

The Fund for the City of New York and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation  
congratulate the winners of the

# 2016 Sloan Awards for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics

Celebrating Extraordinary STEM Teachers in New York City Public High Schools



## Bianca Brandon

AP Biology, Living Environment, Forensic Science, Science & Engineering Research  
Staten Island Technical High School

Bianca Brandon earned her B.S. in Science Education from NYU and then went on to receive her M.S. in Molecular Biology. She spent the next 4 years working for the Department of Forensic Biology in the NYC Chief Medical Examiner's Office before joining Staten Island Tech in 2005. There she has taught AP Biology and the Living Environment as well as two courses she created: Forensic Science and Science and Engineering Research. Her classrooms are a dynamic mix of rigor, experimentation and collaboration. Mark Erlenwein, her principal, says "Bianca is the total package as a teacher of science. She keeps her classes relevant and engaging for students and her curriculum is robust and profound. Her students achieve remarkable results."

## Patrice Bridgewater-Daniel

Integrated Algebra, Common Core Algebra, Trigonometry, Intensive Regents Prep  
Bedford Academy High School

In 2003 Patrice Bridgewater entered the newly established Bedford Academy High School as a freshman. Excelling in math Ms. Bridgewater won a merit scholarship to Brooklyn College, graduated in 2010 with a degree in Math Education and returned to teach at Bedford Academy. Her exquisitely planned lessons are supplemented by two-hour tutoring sessions after school twice a week and three hours on Saturday. The School's Parent Coordinator stresses her importance as a role model. "Patrice exemplifies a level of excellence. Students give full effort in her class. Fortunately, there is no better motivator." Says Bedford Academy Principal Adofo Muhammed, "Ms. Bridgewater's courses embody what the ideal classroom should be: challenging, engaging, and focusing on students and their diverse needs."



## Maria Elizabeth A. Dela Cruz

AP Calculus BC, Common Core Algebra, Algebra II/Trigonometry  
Newtown High School

A former civil engineer and high school teacher in the Philippines, Maria Dela Cruz was recruited to teach math by the NYC DOE in 2003. A brilliant teacher, she is recognized for her creativity and her ability to take students far beyond what they think they are capable of doing. A former student says, "I plan to be a teacher like Ms. Dela Cruz who can teach beyond an exam and get students to see math at its conceptual core. Calculus III in college was easy compared to the work we did in Ms. Dela Cruz's class." Another former student who is now getting his M.A. in Structural Engineering adds, "Ms. Dela Cruz is the heart and soul of Newtown High School. She is a dynamic figure who can turn even the most skeptical student into a math lover."

## Elizabeth Dowdell

Applied Physics, Algebra II/Trigonometry, Earth Science  
The Urban Assembly Maker Academy

With a double major in Physics and Math, in 2009 Elizabeth Dowdell began teaching those subjects at the Frederick Douglass VII Academy in Brownsville, Brooklyn. There she created a four-year science sequence for students, which enabled her to design the school's first senior-level science elective, AP Physics C. A former principal there says, "Liz has a gifted scientific mind and knows how to share her knowledge and passion with students." In 2014, Dowdell left Frederick Douglass to develop the science and math curriculum at the brand-new Urban Assembly Maker Academy. For freshman, Dowdell created an innovative applied physics course. Although the Regents Physics exam is not required at Maker Academy, as sophomores, some students elected to take it. Said one student, "We wanted to show everyone how much we know we had learned."



## Diana C. Lennon

AP Environmental Science, Regents Chemistry, Earth Science  
Columbia Secondary School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering

Diana Lennon is known for her rigorous teaching and innovative projects. Although her in-class assignments are considered to be among the school's most original, students and faculty alike point to Mrs. Lennon's projects that take students outside the school's walls as the true highlights of her classes. Principal Miriam Nightengale comments, "In Diana's courses, students are given the tools to participate in science as a discipline. Her projects reflect how Diana prepares our students for pursuing careers in science." A colleague adds, "Diana is a phenomenal educator who knows how to create socially responsible science students." According to a former student, "Mrs. Lennon's classroom was a laboratory of discovery. The world of science opened up for me there."

## Dr. Margaret Savitzky

Medical Assisting, AP Biology, Chemistry  
Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School

Margaret Savitzky was a chiropractor when an injury required a career change. In 2002, she joined Thomas Edison teaching AP Biology, Chemistry and Science Research and earning a reputation as superb teacher and inspiration for her students. Many have gone on to careers in health care, but she wanted to do more to prepare them. In 2012, supported by her principal, she created what has become her signature program, "Medical Assisting," a carefully constructed three-year program of courses, lab work, practical experience and internships. Principal Ojeda says, "Dr. Savitzky's teaching and concern represents the ethic of 'above and beyond' in every way. She is that teacher students will look back on as the person who opened up the world for them, encouraging them to pursue opportunities that they would not have thought possible."



## Manjot Singh

AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Statistics, Pre-Calculus  
John Bowne High School

Manjot Singh was born in India, came to NYC when he was 13, and graduated as a valedictorian from Long Island City HS. He earned a B.S. in Mathematics and M.A. in Math Education from the City College. Mr. Singh teaches AP Calculus and AP Statistics where a large number of his students pursue math and science in college and beyond. A former student, now majoring in mechanical engineering says, "With all the assignments and resources he gives us, it seems impossible not to ace the AP exams." Another, majoring in aerospace engineering, says, "In his class I felt nourished intellectually in a way I don't think any other teacher before or since has been able to do." Assistant Principal of Math, Toni Linker, describes Mr. Singh as "...the most talented, creative and dedicated teacher I have ever had the pleasure to work with."

Photography by Sarah Shatz



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