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THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE

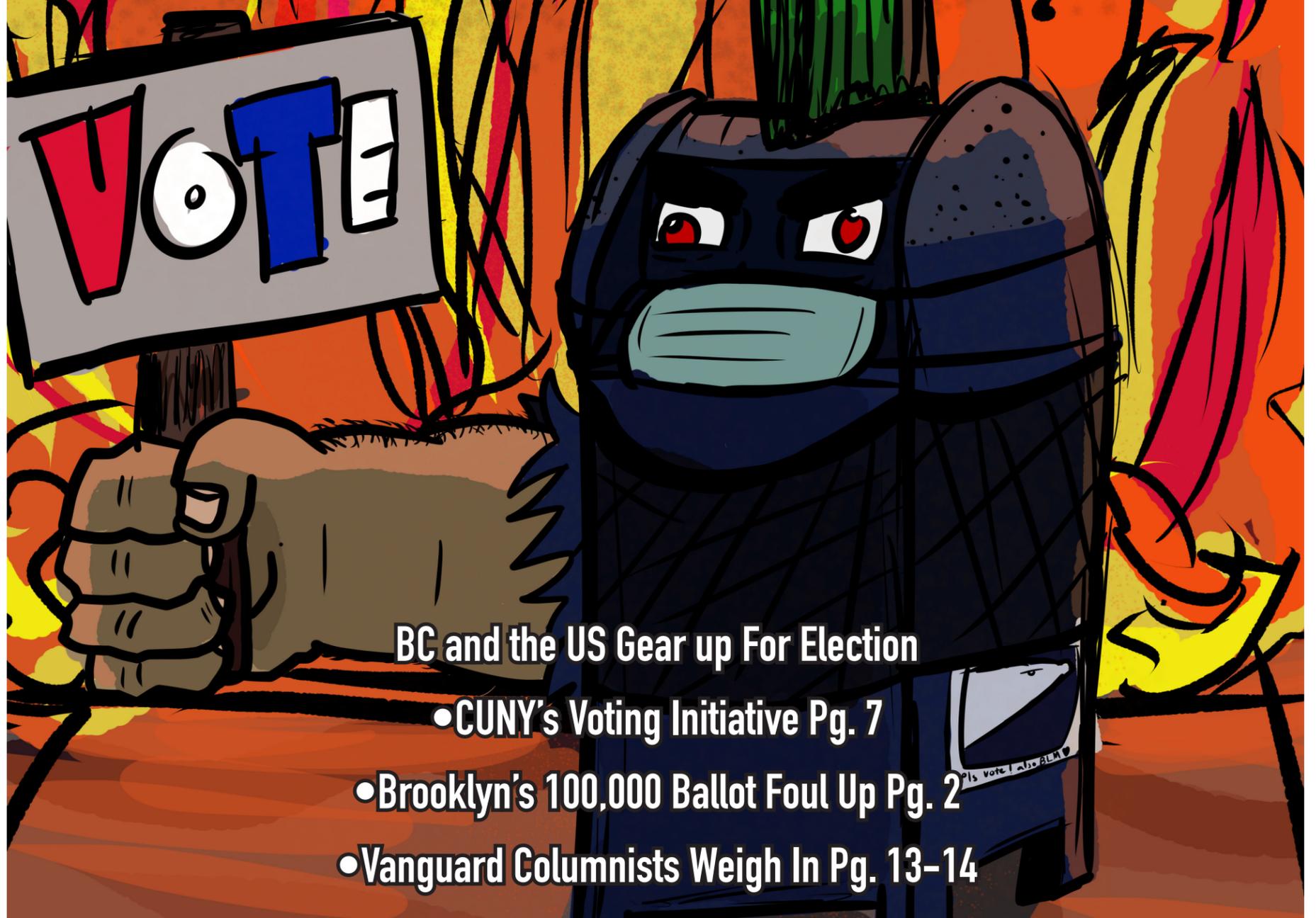
WANGUARD

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READY TO VOTE?



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USS Nominates Steering Committee, BC Student Among Them

By Ian Ezinga
Business Manager

The nominations are in for the upcoming election of CUNY's University Student Senate steering committee. In addition to the nominations for Chairperson of the senate, there is also a Brooklyn College student who has been nominated without opposition for an important Vice Chair position.

This year sees Dexter Roberts and Juvanie Piquant as the two nominations for Chairperson of the senate. The new chairperson, which has always served as a sort of guiding hand for the senate's actions and efforts, and also votes on the CUNY board of trustees, will face one of the toughest academic years in some time.

With the pandemic still showing significant impact on CUNY and exposing more of its flaws and shortcomings with each passing week, the incoming

senate will have their work laid out for them. Both of the people nominated for chairperson are already members of the cabinet and are well acquainted with student affairs.

Juvanie Piquant, from City Tech, currently serves as the Vice Chair of Legislative Affairs. An advocate for CUNY students, Piquant sees the funding of the university as being directly tied to larger issues of systematic racism.

"Right now New York State Lawmakers are proposing potential cuts to CUNY," Piquant wrote in an Instagram post on June 29th. "While the NYPD has billions, they want to defund CUNY. The constant disinvestment into CUNY is systemic racism."

The other nominee, Dexter Roberts, is currently the Vice Chair of Graduate Affairs. Currently enrolled in a masters program at Baruch, Roberts also earned a B.S. of Science in Business

Administration in 2016 from Medgar Evans. Similar to Piquant, Roberts also has a long history of student advocacy which was on prominent display as the president of the Medgar Evers College's Student Government Association.

The winner of this race will lead the USS and their advocacy work into 2021. Nominated without opposition for the Vice Chair for Technology Fee Affairs is Brooklyn College's own, Aharon Grama.

"It feels great," Grama told the Vanguard, regarding his nomination. "Finally, I can push for my agenda to go through and get stuff fast-tracked to benefit students."

Grama currently serves in the Brooklyn College Undergraduate Student Government as the executive cabinet's chief of staff. This new role for Grama will expand the influence of Brooklyn College's student government deeper into the framework of CUNY.

As Vice Chair for Technology Fee Affairs, Grama would like to push for student websites CUNY wide.

"The websites would have all the resources and group chats for students," Grama said. "I think this can be a game changer and pretty easy to accomplish."

This sort of accessibility and student organizing is already a key platform of the USG at Brooklyn College.

With no opposing nominee, the victory will be handed to Grama without any of the heated debates that can often arise when running for high level student group positions.

With the relatable air of a student, Grama responded to running opposed by saying that while, "I always like competition, at this time I am actually a bit relieved since I am a bit overwhelmed in this COVID world."

Around 150,000 Ballots In Brooklyn Mailed Incorrectly

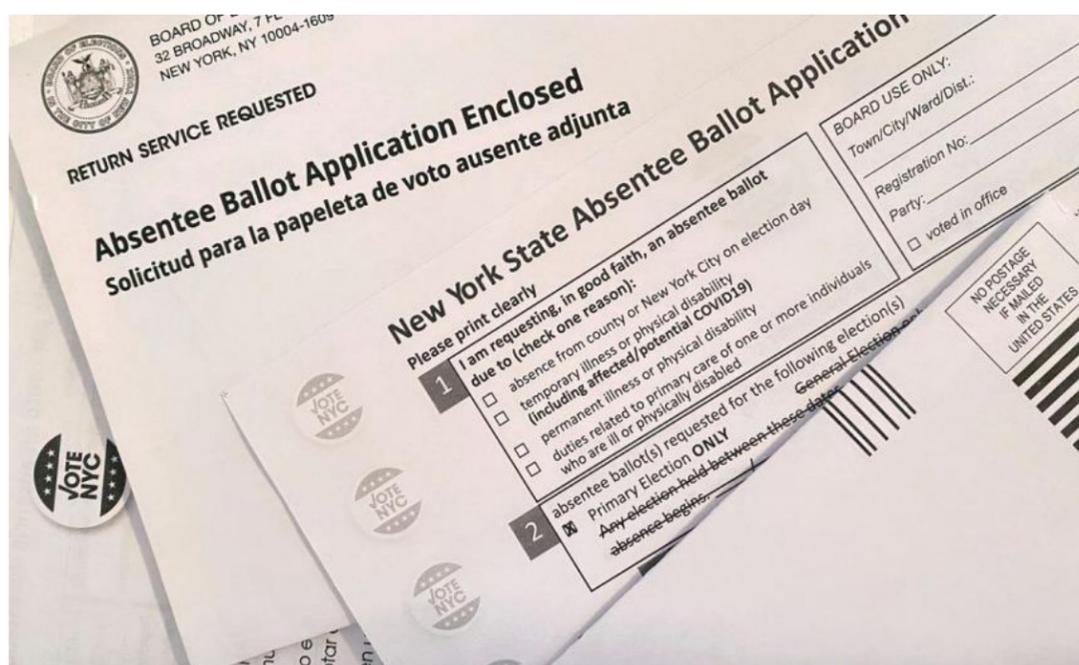
By Maya Schubert
News Editor

With the national election less than 40 days away and COVID-19 still rampant across the country, many New Yorkers have applied for absentee ballots. A number of Brooklyn voters, however, have reported receiving mislabeled return envelopes.

Of the 140,000 people who have applied for absentee ballots in Brooklyn, around 100,000 voters have been affected by the error, according to Melissa DeRosa, secretary to Governor Cuomo.

Voters across the borough have reported finding their return envelopes printed with unknown names and addresses. A ballot mailed in a mismatched envelope would render the vote invalid.

The New York City Board of Elections (BOE) has blamed the errors on "an outside vendor" hired to deliver ballots in Brooklyn



140,000 people have applied for absentee ballots in Brooklyn./ Rose Abuin / New York Daily News

and Queens. The BOE's vendor is a Rochester-based printing company called Phoenix Graphics. The company, which has named itself on Twitter "New York's largest ballot producer," has yet to comment on the BOE's accusations.

The BOE took to social media on Monday evening, tweeting instructions to those who have received

inaccurate envelopes to message them on social media, email, or call them.

"We've obviously called the Board of Elections... and told them they need to figure out how to deal with this right away," DeRosa told reporters at a news conference on Tuesday.

DeRosa said the BOE was in the process of identifying affected voters so that they

could send new envelopes. According to Gothamist, the executive director of the BOE, Michael Ryan, has confirmed that Phoenix Graphics will pay for the new envelopes.

The state began mailing out the ballots on September 18. New Yorkers have until October 27 to apply online, or by fax or email, for an absentee ballot.

ISSO Gets Grant, Helps Students Digitally

By Maya Schubert
News Editor

BC's Immigrant Student Success Office (ISSO), having celebrated its one year anniversary in the beginning of September, continues to grow even in remote form.

The office, which connects immigrant and first generation students to resources like financial and legal aid, faculty mentorship, and more, now operate completely online, offering phone services, online lectures, and workshops.

"It was a very organic plan," ISSO Director Jesus Perez said of the weeks following the school's shutdown due to the pandemic. "The first thing was to make sure the students were okay."

Perez and his staff spent most of April and May contacting students to check up on them. With many students caring for family members or out of work themselves, financial need quickly became apparent. Many immigrant students were not eligible for the CARES Act's Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund released by the government in March. Criteria for receiving the CARES fund included U.S. citizenship or eligible noncitizen status.

ISSO contacted BC's administration with a grant request and in July the Robin Hood Foundation, an outreach organization based in NYC, donated a \$150,000 grant to the



Jesus Perez (second from left) cutting the ribbon for the Immigrant Student Success Office in Dec. 2019./ @BklynCollege411 on Twitter

office. The deadline to apply for the grant passed last Wednesday.

"300 students were given \$500," Perez told the Vanguard.

Perez and his staff regularly communicated with applicants over the summer and contacted awarded students to personally tell them the good news.

"They were just really grateful that someone would take the time to reach out to them," said Ana Bartolome, ISSO's program coordinator. "It's so much more than the \$500. I said to every single student when I talked to them, after I told them they were receiving \$500, 'Pay it forward. Help someone else. Let's make this be a community of support.'"

ISSO is already drawing plans for another grant.

"We are currently working on sending back a report to our funder, and, at the same time, working on a proposal to receive additional funds," Perez said.

Over the summer and into the strange fall semester, ISSO has been more active online than ever. ISSO and BC's Personal Counseling office offer group sessions on Zoom every Wednesday from 3-4pm. The office also sends out a monthly newsletter. On Tuesday, the office's faculty mentor, American Studies Professor Jocelyn Wills, hosted a Zoom conversation on how to navigate college. ISSO is also holding

an info session this Thursday, from 12:15-1:15pm.

The office's social media pages, @issobc on Instagram and Twitter, are run by Bartolome and are mostly responsible for disseminating information regarding events and resources. Student volunteers recently put together a video that shared testimonies about the

office's provisions.

"I'm very fortunate that the office came about when it did," said Perez. "Having administration, having faculty, and students involved really facilitates the operation."

Perez remains optimistic about the office's future.

"My hope for the office is that we become a staple of the college," he said.



Anti-Racist Agenda Team Meets With Students On Issues

By Maya Schubert & Dorette Dayan
News Editor & Staff Writer

BC's Implementation Team for Racial Justice hosted two listening sessions for student concerns. The meetings, held on Zoom at noon and 6 p.m. last Wednesday, were hosted by Chief Diversity Officer Anthony Brown, Vice President of Student Affairs Ron Jackson, and Office Manager of the Black and Latino Male Initiative and Undergraduate Student Government (USG) VP Samuel Ganthier, as part of the college's recently adapted Anti-Racist Agenda.

"We are here primarily to listen to you all," Brown told the students, before opening the floor. "If we're going to listen to what you have to say, we have to take action." Students first wanted to know how conversations on race could be normalized across BC's campus. Participants suggested an orientation course for incoming students specifically designed to address diversity, equity, and school support resources.

Students also requested

anti-racist training for all faculty, as degrees and forms of alleged racist behavior varied across departments.

Many students expressed feelings of discomfort when vocalizing concerns in the classroom.

"Students feel they need to tip-toe around the subject of race in the classroom and minimize their experiences as People of Color so as not to demonize or offend white students and teachers," one student said.

Though professors often pledge a "safe space" to speak, some students felt that teachers reacted defensively when racial subjects were brought up, becoming annoyed and/or closing conversations quickly.

"You should never feel any type of way for speaking on your experiences," Ganthier told the students. "If someone gets offended, that's their problem. You should not have to be sorry for the way you feel."

The students suggested sessions on race for all students. They also proposed bi-weekly mental health sessions for students to vocalize everyday issues,



Ron Jackson, Vice President of Student Affairs./ David Rozenblyum

including those that get brought up in the classroom.

"If this is becoming a barrier in class, we want to fix that," Jackson said.

Jackson and Brown explained that students who wanted to report discrimination by a professor or student had to contact Brown. Establishing grounds for higher punishment - especially for a tenured professor - required evidence of a pattern of racist behavior by the student or teacher.

Brown explained that reports could be made anonymously, but named reports allowed him to disclose other complainants, linking students with shared experiences.

Students then brought up the difficulty of defining statements and actions as opinions or racism. Some felt that the term "racism" carried too much weight, and, if reported and used too often, would become minimized.

"Racism is something

that should not just be thrown around," said student Yehudit Meira Biton. "We have to be sure it's racism before we call it that."

Brown, however, warned against setting a standard for offense.

"We don't want to polarize it," he said. "We want to respect each other's opinions."

The listening session lasted for about an hour and drew about thirty students.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

@THEBCVANGUARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Vanguard Insider: “Vinny The Goat” Comic Strip

By Kendra Martinez
Staff Writer

Theatre majors Gabrielle Toro Vivoni and Mo Muhsin are the Vanguard’s comic strip artists and creators of “Vinny the Goat.” Through characters Vinny, Buster, and Jenna, the four-panel weekly cartoon series depicts the duo’s moments on campus that embody the Brooklyn College and CUNY student experience.

“The characters of Vinny have become a lot more well-rounded individuals. Initially, Vinny was a typical clean slate character meant to represent any college student, while Buster and Jenna were interchangeable to any story,” said Muhsin. Over time, the artists found that storylines became easier to create once they got more familiar with these characters and what they envisioned.

Their comic making process first begins with brainstorming an idea that can be done within the four panels. Then they sketch and develop the strip’s running joke by bouncing ideas off of each other. The duo managed to develop a closer relationship by comic creating and bringing the characters to life. Although they were hesitant at first to combine their professional and personal relationship, Vivoni and Muhsin felt stronger through their mutual interest in comic art.

“The biggest changes were when Gabrielle came on board we switched to digital inking, and recently we added color alongside a major redesign, giving everything bold black outlines,” said Muhsin.



Original sketch for Vinny the Goat and Buster the Bulldog./ Courtesy of Gabrielle Toro Vivoni & Mo Mushin

Muhsin’s stylistic inspiration for the comics comes from web cartoonist Rebel Taxi. “During the early 2000’s, there was this phase of thick black outlines and simple cel shading, and Rebeltaxi’s comic Loki IRL keeps that spirit alive in a time where most webcomics look the same,” said Muhsin.

The transition to remote learning and publishing the Vanguard solely online has not been a challenge for the comic strip. Since everything is digital, it leaves more room for the pair to ink and color creatively. Vivoni and Muhsin managed to work through the pandemic as

they quarantined together and have been working collaboratively since. The duo is usually in the same room, but if not, they are on the phone or Facetime updating each other every step of the way. Vivoni and Muhsin also actively update the Instagram account for Vinny the Goat (@vinnythegoat_bc) so that their audience can follow beyond the Vanguard platform.

After their time at the Vanguard, each partner has in mind what their future looks like - they are both aspiring creators with hopes to improve their art skills to achieve their goals in the art world.

“All I know is I want to spend the rest of my life cooped up in a dark room drawing and get paid to do it,” said Muhsin. Muhsin says that he intends to work in creating comics or animation, but if his plans don’t work out, he would love to be a critic or writer for animation.

Vivoni mentions that her passion for comics comes from her uncle who is a pencil artist for DC and Marvel comics. She knows that she would like to continue creating comics or storyboards for cartoons.

“I’ve always known that I have wanted to share my artwork with people

and make things that made people smile,” she said, “but I have always considered making little comics or even a fully blown comic series if I ever got an idea.”

The pair have managed to produce comic strips for several issues of the Vanguard and feel encouraged by all that’s in store for their strip. Together, the notorious “Mo and Gab,” are bound to create more humorous stories that perfectly sums up the Brooklyn College experience.

From The Kingsman To The Minds Behind The Games: Patrick Hickey Jr.

By Matthew Hirsch
Staff Writer

Born and raised in South Brooklyn, BC alum Patrick Hickey Jr. spends his days as a journalism professor at Kingsborough and nights working on his book series, *The Minds Behind the Games*. Before graduating from Brooklyn College in 2008, Hickey was the former editor-in-chief of the now-defunct *Kingsman* student newspaper. Throughout his career, Hickey has interviewed some of the most prolific names in the video game industry and chronicled their stories in his books.

Hickey prides himself on his hard work ethic he picked up from his time as a student. While pursuing his associate's at Kingsborough, Hickey interviewed former New York Mets Captain, David Wright, for the *Scepter* college newspaper. As a bachelor's student at BC, he spent 16 hour days working on the *Kingsman*. He cut his teeth at CUNY colleges.

"I think my work in Kingsborough prepared me to go to Brooklyn College and to take it to the next level. And then Brooklyn taught me how to work in the field and for local

newspapers and websites and start my own blogs and make money on the side," said Hickey. "And then all of that led me up to the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, which prepared me to write the book and all of those things. So everything is always a scaffolding process."

The series might not have happened if things went his way. Nonetheless, to Hickey, his collection of development stories represent the culmination of a lifetime of hard work and an heirloom for his daughter to remember him by.

"My daughter was going to be born in a couple of months, and I decided I really wanted to do something I was proud of before she was born. My first idea was to help build the journalism program in Kingsborough," said Hickey. "I pitched the director of the program a multimedia journalism course I had taught before at Brooklyn College, and he said no. So instinctively I was just like, well, then I'm going to write a book. And his answer was, 'go write a book, kid.'"

This response lit a fire inside of Hickey. He immediately put his nose to the grindstone and began



Hickey in his man cave./ Patrick Hickey Jr.

brainstorming what he should write about in his book.

"I went home, and I was sitting in my man cave surrounded by video games. I love to do interviews, and I love video games. So I thought, 'I know who created a lot of these games, I should reach out to these developers and I should tell their stories because most of them haven't been told before,' and within a week, the first handful of people that I wanted got back to me," Hickey said. "This was Halloween of 2016. And by Thanksgiving that year, I had a book deal and I just continued from there on, and by this time next year I'll have six books out in the series."

Hickey's journalism background proved useful for his book series, but eventually he expanded his horizons beyond writing and teaching. The people he interviewed for his book series became his contemporaries when he joined the industry as a voice actor in 2017. His debut game, *The Padre*, is available on PC, Xbox, PS4, and Nintendo Switch. It's a creepy and charming horror game that draws on icons

of the past such as *Alone in the Dark*. Hickey voiced the titular character Father Alexander and gave him a flair that only he could.

"The voice actor before me sounded like Russell Brand, just this wacky English accent, and it didn't really fit the game. I thought it needed to be a lot darker. When they asked me to audition, I wanted to combine that original voice with a lot more bass and baritone. I've always been good at that Don LaFontaine 'in a world' voice," said Hickey. "So I combined that deep dark baritone with an English accent and they ended up loving it. Truth be told it destroyed my throat. I was coughing up blood."

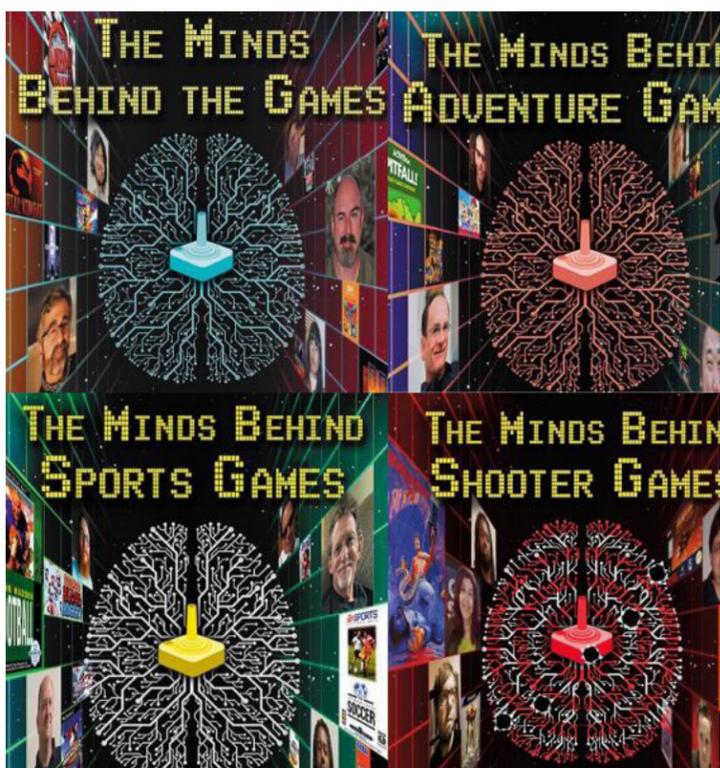
Though video games are known as pastimes, to Hickey and those like him they're more than that. They're an art form that millions of people enjoy every day and represent a billion-dollar industry. There's something for everyone, and there are no limits to what a video game can be. From immersive and expansive worlds like *Dark Souls* and *Skyrim*, to competitive eSports like *League of Legends* and *Call of Duty*, video games are an

interactive medium like no other.

"Video games are so much more than fun and games. They create thousands upon thousands of jobs in a variety of different ways. You don't have to be a coder. You don't have to be a genius. You just have to be creative and able to find a niche to work on them," Hickey said.

Now that he's a father, an author, a professor, and a mentor, Hickey's accomplished a lot in his lifetime. But he never forgets his start as a student journalist at BC.

"For me, it started off as me wanting to preserve history, to be a journalist. And it morphed into something completely different. And I feel like working at the *Kingsman* gave me the backbone to be able to do the things that I'm doing now," said Hickey. "Being editor-in-chief was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I took advantage of it and it carried over to nearly every single facet of my life after. I'll always be thankful for the opportunities that I had in Brooklyn College."



First four books in *The Minds Behind the Games*./ Patrick Hickey Jr.

BC Prepares For 2020 Election

By Gabriela Flores
Features Editor

As the presidential election steadily approaches, many registered Brooklyn College students prepare to cast their votes at the polls or with mail-in ballots. Others are not registering to vote or turn out this year due to different circumstances, from voter ineligibility to personal beliefs. In an effort to encourage voter participation, BC's Voter Registration and Empowerment Initiative (VREI) and CUNY Votes have continued to carry out their services remotely to assist students.

"When campus went mainly online, students were notified via email that forms were available at the Brooklyn College Food Pantry for pickup. Students are also encouraged to register to vote online through the Department of Motor Vehicles website. Our staff is always available to assist students and are encouraged to visit the website or email," said Hamilton Raymond, Director of Student Activities.

Since 2006, VREI has built part of the university-wide CUNY Votes program. Through campus-based initiatives like VREI, along with "external partnerships and university-wide campaigns," CUNY Votes intends to encourage voter registration, participation, and awareness. However, at Brooklyn College, the number of students asking VREI for registration assistance or voter rights information was reliably low.

"The number of students seeking assistance has consistently been low, even before the pandemic.

Many students inform us that they registered before entering the college," said Raymond. The initiative does not have specific data that supports this finding.

"The office provides support and resources, including forms, but it does not keep or track that data; that is not the role of voter assistance programs," said Raymond. "Students who apply for financial aid, however, need to be registered to vote.

In a Vanguard poll on Facebook group "BC In the Know 2," 40 out of 44 members who answered the poll said they are registered to vote and will turn out in the general election. One poll participant said they were registered but would not vote in the coming election, while another three students shared they are not registered. Most students who responded to the poll and conversed with the Vanguard do not know of VREI or its services.

"I don't know about the initiative, sorry," said BC alum Sunmbal Aziz who registered to vote on-campus in her sophomore year.

"This guy was going around campus and getting people to sign up, so I did," said Aziz. "I haven't voted before, but I will this year." Aziz admits she "doesn't really follow politics much," but she knows that "it's important to vote."

Like Aziz, BC student Cam Pham, who registered to vote in high school, does not know of VREI, but he gained access to voter registration and information before entering the college.

"Through my high school, they had someone come into my gov class to get us registered," said



CUNY Votes, an initiative that promotes students registering to vote./ CUNY.edu

Pham. "I have voted, and it was through the mail, so it was super easy and simple. I plan to vote this fall by mail again."

Other students, like Inna Yedzinovic, do not have the option of registering to vote due to their lack of US citizenship.

"I am not a US citizen, so I cannot participate in the elections. As a result, I have not yet been interested to know how to vote in the US," said Yedzinovic, who is generally "not super interested in politics." But, Yedzinovic said, "I read books, news about the American political system, and et cetera, as it is the country where I live right now."

For BC student Arielle, who did not wish to share her full name, she is not interested in registering to vote anytime soon, but she is aware of her voting rights.

"I choose not to vote because I, unfortunately,

do not care enough yet to vote. I haven't had a presidency affect my life to where I felt the extreme need to vote," said Arielle. "Maybe if a civil war breaks out or something."

To encourage youth voters to hit the polls, both in local and general elections, CUNY recently announced its partnership with a city initiative, NYC Votes, to create a text-campaign called We Power NYC. Through this campaign, CUNY plans to encourage 25,000 students to vote during this presidential election year. In a CUNY Votes Summit last February, Sabrina Castillo, Director of Partnerships and Outreach at the New York City Campaign Finance Board, stated that "CUNY has higher voter registration, but in some local elections, the turnout is not as high."

"We [We Power NYC] are starting now because in the presidential election,

New York City has high voter participation for youth. People who vote in a presidential election are more likely to come and vote in a municipal election," Castillo said in the summit.

Though youth voter turnout has been historically low, 63 percent of voters under the age of 30 indicated they will vote in this coming presidential election, as reported by the Harvard Youth Poll. With only 34 days until the general election (as of press time), most registered Brooklyn College students plan to show out this year and form part of that high voter turnout projection. But for those who are not yet registered and interested in voting this Nov. 3, nine days remain until the NYS deadline-giving CUNY and Brooklyn College some time to make their final stretch in aiding eligible students to register and pledge to vote.

“Put A Garden In”: Wolfe Institute Holds Panel on Sustainability

By Chaya Gurkov
Staff Writer

In an online discussion called “Food Sovereignty and Public Health,” the Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities, in partnership with Brooklyn College’s Health and Nutrition Sciences department, shined a light on the deeper connections of land and food. The virtual event featured four women who’ve dedicated their lives to improving sustainable agriculture and reconnecting public health back to our land. Planting in your community or backyard garden might be a cool and hipster thing to do, but it’s actually easier than you may think.

While sharing slides of food from her plantation in Minnesota, the 2020 HessScholarinResidence and rural development economist Winona LaDuke explained that food sovereignty means putting you back at the center.

“For those of who want to be well, we need to get back into controlling our food systems,” she said, highlighting the major theme embedded within the talk.

According to some of the numbers from the White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP) Food Sovereignty 2008 report of her reservation, only about 14 percent of household dollars stayed within the community -- numbers that LaDuke believes likely reflect various communities throughout America.

Tiana Rainford, a dietetic intern at the East New York Farms

organization, does her best to make sure the Brooklyn neighborhood of East New York doesn’t fall into that category. She emphasized the power that young people have to stand up for themselves and travel to the front of the classroom when it comes to food sovereignty.

“It’s important to ask: ‘where did this food come from?’” she explained. “Take ownership of your space because when you do that you start to become responsible for that space.”

Taking ownership and planting your food goes hand in hand with taking advantage of your right to do so, filmmaker Sarah Khan stressed. Suppressing someone from growing their own food can destroy their culture and violate their human rights, she explained.

Her film, *Bowing to No One*, centers around an indigenous South Asian woman and her tribe who are completely self-reliant besides for salt, kerosene, and clothing. By representing a woman who is thriving off the land, Khan hoped to show that food sustainability is in our grasp and that we can learn from people who are already fulfilling that legacy.

“I am an immigrant. People like me, we might have come empty-handed, but we did not come empty-headed,” she commented.

BC has been acknowledging this sentiment by building and expanding the Brooklyn College garden. People from



The White Earth Land Recovery Project, founded by Winona LaDuke, explores food policy./ WELRP

all over the world use its space to plant their years of food knowledge within the soil, Assistant Professor at Health and Nutrition Sciences Margrethe Romanovsky explained.

But the land for the garden was decreased by the building of the sports field and people have been advocating for additional space to be added back, a problem Romanovsky has dubbed as a micro-land rights struggle on campus.

LaDuke provided the bigger context for that struggle, saying that

one of the essential restorations to truly being food sovereign is having the land to do so, an obstacle she still faces with non-Natives holding most of the land on her reservation.

“Land back, land justice remains an essential part of our struggle over the long haul,” she emphasized.

But change begins one person at a time and each person has a role to play.

While being completely devoid of the “corporate colonization of indigenous food and systems” may be an

overarching goal, there are easier steps one can take to put themselves in charge of what they put in their mouths.

“Know where your food comes and build systems where we know where our food came from. Think about how you relocalize some of your foods,” LaDuke advised. “Also, dig up your lawns. What are they for? Put a garden in.”

Brooklyn's Early Childhood Program Adapts To Online

By Qichelle Maitland
Staff Writer

Before the pandemic, the Early Childhood Center (ECC) at Brooklyn College served as a safe place where student parents and faculty members could leave their children while attending classes throughout the day. Once the college switched to remote learning, the ECC community had to leave their classrooms and stay home.

"It all happened very suddenly for us in March. We were never really told that one particular day would be the last day," said Colleen Goddard, Educational Director at the ECC. "There was this heightened reactivity level that was deeply emotional for the parents, the children, and all of the staff," said Goddard, who has been at the center for four years as a Childhood Development Specialist. Since most of her work focuses on determining what is developmentally appropriate for the children, Goddard wished that the transition was a bit more seamless.

"The teachers never really got a full goodbye or a full transition in person, which would have better prepared that child or family for a sort of 'flawless transition' into the virtual world," she said.

ECC's tuition-free virtual classes began last Monday, Sept.



The Early Childhood Center's Administrative Team before COVID-19./ Brooklyn.Cuny.Edu

21, and are accepting students on a rolling basis. Although the scope of classes has been limited to remote learning, "there are still incredibly interactive and engaging learning activities that the teachers have created for the children," said Goddard.

The center is divided into four classrooms grouped by age: The Infants, Twos, Threes, and Fours. Lesson plans for each class provide both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments for children to thrive individually and in a team. Activities done in real time consist of meeting for story telling and show-and-

tells over breakfast or free play. Pre-recorded asynchronous lessons include read-alongs, singing and dancing sessions, and various science experiments for the Pre-K group.

"It is a daycare in the sense that we take tremendously good care of the children during the day. But I think that that is a limited perspective from the four years that I've been here," said Goddard. "The wealth of knowledge the teachers have and what they provide for the children is not only defined as care, but exceptional educational expertise."

The teachers at the center rose to the occasion, maintaining

connections with the students and keeping them engaged as much as possible. Samantha Baptiste, an educator and advocate for the ECC, indicated that the lack of social interaction was one of the main things that has changed at the center due to COVID-19 restrictions.

"They're engaged to the best they can be," said Baptiste. "We do have those one or two students who are not able to really absorb as much as we would like them to virtually. We definitely understand that. We don't pressure parents and we try to keep it flexible to operate based on the needs of the child."

With all of the

adjustments that the pandemic has forced, the center continues its mission and aims to prepare the children with all of the necessary skills they need to excel in primary school and beyond. As a teacher of the "Fours" class, Baptiste expressed her love for the center not only as an educator but as a parent.

"The children gain so much. I truly see that there are teachers and staff who care and really put their all into their work. At ECC we go above and beyond to serve the families," Baptiste said.

Theater Dept. Unveils Fall Plans

By Michela Arlia
Staff Writer

Earlier this month, the Brooklyn College Department of Theater officially unveiled their plans to continue productions for the Fall 2020 semester.

In an email sent out to all students within the department, Professor Sabra Shelly announced two virtual productions for the season, complete with directors and cast members. Both plays, *The Moors* (MFA) written by Jen Silverman and *Derecho* (BFA) written by Noelle Vinas, are set to be performed virtually on Zoom at some point this fall. The details regarding performance dates and times have yet to be announced.

“Normally we would have announced the casting for all of the fall productions this past spring but these are not normal times,” Shelly said in her address to students. “We have all been challenged by COVID -- putting health at risk and making on-campus classes, rehearsals, and performances impossible.”

The Moors is a dark comedy that tells the story of two sisters who live with their dog searching for love in the English moors. On the opposite side of the genre spectrum,

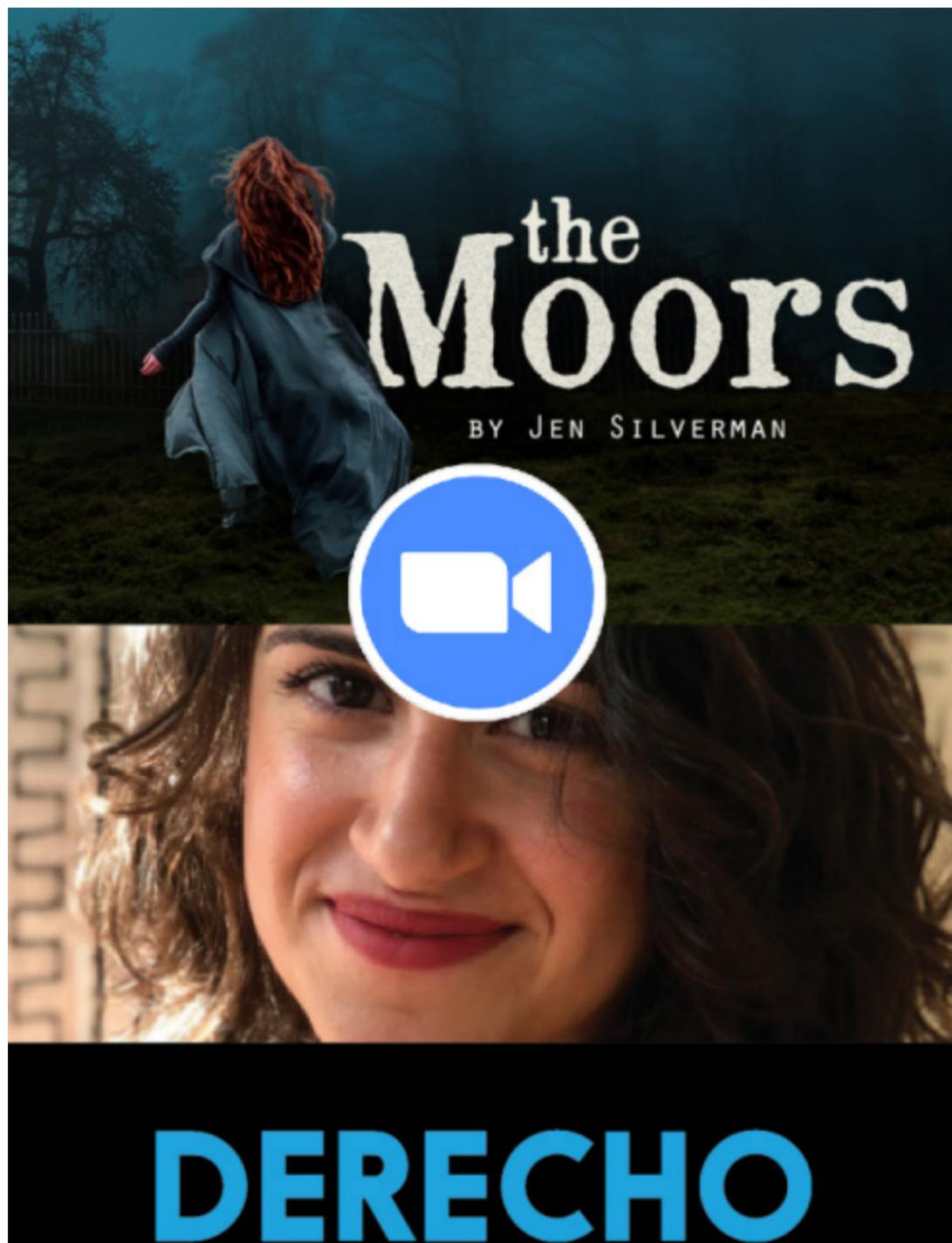
Derecho is a drama that tells the story of Eugenia Silva in her fight to help elect women of color to public office.

The impact of the pandemic took a toll on all arts programs on campus, making it difficult to finalize plans, productions, and casts across the department. Under normal circumstances, in order to prepare for productions, the selection of directors and casting happen during the semester prior to the season.

This semester’s announcement of productions came late, due in part to the pandemic, but also because of the recent list of demands from the newly formed BC Theater Student Coalition.

Earlier this summer, students of all concentrations within the department formed a coalition committee and a list of demands to ask for change within the Theater Department. These demands included changes that would allow for more BIPOC students and staff to have more of a voice and representation in the department.

One response to these demands was bringing in two BIPOC guest directors for the planned shows: Colette Robert,



“The Moors” by Jen Silverman and “Derecho” by Noelle Vinas will be performed on Zoom./ Photo edited by Humza Ahmad

who will direct *The Moors*, and Estefania Fadul, who will direct *Derecho*.

In addition to the guest directors, late announcement of shows, and student demands, Helen Richardson, the Artistic Director for the Department of Theater, announced she would step down from her position. Neither Richardson nor Kip Marsh, the chairperson of the department, responded to

Vanguard’s request for comment.

Despite this, Professor Sabra Shelly released a statement via email assuring students that the department is still taking their concerns seriously.

“We are hard at work responding to your needs and will also be posting a detailed statement addressing concerns that have been raised by students in regards to Theater Department policies as pertains to the season, artistic choices,

and respect for the needs of the diverse Brooklyn College Theater Department community,” Shelly wrote.

“We can assure you that it is our priority to continue to propose more fall productions and further audition opportunities will be announced in the very near future.”

The Citizen Artist: Performing Resistance With Winona LaDuke

By John Schilling
Arts Editor

It was an unlikely forum on Sept. 23 when 2020 Hess Scholar in Residence Winona LaDuke, as well as Brooklyn College theater alums, Katherine George and AJ Cook banded together to speak at “The Citizen Artist: Performing Resistance.” Hosted by Brooklyn College’s Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities and Prof. Laura Tesman, the event focused on how artists address both environmental and social issues in their work across multiple mediums and treated those in attendance to some unique insight on what that process is like.

The event was originally supposed to happen last spring and was centered around Tesman’s “Devising and Collaborative Creation” class which focused on producing short plays based on social issues important to the students. Because of COVID-19, the event ultimately had to be reimaged to a Zoom format.

“The idea was that Winona [LaDuke] would watch our rough drafts... and talk about art and the ways in which it is important for artists to be engaged as citizens as well as artmakers,” Tesman said. “Citizen artists are actively engaged with the world around them.”

In Tesman’s Spring 2016 class, Katherine George and AJ Cook created *Battlegrounds*, a short play about a family of the last organic farmers in a post-apocalyptic world fighting against the exaggerated idea of highly addictive “chemically-altered foods and seeds” replacing natural food entirely.

“This devising class has carried me through everything else that I have done in my entire life as an artist,” George shared. “It was interesting to come together in a community

to say what matters to us, how can we find more information, and how can we do something that is creative, engaging, informative, and moving ultimately to an audience.”

“We wanted it to reflect the disparity between how people have access to healthy kinds of food and who doesn’t have access to it,” Cook added. “We just knew we wanted to build this parable that kind of reflected those social situations.”

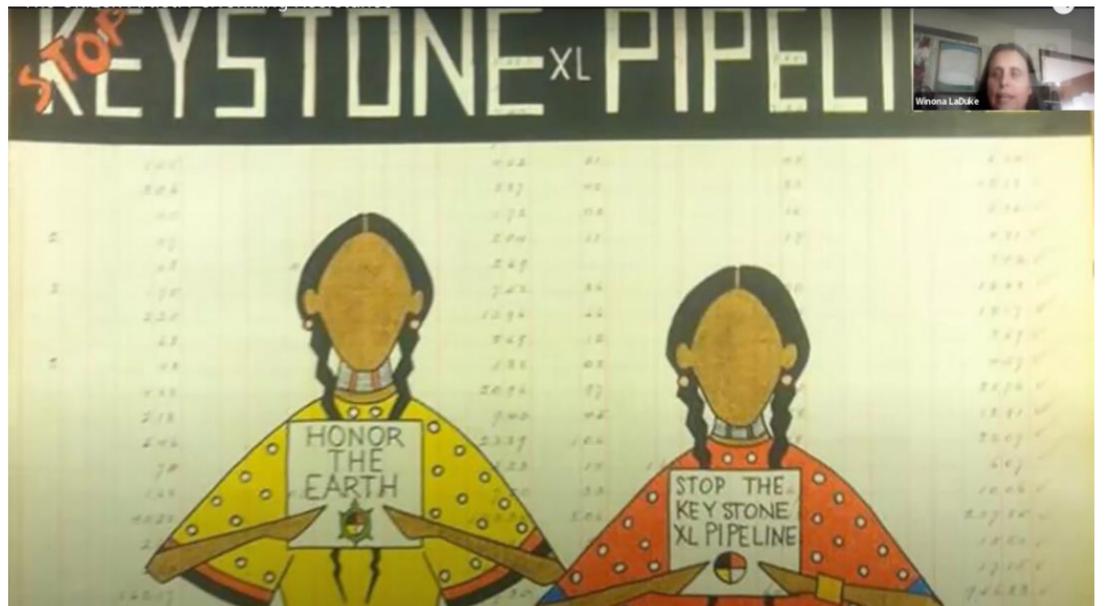
Part of the challenge for George and Cook was the limited amount of resources they had when making *Battlegrounds* “theatrical” as opposed to something you might see on television or in film. This got them thinking about the lighting, staging, and sound design elements they had available and how they could make them work as they were. Both consider this experience to have been an important lesson for them.

“I have been blessed being able to continue to create art and to say...what can I do with the resources that I have available to me right now?” George said.

“[It] really revitalized us and helped us figure out new different types of ways to attack and come at the idea or the story,” Cook added.

Concluding their presentation, George and Cook performed two scenes from *Battlegrounds*, one between two seeds arguing over being “all-natural” versus “sprayed,” as well as one between two married farmers arguing over the sustainability of their organic farming.

The panel continued with Winona LaDuke and her presentation on Native American Art and Indigenous Resistance. LaDuke, an environmentalist and economist, provided visuals of different artworks, some of which included herself.



Winona LaDuke showing students a ledger image of Indigenous Resistance by John Pepion./ **The Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for Humanities**

A majority of these pieces were ledger art or images produced on accounting paper that Indigenous peoples used to assist in the passing down of historical events via oral tradition.

“What we did is we took the historic art forms and I said let’s just record historic events or events that are going to happen with them,” LaDuke said. “And so we started commissioning artists.”

One of these artists is Michael Horse, who created a ledger artwork depicting the installation of a wind turbine in South Dakota featuring LaDuke, her son, and members of her team, as well as another piece that depicts the death of the Keystone Pipeline or what LaDuke refers to as “the slaying of the black snake” by the hands of LaDuke, other Indigenous people, and Cowboys on horses fighting in unison.

LaDuke also showed a ledger artwork created by John Pepion which depicts two women protesting the Keystone Pipeline. LaDuke can be seen in the yellow dress holding a sign that reads: “Honor the Earth.”

“If your art is recording your history, this is how we are recording it now,” LaDuke said. “These artists are doing the work for the movement and I just want to express my gratitude... for all of them.”

LaDuke also provided visuals of other resistance art pieces that did not feature her specifically, such as a “winter count” piece that was made of buffalo hide and included symbols for record keeping and the works of Isaac Murdoch, an indigenous artist from Northern Canada, whose works focus on fighting oil companies and represents the prominence of these older art forms.

Besides ledger art, resistance art can include utilitarian art forms such as clothing designs, a village of murals painted on the walls of housing projects, and the use of red coloring in pieces to represent Indigenous women.

Among the larger works that LaDuke focused on was Charles Rencountre’s “Not Afraid to Look,” a larger-than-life sculpture of man sitting with his knees up and legs out that is located at Standing Rock in the Dakotas.

“The only physical evidence that there was this resistance struggle there is this giant, giant statue,” LaDuke said. “This piece is really just a piece of resistance.”

This idea of resistance in Indigenous art not only resonates with LaDuke, but it is something that she, herself, has tried to represent. LaDuke showed those in attendance a

picture of a billboard that depicts LaDuke with five other women wearing beads and red to honor all indigenous women.

“We have five billboards in Northern Minnesota that are resistance art, and they are in the middle of really conservative areas of Trump supporters,” LaDuke revealed. “I am just happy that I get to smile on them all as they drive by.”

As the event came to a close, Winona LaDuke, Katherine George, and AJ Cook fielded questions from those in attendance including why resistance art may be met with pushback and how to stay motivated.

“When you are revealing a truth or talking about something that is not often talked about, it just simply makes people uncomfortable,” Cook warned. “Do not let people’s reception of your art be your main barometer of success.”

Based on her own experiences encountering the erasure of Indigenous people, Winona LaDuke advised students to stay motivated by making themselves visible and not being afraid to get in people’s faces.

“Being who you are is definitely a revolutionary act,” LaDuke said. “Stand for the art that you are.”

On The Record: What You Gonna Do When The Grid Goes Down?

By Allison Rapp
Opinions Editor

When I was a kid, my parents would take me with them when they voted in elections. We'd walk down the block to our local polling place, which also happened to be my elementary school. The school gymnasium would be set up with folding tables and the chairs were usually occupied by sweet retired ladies, volunteering for the afternoon.

And, of course, there were the voting booths. In those days, the booths still had curtains that you closed behind you and giant metal levers that seemed to be the same size as little grade school me. You'd pull the heavy levers down to cast your vote like the arm of a crane and just as quickly as you came, you would leave. Civic duty: check.

I was fascinated then at how routine and straightforward it all was. Here was something you just...did because it was the thing to do. For my parents, who both work in public service, the act of voting was no different than taking your trash out to the curb on the appropriate day, or stopping at a four-way intersection.

When I was 16, my high school boyfriend nonchalantly revealed to me that he did not plan to vote in the 2016 presidential election. I was mortified. Young and stupid as I was, I could not, for the life of me, wrap my head around the idea that one would simply not vote -- as if he was declining to order dessert at a restaurant. "No, thank you." We debated for three days. Ultimately, I think a significant part of my frustration stemmed from the fact that I was jealous he was old enough to vote and I wasn't. But at

the time, I had never met someone who held the viewpoint that voting was, essentially, superfluous, or that their one vote wouldn't make a difference in the outcome of any election, let alone a national one for the presidency.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan's time was up. Vice President George H.W. Bush found himself squared against Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis. Bush, knowing his audience all too well, pointed the needle towards the past, rather than the future. During his campaign, he frequently referenced the "deterioration of values" he claimed to see in the country, and that combating this would require a "change back," a regression to a "gentler America." For all intents and purposes, he took Reagan's "Let's make America great again" slogan and refurbished it.

But not if Public Enemy had anything to do with it.

"Power, equality, and we're out to get it / I know some of you ain't wid it / This party started right in 66, with a pro-black radical mix / Then at the hour of twelve, some force cut the power, and emerged from hell / It was your so called government that made this occur, like the grafted devils they were."

This was Public Enemy's second album, released in June of 1988 -- smack in the middle of the election year -- and appropriately titled *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*. They had enjoyed enormous success with their first record, *Yo! Bum Rush the Show*, which also featured an abundance of social commentary. Finally, here was a group that looked the ongoing political process in the face and said: this is not



who America is. There is only one way to go and it's forward, not back. In 1988, only 50.16% of eligible voters turned out to vote in the election -- the lowest recorded number since 1924 -- so, regardless, Bush became President of the United States.

In 2020, Public Enemy, now veterans of the game, have decided they aren't done yet. They've just released *What You Gonna Do When The Grid Goes Down?* If there was ever a time to fight the powers that be, now is it.

"White house killer, dead in lifelines / Vote this joke out, or die tryin' / Unprecedented, demented, many president'd / Nazi Gestapo dictator defended / It's not what you think, it's what you follow / Run for them jewels, drink from that bottle / Another four years gonna gut y'all hollow."

So says Public Enemy on "State of the Union (STFU)." The album covers

an incredible amount of ground -- from bashing 45, to police brutality, to the pandemic. They offer a dose of reality that a lot of other artists aren't quite willing to commit to yet. For Public Enemy, laying it all out on the table as bluntly as possible is, at the end of the day, effective. This isn't the time for poetic protest songs that ask where all the flowers have gone -- our lives are at stake. Wake up and do something or suffer the consequences. And yes, Public Enemy agrees that voting is part of that.

The truth is that I understand my high school boyfriend's side of the argument, albeit several years later. I can now wrap my head around the idea that for many people, particularly young people, the concept of voting seems almost archaic. If you remember those creaky voting booth levers, it can be easy to slip into believing that your

one vote will likely not make a difference in the long run. Sure, that may be true. But what happens when millions of young people collectively hold that belief? Now we're talking about shifting the outcome.

You do not stand to lose anything by voting. You may not celebrate the results, and you may not receive the outcome you were hoping for, but you don't stand to lose anything. By contrast, you stand to lose quite a lot by not voting.

So, what are you gonna do when the grid goes down?



OP-ED: How Did We Get Here and Where Are We Going?

By Ian Ezinga
Business Manager

Over the summer and into the fall, we have all been subjected to the recurring battle cries whose message revolves around the necessity to vote. I choose the word “subjected” carefully on account of a lot of the language we are seeing rings of the privilege we are afforded or the responsibility we have to cast our ballot this November. An unfortunate consequence of this language is that it sets an expectation that is easy for people to feel as though they can’t meet. It seems to insist that failing to meet those expectations is an act of falling short or letting other people down. I think the expectations that are set for people to put their head down and vote is a sign of an unhealthy democracy. Dissent, confusion, and anger should be encouraged and platformed, not brushed under the rug until the coast is clear.

My thinking on the subject isn’t over the question of filling out a ballot, but more about the way we talk about voting. If one cares about trans rights, immigration, climate change, and choosing a progressive judge for the supreme court, the choice is obvious and doesn’t merit too much more thought as far as I am concerned. Biden is obviously the lesser of two evils, just as Hillary was in 2016, and just as Obama was in 2008 and 2012. These progressive politicians all have traits, platform planks, opinions, and personal beliefs that are at odds with a more



Joe Biden, Democratic Candidate for President of the US./David Lienemann

just society. Obama and Hillary, for example -- if we are to expand our concern outside of our own borders -- have foreign policy records that would be laughable if it were not for the countless innocent deaths that resulted from them.

The problem then is that every four years, liberal voters are positioned in a drama where their vote is the only thing that stands in the way of a budding fascist regime. We are so easily seduced, and for good reason, by this life or death narrative that we lose sight of a reality where we can elect politicians who embody the same anger and pain as we do. For a number of issues, which I’ve mentioned, this election can be a matter of life and death. But the candidate that is positioned to represent us in those struggles doesn’t, and shouldn’t have to be a man that would be much more at peace in a

retirement community.

But alas, we lowly citizens continually have to listen to popular artists, both contributors and curators of culture, not to mention politicians, tell us that our vote counts. It does, but they often leave out the important part: that we can use it to choose someone that we don’t feel like we have to settle for.

One such writer who doesn’t have much sympathy for those who aren’t excited to vote is David Sedaris, who took to *The New Yorker* to share his piece on undecided or uncertain voters. He wrote:

“To put them in perspective, I think of being on an airplane. The flight attendant comes down the aisle with her food cart and, eventually, parks it beside my seat. “Can I interest you in the chicken?” she asks. “Or would you prefer the platter of shit with bits of broken glass in

it?”

To be undecided in this election is to pause for a moment and then ask how the chicken is cooked.”

My huge issue with this argument is the scenario in which it is framed. As the reader, we are presented with a reality that is straightforward: we are in a confined space and are offered two choices for something to eat. This framing does a good job skirting the issue that there are plenty of warranted grievances for not wanting either options. I, for one, am not a huge fan of chicken. And in lieu of having any other choice, as Sedaris sets the problem, then I am the fool for asking how the chicken is cooked.

This framing is a large part of the problem I have with the current political arena. People have real grievances. There are people living near the coasts who live in fear of the extreme weather

which is a product of the changing climate. We see people being arrested in the streets for protesting police brutality, which is an institution that is both commonplace and vigorously preserved by lawmakers. And there are also people like myself, who, while being born a white male with all of the necessary privileges in order to realize a semblance of upward mobility, haven’t had access to dental insurance all their life.

There are truly endless grievances that shape the material reality of peoples’ lives both in the United States and in countries whose fate is tethered to our own.

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BC Athletics Debuts Intramural Fantasy Football

By Carlos Daniel Martinez
Staff Writer

With intramural sports shut down, Brooklyn College has filled the gap with an intramural fantasy football league where any student can take part in joining a virtual league competing against fellow students.

As the university went online, so too did the school's intramural leagues, and the Athletic Department at BC wanted to find something to fill that void.

"Offering this league is one way we are looking to keep students competing and socializing with other students," said Alex Lang, Associate Director of Athletics and head coach for the Women's Basketball team, who helps run the league.

"So far the feedback has been great and the students that have gotten involved seem to be engaged," he said.

The league has forty-four participants sign into a league that is broken down into four parts. Two groups of 12, and two groups of 10.

As with some fantasy sports leagues that accept members who pay a fee to

enter, Lang on the other hand says that "there is no fee to play – it is free and open to all students."

Once it was apparent BC's fall sports would not take the fields, courts, and pitches, Lang and his colleagues wanted to find a way to keep the sporting spirit alive, albeit remotely.

"The idea came from brainstorming what type of activities we could offer remotely," he said. "This is one that many people are familiar with and enjoy already. I wouldn't say that it has always been a passion to begin a Fantasy Football League at B.C, but it has been a thought, and the timing now is perfect."

With 44 participants, many are supportive of the fact that the league exists at a time when people could use a time to reconnect with friends and acquaintances.

"Fantasy Football makes me see football in a different way. It brings out the competitive spirit in me," he said.

"I enjoy doing the research that allows me to excel in the league," said John Koundouroudas, a Kinesiology major in his senior year.



Brooklyn College now has an intramural fantasy football league where students can join a virtual league. / BrooklynCollegeAthletics.com

For some students, the league was a way for them to get involved in the BC school spirit.

"During this time, I've found it hard to join clubs, especially since this is my first year. Fantasy Football became an easy way for me to feel involved and connected with other students who have similar interests. I appreciate that Brooklyn College organized

this for us!" said Lauren Zami, a freshman student also active in the online league. One of her favorite aspects of it is seeing all the planning come together, "... like before the draft and seeing those efforts come into fruition throughout the season," she said.

For those interested on how to join for next year or have any questions, they should contact Alex Lang

or Sports Information Assistant of Scheduling and Intramurals, Tim Slakas.

While the window to enter into an NFL fantasy league may be closed, those who are interested can at least expect to join the NBA fantasy league when it is fully announced to everyone when the new season comes around.

OP-ED: How Did We Get Here and Where Are We Going?

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When these grievances aren't embodied by a candidate, we should not have to be expected to put our head down and vote for them. We should be free and encouraged to criticize their records and demand that they cast their influence on issues that we all experience the impact of.

The nature of progressive

politics is embedded in the understanding that change is a process and that real progress isn't achieved within a day's work, let alone a presidential term. Joe Biden is at the end of a movement that has serious demands. His record and his current posturing simply does not embody the anger and frustration that most Americans feel. While I won't be withholding my vote from Biden, I will

continue to be a harsh critic of him and actively resist attempts to frame the choice between him and Trump as the only thing we could have done.

If we are to sit down with regular Americans who aren't crazy about the idea of voting, in most cases it is not for a lack of caring. The people of this country are intimately familiar with pain and the feeling of getting the raw end of the deal. Instead of telling them that the only way out

of their plight is to vote for Joe, we should listen to what their problems are and put real pressure, not just posting on Instagram, on the politicians who most directly determine the form of our country.

To humor Sedaris one last time: if we are presented with only one palatable option, we should be asking ourselves "how did we get here?" What kind of airline could even offer a plate of defecation garnished with broken

glass? Whichever kind, I think it would be well warranted to ask how the other dish is cooked. Bearing our well deserved skepticism, we can then talk to our neighbors about what a better menu could look like. Then maybe, once we've drafted a more inclusive program, we can start asking the real questions like "where are we going?"

This is Getting (Darn)Old: What Are the Jets Doing?

By Jose Rohdin
Staff Writer

The Jets have once again started their season 0-3, getting beaten up by the Bills, 49ers, and now the Colts. Even though the Bills and 49ers are projected to be playoff teams, the way the Jets were beaten does not bode well for the future.

Last season, it seemed like the New York Jets had hope for the future, they ended their season 6-2 in their last eight games. That is still pretty good even though the schedule was pretty easy, only playing two playoff teams, the Bills, who they beat in the final week, and the Ravens, who beat them by 21. Still, a win is a win, and after only winning one game in the first eight games, those wins were worth something.

When the draft came along, the Jets had a decent draft. They picked up Mekhi Becton as the new starting left tackle and selected Denzel Mims, a wide receiver that many scouts loved. With a solid draft, it looked like

the jets were on the rise.

However, after a lengthy contract dispute with Pro Bowl safety Jamal Adams, the Jets decided to trade him for two future first-round picks, a third-round pick, and safety Bradley McDougald. The trade seemed like an even-sided deal, other than that Adams was essentially the Jets entire defense last season and was the key reason for that 6-2 record at the end of the season.

Without Adams in the back of the defense causing havoc, the defense has taken a big hit. Last season, the team allowed 22.1 points per game, and in the final eight games allowed just 13.8 points per game, even though they allowed the Ravens to score 42 points.

This season, the Jets are already allowing 31.3 points per game, tied for fifth highest in the league. On top of that, the defense keeps giving up big plays, which is usually caused by poor defensive execution.

And on top of that, the offense is also



Sam Darnold./CBS Sports

struggling, and offense is supposed to be Head Coach Adam Gase's strong suit. Gase was specifically brought on to be an offensive-minded head coach and help quarterback Sam Darnold grow into his full potential. However, Gase and Darnold have yet to find one consistent offensive target, and the best option they had was Le'Veon Bell, who picked up a hamstring injury in Week One.

The numbers also show the Jets offensive struggles, averaging 12.3 points per game,

the worst in the league. They have only mustered up four drives ending with a touchdown, and their offense only stays on the field for an average of 2 minutes per drive. With players Braxton Berrios leading the team in receiving yards, receptions, and touchdowns, and Frank Gore as the primary running back, it makes sense that the offense is struggling.

The fact of the matter is that we don't know who to blame for the Jets troubles. Does it fall on Gase's horrible play

calling? Are Darnold's glimpses of being a great player just glimpses, or do his struggles overshadow them? Is it the responsibility of new General Manager Joe Douglas, who had a solid first draft, but still traded a generational talent at safety, or are the effects of former General Manager Mike Maccagnan's horrible roster-building still having effects? The thing that we do know is that the Jets will have a long season, and need a lot of help to right the ship.

Vinny The Goat

by Mo Muhsin and Gabrielle Toro Vivoni



Hot Water: NBA Finals: Lakers V. Heat

By Conrad Hoyt
Sports Editor

The LA Lakers and Miami Heat are primed to face each other in what should be a historic 2020 NBA Finals. These finals, in addition to being the only ones ever to be played in October, come packed with storylines.

First off, it's LeBron James' 10th NBA Finals. Perhaps even more impressive than this feat is the realization that he first led a team to the finals all the way back in 2007, and is still in his prime 13 years later. But what team helped him to a second, third, fourth, and fifth NBA Finals? What team with savvy roster construction and a culture built upon hard work and dedication helped LeBron win his first and second championships? The Heat of course!

LeBron went to the Finals with the Miami Heat all four years he was there from 2010 to 2014, and won it all in the middle two years. But, as we all know, the story is written: Bron took his talents back home that fateful Summer of 2014, and delivered on his promise to bring a chip home to Cleveland in 2016.

While Heat fans were dejected, rational ones thanked LeBron for what he brought to the franchise and there was no love lost. But President of the Heat, former coach of the Lakers and Knicks, and fabled Godfather of the NBA, Pat Riley, had a different feeling when LeBron left the team.

"When LeBron made that call, I saw a dynasty fly out the window," Riley said. "I didn't blame him, but I knew that was a 10-year team. It was just a sad day for me and for



It is LeBron James' 10th NBA Finals./Brandon Dill/Getty Images

our franchise because I wanted that dynasty."

Now, six years later, LeBron is on an even different team, though still probably the best player in the world, and heading to another NBA Finals.

But Riley and the Heat did not sit back and whimper when James left South Beach. On the contrary, they kept together a culture that requires its players stay in shape, play hard consistently, and always try to win. There is no tanking with the Heat, and ultimately, in addition to being located in one of the most popular U.S. cities, a culture like that wins free agents' respect. Enter Jimmy Butler.

Butler left a Philadelphia 76ers team that believed it had the chance to win it all this year. He was previously traded from a Minnesota Timberwolves team that he believed did not respect and value

him. That indignancy and lack of effort he saw from the team led to extreme outbursts that labeled Butler as "a problem."

But Butler just always wanted to be on a team that accepted him and wanted to win just as much as he did. And he found that this season with the Miami Heat.

Butler, all-star center Bam Adebayo, rookie Tyler Herro, and veteran Andre Iguodala make up a team of hardened veterans and young guns with something to prove. The Heat have, in fact, played better this postseason than they did during the regular season, despite being heavy underdogs to come out of the conference when the season and postseason started. Ultimately, already exceeding expectations, the Heat have little to lose.

The team is a staunch defensive unit, bolstered by Adebayo in the middle and Butler on

the perimeter. They have exceptional 3-point shooters in Herro and Duncan Robinson, a deep bench, and players to throw at LeBron James.

The main thing is that they have to go up against two superstars, two titans the league has never seen play together before now. The Heat could maybe stop LeBron James for a half here, and a quarter there, but could they stop James and Anthony Davis? Highly unlikely, as no team yet in the loaded Western Conference has been able to.

In 15 games, Anthony Davis is averaging 28.8 points on 57.1 percent shooting, 9.3 rebounds, 3.6 assists, 1.3 steals, and 1.3 blocks per game. After only reaching the second round of the playoffs once with New Orleans before this year, these playoffs have been a coming-out party for Davis as a playoff performer. Because as we all know, the greats

only up their play during the postseason, not fold under the pressure and increase in talent.

After coming off a dominant gentleman's sweep in the second round against the favorites Milwaukee, and beating the Celtics in the ECF in convincing fashion, Miami should fear no one. But the Lakers, fresh off winning each of their series in five games, are rested and ready for the moment. Pat Riley vs. the historic Lakers. Pat Riley vs. LeBron James. LeBron James vs. Jimmy Butler. Bam Adebayo vs. Anthony Davis. This series is rife with intriguing matchups and storylines and all bets are off once the ball goes up in game one.

We can't wait for Wednesday and to see whose legacy is built this October.