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NEW PSC CONTRACT p. 4



THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE

VANGUARD

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**WE WILL BE
HEARD**

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Crash Outside Midwood HS Leaves 5 Injured

By Martin Samoylov
Staff Writer

A vehicle collision on the corner of Bedford Avenue and Campus Road at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 25 sent three female pedestrians and two motorists to the hospital, according to the NYPD, although the exact identity of the victims, or if any involved were students, is still unknown.

The NYPD currently attributes the accident to “unsafe lane changing.” The driver of the Toyota Sedan, which the NYPD lists as responsible for the crash, had previously obtained 44 tickets, 13 for speeding in a school zone.

All five victims, whose exact identities are unknown, were sent to local hospitals. Some sustained serious injuries, but all were non-life-threatening.

The vehicles remained

at the site near the Bensonhurst-bound B6 bus stop for a few hours and were removed shortly afterwards. However, remains of the vehicles, such as parts of the car’s headlights stayed at the scene for hours after the incident, with smaller parts staying behind for days.

This crash is not the first on the intersection. NYPD data shows that just last year, there were nine collisions on Bedford Avenue and Campus Road.

It is also not the first high-profile crash in Midwood. In August, a cyclist was killed on Coney Island Avenue and Avenue L following a car speeding through a red light and a 10-year old boy was fatally pinned to the sidewalk at a bus stop on Ocean Avenue and Avenue L last month.

Under the proposed “Reckless Driver Accountability Act”

introduced by Brooklyn Councilman Brad Lander last year, a vehicle with over five annual school zone speeding tickets (such as the Toyota Sedan in the crash) could be impounded or booted.

While the bill currently sits with 31 sponsors in the City Council, it has yet to move forward in the legislative process. According to Lander’s office, there are still “legal and logistical issues” to be worked out before the act can go forward.

“We don’t have an updated timeline right now, but are hoping to be able to share the progress being made next month and still hope to pass the legislation by the end of this year,” said Naomi Dann, Communications Director for Lander’s office.

Brooklyn College and the nearby area are represented by newly-minted City Councilwoman Farah

Louis, who has at this point not signed on to the bill and did not answer as to whether she would in the future. Instead, the Councilwoman added that she is currently working with the City’s Department of Transportation (DOT) on “speed reduction measures” to be implemented along Bedford Avenue.

“Thankfully, no one sustained any life-threatening injuries from this incident, however, I am once again calling on DOT to expedite our requests for speed reduction and safety measures that will ultimately improve public safety,” said Louis. “This is an academic community where everyone, particularly our students, should not have to fear for their lives when crossing an intersection.”

HALLOWEEN ACTIVITIES

Wednesday,
October 30

Mexican Heritage Student Association’s Dia de los Muertos Celebration
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM
Student Center
Bedford Lounge
(2nd floor)

Thursday,
October 31

Brooklyn Bahaadur’s Bake Sale
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Whitehead Breezeway

Graduate Speech-Language Hearing Organization’s Bake Sale
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Whitehead Breezeway

Dominican Student Movement’s Halloween Party!
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Student Center Club Room

LGBTQ Center’s Halloween Costume Party!
6:30 PM 9:30 PM
Student Center
Bedford Lounge (2nd floor)

Brooklyn College Film Society’s Screening of “What We Do in the Shadows”
6:45 PM - 9:00 PM
WEB Room 228

Students Protest Higher Ed Issues, Address State Officials

By Kevin Limiti
News Editor

Passions raged as CUNY funding and tuition were the targets of a rally and subsequent state Senate committee hearing on higher education on Thursday Oct. 23.

Around 50 protesters rallied outside of the main gate of the East Quad at Brooklyn College, chanting, “Hey hey, ho ho, tuition hikes have got to go,” and “faculty, students, and staff unite. Same struggle, same fight.”

The protest was organized by the CUNY Rising Alliance, an activist group dedicated to working towards what they call a “free and quality CUNY.”

Jamell Henderson, a coordinator at the CUNY Rising Alliance and a former adjunct professor and graduate of Brooklyn College, delivered a fiery speech to the assembled students, professors, and media who gathered there.

“We are here to no longer ask because asking got us nowhere,” Henderson said. “If you don’t listen, we’ll make sure you hear us loud and clear. Governor Cuomo: you messed with the wrong crowd.”

“We are not funding public higher education,” said Timothy Hunter, the student government association president



Jamell Henderson at the protest. / Chloe Abosch

at the City College of Technology and new Chair of the Undergraduate Student Senate (USS). “We are not a top priority for New York legislators in New York State. We need to make sure we are coming ready to fight for higher education,” he said. Later, Hunter held up a twitter handle for State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, and encouraged protesters to tweet images of the crowd to her.

Among the issues mentioned were food insecurity among students. “New York City does not have to be synonymous with struggle,” said Santana

Alvarado, a Hunter College student and chairperson of NYPIRG. “Too many students are homeless.”

Keith Redzinak, a political science major at Brooklyn College, said that it was “impossible” to pay your own way through college. “Up until 1979, CUNY used to be free,” Redzinak said. “Since then tuition has been going up every single year. So what we’re trying to do is fight tuition hikes and make CUNY free again because it’s getting a little ridiculous.”

At the hearing of the Committee on Education later that

day, state legislators heard testimony from students, professors, and college presidents at the Brooklyn College Student Union Building. The meeting was interrupted by applause and cheering as those who rallied outside of the East Quad gate joined the hearing.

Also testifying was Leonard Blades, Vice Chair of Disability Affairs at USS, who thanked some of the senators for their work on disability. Senator Robert Jackson applauded those testifying. “It was very important to hear from the students themselves and the activists themselves it is totally different from the President and CUNY and the administrative point of view,” he said. “Some of them cannot really say what they really want to say.”

Henderson gave the most powerful testimony of the day, decrying the poor heating and air conditioning at Brooklyn College, particularly Roosevelt Hall where he taught as an adjunct, and

told the legislators about the state of CUNY’s budget. “It is appalling that in 2019 we are asking the state to fully fund CUNY. It doesn’t make any sense,” he said. “The governor blatantly lied when he said that students making under \$25,000 a year can go to school for free, referring primarily to the Excelsior Scholarship which was implemented in 2017. A common criticism of the program, which was reiterated in the hearing multiple times, is that the hidden costs of college which include transportation, books, and food among other things, wasn’t accounted for when the Excelsior Scholarship was implemented and, therefore, many poorer students can’t take advantage of it.

“We sit here and leaders say to us as young people education is the key to success. Well, stop giving us a rusted damn key,” Henderson said, slamming his fist on the table of the hearing room to uproarious applause.



Timothy Hunter at the protest. / Chloe Abosch

PSC-CUNY Rolls Out New Contract

Adjunct Pay Falls Short of 7K or Strike's Demands

By Quiara Vasquez &
Ryan Schwach
*Editor-in-Chief &
Managing Editor*

After several years of protests, debates, and contract negotiations, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) and CUNY announced an “historic” contract deal on Wednesday, Oct. 23.

Supporters of the deal and union higher-ups have praised the deal for giving raises to both adjunct and full-time professors across the CUNY system. However, while some are proud of a contract that they say prioritizes the most exploited within the PSC’s ranks, supporters of the “7K or Strike” campaign say that the new contract does not go nearly far enough.

“I’m unfortunately not surprised,” said Tom Watters, an adjunct in the English department who has organized with 7K or Strike for a year and a half. “This contract was concluded out of desperation. They don’t feel like they have built the power to make any serious changes.”

He, and other members of the movement have already condemned the contract, calling for PSC delegates to vote no when the contract goes before the delegate assembly on Thursday, Nov. 7.

The key gain in the contract, also known as the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is an overall 2% yearly salary increase for both adjuncts and full-time professors. These raises would result in a new minimum pay of \$5,500 per class for an adjunct lecturer by the contract’s end in November of 2022. This is far below the \$7,000-per-class figure which the 7K or Strike movement has

rallied behind. They say that by 2022, they’d be making \$33,000 a year - almost two thousand dollars below New York City’s poverty line - and that the 2% increases are barely enough to keep up with inflation.

“\$5,500 is not a living wage,” Watters said.

“I said \$7K and I meant it,” said Watters’ fellow English department adjunct Zach LaMalfa.

Still, James Davis, the Brooklyn College PSC chapter chair, says that the raise will mostly benefit adjuncts. According to him, the lowest-paid adjuncts will see an immediate raise of nearly 40% come spring.

“I don’t know anyone at the bargaining table who wasn’t fierce in advocating for adjunct equity,” Davis said. He would know - he was one of the 18 PSC delegates on the bargaining team that hashed out the contract with CUNY management.

“I understand \$5,500 is not \$7,000,” said Meg Feeley. In addition to serving on the bargaining team, she herself is an adjunct who’s worked at Kingsborough Community College since 2002. “It’s not what we hoped for. In the bargaining process, one rarely gets more than or even with what one puts forth.”

Feeley says she understands those adjuncts’ frustrations, being an adjunct herself, but that the bargaining team has been hampered by the requirements.

“I think it’s important to note that our contract has to be negotiated with CUNY and that CUNY’s agreements are subject to approval by the city and the state,” Feeley explained. “We’re not just bargaining with the management as many unions do; we have to

contend with TWO different authorities that have to approve of this agreement. They have to make sure it’s consistent with the funding available.”

But here, again, 7K or Strike adherents object. They claim that due to chronic underfunding of CUNY, the money isn’t there, and that their wages will be paid through tuition hikes.

“Money, unfortunately, has to come from somewhere,” LaMalfa argued. “I am concerned that the place we are making for this budget is coming out of the student’s pockets, which I really hate.”

Davis acknowledged that fear - what he characterized as a “reasonable concern” - but downplayed it nevertheless.

“The union has the assurance of both the city and the state that they will be paid for,” Davis said.

He acknowledged that there was “nothing in writing” to confirm this; however, Davis noted, he thinks CUNY’s new Chancellor, Dr. Felix Matos Rodriguez, will throw his clout around to make sure tuition doesn’t go up.

“I think the new chancellor is committed to using his political capital in City Hall to ensure that the collective bargaining costs are funded, and that student tuition doesn’t have to bear the brunt,” Davis said.

Another major point of contention within the MOA is the elimination of salary steps for adjuncts in 2022. Salary steps allow for gradual salary increases based on how many semesters they have been teaching. Adjuncts, including Watters, say that it ultimately amounts to a



A PSC hearing. / Ryan Schwach

pay freeze for adjuncts.

“It’s a radical concession for the bargaining team,” Watters said.

Meg Feeley says that adjuncts will be better off despite the pay freeze.

“Going forward, people who are coming forward will never make more than \$5,500, but the person who starts teaching in 2022 or 2023 is going to start at \$5,500,” she noted. “That dramatically improves the outcomes for pensions for adjuncts. We would qualify for better pension treatment in two different ways - we would have higher pay earlier and more consistently, and we’re getting paid additional pensionable hours for the times we already work with students.”

Feeley’s referring to one of the other big gains in the contract, namely, the additional “professional hour” each adjunct will be paid for each week. But adjuncts say that even with this additional hour of pay, they’re still working even when they’re off the clock.

“I’m paid for, what, about three hours in front of a classroom and then, generously, two extra office hours? We’re being paid for a five-hour workweek,” LaMalfa explained. “But usually, off the books, I’m working an additional twenty hours a week.”

Ultimately, both the contract’s supporters and

its detractors agree that adjuncts are doing work comparable to that of a full-time position, just without the pay.

“We said we would not settle unless there was real movement on adjunct pay - a demand that was going to be difficult for the state and the city,” explained Blanca Vazquez, an adjunct associate professor at Hunter who was on the bargaining team. “I think we really fought for that and I think we made some real progress for that.”

“Maybe sooner, rather than later, it’ll be more advantageous for CUNY to hire more full-timers,” she elaborated. “That’s the point of raising the wages for part-timers. Our labor is underwriting CUNY, and that’s not fair.”

The members of PSC on either side have until Nov. 7 to plead their case before the first round of voting. If the contract is voted down, the bargaining team will go back to the table; undoubtedly, with added pressure to deliver on the second go-around.

If, however, the vote results in a yes decision, it’s entirely possible there’ll be a strike.

“It is one of the only tools left in the bag,” said Watters.

Brooklyn College Receives \$2 Mil Computer Science Department Expansion

**“I either have to drop it or quit my job essentially.”
- Rami Saban, Comp Sci Student**

By Milette Millington
Staff Writer

Brooklyn College is one of five CUNY campuses that will be getting an investment of \$2 million to expand our computer science program.

This expansion is part of the CUNY 2X Tech program, a \$20 million initiative to increase the number of CUNY students graduating annually with a tech-related bachelor's degree who intend to have careers in tech in NYC in the near future. An additional \$4 million is going to be added by The Department of Small Business in the city.

Langsam, in Michael Elsen-Rooney's article published last week Tuesday for The Daily News, said that the CUNY 2X Tech program “will make a real difference to our students and will be mutually beneficial to both the computer science students in Brooklyn College and their future employers in New York City.

“It's the second largest major in the college,” said Yedidiah Langsam, Professor and Chairperson of the Computer Science department, “the number of courses varies, but the number is upwards of 125 sections,” said Langsam, who has been chair of the department

for nearly a decade.

Although, there have been recent concerns regarding the offerings from the program, a sentiment Langsam denies. “There are no unusual student concerns,” he said.

The article by former student Estefania Barron for the campus radio station WBCR voices concerns of students such as Rami Saban, who made a Facebook post on the BC Computer Science Community page on Nov. 20, 2018 elaborating on his difficulties enrolling for the spring term that year. There was a shift in time slots for one of the classes he needed in order to graduate, “I either have to drop it or quit my job, essentially,” he said.

Another CompSci student, senior Mohammad Danyal “was seeking permission to register for a course (CISC 4900) after he completed prerequisites defined by the college website (CISC 3110 or CISC 3115), Professor Moshe Augenstein denied him permission. Augenstein told Danyal he failed to meet the required GPA and to take an unmentioned course (CISC 3130),” the article states.

Danyal was forced to “take a course in the winter in order to be able to graduate next

semester (Spring 2019).”

Nick W. majored in CompSci for two semesters and is expected to graduate in the fall term next year. “I declared my major as CompSci for the coordinated engineering program,” he said. But then he switched because he realized that he wanted “a career in business, but for tech companies and startups,” he added.

“Students often make recommendations as well as suggestions, which we try to accommodate,” Langsam added, and “One issue with this is adding additional sections because it is nearly impossible to find qualified instructors and of course given the budget, we are unable to hire additional full-time faculty.”

However, Langsam says, “This investment will lead to a significant improvement.” The campus will hire “two full-time Lectures whose expertise will come from industry desired technologies,” he added, as well as “two adjuncts, currently working in the industry to teach specialized classes,” each semester.

“The project will also provide 50 paid internships with training in the tech industries, such as Google, Facebook, and many financial institutions.

Career advisors and mentors are also being hired,” Langsam added.

“Computer science classes are almost always grouped in with another class covering the same or similar material,” says Farhad Rahman, a Business Management (/?) major/CompSci minor here at BC, and ones that should be “CISC. based are not listed as CISC. and are grouped in with BUSN., ECON., and accounting classes, in order to appeal to more people.”

Rahman is currently taking an e-commerce class with a majority of business students and few CompSci students, with “about half the class has been about business and the other half is directed to computer science,” he says. Because Business is divided into multiple majors, such as Business Management, Business Admin., the classes for those majors “have a large amount of students,” he adds.

Because of this merging of courses across four subjects, Rahman says it throws CompSci students under the bus “even though it may say this class is also ‘BUSN. blah blah blah,’ it is misleading and confusing, let alone hard to notice on the page.”

Rahman still thinks that a lack of transparency exists in the department

because, “Many of the department staff are hard to come into contact with, assuming you can even find the hidden department room in the first place,” and the last time he communicated with them, “it seemed as though some don't even know what's going on in their own department.”

Rahman has never heard of the CUNY 2X Tech program or the 50+ new internships being offered in it, and the increase in course offerings is no big deal, but what matters to him is “what the course itself teaches.”

Because BC decided to drop “an essential programming language in favor of a much easier language,” he says, although it makes “wetting your feet in the ocean of computer science programming languages easier to accomplish, it also gives you a sense of false hope because you're limiting yourself to shortcuts that will be detrimental when you start applying for competitive jobs.”

Rahman adds, “I think investment-wise we really need to be paying more to our professors who make a small income teaching anyways, and with this investment, more professors will be attracted to teach.”

**“Given the budget we are unable to hire additional full-time faculty...
this investment will lead to a significant improvement.”
- Yedidiah Langsam, Comp Sci Dept. Chair**

BC Alumni Spotlight – Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi: The American Buddhist Who Addressed The UN

By Ryan Schwach
Managing Editor

As a young man, Jeffrey Block was your average Brooklynite, working as a door-to-door salesman, and, like many of his friends at the time, attending Brooklyn College, where he graduated in 1966. 53 years later, he has addressed the United Nations, has been published more than a dozen times, and is one of the most prominent Buddhist teachers in the United States.

Block, now a monk, and known by his ordination name of Bhikkhu Bodhi (Bodhi meaning enlightened), currently resides in Chuang Yen Monastery in Putnam County, New York. The Monastery is a 225-acre complex adorned with temples and gorgeous views - not to mention the largest indoor Buddha statue in the Western Hemisphere.

It's a far cry from where Bodhi grew up in Borough Park, Brooklyn. Born in December of 1944, just as the U.S. was beginning to turn the tide in World War II, he and his sister were raised by a customs worker and a bookkeeper not far from New Utrecht Avenue and 52nd St. Although now his life revolves around a spiritual lifestyle, his upbringing not quite the same.

"We were Jewish by a sense of cultural and ethnic identity," he told the Vanguard through a video interview.

His childhood was reasonably normal for a young Jewish boy in the 50s. He went to public school, got Bar Mitzvahed, and attended Brooklyn Technical High School before realizing he had no inclination



Bhikkhu Bodhi addressing the UN in 2019. / Compassion NYC on YouTube

towards the science- and engineering-based curriculum pushed at Brooklyn Tech. He left in his sophomore year and finished his high school education at New Utrecht High School, but at the time he still didn't have a path in mind.

"I didn't have an idea of what I wanted to do," he said.

After spending two years at Harpur College (now SUNY Binghamton) post-graduation, Bodhi decided to take some time off from his education and figure things out. While taking his one year break he worked as a door-to-door salesman for the Fuller Brush Company selling brushes along with other personal care and household cleaning products.

"It was an interesting experience," he said, smiling.

After having enough of selling brushes, he decided to restart his education and attend a reasonably small (and then, very cheap) local public institution called Brooklyn College.

"It's where my friends

at the time were going at the time," he said.

He arrived at BC in the middle of the 60s as a philosophy student with an interest in reading and learning about the wider world. While at BC he got involved in some of the anti-war protests that were popping up across college campuses as the Vietnam War began to escalate.

"I was opposed to the military involvement in Vietnam, which I realized was leading to the violent and unnecessary death of thousands of people," he said. Despite his anti-war sentiment, Bodhi says he never quite got caught up in the "scenes of the counterculture."

"I enjoyed my time there [at BC], but it's sort of in the mist of memory," he said. He does remember most of the buildings, specifically remembering a classics class he took in Whitehead, (a building that as far as I know no longer holds any classics classes).

And he does remember his trips to the now-defunct campus bookstore in Boylan, where he happened upon

what would become the path for the rest of his life.

While browsing the shelves he discovered books on Buddhism. "They aroused my curiosity," he said. "The Buddhist teachings seemed to me to give a clear analysis and diagnosis of the human condition [...] and it provided practical methods of self training. It encouraged investigation."

From there, his interest in Buddhism only grew as he continued at Brooklyn up until his graduation with the class of 1966. It was in graduate school, at Claremont Graduate University outside of Los Angeles, that his Buddhist studies became a major factor in his life.

During his second semester of grad school, where he was working towards an eventual PhD in Philosophy, a Buddhist monk came to study there, and moved into the same residence hall as Bodhi.

"I thought this was an opportunity to learn Buddhism firsthand," he said. He specifically

wanted to gain more knowledge and practical teachings in the art of meditation, a large part of most Buddhist practice that he struggled with in the early days of his learning. "I thought it was just a matter of sitting down and focusing the mind, and the mind would immediately go into some kind of deep state of meditative absorption," he said, laughing at his naivete at the time. Of course, now, he leads others in the same practices all over the world.

In early 1967, Bodhi began regularly meeting with and learning from his new teacher, a Vietnamese man named Thich Gic Duc. Eventually he moved in with the monk, first on-campus and then off.

"Through my association with him I realized I wanted to become a Buddhist monk myself," Bodhi said.

In May of 1967, he received a novice ordination into the Vietnamese Buddhist order. Bodhi says that despite the step from a seemingly average life

BC Alumni Spotlight – Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi: The American Buddhist Who Addressed The UN

as Brooklyn-born Jew to that of a Buddhist Monk, a moniker which comes with a strict set of lifestyle guidelines, there was very little trouble in coming to the decision.

“People on the outside tell me it seems like such a drastic decision,” Bodhi said. “It felt like the natural fulfillment of that urge to live a deep spiritual life. [...] There was no struggle, no period of indecision.”

Of course, after you’re ordained, the work in learning only intensifies. Not only was he learning the ins and outs of a monastic life, he was also going to school, teaching a class on world religions at Cal State in Fullerton while working on his dissertation.

Between 1971 and 1972, while living at a mediation center in Los Angeles, Bodhi was introduced to a group of passing monks from the small island of Sri Lanka, just south of India’s tip. Sri Lankan Buddhism, known as Theravada Buddhism, is slightly different than the Vietnamese Mahayana form that Bodhi had been studying (although both are based in core

Buddhist teachings).

In 1972, Bodhi decided to take his Buddhist learning to Sri Lanka to take ordination there under in Theravada tradition at the age of 28.

“In the early days it was quite difficult,” he said of his new life on a monastery in Sri Lanka. “It was difficult to adapt to the different culture, and a very simple way of living.”

The monastery had no electricity, no running water, and the one-room cottage (known as a kuti) he lived in had walls made of mud, straw, and cow dung. He eventually got more or less used to it, and stayed at the monastery for three-and-a-half years before continuing his journey to India at the invitation of another monk. There, he made the Buddhist pilgrimage and taught classes to other monks.

After nine months in India, Bodhi returned stateside. He moved to a monastery in Washington D.C. called the Washington Buddhist Vihara, the very first Theravada Buddhist monastic community in America. He spent five years there from 1977 to



Courtesy of Bhikkhu Bodhi

1982 before returning to Sri Lanka after a planned trip to the nation of Burma (now Myanmar) was derailed due to the political climate there. This stay in the island nation lasted quite a bit longer than the last one, spending almost all of the next two decades there, from 1982 to 2002.

In 1984 he became the English language editor of a Buddhist publication called the Buddhist Publication Society, a quarterly outlet that spreads Buddhist literature around the globe. He worked in that capacity until 1988 before taking over as its President until 2010.

Bodhi’s life in the Buddhist teachings have brought him to pastures all around the world, and even some more notable ones closer to home. In 1999 the United Nations made Vesak (a major holiday in the Buddhist faith which celebrates the birth, death, and enlightenment of the historical Buddha) an international holiday. In 2000, they held their first official celebration of the holiday, with Bhikkhu

Bodhi as its keynote speaker.

“The first time I was really nervous,” he said. “I saw the UN in the distance and I got nervous, but I felt relieved that I had typed up the text.” He has addressed the UN several times since then, including earlier this year, where he addressed concerns with climate change. Now, he says, he “has no fear at all,” and only works off notes.

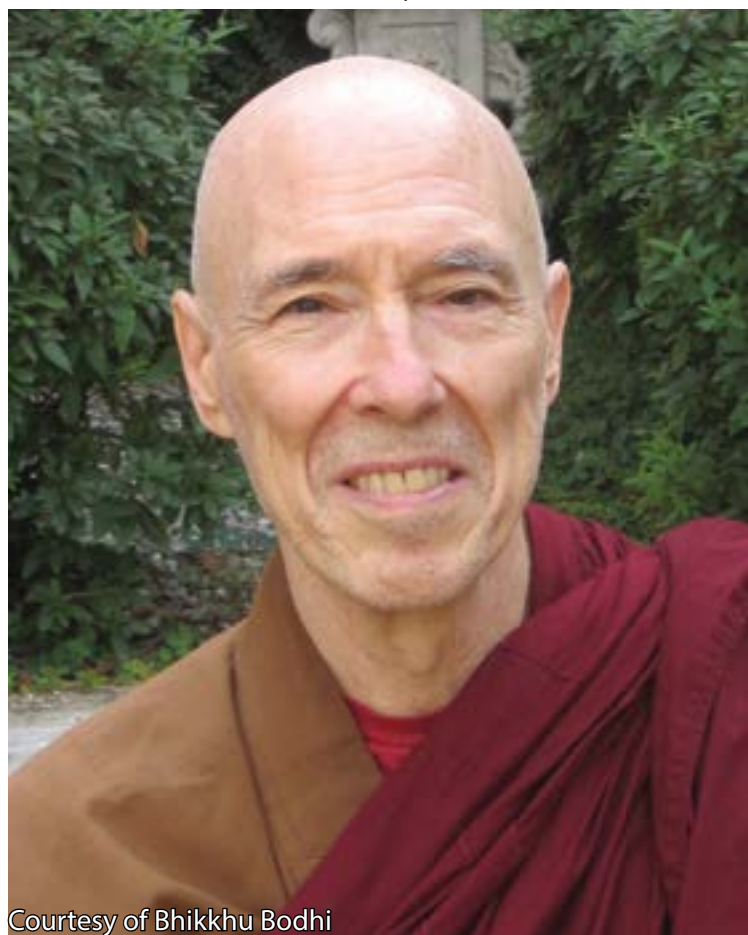
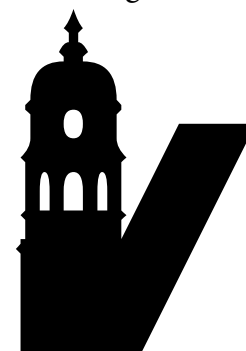
In 2007, he wrote an essay to a Buddhist publication criticizing the way most Americans adopted Buddhist teachings. He questioned how most in the West adopted Buddhism as an inward endeavor for personal growth, but very rarely projected the teachings outward to better the world around them. “We pursue them largely as inward subjective experiences geared toward personal transformation. Too seldom does this type of compassion roll up its sleeves and step into the field,” he wrote.

In 2008, he and a few other monks got together and began

to put his ideas into practice. What came out of those discussions was Buddhist Global Relief, an organization with the aim of pushing charitable causes around the world. BGR embarks on “about 35 to 40 projects per year,” spanning from making donations after natural disasters (such as the earthquake in Nepal in 2015) to pushing for women’s rights.

Bodhi currently resides at Chuang Yen and sits as President of the Buddhist Association of the United States. From day to day, he continues to teach classes and spread the teachings that has helped guide him throughout the majority of his adult life. Of course, his own learning will always continue as grows and expands his own understanding of the world. These days?

“I spend quite a lot of time reading Chinese.”



Courtesy of Bhikkhu Bodhi

What Chimps Can Tell Us About Ourselves

By M.A. Rahman
Features Editor

Brooklyn College Philosophy Department Chairperson and Professor Robert Lurz has apparently made a significant breakthrough in the field of animal cognition. He's devised a cognitive experiment using chimpanzees to determine to what extent they possess consciousness, and whether they're capable of putting themselves into the heads of other beings.

Researchers like Lurz have endeavored to better understand whether a given animal species can recognize or attribute emotions to others, and whether they can use that knowledge for practical purposes. These respective lines of philosophical study have come to be called "perspective-taking" and "theory of mind."

Until recently, theory of mind researchers were uncertain whether chimpanzees could tell if they were being watched, and whether they communicate and manipulate others

accordingly.

According to Professor Lurz, his research has indicated such to be the case.

In the test he created, a chimpanzee is enclosed in a compartment behind a human experimenter. The chimp only beckons for attention when the human experimenter faces toward the chimp, not when the experimenter turns away, indicating there was some understanding that the experimenter has to see the chimp in order to respond to its gestures.

Here's the catch - when the experimenter is turned towards a mirror that has both themselves and the chimpanzee in view, the chimp will continue to seek the human's attention. This demonstrates an understanding of how mirrors work, and an awareness that the human could still see them. Lurz and other researchers believe the chimps determined that they were visible to the human by projecting their own experiences with mirrors onto the human - evidence that chimpanzees are capable



Professor Robert Lurz in his office. / M.A. Rahman

of perspective-taking.

Why are the chimps able to have these complex thoughts? It might have something to do with language.

"Language is a very special form of communication," Lurz said. He notes that the capability of a given species to know and use language weighs significantly on their own cognitive thought process, and can reflect other possibilities of formulating other complex thoughts.

"Without the structure of language you, yourself an animal, could not have a complex structure thought," Lurz said. "You would have a very simple one, like saying 'food there,' rather than a complex one, where you could go ask, 'if there was food there, I would do something differently than I am doing now.'"

"The philosophical argument is that without that kind of structure, animals would be limited in the kinds of thoughts that they could possibly have."

As the closest related species to humans, chimpanzees have demonstrated to researchers a knack for learning language, much more so than other primates closely related to humans. In

2007, one chimpanzee named Washoe was able to learn up to 350 words in American Sign Language.

Given the close proximity of the genealogical link between humans and chimpanzees, as well as our mutual capability of understanding language, the study's data raises several questions as to what the said information might tell humans about ourselves.

For researchers involved in these studies with chimpanzees, it raises the question of whether our ability to interpret language and empathize with others arose from a common ancestor between humans and apes. If so, it would be clear that those abilities did not evolve with the modern human species.

Professor Lurz theorizes that such abilities provided early primates an advantage in an evolutionary context.

"Maybe there was some great advantage, to be able to know what you're thinking or what you're planning," Lurz theorized. "Maybe that will help me survive or reproduce better, by being able to anticipate your behavior, by being able to figure out what's going on in your mind."

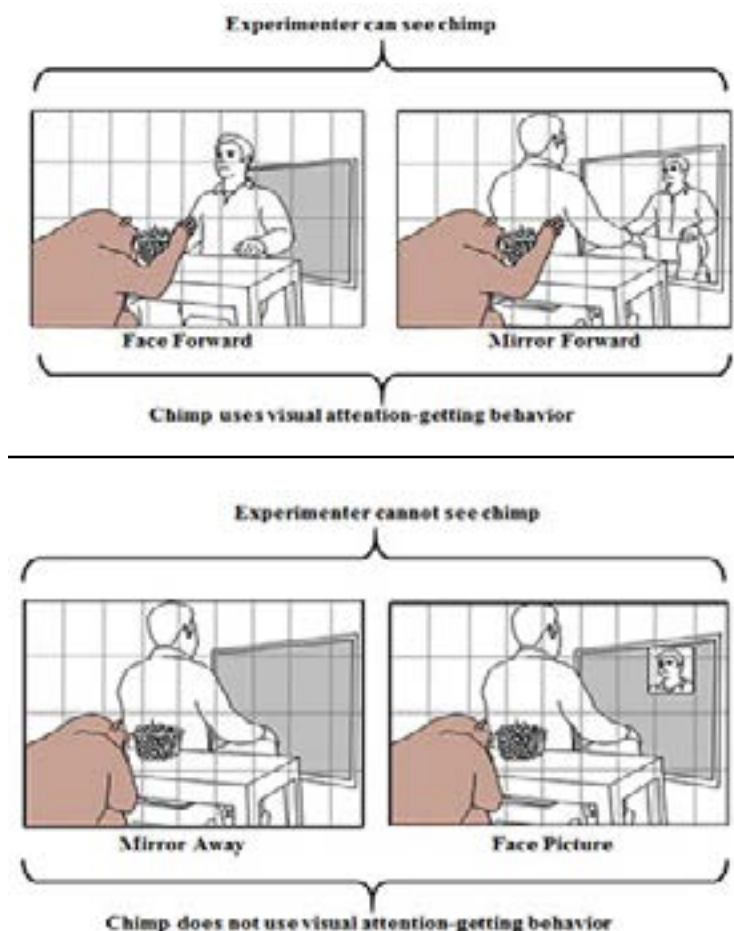
Professor Lurz says that he now plans to

move from studying chimpanzees to studying human children. His focus is on four-year-olds, who are around the age where it is expected they similarly develop such an understanding of language.

He is awaiting approval for the project on ethical grounds, and anticipates he will need a substantial research partnership to secure the funding and equipment needed to conduct further experiments.

For Professor Lurz, there is yet another philosophical question that continues to intrigue himself and some of his peers. Those who study "philosophy of mind" seek to answer: if everyone around you is really self-aware and conscious, how does one go about to prove it?

"Let's suppose we can know that others have minds, I can know that you feel sad, I can know that you see something," raised Lurz. "The question is, how do I prove it, how do I figure it out? I still have behavior to go on, but going from behavior to hypothesis, what makes that hypothesis to be more likely to be true rather than false?"



Fake News & The American People

By Edmund Zhen
Opinions Editor

It was high noon when I stepped foot into the SUBO Penthouse on Tuesday, Oct. 22, unexpectedly greeted by the presence of over fifty people. All were waiting patiently for the moderator to begin, while photographers shuffled back and forth to set up props.

It took another few minutes until the moderator finally welcomed guest speaker Amanda Marcotte, a renowned writer and feminist, to speak about one of the most contentious issues plaguing America today: fake news.

Starting with President Trump's infamous slur "fake news," Marcotte showed us how the Donald exacerbated the erosion of trust and facticity of the general media instead of fixing it. The term "fake news" has always been easy to define and pinpoint,

but its essence today is heavily masqueraded and distorted beyond the threshold of reason. On one of Marcotte's slideshows, she laid out factors that touch base on what makes the American people soak up fake news as real. Some of these factors include foreign interference, lack of fact-checking on their own accord and their own confirmation bias.

Using examples ranging from the legitimacy of Barack Obama's birthplace to Trump's presidency, Marcotte explained how Trump utilized these factors among many others in his mockery and perfidy, going as far as violating the First Amendment on multiple occasions. But his actions did not go unnoticed. Pen America, an organization full of writers and literary professionals, filed a complaint against President Trump on October 16, 2018, listing his offenses:

"Initiating a government



Photo Credit: David Gomes

review to raise postal rates to punish the owner of the Washington Post; directing DOJ enforcement actions against media companies including CNN's parent company; interfering with White House press access; and threatening to revoke broadcast licenses."

In all cases, they violated the First Amendment in the clause, "prohibiting of abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

Trump's actions also violate the concept of viewpoint neutrality.

His punitive actions are specifically geared towards entities who oppose him, while those he favors are praised and glorified. This all reveals his illegal motive to consolidate power, completely ignorant and indifferent to the fact that it's the American people who bear the casualties of his heinous acts. In addition to the fake content spilling all over the Internet, Trump makes it even harder for the American people to discern between authentic and fake sources. In order

to protect ourselves, Marcotte recommends that we always fact-check the information and sources, as well as looking for biases in their content, using sites such as PolitiFact to aid our efforts.

It is clear that this is no longer an era where people can fully rely on and trust the government. For the good of all, it's time to take matters into our own hands and uphold the narrative of truth, both for ourselves and for the future.

Rain Won't Stop USG Fall Fest

By Michela Arlia
Staff Writer

Fall is finally in the air, you can practically smell it! The air is crisper, the foliage is brighter, and along with the comfy sweaters and pumpkin spice that this season brings comes what is arguably the biggest event of the semester.

The Fall Fest was hosted by Undergraduate Student Government (USG), Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership (SAIL), Student Affairs on Tuesday, Oct. 29. If you walked through the West Quad at 9 a.m., you could see stacks of tables lining the pathways,

trucks being unloaded, a crew of people scattered throughout the grass giving orders and moving different pieces around. A typical freshman or transfer student might've wondered what exactly was going on so early on a misty Tuesday morning, but come 12:30 p.m. the quad was filled with festivities as the Fall Fest descended upon us.

From 12:30-2:30, the West Quad campus was filled with color, music and fun. Despite the efforts of Mother Nature all morning, the event seemed as great as ever. Features included laser tag, rock climbing, free food, and a booth where students could



Students enjoy the festivities at Fall Fest. / Moises Taveras

pay to throw pies at USG elected officials.

One of the officials getting pied was USG President Alyssa Taylor, who was a major booster of the event. She put Fall Fest together with several volunteers within USG.

"I wasn't part of USG last year, I attended the fest as a student, but looking

around the campus, every brightly colored orange shirt represents someone that took time out of their day to make sure everyone had fun," said junior and USG senator Michael Davis.

While lines of people awaited free lunch and activities, some students look forward to the event

every year.

"It's a lot of fun," said Crystal, a BC sophomore. "Everyone in the college community comes together to have fun, play games, and obviously for the free food."

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On the Record: Neil Young & Crazy Horse, "Colorado"

By Allison Rapp
Columnist

I'm not sure what the weather is like this week in New York, and there are at least one or two occasions where I can recall visiting the beaches of Coney Island as late as mid-October, but here in Glasgow, it is most definitely autumn. There were a handful of days that still felt like the very tail end of summer — days when I actually used one of the pairs of sunglasses I brought because I foolishly told myself, "there's no way it can rain that much" — but the weather has shifted for the better.

With the turn of the season came the turn of the weather, and most of the trees here are now a brilliant gold or burnt orange color. The Glasgow Necropolis (quite literally the "city of the dead") is my favorite place to walk to. Up a short hill, you get a fresh breeze and a view of the city's massive Gothic cathedral. Just beneath your feet are over 50,000 buried individuals, some with unmarked graves, dating back to the early 19th century.

The Scottish absolutely love Halloween. Decorations have lined shop windows for weeks and bags of candy are flying off the shelves. Maybe the Scots really do enjoy this holiday, but they're also pretty relieved about the news of a Brexit delay. The original departure date was scheduled for Halloween, perhaps an eerie omen of the conflict that inevitably lies just beyond the UK's withdrawal. There's nothing spookier than your entire country facing the biggest political, economic,

social, and moral decision of the century.

Maybe it's corny, but when I think of autumn I think of Neil Young, mainly thanks to "Harvest Moon." A real harvest moon usually presents itself in September, signifying the official start of the season, but Young's version carries through the months. "We know where the music's playing, let's go out and feel the night."

Perhaps Neil Young also has sentimental feelings for this time of year, because he's just released a new record with his reliable backing band, Crazy Horse, called Colorado. Young has faced some criticism over the last few years, mostly complaints that he wasn't making music that sounded like himself. But what is the Neil Young sound? For me, it's this album.

Young has always been a rock legend. He's never flaunted glamour like Mick Jagger or shocked audiences like Iggy Pop, but instead has become a role model for those interested in putting their nose to the ground and making real rock n' roll music. He will be honest and upfront with you, and is one of the kings of the songwriting style I like to call "complex simplicity".

The record opens with a harmonica, an instrument that we've come to associate with Neil Young. Guitarist Nils Lofgren, apparently on a break from the E Street Band, rejoins Young's band for the first time since 1971, and Crazy Horse provides the rest of the brash, messy, no-nonsense kind of sound we're used to hearing on his records. Clearly,



whatever relationship he has with Crazy Horse as a backing group is working - that's tricky to nail in the music business.

But, as always with Young, it goes far beyond just the written music. He has always had something to say, and he talks on this record just as much as he sings, both figuratively and literally. He's trying to tell you something, sometimes on a personal level, and sometimes on a larger scale.

This time, he's mainly talking about climate change. "You might say I'm an old white guy, I saw old white guys try to kill mother nature [...] I saw young folks fighting to save mother nature, I saw them standing for themselves," he sings on "She Showed Me Love." He simultaneously points fingers at those who deserve blame, doesn't let himself and his generation off the hook, and acknowledges the youth trying to do something about it.

He also notes the destruction beyond the environment. "What about the animals? What about the birds and bees? What about the bookshelves? What

about the histories?," he sings on "Shut It Down", a song about the need for an entire system reboot. It's not a secret that Young isn't on the Trump bandwagon: you might remember that he firmly (and legally) demanded for Trump to be banned from playing "Rockin' in the Free World" at his rallies.

And this is Neil Young we're talking about. This is the man who wrote "Ohio" in 1970 in response to the Kent State shootings. This is the man who wrote the biggest "fuck you" to the most corrupt president America had ever known. Nixon may have seemed awful at the time, but little did anyone know what 2016 would have in store. Neil Young, for better or for worse, has served as a sort of musical documentarian of political deceit for decades, as one of the voices for teen angst and protest for years. He is the last person you want to piss off if you're president of the United States. (Perhaps Trump didn't get the memo.)

"I got a voice that does its damage," he says on "Help Me Lose My Mind." If you get upset by

all the political messages on Colorado, you really haven't been paying attention to his music at all. This is his 39th album, he's not trying to impress anyone — this is who he is.

Next month, the Canadian-born Young will officially become an American citizen, able to vote in the next election — an astonishing step for someone who's played such an integral part in American protest music since the 60s. Why now? "We long for a better day," he sings on "Green is Blue." Isn't that all we really want? Nothing more, nothing less, just a light at the end of the tunnel. Parts of Young's message on Colorado are grave — we're running out of time to make a change — but parts of it are hopeful. It's never too late to get involved - even at 74.

I'm thinking about Neil Young this autumn — I found footage of him busking in the train station in Glasgow in 1976. As he sang back in the day on "The Old Laughing Lady," "you got to move, there's no time left to stall."

Theater Review: Glory Fades in “Gloria”

By Quiara Vasquez
Editor-in-Chief

There’s a special thrill in watching a play about your profession - one that accurately captures the details both big and small of what you do day in, day out. That’s not the only reason I so thoroughly enjoyed Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’ “Gloria” - a play set in the unglamorous world of journalism and publishing - but it’s certainly one of them. So many of the little details in “Gloria” seem taken straight out of life in the Vanguard office, whether it’s jockeying over who gets the nicest swivel chair, or casually trolling your colleagues, or stopping everything to do an impromptu office singalong to a 90’s jam.

But at its core “Gloria” is about the dark undercurrent which animates journalism. Most of the events we document, and most of the work we do, is pretty minor. No news is good news, they say - but “no news” isn’t going to further your career. There’s always this nagging temptation to not merely look at life’s horrors, but to feast your eyes on them and regurgitate them back onto the page. Tragedy

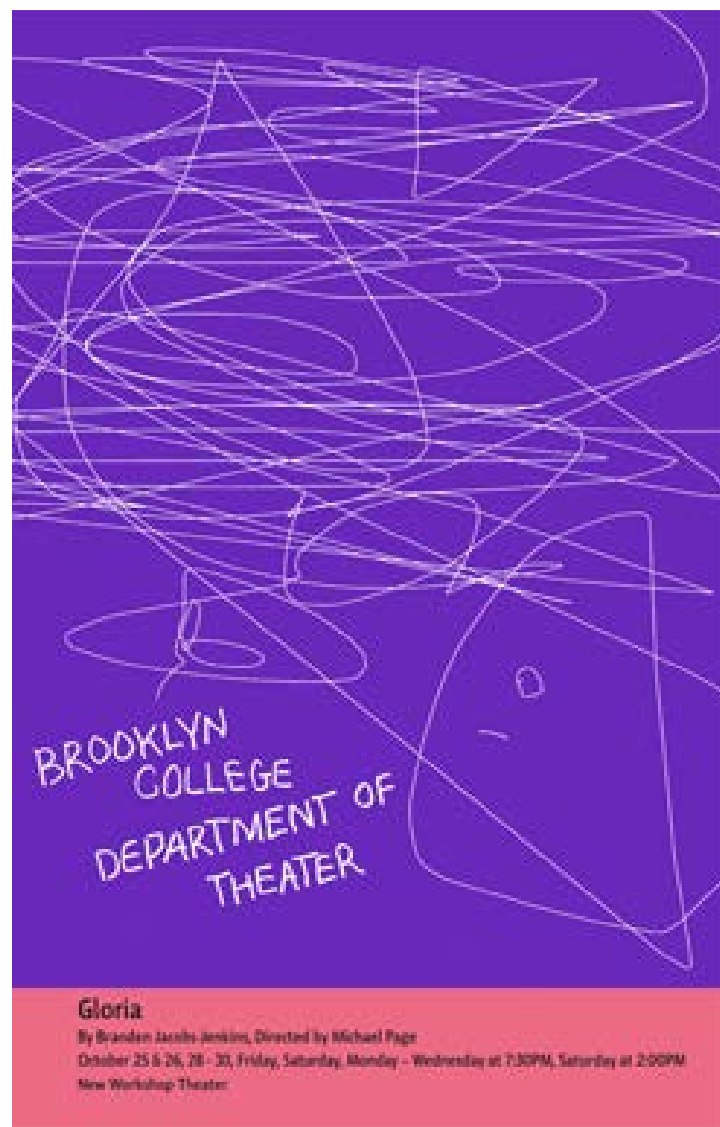
becomes fodder for your future Pulitzer.

That careerist urge is everywhere in “Gloria,” and it’s exacerbated by the play’s palpable drabness. Caitie Miller’s set design plants us in a subdued office environment, all the better for our pissed-off cast to rage in. Poor Dean (Noah Firth)’s dreams of becoming a writer have all but died, and the highlight of his day is carrying a bag of his boss’s vomit to the trash. It doesn’t help that he’s being hounded by his colleagues/frenemies Kendra (Francesca Manligoy) and Ani (Danielle Kogan). Amidst this back-and-forth sniping sits Miles (Owen Alleyne), the guileless intern slash Harvard undergrad, unaware everyone’s shit-talking him behind his back - how dare he have career prospects, and a bright future ahead of him?

This is perhaps the most resonant part of “Gloria,” provided that you’re a twentysomething journalist - or just a twentysomething, living with the crushing fear that your future prospects are looking bleak, in no small part because the boomers ruined everything. In one of the play’s many

great monologues, Kendra excoriates her retirement-age superiors: industry veterans who got their positions not through talent, but by being in the right place at the right time; by coming to New York, as she puts it, “when this city actually accidentally had opportunity in it, and not just the illusion of it.”

No spoilers, but by the end of the first act, her fatalism is proved right in an explosive finale. Unfortunately, the play stumbles after the act break, largely because the actors begin playing different characters, to the play’s detriment. This isn’t because the double- and triple-casting is confusing, mind you - the actors and the costume department (led by costume designer Amy Gallagher) are both up for the task of differentiating the characters. Rather, I think the script doesn’t quite match the quality of the first act - the character drama feels less real, and the media satire significantly broader. I’m not sure whether director Michael Page had the actors ham it up in the third act on purpose to provide further contrast - a move I don’t quite think worked out, if so.



Still, that’s not to say “Gloria” is a bad play - it just didn’t have quite the same personal resonance after act one. I’m not even sure the average theatergoer would notice the drop in quality, if there even is one; most of the audience members I talked to afterwards thought the performance was fantastic all throughout. The acting is certainly top notch, as are all the technical elements, and there’s plenty of food for thought scattered

throughout.

So why am I so down on the play, which by any objective measure is fantastic? I think it’s because “Gloria” hit me not as a theatergoer, grateful for a thought-provoking spectacle, but as a journalist, perpetually scanning for errors. Do yourself a favor and don’t make my mistake. View “Gloria” not as an article, but as art.

Rain Won’t Stop USG Fall Fest

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For this year’s event, an emphasis was put on donations. In the spirit of the giving mood of the season, advertisements of donating non-perishable items and toiletries circulated around to the BC community before the event. Everything from flyers in the hallway

to posts on social media, the word to donate got out.

Any donation of five or more items would allow a chance for the one who donates to win a prize of \$50 or more, something that student government is hoping will entice most to students to participate in, helping to give back to the community.

“All donations given in today will be going

towards the Brooklyn College pantry,” said Davis. “Along with all perishables that are collected from across the neighborhood, that will go to the pantry to help those in need.”

Another highlight of the day along with rides, food and fun came USG promos and giveaways. Tables set up in the center of the quad gave students a chance to grab some

free school merchandise. Some of the items included Brooklyn Bulldogs winter hats and gloves.

Not everyone quite thought they would enjoy the festivities, but they quickly turned around. “Originally, I thought it was going to be super lame because I was here when they were setting up and it looked like the rain had just washed out

all of the fun that was going to be had, but I was pleasantly surprised,” said freshman Alanna Kroening. “They actually pulled it off.”

Students seem to have enjoyed the 2019 Fall Fest. Regardless of the rain, the students made the best of their time and proved that a little drizzle can’t stop BC students from having a good time.

Men and Women Make Soccer Playoffs

By Conrad Hoyt
Sports Editor

After seasons of both ups and downs, both Brooklyn College Men's and Women's soccer teams have both made the CUNYAC playoffs.

Men's soccer finished with an overall record of 4-11-1, and 3-3-1 in conference play. They nab the fourth seed, and will play fifth seed John Jay College on Wednesday at home.

Women's soccer also finished with an overall record of 4-11-1, but were 2-3 in conference play. The Bulldogs are the fourth seed, and will play one seed John Jay College away on Saturday.

Both teams finished with the same overall record, both will play John Jay in round one of the CUNYAC playoffs, and both made the playoffs despite difficult seasons with losing



The Brooklyn Bulldogs playing against the College of Staten Island earlier in the season. /Damion Reid

records.

However, the extra win that men's soccer picked up gives them home field advantage for their game against John Jay. In their regular season matchup this season, the Bulldogs lost 2-1 to John Jay in a closely-contested affair on October 12.

There are nine teams in the men's soccer CUNY Athletic Conference. Six of those teams make the playoffs, with the first

two seeds getting a bye, and the third and fourth seeds getting home field advantage.

Women's soccer lost 6-0 to John Jay College on September 21. The thrashing they took in that game will be at the forefront of both coaches and players' minds as they head to Randall's Island to play the number one seed. In the women's soccer CUNY Athletic Conference, there are

only seven teams, which is why just four make the playoffs. Still, that is more than half of the entire field, and the Bulldogs were just barely able to sneak in.

Alex Sosa led men's soccer with 8 goals this regular season. He also had 2 assists.

Demyan Turiy had the most assists on the season for the team with 3.

Rachel Gomez led

women's soccer with 11 goals this season. She also had an assist.

Anna Curran had the most assists for the regular season with 5.

In their respective quarterfinal and semifinal matches, the men's and women's soccer teams will have to rise to the occasion if they want to advance.

Sports Scores

October 23

Men's Soccer Vs. University of Valley Forge
6 - 1

October 26

Women's Volleyball Vs. Ramapo College
0 - 3

Women's Volleyball Vs. York College
3 - 0

Women's Soccer Vs. Kean University
0 - 7

Women's Soccer Vs. Lehman College
0 - 1

Bullspit!

by Ryan Gleason

Do NOT Wear Costumes to Class!

Okay, story time: It was October 31, 2018. Halloween. I had Intro to Anthropology. It was a brisk autumn day and I strolled through campus on my way to class, the spooky season lightly dusting my smile. I walked through James Hall, up four flights of stairs, and arrived at my classroom.

I was the first one. As always, I felt proud

that I showed up before anyone else. Being early made me feel like I was starting my day right, prepared. I walked into the dark classroom, found my desk and took a seat. I took out my phone, turned on my favorite podcast, and surfed Instagram. Then I got bored and put my phone down. But as I did, I was spooked by a figure walking towards me.

I saw horns and claws and fangs!

I fell back! I crawled across the floor! This fat atheist found a little religion and prayed! Then, the lights. The room was lit up and I faced my monster.

You see, while I was on my phone, my headphones cancelled the tones of the room and the bright light had darkened my perception

past my phone. In that time, a classmate had walked in and made it halfway towards me. I just so happened to put my phone down as they approached. They assumed I was aware of their presence and was trying to greet them, so they came closer. Instead, I had a heart attack.

But what was this monster, with fangs and claws and horns?

It was... a kitty. A very sexy, but very modest... kitty. My classmate, who I will not name, was in a very cute kitten costume, with little kitty ears, sharp glow-in-the-dark teeth caps, and gloves with fake nails hot glued to the fingertips. I am a coward and apparently, my cat allergy might be psychosomatic.