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**THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE**

# **VANGUARD**

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## **TAKING A KNEE**



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PHOTO CREDIT: Ryan Schwach





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# SVP Gilbert Updates Students On Facilities

By Maya Schubert  
*Staff Writer*  
Reporting Assistance  
from Ryan Schwach

Last Thursday, Brooklyn College students received an email from Alan Gilbert, the senior vice president for finance and administration, detailing campus improvement initiatives developing over the spring semester, including an online service for submitting financial aid documents, the update of a feature on the BC Navigator App, and renovations on the library’s clock tower.

First among the announcements was the Office of Financial Aid’s expected introduction of Dynamic Forms, an online outlet for uploading, submitting, and electronically signing financial aid documents.

Gilbert also verified the program of extended library hours during finals week, in which the first floor will remain open and staffed 24/7. The program was first tested last semester, and was met with a warm reception from students.

“I think it’s great,” said Pooja Solayman, a freshman. “If you’re a student with an evening class, an early final, and a long commute, you can just take a blanket and sleep a little between studying, then wake up, grab a coffee, and get to the final.”

The e-mail also highlighted a pre-existing feature on the BC Navigator App called BC Fix-it, now known as BC Fix-it 2.0, which allows students to remotely report general



Photo Credit: Ryan Schwach

restroom issues so that facilities staff can attend to fixtures quickly. Instructions for using BC Fix-it 2.0, which will launch in several weeks, have already been placed on the backs of stall doors.

Sara Byrnes, another freshman, had “no idea” that BC Fix-it existed, but said she would probably use it now that she knew about it.

“I go to the bathroom all the time,” she said. “Leave it to me - I’ll look out for it.”

The administration also confirmed several ongoing construction plans, including the restoration of the library clock tower’s dome and the addition of night lighting “...so that the tower will continue to serve as a beacon for the campus and remain an icon,” said Gilbert in the email.

The administration has also initiated an extensive project on Ingersoll and Roosevelt Halls, focused on assessing, developing, and implementing the buildings’ capabilities. In addition, the long renovated Whitman Hall is expected to open at some point this semester.

In partnership with the BC’s Health and Wellness Initiative, the school announced that health professionals will host presentations about practical wellness habits, and promised details in future announcements. Additionally, the West Quad track will reopen to students, faculty, and staff on April 1, offering the hours of Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday, 12 to 3 p.m.

Gilbert lastly provided students with BC’s

technical support resources, listing ITS Network’s number, 718-951-4357, and inserting links to training sites for Office 365 and Dropbox Business, as well as a link to a page on BC’s website with instructions on activating student emails.

In a response to the email Undergraduate Student Government President Alyssa Taylor increased the reach by posting the email to Facebook on the Brooklyn College: In the Know 2 page. “It is important that we as students know our voice is heard and we are happy to see the administration is taking steps towards improvement. We look forward to hearing about further renovations and enhancements to our campus,” she told the Vanguard.



# Whitehead Cafe Faces Student Scrutiny

By Natalina Zieman  
*News Editor*

The condition of the cafe on the first floor of Whitehead Hall has been raising some questions from students concerning the upkeep of the area.

Students became upset when the Starbucks closed down at the beginning of this semester due to lack of sales.

“It was convenient,” said Nayelis Vargas, a Journalism and Media Studies major. “When it closed I was pretty upset, because we have a lot of students that work long shifts, and are in school all day for hours on end but they don’t want to walk across campus, and no one wants to spend ten dollars for a cup of coffee or tea from the actual Starbucks.”

But because Starbucks at the Library Cafe was not attracting enough customers, it was shut down.

“With one Starbucks already located in the main cafeteria and another store just off-campus, the vendor was not getting enough customers at the Whitehead Café to remain open,” stated Alan Gilbert, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and



The Whitehead Cafe./ Ryan Schwach

the head of the college’s Facilities department.

Many of the issues in the cafe arise from lack of attention or resources from Facilities, where there are several desktop computers that have not been working for months, and also a seating area that has been closed off for nearly a year. The only reported reasons for the seating

section being closed off were from students, saying it was because of a bed bug sighting in the specific area.

“That was at least a year ago,” said Andrea Di Salvio, a Secondary Education and History major. The closing off of the seating area took away a decent amount of seating space for students to hang out.

“We are aware that there

are seats that are broken and in need of repair. There is a plan in place to have them fixed as soon as possible,” Gilbert said.

There are several desktops, in the Whitehead Cafe, that have not been properly working, or have been working in general.

“Whitehead Cafe is an area designated for students to get their work done on

campus,” argued Abigail Jade, Health Sciences major. “There should be no reason why forty percent of the computers don’t work in a facility that caters to students who need to use a computer.”

“Due to heavy use, we have worked with ITS to have some repaired, and others will be in working order in the very near future,” said Gilbert.

With all of the complaints from students about the area, which is specifically designed for student use, attention from facilities still lacks as well as upkeep. Facilities claimed they have no information concerning the Whitehead Cafe, which may also mean there is no plan to better the condition of this student area.

“There needs to be more communication and accounting,” stated Bruce Crane, a former editor of the now-defunct student newspaper Excelsior. “These spaces should not be wasted as students need a rest spot from the computers,” he said in regard to the closing of areas that could be used by students.



The Whitehead Cafe./ Ryan Schwach



# Club Funding Council Changes Rules, Makes it Easier to Reject Funding

By Ian Ezinga  
Staff Writer

The Undergraduate Student Government Club Funding Council has a new set of rules that will make it easier to deny student clubs' funding requests. The council passed the four new rules on Thursday, February 13, and they are designed to allocate funding for student clubs more appropriately.

"We just want to make sure the funds we give out are going to benefit the student body at large

amount determined each semester and is sometimes at risk of running out before the semester is finished.

"The system we have right now is very inefficient. It is not transparent enough," said Nadav Raz, who is a junior member of the Funding Council and was in favor of all the rule changes. Raz also proposed a fifth rule change which would require clubs to avoid using single-use plastic. While the other four passed unanimously,

of club funding being put towards a poorly attended event.

"The reason we passed the proposals is so we could hold the clubs more accountable because they are given money from everyone's tuition," continued Raz. His concern is largely representative of an opinion which demands that more attention is paid to how student's money is best used.

Ortega, while concerned about allocating funds more fairly, put more emphasis

amounts of money for poorly attended events. The first of these requires clubs to provide accurate attendance records of past events in order to receive a grant for an upcoming event. In conjunction with this, clubs must provide evidence of an attempt at marketing the event to all of, or as much of the Brooklyn College student body as possible.

Designed to cut down on waste, these two rules will reign in spending on more mature clubs which may be frequently

thousands of dollars on medical instruments which only sees the hands of a few students, this rule hopes to curb spending which doesn't attempt to help the student body at large.

The fourth rule should not be much of a concern for smaller or newer clubs, but hopes to create a more regimented process for allocating grants in addition to a club's semesterly budget. The rule requires that clubs exhaust their initial budget before being able to request a grant from

**"We just want to make sure the funds we give out are going to benefit the student body at large rather than benefiting only a couple of club members or e-board members." – Stephanie Ortega**

rather than benefiting only a couple of club members or e-board members," said Stephanie Ortega, treasurer of the Undergraduate Student Government, and head of the Funding Council.

These changes were brought about through a culmination of occurrences which the council saw as inefficient at the least, and in some cases, inappropriate. This poor allocation of funding takes the form of leftover food, merchandise for just a few club members, and thousands of dollars spent each semester on events that are poorly attended. This funding comes from a finite

this last one was voted down out of fear of being too large of an inconvenience.

Raz spoke with the Vanguard last semester about a \$1,250 grant that was approved for Turning Point USA, a conservative organization on campus. The money was requested to help pay conservative pundit and singer Joy Villa's speaking fee in a planned visit to campus in December 2019. Her talk was cancelled last minute because there was not a big enough perspective turnout. While the money was returned, this incident was nearly a case of a significant allocation

on the limited amount of funding available and how quickly it can be spent. "These rules were put into place because the amount of money we have for grants is limited and we can't approve all grants," she said after the February 25th meeting, which was the first to have these rules in effect.

Whether these rules effectively hold clubs more accountable or are more simply designed to conserve the limited amount of funding available, they will affect how student clubs will receive their future funding.

Two of the four rules are directly aimed at clubs receiving large

spending more than they need to on events. An exception is in place for new clubs who have yet to host any events and cannot provide the required sign-in rosters. With a continual flood of new clubs, this exception is important but puts the burden of allocation more on instinct than on rigorous funding regulations.

The other two rules work to cut down on club spending. One of the new rules puts a cap on how much a club can receive for items which only benefit specific club members such as the e-board. Whether it is excessive spending on custom hoodies or

the Funding Council. This change will allow for a more straightforward allocation approach that does not leave too much room for clubs to receive access funding.

Ortega's concerns about running out of money and Nav's enthusiasm about creating more transparency can create a more equitable funding allocation system. While these rules are now in effect, it may take some more time and further regulating to create a completely fair and efficient club funding policy.

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# BC Holds Film Screening in Memory of Japanese-American Internment

By Chaya Gurkov  
Staff Writer

“Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States and forswear any form of allegiance to the Emperor of Japan?” This was the 28th question of the loyalty questionnaire that awaited the Japanese in the internment camp. It mattered not if you had been a U.S. citizen your whole life, or whether you ever had any loyalty at all to the Emperor of Japan, refusal to respond affirmatively to this query would make you disloyal to the United States. This was discussed in Konrad Aderer’s *Resistance at Tule Lake* in a We Stand Against Hate screening that took place in the Brooklyn College library on Feb. 19.

Brooklyn College paid tribute to the Day of Remembrance for the first time in recent memory, commemorating the time when Japanese-Americans were told to dispose of their

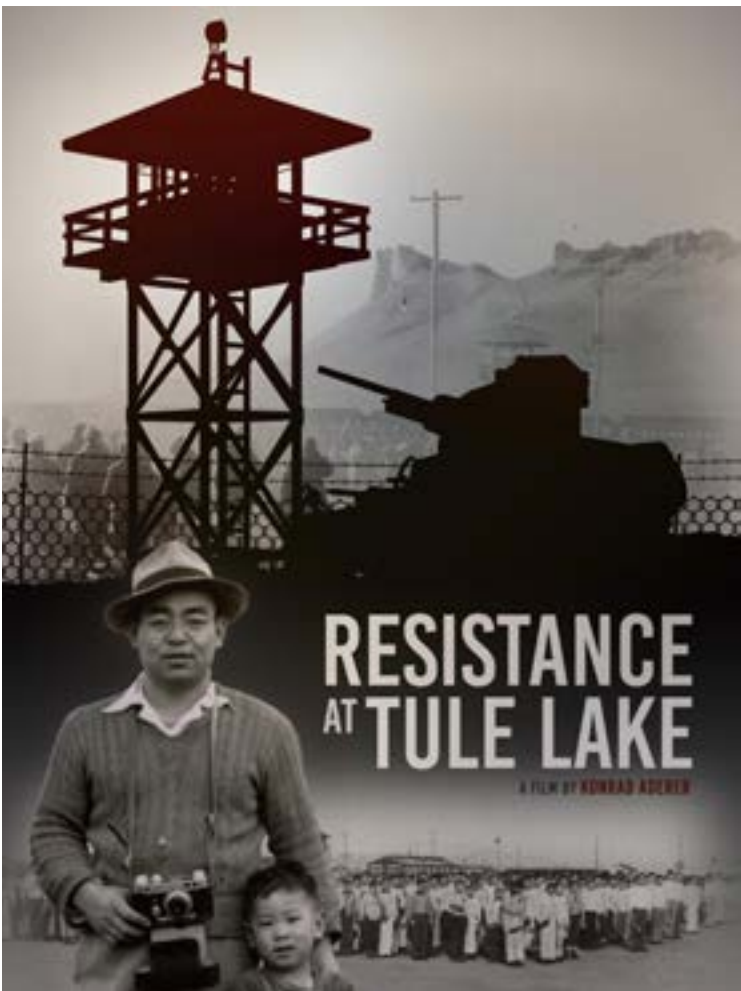
belongings and take only what they could carry and evacuated their homes for internment camps. Filmmaker Konrad Aderer screened his documentary this past Wednesday with the objective of changing a dominating narrative of non-resistance on behalf of the detainees.

“At this very moment, citizens of our society are having their citizenship rights questioned, denied and in some cases revoked,” said Ken Gold, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences. Gold acknowledged that it’s important to remember the acquiescing of the majority because the bureaucratic method of assessing loyalty from the detainees came after the Executive Order from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, that relocated thousands of Americans of Japanese ancestry into military zones on the west coast. With the bombing of Pearl Harbour freshly seared into America’s collective

consciousness, the President’s intention was clear when ordering this-preventing espionage on American shores.

The Loyalty Questionnaire came from the War Department and the War Relocation Authority (WRA) to assess the loyalty of all the adults in the WRA camps so they could first prepare to draft the adult male population in camp and secondly, to release “loyal” Japanese Americans into non-restricted interior states. But some questions wreaked havoc among the detainees, question 28 being chief among them.

“I was a citizen and they were questioning me,” said a former Tule Lake inmate in the documentary. He wasn’t the only one who felt so, 12,000 Japanese Americans were labeled “disloyal” for employing the American method of protesting against the gross overstepping of their constitutional



rights. Tule Lake Segregation Center became a symbol of defiance. The inmates there refused to accept the mistreatment they were receiving, despite judgment pressing down on them from the rest of America and from within the Japanese American community.

Aderer, whose grandparents were incarcerated at Topaz internment camp in Utah, felt the need to create this documentary to “project back” and encouraged viewers to think about what life was like for the people who went through this.





# A Day with the Folks of Brooklyn

## Lifelong Learning

By Moises Taveras  
*Features Editor*

On a Monday morning, I'm typically out of bed for class at 10:30. This Monday, however I was on campus at nine in the morning for a special class in SUBO. You see, on Monday mornings at Brooklyn College, before most anyone else is around, a group of senior citizens descends upon the Student Center and take part in a series of classes not unlike the ones your average student is taking right across the street. Well except the one that I was there for. Because that morning, I was joining the folks at Brooklyn Lifelong Learning to take part in, you guessed it, international folk dancing.

Brooklyn Lifelong Learning is an educational program for senior citizens that strives for so much more than that. Despite the crowd that Brooklyn Lifelong Learning does attract and cater to, it is actually open to anyone willing to register.

"We really provide mental stimulation, education, cultural enrichment and social enrichment for older people," according to Rona Goldwitz, a board member of BLL who acted as my guide through the folk dancing class. "Not everybody is a senior center person, which seems to be the general answer given by politicians as for what should people do after they retire."

Upstairs, I was greeted by many older women who were warming up for their dance class. A few rushed introductions later and after putting down my things, I took

a seat in the corner, notepad in hand ready to take notes. Quickly enough though, I was invited to join them and before I knew exactly why I had, I was holding hands with the group in a circle doing the Cupid Shuffle, led by Elaine Sohon, a longtime folk dancer who had only started teaching in the last two years.

Brooklyn Lifelong Learning aims to provide a well-rounded and affordable schooling that keeps their attendants busy and constantly engaged across various subject matters. Dwindling space on campus has made the organization, which is a non-profit, have to rent the spaces they use. In order to keep costs low, everyone who teaches there works as a volunteer. This has promoted a lack of a hierarchy to the point where Sohon referred to herself and her dance students as "peers."

While it seemed at first like everyone's attendance of the class was for recreation, after speaking to members of the class provided countless examples of other classes, lectures, and activities that they and others engaged in as part of the program's very involved offerings.

Michelle Isaacson, an attendee and BC alum, told me that she deliberately sought out the folk dancing class because she had taken it earlier in life and was in traveling companies in her twenties and thirties. She found herself looking for an outlet when someone at her local temple informed her about the specific course at BLL, despite her knowing of



Elaine Sohon leading her folk dancing class. / Moises Taveras

the organization for a long time. Isaacson has found more than just an expressive outlet in folk dancing..

"I think it's the interesting music," Isaacson said. "It's a way of learning about the diverse cultures, really."

Folk dancing isn't all Isaacson or anyone does at BLL though. She and a number of others also take a science course that meets once a week to read the science section of the New York Times and discuss the latest developments. The course is led by Dr. Leslie Jacobson, a professor in Health and Nutrition Sciences and a "founding mother" of BLL, according to their schedule. The schedule was extensive, charting a semester's worth of classes pertaining to learning other languages, acting classes, film classes, reading workshops, and book clubs, to name a few.

As much as this may sound like your traditional schooling, the folks who attend maintain that BLL isn't, due in large part to a less rigid structure. "This is why Lifelong Learning is nice. Just straight learning and sharing and peoples knowledge," said Isaacson, speaking to the lack of tests and homework, the common stressors of a college student. "I feel like going

back to school, you know, without that pressure is really wonderful."

Lectures with guest speakers, including one which especially caught my eye featuring Dr. Robert Cherry, a professor at BC, presenting a counter-argument to the New York Times' 1619 Project, are also part of the schedule and help keep those who attend on their toes. Even now as prep for the discussion, a number of BLL attendees are reading The 1619 Project to have a proper back and forth.

I was able to step into a short story class where about thirty seniors (approximately double the attendance of the folk dance class) were gathered and discussing the short story "Children as Enemies" by Ha Jin. While I might've walked into this discussion blindly, it was clear that these students hadn't. In a form almost foreign to me as an undergrad student, they were...having a lively conversation, successfully building off of each other's points, leveraging their real world experience. I couldn't believe my eyes.

Goldwitz spoke to me about this very thing, saying "My first year that I started, I took a class. It was two semesters on Don Quixote, it was being given by a professor at the college, William

Childers, and he was at the same time giving the same exact class to undergraduates. And he was always amazed at the difference because not only did we not ask him if something was gonna be on the test because we didn't have tests but also as older people we bring a lifetime of experience sometimes to discussions."

I'm no stranger to senior citizens taking life into their own hands where others would take it from them. But getting a firsthand look at a school for seniors that exists on its own, within the margin of the college, which seemed to be doing well was remarkable. "We are a hidden treasure of Brooklyn," Goldwitz couldn't help but say. I couldn't help but concur.

Walking out of SUBO, I remembered how readily I got up at the end of the dance workshop and couldn't believe how well and true the people at Brooklyn Lifelong Learning had caught me. Nobody looked to me, waved me over, or excitedly called for me to join in. The exhaustion that weighed on me that morning had quickly given way to an excitement at the novelty of the experience and the welcoming ambiance of a community of seniors not just excited to learn, but successfully making it a joy.



# From BC to ABC: Jehosephat Bozeman Gives Advice On TV Trade

By John Schilling  
Staff Writer

It was less than a year ago that Jehosephat Bozeman was a Television and Radio student, walking the halls of Brooklyn College with dreams of working in the industry. On February 18th, Bozeman, walked these same halls once again, but this time as an alumnus who currently works for the live operations team at ABC News. Bozeman was invited back to his old stomping grounds by Michael Sarrao and the Magner Center to share his experiences and give some advice to students interested in pursuing a career in Television.

Bozeman's connection to the Magner Center began in 2016 as an undergrad when he first met with Michael Sarrao to review his resume. Bozeman, a Television and Radio major at the time, had worked as a Post-Production Assistant and Intern for HBO Documentaries in 2015.

After noticing Bozeman's work at HBO

earned only a brief mention at the bottom of the resume, Sarrao encouraged him to make it more prominent. "We need to change this. We need to have a summary that states that you worked on an HBO Documentary. That's the first sentence they're going to see," Sarrao told Bozeman. Ultimately, this change helped Bozeman get hired as a Studio Technician at A&E Network, a job he did not enjoy and left after eight months.

"I didn't like it," revealed Bozeman. "I was aggressively applying for a lot of editing positions to get in the door. That was my thinking."

A few months later, Bozeman got a phone call from Brian Miller at ABC News, who asked him if he wanted to talk over the phone. Bozeman suggested that they meet in person instead. "That was just me taking initiative," Bozeman said laughing. "I'm better with face-to-face contact." Soon after, Bozeman was hired to work at ABC News and revealed that it was his ability to



Michael Sarrao (left) and Jehosephat Bozeman (right). / John Schilling

use a switchboard that ultimately landed him the job, a skill he acquired from his experience at the A&E Network.

"You have to be a jack of all trades. That's what they are looking for. You have to know how to edit a video within five minutes as well as learning how to photoshop in five minutes, as well as check the audio and switch," Bozeman said. "You have to take a Multicam class. You need control room experience, and you need to know every duty inside that control room."

In order to be successful at ABC News, Bozeman expressed how vital it is to learn certain software programs. "For ABC, you have to learn Avid Media Composer, as well as a little bit of photoshop," Bozeman said. "Start Adobe After Effects first and then jump into Avid."

At ABC News, Bozeman's job ranges from streaming live content for programming to editorial work and fact-checking. This includes working to make sure there is no dead space between content, providing graphics for live events, writing the captions, and working with an investigative team to ensure accuracy in reporting and avoid libel.

Bozeman cited the recent death of Kobe Bryant as an example of when things go wrong. "Someone in the company got suspended for reporting Kobe's whole family died. That wasn't true, and he was handled with disciplinary actions," Bozeman said.

In addition to these challenges, Bozeman revealed the added stress that comes from unpredictable work hours. Despite having

a set work schedule at ten hours for four days a week, Bozeman reminded the students in attendance that he could be called in at any time. "Do not expect a work-life balance because you're in news and news can break at any given moment," Bozeman said. "It's very unpredictable. If an explosion were to happen, everyone is in tomorrow." During the recent impeachment hearings of President Donald Trump, Bozeman revealed he had to work for almost a week straight and overnight on occasion.

At the end, both Bozeman and Sarrao offered advice to students on how to be successful in this industry and set yourself apart from the rest.

"I tell students you have to be an entrepreneur for yourself. You have to develop your own content," Sarrao advised.

Bozeman agreed saying, "That's the best way to go. Do not be so closed off. Be open to everything around you."

"This is a very competitive field. It's who you know that can get you in, but it's what you know that keeps you in."



Jehosephat Bozeman and Michael Sarrao (center) with students. / BC Magner Career Center



# Black Student Union Gathers For Day of Unity

By Gabriela Flores  
Staff Writer

The Black Student Union chapter at Brooklyn College hosted an event alongside black leaders from Long Island University, John Jay, and public organizations to create a safe space for black and brown students to speak on common interests.

“We aim to educate others on the black and brown experience of students,” said Amina Taylor, Vice President of the BSU at Brooklyn College, “as well as create platforms to ease the oppressive sanctions placed on people of color in our community,” she said.

Founded in 1968 in response to the fight for civil rights, BSU was created by the University of Kansas to provide a safe environment for black students to uplift their community on college grounds. BSU was established at Brooklyn College in 2013, where members continue to preserve black unity.

Through open-table discussions, attendees spoke with one another on police brutality, mass incarceration, the relationship between black men and women, and other pressing issues, such as relationship with law enforcement.

”There is a reality out there between policing and black people,” said Attorney Zamir Ben-Dan from The Legal Aid Society, “I try to find the right balance between protecting yourself legally and protecting yourself physically from being harmed by the police,” he said.

In 2016, the Census Bureau recorded an estimated 40 million black people living in America. According to the NAACP, in 2014, African Americans made up 34% of the 6.8 million imprisoned population. African Americans are more than five times more likely to be incarcerated than white people. To reduce the chances of detainment, Ben-Dan advised the audience to keep their words few and respectful. If need be, the person in question should lie, unless asked for their name, address, and date of birth. “I would say lying is the worst policy when it comes to dealing with police. Honesty is the second-worst policy,” said Ben-Dan.

Once verbal interaction proceeds to a physical search, with “reasonable suspicion” of a crime, you are allowed not to give your consent. Under the Right to Know Act, NYPD officers must inform



Participants in the 2020 BSU conference 2020. / Gabriela Flores

you of this right; but Level three Reasonable Suspicion to Stop states that permission to frisk a suspect is not needed if the suspect is believed to be “armed and dangerous.”

The subject of racial profiling carried into a conversation of the communal responsibility black women and men must have in protecting one another. Recently, Gayle King asked former WNBA player Lisa Leslie about the complications of preserving Kobe Bryant’s legacy despite his rape charge. To discussion leader Daiquan Llewellyn, President of John Jay BSU, King was “pushing” Leslie to speak negatively about the late athlete.

“This is what society is trying to do to our black men. They are trying to criminalize them,” said Llewellyn. “We have

to make sure we are protecting our brothers and sisters, protecting our women and men.”

The audience also shared their thoughts on the possible solutions for black women and men to establish mutual respect. Most female attendees shared that men of color must become more responsive in situations where women of color are targeted, harassed, or violated.

“I do feel like black men need to tap into their leadership when it comes to defending their counterparts,” said Charlexia Rey, president of BC’s BSU, “because if you are not going to protect your own, who else is going to do it? I show up for black women and black men. I show up for everyone.”

Earlier, a discussion of the history of the n-word created a debate on its appropriateness in modern-day slang and hip-hop culture. During a Kendrick Lamar concert in Alabama, a white fan was brought on stage to rap along to “M.A.A.D City.” During her performance, the 15-year-old rapped the n-word, to which Lamar stopped and addressed her. The participants collectively agreed with the rapper’s actions, and that the n-word should be off-limits for white people. However, the

question of whether the n-word is unifying or insulting to the black community created some polarization.

“We did not create it. It did not come from our language, it didn’t come from our positive history, from our ancestry,” said Rey. “It was imposed on us as a method of oppression.”

On the other hand, to those who apply the term colloquially in multi-racial friend groups, the difference in spaces is essential. “Correction is required; because social acceptance is just the nature of your friendship, but that person may have a misconception,” said New York Life associate Schemia Rowan. “You still have to take responsibility to let the person know it is not acceptable to say in other environments.”

In speaking through their perspectives, vocal contributors created a mutual understanding of their role as members of the black community: to unify and push forward a plan for social change.

“We are not monolithic. We like to do different things,” said Latyna M. Humphrey, President of the Central Ohio Young Black Democrats. “But we have to build our agenda together.”



Amina Taylor leading a talk on use of the N-word./ Gabriela Flores



# Theater Review: West Side Story



Photo Credit: DKC/O&M

By John Schilling  
*Staff Writer*

To make old new again. These are words that truly resonate with Broadway’s newest production of West Side Story, but the show is not as new as you think. When I saw the production for the first time during previews last month, I had no idea what was in store.

West Side Story is no stranger to Broadway, having originally opened in 1957 with a book by

Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein, and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. It focuses on an ongoing turf war between two gangs known as “the Jets,” and “the Sharks,” with a love story between a former Jet named Tony and the sister of a Shark named Maria being the main focus of the plot.

In this revival, directed by Ivo van Hove, all of that is unchanged but molded to reflect our modern society. The

show now features a diverse cast, (including 33 actors making their Broadway debuts) allowing for the gangs to be less about Puerto Rican Americans versus White Americans, but more about two gangs in a territory dispute. In fact, the five lead roles are played by persons of color, a refreshing departure from past productions.

As a whole, the cast is phenomenal, and the chemistry among them is the glue that holds the show together. Jordan Dobson (an understudy filling in for the show’s injured star, Isaac Cole Powell) plays a passionate, angelic Tony that complements Shereen Pimentel’s strong and determined Maria. When they share the stage, you can really feel the love the characters have for each other. Similarly, the tension between Ahmad Simmons as Riff (another understudy filling in for an injured actor) and Amar Ramasar as Bernardo is equally felt. Their scenes together are full of heart-beating tension that provides action and excitement for the show.

The show’s biggest credit are the bold, creative choices made to make this production something new and unprecedented. This includes the use of actual sprinklers to create rain and two small sets designed by Jan Versweyveld, as well as Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker’s choreography for both extravagant dance numbers and simple dance scenes meant to symbolize internal and external struggles that the characters face.

However, the biggest creative feature by far is the use of a large, IMAX-like video screen that provides the show with various backgrounds of the New York City streets. In other instances, this feature provides the audience with alternate angles of the scene being performed right in front of them. This ranges from aerial shots to intense close-ups. There are also moments that are performed off stage in a dressing room designed to look like Maria’s bedroom. These are shown to the audience via live feed that is projected onto the stage’s video screen.

While I admire the creativity behind the choice to use screens to enhance the experience, they often become a distraction. The screens work when they provide images of the setting and provide captions of the date and time for context, but they complicate the show when they are used to provide other angles of the scenes happening on stage or zoom in excessively on the actors’ faces. It makes the audience question where to look and turns something that should be simply executed into an overblown spectacle. At some points, it is almost as if the stage is meant to support the screen instead of the other way around, and the show suffers from this.

As for the scenes that happen offstage, they add a movie-like experience to the performance, and this makes you question if you paid to see the show or to watch a movie. It takes the audience out of the moment and cheapens the experience of live theater.

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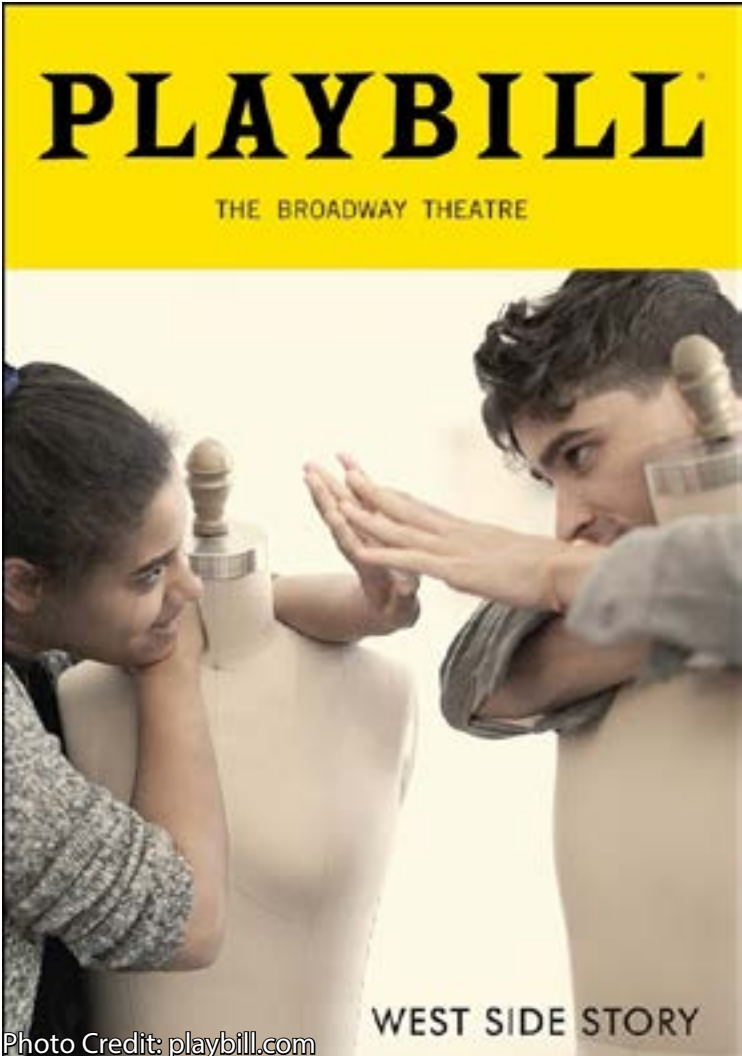


Photo Credit: playbill.com



# Theater Review: West Side Story

CONTINUES FROM  
PAGE 9

Despite these imperfections, the show still manages to pull the audience back into the action at certain points, especially in one scene when the fourth wall is broken. This scene involves a character pointing a gun at the audience, acknowledging their presence and inserting them into the story. The audience is less of a witness to the art, but more so a part of it. This decision is the show’s saving grace.

Altogether, the production attempts to try something new, which is admirable, but goes about it in a way that puts the show at a disadvantage. If the show was adapted to be less reliant on the use

of screens and more focused on the action on stage, it would be a stronger production. Despite over two months of preview performances, the show still seems premature and essentially jumps the gun. The show, however, is saved by the music, the script, and the acting. All of these factors give it a strong foundation that should buy it some time on Broadway. This is vital to the show being successful, since it has already been the center of controversy.

People have criticized the production for its casting of Amar Ramasar as Bernardo. Ramasar, who is a dancer with the New York City Ballet, was accused of receiving and distributing sexually explicit images of his female coworkers without their consent.



West Side Story promotional image. / Jan Versweyveld

While Ramasar disputes the accusation, many have taken the streets before performances to protest his casting, as well as the production’s initial silence on the matter. Since then, the production has addressed it, but maintain their support in Ramasar and the decision to cast him. This has certainly put the show at a disadvantage, with demands from the protesters to “boo” Ramasar, as well as a call to boycott the show until he is fired. A change.org petition calling

for Ramasar’s removal currently has over 49,000 signatures.

In addition, the show suffered two major injuries during previews in Isaac Cole Powell (Tony) and Ben Cook (Riff). Powell has since returned to the production full time as Tony, but Cook was forced to leave the show permanently. The production found a new Riff in Dharon E. Jones, who previously played Action, a member of the Jets, in the production.

While it seems the

production has had its fair share of challenges, the show is still a decent rendition of a Broadway classic. If you are an open-minded fan of the original production or just a fan of experimental theater looking to experience something fresh, you will enjoy this show. If you are a proponent for traditional theater and/or triggered by depictions of sexual assault and violence, you might want to stay away from this production.

# Theater Review: Winter’s Tale

By Quiara Vasquez  
*Editor-In-Chief*

How do you solve a problem like Perdita? At the heart of Shakespeare’s “A Winter’s Tale” lies a paradox: the play is a comedy, but its first three acts are a gory, comedy-free psychological drama about man-rage and child abandonment. In some fields, that’s a non-issue - consider premium cable, where bleak half-hour “comedies-in-theory” routinely triumph come Emmy season - but Shakespearean scholars have spent centuries rattled by the play’s violent opening and odd tonal shifts.

This has led them to dub “A Winter’s Tale” a “problem play,” and it’s led many theatrical companies to shy away from the play entirely. In popular memory, “A Winter’s Tale” is firmly on the C-list of Shakespeare’s oeuvre, right next to “Timon of Athens”

and “the one that inspired that South Park where Cartman trains a pony to bite off an eighth-grader’s penis.” If “A Winter’s Tale” is remembered at all, it’s for the infamous “exit, pursued by a bear” stage direction, or perhaps as the earliest extant reference to dildoes in the English language; but never as a compelling work in its own right.

Brooklyn College’s production of “A Winter’s Tale” doesn’t try to paper over these problems so much as it gathers up the Bard’s contradictions, scrunches them into a ball, and makes a headlong charge towards the goal line. The resulting spectacle doesn’t always make sense, but it’s always fascinating to watch. Visually, the play is split between two kinds of costume drama: the Greek tragedy of the “Sicilia” scenes early on in the play, and the light-hearted pastoral comedy of the “Bohemia” scenes later on. But director Duane

Boutté throws a curveball by adding a third aesthetic: several actors decked out in ghostly white Victoriana represent “time,” whisking us sixteen years into the future at the dawn of the fourth act, among other things.

This sounds confusing, but it mostly works, largely due to uniformly excellent scenic and costume design. The projection work is a little shoddier: frequently they were impressive, but at times I was reminded less of Eastern Europe and more of a screensaver circa 1999 (perhaps most bizarrely, during the aforementioned “exit, pursued by a bear” scene, the bear is represented by projecting the “game over” screen from Super Mario 64 onto the screen. Exit, pursued by a...Bowser?)

As for the performers themselves, they range from merely good to excellent. That’s not surprising given the quality of our regular actors here

at BC, but it’s especially impressive given the material. It can be tough for modern audiences to understand Shakespearean dialogue, which leads some actors to compensate by overemoting or overemphasizing in a way that neither respects the flow of the original text or brings it home for a 21st century theatergoer. That’s not the case here. Take Chris Laing, for instance, who imbues his Polixenes with a gut bustingly funny set of gestures; or Tabitha Perez, who as the young Mamillius once again plays a character less than half her age with irrepressible glee. Earlier this month, I was less than ecstatic about Harrison Hernandez’s performance in “Tick Tick Boom,” but cast here as the Sicilian noble Camillo, he’s clearly in his element, giving the most authentic performance of the bunch.

The obvious standout, however, is Chrissy Brinkman as the

trickster Autolycus. Her performance is joyously physical: at multiple points, she crouches down into a little nook below the stage and peeks over onto the main action. Every time she jaunts her way into the scene, her entrance gives the play a little rush of adrenaline.

Do these great performances elevate “A Winter’s Tale” from curiosity to a worthy entry in Shakespeare’s bibliography? Um... no, if I’m being honest. But that’s Shakespeare’s fault, not the fault of this (both literally and figuratively) spectacular production. Boutté’s take on the “problem” play doesn’t fix its structural problems, but the embellishments he adds are so beautiful, and the quirks so charming, that you can’t help but love it.



# Low Qui Savage: Oh, the Humanities!

By Quiara Vasquez  
*Editor-In-Chief*

Reader, I have a confession to make. Reader, I am not. That may have sounded a bit too Yoda, so to rephrase it: I don't read. Maybe that sounds ironic, given that I write two articles a week at minimum - or flat out wrong, because I proofread at least a dozen articles per issue. So let me rephrase this: I am not a reader of literature.

This perhaps puts me at a disadvantage when it comes to covering Brooklyn College, because BC has staked its reputation in recent years on the literary achievements of its professors and recent alumni. You couldn't trip over a Twitter feed a few months ago without seeing a CUNY surrogate trumpeting the triple threat of hashtag-BC-Family-members on Time Magazine's top ten for fiction in 2019: Ocean Vuong's "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous," Ben Lerner's "The Topeka School," and Helen Phillips' "The Need" were all name-dropped in many a listicle last December. And the list goes on - Charles DeShawn Wallace, R.O. Kwon, Jeanne Theoharis, Corey Robin...

"Oh no, Quiara," you say: "I know where this is going. Fed up with your complete lack of talent, you've decided to take out your anger on these better-known, allegedly inferior authors in an obvious display of green-eyed devilry." Well, first of all, my eyes are a lovely shade of brown (although, would I look better with green eyes? Reader, please let me know what color contacts I should be buying in the future) - and second of all, no, I think all these authors genuinely deserve the

praise they're getting. What concerns me is the level of emphasis that the college has been putting on its English program as of late. We often hear claims that the humanities are under attack in academia, as legislators push for a curriculum rooted in STEM and market-relevant skills. (This is especially relevant as a philosophy major, where posters in our little annex in Boylan suggest that the critical thinking skills that majoring in philosophy fosters can make you as successful as... Carly Fiorina?)

On paper, this emphasis from admin on our achievement in the humanities seems like Brooklyn College taking a stand against the corporatization of higher education; the heroic CUNY supplying the liberal arts' erstwhile David with rocks to wield against the STEM Goliath. But I'd like to put forth what I believe to be a more accurate view of why our colleges prioritize certain departments.

The deficit in attention between majors like, e.g., Accounting (heavily supported) and e.g., Puerto Rican and Latino Studies (historically underfunded), is usually explained by the college in terms of enrollment numbers and by PRLS majors in terms of universities trending towards "marketable" skills. But neither explanation holds water when you consider how little emphasis the college puts on our extremely popular Psychology department (one of the top two majors at BC, by my count), or the lavishing of attention in college literature on a handful of creative-sector MFA programs (Creative



Writing, Playwriting, etc.) with zero corporate utility. How to explain it?

Here's one explanation: Imagine a grid where the vertical axis measures how expensive a field of study is, and the horizontal axis measures the "sexiness" of a field of study - e.g., how easily it can be used for positively boosting CUNY's national profile. The best majors land in the bottom-right hand corner - big fame, low cost.

This is the model I am tentatively (and egotistically) calling the Vasquez Cash/Sex Matrix - and it helps to illuminate why some departments get more attention than others. To go back to Accounting vs. PRLS, for instance, both majors are inexpensive, but Brooklyn College's accounting program is a big draw for the college; meanwhile, ethnic studies programs are less useful for the college publicity team than shipping random

undergrads to Ghana and snapping photos for Facebook. Even within majors, that cash/sex framework is relevant: more students go to BC to learn about technical theater than playwriting, but technical theater is expensive and space-intensive; meanwhile, you can stick a handful of MFAs in a room in Boylan with Mac Wellman at no cost, and at least one of them will get an Obie.

I'm complicit in this too, of course. The overwhelming majority of student journalists on this campus are humanities majors - mostly in the JAMS department, of course, but also a few English-journalism stragglers, and a surprising number of Film and TV/Radio people as well. This results in very few writers having contacts outside the humanities, which means that college papers are far more likely to report on a sparsely-attended event about journalism in the Trump era than they are, e.g., some groundbreaking scientific discovery in the Biology department. Last semester, I covered the memorial for the late Biology department chair Dan Eshel. It was the first time BC's student media

had even acknowledged the School of Natural Sciences in two years. I've been writing for four years, and I don't think ever I've ever seen a student paper write a piece about a psychology course, or a story about the Koppelman School of Business that didn't involve a business professor making controversial comments on social media. (And again, these are the two biggest majors at the college.) It might seem odd to stick up for the "hard sciences" given the societal push towards them - but they're the departments that are most affected by chronic underfunding.

I end this article not with a stupid joke but with a genuine plea: if you study something outside of the humanities, and something interesting is going on within your major, let us know. We have a responsibility to represent the BC student body in all its diversity, and our diversity of scholastic pursuits is a part of that. Don't let this paper dedicate all of its precious column inches to the onanistic ramblings of us humanities majors. We're not that important, after all, and we're not that smart. Some of us, I hear, don't even read.

What concerns me is the level of emphasis that the college has been putting on its English program as of late.



# I am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter (Book Review)

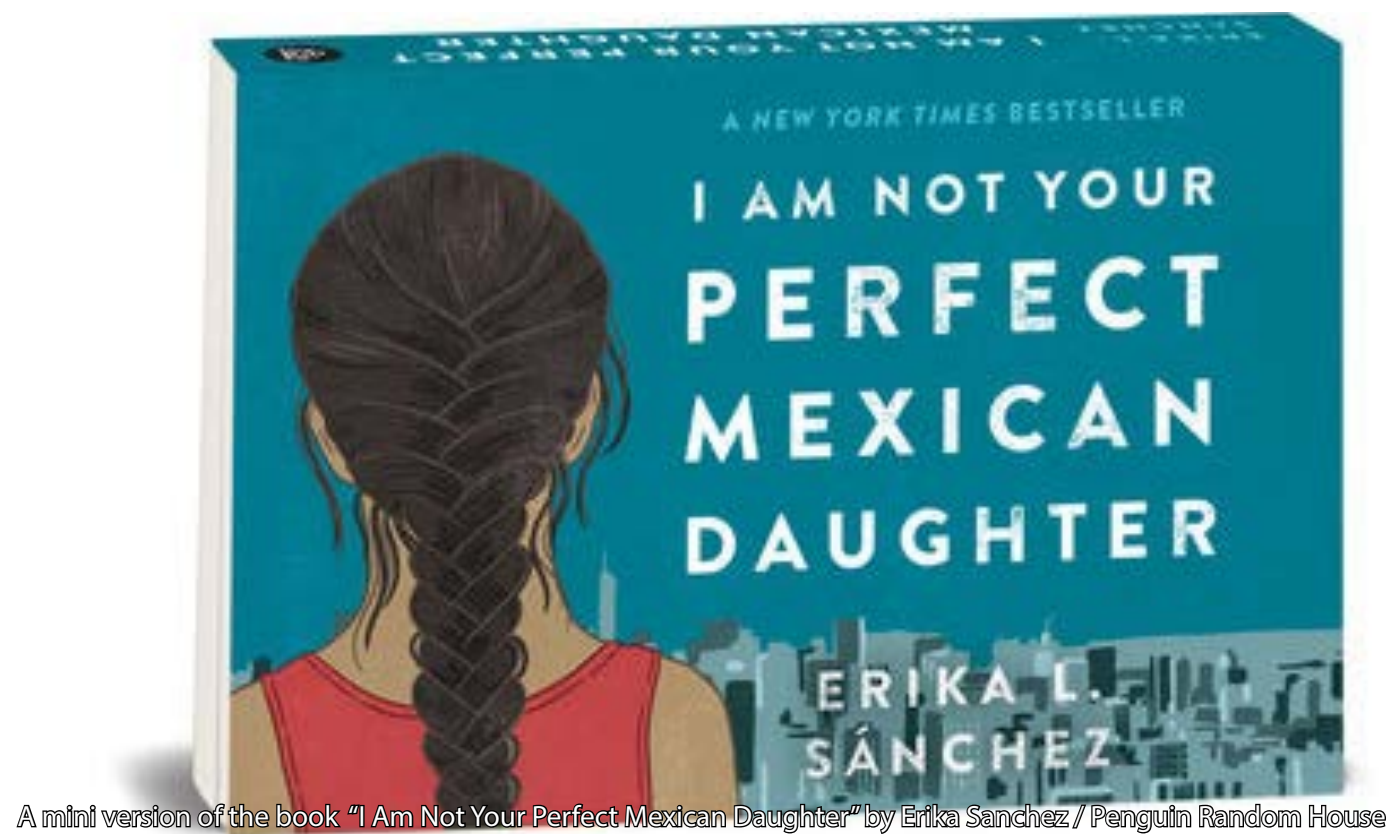
By Michael Castaneda  
*Columnist*

I might not be the best person to review this book. I watched a YouTube video from the Chicago Humanities Festival in which the author highlighted that she wrote the book for brown and black girls who are truly underrepresented in literature. I am neither brown nor black, and I am not a woman. I am a cisgender heterosexual male.

There is a little bit of Spanish in this book, which my C minus in high school Spanish did not equip me for. In fact, I didn't even know there was a Mexican and Mexican-American community in Chicago until I visited the Chicago Heritage Museum over winter break and saw an exhibit showcasing this community. (I mention both groups because I feel it is important to understand that as a country, we do not recognize that to be American is more than just being from a northern European heritage.)

In fact, I came across this book at The Dail, a used book store in Chicago across the street from Millennium Park on Michigan Avenue. I had just learned the hard way that cold weather drains your cell phone battery fast. The owner of the bookstore allowed me to charge my phone there.

When browsing books, I have a habit of reading



A mini version of the book "I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter" by Erika Sanchez / Penguin Random House

the first sentence of the books I pick up. The first sentence from Ms. Sanchez's book was about a teenage girl perplexed by the smirk on the corpse of her dead sister lying in her casket. It got my attention and I picked up the book.

This is yet another young adult novel for me. These things are incredibly easy to read and I learned that from reading John Green. I read the last 100 pages of this book in less than 24 hours, which is unheard of for me. The book is 340 pages and it goes by fast.

All that being said, the story of Julia Reyes is a story that transcends ethnic backgrounds and gender. Julia is poor and her parents are undocumented immigrants from Mexico. Her sister, Olga, has just died. She was hit by a car while looking at her phone. However, there is a lot more going on than that.

One criticism might be that there is too much going on, but such is life. But unlike the characters in an Italian movie, where everyone is talking over each other in the kitchen, no one in Julia's family really communicates with one another, and that's the problem. Children who become schizophrenic typically have several background characteristics in common, such as a passive or removed father and an overbearing mother.

This is the situation in Julia's household. Julia is drowning emotionally. The death of her sister has left her with more questions about who her sister actually was. The loss of her sister is a tipping point for Julia. She needs to move forward but doesn't know how.

Julia is isolated because of her poor social skills. Her family cannot understand why anyone in their family would

want more than to be swaddled in their ethnic enclave of Chicago. Sometimes this makes it hard to read. There is a mix of self-sabotaging behavior and emotional violence within the family that comes to the surface any time Julia doesn't fit their narrow vision of the world. At those times, they take her soul and go in for the kill. It's exhausting.

Alas, like most coming of age stories, Julia is resilient and you start to get the sense that she is going to be OK. She has a few good relationships to help her along the way. Her best friend is a remarkably stable force in her life, despite the occasional petty dramas between them. Her English teacher advocates for her and wants to see her succeed. He gives her the necessary tools to navigate the world beyond her friends and family. There are people outside her family that get it and truly care for

Julia.

Julia wants to go to college in New York and to become a writer. She wants the same shot at success that every American should have. The biggest obstacle to achieving this goal is her family. In their eyes, the next step for Julia's generation is to move from a low-paid manual labor job to a low-paid office job. Julia feels that on top of that and being brown, not a lot is expected of her. Moreover, by the very act of trying to move beyond these low expectations, she is made to feel as though she is committing a crime.

I love this line from the penultimate page of the book: "What a waste their journey would be if I just settled for a mediocre life." Not everyone has to struggle this hard, but for anyone who has struggled, you will relate in some way.

**Hot take? We'll take it.**

Our opinions section takes submissions from current BC students. For more info, write to [thebcvanguard@gmail.com](mailto:thebcvanguard@gmail.com), or directly contact Allison Rapp (our current opinions editor) at [allisonrapp22@gmail.com](mailto:allisonrapp22@gmail.com).



# On the Record: Harry Styles, “Fine Line”

By Allison Rapp  
*Opinions Editor*

I’ve been thinking a lot lately about role models — about those who set precedents, raise the bar, and inspire us to dig deeper.

Maybe it’s because I’ve been neglecting to keep up to date with the latest presidential campaign news and I feel a bit guilty about it. I’ve had multiple conversations with people over the last several months about the idea that whoever sits in the Oval Office should be a role model. I didn’t think that was too far reaching of a request, but apparently there are plenty of people that don’t seem all that concerned about the character of the leader of the free world. As long as the job gets done, right? As long as the bills are paid, the roof is solid, and the food is on the table.

That’s not an entirely unreasonable way to go about living. But I struggle to think about what it must feel like

to be the parent of a young child, and about having to explain to them why the actions of a particular person — a person we elected to do the right thing — are wrong and inexcusable. Of course, a great many of us did not elect Trump to do the right thing. We continued to resist and protest, but, at the end of the day, we still have to explain to our children why the man on the TV is not someone they should look up to.

So who do we look up to? Figuring out who your role models are takes years. Role models get added, dropped, and swapped out over the years. I’ve got a few of my own.

I suppose I’ve been thinking about this concept as of late because I’ve indulged myself, and I’ve listened to Harry Styles’ sophomore album, *Fine Line*, for a second time.

I was never on the One Direction bandwagon in quite the same way that many of my friends in middle school were.

But if there’s one thing I love, it’s a boy band, and if there’s one thing I love even more, it’s former boy band members inevitably showing their true colors.

I always had the feeling that it would be Harry Styles who would go on to expand his horizons and, frankly, get weird with it. He had talent, ambition, and an impressive fan following — the recipe for a superstar.

In his 2019 *Rolling Stone* profile, the same year *Fine Line* was released, Styles talked about how he would repeatedly queue up an interview with one of his role models, the late David Bowie. In that interview, the Thin White Duke dropped one of his most famous quotes:

“If you feel safe in the area you’re working in, you’re not working in the right area. Always go a little further into the water than you feel you’re capable of being in. Go a little bit out of your depth. And when you don’t feel that your feet are quite touching the



bottom, you’re just about in the right place to do something exciting.”

I can confidently say that there will never be another Bowie; it’s just not possible. But the key is that Styles isn’t trying to become Bowie, he just wants to channel some of that artistic bravery and boldness.

I will note that there are too many fruit references in the lyrics on *Fine Line*. (Strawberries, cherries, watermelon, etc.) I like a good concept album just as much as the next guy, but fruit is not a concept. And while the

second half of the record is decidedly stronger than the first, I’m still eager to hear deeper songwriting out of Styles. “Golden” and “Lights Up” prove to me that Styles is beginning to scratch the surface — I want him to get even weirder with it. “Falling” and “She” prove that he’s willing to be vulnerable with this writing — I want him to trust that the best art gets made that way.

But it doesn’t hurt to have a role model like David Bowie to light that path.

## Bullshit!

by Ryan Gleason

## Top 5 Men’s Bathrooms on Brooklyn College

I will admit, pooping at school was a fear of mine for many years. Brooklyn College’s bathrooms have erased that fear for me. So here are the top five bathrooms to poop in on campus.

**5. Roosevelt Hall Extension, Second Floor:**

Isolated, clean, always has paper towels/toilet paper/soap. If you like to poop promptly, this is the single stall for you! However, it is simplistic and doesn’t have that “WOW FACTOR”.

**4. WEB Film Building, Second Floor:**

Three Urinals? Motion detecting flush technology? FILM STUDENTS LIVING IN THE FUTURE OUT HERE! It is a very nice bathroom but too big -- a lot of echo. You can see how that is a problem... right?

**3. The Staff Bathroom at the Chipotle on Junction:**

Technically not a school bathroom, but close enough. Have you ever needed a clean bathroom to hit the Hershey Highway after your fourth burrito bowl of the week? This

bathroom is the one for you. All you need to do is use the password and the staff lets you use it. The password is “please, please, I have to poop. I will pay you 50 dollars, please.” If you don’t have fifty bucks, don’t worry, just run as fast as you can out the door. They don’t get paid enough to care.

**2. Whitehead Hall, 3rd Floor:**

This is a Goldilocks tale if you’ve ever heard one. I was ready to give birth to a turd toddler one morning last fall, and the first two floors were

being cleaned. Note: the top two floors haven’t been cleaned since Bernie Sanders went here. I hit the third floor and the sense of urgency hit code BROWN! I was crowning and I refused the epidural. I burst in the room and found a clean, moderately sized, and decently kept porcelain palace. I sat down, enjoyed the lack of smell and graffiti, and welcomed my crap child into the world.

**1: The bushes in front of Boylan:**

IF IT’S GOOD

ENOUGH FOR THE SQUIRRELS IT’S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME!

I know this list can be helpful to fellow shy poopers, though I apologize I couldn’t give my opinion on women’s/gender neutral bathrooms -- I respect those who use those bathrooms and refuse to stink ‘em up. But men? SIT IN IT! Down with the patriarchy, one dookie at a time. If this list is pointless to you, continue pooping at home like a homeschooled freak, no one cares.



# Rohan Mathur, Men's Tennis Captain

By Conrad Hoyt  
*Sports Editor*

“I love the multifaceted nature of tennis. The combination of strategy and mental endurance with the physical strength needed to conquer opponents makes tennis the greatest sport in my eyes.”

These are the words of Rohan Mathur, captain of the Brooklyn College men's tennis team and third year student at Brooklyn College. Mathur's life has been one defined by overcoming obstacles and adversity. He explained that he has been obese for much of his life, and that has made him smart about how he conserves his energy on the tennis court.

As captain of the team for the second straight year, Rohan must not only concern himself with his own play, but also the play and morale of his entire team.

“During warmups as well as in the middle of matches, I try to make sure everyone is only concerned with winning their matches in the most efficient way and using their strengths and opponents' weaknesses to their advantages,”

said Mathur. “I never let the losses be anything more than a learning experience for all of us and make sure our practices following the loss only reflect our mistakes and how they can be improved upon.”

Mathur grew up in Dix Hills, New York, on Long Island. He started playing tennis around age 10, and more competitively at age 14. He is currently a communications major and also in the B.A./M.D. program at Brooklyn College, where tennis has helped him out in his academic pursuits.

“Honestly, tennis makes studying a lot easier for me because it forces me to manage my time around practices and matches and avoid procrastination. My parents have ingrained in me the importance of education, so I make sure to maintain a balance between my schoolwork and the sport that I love,” said Mathur.

Mathur explained to the Vanguard that playing tennis at Brooklyn College has been a great privilege, and that working with coach David Wallis and the staff “has made competing to represent my school one of the most enjoyable



2019 Tennis Roster image of Rohan Mathur. / BC Athletics

experiences I've had here.”

But being a scholar-athlete has not been all smooth sailing for Mathur at Brooklyn College. This past fall and moving into Winter, he experienced a major setback. Rohan felt discomfort in both of his wrists while working out, but dismissed the pain and tried to work through it. In January, when the pain did not subside, he went to get

an MRI.

“Results showed that I have partial TFCC tears in each of my wrists, which means that I must rest both my hands and not play any tennis or work out for at least 6-8 weeks. I have done nothing but rest them in addition to wearing wrist braces and icing my wrists, but I'm quite anxious to get back out on the court and into the swing of things,” expressed Mathur.

Mathur told the Vanguard that he plays with a big serve and implements a large number of drop shots, slices, and other maneuvers that can change the pace of a match and keep his opponent out of their comfort zone. He also explained that he does not have a favorite professional tennis player, but he has always been a fan of the underdogs.

“I always have high expectations for our team because I know with everyone's varied skill sets, there is great potential for us to succeed in the conference playoffs,” Mathur said. “Considering how we lost by merely a few points in the semifinals last year, I'm hoping that once I recover from my injuries, our teams can make a deeper run and have a better record than in past seasons.”

The Brooklyn College men's tennis team's season begins on March 12, with a home match against Purchase College.



The 2019 Brooklyn College Bulldogs Tennis Team. / BC Athletics



# Women's Basketball #1 Seed Going Into Playoffs



The Brooklyn College Bulldogs in action this semester. / David Rozenblyum

By Kwame Perez  
*Staff Writer*

The Brooklyn College women's basketball team blew out Medgar Evers College Saturday 94-31 in their final game of what has been a remarkable season. The Bulldogs have been on a roll this entire season and are looking to continue the trend into the CUNYAC playoffs.

The Bulldogs came into senior night Saturday on a high note after winning

their previous two games, facing Medgar Evans for the last game of the regular season. This did not change their mentality as they thoroughly demolished Medgar Evers. They are now undefeated in conference play with a record of 14-0. It was a team effort with everyone on the team scoring at least one basket. Freshman guard Erika James led the team with 13 points and Kailyn Richburg and

Nancy Pham both added 12.

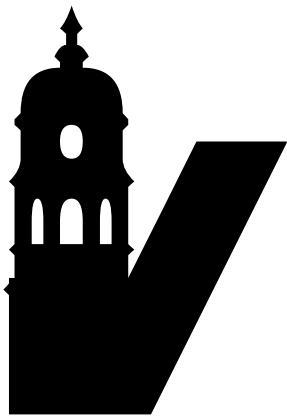
There was no letting up from the Bulldogs as they held Medgar Evans to single digit points every quarter after the first. Their defense smothered Medgar Evers to under 30 percent shooting from the field for the game while they were well over 40 percent from the field themselves.

The team has been consistently blowing teams out this season with their margin of

victory being over 20 points a game and their defense playing a big part in that. For the season, they have held opposing teams to less than 40 percent from the field and less than 30 percent from the 3-point line. The Bulldogs will look to continue this way of play leading into the playoffs; their hard work has secured them the number one seed in the playoffs with an overall record of 19-6.

The Bulldogs will face

5th seed York College at 6pm in the West Quad Center Wednesday night. If they win that game, they will be set to play for the championship at York College this Friday at 5:30pm.



## Vinny the Goat by Gabrielle Toro Vivoni & Mo Muhsin





# Volleyball Players Kneel During Anthem



Omar Rezika and Hunnan Butt kneel during “Hatikvah” at Yeshiva University. / Sarah Serfaty

By Ryan Schwach  
**Managing Editor**  
*Reporting Assistance  
from Lorenzo Davies*

In this Sunday’s match against Yeshiva University, a Modern Orthodox Jewish college, two players from the Brooklyn College men’s volleyball team appeared to kneel during the playing of the Israeli national anthem.

Sophomore Omar Rezika and freshman Hunnan Butt knelt during the playing of “Hatikvah” ahead of the match on Sunday, Feb. 23. Video of their apparent protest gained traction on social media after it was posted on Facebook by Yeshiva

University student Sarah Serfaty.

“This is Anti-Semitism. This is not a place to make a religious or political statement,” she said in the post. “Respect the other team.”

Serfaty also alleged that following the match, which the Bulldogs won 3-0, the same two BC players refused to shake hands with the YU players and cursed at them in Arabic. No other sources have substantiated these statements. Yeshiva University’s athletic department’s Twitter account has posted that these additional claims are not true, as has Brooklyn College.

Critics took to Twitter to call out

the Bulldog players’ actions, and to call for Brooklyn College to condemn and take disciplinary measures against the two players. Among these voices was the Simon Wiesenthal Center, a global Jewish rights organization.

“We demand to know what steps Brooklyn College intends to take with regard to this display of anti-Semitism by members of its volleyball team,” the organization said in a press release.

Others believed it was within the players’ First Amendment rights to kneel during the anthem, in the same way former NFL Quarterback Colin Kaepernick knelt

during the national anthem in 2016.

“The right to free speech and peaceful protest is protected by the 1st Amendment in the United States Constitution. Kneeling for the Israeli anthem falls well within that right,” said Brooklyn College student Chris Omar to the Vanguard.

Some commenters questioned why the Israeli national anthem was being played at Yeshiva University in the first place.

“Considering both schools are located in New York, why is the Israeli anthem even being played to begin with?” said Omar.

In an official statement, Brooklyn

College defended the players’ right to nonviolent protest.

“Brooklyn College strongly condemns all forms of Anti-Semitism and hatred. The two students who knelt during the national anthem did not refuse to shake hands with players from the other team. Their kneeling is protected by the First Amendment.”

The Vanguard has reached out to the two players who knelt, to other members of the volleyball team, and to the Athletics Department, all of whom have been told they are not allowed to discuss the matter.

Wondering where the Vinny the Goat comic has gone? He’s still here...  
on Page 15!