impact can also be measured through other factors, such as if a company hires

a student, makes a donation to the school following a project's completion, or does another project with the school. "These are all examples we've seen," he adds.

As always, outcomes speak to the success of these projects. Nearly all have resulted in students being re-engaged by companies to work on other initiatives or being hired as interns or employees.

And like the bees who venture far to conduct their fieldwork, they always return to where they started and contribute to the hive. "Often, when I take my students out to engage with the industry, the people meeting them and giving industry tours are alumni. That is really

"We're trying to take this philosophy of engaging with industry and having a real impact and bring it right into the classroom."
— Colleen Kirk

great for our current students to see," says Koenig. "It shows these programs will have a real, lasting impact on their educations and their lives." ■



Read about more partnerships:
bit.ly/NYIT-Edventure

One Rung at a Time



SUNITHA VIJAYAKUMAR
(M.B.A. '15)

“To me, the whole world can be viewed as one huge supply chain,” says **SUNITHA VIJAYAKUMAR** (M.B.A. '15). “Everything is linked together. It is so enjoyable for me to understand how the whole system works.” Vijayakumar was working in India as a supply chain analyst for global professional services company Accenture when she realized she would need to further her education to climb higher. She set her sights on a university that would allow her to amplify her career and access high-caliber companies and clients. The M.B.A. in Operations and Supply Chain Management at NYIT-Vancouver immediately interested her. “NYIT is a global university in all senses,” says Vijayakumar. “Not only do students have the chance to switch between campuses if they choose, but they also get to interact with people from all over the world.”

Within a month of graduation, Vijayakumar received several job offers from multi-national companies. She chose to become a supply chain specialist at Creation Technologies, a global electronics manufacturing services provider in British Columbia. “NYIT gave me the confidence to manage and supervise a high volume of supply chain activities for customers in the aerospace, defense, security, medical, and transportation industries,” says Vijayakumar. “I feel very empowered by what I learned at NYIT.” ■

See how four recent alumni are growing their careers. Read their full stories and meet more alumni online at nyit.edu/box/profiles.

JOHN GIENAU
(M.S. '13)

JOHN GIENAU (M.S. '13) is a high school physics teacher by day, but on nights and weekends, he spends his time as an umpire on the baseball field. His favorite age to ump for is the 14- to 15-year-olds division. “They’re so in tune and want to learn,” says Gienau. He also tries to bring a sense of play into the physics classroom. He’s used bumper cars demonstrate the law of conservation and even cooked a hot dog with an electrical current to show the conversion of energy into heat.

Always “a math and science guy,” Gienau originally pursued a graduate degree in engineering but decided to follow his interest in lifelong learning and enrolled in the M.S. in Instructional Technology program at NYIT. There, he served as a research assistant to Associate Dean Shiang-Kwei Wang, Ph.D., and Associate Professor Hui-Yin Hsu, Ph.D., on a five-year National Science Foundation grant to promote cyber-enabled learning in K–12 classrooms. Today, he uses methods he learned at NYIT to

engage students through technology in his own classroom. But he says there’s another trick to getting their attention: “The key is to make the students like me enough to work hard for me.” ■



Do you have a new job or internship?
Tell NYIT Career Services:
cs@nyit.edu

**THOMAS
LAVIN**
(D.O. '17)

Call it a D.O.-over. Recent NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) graduate **THOMAS LAVIN (D.O. '17)** switched up his medical education and says it was his best prescription for future success. Lavin was enrolled in the physician assistant (PA) studies program at Hofstra University when he decided to become a doctor. "I had a stay-at-home mother," Lavin says. "In my extended family, she was the caretaker and managed the health care. I helped with doctor and hospital visits." The exposure to medical professionals opened Lavin's mind to new ways of helping others while embracing the spirit of his mother.

The decision to leave Hofstra meant having to retake anatomy, biology, and other coursework while pursuing his D.O. degree. "I already went through all of the stress of medical education while doing my PA studies," says Lavin. "So that part of me had already fizzled out." At NYITCOM, he was a standout student, and his outstanding work earned him the Dean's Achievement Award for Overall Academic Excellence and—for remarkable academic work in the field of cardiology—the Philip F. Fleisher Memorial Award. Lavin now serves as a resident anesthesiologist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. "My NYITCOM experiences provided me with the resources to be a success and will provide dividends throughout my career," he says. "I couldn't be happier." ■



NOELLE SCINDIAN
(B.F.A. '16)

"When I started thinking about what I wanted to pursue as a career, I knew that I wanted it to be something creative that I would also have fun doing," says **NOELLE SCINDIAN (B.F.A. '16)**. Her drive started early. An avid Jim Henson fan, she watched *Sesame Street* and Muppet movies and became interested in children's media. But to pursue her career choice, Scindian knew she needed to learn as many production skills as possible. She enrolled in the B.F.A. in Communication and Media Production program at NYIT with the goal to land a job at Sesame Workshop.

Scindian quickly gained experience, taking advantage of NYIT's location and industry connections. Interning with educational organization Story Pirates, she helped children write and perform their own stories. "It was inspiring to see such young students be so passionate about reading and writing," she says. Then, after graduation, Scindian's plans came together: She accepted a position as a post-production assistant for Sesame Workshop, where she helps coordinate what happens between the show's taping and airing. "My involvement at NYIT gave me some of my first chances to see myself as a leader," says Scindian. "Taking the leap to be in control gave me the confidence to go after my dreams." ■



The fall is the perfect time of year to take advantage of your alumni benefits. Enjoy exclusive discounts for restaurants, hotels, Broadway shows, insurance, and more. Alumni also receive free access to services to further your career development, including membership to the Five O’Clock Club, webinars, and lifelong support from NYIT Career Services.

This fall, Career Services will launch a new online recruiting platform (via Handshake). Search for jobs and register for career events or recruit NYIT talent for your organization by creating a profile online.

Sign up for Handshake: nyit.joinhandshake.com

Learn more about all benefits: nyit.edu/alumni/benefits



ALUMNI

Alumni Notes

1960s

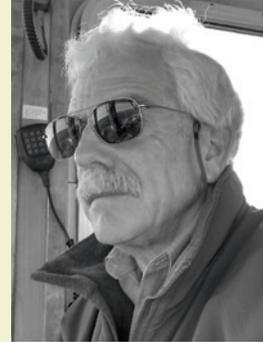
When he’s not traveling the world with his wife, Bette, **GEORGE MARKS (A.A.S. ’63, B.S. ’65)** enjoys photography and recently acquired a Phantom 3 Professional drone to capture aerial images. “Best regards to my Class of ’65,” he says. “I hope all is well with everyone.”

On March 29, students in the NYIT chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) were awarded the Long Island Section Velio Marsocci Outstanding Student Branch Award. Joining the celebration was **WALTER POGGI (A.A.S. ’67, B.S. ’69)**, who founded the IEEE chapter at NYIT when he was a student nearly 50 years ago. Today, he serves as president of Retlif Testing Laboratories in Ronkonkoma, N.Y. bit.ly/IEEE-Award

1970s

JOHN EFF (B.S. ’73), owner of J.J. Energy Consultants and NYIT adjunct professor, was re-elected to the village board of West Hampton Dunes in Suffolk County, N.Y.

LARRY REOCH (B.S. ’73) retired from American Electric Power as a purchasing manager in 2000 after 26 years of service. Today, he lives in Westerville, Ohio, with his family. “In retirement, I’ve done a lot of community service work and joined the local police and fire departments as a volunteer,” he says. “My NYIT degree enabled me to have a highly successful career.”



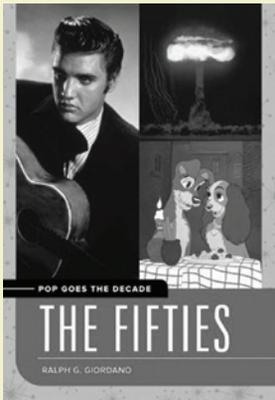
Courtesy of John Cronin

On September 1, **JOHN CRONIN (B.S. ’76)** (pictured) retired as town engineer for Shelter Island on Long Island. “My most significant NYIT memories involve four professors—Gabriel Sunshine, Bernard Gleimer, Rifat Tabi, and **DANIEL KANE (M.B.A. ’88)**,” he says. “These four gentlemen demonstrated a level of dedication to engineering instruction unlike many folks I have since encountered.” The most important takeaway from his NYIT education was learning that education is a lifetime experience, which also includes serving as a mentor to others. “That singular message of lifetime learning and mentoring has stuck with me and been the source of a satisfying career in engineering.”

PATRICK PESCE (B.S. ’76) published his memoir, *Blue Memories*, chronicling his career in the NYPD, which includes working for then-Assistant U.S. Attorney Rudy Giuliani. “I chose to attend NYIT because it offered courses to assist me in my career as a New York City police officer and help me advance through the ranks,” he says. bit.ly/Patrick-Pesce

Things are adding up nicely for **MARIANNE ZAMOR (B.S. ’77)**, who was named Teacher of the Year by the Mathematical Association of America. She has taught algebra, geometry, physics, and other subjects at Owasso High School in Owasso, Okla., for nearly 40 years.

ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT



Courtesy of Ralph Giordano

RALPH GIORDANO (B.S. '79) published his seventh book, *Pop Goes the Decade: The Fifties*. His favorite NYIT memory took place a few years after graduation, during the start of his career in architecture. "I was taking refresher courses in preparation for my Professional Architectural Registration," he says. "The instructor asked where each student had graduated. They were rattling off schools like Harvard, Yale, Pratt, Kansas, and others top schools. When I said, 'New York Institute of Technology,' the instructor stopped and said, 'Your school has the highest rate of passing on the R.A. test.' I was extremely grateful for how known and respected NYIT was in the profession." RalphGGiordano.com

MATTHEW STEGLE (B.F.A. '79) was appointed to the Frederick County (Maryland) Government's Insurance Committee following his retirement from the Allstate Insurance Company. While an NYIT student, he was commissioned in the New York Army National Guard. "I enjoyed working for *The Campus Slate* and have many fond memories assembling the student newspaper," he recalls. "My degree and the opportunities I had while at NYIT have all helped me throughout my career."



Jeannine Haggerty

(M.S. '97)

Orlag Wallace Dale

J EANNINE HAGGERTY had already worked at Con Edison, one of the world's largest energy delivery systems, for 20 years when Hurricane Sandy blasted up the East Coast. At the time, she was a director in the IT department and responsible for Outage Management Systems, which she describes as "the eyes and the ears of the company." More than 1 million customers lost electricity during the storm, so it was critical to keep the IT systems up and running. The system could generally process around 4,000 calls per hour, but during the peak of Sandy, it handled nearly 10,000 calls. Con Edison's systems remained up, but if they hadn't (due to the extreme call volume) "it would have temporarily hindered our power restoration plans and ability to provide our customers with estimated restoration information," she explains. Haggerty did not leave the office for three days and slept only a few hours. "Hopefully," she says, "we'll never experience that again."

Now the general manager of Con Edison's Bronx and Westchester Electric Operations, Haggerty is responsible for the Electric Distribution Systems that serve 1.4 million customers in a 41-square-mile area. Her career at the company began after she earned her undergraduate degree in finance and international business with a minor in economics. She took a position in Con Edison's Growth Opportunities for Leadership Development Program (GOLD), which allows employees to move around the company and work in different areas and positions. In the mid-1990s, when the company was increasing its focus on environmental awareness and Haggerty was training to be an environmental manager, she enrolled in the M.S. in Energy Management program at NYIT School of Engineering and Computing Sciences, where she also earned an advanced certificate in environmental management. She studied power generation, utility management, and environmental management—all topics that were integral to her work at Con Edison.

As a leader at a top energy company, Haggerty is aware of the difficulties women face in pursuing STEM careers. She has mentored a number of women in the organization. "Women face challenges in STEM fields and need to have a support structure," she says. This past June, Haggerty was honored at the Westchester County Association's Women in Tech Awards Luncheon, which pays tribute to local pioneering women in STEM fields.

Con Edison has a high employee retention rate, which Haggerty attributes to the work the company does. "From hospitals to nursing homes to homes to every institution, organization, business, we provide a critical and essential service for our customers," she says. "We ensure that Westchester and New York City have the power they need." ■

1980s

STEPHANIE DIRCKS (B.F.A. '81) is a personal trainer and fitness instructor for active older adults.

IVAN FLOWERS (B.S. '81) is a culinary project manager at Resource Media, where he scouts talent and serves as a consultant for several TV shows.

JEFFREY GOLDBERG (D.O. '81) earned the American Psychiatric Association's most prestigious honor, the Distinguished Life Fellow. He serves as chair of behavioral health at NYC Health + Hospitals/Coney Island. bit.ly/Jeffrey-Goldberg

GERARD LUCKMAN (B.S. '81) is a partner at Forchelli, Curto, Deegan, Schwartz, Mineo & Terrana, a law firm in Uniondale, N.Y.

The Association of Latino Professionals for America named **MARIA SASTRE (B.S. '81, M.B.A. '83)** among its 50 Most Powerful Latinas in corporate America. She serves as president and COO of Signature Flight Support in Orlando, Fla.

DJ Ken Michaels, also known as **KENNETH KASSOFF (B.F.A. '82)**, celebrated the 35th anniversary of his weekly Beatles radio program, *Every Little Thing*. The show airs on more than 20 stations nationwide. He got the idea to launch the program when he worked at WNYT, NYIT's student-run radio station at the Old Westbury campus. kenmichaelsradio.com

Last May, **LAURIE CANTILENO-LILLIS (B.S. '85)** was recognized as a Nassau County Woman of Distinction for her support of educational and empowerment programs focused primarily on young women. She serves on the Dean's Executive Advisory Board of NYIT School of Engineering and

Computing Sciences. She also established the Cantileno-Lillis Family STEM Rising Star Scholarship for female NYIT students.

C.J. CORNELL (M.S. '85) is author of *The Age of Metapreneurship: A Journey Into the Future of Entrepreneurship*. For more than 25 years, he has served as a media industry executive, entrepreneur, investor, educator, and author. Cornell also serves on the Dean's Executive Advisory Board of NYIT School of Engineering and Computing Sciences. metapreneurship.net

Cardiologist **IAN GOLDBERG (D.O. '85)** treats patients at SwedishAmerican Heart Institute in Rockford, Ill. He is board certified in internal medicine and cardiovascular disease.

Historical preservation firm Nicholson & Galloway (in Glen Head, N.Y.) is home to four alumni—co-owner **MARK HAYNES (B.S. '85)**, project managers **STEVEN SAVVA (B.ARCH. '12)** and **VAN HEMSLEY (B.S. '10)**, and construction administrator **ARENDSSE PAIGE (B.F.A. '09)**. A contractor, Haynes appreciates how his NYIT degree helps him connect with business associates. "Consultants have always commented on how refreshing it is to work with a contractor with architectural training," he says. "The specialized courses in architecture and engineering [at NYIT] allowed me to diversify my degree," adds Hemsley. Savva's favorite NYIT memory was working in the architecture studios: "It was a great bonding experience." Paige recalls her final thesis critique under her mentor, Associate Professor Charles Matz: "He really helped me push my creativity."

KEVIN HYMS (M.B.A. '86) has worked as an environmental health and safety engineer. He is also a candidate for the Suffolk County Legislature (12th District) on Long Island. "My NYIT degree has

opened up doors for me with various employment opportunities and has also enabled me to make more professional connections," he says. He serves on NYIT School of Management's advisory board. "My daughter, **BARBARA HYMS BERRY (B.S. '12)**, also attended NYIT and graduated in 2012."

NYITCOM Associate Professor and Associate Dean **DAVID BRODER (D.O. '87)** was elected for the fifth time as vice speaker of the American Osteopathic Association House of Delegates. He serves as president of the New York Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Educational Consortium.

RICHARD B. JACARUSO (D.O. '87) received the 2017 Top Doctor award. He treats patients at Island Wide Medical Associates in Garden City, N.Y., and is affiliated with Winthrop-University Hospital and North Shore University Hospital. He is board certified in internal medicine, cardiovascular disease, and nuclear cardiology.

A.J. LACOMBA (B.S. '87) joined Pennsylvania College of Technology as vice president for information technology/chief information officer.

Athletic coach and teacher **EDDIE BARNES JR. (M.A. '88)** was named 2017 Northumberland County (Pa.) Public School Division Teacher of the Year. He has taught for 38 years.

JOHN MACK (M.A. '88) was elected to the board of supervisors for Newtown Township in Bucks County, Pa.

Vascular surgeon **JAMES TRETTER (D.O. '89)** works at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center in Johnstown, Pa. In the Army, he was division chief of vascular surgery at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu.

ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT

1990s

LISA ENG (D.O. '90) celebrated the grand opening of the Birthing Center of New York, a natural childbirth facility she founded in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, which serves women with low-risk pregnancies.

GABRIEL L. DASSA (D.O. '91) was named a 2016 Top Doctor in New York and New Jersey. He is an orthopedic and hand surgeon at Bronx Med Orthopedic Associates and Central Valley Orthopedics and is affiliated with Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center and Montefiore Medical Center.

SALVATORE "SAL" TROIA (B.S. '91) is senior vice president, finance, at GCG, which provides legal administration and business solutions internationally. "Without a doubt, my favorite NYIT memory was graduation," Troia recalls. "That day, I looked back on the four years I spent at NYIT and felt an incredible sense of accomplishment, proud to have finally become an accountant."

JOE CHIARELLI (B.S. '92) is a partner and director of operations for T.G. Nickel & Associates, which has offices in New York City and Ronkonkoma, N.Y. In April, he appeared on *Radio Jobline*, a program that runs on LI News Radio. bit.ly/Joe-Chiarelli

Physiatrist **BETH MASSEY (D.O. '92)** is medical director of Long Beach Multi Medicine on Long Island. The facility treats for musculoskeletal injuries, chronic conditions, and more. During her residency at Peninsula Hospital in Far Rockaway, N.Y., Massey served as chief resident.

THOMAS PIRONE (B.S. '92) serves as vice president for business development at Lime Energy, which provides energy-efficient solutions for small businesses. Last April, he presented "Distributed Energy Resources



Domenick Sportelli

(D.O. '09)

FOR DOMENICK SPORTELLI, being featured as a guest on the CBS show *The Doctors* is a natural extension of his early career. "I grew up in front of the camera. When I was young, I modeled and acted in commercials and a few movies," he says. Now a board-certified physician in adult and child psychiatry, Sportelli runs the New Jersey Center for Advanced Psychiatry and Behavioral Health. He believes that promoting mental health awareness is essential. "I want to help people know they can be treated for mental health and to decrease the stigma of mental illness," he says. "It's very misunderstood."

Sportelli says that the Doctor Patient Continuum program (DPC) at NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) helped shape him as a physician. "From the very beginning, the college created an incredible passion in me to understand, to further question, and to look at the big picture. It made all the difference in my training and who I am as a doctor and how I approach patients today," he says. The DPC curriculum is case based, and from day one students are taught to treat patients "not as a chapter in a book or a multiple-choice test or lecture subject, but as a patient with a name, a face, and a body." Sportelli adds that the approach "fostered intellectual curiosity and reminded you that you are treating a person."

Sportelli has always been drawn to human behavior and the questions of what drives us and what makes us tick. But it was his NYITCOM classmates who predicted he would go on to be a psychiatrist. "I was resistant to it," he admits. "But when I was a family medicine resident performing surgery and delivering babies, what fascinated me the most were the patients who had schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, Alzheimer's. My friends were right. When I sat down with my program director, I said, 'I have to follow my heart,' and I applied for a psychiatry residency."

Sportelli sees osteopathic medicine and psychiatry as a perfect fit. "In osteopathic training, we look at a patient holistically, and in psychiatry, you have to have the mindset to treat the whole patient, examine their psychological and social background and their medical and genetic history." One of Sportelli's biggest concerns is the opioid epidemic and its devastating impact on communities in New Jersey, where Sportelli practices, and the country as a whole. He is passionate about helping families and their children during this crisis and adamant that there is need for prescriber education and accountability and family and patient education. "This is preventable," he says.

Follow him @drsportelli on Twitter and Instagram. ■



A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Alumni **RUSSELL CHIARELLI (B.S. '67)** and **THOMAS HOLMAN (B.S. '67)** were honored at this year's commencement on May 21, where they celebrated the 50th anniversary of their graduation from NYIT. Chiarelli also joined members of the Class of 2017 in pre-commencement festivities, including the Final Roar Senior Toast held earlier in the week.



Watch Chiarelli share his memories of being an NYIT student in the 1960s: bit.ly/Russell-Chiarelli.

(Left to right) Chiarelli and his wife, Petrina Chiarelli; President Hank Foley; former NYIT Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Rahmat Shoureshi; Holman and his wife, Lucy Osorno; and Dean of NYIT School of Engineering and Computing Sciences Nada Marie Anid.

Craig Wallace Dale

and Energy Efficiency Programs in the Current Landscape” at NYIT-Old Westbury.

LISA COLANTUONO (B.S. '94, M.A. '98) shared her do's and don'ts of new businesses on a podcast for the Agency Management Institute. She is also the author of *@AARLisa: New Biz in 140 Characters (or Less)*. bit.ly/Lisa-Colantuono

SCOTT COSTLEY (D.O. '94) joined Health Quest Medical Practice in Rhinebeck, N.Y. He is board certified in family medicine and treats adults, children, and infants.

New York Real Estate Journal named **WILLIAM MANDARA (B.S. '94)** Executive of the Month in June. He serves as principal at New York City design firm Mancini Duffy.

AYYAZ SHAH (D.O. '94) received the Doctors' Choice Award in the area of dermatology. He is founder and president of Shah Dermatology in Orlando, and is associate professor of dermatology at University of Central Florida College of Medicine.

City of Glen Cove Personnel Officer **JOHN CHARON (B.S. '95)** received the President's Award from the New York State Department of Civil Service.

FAUSTO VINCES (D.O. '96) serves as medical director of Health Quest Medical Practice Division of Trauma. He also leads the trauma center at Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

JUAN F. ACOSTA (D.O. '97) was named a 2017 Top Doctor in Smithtown, N.Y. He serves as an emergency medicine physician and associate director at Saint Catherine of Siena Medical Center.

CRAIG ATTWOOD (A.O.S. '97) is executive chef at the East Hampton Point Hotel on Long Island.

LAURA FORD-MUKKAMALA (D.O. '97) works at Great Lakes Cardiovascular Group out of its Orchard Park, Williamsville, and Buffalo General offices (N.Y.). She focuses on adult congenital heart disease as well as women and heart disease.

MICHELE CLAUDETTE REED (D.O. '97) is a family medicine physician, owner, and medical director of MS Family Medicine Health Care, with locations in Rosedale, Queens, and Garden City, N.Y. Her new book, *Mentally Fit Physically Strong*, is available on Amazon. bit.ly/Michele-Reed

JENNIFER KELLY CAMPBELL (M.S. '99) is associate vice president for alumni and government relations at SUNY College of Optometry. Her husband, **JOSEPH R. CAMPBELL JR. (M.S. '16)**, works for Verizon. Campbell's favorite NYIT memory was getting the results of her first midterm. "I was the last person to get my exam back. I read the score three times and went up to my professor to confirm my grade of 100 was correct. That moment fueled me with all the confidence I needed to excel."

2000s



MELANIE AUSTIN-McCAIN (B.S. '00) (pictured) is NYIT's new Faculty Athletics Representative, acting as a liaison between the university and the athletics department.

Courtesy of C+M

ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT

In addition, she will represent NYIT in East Coast Conference and NCAA affairs. At NYIT School of Health Professions, she also serves as assistant professor of occupational therapy, admissions coordinator for the Department of Occupational Therapy, and faculty associate at the Center for Sports Medicine. bit.ly/Melanie-Austin-McCain

New York Real Estate Journal named **LAURA REDDY (B.F.A. '00)** its Executive of the Month in March. She is CEO and founder of NuZine in New York City. The firm specializes in planning, designing, construction, and project management.

HENRY PEREZ (B.T. '01) was elected to the board of education for the Shoreham-Wading River Central School District (N.Y.). He serves as operation manager for Wendel Energy Services.

Family medicine physician **STACEY WHYTE-CONNELL (D.O. '01)** joined Crystal Run Healthcare in Middletown, N.Y.

MAUREEN ALADIN (M.S. '02) is creative director and executive producer for production company TWELVE18 Media, Inc.

NYITCOM Associate Professor and Associate Medical Director **SONIA RIVERA-MARTINEZ (D.O. '02)** was given the 2017 Outstanding Female Leader award by the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP). She has served as president of the New York State Osteopathic Medical Society and the New York Chapter of the ACOFP. "My proudest accomplishment was to spearhead the opening of the NYIT Community Free Clinic in Central Islip," she says. "This student-run clinic under the supervision of clinical faculty treats uninsured and under-insured patients. That was something very close to my heart."



Richard Gerbe

(B.S. '01)

“BUILDINGS,” SAYS RICHARD GERBE, “ARE VERY INEFFICIENT.” Gerbe should know. He’s worked in the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) sector for more than two decades. His quest to make buildings more efficient prompted him to co-found HIGHMARK, a New York City company that makes products and systems that help engineers, contractors, building owners, and building operators curb energy usage, foster sustainability and green energy, and cut operational costs.

Gerbe received his B.S. in Mechanical Engineering at NYIT. After years of working for multinational HVAC companies—in jobs ranging from engineering to sales to product engineering—he saw “a lot of stagnation, a lot of the same products, a lot of the same methods of production.” After recognizing the inefficiency of standard HVAC technology, Gerbe formed HIGHMARK to challenge the status quo.

Buildings consume 40 percent of the energy and 70 percent of the electricity used in the United States. Gerbe is determined to chip away at that energy consumption and save water. “Everything is too big,” he says. “Buildings need to get smarter. We have a finite infrastructure in the Northeast, and we need to curb the amount of energy we use, not increase it.” For example, the company is developing rainwater harvesting systems that store rainwater in tanks for use in a building’s cooling and plumbing systems. “At HIGHMARK, we are always looking to drive the size of the systems down to shrink the mechanical space in the buildings. If you have entire floors of mechanical systems, that hurts your bottom line for rentals,” he says.

But while Gerbe says the industry is changing, it’s not happening at a fast enough pace. “We’re starting to see buds on the seeds we planted when we started HIGHMARK. There’s a lot of good legislation out there that’s pushing change and that has impacted the industry, but it’s still in the infancy of what, in the future, will be huge advances in technology.”

Gerbe credits courses he took at NYIT as being the precursors to HIGHMARK. Many of the mechanical engineering classes were “hands-on,” he says, and encouraged him and his fellow classmates to think beyond the textbook. In particular, he recalls late nights at NYIT spent trying to find a solution to a challenging problem with a team of students. “It’s the practical knowledge that makes things click, not statistics. You remember the problem you had to solve and that stays with you forever.” *For more on Gerbe and HIGHMARK, visit highmark-ny.com.* ■

Barry Sloan

QI SUN (M.B.A. '02) is director of global sourcing for Wormser Corporation. “Even though I graduated many years ago, I still care a lot about NYIT,” she says. Among the lessons she’s learned: “If you want to motivate your employees, assign responsibility to them.”

Former Bears pitcher **BRANDON KURZ (B.A. '03)** was inducted into the Paul D. Schreiber High School Athletics Hall of Fame in Port Washington, N.Y.

JOHANNA GOTTLIEB (M.A. '04) runs the Chicago office for Axis Promotions. This year, Advertising Specialty Institute selected her as a rising star in the industry. She and her husband, Joseph, have a daughter.

CHANG IK EUN (M.A. '05) is a professor in the Department of Design at Dong Yang University in South Korea.

Last March, actress and writer **MELISSA NAVIA (B.A. '05)** appeared on the Showtime TV series, *Billions*.

The International Association of HealthCare Professionals included bariatric and general surgeon **ABRAHAM FRIDMAN (D.O. '06)** in *The Leading Physicians of the World*. He serves patients within Fairfield County Bariatrics & Surgical Specialists, P.C. in Connecticut. Fridman is also director of bariatric surgery at the Griffin Hospital in Derby, Conn., and is affiliated with Norwalk Hospital and St. Vincent’s Medical Center.

MICALYN HARRIS (M.B.A. '06) is president and CEO of ELPRO Services Inc.’s U.S. subsidiary. She joined the company in 2009. The Swiss-based company specializes in environmental monitoring solutions.

TFS International named **RYAN SHORTREED (M.B.A. '06)** chief financial officer. He has more than 14 years of senior global finance experience.

JESSIE BUKIEWICZ (B.F.A. '07) serves as senior associate, project leader, at Moser Associates, an architecture and planning firm. She was featured in *Interior Design* magazine, where she discussed her company’s collaboration with the nonprofit, Teach for America. bit.ly/Jessie-Bukewicz

Food enthusiast **CHANTAY CAMPBELL NEIL (B.ARCH. '07, M.ARCH. '08, M.S. '11)** shares cooking tips on her blog, greedygirlcooks.blogspot.com, where she also highlights delicious dishes from her native country of Jamaica.

FALGUNI PATEL (D.O. '07) treats patients at the Tyanna O’Brien Center for Women’s Imaging at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, Md. She is board certified in diagnostic radiology and specializes in breast imaging.

MICHAEL RISCICA (B.ARCH. '07) runs the blog youngarchitect.com, which offers advice to up-and-coming architects.

STEVEN SALYER (M.B.A. '07) is chief operating officer of UP Health System-Marquette in Marquette, Mich. He has 10 years of health care experience, including serving as CEO of Sebastian River Medical Center in Sebastian, Fla., and chief operating officer of Indian River Medical Center in Vero Beach, Fla.

DIANA L. SILVERMAN (D.O. '07) received the Forty Under 40 Mover & Shaker Award from the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce in the Hudson Valley. She serves as a breast surgical oncologist at CareMount Medical in its Fishkill and Poughkeepsie, N.Y., locations.

MOHAMMAD ATEEQ AL FALAHI (M.B.A. '08) serves as secretary-general of the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Emirates, which is affiliated with the

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

JESSICA VAITIARE CHIN FOO (M.B.A. '08) is co-founder of Gauguin Wines. Originally from Tahiti, she has also served as an advisor to the minister of energy of French Polynesia and launched Polynesia Yoga.

SHELLA LIENERTH (B.A. '08) was appointed assistant vice president of client relations at Safeguard Properties in Valley View, Ohio. She has held senior positions with Bridgestone’s credit division and KeyBank.

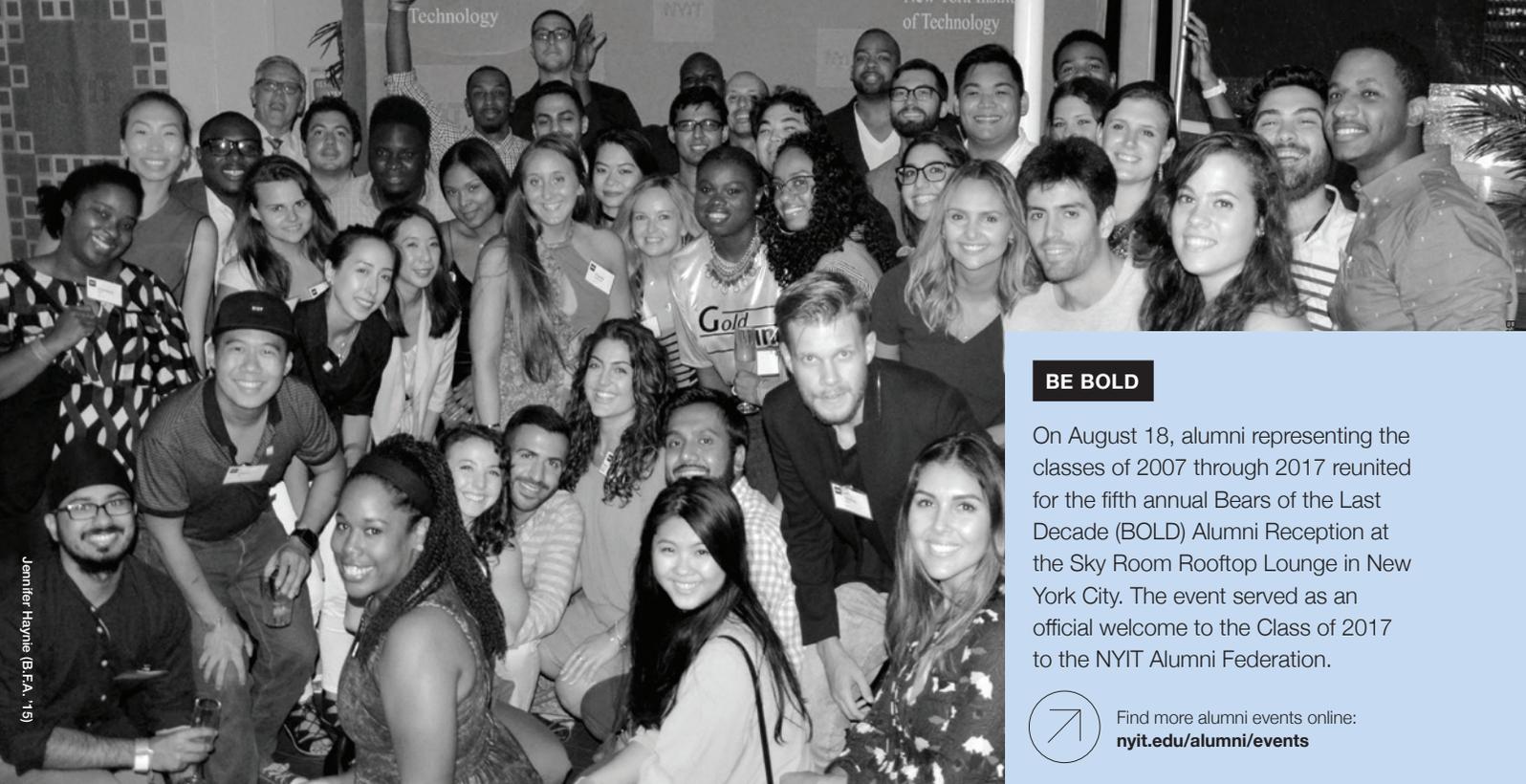
MO’ATH ALKHAWALDEH (B.S. '09, M.S. '11) is training hard to become the first Olympic marathoner from Jordan at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. An advocate for peace and goodwill, the cross-country marathoner recently worked with Generations for Peace, an international organization that champions youth sports in regions with conflict and violence. In 2015, *Runner’s World* featured Alkhalwaldeh in its “50 Most Influential People in Running.”

JOSEPH A. CATANIA III (M.S. '09) is director of technology at Pelham Union Free School District (N.Y.).

BRILYNN FIELDS (B.S. '09) was named a Women’s Football Alliance First-Team All-American for her efforts as a tight end with the New York Sharks. bit.ly/Brilynn-Fields

ANTHONY V. HAYES (B.F.A. '09) joined public television station WGBY in Springfield, Mass., as its general manager. He has nearly 20 years of experience in public television and radio.

DANIELLE TODD (B.A. '09) is a proud first-time grandmother following the birth of her daughter’s baby, Katherine Page.



Jennifer Haynie (B.F.A. '15)

BE BOLD

On August 18, alumni representing the classes of 2007 through 2017 reunited for the fifth annual Bears of the Last Decade (BOLD) Alumni Reception at the Sky Room Rooftop Lounge in New York City. The event served as an official welcome to the Class of 2017 to the NYIT Alumni Federation.



Find more alumni events online:
nyit.edu/alumni/events

2010s

PIYAKARN (SRIBURI) HARWELL (M.S. '10) lives in Fairbanks, Alaska, with her husband, Jon, and their two children. She is originally from Bangkok, Thailand.

ANASTASIIA STOIATSKA (B.S. '11) serves as events and program coordinator at the Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. Previously, she worked for the royal family of Saudi Arabia, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations, and the Embassy of Jordan in the United States. Stoiatska is fluent in Russian, Arabic, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Portuguese.

MIKHAIL VARSHAVSKI (B.S. '11, D.O. '14)—also known as “Dr. Mike,” *People Magazine*’s “Sexiest Doctor Alive”—joined the client roster of Krupp Communications in New York City. In addition to his own charity, Limitless Tomorrow Foundation, he has been involved in Stand Up to Cancer, Americares, and the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

SEAN SPENCE (M.S. '12) completed his Doctor of Engineering at The George

Washington University School of Engineering and Applied Science. He works for consulting firm GoldenWolf, LLC in Maryland. “I chose NYIT because of its focus on energy management and locations near Columbus Circle and in Old Westbury,” Spence says. “Shortly after completing my NYIT degree, I was hired by Deloitte Consulting LLP to join their strategy and operations practice.”

GABRIEL J. STORTI (B.S. '12) is founder and CEO of Obajá, an online supermarket delivery service. His favorite NYIT memories include time with classmates in the chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. “We built great things together, while also developing interests and bringing together several of NYIT’s other schools and colleges to form multidisciplinary teams, brainstorming ideas, and bringing them to life,” he says.

CHRISTOPHER CUBITT (M.S. '13) is an employment services specialist for the city of Tampa (Fla.). He previously worked at the Central Intelligence Agency as a human resources officer. “NYIT was the start of a positive domino effect on my career and life,” he says. “It was at NYIT that I learned that I belonged in HR.”

SELEENA RASHID (D.O. '13) is a family medicine physician at the Wright Center for Primary Care Mid Valley in Jermyn, Pa.

Physician Assistant **MARGARET RESH (M.S. '13)** joined Carroll Health Group Cardiology in Westminster, Md.

Sports writer **JOHN SANTAMARIA (B.F.A. '13, M.A. '14)** joined Elite Sports NY, where he covers the Mets, Islanders, Jets, Knicks, and other teams in the New York City region.

NELLY CIOLKOWSKI (M.A. '14) completed an 11-week apprenticeship with the United States Tennis Association. She played for the NYIT women’s tennis team for the 2012–2013 season and became the program’s first All-American. Later, Ciolkowski served as assistant coach for the Bears’ 2013–2014 season.

JOSEPH LAUDATI (M.B.A. '14) is a hospital administrator at the Medical University of South Carolina. “My M.B.A. helped round out 20-plus years of experience in the corporate world and gave me a new profound feeling of confidence,” he says.

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NYIT Magazine welcomes submissions, story ideas, and feedback. Unsolicited manuscripts, related materials, photography, and artwork will not be returned. Please include your year of graduation, degree completed, and major or program of study.

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ERICK SATCHELL II (B.S. '14) is one of five artists whose work was selected by the public to be featured on traffic signal cabinets throughout Prince George's County in Maryland.

ALEX CASTILLO (M.A. '16) is an assistant account executive at global communications and marketing firm Edelman in New York City. Her clients include Barilla, Dove, Suave Professionals, and more. She credits her experiences with the Carleton Group, NYIT's student-run ad agency, with helping her learn to deal with clients.

MACKENZIE HOLLISTER (B.S. '16) is a registered nurse at Kendall Regional Medical Center in Miami Beach, Fla. "I am working at a Level I trauma center and specializing in a burn/trauma ICU section," she says. "It has been an amazing journey!"

LISA MORRIS (M.S. '16) joined the law department management practice of Consilio LLC as an associate consultant.

SUDHA VASU (M.S. '16) is a junior architect at A. Ottavino Corp. in New York City.

Marriages

AMANDA MICHELE BAUER (B.S. '10, M.S. '14) to Jason Michael Manzella

JAMIE MICHELLE LEITHEAD (M.A. '10) to Michael Bernard Fox

MOHAMED ABBAS (B.S. '13) to Dina Zaouid

JAMES DANIELSSON (B.S. '16) to **BROOKE MCNALLY (B.S. '16)**

Passings

PETER F. LEWAND (B.S. '77)

JOHN NOTARO (B.ARCH. '80)

JUDITH R. GJERTSEN (B.F.A. '87)

TERRY N MAYBECK (B.S. '87)

GARY MARCHALK (B.S. '01)

JASON PEARSON (B.S. '04)

GEORGES EDOUARD (B.T. '10)

PAWEL "PAUL" ZAJAC (B.ARCH. '12)

PERCY GRIFFIN (faculty in NYIT School of Architecture and Design)

BRIAN TAYLOR (faculty in NYIT School of Architecture and Design)

SUBMIT

ALUMNI NOTES

**NEW JOB? ON THE MOVE?
TELL US AT NYIT.EDU/ALUMNI_NOTES
OR MAGAZINE@NYIT.EDU.**



ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT



Michael Koutsoubis (B.ARCH. '14) AND Andy Christoforou (B.ARCH. '14)

ABOUT A BUSINESS

Mythic VR started with single-family home buyers, but the duo's current client list includes architecture firms, corporations, and real estate developers. They've also connected with a startup accelerator in Silicon Valley and recently launched a VR center in Brooklyn for new development pre-sales.

Clients use their products in design and sales. Mythic VR helps designers conceptualize an idea and experience it full-scale, while on the sales side, the tool helps buyers decide whether or not to buy property before ground has been broken.

The team is building virtual reality centers in real estate offices, which, Koutsoubis explains, saves the seller money (they can sell prior to construction without creating a model unit) and time (they can show a client their collection of properties in a single appointment).

(Above) Andy Christoforou (left) and Michael Koutsoubis (right) stand outside their offices in Queens, N.Y., wearing the virtual reality headsets (also pictured above left) used by Mythic VR's clients to visualize designs.

TWO NYIT GRADUATES have figured out a way to apply video game technology to architectural design and visualization. Mythic VR (mythic-vr.com) offers an innovative way for real estate customers to “see” a property design virtually—even before it exists. **MICHAEL KOUTSOUBIS (B.ARCH. '14)** and **ANDY CHRISTOFOROU (B.ARCH. '14)** first met playing league volleyball on rival teams in Long Island. Their paths crossed again during a thesis class for NYIT's five-year architecture program. After graduation, they reconnected at an alumni event. “We talked about what we were working on,” says Koutsoubis. “Andy was experimenting with Unreal Engine [a technology used for video games that creates “real-time” experiences].” The rest, as they say, is history.

In real estate, developers will typically show buyers blueprints and models of units, but Mythic VR creates full-scale 3-D models for its clients to experience. “Instead of looking at a fixed image, a person puts on a VR headset and can explore a proposal like they would in a video game,” explains Koutsoubis. “We basically had to become game designers and software engineers,” says Christoforou. The duo also had to teach themselves how to launch and manage a business. “We watched a lot of YouTube videos,” laughs Christoforou. While theirs is not the only virtual “realty” product in existence, the partners are dedicated to creating the most immersive experience possible, sticking solely with desktop VR as opposed to mobile access. “In mobile, the quality is not there,” explains Christoforou. “Desktop offers a smoother experience...Clients choose us because we can offer that level of photo-realism in real time. It's not cartoony.”

These two innovators don't see a disconnect between their formal architectural training and their current endeavors either. “I'm not designing buildings, but I am designing 3-D user interfaces,” says Koutsoubis. And their relationship with NYIT may not be over. The team recently met with NYIT's Center of Excellence in Data Visualization, Entertainment, and Education Engineering in the hopes of developing a future partnership. For now, Koutsoubis and Christoforou are enjoying the ride as their business grows. “We're happy where we are now and the direction we're moving in,” says Koutsoubis. “We're looking to create a virtual reality marketplace.” *Read the full story: bit.ly/NYIT-Mythic-VR.* ■

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SCENE AT NYIT

A close-up of a model made by a student in the School of Architecture and Design.