

## Fourth Annual Networking Mixer Connects Students and Alumni

by Glenn Jochum



More than 80 students converged at the Hilton Garden Inn February 27 on the Stony Brook University campus to listen to alumni from 20 fields share the ins and outs of their jobs and how best to prepare for them.

The networking mixer was organized on behalf of the Stony Brook University Alumni Association by Stephanie Tarantino Neidhart, senior coordinator for Alumni Relations and on behalf of the University Career Center by Nikki Barnett'01, '03, senior career consultant for alumni.

Barnett called the event a great example of “preparation meeting opportunity,” explaining that “the success of the event depended on how much student mentees were willing to move outside their comfort zone and meet as many mentors as possible — and they did. Mentors spoke about possible internships, full-time positions and job shadow opportunities in fields such as finance, healthcare and education. We are looking forward to reviewing the feedback.”

“I think this event provides a much-needed benefit and resource for students and recent alumni who are looking to enter the employment market,” said Neidhart. “Seasoned alumni really welcome the opportunity to network with our students and graduates, while at the same time strengthening their ties to the University. Some of the connections made at this event lead to greater career development for many participants. It makes what I do exceptionally rewarding.”

One such mentor was Joseph Manopella '95 of Williston Park, New York, a vice president who has been with North Shore-LIJ Health System for the past 15 years. The former Stony Brook sociology major works on the development of North Shore-LIJ Health System's ambulatory sites. It was Manopella's first student-alumni mixer. As someone who started in an entry-level position in the healthcare field he stressed the importance of “getting a foot in the door” and not worrying about the first position, but instead “working hard, being

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*Scott Middleton, Partner at Campolo, Middleton & McCormick, LLP*

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patient, and having a steady upward progression.” He said that many of his “life friends” including his wife Joanne are people he went to Stony Brook with and he stays in touch with more than 100 alumni on Facebook. He is serving on the Stony Brook Alumni Association Board of Directors Finance Committee.

Attorney Scott Middleton '84, a political science major at Stony Brook, served as the mayor of Lake Grove, New York and as village judge. He, along with his partner Joe Campolo '94 from their firm Campolo, Middleton & McCormick, LLP in Ronkonkoma, New York, remain very active at Stony Brook. Past President of the Alumni Association,

Middleton currently serves on the University's Intercollegiate Athletic Board and the Children's Hospital Task Force. Campolo, also a past president of the Alumni Association now serves on the Staller Center's Board.

"I had the chance to speak to several students at the mixer. Some were just curious about general career information and some more interested in the specifics of a career as an attorney," Middleton said. "My law firm is always available to act as a mentor to students who want to pursue a law career; in fact we host a Law Day open house where students come to the office and meet with the partners and associates to learn a little about the inner workings of a law firm."

Students were equally enthusiastic about the opportunity to talk to professionals in fields that interested them. "My experience at the mixer was inspirational because I got to meet professionals who were once in my shoes and found their way into careers and enjoyed success," said Randy Ferguson, a sophomore majoring in economics.

"This event gave me the chance to network with a new mentor who has offered me potential internship at a local company," said Nga Cecilia Cheung, a graduate student in geosciences.

Another alumni mentor, Lisa Pesce, '00 of Glen Cove, New York, was a social sciences major who is now an agency recruiter for Prudential Financial, Inc., based in Melville, New York, which co-sponsored the event. "I found a career that allows me to showcase my personality through networking and cultivating numerous relationships within the community," she said.

Pesce said that most students she met at the mixer asked her if her career path aligned with her major. "I shared many of my personal life experiences, including the importance of finding the right career to fit your personality," she said. "Most of our offices in Melville and Uniondale are made up of Stony Brook alumni," she said. "We recruit from all schools on Long Island but Stony Brook is considered one of our tier-one recruiting schools."

<https://alumniandfriends.stonybrook.edu/2014-students-and-alumni-networking-mixer>

For more information visit [www.stonybrook.edu/Alumni\\_Zebracan](http://www.stonybrook.edu/Alumni_Zebracan)

