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**THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE**

# **VANGUARD**

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# Student Gov Veep Ethan Milich Resigns

By Quiara Vasquez  
*Editor-in-Chief*

“I am no longer the best person to be serving as the Vice President.”

So says Ethan Milich, the now-former-Vice President of Brooklyn College’s Undergraduate Student Government (USG), in an email sent to officers within USG on Oct. 23.

“I am very honored to have served as the Vice President,” the email continues, “and I will value the relationships I made with each of you.”

In a follow-up interview with the Vanguard, Milich said that he felt the position should go to “someone more passionate and engaged,” than himself.

“There are others out there much more enthused and excited and could make a bigger impact,” Milich told the Vanguard.

Milich will no longer be serving on USG, but he will retain his position as one of Brooklyn

College’s two delegates to the CUNY-wide Undergraduate Student Senate (USS). Earlier this semester, Milich ran a campaign to become the new Chairperson of CUNY’s Undergraduate Student Senate (USS), a race he lost to CCNY’s Timothy Hunter.

“I am still enthusiastic and passionate about CUNY and USS, and I believe I am the best person to serve as delegate,” Milich said.

Milich is the most high-profile departee from USG, but he’s far from the only one. Of the eight people who ran on USG president Alyssa Taylor’s slate in spring 2019, only Taylor herself and Treasurer Stephanie Ortega remain.

Taylor says this state of affairs is just business as usual.

“Student government has always had a terrible turnover,” Taylor said. “Remember, we’re all students - inner city students who work [...] It’s really hard to balance



Ethan Milich. / Ethan Milich/Facebook

all these different hats.”

“If it takes everybody on my slate to resign before finding the right person for the job,” Taylor added, “so be it.”

USG’s constitution allows Taylor to name a replacement for Milich via executive order, but she’s taken time to consult with the USG Senate before making a decision. Because the VP’s duties would include being in charge of the Senate, Taylor is seriously considering their input.

According to Taylor, the “race” for Vice President has been narrowed down

to three candidates. Two of them, Jessica Johnson and Dapo Ibrahim, are currently Senators. The final candidate is Hamza Khilji, a former member of the now-defunct CLAS Student Government. Khilji ran a write-in campaign for the presidency last year with current USG Student Advocate Zain Qureshi as his running mate.

Taylor says that she’s made a decision on Milich’s replacement, which will be released to the public by week’s end.

## Census Bureau Seeks CUNY Students For Temporary Work

By Martin Samoylov  
*Staff Writer*

With the next Census mere months away, the federal government has begun holding job fairs to recruit temporary workers for their outreach effort. One such job fair was held at Brooklyn College on October 24th.

The census is a count which occurs every ten years and determines subjects such as funding allocations and legislative redistricting. In other words, the fewer people fill out the Census, the fewer dollars an area will receive in federal, state and local funding.

2020 will mark the first year participants will be able to fill out the census online. The outreach effort encompasses hundreds of thousands of temporary

workers around the country, with over 14,000 in New York City alone.

“\$25 an hour, you don’t have to quit your full-time job to work for us. You can work nights and weekends and be extremely successful. So it’s a great opportunity for students, for those who have a job but just want to learn a little extra money for maybe an upcoming trip or pay off some holiday bills,” said the Census Bureau’s New York Regional Office Director Jeff Bahler at an August town hall at Brooklyn College. “Recently retired but you’re not ready to sail into the sunset - come and work for us. The majority of jobs are short-term temporary jobs that lasts anywhere from 6 to 12 weeks per operation and we’re going to have five six seven operations over the

next year.”

The temporary Census outreach jobs are eligible to any U.S. citizen over 18 years of age and pay between \$20 and \$25 an hour.

CUNY is also involved with Census 2020 in multiple other ways. For instance, the “CUNY Student Corps,” an outreach group consisting of 200 students and accepting applications until November 14. Unlike regular Census 2020 staff, Corps members will work through June 2020 at 12 hours a week and be paid \$15 an hour.

“Census Corps provides paid work experience. Students will build their leadership, problem solving, teamwork, and communication skills as well as grow their networks so they have increased access to meaningful

employment after graduation,” as per CUNY’s website.

CUNY is helping to review census-related grants to local organizations, and its Mapping Department created the “Hard to Count Map”. The map shows the percentages of responses within a local census tract. According to the map, Brooklyn’s College’s local tract is “one of the hardest to count,” with a mere 64.4% response rate. Other areas of Brooklyn have an even lower response rate, such as a tract with 52.1% in Brownsville.

“If you choose not to count or your neighbor chooses not to be counted, it will affect you, your community, your city and your state for the next 10 years. So we have to get this right,” said Bahler.

# Black Solidarity Day Observed at BC

By M.A. Rahman  
Features Editor

Students and members of the Brooklyn College Black Solidarity Day Committee (BSDC) sought to have their voices heard with a demonstration encouraging students to not attend school or work on the Monday before Election Day.

“We want society to feel the impact of ignoring us,” said organizer Shakima Hightower, Treasurer of the BSDC and Event Coordinator of the Women of Color club.

The day-long event concluded with a campus-wide march, then the BSDC reserved a room on the sixth floor of the Student Center where students could learn about Black Solidarity Day, enjoy refreshments, and interact with students representing many of the predominantly black student groups partnered with the BSDC.

For attendees like Jessica Johnson, President of the BC National Black Law Students Association, it made sense for her organization to collaborate with the BSDC as their missions “aligned with one another’s goal to empower our community.”

“The thought process of not going to class on Black Solidarity Day is

to really focus on your community that day, not spend money at stores, not to go to work, not to attend class, because your focus should be coming together as a community and show that we’re stronger together,” Johnson said. “You can’t do that if you’re in class.”

“Like most black clubs on campus, we collaborate with each other nearly all the time,” said Abigail Yakubu, the VP of the African Student Union. She says that the Black Solidarity Day event was “a really nice idea” for disaffected black students to raise their concerns.

Black Solidarity Day was first established at Brooklyn College in 1969 by Dr. Carlos E. Russell, the then Dean of the School of Contemporary Studies. According to the Florida Star Newspaper, Russell’s goal was that people would “not attend school or work and elect to shop only in black-owned establishments.” This would highlight the economic and social disruption that would ensue without African Americans, making a non-black audience more willing to acknowledge the struggles of African Americans.

Russell died last year, but organizers hoped that Black Solidarity Day can help improve the deteriorating trust young people of color feel towards



(L - R) Wesley Blackman, Nya Archie, Sade Bain, Shakima Hightower, Meli Holdipp, and Charlexia Rey. / M.A. Rahman

institutions. The course of action: depriving said institutions the benefit of having their presence, purchases, labor, and so forth, thereby pushing bystanders to notice and take a stance on the matter.

One such concern organizers hope elicits a response is the current issue over fare evasion, specifically, the NYPD’s recent crackdown. Hightower referenced a recent incident caught in a now-viral video involving a black teenager in an NYC subway who despite appearing to be subdued on the floor of a crowded cart for fare evasion, still had officers draw guns on him, prompting much uproar online.

The “Swipe It Forward” campaign, which seeks to help individuals unable to pay their transit fares and raise awareness of the circumstances

concerning their plight, had pamphlets distributed encouraging students to participate in their own demonstration to disrupt the MTA over its treatment of the aforementioned incident involving the black teenager.

Students supporting the program say that by paying for higher education students’ transit, it would reduce the need for enforcement of petty crimes like fare evasion. “It would defeat the purpose of some of us hopping the turnstile and limit the situations with the police,” said CJ Thomas, VP of the Caribbean Students Union.

Another discussion point was the treatment of prison inmates. They discussed the recent push for the closure of Rikers Island, and the overall goal of halting the construction of new

prisons, as indicated on some of the picket signs showcased at the event.

Attendants of the BSDC event said that far too often they felt issues concerning them and the Black community were not being recognized by fellow New Yorkers and that although they did themselves intend to vote, they hoped to stir thought into the classrooms over the matter.

For members of the BSDC, student turnout remains an important factor to evaluate the effectiveness of the event and its message. Regardless, Hightower notes that any participation is appreciated and encouraged.

“I’m happy we had all these students come by and learn about the problems we are facing,” she said.

## Man Stabbed to Death Block Away From Campus

By Martin Samoylov  
Staff Writer

A 54-year old man was found with stab wounds inside his apartment at 1306 Ocean Ave near the Brooklyn College campus Sunday morning.

The victim, Ramon

Marrero, was discovered by police responding to a 911 call. He was rushed to Kings County Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

The apartment building is located at the B49 bus stop across from Brooklyn College’s heating plants and

western entrance.

Later that day at around 7pm, police arrested 44-year old Norberto Lozada, Marrero’s cousin, and is now being charged with second-degree murder. The two men lived together in the apartment and looked after Marrero’s mother.

Prosecutors alleged that a witness saw Lozada overpower his cousin and stab him with a knife. Lazado’s attorney, Mark Robert Muccigrosso, claimed that the stabbing was in self-defense.

Bail was denied and Lazado is currently being held at the

Brooklyn Detention Complex in Downtown Brooklyn. His next court appearance is set for November 18.

Neighbors told PIX11 News that Marrero was a “very nice guy,” who walked his dog and took care of his mother.

# Italian Major Placed on Hiatus Amid Alum Outcry

By Carolann Lowe & Michela Arlia  
Staff Writers

Students and faculty majoring in Italian were surprised to learn this week that their major had been placed on indefinite hiatus, and that most upper-level Italian classes planned for Spring 2020 had been cancelled.

The move angered many Italian-American alumni, but it also hinted at wider problems within the Italian program, which is currently struggling with dwindling student interest and AWOL faculty - the latter problem plaguing other majors within the Modern Languages and Literatures Department.

“[The Italian program] has been placed on hiatus so that we might take some time to restructure and reimagine the major and minor,” said Vanessa Perez-Rosario, chair of the Modern Languages and Literatures Department. “The Italian program has been placed on hiatus so that we might take some time to restructure and reimagine the major and minor,” said Vanessa Perez-Rosario, chair of the Modern Languages and Literatures Department. She stressed that “Italian classes will continue to be offered as part of the college option and electives will be available.”

“The major and minor need to be reorganized, new classes developed, study abroad programs developed, so that we can build a program that will attract students.”

According to data provided by Perez-Rosario, student enrollment in the Italian program has been in the single digits since at least 2010. Last semester the program hit an all-time low in enrollment numbers, with only one student enrolled as an Italian major, only one as a minor, and only one taking a concentration in Italian.

The program’s low student interest is also evident in enrollment numbers for individual classes. A total of nine students are enrolled in Italian department courses above the entry-level. ITAL 2021 (Integrated Language Skills) and ITAL 3610 (Landmarks of Italian Literature) have a maximum capacity of 20 students, but only four students are enrolled in the former class and only three in the latter.

These student enrollment numbers are especially low compared to that of other language majors.

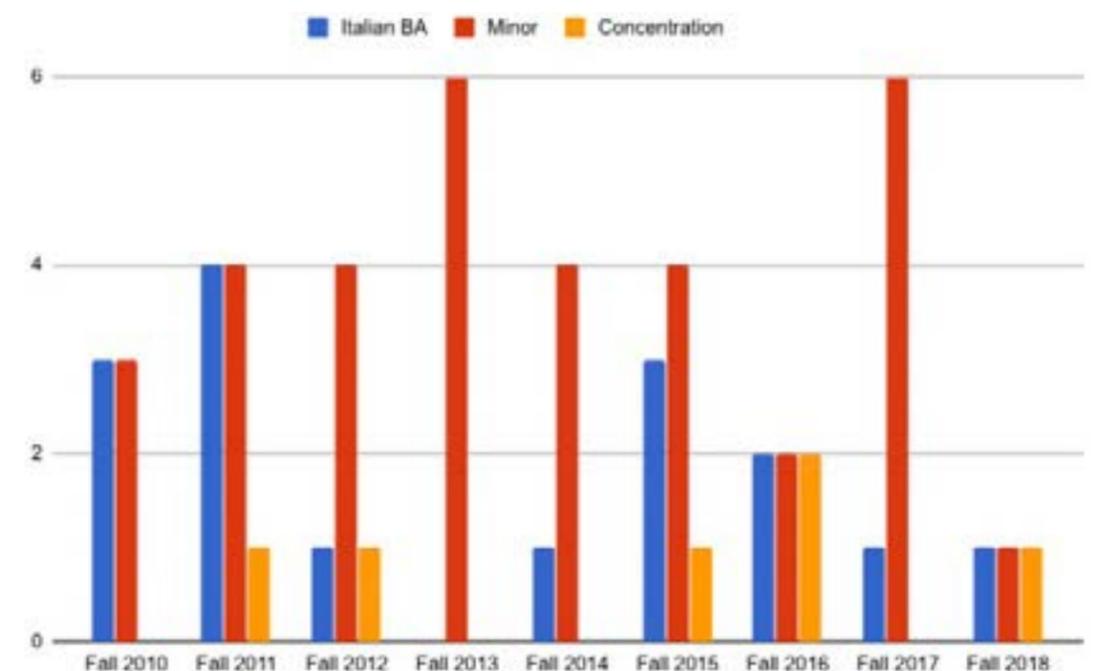
For instance, 18 students are taking French 2030W (Advanced Language Skills II) - double the enrollment of all upper-level Italian department courses combined.

There are other signs of student disinterest. On Tuesday, Sept. 24, Perez-Rosario and faculty member Pedro Cabello del Moral conducted a Language Lunch Tables event during common hours in Boylan Hall, to provide an opportunity for students of all language levels to practice their language skills with one another and members of Brooklyn College faculty and staff. Students interested in practicing their knowledge of Italian and Spanish were invited to attend that day. Of the eight people in attendance, seven were fluent Spanish speakers. The eighth person present was a student interested in Italian whose role at the Language Lunch Table session was to assist students who want to practice speaking Italian speaking. No other students showed up for Italian sessions.

According to Perez-Rosario, there were bigger turnouts during previous lessons, in which the languages of focus were Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, French, and Haitian Creole. For her, this is further proof that students are not currently interested in the college’s Italian program.

Italian-American alumni don’t agree with her verdict. Many have taken to the Internet to express their frustration, e-mailing members of the BC administration asking them to reverse the decision.

“No one respects the language and culture that made New York and the United States a great art, culture, science and building headquarters of the modern world,” wrote Maria Fuccio-Di Graziano, who attended BC from 1986 to 1990 and served as president of the college’s Italian Culture Club. Di Graziano has worked with many organizations and companies to spread the word of what she believes is an injustice to the Italian culture, including spearheading a letter sent to the College by the



Washington, D.C.-based Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America (OSDIA)’s Commission for Social Justice.

The OSDIA letter, written by President Robert M. Ferrito, alleges that the cancellation of the classes was not merely unfortunate, but discriminatory.

“In 1979, Italian Americans were declared a protected minority by Federal Judge Constance Motley Baker in a lawsuit brought against the State and City University of New York,” Ferrito wrote. “Should we deem that your decision to cancel Italian language classes constitutes discrimination, we will refer it to our legal team to investigate, and if necessary, take action.”

Similar claims were made by Luigi Bonaffini, who teaches entry-level Italian courses at BC. In an e-mail Bonaffini wrote posted on Facebook by the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, he claimed that “Italian was the only language targeted” in this decision and that the Italian-American community within the CUNY system and Brooklyn College was “under attack.” In the message, he urged that e-mails be sent to the college President and Provost, as well as to Perez-Rosario and Humanities Dean Kenneth Gould.

One of the people sending these e-mails was Bernette O’Connor, a parent of a BC student who had an extended e-mail exchange with college Provost Anne Lopes. In their exchange, a transcript of which was provided to the Vanguard, she questioned how the college could allow the

Italian department to fall into such disrepair.

“What type of outreach was done within the Foreign Language Department to promote the Italian Language Major? What type of outreach was done to the ‘undecided’ students to perhaps spark an interest? Did Academic Advisors specifically offer it as a choice?” O’Connor asked Lopes.

Lopes countered that the department’s decline was inevitable giving shifting college demographics.

“I have been told by our Italian language faculty that students enroll in their heritage languages and rarely study another language,” Lopes wrote. “When they do they elect languages that have the most currency in the job market. [...] Since most students who come to Brooklyn College reside in the borough, immigration to Italy from Brooklyn has declined precipitously since the 1960s, and students are generally employment and career focused when selecting a major, the decline in enrollments in Italian is not surprising.”

But there may be another factor in the department’s decline. According to an anonymous source within the Modern Languages Department, several faculty members within the department, including the Italian program, are not doing their jobs. The source singled out Italian professor Claire Huffman, who’s on record as having taught an average of two in-person courses per semester, but allegedly does not show up to teach at least half of her classes.

“Huffman never teaches online but she has three classes and each class is supposed to meet twice a week. She will come one day, teach three classes and disappear for the rest of the week,” the source told Vanguard. Multiple sources who spoke to Vanguard, as well as student evaluations posted on RateMyProfessor, confirm that Huffman regularly gives online instruction in-lieu of in-person class time.

“Her classes are not online,” the source continued. “Huffman was supposed to be teaching here. Just imagine working somewhere and you show up half of the time but they’re paying you a full salary.”

The Vanguard has reached out to Professor Claire Huffman but she has not immediately responded to comment - possibly because, as the source claims, she “would not answer e-mails.”

The source also called out another Modern Languages professor. According to them, French professor Bernd Renner is currently teaching six courses and has not consistently appeared during all class sessions. Research shows this claim is inaccurate: Renner is actually teaching seven courses this semester (French 2030W, 2120, 3510, 5070, 7010X, and 7510X, as well as MLAN 2610). Renner allegedly provides students with instructions and resources needed to pass his courses, but inconsistently appears to show up to teach students in person.

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# Gold Room Hosts Halloween Festival

By Farhad Rahman &  
Natalina Ziemann  
*Business Manager & Staff  
Writer*

On Thursday, Oct. 31 in the Gold Room of SUBO, Brooklyn College hosted a Halloween festival for staff and students.

The event was hosted by Brooklyn College student, Jamie Jones, who contacted the student government for funding and approval of the event. The event featured musical guest appearances from the singer Teemanay, as well as guitarist and self-proclaimed “Ruthless Dictator of Brooklyn College” Mosefer Muhsin. Also at the event were models dressed up in clothing from fashion label SoFrekan.

“Frekan is a French-Creole word which means fresh and disrespectful, but we turned it around to mean fresh and cool,” explained the founder of the SoFrekan brand, Ed Bellevue. “It’s all about your uniqueness, it’s all about you.”

The models for the event, who represented the Starchasers artist collective, were BC students managed

by Alexander Pereyra, who himself had been mentored by Oriel, another artist present at the event.

“[Starchasers is] an art movement of young creators striving to be the best that they can be themselves using their artistic talent,” explained Pereyra. “Brooklyn College has been an attraction for me, because I see a lot of creativity here and I see a lot of influencers here.”

Oriel, a BC alum and artist shared his journey with the crowd. He spoke about obtaining several degrees in psychology, religion, and philosophy from different universities and how he still spends most of his time making and selling his art. He shared his experiences of being an artist as a person of color, where he alleges park rangers and NYPD would kick him out of the park for not selling his art on a table.

“[The police] have been hating on me because I’m not just focusing on making money, I’m inspiring other students,” Oriel insisted during his presentation. He uses his platform as an artist to inspire people to

change their negative view on people of color, and to encourage those to make the art they are meant to make.

Among the other features, there was a salsa dancing seminar. Students and faculty danced in duos to DJ Snake’s “Taki Taki” while an instructor demonstrated the correct form.

Jamie Jones, the event’s main organizer went through considerable effort in order to get the festival going. With just a \$500 budget from USG, Jones resorted to paying out of pocket.

“We did a lot of planning and getting student government to help us, but then we also used our own money... our own personal money to get everything together,” Jones said.

Jones also had to manage the guests, reaching out to several possibilities before winding up with who she wound up with. For some guests, SoFrekan for example, she had met at a fashion show, convincing him to host another fashion show on campus using some of her marketing skills from her time on



Teemanay (left) serenades a student mid-set. / Farhad Rahman

the Marketing Club at Brooklyn College. This interaction alone landed her two internships for the coming semester, one with Sofrekan and one with fashion designer Rue107.

“You have to plan, communicate and also, make sure, step-by-step, everything flows, everything goes together...

And you’ll be just fine,” Jones advised.

Jones considers the event a success.

“This event was more for bringing Brooklyn College students together and showing the international races of all students, and just being, like, one big happy family.”

# Physics of Medicine Club Starts at BC

By Milette Millington  
*Staff Writer*

The Physics of Medicine (P.o.M) Club is one of BC’s newest club after it was established earlier this semester. The mission of the club is to engage with students so they can view science differently, ensuring that students feel welcome, and creating an environment where students can discuss ideas and interests with one another.

“We would like to talk about the science behind medicine, and the future depends on it,” said Liliana Carrillo, a Pre-Dental student and President of P.o.M. She has recently been holding weekly meetings with her board to discuss the newest scientific findings. The club

also wants to give each club member an opportunity to research a topic of choice related to science.

Climate change “has been an issue that scientists, students, environmentalists have been trying to work and come up with ways to have a cleaner environment,” added Carrillo, and “As the president of P.O.M and a scientist, I try to bring awareness of the importance of cleaner air and the battle of climate change.”

“This is why we Marched for Science in April and we marched in September at the Climate strike, we feel like there is a need to bring people together to protest and ask the Trump administration for help. Climate change is real and it’s here. We are running

out of time,” Carrillo said.

Prior to being established this semester, Carrillo and fellow student Alma Reiker attended the March for Science, which was held on Earth Day, April 22, of this year. The March for Science which began Earth Day two years ago, as a direct response to the Trump administration’s view on climate change and science: the misrepresentation and exclusion of scientific knowledge in policy decisions.

On Monday, The Washington Post’s Brady Dennis reported that the Trump administration sent a notice to the United Nations to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. Thus, “the White House can officially withdraw from the agreement in one year,” on

November 4 of next year, a day after the presidential election next year.

The club has fifteen active members who attend events. One of those events included guest speaker Dr. Allen Mincer, a BC alumnus, NYU Physics Professor, and scientist for CERN, a European Organization for Nuclear Research. “He spoke about what he does at CERN and his new findings in the realm of Science,” said Carrillo, hoping to continue with events like it going forward.

Mincer focuses on research in experimental high energy particle physics/astrophysics, which involves studies of elementary particles with origins and relativity in astronomy, astrophysics and cosmology.

“Research in medical diseases will help patients and will create a better environment. This is why we would like to encourage students to view science as a wonderful opportunity,” said Carrillo. “There are so many diseases out there that science has cured and can cure that will positively affect mankind.”

P.o.M hopes to help students also view STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) as a way to make this world a better place. The club is inclusive and students from different majors are invited to learn and engage in science and STEM.

: In recognizing the school’s diversity, members reiterated how they felt there is something for everyone in the club.

# BC Prof Chester Opens Door to Human Origins

By Gabriela Flores  
Staff Writer

Approximately 66 million years ago, an asteroid hit planet Earth and brought to extinction 75 percent of the species on earth. This extinction event marked the Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary (K-Pg) and has virtually made it impossible to find fossils dating back to its time. Nonetheless, BC's biological anthropologist and paleontologist Professor Stephen Chester and his team discovered a trove of thousands of mammalian fragments in Corral Bluffs, Colorado which opens up doors into how we came to be as a species.

"We now have literally thousands of undescribed fossils to study," said Chester.

Before their recent study, Professor Chester's colleague, Dr. Tyler Lyson, was on the hunt for post-K-Pg fossilized bones. He then realized that concretions, or masses of local sediment that harbored fossils,



were best for discovering remains. Thereafter, the team began to search for rocks. The tactic paid off, and they found a bounty of skull fragments.

"Most of the extinct species of mammals that we collected were previously known only from jaw fragments," said Chester. "Now with complete skulls, we can learn a lot more about the behavior of these extinct species."

In a research article for

Science, Chester and his collaborators mentioned that they found "unusually complete fossils of mammals, reptiles, and plants."

Why did these fossils remain fully intact? "It's difficult for me to explain well without using jargon," Chester admitted. Professor Chester and his team's findings show mammalian resilience and our ancestral large-bodied vertebrates' ability to reappear on Earth after the disaster.

Some scientists credit the K-Pg extinction with contributions to mammalian evolution, despite limited evidence supporting the claim. Being that K-Pg drastically affected Earth's composition and its inhabitants, paleontologists like Dr. Chester aimed to figure out how living things re-emerged despite the catastrophic aftermath.

According to Earth and Environmental Studies professor Constantin Cranganu, soot accumulation in the stratosphere and acidification of the planet's water did not prevent Earth from re-establishing an abundance of life.

"Earth has proved many times to be a resilient planet," said Cranganu. "The cosmic catastrophe that killed the dinosaurs was not the only one, but the last one of a long list of past asteroid impacts."

Over time, through the carbon dioxide, polluted waters, and limited sunlight, the surviving plants photosynthesized.

"Not all plants were destroyed by the asteroid impact," Cranganu explained. "Some terrestrial plants like marine flora contributed to the re-start of photosynthesis and, by extension, of animal life," said Cranganu.

The occurrence of plant reemergence is supported by Professor Chester and his team's discovery of 6,000 fossilized leaves and 37,000 pollen grains. This abundance of plant life created a steady food supply and produced plenty of oxygen, thus promoting the reappearance of large-bodied vertebrates and other animals, including our mammalian ancestors.

To better understand the behavior and qualities that these early mammals and their surroundings exhibited post-K-Pg, Professor

Chester and his colleagues used micro-CT scanning and 3D visualization software. In a documentary featuring Chester called "Rise of the Mammals," paleontologist Lindsay Zanno stated that CT reconstruction scanning shows how "animals were as living, breathing creatures." Furthermore, Professor Chester said that 3D visualization software is being used to configure the internal structures of the extinct creature, such as its brain cavity. With these two technologies, researchers can determine the attributes of an animal and its lifestyle.

"This information will allow us to better understand which senses these early mammals used to navigate their environments shortly after the extinction of the dinosaurs," said Chester.

Many paleontologists continue their search to find out how our human existence came to be. Thanks to the efforts of Professor Chester and his partners, we are all one step closer to unveiling much sought after answers.



Stephen Chester on site/ BC website

# Yvonne Williams: The Happiest Person At Brooklyn College

By Ryan Schwach  
*Managing Editor*

Yvonne Williams might just be the happiest person on the Brooklyn College campus. And she's been here four times longer than most of us hope to be: It's been sixteen long years since Williams began her tenure as a custodian at BC.

"I love it here, and beauty of the campus," she said, smiling outside her small closet office in the basement of Boylan.

Her custodian's closet, which she calls her "home away from home," has to be the most fascinating room on campus. Although it has barely enough room to fit two people, it is a pull-out bed short of being a livable apartment. Complete with an upholstered chair, a microwave, toaster oven, mini-fridge, and few potted plants, it rivals most college students' living arrangements.

The walls are lined with newspaper clippings of her heroes: athletes, music stars, and other notable people, ranging

from Bob Marley to Jamie Foxx to Rafael Nadal, a personal favorite. ("When I get home from work I lie down and watch tennis," she said.) She has been cutting out and hanging up these photos since she started working here. She also has photos hanging up of many of the BC faculty whose offices she cleans.

She has close relationships with many of the staff who she works with and around every day. During my approximately 30-minute interview, three people strolled by to say hello to Williams. One person, who had come from the farm share in the Boylan cafeteria, gave Williams some of the produce she picked up - something she does every week. "I love it here, I love the people, I love the staff," Williams said.

Her office is filled with folders of photographs of family and friends, including her brother Kester Smith, an accomplished blues percussionist who plays with legendary blues musician Taj Mahal.



Yvonne Williams in her "home away from home." / Ryan Schwach

Williams came to the United States from Trinidad and Tobago, starting out working as a nanny for a family in South Orange, New Jersey for 12 years. She wound up moving to an apartment in Brooklyn with several other people, where she heard about a custodian job at Brooklyn College from a friend. When that friend asked her if she wanted the job her response was: "If I can get it!"

She did get it. Sixteen years later, she is still in the exact same room she began in, and enjoying it no less than she did in 2003.

"Not any real change, it's the same kind of work," she said, without an ounce of dismay.

In December 2007, she was named BC's employee of the month and printed in the campus magazine, an article she still has framed. Twelve years later, nothing has changed: she still loves her job, and everyone

around her shares the same sentiment about her.

"I wish more employees would behave as she does," said Brenda Hertzendorf, an Executive Assistant in Human Resources at Brooklyn College.

Williams' day at BC begins rather early when she makes the short trip from her apartment near campus at 4:30 a.m. to start her shift at 6 a.m. She works cleaning half of Boylan's first floor and the basement's bathrooms until 2:30pm, then she gets lunch and heads home, but not before turning on the radio for her plants. "I'm not there to talk to them," she said.

In March, she got the opportunity along with some of BC's other facilities employees to meet Senator Bernie Sanders when he launched his 2020 presidential bid on campus last year. She has the picture they

took with him mounted proudly on the wall.

"Bernie is my boy," she said.

Five years ago, Williams had a scare when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, an ailment that never seemed to dampen her resolve and love for what she does.

"I would punch out, go and do the chemo, and then come back to work," she said.

The cancer eventually was handled with surgery, and after that she was once again back to work. "The day after the surgery I was working," Williams remembered.

After 16 years, she has begun considering retirement, much to the dismay of the staff, she says. She says the day she retires to her family and hangs up the broom might be close on the horizon.

"Enough is enough, I need to relax," she said, laughing.



Yvonne Williams' wall of heroes in her office. / Ryan Schwach

# q: A Programming Language You Have Never Heard Of

## (and that's a bad thing)

By Michael Castaneda  
*Columnist*

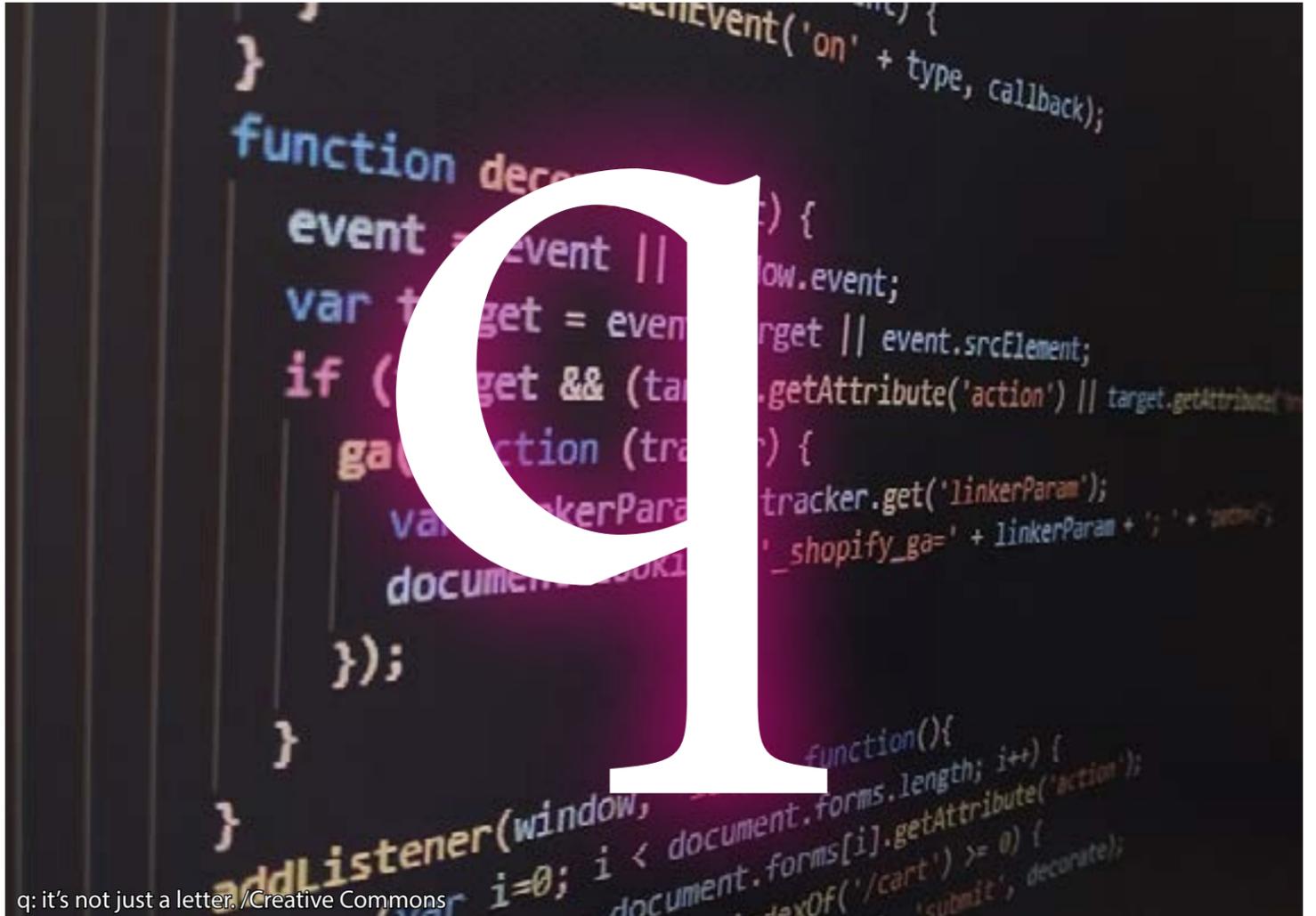
There is no shortage of popular programming languages out right now, and q is not one of them.

Not too long ago Brooklyn College's comp sci program changed its teaching language from C++ to Java. I was told in class that the department lost professors who didn't want to transition to Java. I thought it was cool that Brooklyn College was teaching C++ while most colleges have been teaching Java for over 20 years. Often the transition of teaching languages went from Pascal to C to Java. Recently other colleges such as Harvard and M.I.T. start students off with Python, which might be more useful because of its ubiquity in hot areas such as data science and machine learning, leaving Java as the most outsourced language out there.

Still, the great thing about most of these languages is that if you know one well, it is totally possible to pick another one up. All you have to do learn some new syntax and libraries. You structure your code in loops, and other data structures in a top-down approach.

The q programming is 3GL, but very different from normal languages. It is an Array programming language like Lisp or APL. This means instead of having data spoon-fed in a loop, the entire set of data gets operated on at once. Such scalar operations are similar to Professor Preston's Linear Algebra course, but to a much larger scale.

In fact, q is just a



q: it's not just a letter. /Creative Commons

language wrapper on top of another language called K. The K programming language was created in the 1990s by Arthur Whitney while working at Morgan Stanley. Like James Naismith who invented Basketball in Springfield, Massachusetts, Whitney is a Canadian investing in the U.S. Actually you can say that about Brian Kernighan too, who is half the team that invented UNIX, C, AWK, and the other letter combinations known and loved by programmers.

K is written in C and it is said to be faster than C. How can that be? The difference is the philosophy of K - and by extension, q and by extension kdb+ (we'll get to that shortly). The philosophy is a minimalist approach to put it mildly. The average technological worker looks at a q

code and asks "What the . . . ?" This makes q/kdb+ consultants attractive. The code looks like this: "10 {x,sum -2#x}/ 0 1" - that computes the Fibonacci sequence. The idea is you can write q quickly in a few short optimized lines versus writing 100 lines in C, which would be more error-prone and dependent on the efficiency of the developer.

This is where we get to kdb+, which is the database. Kdb+ and q come packaged together. It is the fastest time-series column stored database. It is used by finance corporations, big Pharma, NASA, and really anywhere time-series analysis needs to be done up to the nanosecond. An example you might see in your first job coming out with a CS degree is that KDB+ is the tick database used for trading, algo's and

analysis. If you want to be a Quant, you will come across kdb+.

One of the beautiful things about kdb+ is that it has an 800kb memory footprint that lives in the L1/L2 caches in your processors. This means that you can put it anywhere. You can put it in anything that runs a computer in it, which almost everything these days. Being that it's vector programming, it takes advantage of the vector optimizations added to modern chip architecture. It can search 4 billion records per core and ingest 4.5 billion bulk events per second per core.

Kdb/q has both a real-time database (RDB) and a historical database (HDB). The RDB keeps all the data in memory. One of the slowest parts of a computer is the read/write functionality that is constantly happening. The RDB does have that

program. Unlike other analytical environments, where there is column-based data (where you extract data with SQL then maybe have some middle transport layer say XML and then work on it using Java or C++), in kdb everything happens in q at once. The processes are flattened. Its minimalism improves speed and development time.

If you take some event like a particle collision from the Higgs boson supercollider at CERN, where the first events are crucial, you need to be able to look at data on the nanosecond layer. You are building models to trade stock in real time, so you need to be able to analyze large data in 8 milliseconds. There really isn't another good tool.

# On The Record: Grace Potter, "Daylight"

By Allison Rapp  
Columnist

I've lived in Glasgow for just under two months and I have not been catcalled once. I have not been whistled at on my way home from the bus station after dark, I have not been commented on while in line at a concert venue, and I have not been hollered at from the windows of passing cars. These are all regular occurrences at home in New York. Here? Not one single time.

I don't write this to garner pity, I write this because Glasgow is a major city just like any other. It has a busy nightlife scene, a heavy population of university students, and yet, clearly, something is different here.

That isn't to say that sexual assault doesn't happen here. It does. Between 2017 and 2018, there were 2,032 reported cases of sexual crime in Glasgow, and 12,487 for the entire country. As we all know, there are often thousands more that are not officially reported to the authorities.

At my university, there are stickers on the backs of every restroom stall door that list hotline numbers for rape, domestic violence, and suicide prevention. It's a tiny detail in the grand scheme of things, but it feels important -- like there's a small voice

reminding you that it's okay to speak up, even if it's hard to do so. Like in the news last week in the news, when Harvey Weinstein was invited to an actors' event in New York, and it was a female comedian who had the courage to use her set to call him out. She was booed.

I'm sure the women of Scotland are not untouched by this madness; this obscene way in which men feel a sense of entitlement and superiority in their work and in their personal lives. In some minuscule way though, it feels good to walk the streets of a city and not hear jeers or catcalls. It's the bare minimum, but it's significant enough that I noticed the difference when I moved here, and I'm going to enjoy it while I can.

In the interest of women everywhere putting their feet down and sticking it to the past, I listened to Grace Potter's new album, *Daylight*. It was a fantastic choice. (So much so, I even bought a ticket to her upcoming show at the Beacon Theatre in February.)

Potter's last solo album, *Midnight*, was released in 2015 and was more synth-pop than anything else. Since then, Potter has been divorced and remarried. She's also had a baby and dropped



her previous band, The Nocturnals. As you might guess from the record title, *Daylight* is a complete 180 turn for her, both personally and musically.

*Daylight* is open, honest, and unapologetic. It features the gripping, smokey, soulful vocals that Potter became famous for, and her range is impressive. She's nobody's fool, and gives a good rock'n'roll scream on several of the tracks. It's also deceptively layered: very blues-driven blues driven, with horns, piano, organ, and strings, but chock full of soul. Benmont Tench (of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers) lends his talent on the keyboard, and the best tracks on the record feature the lovely ladies of Lucius serving as the backing vocalists.

Is there anything better than a talented female vocalist supported by equally talented female vocalists? Nope.

In a lot of ways, *Daylight* seems to be about Potter shedding a skin -- switching directions but also using it as a stepping stone towards the sound that she ultimately wants to achieve. As she sings on "Every Heartbeat," "the only sure thing is that everything will change."

I'd love to hear her do a little more experimenting with guitar chords, or perhaps collaborate with a lyricist. She's got a fantastic voice. Now is the time for her to hone her craft, and figure out how to deepen the complexity of her music. *Daylight* sounds as though she is just beginning to scratch the

surface of her potential.

If there's anything Potter has proven over the years, it's that women belong in the arts industry. Yes, women can play electric guitar, women can belt their vocals, women can write powerful songs. Women can be blonde and gorgeous and they don't have to be compared to Taylor Swift.

"Intentions are different than actions [...] show me what I've always known, show me that I'm not alone," she sings on the closing track, "Daylight." And Potter isn't alone. There's a slew of female musicians striving to change the direction not only of their work, but of the environment that they produce it in.

I hope that trend continues.

## Italian Major Placed on Hiatus Amid Alum Outcry

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The source claims that these occurrences have been an ongoing problem for 20 years.

Renner could not be reached for comment before press time.

This upcoming semester, Brooklyn College will

continue to offer Italian language courses such as: Italian 1010 Basic Language Skills, Italian 4710 Writings of a Major Italian Author, Italian 2030W Advanced Language Skills II, ENGL 2003 Italian American Literature and Film, and MLAN 2610 Italian Literature in Translation.

Perez-Rosario says she's debating whether there's sufficient student interest to re-open Italian 1020.

"We hope that with enhanced general education exposure, interest in the Italian language and Italian history and culture will grow over time," Lopes said. "Our Italian

faculty will continue to teach Italian language, literature, history, and culture courses as they always have."

Still, some, such as alumna and former Italian minor Dina Sardo claim more could be done.

"During my time in college studying a minor

in the language, both the major and minor had many students enrolled," Sardo said. "There are many people who I'm sure would be more than happy to try and promote the courses and culture, so why isn't anyone doing anything?"

# BC Alum Jimmy Smits Leaves a Hung Audience with “Bluff City Law”

By John Schilling  
Staff Writer

On September 23, 2019, *Bluff City Law* premiered on NBC starring an alumnus of Brooklyn College, Jimmy Smits.

Smits, who graduated in 1980 with a bachelor's degree in Theater, is best known for his breakout role as Victor Sifuentes in *L.A. Law*, as well as his work on *NYPD Blue* and *The West Wing*. Additionally, some people might recognize Smits for his role as Bail Organa in various installments of the *Star Wars* franchise.

In *Bluff City Law*, Smits plays Elijah Strait, a highly regarded civil rights lawyer in Memphis, Tennessee who asks his daughter, Sydney (Caitlin McGee), to return to his law firm after leaving over three years ago. From there, the two begin working together, while simultaneously working on their relationship as father and daughter.

*Bluff City Law* has already aired six episodes with four more scheduled to air before Thanksgiving. So far, however, the show has been met with bad ratings and negative reviews. It currently sports a 38% rating from critics on Rotten Tomatoes with Hank Stuever of *The Washington Post* claiming “the show feels like a pilot from some random yesteryear’s fall TV season.”

Before the premiere of the show, NBC had ordered another six scripts for a full season of the show. According to *TheWrap* and *The Commercial Appeal*, however, NBC has responded to the negative feedback by canceling further production of *Bluff City Law* altogether. Despite this decision, sets for the show are said to still be “intact,” and the fate of *Bluff City Law* is still up in the air.

This uncertainty has led *Bluff City Law* fans to flood social media



Jimmy Smits in *Bluff City Law*. (Jake Giles Netter/NBC)

with desperate pleas to save the show from cancellation, and it is certainly making an impact. Despite the low critics score, the audience score for *Bluff City Law* on Rotten Tomatoes is 88%. Some of the top tweets include one from Jayne Atkinson, who stars in the show.

“Tell your friends to watch online. If we get viewership up we still have a chance! Online views on platforms like Hulu count! Get the word out,” says Atkinson. According to *Popculture.com*, a Facebook post from the Memphis &

Shelby County Film and Television Commission has provided Memphis fans of *Bluff City Law* with a way to help save the show. The post encourages people to leave positive feedback for the show on NBC’s website.

“This is the best way to make your voice heard,” said NBC’s Senior VP of marketing.

Back in May, Jimmy Smits was presented with the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Brooklyn College at the 94th Commencement ceremony. In his speech, Smits urged the graduates to never give up.

“If I were given the ability today to instill one thing in you, it would be perseverance...fall down, feel the fall, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and you try again,” Smits said.

“You give everything your best shot, and once you have, you live with the results.”

These words certainly resonate with the fans of *Bluff City Law* and their persistence to buy it a second season either for television or an online streaming service like Hulu. The ratings for the show may be low, but the fans are living by Smits’ words.

## The Toxicity of Urgency

By Edmund Zhen  
Opinions Editor

Flowers do not bloom overnight. It takes cycles of photosynthesis, months of nurturing, sustainable environments, and time in order for growth to spur. Time, in truth, is a concept needed for the living to develop their purpose and capabilities.

So why is it that we understand that idea, but seem to defy it when it’s about us?

Picture standing on the sidewalk between Brooklyn College’s two main entrances.

You’re looking at the glum expressions on students’ faces as they wait for the light to turn. Immediately after the switch, they dart off like missiles, making their presence known through their unrestrained bumps as they pass.

It all seems familiar, doesn’t it? That’s because it’s an echo of the stigma behind New Yorkers; the dramatization of our sense of urgency and our rudeness towards other people. And obviously, that stigma includes us. But an underlying matter, which people frequently gloss over,

is that our unhealthy sense of urgency plays a role in exacerbating our soaring levels of anxiety, depression, and isolation.

Because we are always in a rush, we never stop to be present at the moment and really unravel the thoughts we have. For one, how can we be more empathetic and authentic towards ourselves and others if there’s no process? It will only set us back and become more severe through time. So should we alter our understanding and utilization of time? No, let’s not be too extreme.

In some ways, college is

a microcosm. It offers the structural characteristics of adulthood yet fosters an atmosphere coated with safety and leniency. What I’m advocating for is the parting from stringent old ways, to better accommodate a generation in need. We could start by cultivating a space where our current sense of urgency is not necessary. We need resources that can teach us about proper time management and how to live in the moment, allowing for a better understanding of what it means to be an individual and still keep our sanity.

More often than not, this sense of urgency rushes us to bypass crucial steps of our growth.

If there’s one thing to adulthood I’m certain about, it’s that success is determined by the foundation you’ve set for yourself. If you have all the right groundings and support to aid your efforts to succeed, you will. It only takes a small leap to reach monumental progress, and only through progress can you bring momentum to your life. *Carpe diem.*

# Color, Art History, and Leisure in MFA Student Mike Serafino's Studio

By Jack Coleman  
Arts Editor

The studio is riddled with old and new paintings, sketches, tubes of oil paint, palettes, brushes and jars of thinner. If you've ever seen an artist's workspace, this is it. Pinned along the walls are pencil, ink, and watercolor sketches of bars, nightclubs, and other leisure spaces. These drawings work as studies for MFA student Mike Serafino's latest series of paintings which looks to nightlife and public leisure activities, tying together a rich art historical tradition in present day settings. Using rich colors and painterly forms, Serafino endows these already lively spaces with a heightened sense of energy and narrative.

These locations may be familiar, especially if you happen to be part of the gallivanting crowds, strutting around the Bushwick and Williamsburg area on any given night. For example, a large unstretched canvas

hanging on the wall of his studio captures a rather calm night at Rebecca's in Bushwick. This piece, though unfinished, depicts the bar's patrons mingling and sitting quietly in the darkly lit and moody atmosphere in oil paint. With dark sanguineous walls and washes of dark blues and black which make up the floor, the scene's intimate mood emanates from a glow of pink and orange lamps which float in like orbs.

Serafino's usage of color is paramount to his conveyance of mood, and the artist's perspective as observer is seen most clearly here, as he is seated not at the bar with said patrons, but behind them, as if catching them in their acts.

"I'd describe it as sitting quietly in crowded places," says Serafino.

Another large-scale, and unfinished, work on canvas depicts a wild burlesque night at the House of Yes, a famous nightclub which often plays host to burlesque and drag performers. Similar to the previous

work, the viewer is placed outside of the action, we are observing, though much closer to the action. This piece in particular seems to harken back to the work of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, the French nineteenth century painter who often sought to capture the rambunctious dance-filled nights of the Moulin Rouge.

But Serafino doesn't have to look too far back for inspiration, he cites Nicole Eisenman, Dana Schutz, and Cecily Brown as major influences as well. These artists also work in, more or less, a style which is predominantly figurative and, like Serafino, use color as the major delineator of form. Also permeating through his work is a narrative structure which he sees as reflected especially in the forms.

While the "Social Scenes," certainly depict a rowdy night out, the kind that has been looked at in art for over a century, they also seek to examine certain aspects of our own



Mike Serafino in his studio, doing what he does. / Jack Coleman

times; this decadence and debauchery is not without political implications. Many of these club-goers frequent these spaces in order to escape the stratification experienced in the outside world. This, for Serafino, is central.

"Relaxation is important, leisure has a place in history," says Serafino, who cites the Brooklyn bohemian and queer aesthetic as a major influence, "it's all kind of justifiably decadent."

If you'd like to see the studio, as well as the other MFA and BFA students' work spaces, come to the Art All Day event on November 8th from 12pm-8pm. Hosted by the Brooklyn College Art Department, this event offers students and staff a special look into the campus' thriving art scene. More information can be found on the Art Department's website, as well as on fliers posted all around Boylan Hall.



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# BC Swim Team Opens Up 2019 Season

By Conrad Hoyt  
Sports Editor

A new season is underway for the Brooklyn College Men's and Women's Swimming teams, and both teams look to build off of the success they achieved last year.

In their first and only meet so far this season at the Sarah Lawrence Sprint Carnival on October 26, the men finished first out of five teams, and the women finished seventh out of eight teams. Brooklyn College's Devin Boodha was named CUNYAC Men's Swimming and Diving Rookie of the Week after a first place finish.

"What I realized is I can still add people to my roster. With that, the more people you have, the more events you

have a chance to win," said Head Coach Brian Jensen, who was pleased with the results from the meet, but also sees a lot of room for improvement.

"I noticed that turns are something I want to work on, starts are something I want to work on," he said.

Jensen was on the men's swimming team for 2 years, before last year taking the role of an assistant coach. Now, after just one year on the coaching staff, he has taken the mantle of head coach for both teams.

His relationships with the players and ability to understand what they go through as student-athletes gives him a unique perspective and ability to maximize his players' potential.

"I want to build a family environment, where they feel safe, they can come talk to me,



The Brooklyn College Bulldogs at the Sarah Lawrence Spirit Carnival. /Damion Reid

but they also know that when they're in the pool, it's a lot of hard work," he said, "and at the end of the day the goal is to win, but the bigger goal is improvement, and knowing that they're in a safe space."

The men's and women's teams practice together, but compete separately at meets. The point system is the same for both teams, but they are scored separately. 9 points are won for first place, 4 points for second, 3 for third, and so on. For relays, its 11

for first, 4 for second, and 3 for third.

Points are added up to determine which school (team) had the most points, and therefore won the meet. The CUNY Championships are the only time an individual wins a medal.

Even in the CUNY Championships, the points that each individual (or relay team) wins adds up to the overall team points.

"Last year was the second best year our school saw," Jensen said.

"We had a lot of guys

take medals; we had some girls take a couple medals too."

The Men's and Women's teams' first home meet is against York at 6 pm on the 15 of November.

After last season, Jensen saw how good the teams could be.

"What I told a lot of the guys who returned was kinda keep the momentum going. Next year we're going to get more people, we're going to try even harder, we're going to hopefully do better than we did this year."

## Vinny the Goat by Mo Muhsin



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