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**THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE**

# **WANGUARD**

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# USG Co-Prez Aharon Grama Disqualified From USS Chair Race



Photo edited by John Schilling

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By Gabriela Flores  
*Editor-In-Chief*

Four days before a follow-up election for the University Student Senate chairperson position, candidate Aharon Grama, Brooklyn College's Undergraduate Student Government Co-President, was disqualified from his run on Nov. 24. The allegations set by the body's Election Review Committee (USSERC) claimed he violated the campaign rules and USS constitution for "campaign purposes," including using Brooklyn College technology for an article published on The Vanguard's website that was accused of supporting Grama for USS Chair.

As of press time, USSERC and current Interim Chair Cory

Provost did not officially notify voting members of USS about Grama's disqualification, nor has Grama received an official hearing.

"We haven't even been given a course of action on how to ensure he receives that hearing. And no matter what we do, we can't force anyone to do anything," Jonathan Hanon, USS Vice Chair for Technology Affairs, told The Vanguard. Hanon and 27 other members of the plenary, a body comprised of student representatives from each CUNY college who vote in USS elections, signed a letter to CUNY's Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Denise Maybank. According to documents obtained by The Vanguard, the letter called Grama's disqualification an "act of retaliation for whistleblowing."

"We're just trying

to say that this is what the plenary wants, that Aharon at least receives a fighting chance to become the chair because this is making a mockery of democracy," Hanon said, who was notified by Grama about the disqualification.

Grama was slightly leading the chairperson election against his opponent Salimatou Doumbouya on Oct. 17, before being disqualified weeks later by USSERC for two allegations. For the first count, per a document obtained by The Vanguard, USSERC used an email Grama sent on Nov. 19 titled "[PLEASE READ] USS Transparency" as evidence. The Committee claimed that by "disseminating this email as he did," noting his email address (uss@aharongrama.com), Grama violated clauses that prohibited

the use of campus and university resources for "campaign purposes."

USSERC further alleged Grama used the USS name and sent the email to the USS listserv, or software that controls the mailing list containing USS members' email addresses, for "campaign purposes." There was no clarification on the meaning of "campaign purposes" in each USSERC allegation.

Grama's email notified the USS Plenary and Steering Committee, the highest committee within the Senate, that five USS members were appointed as student representatives on the Committees of the Board by Interim Chair Provost. At the time, Provost had not notified the whole student government of his appointees,

# USS Chair Race (Continued)

who would work with the university's top decision-making body, the CUNY Board of Trustees. According to CUNY's official website, one of those selected by Provost was chairperson candidate Doumbouya, who remains in the election and currently serves on the Committee on Facilities Planning and Management.

Grama claimed in his email, Provost was not being transparent with his decisions, ending with a call to all voting members to "vote for a Chair who will uphold Bylaws of USS" on the next round of elections scheduled for Nov. 28. The disqualified candidate did not directly call on USS members to vote for him, which led to members who supported his run questioning the fairness of USSERC's disqualification.

"He was simply calling attention to an unscrupulous action of the acting chair, and he was punished for that," Aryeh Kalb, a Lehman College Undergraduate Delegate, told The Vanguard. "And I'm a little concerned about what kind of message that sends."

Kalb noted that one of the members on the Elections Review Committee is Ja'Loni Owens, Provost's Co-President at the Student Government Association of CUNY School of Law, who could have had a conflict of interest.

"I think she should have recused herself from that vote," Kalb said. "How can you be unbiased if your

co-president is being attacked and you are then voting to knock someone off the ballot because they attacked your co-president? I just think that's simply ridiculous."

Owens declined to comment on the disqualification and allegations questioning her impartiality "to maintain fairness and integrity in the USS elections" as a USSERC member. In The Vanguard's email request, she stated, "Any allegations of inappropriate behavior or wrongdoing by the USSERC should be brought to the Vice Chancellor [Maybank] or her designee for her review."

USSERC's second allegation against Grama used an article published on The Vanguard's website titled "USG Co-Prez Continues Run For Chair," which it accused of supporting Grama for the chairperson position. The count stated Grama allegedly used "CUNY/Brooklyn College technology" and a "student government/student club" for "campaign purposes," noting The Vanguard as "a student activity fee funded organization at Brooklyn College."

The claims, however, did not acknowledge the paper's referendum group status.

"Referendum groups, including the Vanguard, are considered student clubs, but what sets them apart from other student clubs are the source of funding and oversight," Ron Jackson, BC's Vice President of Student Affairs, wrote in a statement to The

Vanguard. "Referendum groups receive a portion of the student activity fee directly on an annual basis and don't rely on funding from student government. Additionally, student government has no authority over them because they are approved by the Board of Trustees, not student government."

With The Vanguard and other CUNY student publications having reported on USS elections in the past, many USS members in support of Grama found the second allegation unprecedented. "This has never happened before," Hanon said. "And what it's doing is basically telling us we can't go to student newspapers about anything or else we disqualify ourselves, and that's not okay because, in the past, every candidate has done that. Nobody has ever gotten disqualified."

Other USS members opined that if Grama's disqualification stands under this allegation, it may affect how future USS elections and candidates operate.

"I think you're going to see that almost probably no candidates for positions will speak to press because of fear of being disqualified. And I think that would just be really sad, honestly," said Kalb.

On the day of the follow-up election on Nov. 28, USSERC carried on the voting for other remaining positions in the Steering Committee but suspended the USS Chair election without mentioning Grama's disqualification.

"With respect to the chairperson position, the Vice Chancellor of Student

Affairs [Maybank] or her designee, must make a determination regarding an issue to the chair position," said USSERC Chairperson Lucrece François while addressing the plenary during the meeting. "Once a decision has been made you will have an opportunity to choose a new date upon which time you will vote to fill in the chairperson position."

Later on in the meeting, members proposed a vote of No Confidence against USSERC in the wake of Grama's disqualification, but it did not meet the 29 votes needed to be added to the session's agenda. However, 22 votes were for the No Confidence proposal, 10 against, and 8 abstained.

With the USS Chair position temporarily filled by Cory Provost, USS Steering Committee's second-in-command as Vice Chair of Legislative Affairs, only some time remains till the seat becomes vacant. Per the USS Constitution, the "Interim Chair shall serve as Chairperson for a period not to exceed 45 calendar days, or the unexpired portion of the term, whichever is shorter." If a chairperson is not elected after the 45-day mark, the position will be vacant "until it is filled by vote of the Body."

For many USS members, Grama's disqualification shows the USSERC's ambiguous protocols for removing candidates and the absence of a definite appeal process. In the email that outlined USSERC's allegations

against Grama, he was instructed to send his appeal to Vice Chancellor Maybank within seven business days. Grama has since filed an appeal to Maybank, confirmed by documents obtained by The Vanguard.

For the USS members who support his return to the chairperson ballot, they believe that if his disqualification stands, it will set a precedent and lead to no reforms in USS.

"One thing I will say about with how things are changing is that if we can't get Aharon reinstated into the election, then this is just gonna be another year of the same and the administration will slow us down to a crawl," said Hanon.

The Vanguard reached out to Aharon Grama, who declined to comment for his concern of facing further retribution.

USSERC members Lucrece François, Hugo Fernandez, and Marlon Bailey did not respond to multiple requests for comment. Joseph Adwajie, CUNY Student Affairs Chief Liaison to USS, who initially contacted The Vanguard for a list of sources and its copies of communications with them for a USSERC investigation, did not respond to the paper's comment requests. USS Interim Chairperson Provost and Vice Chancellor Maybank, who was asked for an update on her review of Grama's appeal, did not answer The Vanguard's follow-ups.

# BC's Latest Spring Updates Pending Omicron Trend

By Gabriela Flores  
Editor-In-Chief

Most updates on the incoming spring semester depend on CUNY Central's plans as more information releases on Omicron, the new COVID-19 "variant of concern" that pushed Governor Kathy Hochul to declare a state of emergency in New York. With 70 percent of BC spring courses currently scheduled for in-person, and 30 percent running hybrid or online, administrators and student leaders are preparing for different possibilities.

"The College has been through many scenarios since March 2020," Alan Gilbert, Brooklyn College's Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, wrote in a statement to The Vanguard. "The University makes the determinations on the percentage of in-person classes. We are prepared for any possible changes."

As Omicron continues spreading to over three dozen countries, the New York Times reported, public health experts have noted there's not yet any firm evidence to prove the variant is more dangerous than Delta. While studies on Omicron develop, CUNY Central is "working with State and City health officials to develop guidance on how campuses should respond to new variants," BC President Michelle Anderson wrote in a college-wide email on Dec. 6.

CUNY's random testing program for vaccinated



As more studies on Omicron develop, BC prepares for different possibilities./Brooklyn.CUNY.edu

individuals across the university will continue into the spring, Gilbert confirmed. Within seven days of testing notice, a randomly selected CUNY student or employee must get tested at a university testing site. If those selected do not comply, they will not be allowed on campus. Those who test positive for COVID will be allowed to return once they test negative, according to CUNY's website.

Students enrolled in hybrid and in-person courses for spring 2022 must be vaccinated, unless their medical or religious exemptions are approved by administrators, per CUNY's vaccine mandate. Vaccine verification forms must be uploaded to CUNYFirst by Jan. 14, two weeks before the term's official start, or those who do not comply "will be subject to potential academic withdrawal," CUNY's official website states. Those opting for Johnson & Johnson must get their jab by Jan. 14,

while those receiving Pfizer or Moderna must have their first dose by Dec. 24 and Dec. 17, respectively.

As of press time, Student Affairs will remain in charge of verifying vaccination status on CUNYFirst during the spring, confirmed Ron Jackson, BC's Vice President of Student Affairs.

Come spring, if initial in-person plans are not affected by Omicron, the Student Affairs office will have an increased staff presence and remain open during regular business hours. Different virtual services will also remain, Jackson explained in a statement to The Vanguard.

"[...] We now have a multitude of modalities for communicating with students which don't require them to come to campus to conduct business," Jackson wrote, noting that his department intends to revamp existing resources. "Therefore, we

want to be sure a number of options are available from which students can select the mode of communication that works best for them." As Student Affairs works on hosting an in-person fair to inform students of available resources, they will continue their focus on academic advisement, financial support, and mental health concerns.

To continue addressing those needs and others students may have, the department created the BC Cares Students in Distress Survey.

Student Affairs and the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) are also currently collaborating on a series of events to welcome students back on campus.

From hosting more Movie Nights to tabling events hosted at the Student Center, USG intends to increase its presence and promote student life at Brooklyn College.

"I look forward to directly interacting

with a larger group of Brooklyn College students and connecting them to all the resources we have as USG, all the resources we have at BC," Iqura Naheed, USG Co-President, told The Vanguard. USG members will continue following up on resolutions they passed down to administrators, addressing student issues such as registration and in-person class concerns. Naheed noted that the organization will request more access to its office from BC administrators, with the hopes of allowing students to speak to USG representatives directly about their problems and ideas.

"It's going to be a different sort of challenge next semester, we'll see how the semester unfolds," Naheed said. "And we're ready to take that on and make sure student voices continue to be heard."

# NYC Might Allow Noncitizens To Vote

By Matthew Hirsch  
News Editor

DACA students attending CUNY colleges may have the right to vote in local New York City elections soon.

About 427,000 noncitizen students are protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and attend colleges in the United States, according to New American Economy, a nonprofit research organization that advocates for “smart federal, state, and local immigration policies.” Those students who live in New York City will

likely be allowed to vote in local elections starting Thursday, Dec. 9, if outgoing Mayor Bill de Blasio signs the proposed bill into law. De Blasio has expressed concerns about the legality of said proposal but stated he will sign it, the Associated Press reported.

If ratified on Thursday, the proposed bill will allow non-citizens who are permanent residents of New York City for a minimum of 30 days and have a clean criminal record to vote in all municipal elections. Once signed into law, the NYC Board of Elections will create a plan to establish a separate ballot for local



Photo by Thalia Juarez for The New York Times

elections to prevent noncitizens from as of 2017. Though voting in federal and state elections. According to NYC. gov, about half million noncitizens live in New York City on city elections. Once the proposal passes, noncitizens in New York City will be allowed to vote in the 2023 city elections.

# Third Round Of Relief Funds Makes Way To BC Students

By Radwan Farraj  
Staff Writer

Reporting Assistance  
By Gabriela Flores  
Editor-In-Chief

A new wave of COVID emergency funds made their way to CUNY students and colleges last week as the fall semester nears its end. The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III), signed into law in March 2021, provided funds for students that are enrolled during the COVID-19 pandemic. CUNY received over

\$400 million for all its campuses, with Brooklyn College receiving more than \$13.1 million for 15,688 students, according to Antonio Marrero, BC’s Director of Financial Aid.

“I believe this is a tremendous opportunity for our Brooklyn College students to have some relief in their time of need during the pandemic,” Marrero wrote in an email to The Vanguard. CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez announced the third round of fund dispersal in mid-November,

explaining that eligible students would receive a minimum base grant and could opt to have it applied to tuition and fees listed on CUNYFirst or choose to have it sent through direct deposit. HEERF I and HEERF II passed in March and December of 2020, respectively.

Both international and undocumented students are eligible for the emergency funds as long as they are enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a certificate or degree program, and currently

enrolled in classes, explained Marrero.

HEERF III also allotted CUNY institutional funds that can be used to make up for university expenses that were accrued during the pandemic. A portion of these funds will be spent on minor remodeling for COVID-19 safety, which includes HVAC installation or the purchase of room dividers to increase social distancing inside classrooms, per the U.S. Department of Education’s requirements.



Students can receive their check through direct deposit or mail./ collegelearners.com

“They get a lot of money for that purpose,” Aharon Grama, Undergraduate Student Government Co-President, told The Vanguard. “We try to use up all the money if possible.”

# Decompression Circle: Women Center and MWLDP Host Mental Health Talk

By Serin Sarsour  
Features Editor

Anxiety and depression rates have skyrocketed within the student population as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Women's Center and Muslim Women's Leadership Development Project (MWLDP) teamed up with Sana Shad to host a safe space where Brooklyn College students could decompress and discuss mental health via Zoom last Thursday, Dec. 2.

Shad is a clinical psychology trainee pursuing her Ph.D., working as an extern at the BC Personal Counseling Center. Although mental health was stigmatized and not talked about much in Shad's household growing up, she is the first in her family to

pursue a career in the field of psychology and urges people to open up about their mental state, especially during the pandemic.

"There's been an increase in anxiety and depression during the pandemic for students," Shad said during the event, sharing the results of a study CUNY administered. 2,282 CUNY students were surveyed last April and about 55 percent of them reported having depression and/or anxiety.

Shad explained that the pandemic's negative impacts on students range from health and financial worries to losing different experiences as the boundaries between work, school, and home blurred.

Shad also highlighted that students are constantly



Courtesy of The Women's Center at Brooklyn College via Facebook.

adjusting. First with transitioning to remote learning and isolation at the beginning of the pandemic, then fast forward to now, students are learning to adjust to a semi-normal life and learning environment while still being in a pandemic.

"With the new Omicron variant, the thought that the things and places that have been opening up lately may close again is very traumatic and can cause fear in people," Shad said.

Omicron, a new COVID-19 variant, was first detected in Botswana and South Africa in late November and has reached more than a dozen states in the US, including NY, according to The New York Times. However, more research must

be done to determine how contagious and serious the Omicron variant truly is.

Shad noted that she hopes the forum and interactive discussion will help demystify mental health, develop balance in a virtual learning environment, and connect BC students with resources.

To help make people aware of when they are "out of balance" in their lives, Shad shared some signs one should look out for. Headaches, sleep disturbances, changes in appetite, and/or heart palpitations, can all be physical signs of imbalance. Emotionally, one may also experience depression, anxiety, and/or feelings of powerlessness and resentment. Avoiding social activities and/or self-medication

can potentially indicate someone being out of balance with their personal life and relationships, Shad explained.

"Create your own boundaries and structures for school, work, and your personal life," Shad said. "By doing so, you are putting in place - somewhat artificially - the structure and routines that the pandemic took away from you."

Shad prompted those in need to seek the personal counseling available at BC. "We administer crisis intervention, group counseling, skill workshops, and so much more. It's all free to Brooklyn College students and everything remains confidential," she said.

Join the **Women's Center at Brooklyn College** and the **Muslim Women's Leadership Development Project** for:

**Let's Talk Mental Health!**  
**MWLDP Decompression Circle**

**When:** Thursday, December 2nd, 2021 4:00 PM-5:00 PM on Zoom  
**RSVP here:** <https://tinyurl.com/WCBC-TalkMentalHealth>

Join us to discuss how to:

- Demystify mental health
- Develop balance in a virtual learning environment
- Connect with resources

Led by **Sana Shad, MA**, Clinical Psychology Trainee, PhD and extern at the Brooklyn College Personal Counseling Center

**OPEN TO ALL BC STUDENTS!**  
For more information contact: [iqura.naheed@bcstudentgov.org](mailto:iqura.naheed@bcstudentgov.org)

**Brooklyn College** Office of Diversity and Equity Programs

Promotional image./@BCWomensCenter on Twitter

# BC Students Make Film On Ongoing Push For Asian American Studies

By Mary Zakharova  
Staff Writer

Why Is There No Asian American Studies Program In Brooklyn College?" is a short documentary created by BC students Joshua Leonard, Niara Johnson, and Bridget Squitire, and curated by BC Professor Cherry Lou Sy. The documentary premiered at a conference where students, who form part of the Mellon Student Transfer Research Program, presented their projects.

After eight people were shot in Atlanta, Georgia in March, six of whom were Asian women, Brooklyn College President Michelle Anderson held a meeting with BC professors to discuss the tragic event. At the end of the meeting, Professor Sy brought up the fact that BC does not have an Asian American Studies program available. There, the documentary's idea was born.

The three creators interviewed 18 Asian and Asian American students, alumni, and professors to find out what they think about the need for an Asian American Studies program at BC. All those who were interviewed, including members of an Asian American Studies Faculty working group, agreed that it's important to include the program not only for Asian and Asian American students, but for everyone who wants to learn about a different culture.

Though the documentary focuses on Brooklyn College's lack of Asian American Studies, many CUNY colleges do not offer the program. Only 2 campuses,



The opening shot of the film featuring BC lecturer and Masters student, Cherry Lou Sy./AAS MTSRP on Youtube

Hunter and City College, offer majors in the study. Out of the 47 classes offered within the Asian Studies minor at Brooklyn College, more than 30 were either moved to other departments or weren't offered in the 2021-2022 academic year.

The featured students and professors argued that questions of race and ethnicity are a priority in twenty-first century America, but it's impossible to carry those out without having an Asian American program on campus. Many also noted that over 20 percent of Brooklyn College students identify as Asian American or Pacific Islander. "I wish that people

cared more about us. I wish that Brooklyn College cared more," commented BC student Annie Ho in the documentary.

For the creators, their documentary's purpose was to show the importance of creating an Asian American Studies program, not just the administration's lack of action, Squitire told The Vanguard. "[...] Part of me feels like the only way there is going to be an Asian American Studies program at this point, is that if there is enough negative publicity and for long enough that the administration is forced to not ignore it," she said.

Now, the team is hoping to

introduce as many people to the documentary as possible to shine more light on the issue.

Squitire added that transitioning from the premiere of the documentary right to the in-person semester can be used to her and her colleagues' advantage since it'll be easier to engage with more students. "Someone suggested a sit-in and that feels like something big in my mind," Squitire said. "It needs to be impossible to ignore."

Squitire also shared that she is not aware if the administration watched the documentary, but if they did, they may not have

commented on it to avoid bad publicity on their end.

As the three students intend to make the documentary big enough for the administration to respond, those interviewed by the documentarians will continue pushing for the program's implementation at the college and other CUNYs. "It's time for the administration to walk the walk, not just talk the talk," said Professor Jocelyn Wills in the documentary. "And if they are not willing, then maybe they should think about going somewhere else."

To watch the documentary, visit: <https://vimeo.com/652937796>.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

@THEBCVANGUARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

# Steven Spielberg Visits BC... Kinda, Talks 'West Side Story'

By John Schilling  
& Michela Arlia  
*Managing Editor*  
& *Arts Editor*

The “West Side Story: The Brooklyn Connection” educational lecture series came to an epic conclusion on Wednesday, Dec. 8, with a surprise lecture from world-renowned filmmaker Steven Spielberg.

The lecture series, hosted remotely by the Puerto Rican and Latino Studies Department (PRLS) throughout the semester, previously featured live lectures with guests like Tony Kushner and Jeanine Tesori. This time around, however, Spielberg’s lecture was a pre-recorded interview conducted by Associate Professor María Pérez y González and Dr. Virginia Sánchez Korrol that was presented to the Brooklyn College community yesterday morning. Questions had to be submitted to PRLS Deputy Chairperson and Associate Professor María Pérez y González prior to Dec. 7.

This, of course, came as a surprise and disappointment to many in attendance who expected the lecture to be live, like the previous ones, and put their questions in the Zoom chat, not realizing at first that it was pre-recorded.

Back in September, The Vanguard reported that Spielberg could join the lecture series but nothing had been set in stone and it was “a matter of his availability,” according to Pérez y González. The idea of pre-recording the lecture, therefore, had been a possibility from the beginning, as Spielberg did not want to miss being part of the series.

Known for his work on “Jaws” (1975), “Jurassic Park” (1993), “Schindler’s List” (1993), “E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial” (1982), “Saving Private Ryan” (1998), “Back to the Future” (1985), the “Indiana Jones” franchise (1981-2023), “Ready Player One” (2018), and much more, Spielberg’s most recent work comes with “West Side Story,” his first musical which releases officially on Dec. 10, but has already been screened for some audiences and received rave reviews.

In this new adaptation of “West Side Story,” which focuses on an ongoing turf

war between two gangs in New York City during the 1950s, Spielberg knew from the start he wanted to hire Latinx actors and actresses to play the Sharks, the film’s Puerto Rican gang. This led Spielberg and his casting director to sort through 32,000 audition submissions to fill four roles.

Spielberg cited Rita Moreno, who played Anita in the 1961 version and returned as Valentina for his version, as one of the inspirations for this decision.

“When Rita Moreno first appeared in the 1961 ‘West Side Story’ that opened doors. That inspired young Latina girls to say, ‘Oh my God, that could be me someday,’ and...that did open a door, but it didn’t open a door to a Hollywood soundstage. It opened a door and simply raised awareness,” said Spielberg. “What we hope happens with ‘West Side Story’ is that [the] door gets kicked open a little wider.”

Despite this decision, however, Spielberg did not mince words about the original film’s controversies, but his main focus was simply to just make the film and perhaps continue raising that awareness.

“I was not trying to apologize for anyone’s past version of ‘West Side Story.’ That’s not my responsibility,” said Spielberg. “There needs to be more stories that invite these very talented communities to have more opportunities cause I always say it’s gotta be on the page before it’s on the stage.”

Beyond this aspect of the film, however, “West Side Story” was something that Spielberg had been a fan of since he first listened to the original album when he was only 10-years-old. Despite his love for the show, however, he knew that directing this film version would still pose a significant challenge for him.

“‘West Side Story’ to me is the greatest musical ever written for the Broadway stage...If I was going to make a musical it was only going to be ‘West Side Story,’” said Spielberg. “I never made a musical before. Ever. I didn’t even know I’d be any good at it. I just knew I loved the idiom and the genre of the musical...[but] just cause you love musicals doesn’t mean you should do one.”



Steven Spielberg at the “West Side Story” premiere on Nov. 29./Charles Sykes via AP

For Spielberg, however, there was a specific pull that “West Side Story” had on him that went beyond personal taste. He recognized that some of today’s younger generation may not be familiar with “West Side Story,” and he wanted young people to find this story to be worthwhile even in 2021, 60 years after the original film version.

Spielberg, nonetheless, did not think it would be the right approach to take the story out of the 1950s in favor of a more current setting. In his eyes, Spielberg felt that today’s audiences could still resonate with a story from decades ago.

“To have set it today would have politicized it and basically completely hijacked the themes, the story, the joy of the tragedy. There’s not as much joy today as there was in the 1950s,” said Spielberg. “If you set it today, it wouldn’t be a divide of a neighborhood. It would be a divide of a state, of a district, of an entire country that is more divided today than ever dreamed of being in 1957.”

An additional inspiration to stay true to the setting also had to do with Stephen Sondheim, who wrote the lyrics for the music with the 50s in mind. Spielberg and the rest of the creative team did not want to

change the lyrics at all, except in the infamous “America” song to ensure that it would be more respectful of Puerto Rico.

In addition to this, Spielberg revealed that there are various instances in the film in which Spanish is spoken but no English subtitles are provided. This, according to Spielberg, was very deliberate.

“I felt that subtitled ‘West Side Story’ would have doubled down on the English and put English in a vastly superior commentary against the Spanish language,” said Spielberg. “There is already so much pushback in this country about Spanish speaking individuals that I just said we can’t do that.”

In order to do full justice to the film, according to Spielberg, he traveled to Puerto Rico with Tony Kushner, who wrote the screenplay, and knew it would be necessary to surround himself with people who have sung and danced in the genre for years and allow them to “mentor” him. This was a daunting but rewarding experience.

“Probably the hardest job I’ve had in many many years, but also the most rewarding,” said Spielberg. “The most beautiful thing about this picture is that we all became a family.”

This idea of mentorship became a larger theme of the conversation, and according to Spielberg, has been paramount throughout his career. Spielberg remarked that Universal Studios became his mentor when he was 16-years-old after leaving a tour and hiding in the bathroom, observing the action on the studio lot. He also remembers all the people, during that time, who took a vested interest in his aspirations and encouraged him along the way, something he has tried to pass on to the next generation of filmmakers.

“When you find someone who is willing to take you under their arm and share their magic, you know a magician never shares their tricks except to young apprentice magicians, and I think that anybody that wants to be in this business we should consider them young apprentice magicians, and yes, it’s fine to share your tricks,” said Spielberg. “You should always remember the people that help you, and you should always be grateful, but you should absolutely be ambitious and don’t be shy because if you have a dream, you have to work to achieve the dream...Dreams only come true in Walt Disney movies. They don’t come true without a lot of hard work.”

# Composer Jeanine Tesori Talks “West Side Story” Music

By John Schilling  
Managing Editor

Prior to the release of Steven Spielberg’s film adaptation of “West Side Story” on Friday, Dec. 10, the Puerto Rican and Latino Studies Department (PRLS) welcomed Tony Award-winning musical composer Jeanine Tesori as a guest lecturer for “West Side Story: The Brooklyn Connection,” an educational lecture series that has been hosted throughout this semester by PRLS Associate Professor María Pérez y González and Dr. Virginia Sánchez Korrol.

Tesori, who won her Tony Award in 2015 for Best Original Score for the musical “Fun Home,” worked on “West Side Story” as a development music consultant and supervising vocal producer, contributing over 25 years of knowledge and experience in musical theater composition. In addition to “Fun Home,” Tesori’s other notable works include “Thoroughly Modern Millie” (2002), “Shrek The Musical” (2008), and “Caroline, or Change” (2004), which returned to Broadway this past October.

Throughout her career, Tesori has worked with Tony Kushner, the playwright and screenwriter who wrote the screenplay for Spielberg’s “West Side Story.” Naturally, when it came time to work on the film, Kushner reached out to Tesori.

“This job...was to come in with the POV of a composer, since we didn’t have the composer anymore, and to really not look at it as a story that has been done but [as] a story that is sung into being,” said Tesori. “A story that is really inhabited by characters that want something, and there is something in the way of them wanting it. And

they work lyrically to work through these songs.”

“West Side Story,” which first opened on Broadway in 1957, focuses on the turf war between the Jets, a white gang, and the Sharks, a Puerto Rican gang, in New York City during the 1950s. At the time and still to this day, the story has been a source of controversy for the ways in which it depicts and describes Puerto Rico and the Nuyorican experience. This was something Tesori wanted to be conscious of when she joined the film.

“It’s all about partnership,” said Tesori. “[...] You bring your imagination to something that you can’t possibly have experience [in] because we cannot walk in the shoes...of other people all the time. It’s simply not possible... but you must partner with someone who has been there [and] has this lived experience.”

When it came to “West Side Story,” one of Tesori’s tasks included partnering with Puerto Rican dialect coaches to ensure that Latinx actors would have a seamless transition from speaking to singing. This included working with dialectal coach Victor Cruz, who helped Tesori understand that dialects can change and there can be more than one.

This resonated with Tesori, who is of Sicilian ancestry and grew up noticing how the Sicilian dialect compares with that of Northern Italy through her grandmother.

“I see that dialect is part of the storytelling, and I needed to understand these characters because it also would tell me the length of time,” said Tesori in reference to how long the Puerto Rican characters have been in America when the film takes place.

In regards to the actual music in the film, Tesori

mentioned how daunting it was to take on something that is already acclaimed and widely known, but she appreciated how complicated it was to stay true to the material yet make it feel new again.

Despite her contributions, Tesori credits Tony Kushner and Stephen Spielberg for the decision to stay true to the show’s 1957 soundtrack in some aspects while modernizing it in other areas for the film, but she takes ownership over the approach she took with each singer, which involved asking themselves why they were singing in the first place and emphasizing the importance of “rhythm and inevitability,” as playwright George C. Wolfe has said.

“[A song] starts with a rhythm way before so they can understand where a song starts, but the audience doesn’t hear it,” said Tesori. “They can understand the shoulders they’re standing on inside the narrative. This is the thing that we talk about, and the order that we work with has to be inevitable.”

In terms of “West Side Story,” Tesori mentioned how certain songs in the story are used to release the tension of a previous scene, such as “I Feel Pretty” and “Gee, Officer Krupke.” As Tesori explained, “I Feel Pretty,” the song in the story in which a character describes how she has fallen in love, comes after a serious turning point in the story that only the audience knows about while other characters still have yet to find out. This is deliberately placed to keep the audience drawn in and keep the tension alive. Similarly, “Gee, Officer Krupke” is seemingly comedic, but it explores the system in which young men become societal outcasts and the target of law enforcement all while using rhythm.



Tony Award-winning composer Jeanine Tesori./Molly Sheridan

“Your ear is delighted by that,” said Tesori. “So we have to make sure people still listen to the story being said... We had to make sure that people got both.”

Similarly, a noticeable difference in this new adaptation, according to Tesori, are some lyrical changes that were implemented to fix some of the controversial aspects of previous versions of the story, some of which involved tarnishing Puerto Rico.

There are also some lyrics that are the same but now heard differently based on some tweaks made by Kushner, as well as composer Stephen Sondheim, who passed away on Nov. 26.

“[Sondheim] was listening as if the words were an oil [painting] and could be moved around. He did that for all of ‘West Side Story,’” said Tesori. “Questioning everything to the point where I thought ‘Oh my God, it’s really good. Don’t change it.’”

In addition, Tesori mentioned how the music now bears some more responsibility than

it did previously as the film features Spanish dialogue without any subtitles, acknowledging that America is not a monolingual country while also allowing audiences to rely on the rhythm of the music, body language, and the overall performance to help them comprehend what is going on in the film if they do not speak Spanish. This allows the Puerto Ricans in the film to be the “insiders” instead of the “outsiders,” as they are normally portrayed.

For Tesori, it is all about elevating these voices that are representative of an entire culture or a specific group of people, which this adaptation of “West Side Story” aims to do for Puerto Ricans.

“Everyone has a song to sing. It is our job to locate it, to amplify it, to push the faders up, and to make sure those who have not claimed this space get listened to,” said Tesori. “Will it be perfect? Never...but we must strive to do more to reveal that inner working.”

# Andrew Garfield Shines As Jonathan Larson In “Tick, Tick... Boom!”

By Alexandria Woolfe  
Staff Writer

“Tick, Tick... Boom!” the movie musical released on Netflix on Nov. 12, tells the inspirational true story of Jonathan Larson, a composer, lyricist, and playwright, as he scrambles to become a successful musical theater composer before the age of 30.

Directed by Lin Manuel Miranda, the film opens with Larson, played by Andrew Garfield, in 1992, beginning a presentation of “Tick, Tick... Boom!” on Off-Broadway. Larson explained through song how he has been working on his original musical, “Superbia,” for eight years but no one has picked it up or shown any interest in paying to put it on Broadway or even Off-Broadway.

To prepare for the role, Garfield worked on bettering his vocals by studying Jonathan Larson himself, watching numerous vocal training videos on YouTube, and working with various vocal coaches. His vocal skills truly shine throughout the film, as the preparation for the role is clearly shown in Garfield’s portrayal of Larson’s final performance. Garfield additionally spent the year before filming on learning how to play the piano for the musical’s rock monologue.

I especially enjoyed his portrayal of Larson. I’m familiar with Garfield’s non-musical acting, most notably his role as Peter Parker/Spider-Man in The Amazing Spider-Man movies (2012-2014), and I knew of his Broadway work and Tony Award

but wasn’t aware he could sing. I felt his performance was strong, and the emotion he puts into his previous roles affirms that.

The year is 1990, and Garfield as Jon struggles with paying all of the rent bills piling up, and hating his job waiting tables at the Moondance Diner on 6th Ave. As his huge presentation of “Superbia” nears, he can’t seem to perfect it. In 1992, Jon explained that these events had created a clock-like ticking in his head, counting down to his 30th birthday.

A recurring and relatable theme in the film to us as students is the impending age crisis where you feel the need to have goals set with dates. Paired with the dreary feeling of having accomplished nothing at all, especially nearing milestone ages such as 20, or in Larson’s case, 30, you find yourself as a character in the play and, better yet, the film.

The ticking throughout the film seems to weigh heavy on all audience members, as we are all racing against the clock that is life.

At this point in the movie, you can really feel the weight of turning 30 on Jon’s shoulders. He’s racing against a metaphorical clock and everything seems to be against him, the ticking seeming louder than ever.

The moments where the ticking is isolated from dialogue stick with me, and I feel college students really resonate with the idea of this mental clock ticking endlessly. There are constant reminders of the many deadlines on the horizon and goals you have yet to accomplish that

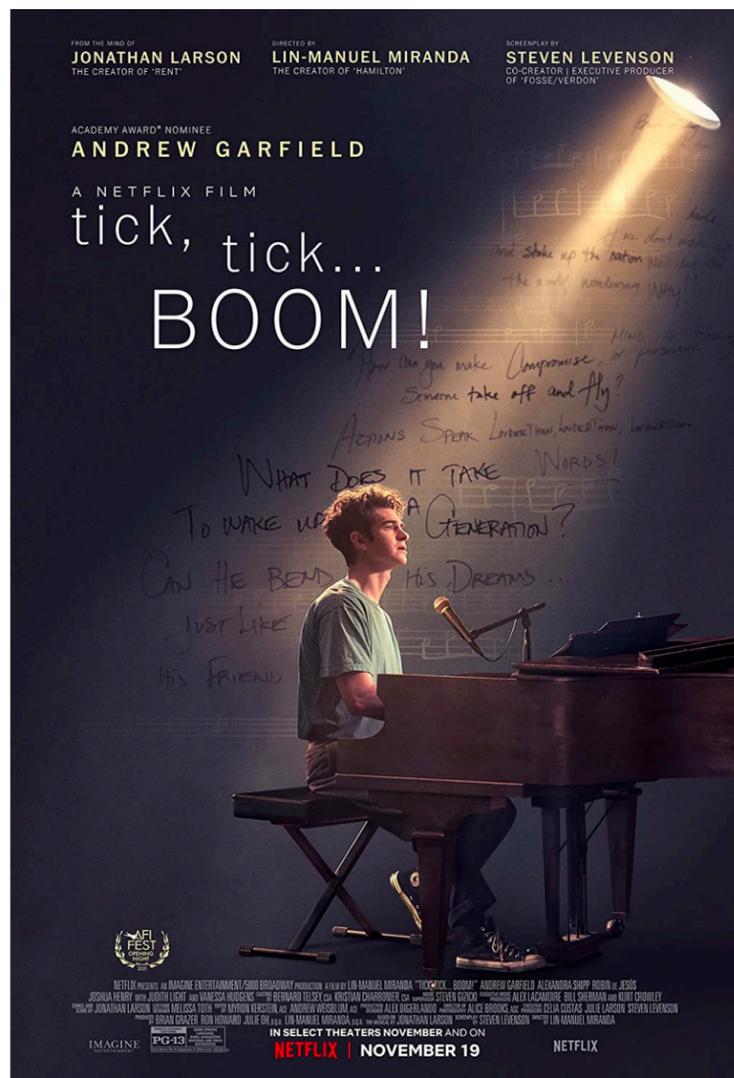
others have completed two times over by your age.

As Jon grapples with adding a song to become the turning point of his show, a slew of issues come one after another: Freddy, a friend and fellow waiter at the diner, is hospitalized with an HIV-related fever; his childhood best friend Michael has taken a new job that pays well and has moved uptown, becoming the kind of adult Jon feels the two never wanted to be; and his girlfriend, Susan, has taken a permanent dance instructing job hours away in Massachusetts, hoping Jon might come or at least explore the option with her.

Seeing Jon become extremely discouraged after a lack of reaction to his presentation of “Superbia” felt familiar too. The feeling of working on something so hard, something you’re proud of, that no one else appreciates. Garfield really sold me that this was an experience familiar to himself as well.

The audience gradually witnesses how Jonathan feels that his work has been completely wasted and begins to think that he needs to give up on musical theater entirely for a job with benefits and good pay. Grappling with his career struggles, Jonathan finds out his friend Michael recently received an HIV-positive diagnosis.

This is the second character in the film to announce they are HIV-positive, however, Jonathan’s monologue reveals that Michael and Freddy are on a long list of friends and acquaintances who have been impacted by the uncontrolled AIDS crisis. While Larson



Courtesy of Malcolm J. Merriweather “Tick, Tick... Boom!” poster./IMDB

doesn’t dwell too much on this in “Tick...Tick...Boom!,” the show “Rent,” arguably Larson’s most famous musical, has a plethora of HIV-positive characters from different backgrounds.

The weight and awareness of the AIDS epidemic at this point in the film is a topic not ignored but embraced very well by the creative team, as they showed how pertinent it was to give viewers a deeper sense of what life was like for people.

The film then finally comes to Jonathan’s 30th birthday celebration at the Moondance Diner where, even with a long list of rejections, he is happy to make it to 30 as so many of his friends never had the chance to since they lost their lives to AIDS. He has reached a grateful feeling compared to the stress he had been putting himself through over this one musical.

As the movie ends, this scene where the cast is all together made me feel warm inside. They all seemed genuinely proud of their parts in making “Tick... Tick...Boom!”

Jon then asks the eternal question, what next? His agent

Rosa encourages him to keep working, describing the process as: “You write the next one, and then the next one, and then the next one.” Jonathan’s next one ultimately became “Tick...Tick... Boom!”

Following this comes “Rent,” a musical that would thrive on Broadway for 12 years. Though Larson does pass away before achieving the success he craved, you see throughout the movie how hard he works toward his goal and how he inspirationally perseveres through the discouraging events around him.

The musical version of “Tick... Tick... Boom!” was originally created not only as a piece inspired by Stephen Sondheim but as Larson’s love letter to him, which was obvious to me while viewing the film after the 91-year-old composer’s recent passing. That being said, it is clear that the film version is a love letter and tribute to Jonathan Larson from director Miranda, and how “Rent,” as Larson’s former girlfriend Susan said in its closing, “changed the definition of what a musical could be.”



Andrew Garfield as Jonathan Larson in “Tick, Tick... Boom!.”/Netflix

# Rolling Rock Ramblings: Philosophical Inquiry Into Imagination Suppression

By Ian Ezinga  
*Opinions Editor*

Up until this semester, I have never taken a philosophy class. Being friends and roommates with philosophy majors when I was 18 did not exactly help my perception of the study as a whole. But the readings and subsequent assignments I completed for my Introduction to Problems in Philosophy course have helped reorient my thinking on a few topics. Important among them is my fervent damnation of Disney.

It is worth disclaiming early on that I have never been to Disneyland or an affiliated theme park, nor did my parents have a cable subscription that allowed me unbridled access to the content that their television channel produced. I understand this disclaimer limits the value of my opinion on the matter to some who may read this, but in total honesty, I am quite thankful for my limited encounters with what I understand to be one of the more damaging imaginative voids that American culture has handcuffed to the world's psyche. To break down my contention, I will briefly examine their parks, movies and television, and why they seek to hinder our creativity and imaginations.

The theme parks, that I was for a short time jealous of kids who could afford to go, now stand in my head as great altars. Places of sacrifice where people lay down their own imaginations, and money, to a deity which they assume presents them a more refined



*Courtesy of ananddamani.com*

imaginative world. It is true that there are spectacles to be seen at these parks. But what are these spectacles compared to the world around us? I would argue that they hardly compare. The lives that people are escaping to go to Disneyland can contain much more drama and excitement than the lives they assume when they wear their lanyards and take photos with mascots.

The movies and television, while not altogether evil, represent a similar action of presenting a reality for people to observe rather than feed the creativity needed to reimagine their own. Tuning in to shows or endlessly rewatching superhero or princess movies does not unlock a greater understanding of the world. Instead, it offers a reality to be enjoyed not by being an active participant but a passive observer. If a piece of media doesn't

inspire any action apart from reciting lines or mimicking responses, then it isn't actually inspiring. This, of course, doesn't mean these shows cannot inspire people. But my argument stands that they are designed more to sell young people stuff – a passive consumerist lifestyle being the most important product – than to inspire them.

Disney's television and movies, in a similar way to the parks, do not outright encourage creativity and imagination. Instead, they provide an outlet to experience Disney's reality by paying for it. Yeah, sure, it's just media. What's the big deal? Maybe not that serious, but I personally lament the loss which future generations will unknowingly carry when they relate their lived experiences more to television shows, movies, and video games than to other humans living and

breathing around them. Again, this is not an anti-media piece, I happen to love entertainment. But Disney is a company. Is it wrong to assume that they are creating products designed to keep their audience glued to their screens rather than the world around them?

Creativity is not consuming media or simply replicating it in your own endeavors. Creativity involves seeing the world for what it is, and finding ways to reimagine it. Disney, and other large media corporations, stifle this process by instead of presenting reality, present their trademarked version of it. Instead of children's imaginations being cross-referenced with the world around them, it becomes all too easily juxtaposed against the reality that is presented to them. Think Plato's Cave but the shadows are animated Disney

characters. If you were to leave the cave, see reality, and try to return to tell of your findings, the shadow watchers wouldn't hate you, they would just prefer the animated version.

After meeting their basic needs, humans instinctively seek out ways to better their experience on earth. Forever in our quest for safety, we are chasing, however fervently, the dreams which our minds present us. Disney and other large media corporations are trying to create a monopoly on the dreams we have and how we imagine them in reality. Sure we have a choice in what we watch or how we spend our money. But if they catch us young enough, we may become unable to imagine better alternatives than the pleasure palaces that are offered through their ever growing media empire.

Disney is not a dream, it is a snow globe that you buy in a gift shop.

# Opinion: The Importance of Staying Creative Over Winter Break

By Melissa Morales  
Staff Writer

As finals week rolls into view and the end of this semester is fast approaching, many students around this time may begin to feel the “winter blues.” Despite the potential stress and anxiety from upcoming exams and projects due in the next two weeks, the thought of classes actually ending and not having that communication and productivity of working on assignments may hit hard for some.

Winter blues can be described as feeling more tired, anxious, and moody, which resemble the environment around us during the cold, dark winter months. Beyond just feeling down, many people experience a more severe form of winter blues, known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This is a mood disorder characterized by depression that occurs where there is less sunlight at certain times of the year. Because of how common these forms of seasonal depression are, it is critical to remain engaged and productive during winter break. I don't just mean with academic studies or employment, but also being productive creatively (which is just as, or even more important, during the winter season).

The first step in remaining productive and creative during the winter break is to stay connected. Even if it is



Photo by Justin Kauffman via Unsplash.

done virtually through phone or video calls, it's crucial to maintain a human connection with family and friends. Additionally, joining an online group catered toward a passion or interest is extremely beneficial. Being part of creative communities can lead to new friendships, connections, and the possibility of networking. Students should check out if any clubs cater to their interests and are still hosting activities during the break.

Another absolutely vital thing for everyone to do to remain engaged during winter break is to prioritize. Although this is always important, looking out for yourself is especially important during a time where some individuals tend to spend it alone or with a minimal number of people. Self-care not only involves physical health, but it is also important to maintain

emotional, mental, and social health, which are all equally essential to take care of.

As winter blues may bring up new anxieties revolving around isolation or not having much to do, it becomes crucial to learn about one's own needs and taking care of oneself like eating healthy, having a regular sleeping routine, doing a hobby you enjoy, and taking advantage of the days where the temperature gets above 50 degrees.

One way I found myself practicing self-care while also feeling productive and creative is by decorating or reorganizing my room. I know I get very creative and engaged when it comes to redecorating my room for different holidays; it always gets me more motivated as well. Incorporating bright lights, sun lamps, minimalist design, and even plants can be great

ways to brighten up one's mood. Similarly, many pets such as dogs, cats, birds, or guinea pigs are great for companionship for people of all ages, and in my opinion, they especially bring joy during the winter break where people can give them more attention.

Creating personal projects is an extremely productive and equally creative way to stay engaged beyond one's own room. For someone like myself who is big on creativity, doing projects and artistic works like writing poetry, stories, and making short films are some things I look forward to doing this winter. These projects enable individuals to become self-starters and enhance the ability to do tasks on one's own time. These things can be incredibly advantageous and possibly profitable too. Self-publishing books or submitting films and

scripts to competitions, for example, could lead to positive outcomes for future businesses and careers.

Creative projects let individuals discover and learn new things, which provides more experience for future endeavors. While working on a passion project for a short film, I can learn about different editing software and specific systems through online tutorials; this can strengthen my skills and allow me to be creatively productive with a vision for entrepreneurship.

Being productive may have different meanings depending on the task at hand or the time of the year. But in the upcoming winter break, I encourage you to explore ways in which you can be both productive and creative as an important way of practicing self-care and pushing out the winter blues.

# Farewell From Dylan Kaufman, Photo Editor



*Dylan Kaufman, former Photo Editor.*

By Dylan Kaufman  
*Photo Editor*

Following the spring 2021 semester, I wanted nothing to do with college. The school experience I'd grown to love bore zero resemblance to its pre-COVID days, and I spent every open-ended assignment finding ways to channel my depressive state into something I could get a passing grade on.

"Divided by a Digital Ocean, Students Seek Hope a Year into Remote Learning" read the title of one article I wrote for a journalism course. It may as well have been a journal entry. Each week I felt

more hopeless about the degree I'd eagerly begun and by the time finals came around, I felt about the same as my college experience -- a shell of my former self.

It had only been a few weeks into summer, and while the relief of completing the semester was nice, I still felt lost, disillusioned by how higher education now looked to me. I had plans to graduate over the summer, but things went awry and before I knew it, I had another semester to look forward to. Then I heard from John.

He reached out to me through LinkedIn, a platform that at the time, gave me

headaches. But John's message gave me hope for the first time in a while. He asked if I wanted to join The Vanguard as Photo Editor and explained the responsibilities. I was uncertain but figured if he believed in me, and I was going to be returning next semester anyway, why not?

We did a practice issue over the summer to get a sense of our roles, and it was cool, but it wasn't until mid-semester when we had a Zoom call with a university employee that I began to truly appreciate my experience at The Vanguard as I do now.

It was on an off day, and we all slowly

joined the call as we could. As we described what we do to this guy, he started to seem a little puzzled. He couldn't believe what we've been able to accomplish being nearly fully remote. I felt a sense of admiration for my team here, for John and Gabi's steadfast leadership and organizational skills, and for the communication and dedication each of the editors and writers put in every week to make things come together.

Everybody is a student, most working outside of class too, and somehow this beautiful work of journalism came to be each week. But it wasn't

magic, it was the result of the care, time, and effort put in by each of us (and I'd be remiss not to reiterate the inhumanly impressive contributions of Gabi and John, who I am fully convinced deserve a salary over a stipend).

It was an honor to be a part of The Vanguard. It was, without question, the best thing to come out of this final, unexpected semester of mine. I leave with gratitude, pride, and admiration -- for the opportunity, for my peers, and all we've accomplished here together.

# Gil Hodges And Others Elected To MLB Hall Of Fame

By Owen Russell  
*Sports Editor*

Labor negotiations between the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) and MLB owners broke down last Wednesday, Dec. 1, leading to the league's first work stoppage since the 1990s. In accordance with the work stoppage, most baseball-related activities have shut down. That means no free agency, no trades, and could possibly mean no spring training or even regular season games.

Though current players have been left out in the cold, baseball stars from yesteryear still have much at stake. On Sunday, Dec. 5, the National Baseball Hall of Fame immortalized six former athletes by electing them to the Hall of Fame.

The election consisted solely of players who had been passed over during their time on the Baseball Writers' Ballot. Bud Fowler and Buck O'Neil were elected from the Early Baseball Era Committee (pre-1950).

The majority of the players elected, however, came from the Golden Days Committee (1950-1969). Pitcher Jim

Kaat, third baseman Minnie Minoso, outfielder Tony Olivia, and first baseman Gil Hodges all received the much-deserved honor more than half a century after their playing primes.

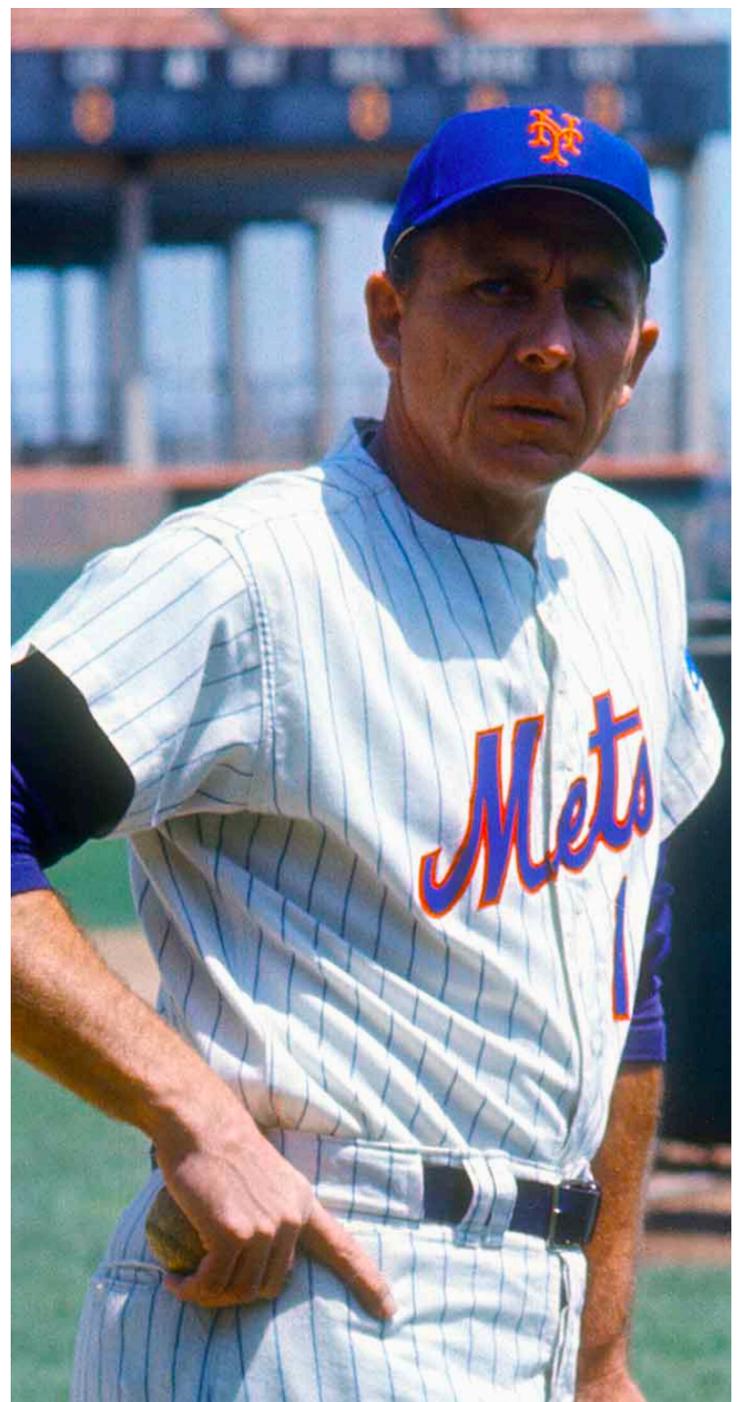
For New Yorkers, the Gil Hodges announcement is the biggest cause for celebration. Hodges spent the majority of his baseball life as a New York icon. Starting his career in Brooklyn, Hodges would become an eight-time All-Star and a key member of the 1955 World Series team. After a brief stint in LA, where he won another World Series, Hodges came back to NY to join the newly-formed New York Mets. During his two-year tenure in Queens, Hodges was by no means a standout player; he would retire just two years later.

From there, Hodges began a career as a manager, where he would go down in Mets' immortality. In 1969, Hodges led the "Miracle" Mets to the promised land, earning them a shocking World Series win over the Baltimore Orioles. Hodges would continue managing the team through 1971 until his untimely death in 1972.

Hodges isn't the only

player who finally got what they deserved. While Kaat, Minoso, Olivia, and Bud Fowler were all incredible athletes, none may have had a bigger impact on the game than Buck O'Neil, who was a stalwart of the Negro Leagues pre-integration. He won a championship with the 1942 Kansas City Monarchs, and was a three-time All-Star. Though he was a remarkable player, O'Neil earned his spot in the Hall of Fame as Pioneer of the Game. Transitioning to an off-the-field career, O'Neil became the first Black coach in MLB history with the Chicago Cubs. After scouting some of the best talent in MLB history and founding the Negro League Hall of Fame, O'Neil passed away in 2006. Though the achievement comes posthumously, the countless people who Buck O'Neil inspired can finally celebrate.

Of the players who did not make the Hall of Fame this time around, New Yorkers may best recognize Roger Maris, who gained national acclaim after breaking Babe Ruth's single season home run record. Maris won two World Series with the New York Yankees in the 60s, as well as two MVP awards. Though Maris had an



Gil Hodges as Mets Manager./Focus on Sport via Getty Images

extremely high peak, his career was plagued with injuries and inconsistency. Though he may never find his way to Cooperstown, Maris' number 9 is forever retired by the Bronx Bombers.

Despite these elections, the 2022 Baseball Hall of Fame class is far from complete. At the moment, the Baseball Writers of America are still voting on a ballot of 30 players, more recently retired. Highlighting the ballot are steroid

era superstars Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens, Sammy Sosa and more. This year, designated hitter David Ortiz and shortstop/third baseman Alex Rodriguez have joined the ballot for the first time. Last year, nobody received the needed 75 percent of the vote to be inducted, and it remains to be seen if this will happen again this year. Regardless, there will still be new faces entering Cooperstown in 2022.

# NYCFC Makes MLS Cup

By Billy Wood  
Staff Writer

The New York City Football Club (NYCFC) is going to the Major League Soccer (MLS) Cup final on Saturday, Dec. 11, for the first time in their seventh competitive season.

The road to the final was no easy feat. On Tuesday, Nov. 30, NYCFC was able to advance to the Eastern Conference final by beating the New England Revolution 5-3 on penalties after an emotional game. They took an early lead as midfielder Santiago Rodríguez scored in the third minute. The Revolution was able to equalise a few minutes later as centre forward Adam Buksa scored in the ninth minute.

Both teams headed to extra time after remaining 1-1, following 90 minutes of grueling action at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts. NYCFC looked certain to advance when Valentín Castellanos scored in the 109th minute. The celebration did not last too long as he was sent off four minutes



The team hopes to take home another trophy after earning their first with a triumphant Eastern Conference Finals victory./Associated Press

later after being shown the night's second yellow card. With a man down for the remainder of the game, Revolution was able to equalise at the 118th minute by Tajon Buchanan. His goal sent both teams to penalties where NYCFC would advance in a dramatic fashion.

In the Eastern Conference finals, NYCFC played Philadelphia Union at Subaru Park in Chester, Pennsylvania. After a

scoreless first half, the game picked up pace in the second. Union got on the scoresheet first in the 63rd minute as Alexander Callens scored an own goal. NYCFC responded two minutes later when Maximiliano Moralez equalised. With the game looming to go to extra time, Talles Magno was able to score the winning goal in the 88th minute - two minutes away from regular time.

With that goal they

were crowned the Eastern Conference champions. "This club has already gone through a lot already in a young age and today we have for a third time had success and we bring the first trophy to the club," said NYCFC head coach Ronny Deila, MLS reported. "I'm sure it's not going to be the last."

NYCFC will play the Portland Timbers in the final this coming Saturday at Providence Park in Portland. This will be the

first meeting between these two teams this season. Their last game was a 3-1 win for Portland in August 2020. This will be the Timbers' third MLS Cup final, after having lifted the trophy in 2015.

NYCFC coach Deila is aware of the Timbers' history in the cup finals but knows that if his team puts more energy into the game and leaves everything out on the field, they can beat anybody.

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# BC Sports Recap (Dec. 3-6)

## Women's Basketball Dominates The Court



Chanel Jemmott./CUNY Athletic Conference

By Owen Russell  
*Sports Editor*

The women's basketball team had only one game this past week. The team found themselves in CUNYAC competition for the first time this season against Lehman College on Friday, Dec.

3. The Bulldogs did not face much of a challenge against the Lightning. It was pure domination from the jump. The Bulldogs' staunch defense held Lehman to only 4 points in the fourth quarter. As the game went on, Lehman never scored more than 15 points in a single

quarter. The Bulldogs applied constant pressure, stealing the ball 10 times and forcing 24 turnovers.

Brooklyn's offensive juggernaut was out in full force as well. The team dropped 94 points on Lehman's head in a game that saw seven players score double-

digit points. Forward Chanel Jemmott led the way, scoring 16 points and securing 9 rebounds, one short of a double-double. Brooklyn's convincing thrashing of Lehman earned them their fifth win of the season, putting their record at 5-1.

The Bulldogs will look to secure their sixth win against FDU-Florham on Wednesday, Dec. 8 at 7PM.



## Men's Basketball Continues Losing Streak

By Elijah Hamilton  
*Staff Writer*

Coming off of Thanksgiving break, the Brooklyn College men's basketball team tried to end a two-game losing streak, seeking their second win of the season. Things did not go according to plan, however, as the Bulldogs lost their last two contests.

In their Dec. 3 matchup against Lehman College Lightning, a CUNYAC rival, at the West Quad, it was a slow night for the Bulldogs, who lost 76-82. Junior Ojalide

Kaydin led the way with 22 points to go along with five steals for the Bulldogs. Senior Noah Shy also scored 14 points to go along with four assists.

However, their worst loss of the season came on Monday, Dec. 6, at home against the Yeshiva Maccabees. The Maccabees, who is currently ranked number one on the D3Hoops.com national poll, came to play Monday night, holding the Bulldogs under 50 points throughout the contest.

Brooklyn went on a 7-0

run and held Yeshiva scoreless. Yeshiva's Ofek Reef, however, scored a running layup as the buzzer expired, allowing the Maccabees to take a 42-25 lead at the half.

YU would continue to dominate the matchup, winning the contest 94-48. Junior guard Olajide Kayin led the way for the Bulldogs, scoring the team 10 points.

The Bulldogs will come back from a 1-8 start to the season, with their matchup against Farmingdale College on Wednesday, Dec. 8.



Kayin Olajide./Damion Reid