# From the Desk of President Maurie McInnis

I am writing today to thank you.

I have spent the majority of my academic career in public research universities — building a foundation in Virginia, then plunging into leadership at the flagship public university in Texas, now back on the East Coast and proudly serving as President of Stony Brook. I know first-hand how important public research universities are in creating opportunity, in furthering cultural and academic dialogue, in building a better and more engaged world. And I understand how integral loyal alumni and friends like you are to furthering our goals.

Stony Brook is a young research institution with unlimited potential: a public university that champions excellence and access in equal measure. We have a vibrant community of students and faculty here on Long Island, working together to take on the most significant intellectual endeavors of our time. We offer experiences, and a level of support, not usually afforded to undergraduates.

At a time like this, when our world is rapidly changing and in need of answers, our University's mission, purpose, and relevance could not be clearer. I am so proud of the way our community has come together during these last few months to serve and lead the way forward. For much of this time, I was still 1,800 miles away in Texas, but I was watching and listening — taking in the myriad ways the Stony Brook community united to navigate the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. And now, as I write this — firmly settled on Long Island — I can say that I'm even prouder today.

Despite being at an epicenter of the outbreak, Stony Brook was able to launch 180 COVID-19 studies and share data on treatment and other measures that have led to improved patient outcomes across the country. Likewise, the community mobilized to help its hospital and students who were impacted by the crisis. Your support has helped make this possible.

This summer has also been a time of political upheaval — of necessary questioning, action, doubt, hope, and criticism. As a cultural historian, I have long been keenly attuned to the issues of race and class that have defined — and continue to define — our American experience. These power dynamics have been present in higher education for centuries and have served to curtail access to opportunity and advancement for many among us. Talent has always been equally distributed — but for far too long, opportunity has not. It is my hope that this summer's national dialogue will go a long way toward changing that and, right here at Stony Brook, we are uniquely positioned to make an impact.

At Stony Brook, we have become a national leader in generating social mobility for our students. This has helped create well-earned opportunities for thousands of talented graduates of all backgrounds who saw their Stony Brook degree as the key to a better future. We provided the pathway, but they opened the door and are now thriving and making incredible contributions to society.

In the coming years, we know that our University will be called upon to provide leadership to take on challenges that are global in scope, historic in scale, and pressing in need. Adapting — not limiting — our education and academics to a world in the middle of the pandemic is a serious undertaking. Looking inward and dismantling systems of inequality with proactive and empathic solutions is a perpetual task. Overcoming budget challenges and an uncertain economic climate is daunting.

Yet, I'm confident that what has always been true about Stony Brook remains so today. Stony Brook is strong.

Stony Brook is strong because of our incredible students, faculty, and staff, but it's also strong because of you. And for that I thank you from the bottom of my heart. We have considerable work to do in the coming year, but I know that with your strength, leadership, and generosity, we will meet this moment in a way that makes us all proud.

Thank you for all you do for this incredible University and inspiring community.

Sincerely,

Maurie D. McInnis, PhD
President