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BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

BC Goes Back To Mostly Online Learning for Fall Semester

pg. 4

Photo Credit: Ronny Shama

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Adjuncts Hold Teach In Outside Prez’s Home

By Ryan Schwach
Editor-in-Chief

Sitting on the trimmed lawn of Brooklyn College President Michelle Anderson’s home in Prospect Park South, several BC and CUNY adjuncts held a teach-in to protest firings and what they call the college’s failure to implement anti-racist policies.

Organizers, mostly from the Rank and File Action group, littered the sidewalk and lawn in front of President Anderson’s reportedly 1.6 million dollar, CUNY-financed home with signs and chalk calling for action from the campus administration. The adjuncts wanted to draw attention to the home, a regal two-story with a balcony, paid for by CUNY funds, and was previously occupied by Anderson’s predecessor, Karen Gould. The goal was to juxtapose the lavish nature of the house with the plights facing students and professors during the pandemic, namely those of at least 52 adjuncts who have lost their health insurance or been fired since the outbreak.

“She shouldn’t be living in this house,” said one



CUNY adjuncts protest outside the home of BC prez Michelle Anderson. / **Ryan Schwach**

adjunct.

“We wanted to highlight the mass firing of adjuncts and the enduring racism of BC,” said Conor Tomás Reed, Africana Studies professor and one of the event’s organizers. The event specifically wanted to comment on Michele Anderson’s tenure as BC President. “There’s a legacy of structural racism under Michelle Anderson’s tenure as BC President,” said Tomás Reed, criticizing President Anderson’s lack of acknowledgement of African Studies and Puerto Rican and Latin Studies majors, as well as her “Stand Against Hate” initiative, which critics have called

performative.

The point of the demonstration was not just to protest, but to work as a teach-in, so the organizers brought in CUNY-connected speakers to talk about the issues they wanted to address. Robert Cuffey, a CUNY grad and organizer with the Democratic Socialists of America NYC AfroSocialist Caucus, spoke about a history of racism and some of his own personal struggles as a social service worker during the pandemic. He discussed trying to get PPE for his coworkers, but being told by his supervisor to stop using outside vendors. “It’s a society that does not value

or prioritize human need,” he said.

Another speaker, former BC graduate student Julia Steiner, spoke about her difficulty pushing the need for Indigenous studies and research at Brooklyn and CUNY, saying there are “Actions to keep professors that identify as Indigenous and People of Color out.”

Organizers hope this will be the beginning of a continuing conversation on how to better the Brooklyn College community, and believe the buck stops with President Anderson.

“She should address these issues for a better place to work,” said Tomás Reed.

Milich Administration Sets Goals For Term

By Ian Ezinga
Business Manager

With the college formally announcing that almost all courses will be delivered in a remote format this coming fall, the administration at the helm of the Undergraduate Student Government has a unique set of challenges for this coming semester. The new government, headed by President Ethan Milich and Vice-President Samuel Ganthier, aim to focus their efforts at serving students during a time poignantly marked by a global pandemic.

“Everyone on this team wants to serve the students,” said Iqura Naheed, the

new administration’s Press Director who is a junior majoring in anthropology while also on the pre-med track. “Our mission is to help move Brooklyn College forward especially in a time when we are dealing with big issues like the pandemic, austerity, and hate which includes racism, sexism, and bigotry.”

The administration’s platform has adapted to the unusual semester.

“Our main pillars are that we want to address the COVID issue and help the students in any way we can while we are doing distanced learning,” said Naheed. “We want to make USG more accessible and

more available for everyone on campus to interact with. And we also want to fight for a free and fully funded CUNY.”

One of the largest issues that student clubs in general will face is how to reach and interact with students when the campus will be almost completely empty.

“We have been trying to expand our online presence a lot so that we can access students wherever they are. We also launched a discord server where we hold our meetings now,” said Naheed.

Most importantly, the new administration created bcstudentgov.org, in order to share information and make it easier for students

to know what is going on. These efforts, coupled with a newsletter which is in the works, are all being carried out to combat the challenge of interacting with a student body which will be dispersed throughout the city.

Facing an unprecedented semester, there are still countless questions for the college’s administration at large, and also for student run bodies like USG. However, Naheed wants to assure students that the progressive energy found within the ranks of the new administration will be used to fight for student rights and accessibility.

ICE Reverses Order, International Students Can Stay



By Paola Sacerdote
Staff Writer

“I really thought I had to go back home,” said communications major Cinthia. International students at Brooklyn College expressed relief after the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) stated on July 24, that nonimmigrant students “who were actively enrolled at a U.S. school on Mar. 9 and are otherwise complying with the terms of their nonimmigrant status, whether from inside the U.S. or abroad” will be able to remain in the U.S.

“The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will not issue a temporary final rule impacting nonimmigrant

students for the fall school term,” ICE.gov notes.

The announcement came ten days after ICE revoked its earlier policy which would have told international students they had to either go home or transfer if their college went online for the Fall. The government agreed to return to previous COVID-19 guidance that allows students taking online courses to remain in the United States on F-1 visas “for the duration of the emergency.”

“Students that want to study at Brooklyn College can still apply,” said Director of Graduate Admissions and International Student and Scholar Services (ISS) Keisha Wilson. “Being that we are now online, students can actually apply, get accepted,

and start their program of study from their home country. Once embassies reopen and we are back on campus, they can apply for an F-1 visa and enter the US to continue their education.”

This protection will not apply to first-year students.

“If initial students have not arrived in the United States, they should remain in their home country,” ICE.gov notes.

The admissions department remains hopeful that the pandemic will be controlled for the spring 2021 and new international students will be permitted to study in the U.S.

“I still can’t believe that last year the world was open and now after the virus we are told to go back home, said a student who wished to remain

anonymous.

Graduate admissions and ISS have reached out to incoming students to let them know how the March 2020 guidance affects their education for the fall.

In accordance with CUNY policies and guidelines, Brooklyn College for fall semester modality will be distance learning. Almost all courses will be delivered in a remote format. A small number of mostly hybrid courses must be occasionally conducted face-to-face as they are based on experiential learning or require equipment that cannot be obtained in a distant environment.

“Students that are in the country must register full time and take their courses,” said Keisha Wilson. “Nothing is preventing

them from remaining in the country.”

International students attending schools who switch to online-only learning this fall will not have to either transfer schools, leave the country or possibly be deported. Now, international students who “were actively enrolled” in Brooklyn College or any other university in the U.S. on Mar. 9 will not be affected by ICE’s critical decision.

“When I first received the news that international students had to leave the country I was worried that I wouldn’t attend class fall semester,” said Cinthia. “It was the two most frustrating weeks for me, but now it is a great relief knowing I can continue my degree in Brooklyn College.”

BC Goes “Mostly” Online For the Fall



BC's Lily Pond, which many students will have to wait to see again./ **BC Website**

By Ryan Schwach & Zahra Khan
Editor-in-Chief & Staff Writer

For the first time in its 90 year history, Brooklyn College will be predominately closed to students for the Fall semester, as the majority of classes go online due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The mostly expected news came in an email Monday from Provost Anne Lopes.

“In accordance with CUNY policies and guidelines, our modality will be distance learning. Almost all courses will be delivered in a remote format,” she wrote.

The key words in that sentence, “Almost all courses,” gestures towards hybrid classes which can be carried out to some extent in person and in some cases are expected to. It is currently unclear which classes will be conducted in this manner.

As far as club operations, a BC spokesman told the Vanguard that, “Clubs will not be operating on campus, however student

clubs and organizations are still able to operate remotely. Access to campus will be restricted, but services will continue to be provided remotely.”

Students and professors alike have mixed reactions to the call, and though there is disappointment, most believe it is the best call to ensure the safety of Brooklyn College’s population.

“I miss and love the in person contact and learning, but to be in a small room with over ten people right now or even in the fall is very soon!” said BC student Christina Kristen. “It’s scary.”

Others admit that studying at home is not the most ideal environment, and doesn’t have many of the perks of being able to work in the campus library or on the quad.

“Though I have no legitimate and healthy atmosphere to study at home, I’d rather adjust myself to this whole remote learning thing than actually the classes be held in-person. Brooklyn College is literally the worst place for a virus to spread,” said student

Maheenul Nadim.

Of course, there have also been detractors fighting the move to go online.

“This ‘remote learning’ is some bs. You get far less for your money’s worth and a lot of students end up learning nothing,” said BC student, Grald Ster. “Compared to just a couple decades ago we’re far less likely to die from diseases,” he told the Vanguard.

Brooklyn College has a reputation for being unclean. Look no further than the bathrooms and the anointed nickname “CUNY Brokelyn College,” for hints of this legacy. This reputation makes some students doubt the college’s ability to ensure on campus safety for students and staff.

“Our campus was never prepared for this pandemic - we could barely find sanitizer dispensers or well ventilated rooms, and no automated sinks,” said BC student leader and former USG presidential candidate, Michael Davis. “If we are to ever

go back in person we’d need a revamp of our infrastructure, better pay and protection for staff so we can have more workers who can clean.”

Another point of contention is whether or not students should have to pay full tuition for the online learning, since it isn’t the full experience students are used to paying for. With many students and families struggling amid the financial ramifications of the pandemic, a steadily rising tuition has only complicated matters.

“The fact that a global pandemic is causing distance learning and completely erases the idea of having a traditional college experience, tuition should absolutely be waived,” said Ethan Milich, the newly elected president of USG. “In this case, cancelling tuition, offering a tuition waiver, a tuition reduction, or even a tuition hike freeze, are all preferable to regular tuition being imposed on the students and increased again like what is planned,” he said.

Prior to the official

announcement, some professors had already been told to prepare to shift their class into an online format. “We are disappointed about learning not happening in the classroom,” said English professor Zach LaMalfa.

Regardless of the disappointment, LaMalfa and others realize this is the path to learning safely in the fall.

“I’m sad about it, but it’s the right decision,” he said.

Although much is still unknown on how BC will manage the unprecedented move, campus officials, students, and professors alike are bracing for something new.

“We are preparing for the fall semester and working diligently to ensure the health and safety of our community by making decisions based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence and by implementing rigorous health and safety measures,” Lopes wrote in her message to the BC community.

As World Faces A Racial Reckoning, BC Follows

By Maya Schubert
News Editor

As racial tensions have swept the country following the police killings of George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Breonna Taylor and countless others, Brooklyn College faces its own racial reckoning.

On June 11, the Puerto Rican Alliance published a letter to President Michelle Anderson, criticizing her email of support for communities of color. Anderson's June 2nd email mentioned systematic racism and higher COVID-19 cases for people of color and linked to Anderson's We Stand Against Hate initiative, a program of lectures, workshops, and concerts about race.

"We work through classes, programs, lectures, and teach-ins to understand the legacy of systematic racism in this country, using the critical academic lenses afforded by the liberal arts and sciences, humanities, and creative arts," Anderson said in the email.

In their open letter, PRA stated that the email "lacked a clear message of support, concern, and any true commitment to acting upon the conditions that inform the experiences of Black, Indigenous, Afro-Latinx, Latinx, and Students of Color at Brooklyn College..." The group also criticized the We Stand Against Hate campaign, calling it "a spectacle of virtue signaling that the university profits from financially and uses it to boost its supposedly progressive band."

The letter went on to make a list of demands of the BC administration. The group first requested the removal of the NYPD and BC Public Safety from campus. They demanded that the Africana Studies Department be prioritized in academic and fiscal planning for the next few years, and requested the hiring of Caribbeanist scholars, the hiring of a Black, Latinx scholar, and the replacement of necessary components for

the Africana Studies and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies Departments to thrive.

"For Africana Studies, Caribbeanist Scholars; for Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, a scholar of Bilingual Education," they wrote.

In addition, the group demanded the reinstatement of the Center for Black Studies and the Center for Latinx Studies and ensured financial support for the Black and Latino male initiative for the next decade. They also asked for the creation of an endowment funding scholarships, activities, and travel programs for BC students of color and the immediate reappointment of all Indigenous and POC adjuncts.

The group wanted the immediate nullifications of restrictions that keep members of the neighborhood off of the campus, as well as an assessment of BC's cafeteria staff's rights. They demanded that the administration release a letter supporting adjuncts and rejecting tuition hikes proposed by the CUNY board of trustees.

Lastly, they demanded Brooklyn College to "submit a detailed action plan, by the 30th of August, 2020, that explains how they will implement these demands over the course of the upcoming academic year 2020-2021."

Shortly following PRA's open letter, the BC Black Faculty and Staff Organization, Faculty of Color Group, and the Latino Faculty and Staff Organization released a similar set of demands in a blog post. The June 16th post to BC's Public Service Commission blog demanded the "funding and protection of culturally relevant programs," a living wage and clear path to promotion for all jobs at BC, and a more diverse faculty. The piece also requested a change in promotion and tenure policies and the appointment of a Diversity Mentorship Coordinator

and Staff Ombudsperson. Lastly, the groups requested the removal of NYPD and a "reimagining of campus safety" that would include the prioritization of de-escalation tactics and mental health.

On July 2nd, President Anderson sent out an email outlining an "Anti-Racist Agenda," citing the "experiences, concerns, and ideas" of students and faculty as inspiration. The agenda included the hosting of six listening sessions for the BC community, the organizing of an Implementation Team for Racial Justice, and an analysis of admissions, retention rates, and graduation rates to pinpoint racial disparities. As per the faculty's blog post, Anderson also promised the appointment of a Faculty Mentorship Coordinator and a Staff Ombudsperson.

"We must alter systems, policies, and practices to advance an anti-racist agenda," Anderson wrote in the email.

Anderson sent out a second email on July 8th, clarifying some details in the agenda and announcing a draft for a set of responsibilities for the Diversity Mentorship Coordinator and Staff Ombudsperson. She also condemned the ICE decision barring international students from returning to U.S. campuses.

Several days later, Chief Diversity Officer Anthony Brown and Human Resources Director Renita Simmons hosted the first Listening Session. Over 100 participants, mostly BC faculty and staff of color, tuned in to express feeling underappreciated and disadvantaged in promotion opportunities.

"There is a general agreement that a culture change on these issues is needed," Anderson wrote in a third email on July 14th.

The same day, a newly formed group called the Anti-Racist Coalition at Brooklyn College organized to discuss the same issues. The Coalition is comprised of many of the BC students, faculty, and staff who wrote



Brooklyn College's Anti-Racist Coalition Logo

the June 11th and 16th letters to Anderson.

"We're students, staff, and faculty who recognize that systematic racism is a primary impediment in institutional change at BC," the group's website states.

On July 14th, the Anti-Racist Coalition led a Facebook live student-run Town Hall, where students, faculty, and alumni spoke of systemic disparities and token support.

"In my entire time at Brooklyn College, I may have had three black professors, all of whom were men," said speaker Stéfon Charlot, a recent graduate. "Brooklyn College is a neo-liberal institution. Neo-liberalism creates the ideology of cultural homogeny; however, it also creates exclusions based on differences."

"Empathy is not allyship," said student Diamond-Marie Gonzalez.

According to Assistant Professor of Sociology and ARC member Lawrence Johnson, President Anderson reached out to the ARC shortly after the town hall and the group requested a meeting.

"It is the hope of the coalition that Michelle Anderson will be willing to work with members of the BC community who has been at the forefront of addressing racism on campus and whose professional careers deal with racism," Professor Johnson told the Vanguard.

On July 23rd, President Anderson sent forth an email announcing that the administration had held meetings to discuss diversifying the faculty. She also reported that the Roberta S. Andrews Center for Teaching and Learning was now offering training to faculty, and that the Office of Diversity and Equity is developing an online anti-discrimination training for faculty.

Lastly, Anderson announced that BC had been awarded a \$150,000 grant, devoted to support immigrant students, from the Robin Hood Foundation, a charitable organization based in New York City.

"I look forward to working with you to ensure that our collective efforts result in a better and more just College environment," Anderson wrote.

"Brooklyn College is listening to all of its constituents — students, faculty, staff and the larger community — to address issues of equity, diversity, fairness, and inclusiveness," a BC spokesperson told the Vanguard. "The College is grateful for all of the input it has received during these critical times."

Letter Mixup Falsey Tells Profs “You’re Fired”

By Bobbie Bell
Staff Writer

Brooklyn College faculty have been placed under a lot of pressure since COVID-19 hit, facing rumors of a mass wave of unemployment. It only added insult to injury when they received letters informing them they had been fired, when in reality they had not been.

“Have I just been fired from @BrooklynCollege411 where I’ve taught for the last 28 years and completed my 9th semester as Dept. chair? Not clear,” tweeted Brooklyn College professor Katherine Fry, the chair of the TV, Radio, and Emerging Media department, now known as TREM. She was on the receiving end of one such letter.

Although she has tenure, and knew that she could not be fired in that letter, she felt a responsibility to speak up. Posting a screenshot of her “non-reappointment letter”

email on June 29th, Fry took to Twitter.

“I was concerned that the letter lacked clarity, and I knew that other adjuncts and staff would be receiving similar letters...So I tweeted my letter to make a point about not just a fumbled way of communicating, but also make a point about the devastating nature of the whole decision to further cut employment at BC and CUNY, which undermines all of us -- especially student education,” she told the Vanguard.

Many faculty commented under her post, expressing that they too had received a letter. She recognizes the support she received and the strength of CUNY faculty, saying, “it’s been painful” having to relay the message to adjuncts that have taught for years that they’d fallen prey to the system.

Many replied with comments of confusion at having received letters. The

PSC chapter for Brooklyn commented, “An error of colossal proportions. Easily corrected in this case, since tenured professors cannot be fired without cause, but imagine all the similar letters - accurate or inaccurate - that colleagues without job security have received!”

James Davis, the chair of PSC Brooklyn College, said, “We advocate for our members with the college administration, and we ensure that the labor contract between the university and the union is correctly enforced on campus.”

Professor Liv Mariah Yarrow, a professor at Brooklyn College commented under the post with a screenshot of a similar letter she received stating, “I got one too from the Library...It’s because at some point we worked as adjuncts either NTA or overage.”

Human Resources

worked swiftly, according to Fry, to put employees’ concerns at ease. Later that evening, Fry posted an update that she was in the clear and her job was safe, ensuring she will be able to teach the graduate Media Literacy Education Seminar for the fall semester. She noted that she was one of the lucky ones, hashtagging CutCovidNotCUNY.

“My feeling is that CUNY administration needs to put WAY MORE pressure on Governor Cuomo and state legislators to fund CUNY,” Fry told the Vanguard.

Of letting go of employees, she says it’s, “horrible to tell people who’ve taught for several semesters that you don’t have a section for them to teach -- especially when you know it means they will lose health insurance.”

But CutCovidNotCUNY is not the only hashtag they’ve been following. Davis said “an entire campaign has

been run out of PSC central office around the theme #SummerOfStruggle, the goals of which to Save Lives, Save Jobs, and Save CUNY.” Davis said, “people working in higher education deserve better,” and that while they do not know exactly how many people received these “generic” letters, he appreciates how quickly HR worked to resolve the problem and “doesn’t fault anyone who works for Human Resources.”

“I’m hopeful that over the next few weeks the union’s advocacy and the pressure that elected officials have brought to bear on the Chancellor and the CUNY Board of Trustees will yield additional gains,” Davis said. As of now, reportedly 52 Brooklyn College adjunct professors have lost health insurance, according to their colleagues.

BC Professor Alex Vitale Author of “The End of Policing”

By Ian Ezinga
Business Manager

2020 has added George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and many more to the growing list of names immortalized against the backdrop of police brutality and white supremacy. In the wake of Floyd’s murder, the country reengaged itself in a now-familiar conversation that revolves around both the racial injustice rooted in our history, laws and economic system, as well as the institutions which continue to perpetuate said injustice. In step with protesters’ recurring reminders of those who have been killed, are demands to reform, defund, and abolish the police. These three calls, while often fumbled with

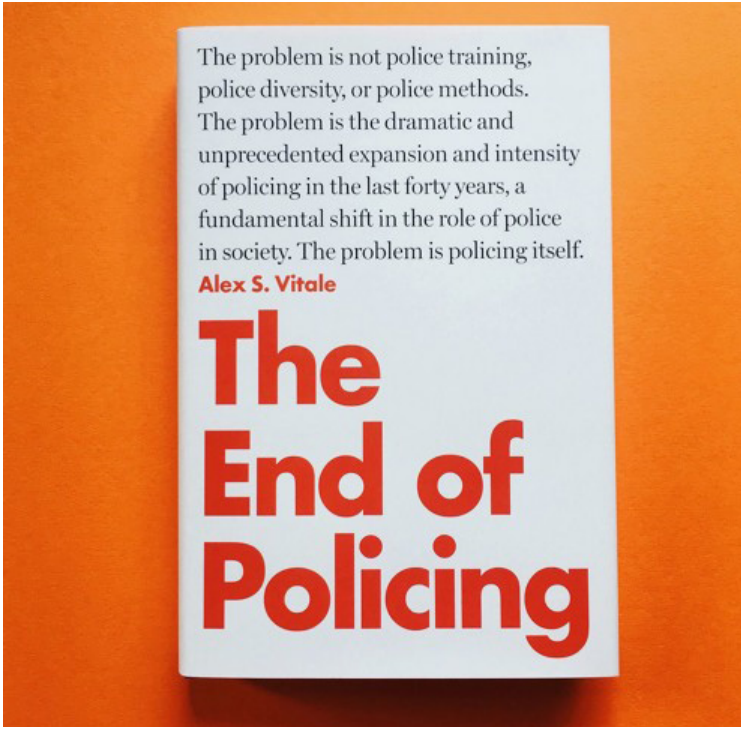
one another in the media and sometimes in the streets, have very clear meanings for those at the front of the movement.

A prominent voice in this struggle is Alex Vitale, a sociology professor at Brooklyn College and a twenty-year veteran police scholar. Vitale’s latest book, The End of Policing, aims to expose the police’s dramatic shift in function over the last few decades and how their role is at odds with a just society. Published in 2017, the book has seen a rise in popularity since the death of George Floyd. By mid-June, the book’s publisher, Verso, made the book free online after having completely sold out of physical copies.

Vitale was first exposed to the misaligned role that police are forced to

play in 1990 when doing housing policy for the San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness. “It was during this time that we began to see the ramping up of police harassment of homeless folks,” Vitale said. Vitale helped pull together a committee of attorneys and outreach workers to investigate what was going on and to figure out how to respond. “What became clear was that the city of San Francisco had given up on the possibility of actually housing people and had turned the problem over to the police to manage,” he said.

This discovery galvanized Vitale’s passion for uncovering the many faults and failures of police departments across the country. During his time at the



BC Prof. Alex Vitale’s book “The End of Policing”./ SoundCloud

CUNY Graduate Center in the mid-nineties, Vitale became involved with scholars who came to similar conclusions about the changing role of the police department in New York City under Rudy Guliani. Together,

activists and scholars began emphasizing the proliferation of “broken windows” policing.

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BC Professor Alex Vitale Author of “The End of Policing”

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Born out of the University of Chicago, this policy operated on the idea that in order to prevent the growth and spread of crime, cities must crackdown on minor infractions and increase police presence.

Vitale argues that the urban transformations the country saw in the latter half of the twentieth century produced conditions ripe for a fusion of “neoliberal economic development projects and neoconservative criminal justice projects.” This fusion saw police departments receiving massive budgets, military-grade equipment, and closed-door internal investigations. Meanwhile, homelessness, income inequality, substance abuse, and crumbling infrastructure have remained commonplace in American cities.

This paradox, aided in part by increasingly visible acts of police violence, has led to the growth of the Defund Movement. This movement, Vitale explains, “says that even when policing is done right it’s harmful, and so we need to shift resources out of policing and into non-punitive, non-carceral strategies.” Similarly to the age-old struggle being waged by public education activists, the movement seeks to address the source of the problem instead of just fighting the problem itself. This would mean divesting from police departments in order to invest in programs that are designed to reduce crime in the first place. So while defunding is often regarded as a reform, the defund movement is actually very different from activists who are primarily calling for procedural reform.

In June, Governor Cuomo addressed the masses in the streets, “You don’t need to protest, you won. You accomplished your goal. Society says you’re right. The police need systemic reform. That was accomplishment one, now go to step two.



Alex Vitale

Professor
Sociology

Brooklyn
College

What reform do you want?” After this statement, Cuomo made the theatrical gesture of offering up a pen and paper to the camera and beckoning activists to write down what they want.

“What Cuomo thinks he wants to hear are procedural reforms to policing: training, equipment, professionalization, and oversight. What I want, and what this movement is demanding is to reduce our reliance on policing and replace it with better community-based alternatives,” responded Vitale.

One of the biggest gripes that Vitale and fellow activists have with procedural reform advocates like Cuomo, is that they are missing the true point of what protestors and activists want, and inevitably fall short in creating any meaningful reforms. “The reason,” Vitale explained why politicians don’t press the police too much, “is because it lets them off the hook for any responsibility for addressing the failures of labor markets, of housing markets, and of healthcare markets that produce the kind of profound poverty and economic dislocation that is at the root of what police spend their time doing.”

“We need to be reaching into the community-based movements that are actively involved in trying to produce safer communities: the Rockaway Youth Task Force, Vocal New York,

Make The Road By Walking, these are the kind of groups that need to be consulted about how to produce these alternatives to policing,” said Vitale.

As Vitale makes clear, defunding would involve a strategic reallocation of resources in order to treat the causes of crime. “We need to quit hiring more police to throw homeless people off of the subway and instead put money into supportive housing on a state-wide basis. We need more resources for community-based anti-violence efforts to deal with domestic and youth violence,” said Vitale. To him, these measures are the main alternatives to police reform, but they are not what the governor is looking for.

The premier shortcoming of pushing for reform instead of defunding is that it puts too much faith in a system that is unable to correct itself. For example, the use of neck restraints and chokeholds were already banned in Minneapolis when George Floyd was murdered. An important stipulation that is written into many use-of-force reforms, however, is that they can still be used if an officer feels that their life is in danger. This stipulation, paired with police officers that go on patrol with a bullet-proof vest, a pistol on their hip, and a shotgun in their car, means that they feel as though their life is at risk before they leave the station.

If we continue to pass reforms with semantic wiggle room, we will never see the changes necessary to end police violence. Vitale speaks to this dissonance by arguing that in the killing of Eric Garner and now George Floyd, it was not a problem of police training or guidelines but a “problem of values [that] seems to go to the heart of the claim that, for too many police, black lives don’t matter.” To get at this problem of values, many activists are branding themselves as abolitionists. Abolitionists, although very similar to activists calling to defund, set themselves apart with their two-step approach to the problem of policing.

“Abolition is about a long-term vision and an analysis. The analysis is that policing as an institution has historically always been used to reproduce race and class inequality. Because it uses violence and coercion to accomplish its goals, it is an inherently problematic institution that’s incompatible with producing race and class equality,” explained Vitale. “The vision is a future world that doesn’t rely on state violence to produce a social order that rests on inequality. We want to live in a world where we don’t need people with guns and we don’t need cages for human beings to produce safety and stability.”

For Vitale, the issue is not that there are a few bad apples; it is that the

policing institution allows for those bad apples to continue working with impunity and little recourse for their actions. Like many prominent activists, Vitale thinks the end of policing as we know it, is the only course of action for building a society that does not cycle through headlines of unarmed black people being killed at the hands of the police.

Although the movement has proven itself strong and flexible, there will always be a lingering fear of it losing momentum. Vitale said that although the street protests have created a tremendous amount of political space, in order to prevent the movement from bottoming out, “that street energy needs to move itself into ongoing organizing. We’ve got to talk to our neighbors, our friends, our families, and enlist them in this effort.”

As shown through the recent sit-ins, demonstrations, and marches, this movement’s strength is in its numbers. So while it may be expected that the marches lose some of their critical mass over time, the pain and anger that people are feeling right now must not be let go. The discussions must keep happening. The votes must be continuously cast for candidates who are willing to play an active role in this dialogue. And we must at least try to envision a world without police.

CUNY Students Face Job Struggles Amid Pandemic

By Gabriela Flores
Features Editor

Under Gov. Cuomo’s reopening agenda “NY Forward,” New York City has gradually shifted to the “new normal.” As a result, summer job offerings have rolled out slower than anticipated, causing several CUNY students, and other NYC youth, to struggle with lagging employment rates. Many have been on the lookout for seasonal jobs to gain financial independence, work experience for their résumés, and a summer pastime. However, with the threat of coronavirus, initial summer plans have changed.

“I thought I would have something smooth sailing--at least a summer job, then another job after that--but then it wasn’t like that. There was a complete stop--it was no longer just worrying about a job anymore, but the bigger issue of death from contracting this serious virus,” said Mia Galeno, a Political-Science major at Brooklyn College. Galeno currently works from home as a Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) Bridge participant. SYEP Bridge is the successor of SYEP, a city-funded program suspended in April due to COVID-19.

For many NYC students, between the ages of 14 to 24, SYEP has become a go-to summer opportunity. The Daily News reports that the program cost the Department of Youth and Community Development \$150 million in 2019. Before the pandemic, it provided jobs for 75,000 New Yorkers across 13,000 workplaces each year. This summer, SYEP is replaced by SYEP Bridge,



Brooklyn College undergrad, Paola Muñoz, applying for jobs online. / Paola Muñoz

a five-week-long career readiness virtual program that has selected roughly 35,000 applicants.

To Julian Perez, a Macaulay Honors student at John Jay, the suspension of SYEP led to his loss of savings for college necessities.

“When the spring semester switched to online, I started to become concerned. I use my summer job to cover any book costs and expenses needed for college for the following semester, so I was definitely concerned about that,” said Perez. “I knew I needed a job but because of COVID, it’s so hard to find.”

According to the NY Department of Labor, the city’s 2020 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose from 18.3 percent to 20.4 percent in June. With the continuation of high unemployment rates in NYC and possible resurgence in coronavirus cases, some CUNY students have limited in-person job opportunities. For Fariha Hanif, a Macaulay Honors student at City College, not working in-person may impact her eligibility

for medical school as a psychology major.

“If I don’t get any healthcare experiences in a year, then I’m pretty sure it’s going to be a problem for applications [...] All of the jobs that I want to do revolve around healthcare, getting hands-on experience with patients,” said Hanif. “Hospitals won’t hire new people right now, maybe once they get a vaccine out. It really just makes me depressed, looking at all those opportunities that I can’t have right now.”

Similarly, for Ide Kafexhiu, a student who attends the Sophie Davis Biomedical School at City College, the current closure of CUNY labs and postponement of scientific research concerns her as a biomedical-major. However, Kafexhiu prefers to work from home and limit her chances of contracting the virus.

“I think future employers, or those in charge of whatever I apply to, will take that into consideration because a lot of people couldn’t do anything during quarantine,” said

Kafexhiu. “I wouldn’t get a job in the real world, because I don’t want to risk getting COVID or giving it to anyone.”

To date, about 412,878 New Yorkers have tested positive for coronavirus. Though the rate of virus transmission has significantly decreased since the pandemic’s peak, COVID-19 caused over 25,000 deaths in NYS. With this in mind, BC film-major Paola Muñoz finds the decision to work outside of home challenging to make, especially because of her need for a steady and stable income. Before the pandemic, Muñoz was a hostess and cashier at a restaurant, using her earnings to rent a bedroom near the BC campus. However, once NY was on “PAUSE,” Muñoz lost her job, and subsequently, her place to stay in the city.

“I worry about the safety of it all because even though I do want a job to save enough money for a room, I’m also scared to put myself out there every day. I know my family wouldn’t be okay with that. It’s all

very complicated,” said Muñoz.

Despite the challenges COVID-19 has created for many statewide, several CUNY students intend to continue searching for employment. Though the future of public health and job security in NYC remains unclear, many students aim to adjust their summer plans according to the “new normal.”

“People’s jobs had to close down, now they’re opening up again, but they have to make up for lost revenue. They can’t hire people on the dot,” said Ridwan Waseef, a Hunter College undergrad who is currently applying to part-time retail jobs like Party City. “Job wise, I think it’s going to take a while for everyone to get back on track. And if you can’t find a job right now, it’s not your fault. This is a really weird situation, a tough situation--we’re in a pandemic.”

Counseling Through COVID

By Qichelle Maitland
Staff Writer

Before the Covid-19 outbreak, Stacey Mohamed, a licensed mental health counselor and recent Brooklyn College graduate, provided counseling through group therapy at an outpatient clinic. She worked closely with those battling chemical addictions and mental illnesses. But ever since the pandemic enforced distancing measures, Mohamed's job has grown increasingly complicated.

During the pandemic, Mohamed has experienced a new set of challenges, including having her in-person sessions cut from her practice, an influx of patients, and fewer paid hours. Her organization, along with many others, has switched to telehealth, which connects patients to providers via various digital platforms. It took time for Mohammed to adjust to her workload and her patients' needs. "My specific population of patients are mandated by the state," she said, and her biggest hurdle has been, "trying to get my patients engaged in therapy again because... they need this."

It was important for Mohamed to maintain the relationship that she had with her patients through this new virtual platform. She finds that with the transition to telehealth, patients have been less willing to share their thoughts over the phone, which she recognizes as one of virtual therapy's most significant flaws. "For my patients with severe mental illnesses, I really want to be there for them, face-to-face," said Mohamed. "They

don't really want to engage. You can't read their expressions and you can't read their body language. That in-person interaction makes all the difference, for me, that's what makes therapy so much stronger."

The increased intake of clients and virtual sessions also means that Mohamed has begun counseling patients she hasn't even met yet in person. This has been especially frustrating for her as a therapist, at times feeling as though newer clients were slower to trust her.

Since a huge aspect of her profession is relationship building, Mohamed has had mixed feelings towards telehealth therapy. Though her patients feel she can support them whenever they need her most, she no longer has time to care for herself. "One of the positive things about it is that my patients have access to me essentially 24/7, but it's kind of negative for me, in a way," Mohamed said. "My work has now become my everyday life, and there hasn't been any time for me."

Mohamed usually finds herself responding to patients outside of her office hours, as there are many cases that she considers essential. "Some patients do need that extra support. The ones that have psychotic ideations and the ones that are maybe suicidal... I can be there for them, of course I can," she said.

Having to be there for others professionally while battling her anxieties in her personal life has been a constant struggle for Mohamed. She has counseled patients who have lost their loved



Stacy Mohamed

ones due to Covid-19, as she has dealt with her own grief. Mohamed has lost relatives and some of her patients to the virus. Before the outbreak, when she left the office, her work stayed there. "I could go through the stressors of dealing with everything that a patient went through, but I was disconnected once I left [work]," she said. "Now that my home in a way became the office, I don't ever get to leave. It became my life."

To cope with her anxieties, Mohamed finds peace in staying active as much as she can. Her evening runs have been

crucial to keeping herself sane. Though most days making time for exercise is difficult, she still tries to make working out fun and part of her routine.

With restrictions lifted, Mohamed is now seeing some patients between office meetings and continuing virtual sessions from home six days a week. As the pandemic continues, she hopes to master the ability to show up for herself as much as she shows up for her patients. Still figuring it all out herself, the most important thing that Mohamed wants her patients and others who may be feeling

overwhelmed to know is the importance of self-care. "Oftentimes we are so busy trying to help everyone else and we neglect the most important person, which is ourselves," she said. "I talk to my patients about this, you have to be selfish with your time. You have to be selfish with you."

"Mental and physical go together," she said. "Even if it's an hour or 20 minutes, make sure that you do something that is solely for you each day."

Theater Students Push Inclusion Through Zoom

By Michela Arlia
Staff Writer

As the summer days are slowly passing, some students within the Theater Department have collaborated to create a fun, virtual activity to show that theater is not dead even during a pandemic and to raise awareness of social injustice across the country. Created by M.F.A directing student Elissa Goetschius with the help of two assistants, B.F.A acting students Francesca Manligoy and Izzy Marinucci, the BC Theater Play Reading group is one of the responses to making the Theater department and program as representative as possible of all people. These events, usually hosted about once a week, are a virtual reading of plays through Zoom by students, for students, and about students' needs. These plays are being workshopped specifically because they are not the typical plays you would find on a syllabus.

"The play readings we do are meant to be a resource for students so they are able to explore and read plays for people of color, plays about LGBTQ topics, plays written by women, and international plays," said Francesca Manligoy, rising senior and Assistant Coordinator. "We wanted to set something up that would help students expand their horizons in terms of materials."

Following a department

wide discussion about race and white privilege, students within the BC Theater program have been very vocal about the alterations they want made to the department curriculum and show season to reflect the diversity of the campus. This group of graduate and undergraduate candidates have created a platform for everyone to explore and hear works that they are represented in.

The weekly meetings are decided through mass email lists and Google polls set up by assistants Manligoy and Marinucci. With coordination and the preference of plays given by other students, plays are then chosen to be read over Zoom meetings. Each play celebrates the work of BIPOC playwrights. Past readings include The Thanksgiving Play by Larissa FastHorse, Venus by Suzan-Lori Parks, All's Well That Ends Well by William Shakespeare, and An Octoroon by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins being the next reading.

"Reading and performing plays by BIPOC Playwrights should not be a trend, they should be staples in your library, and they should be serious contenders in your production season," said Izzy Marinucci, assistant and rising senior. "These plays should not only be heard or considered when discussing activism or social justice."

Turnout for these events have been



Plays now being broadcast on Zoom, the video conferencing app/ Humza Ahmad

positive, with many students expressing a demand to take part in the readings and choosing of each play. The one downfall, says Marinucci, is that even though the students seem to be enjoying the readings, it is hard to get a large group of people to agree to be on Zoom at the same time. But nonetheless, herself and the other students involved are proud of what they have been able to accomplish so far.

As of now, the reading group does not include any faculty members due to personal time constraints, but they are always welcome. "If [faculty] were to come and join, our top priority is always going to be making sure that

we are catering to the students' wants and needs," Manligoy said.

These student-run readings may continue into the upcoming Fall and Spring semesters, but if the campus reopens, this might not be likely. Once back on campus, concerns have been expressed that it wouldn't be feasible to continue the events because of the class and rehearsal schedules that would have to be considered, but the organizers remain optimistic.

"The program does a play reading series throughout each semester, which allows for actors, playwrights, and directors, to work together," Marinucci explained. "The faculty facilitates those readings,

but it is possible we would continue these readings throughout the semester as well!"

The BC Theater Play Reading Group will continue on throughout the remainder of the summer, and possibly during the Fall 2020 semester, should there be online instruction. The objective is to include all students and make them feel comfortable as well as heard.

"The main goal for these readings is for students to look at a play that they can picture themselves in," Manligoy said. "That feeling as an actor is one of the most liberating things in the world."

Where Arts Meets Activism: Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj

By John Schilling
Arts Editor

It was almost a decade ago that Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj, an award-winning playwright, director, choreographer, and producer, walked the halls of Brooklyn College as a graduate student with a love for theater.

On July 21, the Magner Career Center invited Maharaj to a Zoom call to discuss his experiences in both theater and activism and how the two can combine to promote racial equality and provide representation on stage. It was Brooklyn College after all that helped Maharaj navigate this approach to theater and shaped him into who he is today.

“I wanted to be in a place where you could really work...and that was very diverse culturally,” Maharaj said. “Brooklyn College really fit the bill.”

For Maharaj, who is of Haitian, Bahamian, Trinidadian, and Indian descent, this was particularly important as his love for theater was not always encouraged by his Caribbean heritage.

“Like many people of

color...the option of going into the theater was not really something that was admirable,” Maharaj said. “It was you’re going to be a doctor or a lawyer or a teacher!”

Because of this, Maharaj initially studied criminal justice and communications at St. John’s University where he received an associate degree and bachelor’s degree, respectively. It was at Brooklyn College, however, where Maharaj learned more about theater and his creative process while completing a Master of Fine Arts in Theatrical Directing in 2011.

“My time at Brooklyn College was everything,” Maharaj said. “It forced me to engage every day in terms of growing past my comfort zone and...seeing the theater not just as a tool for entertainment and education but as an opportunity for social change and social justice.”

Maharaj credited the other students and faculty he encountered at Brooklyn College for their support, which helped him value the importance of his “voice,” and this is something he

carries with him today in both his theater work and activism.

“In these very challenging but inspirational times we’re living in, I carry what I learned at Brooklyn College in every speech, every march, every opening, every rehearsal room every day!” Maharaj shared.

This includes his role as the Producing Artistic Director of Rebel Theater, a company of theatre artists based in New York. According to Maharaj, his goal in starting the company was to focus on “marginalized storytelling.”

To that end, Maharaj reflected on the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other Black Americans and how the current Black Lives Matter movement connects greatly to his work as an artist and activist.

“Black Lives Matter means that you right now exist and are important and your story matters, and how will you tell it?” Maharaj explained. “It is going to always be the artist that moves society and saves society going forward.”

Recently, Maharaj



Photo Credit: Michael Moore Agency

finished writing a musical that deals with civil rights and a group of American teenage girls who are wrongfully imprisoned for protesting. While Maharaj believes in telling these types of stories, he warns of the unpredictability in how art will be received as time progresses, citing Hamilton as a prime example.

“Hamilton was so successful with the Obamas and the promise of diversity...and now after everything that has

happened with Black Lives Matter, there has been such a pushback from African American leadership and folks in the theater of color,” Maharaj explained.

Despite this, Maharaj remains adamant about the importance of diversity in theater and the legacy it will leave behind.

“When all is said and done, my legacy will be that I hopefully inspired folks but [also] that I left, through my plays and through my writing and my speeches, a pathway for those generations yet unborn who are named Rajendra, who have similar beliefs, who didn’t have the opportunity or the access,” Maharaj said. “I found it in the works of James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Lloyd Richards, August Wilson, and George C. Wolfe. I can name them and then someone will name you, and that’s the continuum.”



Photo Credit: John Schilling

On The Record: Rough and Rowdy Ways, Bob Dylan

By Allison Rapp
Opinions Editor

"Today and tomorrow, and yesterday too, the flowers are dying like all things do...I fuss with my hair and I fight blood feuds, I contain multitudes."

I can't say that I perfectly understand the nuances of Bob Dylan's newest record (I likely never will) and I can't say I know where his mind is heading next (no one has been able to crack that code for years), but I can say that I believe *Rough and Rowdy Ways* showed up at precisely the right moment in time.

Admittedly, I'd heard through the grapevine months prior that Dylan had something brewing. I remember shaking my head a little -- sitting in the bathtub of my parents house in Buffalo with a glass of wine -- when a friend told me a new album was coming, thinking how admirable it is to be a musician who very clearly has nothing left to prove, and yet writes another heap of brilliant songs anyway.

"I'll drink to the truth and the things you said, I'll drink to the man that shares your bed. I paint landscapes and I paint nudes, I contain multitudes."

That was in late March of this year. I'd returned to my hometown to ride out the first wave of the pandemic and I had absolutely no way of knowing that this was only just beginning. Sitting in the bathtub with a glass of wine seemed like such a rare luxury at the time -- it still is I suppose -- but it seems like even more of one now, the ability to do absolutely nothing except sit and sip. There was nothing else to be done aside from drink to the truth, which was that a global pandemic had

struck, and paint whatever the hell paintings we wanted because there was little else to do.

Now I've returned to my tiny Brooklyn apartment, there is more than enough to be done, and I can hardly sit still long enough for a glass of wine, much less an evening in a bathtub.

"Tell me, what's next? What shall we do? Half of my soul, baby, belongs to you. I rollick and frolic with all the young dudes, I contain multitudes."

Admittedly, I never considered myself much of a social butterfly. I pride myself on being the type of young woman who does things like spend whole afternoons alone at an art museum, or sit solo with a coffee in the park, or drink a lunchtime martini at a bar with nothing but a paperback book with her. The rude irony was that while the isolation that quarantine brought wasn't jarring, the real loneliness came from missing the city.

"I'm just like Anne Frank, like Indiana Jones, and those British bad boys, The Rolling Stones. I go right to the edge, I go right to the end, I go right where all things lost are made good again."

The natural tendency is to think of Bob Dylan as the most lone wolf of the pack -- almost irresponsibly independent, witty and unwilling to bend, and surely too self-centered to give much thought to his fellow musicians. Yet, on *Rough and Rowdy Ways*, he starts name-dropping others and running down a list of countless cultural references. Even the instrumentation and structure of the songs is clearly using elements of jazz and blues.

Some of it is poignant and serious, some of it comical, but it proves



one thing: that Dylan -- the man responsible for influencing millions -- is more influenced himself than he's usually willing to let on.

Of course, it would still be foolish to consider Dylan as one individual. He couldn't have written it any better: "I contain multitudes." Dylan, well-read and aware as ever, is a conglomerate of hundreds of people, places, and periods of time. We are no different. I had always enjoyed being a solitary person, but isolation showed the other edge of that sword. It peeled back the curtain for all of us to meet those other versions of ourselves, those multitudes.

"I sing the songs of experience, like William Blake, I have no apologies to make. Everything's flowing all at the same time, I live on a boulevard of crime. I drive fast cars and I eat fast foods, I contain multitudes."

Only Bob Dylan could get away with releasing a 17-minute track about the assassination of JFK and release it in the middle of a global pandemic, but as he notes, there are no apologies to be had on

his part -- he's done it all and can't ever be taken down. I wasn't around for President Kennedy's death, nor most of the other historical events Dylan's sung about, but that also doesn't matter, I have the songs of those experiences. If Dylan is off working on some songs about the time quarantine, I look forward to hearing those experiences too.

"I'll sell you down the river, I'll put a price on your head. What more can I tell you? I sleep with life and death in the same bed...I'll play Beethoven's sonatas and Chopin's preludes, I contain multitudes."

My perception of quarantine has been a fortunate one. I'm lucky enough to have a set of financially stable parents and a place to escape the city from if needed. No one close to me died, no one in my household was ever sick, and I try not to take any of those things for granted. I couldn't quite explain why *Rough and Rowdy Ways* seemed to appear at just the right moment in time, but it likely had something to do with Dylan's repeated reminder: human mortality is fragile, no

matter what anyone tells you, and that life can be long and full of art, music, song, and dance, but it can also be tragically cut short.

When Dylan was asked about the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, he called it "sickening" and "very ugly." He didn't really need to say anymore. What more can he tell you? He's been writing about this -- about people who have been dragged, punished, or killed for nothing more than existing as who they are -- for decades. He is no stranger to seeing the pawns in the game get violently taken away.

In conversation with a friend last week, we mused about what Bob Dylan must be like to have dinner with. What does he talk about with people? Does he talk much at all? Who does he pay attention to and who does he coolly ignore?

We're back to his words again: I contain multitudes. So does America, it appears. And so do you, and I.

An Abundance of Karen's

By Michael Casteneda
Staff Writer

Calling racists “Karen” isn’t helping. There is no shortage of “Karens” out there. There are racist women and men who will try to crush the souls of anyone they think is not racially acceptable. It’s a feckless power grab. Some of these incidents will be caught on social media. The juicier ones will make it on TMZ or even the New York Times. It is the lowest form of existence.

The power of the cell phone camera in this day and age is that we can document these verbal attacks and bring them to light. No longer is there plausible deniability. The frequency should establish a pattern that can be burnt into the collective viewing experience.

And that’s where things fall apart.

This could be a powerful step forward in our country’s evolution. Instead, we have chosen to make a container, a “catch all” term for such incidents. We focus on the incidents where the perpetrator is a woman, which is sexist, and we can call that woman “Karen.”

This isn’t the first time a generic woman’s name like “Karen” or “Becky” has served to represent a person who is motivated by racism. The trope goes as far back as the days of Reconstruction after the Civil War and continues to be used today, like in Beyoncé’s “Lemonade,” released in 2016. These names and words used in the racial lexicon are both a shorthand and a psychological protection against existential death that racist language



Amy Cooper, who faces charges for unnecessarily calling the police on an African American man in Central Park./
Christian Cooper

attempts to inflict. However, this doesn’t get us anywhere.

Everyone can shame “Karen” instead of dealing with the issue of racism. This protects the identity of the culprit. It helps her escape consequences for her actions. The term “Karen” is a protective class abstraction to shield racism from scrutiny. It’s a straw man fallacy.

This is why Christian Cooper has chosen not to assist in the DA investigation against Amy Cooper. Ms. Cooper, a white woman, called the police from Central Park in May. On the call, she falsely accused Mr. Cooper, a black man, of attacking her. Mr. Cooper wrote a powerful op-ed in the Washington Post this month, discussing his decision not to aid the investigation, stating: “Focusing on charging Amy Cooper lets white people off the hook from all that. They can scream for her head while leaving

their own prejudices unexamined. They can push for her prosecution and pat themselves on the back for having done something about racism, when they’ve actually done nothing...”

This is not the point of activism. As Barack Obama put it, “I do get the sense sometimes now among certain young people... that the way of me making a change is to be as judgmental as possible about other people and that’s enough. That is not activism, that is not bringing change. If all you’re doing is casting stones, you are probably not going to get that far...” We want to take this mess and make the country a better place. If we start by making the United States a better place, then the world may follow suit.

When Barack Obama was elected, many people believed that America was in a post race society. That was dead

wrong. Donald Trump’s rhetorical power comes from that liberal idea that racism isn’t a problem that still exists or at least one that they want to acknowledge.

Trump campaigned on racism. He came off as an iconoclast. He was the only candidate speaking honestly about race. It was pure hate, but he was being genuine. It worked because the other side pretends that racism doesn’t exist. It pretends that the country is black and white. It isn’t. It pretends that only white people are racists. Immigrants and minorities are also racist, not to whites, but to each other. Often, they rally around racism to other minorities. That needs to be examined. However, our structure of Black, white, Latinx, and Asian doesn’t allow this.

Take for example junior congressman Richie Torres from the Bronx, a self-described

Afro-Latino, who is not allowed to be both in the Black and Hispanic caucus in the House of Representatives. I can think of ten New York Yankees who are both Black and Hispanic, but this does not fit in the structure of race in our country. This is important because it is one of many examples how the conception of race is absurd.

So, how does this relate back to “Karen?” The Karen concept protects the racial structure, i.e. the status quo, as long as the problem is some made-up person then nothing is wrong. In essence, all of us, as a nation, need to look closely at ourselves and what our values are. The “Karens” of the world are just a symptom of the problem, not the problem itself.

The Nets Bubble Keeps Popping

By Conrad Hoyt
Sports Editor

When the NBA season was suspended on Mar. 11, 2020, the Brooklyn Nets were in a rather precarious position, and it seems that as the league restarts, their situation hasn't become much better.

The team was in the 7th spot in the Eastern Conference, set to go up against one of the best teams in the league if the playoffs started that day. During hiatus, there was growing optimism among Nets fans that both Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving could return if and once the season resumed.



Brooklyn Nets Players./ Elite Sports

However, despite the NBA announcing the season would resume on July 30, both Durant and Irving have firmly stated they would not play this season. Speaking to The Undeclared, Durant expressed, "My season is over. I'm not playing at all." With fans' hopes dashed and star players out of the game, the Nets situation has only worsened.

The team's roster has only continued dwindling. Rotation players Spencer Dinwiddie and Taurean Prince are sitting out the Orlando restart

after testing positive for COVID, while Wilson Chandler has completely opted out of returning, citing family concerns. The Nets have gone from a fringe-star-laden team, to a team most aren't sure has enough players to suit up.

But the Nets are a strong organization and pivoted without complaint. The team signed some players who may be looking at their last chance in the league. Take Jamal Crawford as a prime example.

Crawford is 40 years old, and has played for

nine teams in his career. He is what he is, a crafty, quick 6th man, who struggles on defense and often needs the ball in his hands to be effective. But Crawford scored 51 points in a game for the Suns last year, and though he is undoubtedly in the twilight of his career, he still may have some juice left.

This is the position the Nets are in right now. Their stars are out, much of their rotation is amiss, and they have nothing to lose. So the plan will probably be as it should be: roll with the young

guys, see what some of the vets can give you, and start planning for what comes next.

Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving should be back for the start of next year. Caris LeVert looks set to stay with them, along with other high-quality players in Jarrett Allen, Spencer Dinwiddie, DeAndre Jordan, and Joe Harris (who they need to resign). If all healthy, the Nets should be one of the most feared teams in the league next year.

There are a lot of questions for Brooklyn's basketball team.

Questions that, on, say the Knicks, or the Bulls, or some other poorly-run franchise, would signal danger and failure on the horizon. But Sean Marks and his top brass have shown the ability to set a culture in Brooklyn of accountability, transparency, and innovative thinking.

Ultimately, it will be exciting to watch the Nets play in Orlando. But the franchise's destiny is not written just now. That comes next summer.

Vinny The Goat by Mo Muhsin and Gabrielle Toro Vivoni

