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**THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE**

# **VANGUARD**

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# #CrumblingCUNY Shows Broken Facilities University-Wide, Hochul’s Exec Budget Gives Some Hope For Repairs

By Matt Hirsch  
News Editor

New York State Governor Kathy Hochul passed a budget allocating \$965.8 million to repair and maintain CUNY facilities on Apr. 9. During state budget talks, CUNY faculty and students took to social media to share the broken facilities on their respective campuses. One need only walk into a Brooklyn College restroom for an example of repairs needed on an average CUNY campus.

“One of the things that we’ve been working on is in terms of getting a better system [to report broken facilities on campus]. The way that it works is that you file a report, and you’re supposed to hear from somebody in Facilities. That can take some time,” Mobina Hashmi, a Brooklyn College Television and Radio professor, told The Vanguard. “Or when you do hear from them, it can be just like, ‘Oh well, we can’t really do anything about this, because it’s not an easy fix.’”

Before #CrumblingCUNY, the Instagram page [cuny\\_brooklyn\\_college](#) first showed examples of the broken infrastructure CUNY students, faculty, and staff encounter daily. During the spring 2022 semester, the Instagram page shared eleven posts with “documentation of anything that is in a state of disrepair at CUNY Brooklyn College,” according to their bio. The page has been active for over four years, with #CrumblingCUNY on Twitter being the most recent platform where university members share disrepair across all of CUNY’s campuses. The maintenance problems



A photo posted on Apr. 28 of fallen roof tiles on the third floor of the Student Center./ [@cuny\\_brooklyn\\_college on Instagram](#)

plaguing Brooklyn College are not an isolated issue for the university.

A Brooklyn College Facilities staff member who identified themselves to The Vanguard as Linden Johnson said that a lack of available staffers has made their job difficult.

“The staff here is working really hard. It’s just a matter of, in my personal opinion, just a matter of the lack of people. Not Facilities per se, but trade workers, custodial workers, things like that,” said Johnson. “We don’t have a lot of people here in the office because of COVID stuff, but that’s slowly going back to normal.”

PSC-CUNY, the union

that represents the faculty and staff of CUNY, has organized trips up to Albany to lobby for the New Deal For CUNY, which proposes free tuition and other budget increases. One of the key issues that they’ve continually advocated for is the repair and maintenance of CUNY campuses.

“I think that we continue to have long-standing infrastructure needs,” said PSC-CUNY Brooklyn College Chapter Chairperson and BC Professor, Carolina Bank-Muñoz. Since she started at BC in 2004, Bank-Muñoz has taken notice of not only the degradation of facilities but also the equipment available to faculty and

students.

“I think that the combination of the pandemic relief funds and the Hochul budget will definitely improve some of these infrastructure challenges, but they’re not gonna solve them wholesale,” said Bank-Muñoz. “We definitely need to keep fighting for more funding for CUNY so that our buildings can not just be fixed, but [...] we’ve got to keep up with the times.”

Hashmi, who is a PSC-CUNY Delegate for Brooklyn College, noted that when she was hired in 2006, morale was high. But after the great recession in 2008, the optimism

*Continued on page 3...*



*Continued from page 2...*  
that these issues would be addressed slowly faded.  
“Some of that optimism that we will be able to sort of fix some of those things or achieve some of those changes has sort of gradually drained away,” said Hashmi. “We don’t even talk about things like leaks, tiles, peeling paint, broken water coolers, one stall out of three not working, because that’s just how it is.”  
She mentioned that part of the reason that optimism drained was because she and her colleagues felt their requests to the administration fell on deaf ears. This led to them

pushing the “brooklyn college” hashtag.  
“We were part of starting a campaign with the hashtag ‘brooklyn college.’ And the thing is, that got a response from the administration. Not because we had been saying for years that these are issues, but because suddenly there was bad publicity,” said Hashmi. “So if you’re going to talk about broken infrastructure, certainly the communication infrastructure, in terms of the administration’s responsiveness to student, faculty, staff needs and concerns, that is also broken.”

Brooklyn College Media Relations Manager, Richard Pietras explained in a statement to The Vanguard that students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use the “BC-Fix-IT” app to report any issues, and called it, “very successful.” The app can be accessed through the BC Navigator App available on iPhone and Android devices. For non-emergencies, on-campus faculty and staff can use the Archibus Work Request in BC WebCentral, or contact facops@brooklyn.cuny.edu if they’re off-campus. If there is an emergency and immediate attention is needed, Pietras encouraged

students, faculty, and staff to call 718-951-5885.  
“The \$965.8 million capital increase for new construction, improvements and critical maintenance in the NY State budget last month for FY 2023 was historic and represents a critical commitment to the University and its campuses,” said Pietras in the statement.  
He explained further that the above-ground construction on the East Quad should be finished by the end of May.  
The new budget may finally bring much-needed repairs and upgrades to campuses across CUNY. But Bank-

Muñoz wanted to make it clear that this small victory doesn’t end the ongoing fight for a better CUNY.  
“It’s really important for us to keep up the pressure and to keep showing legislators and the governor that CUNY needs more investment. They’re not on our campuses. They don’t come to our campuses and they don’t experience what students, faculty, and staff experience,” said Bank-Muñoz. “I think that’s one of the reasons why those social media campaigns are really important because it kind of shows people what the ground conditions are on the campuses.”

# Students For Justice In Palestine Protest Israel Independence Day Festivities

By Gabriela Flores  
*Editor-In-Chief*  
  
Reporting Assistance  
By Matt Hirsch  
*News Editor*  
  
Last Thursday, May 5, several Jewish-based and pro-Israel clubs hosted Brooklyn College’s traditional Israel Independence Day, or Yom Ha’atzmaut, celebration on the West Quad. Outside the quad’s gates, protesters from the Student for Justice in Palestine rallied alongside allies to condemn the festivities, the state of Israel, CUNY’s recent trip to the country, and other issues.  
“[We are here] to raise the voice of many Jewish communities worldwide and especially in the United States in total outrage at the existence of the state of Israel and especially to the celebration taking place here,” said Rabbi Dovid Feldman, who joined SJP. “And we as Jews are concerned as well.”  
Before the rally began, Israel Independence Day organizers tabled different stations where BC students could learn more about Israel’s history, taste traditional foods, and bounce in a bouncy house with upbeat music in the background. For BC’s SJP, a club that aims to amplify Palestinian culture



Students signed up to participate in activities during Israeli Independence Day on campus. / *Photo by Kaylin Guzman*  
  
and condemn the “ongoing Israeli occupation,” the festivities were considered inappropriate given that it aligned with Palestine’s Nakba, which refers to the 1948 “[...] displacement of over 750,000 Palestinians out of their homes due to Israeli settler colonialism,” according to the club’s Instagram page.  
“In actuality, they’re celebrating their independence, but it’s actually like the genocide for the Palestinian people – it’s when they lost their homes,” an anonymous SJP board member said, who wanted to be called “Fatima” due to their concerns of being “blacklisted.” “So for us, it’s a very sad period. It’s nothing to be celebrated.”  
After the SJP rally was announced, the president of the Bulldogs for Israel – an organization that was set to join the independence day festivities – reposted a story on Instagram about the protest, alleging “these people are violent and have harmed several Jews in NYC” when referring to SJP alongside Nerdeen Mohsen Kiswani, a CUNY Law student who is known for her anti-Israel activism. The same post called on celebrants to “be prepared to defend yourself,” and to contact the original story source for where they can get pepper spray.  
The Undergraduate Student Government released a statement condemning the club’s repost and incitement of violence against SJP and protestors. On Israel Independence Day, the club was not represented at the fair.  
“The Israel Independence  
*Continued on page 4...*



# Students For Justice In Palestine Protest Israel Independence Day Festivities (CONT'D)

*Continued from page 3...*

Day Committee believes all students should feel safe on campus. We condemn all forms of violence and affirm our commitment to the free speech rights of all members of the Brooklyn College Community,” the committee’s official statement stated on an Instagram post. These posts leading to Thursday’s protests are backdropped by an ongoing federal investigation against Brooklyn College for antisemitic incidents that are unrelated to SJP and an “all-time high” count of antisemitic incidents in 2021, according to ABC News.

Going into the rally, SJP members decided to only demonstrate outside the West Quad’s gates for their own safety and to ensure the rally remained peaceful.

“We never went upon their [Israel Independence Day celebrants] premise. We never tried to disrupt whatever they were doing. We stayed on a public property and we held our ground and everything,” said another anonymous SJP board member, alias “Jack.” “[...] We planned it peacefully. It happened peacefully.”

During Thursday’s protest, several public safety officers were stationed around the West Quad’s parameters to monitor the rally. SJP demonstrators and allies from the Orthodox Jewish community held posters that condemned Israel and the killings and displacement of Palestinian people. Protestors also chanted sayings including, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” “Judaism yes, Zionism no,” and “Israel go to hell.” During their demonstrations, the protestors were met with two pro-Israel people who attempted to disrupt the protest and another pedestrian who argued with one of the allying rabbis. Fatima noted they felt “uncomfortable” and unsafe from these attempts.

In the background, the Israel Independence Day



Protesters outside of Israeli Independence Day event./ *Photo by Kaylin Guzman*

celebration continued.

“Even before they said anything, we knew from months ago that they [SJP] were going to do something of the sort,” said Allegra Timsit, who helped organize the event. “We were preparing for it pretty much the whole time. But, to be honest, it doesn’t bother us. We are here having a great time, having a fun time celebrating our state and its birthday. So, we’re just happy to be here, really.”

Among their chants, SJP members also protested against Brooklyn College President Michelle J. Anderson and other CUNY school presidents for their recent trip to Israel alongside CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez. Anderson

announced in a college-wide email on Apr. 26 that the “Scholars as Bridge Builders” trip is in partnership between the CUNY Chancellor’s office and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. The visit, which took place from Apr. 27 to May 3, aimed to connect CUNY leaders with “Jewish and Arab students, faculty, and administrators,” according to Anderson.

“We heard from people with divergent perspectives on higher education, equality and diversity efforts within higher education, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the prospects for peace,” Anderson wrote in a statement to The Vanguard.

“The study tour provided

us with a complex set of perspectives. As such, it resonated with core academic values of open-mindedness, listening to others, assessing the evidence and historical facts, considering alternate interpretations of that evidence and those facts, enhancing empathy for people from very different backgrounds, and being willing to change one’s understanding when faced with new perspectives,” she stated, noting she joined the trip to “enhance my understanding of the complexity of the region in order to better serve our community.”

For SJP members, the trip was “insensitive,” given the recent killings of over 30

Palestinians during this past Ramadan.

“Why Israel out of all the countries in the world? What policies are they trying to bring in CUNY? It just rose a lot of questions and it’s very insensitive [...]” said Fatima.

According to SJP members, they wanted the rally to educate the community on Nakba and condemn the on-campus celebration of Israel for its violence against Palestine.

“A human right is a human right. It doesn’t matter where it’s being violated, and we should stand for all people across all the world that are experiencing atrocities being committed to them,” said Jack.



# BC Faculty Talk About Their Published Books And Works



Faculty authors who presented at the presentation./Radwan Farraj

By Radwan Farraj  
*Staff Writer*

Brooklyn College hosted its 29th Annual Faculty Author's Reception this past Tuesday, May 10 to commemorate the works of more than 40 BC faculty and staff members. Beginning in 1993, the annual reception has allowed staff and faculty to share their work both amongst colleagues and with the BC community, as all featured works are placed in the library's collection.

"There is nothing that gives a provost more pleasure than seeing faculty honored for their creative achievements," said Anne Lopes, BC's Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, at the beginning of the ceremony.

"There is nothing like a book, or a creative work, or medium. There is nothing like the pleasure of writing or creating or reading or listening to the book or seeing the creative work,"

remarked Lopes when recalling a quote written by her favorite author. "Among all forms, we recognize creativity..." said Lopes when commending the BC authors.

The event was hosted in-person for the first time in the Christoph M. Kimmich Reading Room since the pandemic's start. Mary Mallery, the Chief Librarian and Executive Director of Academic IT, began the ceremony with a warm welcome.

Following Provost Lopes' statement, the authors had their works presented by the deans of their respective schools and were once again congratulated on their outstanding achievements.

Professor Archie Rand of the School of Visual, Media, and Performing Arts presented three pieces that he has published between 2021 and 2022. With the help of co-author Anne Waldman, Rand and Waldman created

"Blood Moon," which is their collection of artwork and poetry published in 2021.

"We kept tweaking each other's texts and images until we both decided that we had a genuine collaboration. And then we had an exhibition and the exhibition was so successful that the galleries got a publisher to publish the book with all of the entries," said Rand.

Jeffrey Biegel, an Associate Professor for the School of Visual, Media, and Performing Arts, was congratulated for his work as the pianist responsible for playing in the newly-made recording of "Rhapsody in Blue," which was created and originally played by George Gershwin in 1924.

"I've played 'Rhapsody in Blue' since I was a child, and having met members of the Gershwin family, it brought me closer to what is the original 1924 manuscript, which was created by a

musicologist [scholar of music]," said Biegel when asked about his motivations to recreate the piece.

With the help of the Adrian Symphony Orchestra and conductor Bruce Anthony Kiesling, Biegel was motivated to "reenact exactly what George Gershwin composed in 1924." In their efforts, Biegel created the first commercial recording of this piece, which "brought out the originally jazz spirit and lightness of the piece," he explained.

Professor Aleah N. Ranjitsingh was featured as an author for the School Humanities and Social Sciences during the reception. She presented her book "Douglas in the Twenty-First Century: Adding to the Mix," which was co-authored by friend, and fellow PhD scholar, Sue Ann Barratt.

"Douglas are mixed race people, very specific to the Caribbean. They are mixed

of African and Indian descent," said Ranjitsingh when explaining the book's namesake. Ranjitsingh and her co-author Barratt both identify as Dougla. Writing this book was a deeply personal experience for the both of them.

To better interpret how Dougla people understand themselves and their mixed identities, Ranjitsingh and Barratt interviewed 125 individuals from New York who identify as Dougla. "A great part of the book is hearing Dougla experiences through the Dougla voice... so actually hearing their stories and seeing how similar their stories are to my story, I think that's the best part," said Ranjitsingh.

Once the ceremony ended, authors signed the copies of their works that would be included into the Brooklyn College library and gathered for a photo to celebrate the event.



# USG Prez Iqura Naheed Reflects On Time At Student Gov and BC

By Gabriela Flores  
Editor-In-Chief

After serving three years in the Undergraduate Student Government, President Iqura Naheed is set to graduate later this month from Brooklyn College. During her undergrad years, Naheed was no stranger to advocating for student needs, and she aims to carry that fighting spirit into her future as an aspiring doctor. “I’ve really broadened my perspective on the world as well as solidified my views about what I find important in the world,” Naheed told The Vanguard while reflecting on her undergrad career. “Just generally to advocate against anything that is oppressive, or that’s not okay that I see in the world, and try to find ways to fix it.”

As a born-Brooklynite raised in Staten Island, Naheed’s start at BC as an undergraduate began in 2018 after she was accepted into the Macaulay Honors program. Pulled in by the college’s diversity, she was interested in interacting with different communities. Though she entered undecided about her major, she was always bound to pursue medicine. Once she took a few anthropology courses, where she was able to better understand human beings and the systems that shape our experiences, Naheed decided on what she wanted to study long-term – leading her to become an anthropology major on the pre-medical track with a minor in chemistry. “Just studying a person completely holistically with everything that’s happening to them, that was really cool to me. And also, it really informed how I interact with the world,” said Naheed. “I thought it’ll be super helpful as a doctor to be able to look



Iqura Naheed, USG’s outgoing president who’s graduating in a few weeks./BC Student Gov

at a person more holistically rather than just one or two aspects of their lives.” After learning from her anthropology courses that positions in power can bring about legitimate change, she decided to aim for a spot in USG. During her sophomore year, Naheed started as a senator serving in the Student Affairs subcommittee. The government’s former president, Ethan Milich, later asked her to join him in his cabinet when he ran for presidency. When Milich was voted in 2020, and Naheed eventually assumed her role as press director, the pandemic had recently unfolded and left

many students, faculty, and staff scrambling with remote learning. Naheed, alongside her USG colleagues, advocated for a credit/no credit grading policy and worked to expand the channels of communication Brooklyn College had with its students. “I learned a lot as press director in terms of what student government is needed for,” she said, noting that many students checked USG’s announcements and socials for college-related updates. “[...] That year, we also realized how important it is that student voices are heard during the pandemic. The credit/no credit policy was really, really vital for a

lot of students and we had to do a lot of advocacy when it first came out so that it can be extended [...]” During her last two years at USG, she learned the importance of staying connected with the student body and advocating for their needs in front of administrators. Naheed also noted the importance of teamwork in making these strides possible. “As [a] cabinet, you really have to work well as a team. As long as all parts of the team are doing the job, it works better,” Naheed said. Taking what she observed and learned from Milich’s leadership, Naheed and her partner Aharon

Grama aimed to continue the momentum of USG’s support for students. Together, they led the student government and student body into transitioning back in-person, directly communicating issues that arose among students to administrators. In her role as co-president, which meant she served as vice-president in the fall and as president this spring, Naheed wanted to make sure that Muslim student concerns were passed along to the BC administration given the history of the community being spied on by an undercover NYPD officer from 2011-2015 on

Continued on page 7...



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campus.

“And so there’s still a lot of mistrust between Muslim students and the administration due to the legacy of that. Over the past year and year before that, we’ve [USG] done a lot of advocacy in getting Eid as a holiday, which passed last week and still is unfortunately not an official holiday on the CUNY calendar,” Naheed said, mentioning she brought the issue directly to the CUNY Chancellor. Despite USG’s efforts not succeeding CUNY-wide, she hopes that next year will mark CUNY’s recognition of Eid as a holiday in its calendar.

At BC, though, Naheed and her USG colleagues hosted the campus’ first iftar dinner during Ramadan. The historic event was part of a series of celebrations hosted by USG that uplifted BC’s cultural diversity. Within the senate, she’s happy that students have become more involved.

“Most of all, I’m really, really proud of our cabinet. Every single member of our team has truly stepped up in their positions and taken a lot of initiative, and really been very vocal and great advocates,” Naheed explained.

As she delved head-first into her work at USG, Naheed encountered her

fair share of challenges. The chief hurdle among them included an initial “run-around” with administrators, which she mentioned has improved as USG can communicate with them more easily. Among her challenges, she also encountered obstacles due to her identity, which she overcame with the support of professors, including Professors Naomi Schiller and Rhea Rahman.

“Being a woman of color and especially a Muslim woman on the Brooklyn College campus, holding the position I hold, was a complicated sort of experience. It required me to be very particular of

everything that I do, every event that I choose to show up to, and every position that I hold or things that I say that I feel like probably wouldn’t have been the case if I had any other identity,” Naheed said. “Which I understand, it just comes with the territory of holding this position, but that’s definitely one of the bigger obstacles throughout the year.”

Growing from her experiences in student government, Naheed has learned much about advocacy and bureaucracy. In her final stretch as president, Naheed is helping USG’s second-term president Grama and his

new partner, Carrie Ebbin, in their government’s transition.

“It’s been a really eventful four years. I’m really grateful for all the experiences I was able to have despite everything that was happening in the world. I’m really grateful for all the amazing mentors, and friends I’ve met along the way, and all the lessons I’ve learned that shaped who I am right now,” Naheed said.

Naheed will not be too far away from BC since she will continue working at The Women’s Center as the program coordinator for the Muslim Women’s Research Development Project.

# CUNY Immigrant And Undocumented Students Celebrated At John Jay

By Gabriela Flores  
*Editor-In-Chief*

In celebration of CUNY’s undocumented and immigrant students, John Jay hosted a university-wide event alongside Brooklyn College’s Immigrant Student Success Office (ISSO) to promote resources for all students and a space for them to speak on their experiences as non-citizens. With nearly 200 participants in attendance, last Saturday allowed students and administrators to vocalize the progress made for those undocumented across CUNY colleges and the actions that must follow for further change.

Across the university’s 25 campuses, there are only two Immigrant Student Success Offices available - one at Brooklyn College and another at John Jay. Each college, however, has a designated liaison for immigrant student resources.

“Every time I come to one of these events, I go home, and I feel like I can’t close my eyes because I’m just shining this energy that you guys bring,” said ISSO Director Jesús Pérez during the event while he thanked the afternoon’s speakers and organizers.

During the celebration, participants tuned into the remarks of the CUNY Chancellor and other university administrators who’ve worked on expanding the services available for

undocumented and immigrant students. Most recently, the university appointed a new interim director for Immigrant Student Success, Dr. Cynthia Carvajal, who has already hit the ground running in ensuring that immigrant and undocumented students are given the ample resources they need to get by their respective college careers.

“CUNY is proudly expanding efforts to ensure that all immigrant students are getting the resources they need to overcome the barriers they unfortunately face when pursuing a college education,” said Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, according to a press release. “We have been consistently inspired by the determination and drive of these students, and they are more than deserving of celebration. As I have said, CUNY has a simple message for immigrant New Yorkers: We know and treasure your incredible talent and persistence. We have your back.”

Besides students and administrators, family members, immigrant supporters, and city officials joined the celebration, including Manuel Castro, a Commissioner of the New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs who is a CUNY alum himself.

“The road here wasn’t easy, but now I can stand here and say to you that because of my friends, my colleagues,

the community around me, I am now the first formerly undocumented, Dreamer Commissioner of the City of New York,” Castro said during his speech.

A panel of five undocumented and immigrant students also took the floor to share their own experiences navigating through CUNY. Among the topics discussed included the difference in resources that different campuses offered for students – with some providing aid more than others. For most panelists, expanding consistent support of immigrant and

undocumented students at CUNY could enable an improvement.

“[...] I feel that CUNY to me is something that represents equality in terms of resources and diversity, and I don’t think it’s fair for just me to have the resources, but then one of my classmates at Queens College doesn’t have it because of the lack of consistency between campuses in student support systems,” said Mahir Sadad, a Macaulay Honors student at Queens College, who emphasized the importance of readily accessible help for immigrant and

undocumented students.

As Saturday’s discussions closed, participants ate food and played games with one another. For many of the students who attended, the event and its space for such conversations were important for the inclusivity of those living the undocumented and immigrant experience.

“I loved the energy here,” BC student Darla Moshe told The Vanguard. “[...] You feel safe because all of us are in the same status – so you can freely talk without worrying or anything. Everybody here understands.”



Panelists spoke of their experiences as immigrant and undocumented students at CUNY./Gabriela Flores



# BC's Eid Community Celebration

By Serin Sarsour  
Features Editor

Brooklyn College held a CUNY-wide Eid al-Fitr community celebration on Wednesday, May 4 with the efforts of several clubs.

"The Eid celebration was great!" said BC junior Fatimah Kezadri. "I met many new people and enjoyed the food, music, and socializing. Looking forward to another one."

Eid al-Fitr is one of the two main holidays that Muslims celebrate every year, the other being Eid al-Adha. Eid al-Fitr, in particular, is when Muslims celebrate having fasted for 29 to 30 days prior to that day; the month that Muslims fast annually is called Ramadan. Along with their fasting, Muslims pray five times per day and read their holy book, the Quran, in order to further their connections with God. Muslims also partake in good deeds, such as donating money to charity. Donating money to charitable efforts every year is one of the five pillars of Islam called zakat.

"My favorite part about Eid is getting dressed up and going to Eid prayer with family," added Kezadri.

The event was held at the West Quad and was put together by the Muslim Women's Leadership Project (MWLDP) and the Women's Center with

help from several clubs, including Bridges for Yemen, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), Muslims Giving Back, the Islamic Society, Muslim Women's Educational Initiative (MWEI), the Office of Diversity and Equity Programs, the Bangladesh Students Association (BSA), and S.A.I.L.

Similar to Ramadan, one of Eid's purposes is to bring the Muslim community together. "It [Eid] brings families and friends together to have a great time full of fun and happiness," said Eman Saleh, a junior at BC who forms part of Bridges for Yemen and serves as the treasurer of SJP.

This year, Ramadan lasted 30 days and Eid al-Fitr fell on Monday, May 2, which was celebrated for three days. During the holiday, Muslims wear their nicest clothes, usually from their specific cultures, exchange gifts, and pray and eat with their loved ones.

At BC's Eid celebration, games, a photo booth, henna, club tabling, and food were offered. "The framework was sort of like an Eid bazaar where we get to see and showcase different cultures and practices that take place during Eid," said Fahria Orine, the president of Muslim Women's Educational Initiative (MWEI). A bazaar is similar



Students participating in the Eid celebration./Shuma Easmin

to a marketplace where multiple shops and stands are available to the public. Each table that was present at the event represented different clubs and cultures at BC.

"My favorite part about the celebration was seeing the entire Muslim community from different cultures celebrating Eid together with their own cultural spirits," Saleh said. "Also, it was great trying the dessert from all the different cultures that attended the events."

Over 80 people attended the event and represented their cultures proudly through their attire. The

event was meant to celebrate and highlight the cultural diversity at BC, all while bringing the community together.

Although the celebration was a success, the clubs and organizations involved in the planning and assembling of the event faced a couple of obstacles.

"I would say the only challenge was timing since it was on day three of Eid and we were all trying to plan what to bring to the table," said Orine. "In the future, we hope to showcase the cultures of a lot more of our members and also provide history as to why we celebrate Eid as Muslims."

Students like BC senior Shuma Easmin look forward to attending future Eid celebrations at BC. "I am able to learn about so many different cultures and [being] able to interact with them is an experience that I always look forward to," said Easmin, who is also a member of the BSA.

Those involved with the celebration have a few suggestions for similar events in the future. "Having it outside so non-Muslims can see the way different cultures/Muslims celebrate Eid would be nice," Saleh said.

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# BC Hosts Panel On The Importance Of Asian American And Pacific Islander History In Curriculums



Events are being held to celebrate and bring awareness to AAPI Heritage Month./Brooklyn College.

By Mary Zakharova  
Staff Writer

Brooklyn College held a virtual discussion about the importance of covering Asian American and Pacific Islander history in school curriculums on Thursday, May 5. The event, titled “A Path Forward to Unity and Diversity: AAPI History in School Curriculum,” promoted the significance of inclusion of AAPI history, heritage, and experiences in public schools and universities.

During the event, four panelists shared their points of view on the matter.

The first speaker was Ying Lu, an associate professor of Applied Statistics, Social Science, and Humanities at NYU, and a member of Make Us Visible NJ, a coalition that advocates for more inclusion of AAPI studies in New Jersey’s K-12 public schools. She first talked about her organization, which aims to support AAPI curricula development, to advocate for New Jersey’s legislation mandating the inclusion of AAPI program, and build

coalitions to help teachers get all the information they need to include AAPI history in their study programs.

“We were able to mobilize thousands of people in the American community, allies across New Jersey,” said Lu. “We embarked on this incredible advocacy and ensured passing of two legislations.” According to Lu, the first legislation that was passed mandated the AAPI curriculum in NJ public schools, and the second established Asian American Heritage Commission in New Jersey’s Department of Education.

Lu then discussed the role of AAPI in today’s America. According to the 2020 Census, Asian American and Pacific Islanders were the fastest growing group in the last decade and make up 7.7 percent of the U.S. population. In New Jersey, 12 percent of public school students are Asian Americans. At the same time, even with the new legislation, the Asian American curriculum is mostly left out of NJ

schools, and it will take time to fully implement the new system, Lu explained.

“Asian American history is an integral part of the U.S. history,” said Lu, emphasizing the importance of AAPI history in the curriculum.

The second speaker, Mikayla Lin, is a sophomore at Stuyvesant High School and a founder of Read Nation, a nonprofit dedicated to fighting against inequality in education by offering free tutoring services. She spoke about her family’s immigration story and assimilation as an Asian family at the event.

“Learning about my family’s history gives me this anchor point and the sense of continuity,” said Lin.

Lin then mentioned that she grew up in an environment where Chinese people were not in history books, and that’s when she began wondering if there are other people like her who are worth mentioning. She then found many examples of Asian figures who deserved more attention, one of which was

Chien-Shiung Wu, also known as the “Chinese Marie Curie.”

“She is a perfect role model. Not just for Asian girls, but for all girls that love science,” Lin said.

After Lin, Joseph Schmidt was the next speaker at the event. He serves as a Senior Instructional Specialist at the Department of Social Studies at the DOE in New York City. He talked about the Hidden Voices, a project developed by his department to include underrepresented voices from history in the teaching practice.

He then discussed a few other ongoing projects that are aimed at promoting AAPI history and making it a more significant part of the education system.

The last speaker was NY State Senator John Liu, who started his speech by describing the discrimination that’s been happening against Asian Americans in the last two years. “I think, I’ll speak for myself, I’ve been through my share of hate and discrimination...,” Liu said. He mentioned that

people who are responsible for Asian American hate crimes, as well as other hate crimes, should be prosecuted so it is evident that the government is against this hate.

Liu then transitioned to discussing his Asian American History bill, which aims to make sure that there is a community infrastructure that supports Asian American history learning and helps community-based organizations who already provide the opportunity to learn about Asian American history. The bill is also ensuring that there is Asian American history education in public schools.

“I don’t think that people are born to hate others,” said Liu when talking about Asian American hate that occurred during COVID. “I think hate comes out of a combination of fear and ignorance. [...] It’s easier to blame people you don’t know.”



# BC Theater's Undergrad Senior Showcase Is Set To Premiere

By Michela Arlia  
Arts Editor

The end of each spring semester brings on the usual feelings of stress and cramming as finals must be taken and papers must be submitted. For some students, it marks graduation and the end of their undergraduate journey. Amidst all this chaos comes an important mark for the Theater Department's graduating BFA class: its annual senior showcase that debuts May 19 at 8pm.

The BFA showcase is a highlight of each senior's journey throughout the conservatory-style program and their solo pieces that give a glimpse into all their hard work and training.

This year, the department has teamed up with BC's Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema, since the pandemic in spring 2020 delayed the showcase indefinitely.

The showcase event will be livestreamed on YouTube and the seven BFA actors will present four two-person scenes in the form of short films, one to two monologues per actor, and introduction videos to let audience members in on who they are not just as artists, but as people with everyday personalities.

While looking ahead to the excitement of the showcases, the graduating class looks back on the roots of their training at BC and their time throughout the program.

Senior Christian "DOVA" Cordova reflects on her initial applications to the program years ago, after realizing that an associates degree from BMCC in theater did not cover enough skillfully to her passion of acting.

"I had heard really great things about the BFA Acting program at Brooklyn College," said Cordova. "I missed being part of an ensemble and realized I had a lot more to learn about what it takes to be a professional actor."

Fellow graduate Alleyne reminisces on being drawn to the program for the opportunities he was offered.

"I saw people like me. I did not want to go to school where I had to constantly code switch because I did not belong," he said.

A major highlight to the BFA showcase is that all students have the opportunity for access to various artists, talent representatives, and other leaders in the arts world that will view their pieces and meet with the ensemble for discussions.

Heading this aspect of the showcase is Graham Schmidt, who holds the title of showcase coordinator. His duties range from sending notices to alumni, talent reps, and press, to managing social media accounts.

"The two most exciting roles I fulfill right now are to recruit artists and arts leaders to connect with our grads in a series of panel discussions that take place during the week or Showcase (and sometimes leading up to Showcase week)," wrote Schmidt to The Vanguard. "The purpose of these panels is to create a bridge to the professional community for our grads, so there are some well-placed friendly faces for them."

For the showcase, Schmidt was able to design a round robin event for the actors where following the premiere of the showcase, the ensemble will meet with elite talent representatives and industry professionals to have private one-on-one



(L to R) Peixuan Wang, Christian "DOVA" Cordova, and Antonyio Artis./Christian "DOVA" Cordova

sessions.

Described as a sort of speed-dating event, Schmidt says it is a great opportunity for initial exposure to the industry.

"It allows our grads to make a valuable first impression, and also to get some experience pitching themselves under their belt."

The collaboration with Feirstein was a long time coming, and finally springboarded by the new department chair, Patrick Sabongui.

Sabongui, who has a long list of credits in the film industry acting in main roles on television shows such as "Homeland" and "The Flash," served as the glue between the theater and film departments on campus, an idea already in the works, as told by Schmidt.

"Our program was mostly oriented toward straight plays, and a bit toward musical theater," said Schmidt. "When Patrick was hired and brought the force of his connections, vision, and passion for film and television to the program, he super-charged the program."

Sabongui did not respond to the Vanguard's request for comment in time for print.

Senior Randy Arbujo sings praises to the school of cinema in its collaboration with the graduates to create a vision of performances that everyone involved can be proud of.

"We presented this idea that seemed impossible to do in a couple of weeks and dove into the work," said Arbujo. "Although it was big, we didn't hesitate nor give up. We gave them the play/scene we wanted to do and they created the world in which we as actors created the magic."

The process for creation of this event was far from easy, as most students in the graduating class expressed hardships to get to the spot they are currently in.

"I was full of overwhelming feelings," said senior Antonyio Artis. "Not just the pressures of graduating but answering the question of who I am and how my pieces showcase that the best...In the end, I have grown a lot throughout this process alone."

Following both this showcase and graduation, all the students have a common goal of broadening their horizons after speaking with professionals in the business, and some are even

ready to pursue their firsts projects post grad.

"It would be nice to leave with a manager and/or agents interested in meeting and signing me," said Artis. "The biggest goal for me is to look back at my work and recognize how far I have come."

Cordova also expressed similar outcomes of hope, crediting the BFA program to her success thus far.

"I hope to walk out with an agent that can help me break into this industry. As a graduate, I am walking out with the tools and professionalism that will ensure my work ethic, and endurance in this industry," she said.

Amidst all the excitement of new pathways for the actors with the potential for opportunities of a lifetime, what keeps them grounded are the skills they learned and built within their three years in the program.

"This industry is about perseverance. It's within you that keeps you working, not an agent or manager," said Artis.

The trailer for the class showcase is set to be released this month. For more information visit <https://www.brooklynshowcase.com>



# ‘Trailblazers, Champions, and Changemakers’ Lets Theater-Goers Meet Historical Leaders

By Samia Afsar  
Staff Writer

The BC Theater Department invited audience members to meet leaders who changed the world in their production of “Trailblazers, Champions, and Changemakers,” directed by Professor Manuel Simons. The brand new production held on Friday, May 6, was created by the Devising and Collaborative Creation Ensemble, a course that ran in the department this spring. Under the direction of the department’s undergraduate deputy chair, Professor Manuel Simons, the show can be described as a new kind of theater production, incorporating patrons as part of the show to create a theatrical ensemble where audience members are able to interact with each character. “I think that theater is at its best when it moves people, and I tend to feel that in a very literal sense that it actually moves people,” said Simons post-show. “That’s what made me want to make this kind of theater – to move people to participate and to take action, and to hopefully carry that outside of the theater, to take

action and to make change in the real world,” they added. In this collaborative and interactive living museum experience, spectators walked around the Leonard and Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts, where they met celebrated leaders, artists, activists, and scholars such as Maya Angelou (Nancy Umba), Dolores Huerta (Elisa Salgado), and Harriet Tubman (Briana Brown) to hear their powerful stories while having the opportunity to speak with and learn from these prominent figures through interactive activities. Through costumes, props, and the occasional brilliant improvisation, student actors embodied the entire being of the once-living and influential people in the public eye. Marvin Gaye, played by Ashawn Rose, sat on a chaise where he smoked a much believable cigarette prop as Gaye’s song “What’s Going On” played in the background. Similarly, silk scarves, sunglasses, and colorful sofas surrounded Claude Cahun’s set where actor Zara Zeidman asked viewers to dress up, pose, and photograph each other during an intense discussion regarding beauty

and self-perception. “We need examples, we need role models, and we need hope to carry on,” said Simons. “We need a ‘how-to book,’ and that was on my mind with getting to talk with Maya Angelou, getting to talk with Simone B., getting to talk with Marvin Gaye. I thought it was like getting a living ‘how-to lesson,’ like, ‘you wanna know what I did, here’s how I did it, here’s what I think, what do you think?’” they said. Reactions from patrons were mixed, with some surprised and others intrigued as the show not only brought student actors out of their comfort zone but audience members as well. “This [production] was very different,” said audience member Lauren ZefTel. “It was a lot of asking the audience to participate and to take part rather than just sitting back and reflecting, which is scary at times but it makes you have to engage,” she added. Although perhaps being an introvert’s nightmare, the performance is an accurate representation of heroism. By challenging audience members to interact and ask questions, even at times when



The production’s official poster./BC Department of Theater

discussion of certain topics or fear of participation might make one uncomfortable, this production reminds us that change is a product of conversation. “Whenever things have changed in the world, they happened when people pushed for it because they could imagine a different world,” said Simons. “It’s the only way things truly change.”

## Vinny The Goat

by Mo Muhsin an Gab Toro Vivoni





# ‘Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness’ Is A Puzzle

By John Schilling  
*Managing Editor*

**Disclaimer:**  
**Minor spoilers ahead**

Long gone are the days where Marvel Studios could seamlessly release filler movies and sustain the franchise with the occasional blockbuster. In recent years, Marvel has set the bar too high with releases like “Avengers: Infinity War,” “Avengers: Endgame,” and most recently, “Spider-Man: No Way Home.” Not to mention, the endless amount of Marvel’s Disney+ content, making the superhero genre as omnipresent as ever before.

It is no wonder why “Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness,” a sequel, comes nearly six years after the protagonist’s first introduction into the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) in “Doctor Strange,” but the neurosurgeon turned sorcerer (Benedict Cumberbatch) has still appeared in four other films between his own two stories.

Since its release last week, the film has proven to be divisive with some praising its darkness and others criticizing it as underwhelming or for its pacing, among other things. These two perspectives, however, are both valid and not mutually exclusive.

The best things about “Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness” have much to do with the individual puzzle pieces of the story, some of them being bigger than others. The worst thing about the film, however, is the bigger picture that those puzzle pieces create.

For a Marvel film, the acting is particularly

praiseworthy with solid performances from Benedict Cumberbatch as the film’s main hero, Benedict Wong returning as Wong, and newcomer Xochitl Gomez as America Chavez. The main standout, however, is Elizabeth Olsen as Wanda Maximoff in her best acting performance yet.

For years, Olsen has taken a backseat to many of the Avengers and only rose to real prominence last year in WandaVision, the Disney+ show that precedes this film. That show made clear there was more to Wanda than meets the eye, and her character was less of a hero and more of someone who existed in the gray area of right versus wrong or good versus evil.

This feels like it should be referred to as Wanda’s character growth, but I suspect it has more to do with Marvel’s many directors passing the characters around from film to film like action figures they now get a turn to play with. “Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness” certainly makes this feel true and in more ways than one.

Since joining the MCU, Cumberbatch has worked under five different directors (six if you separate the Russo Brothers) as Doctor Strange, and in every film, he feels different than before. In this film, Cumberbatch is a scarred man, burdened by his past decisions both as a superhero and in his personal life. In “Spider-Man: No Way Home,” however, he is no more than a laid-back, sometimes goofy plot device.

It’s not productive nor reasonable to dissect differing directions or

expect Cumberbatch to offer an identical performance every time, but it becomes hard to ignore when key moments seemingly conflict with the character’s past actions or emotions.

The same is true although slightly different for Olsen’s Wanda, who feels like the character she has always been, but it’s slightly jarring seeing her as the villain of the film when you consider where she was when WandaVision ended. In that series, Wanda’s grief drove her to essentially take an entire town hostage before realizing what she was doing was wrong. That was too far, but in this film, Wanda is perfectly fine with killing others to get what she wants.

Wanda’s sudden spark of pure evil is accredited to her being brainwashed by the Darkhold, a book of spells, and something that was teased at the end of WandaVision. However, it still comes across as something forced into “Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness” for the sake of the plot.

This is not unique to Wanda, however, as the film also incorporates whatever the MCU-film cookie cutter deems appropriate, including a few surprise appearances, some light humor, and a complete suspension of disbelief.

These surprise appearances are sure to please as many of them are famous characters that fans have been waiting for the MCU to introduce, but these characters are shuffled away as quickly as they are introduced and with complete ease.

It is almost as if Marvel Studios required director Sam Raimi to incorporate these characters and Raimi



“Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness” feels like two different visions morphed into a lackluster final product./*Marvel Studios*

obliged but not without sending them on their merry way before they could have any real impact. This is where the suspension of disbelief comes into play.

The film expects us to believe that an overpowered Wanda can easily dispose of superheroes and sorcerers around her with little to no effort. Yet when it comes to her fights against the main protagonists in Strange, Wong, or Chavez, she may gain the upperhand but either opts not to finish them off or can’t follow through with it for some reason. It seems silly to talk about suspension of disbelief in a Marvel movie, but even if the logic is far-fetched, it should still be consistent.

This is not the fault of Raimi, whose direction comes across as insanely crippled by the Marvel overlords. Despite having

his name attached to it, the film only feels like it is truly his during brief, horror-esque sequences and with a cameo from his good friend Bruce Campbell. These dark, intense moments are the highlight of the film and showcase some of Raimi’s best work but much of it comes in waves instead of it existing throughout, undoing much of the film’s tension and causing it to drag during some parts.

Ultimately, “Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness” feels like two different visions morphed into a lackluster final product that leaves much to be desired despite some redeeming qualities. Still, the film is a typical enjoyable watch for any Marvel fan or moviegoer, but it would be wise to curb your expectations and try to enjoy the experience of the puzzle if not the actual puzzle itself.



# Farewell From John Schilling, Managing Editor

By John Schilling  
*Managing Editor*

It's crazy to think that an impulse email I wrote and sent in between classes in 2019 would ultimately lead to this moment and the long journey that brought me here.

After almost three years, my time at The Vanguard has finally come to an end, and while I won't miss the late nights editing and my hectic work-life balance (which is probably only going to get worse), I can truly say that it was The Vanguard and the people I met along the way that made my time at Brooklyn College worthwhile and have helped me become a better person than who I was when I came to Brooklyn College in fall 2018.

I never thought in a million years I could or would graduate summa cum laude, be selected as a candidate for valedictorian, or most important of all: lead a newspaper with a great group of people and build friendships that will last a lifetime.

I could write an endless, 1000-word article, as Ryan Schwach always dreaded, about everything I learned, the stories I covered, and the experience I gained along the way, but I would instead like to dedicate this farewell to all those who have supported me or left an impression on me during my time here.

To Journalism and Media Studies Professors MJ Robinson, Katherine Fry, Lenn Robbins, Mark McSherry, Brian Dunphy, Maisie McAdoo, Annie Byrnes, Helen Pfeffer, Don Hecker, Irina Patkanian, and Charles Carr. There may have been a few instances in which I nodded off during your classes or scrolled through

my phone as you lectured, but please know you have all helped me develop the portfolio of work I have today, and for that, I am truly grateful.

To English Professors Adam Bangser and Hannah Treasure. You noticed my writing potential right away in freshman year and gave me the confidence and validation I needed at that time to keep working hard.

To Math Professor Shaheed Rasul. I don't know how you did it, but you made this avid writer enjoy his Math Gen-Ed requirement. Not to mention, you were the only professor to ever give me a hug after I handed in my final exam and say to me, "You are a good guy." I ran from campus to go see "Star Wars: The Rise Of Skywalker" immediately after and could not stop thinking about that moment throughout the movie. You are truly bigger than a galaxy far far away.

To History Professors Jocelyn Wills and KC Johnson. Taking your classes kept me grounded in my academics and nursed my passion for American history while I earned my degree.

To The Vanguard's original, founding core four: Quiara Vazquez, Ryan Schwach, Moises Taveras, and Camila DeJesus. You welcomed me to The Vanguard in 2019 with open arms, and I was honored to work with you all and carry on the paper's legacy after you graduated. Your faith in me was something I had never experienced from anyone other than my family, and I am truly the reporter I am today because of your mentorship. Thank you for trusting me with your paper.

To all of The Vanguard's section editors, writers,

and supportive staff I had the privilege to work with, especially Jack Coleman, Maya Schubert, Conrad Hoyt, Allison Rapp, Ian Ezinga, Serin Sarsour, Owen Russell, Anakin Jackson, Emmad Kashmiri, Fawaad Farooq, Kaylin Guzman, Dylan Kaufman, and Mo Muhsin. You are the reason for The Vanguard's continued success and working with you was a pleasure.

To Matt Hirsch, my Capstone partner and fellow Mets fan. I cannot think of a better friend to graduate alongside with, and I look forward to your success. I am grateful that somehow the stars aligned for us to not only meet at BC but to leave The Vanguard together.

To Michela Arlia, who will succeed me as Managing Editor after previously succeeding me as Arts Editor. I am proud to have worked with you, and I cannot think of anyone more capable or deserving to help lead the paper. You got this, and I know you will do great things.

To Gabriela Flores, my partner in crime. I am truly grateful to have worked with you, and I am proud of what we accomplished together at The Vanguard. I have the utmost confidence that this success will continue on because of you. Thank you for your willingness to share the paper's responsibilities with me. I could not have asked for a better partner...even though you relentlessly ripped apart every article I wrote. If it had to be anyone, I am glad it was you.

To all of my friends who will remain at The Vanguard and the students who will join them in the future, please take care of the paper. Keep writing and keep campus journalism



John Schilling, former Managing Editor.

alive.

And finally, to my grandma Sue Ellen Sullivan, who passed away on Jan. 6, 2021. It seems cliché to say that my grandma was my biggest fan, but she WAS actually my biggest fan and kept a folder of all my articles, all of which were written specifically for The Vanguard and from the issues I printed for her during our COVID-induced printing hiatus.

In some ways, writing for The Vanguard has allowed me to keep her memory alive and honor her, and now that my time at The Vanguard has come to an end, it is almost like having to let go of a part of her.

But I find comfort in knowing she is watching

over me as I graduate and head to the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY in the fall, where I will continue to learn, report, and write not just in her honor but all of those who have helped me reach this moment, and to keep alive a trade that many have called a "dying field."

My grandma, of course, disagreed and gifted me a t-shirt in my Christmas stocking one year that read "Journalism matters now more than ever." I couldn't agree more.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you all. For better or worse: You have not seen the last of me.



# Farewell From Matt Hirsch, News Editor

By Matt Hirsch  
*News Editor*

When I came to Brooklyn College two years ago, I had no clue what to expect. It was August 2020, a few months into the pandemic. I had graduated from Kingsborough Community College eight months prior, and in that time, the world turned upside down.

It felt like every semester was more difficult than the last, and it was. As I write this, my head is spinning from the amount of work to be done before I'm finished here at BC.

Like many of my peers, these last two years have been some of the most difficult in my life. But I wouldn't change a thing.

First, I want to thank our fearless leader, and Editor-in-Chief, Gaby. The first in the room and the last to leave. Thanks for sticking by me. I don't know how you do what you do. You've been helpful beyond words and so understanding over the last year. It's been an honor and a pleasure to be your friend, peer, and colleague. I know that The Vanguard is in good hands as long as you're in charge. And to our second in command, John. Us Mets fans gotta stick together, right? You're off to bigger

and better things at the CUNY J-School. And we thought capstone's been a challenge. Good luck my friend. I know you're going to do great things there.

Despite the long, stressful nights, when we texted each other at midnight to finish up the paper for print the next day, somehow, we've always managed to create something I'm immensely proud of. Working under the two of you pushed me to be a better journalist. The Vanguard will always hold a special place in my heart. There are other people I have to thank, but they know who they are. And they already know how grateful I am to have them in my life.

I've never worked as hard or as long for anything, as I have to graduate from Brooklyn College. After dropping out of college twice, I found my path when I enrolled as a journalism major at Kingsborough. I was so lost and so unsure of myself before I found that path. And though graduating there was a big milestone, it pales in comparison to the step I'm about to take. It still hasn't quite hit me yet. And though this is the end of one journey, it's just the beginning of my career. Who knows where I'll be twenty years from now?



Matt Hirsch, Vanguard's news editor, and his mom./*Matt Hirsch*

I've learned to embrace the twists and turns that life throws at me. Four years ago, if you asked me what I wanted to do with my life, I would've probably said something sarcastic and brushed off the question. Because I didn't know the answer. Today, I'll still

probably have a sarcastic response, but now I know.

So, thanks to Brooklyn College. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it wasn't for you. And though I only got to spend a single semester on campus, it's been a semester I'll never forget. Serving as The

Vanguard's News Editor has taught me so much about myself, and about what it takes to be a journalist. But, before I spend too long getting sentimental, I'll just say, peace out BC. I'll catch y'all on the flip side.

# The Last Rolling Rock Ramblings: A Farewell To Arms

By Ian Ezinga  
*Opinions Editor*

I shall begin by admitting that my column, Rolling Rock Ramblings, was a wonderfully self-

indulgent space where I may have done a disservice to my role as the opinion's editor by regularly writing pieces that did not necessarily contain a strong opinion. I evaded potential critics by

shielding myself under the insistence that whatever might follow was in fact a rambling. Accordingly, I was given freedom to churn out disconnected thoughts and feelings in the form

of wandering tangents, provide answers to my own questions, and produce entirely warranted yet not altogether substantiated criticism and skepticism of people in power and

the institutions they pilot. I must confess that I used my own position of power to publish pieces that may have done little more than consecrate my own

*Continued on page 15...*





Ian Ezinga with a Rolling Rock beer in hand./Ian Ezinga

*Continued from page 14...*

thoughts and encourage myself to pursue my passion at least once a week.

With the truth off my chest, it has been my passion for writing that has always been at the heart of my involvement with the Vanguard. When I first met with former Editor-in-Chief, Quiara Vasquez, I offered myself to the service of the paper in any way that could be helpful. I was given a handful of small news assignments which I eventually managed to steer toward my interest in politics; becoming the unofficial Brooklyn College student politics correspondent. But once I was in the fold, I continued to bug Quiara to spend less time on the news beat and be given more opportunities to write things that got me a little more excited. This harassment campaign culminated in my interview with distinguished professor of English, Ben Lerner.

A personal inspiration of mine, I feel safe in the confines of a farewell address to admit that while

Lerner did have a new book out and was certainly a deserving character to be profiled by the student newspaper, I pursued the interview towards mostly self-serving ends. Perhaps it was because of these roots laced in my own ego that the experience ended up becoming one of the most humbling of my undergraduate career. The interview went well, but out of an anxiety that not everything was being recorded, I double-checked my phone and must have accidentally ended the voice memo halfway through our hour-long conversation. Then, in another cruel twist of fate—that was actually more just a prison of my own design—I proved myself nearly incapable of writing anything meaningful about what we talked about. So concerned I was with maximizing the value of the experience that I couldn't slow down and appreciate the value for what it actually was.

My piece was thoroughly criticized by Quiara and

a few of my more gentle-handed friends. I still have the printed draft that Quiara handed to me, thoroughly coated in red ink, which expertly dissected every one of the piece's shortcomings. My favorite line written in summation of the piece's inadequacy was, "This is the sort of drollness that impresses professors because it shows you know the jargon and are thus part of 'the tribe' but it falls sooo flat for a general audience. You just spent an hour talking to a MacArthur genius; take your brain out of your own butt and put that give and take onto the page." Needless to say, revisions were made, the piece was published, but I still don't think I could stomach reading it today because of how hamstrung the piece was by my incessant desire to do something significant with it.

But despite whatever personal turmoil the experience entailed for me, a product of our conversations still looms

in my head. It arose when discussing one of the book's central themes and Lerner extended an invitation to "inhabit the present without irony." A decidedly pertinent invitation for my generation and certainly for those that will follow. I remain grateful for having the conversation, especially at an impressionable age and at a time in my life that was so greatly shaded by questions of authenticity, sincerity, and how to find the truth in the midst of it all.

So then I must thank the Brooklyn College Vanguard for allowing me to explore these questions with an ample amount of freedom and support. I must thank my former editors, Quiara and Ryan, the current editors, John and Gabi, as well as several of my close friends. Without their insight, feedback, and, perhaps most important of all, leniency, I wouldn't be able to reflect on my experience at the Vanguard with as large of a smile that currently rests on my face. I must also thank the readers

of the paper, few of whom would be safe to assume dedicated their precious minutes to reading all of my ramblings, but nonetheless represent what I find so beautiful about writing. As much as I have admitted to doing things out of my own self-aggrandizement, I have come around to viewing writing as a conversation. And while it would be too much to wonder if I had any meaningful impact on how people thought about current events or structures of power, it remains my undying, though perhaps forlorn, hope that a single sentence I have written has had a positive impact on someone's life.

The time has come for me to bid the sweetest of farewells to a special paper found in a remarkably special place. I wish the best of luck to future writers and hope that the paper reaps a plentiful harvest for all the good that it has sown in my life and the lives of many others.



# Farewell From Mo Muhsin, Cartoonist And Social Media Manager

By Mo Mushin  
*Social Media Manager*

When I was asked to join The Vanguard as a cartoonist, I did not believe I was up to the task, but I still wanted to give it a shot. Three years later, I find myself struggling to come up with a comic to finish this run. The Vanguard has helped me grow as an artist and kept me in the loop of what was going on at school. The Vinny comics served as a means for me to experiment with expressions, and I would be lying if I said every experiment was a success (at least to me). The Vanguard has accepted every single one with no questions asked because it has always been a safe place to try new things. The safe environment the paper created is symbolic of what is great about Brooklyn College: a means of becoming your best self despite the hardships and challenges.

Throughout my time here, I witnessed a

devastating pandemic and had a continuous fight with a chronic illness. Despite everything, here I am – about to graduate. I served my time to get a BA in Theater Production. I have so much love for the whole department, and I would like to give a shout-out to my professor of puppetry, Deborah Hertzberg. Since fall 2020, Deb has been there and helped my artistic growth. This year she helped me get a spot in the Short Works Festival which helped me land a place in this year's National Puppetry Conference. None of my accomplishments this year would be possible without her.

I'd like to wish everyone else graduating good luck in their future endeavors and give my most sincerest thank you to The Brooklyn College Vanguard for giving me something to do for the last three years and for trusting me with the password to the social media accounts.



Mo Muhsin, Vanguard's social media manager and cartoonist of the iconic Vinny The Goat./*Mo Muhsin*

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# Opinion: AG James Is Right, Biden Needs To Cancel All Student Loan Debt

By Priscilla Mensah  
Staff Writer

The burden that is student loans has been a topic of discourse for some time now. It seems as if student loans, and specifically whether to cancel them, has also been quite a polarizing issue. As polarizing as it has been, however, large numbers of lawmakers support canceling student loans. The latest effort spearheaded by lawmakers looks promising, as it involves a coalition of eight attorney generals across the US all urging President Biden to cancel student loans.

Led by New York Attorney General Letitia James, this latest proposal calls for President Biden to cancel student loans for all student loan holders in the United States, emphasis on all. The salience of such a move cannot be understated as it would mean that millions of Americans will no longer be encumbered by high interest rates and/or monthly payments that they have no choice but to make.

If this proposal – as put forth by this coalition of attorney generals with James at the helm – successfully reaches Biden, and then prompts him to act in the affirmative, it is also likely that the credit scores of many student loan borrowers will improve and grant them more opportunities for productive investments, which would in turn result in an overall improved

economy.

Moreover, if student loan debt is canceled, borrowers will no longer be prey to predatory schemes that purport to cancel debt without making good on the promise. I know a little something about this, as I was scammed out of a good deal of money by a similar scheme. Clearly, then, the benefits to canceling student loans are numerous and are something that Biden should take into consideration as he ponders his next steps on the issue.

While I am honestly not entirely sure if this latest move will be successful – especially given the animus that many prominent Republican lawmakers have very publicly had towards the idea of canceling student loans – there is a great part of me that still has high hopes for its triumph. That this monumental proposal is fronted by NY AG Letitia James is one reason why I am, albeit cautiously optimistic about its potential success.

James has proven to be a more than capable leader, who has already had considerable success litigating cases on behalf of the state of New York. Furthermore, James is well respected, so she will probably be listened to in a way that the average American fighting to cancel student loans would unfortunately not be listened to even with student loan forgiveness being as popular as it



Letitia James./New York Times

**“With all the income, health, and other interrelated disparities present in this country, our nation could definitely benefit from a policy that would cancel student loan debt for all borrowers”**

is. It’s important to note that those with student loans themselves, such as college students, are now facing an economic environment that is not as hospitable as they were made to believe it would be in school.

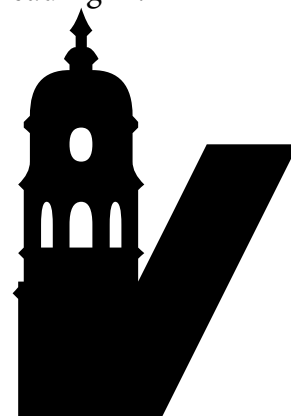
If James, and others who are similarly fighting to cancel student loans debt on more of the grassroots level, are successful, it would mark a major turning point. A shift like this would almost certainly move us closer to living in a truly equitable society that allows for all people to flourish.

With all the income, health, and other interrelated disparities present in this country, our nation could definitely benefit from a policy that would cancel student loan debt for all borrowers, thus encouraging financial freedom and equality for all Americans and not just a select few. Once people have more financial leeway, it is quite probable that they can devote more of their time and their funds for other

things, including basic living expenses such as the rising cost of rent and/or mortgage payments.

As effective as forgiving student loans would be for millions of Americans, it still may face an uphill battle. For instance, there are detractors of student loan forgiveness who, very visibly and vocally, claim that forgiving student loans would be too expensive and thus a waste of taxpayers dollars.

These detractors hold such positioning despite the fact that tax-payer dollars have been spent on far less productive things – think the F-35 Fighter jet. Notwithstanding this, I’m hopeful for the future of student loan forgiveness and I very much like the direction that we seem to be heading in.





# The Cagers: BC's 1981-82 Men's Basketball Team Inducted Into Hall Of Fame

By Owen Russell  
Sports Editor

In 1982, Brooklyn College went on an improbable run and reached the NCAA Division III final four. It was a magical time on campus. Students flooded the gymnasium, packing the house to watch New York City's best basketball team rack up win after win. How did Brooklyn College manage such an impressive feat?

Forward Kenny Vickers put it best, "Every guy on that team was a Bulldog."

Technically, the 1980s teams were Cagers – a nickname given to basketball players back in the day because most courts were surrounded by tall fences, or a "cage." Brooklyn College's official mascot was still the Kingsmen, but the local papers all referred to Brooklyn's final four team as the Cagers. Name drama aside, the men who stepped on that court played extremely well, finishing the season with an 18-8 record.

With an emphasis on fundamentals, and impressive team play, the Bulldogs secured their winning record. The highlight of those 18 wins came in the final game of the season, when Brooklyn toppled #1 ranked College of Staten Island. For a moment in the 80s, CUNY basketball was a force to be reckoned with. When Brooklyn College made the final four, there were four teams in the CUNYAC with strong records. John Jay, Baruch (finished with the same record as Brooklyn),

and of course, top ranked CSI. In the final game of the season, Brooklyn dug deep and put away the nation's best in front of a packed Roosevelt Hall. Just one of many impressive feats that season.

Brooklyn's success can be attributed to a dozen factors, but some credit has to go to head coach Mark Reiner, who is an NYC basketball legend in his own right. After becoming the best high school basketball player in the nation at Lincoln High School, Reiner took his talents to NYU. After his playing career ended, he coached multiple state championship teams at Canarsie. It took him a few detours, but he ended up at Brooklyn College. Though Coach Reiner has since

passed away, the players still value the lessons they learned from him.

"Like many of us said, I looked up to him as a father figure," Kenny Vickers told the Vanguard.

While the Cagers achieved astounding accolades on the court, most of the players choose not to dwell on it.

"When we get together, it's not about points, or rebounds. It's about locker rooms, travels, practices," Forward Dan Byrnes remarked. Sure, Brooklyn College's most successful basketball team remembers the games they won, but they fondly remember the times they shared off the court. You could never tell that some of these guys hadn't seen each other in years. They spent time

teasing each other about who used to avoid sprints, laughing about how hot the godforsaken gym used to get, and praising their Hall of Fame coaches. For a group of guys who all commuted to school, they were able to connect through basketball.

"We spent so much time on that campus, I didn't even feel like a commuter," forward Eddie de la Guardia added.

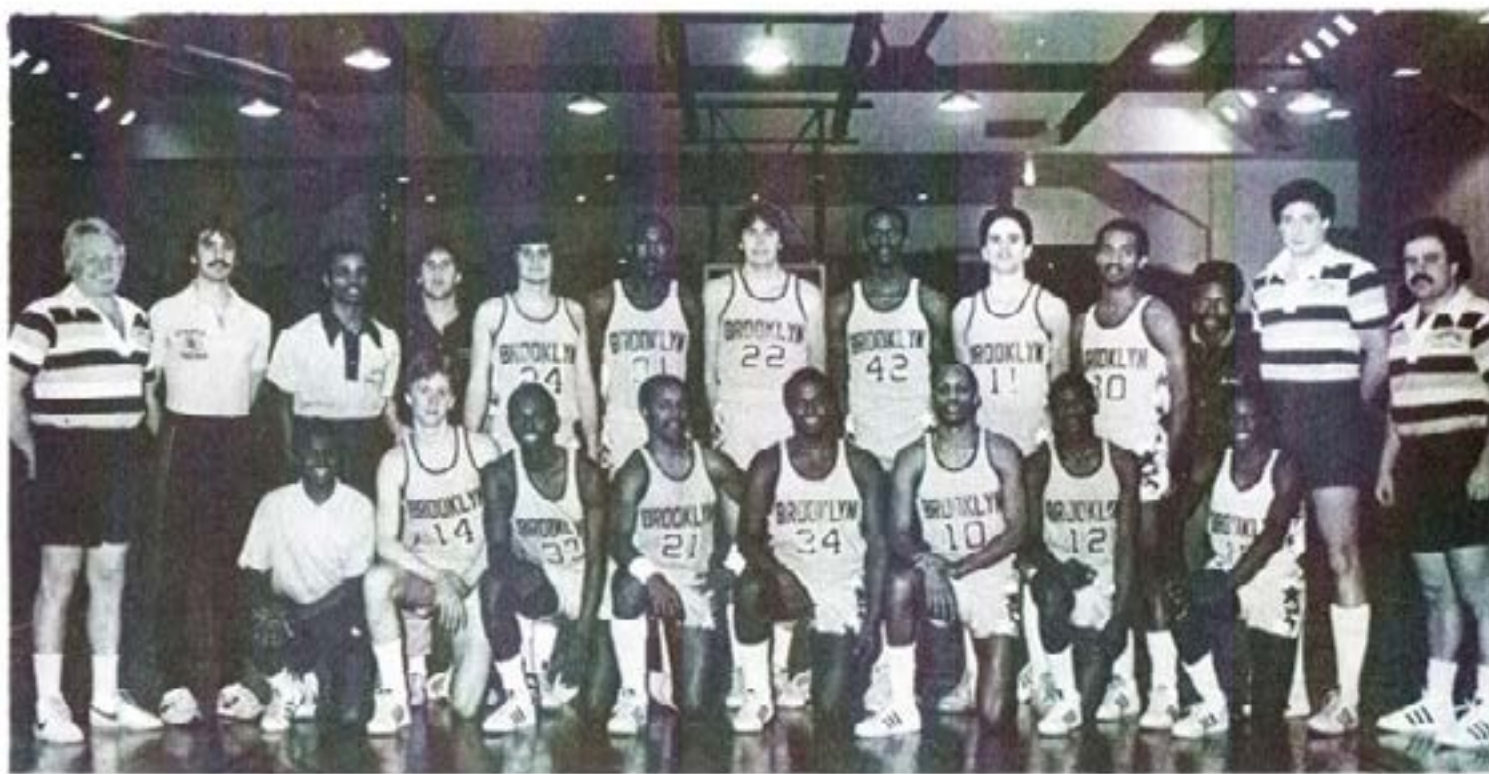
Campus became white hot during the winter months of 1981-82. While Brooklyn was winning game after game, more students crammed their way into Roosevelt Hall. Even faculty members found their way into the gymnasium, including former university president Robert Hess. The

atmosphere on campus became "infectious" as leading scorer Rich Micallef put it. While the players were camping out at the Student Center, playing PacMan and Dig-Dug, their popularity grew beyond Brooklyn College. Newspapers from around New York covered the Cagers as they stormed into the NCAA tournament. Soon enough, after ousting CSI from the tournament, Brooklyn became the last show in town. The only NYC school to still be playing basketball.

"Now when you hear the name BC, you don't just think of Boston College," guard Ronnie Phillips told the New York Times during the Cagers' final four run.

Brooklyn, and the

## BROOKLYN KINGSMEN



(l—r) Kneeling — R. Blake, Manager, G. Sullivan, R. Phillips, A. Wheeler, D. Brown, K. Williams, E. Robinson, G. James; Standing — Head Coach, M. Reiner; Trainer, L. Klein; Assistant Coach, T. Gustus; R. Micallef, R. Edwards, D. Byrnes, R. Davis, E. Delaguardia, K. Vickers, Manager, H. Robinson; and Assistant coaches, L. Vitale, M. Eisenberg.

Brooklyn College's 1981-82 Final Four Team./BC Athletics

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Continued from page 18...

sports world beyond, were captivated as the Cagers rose the ranks in 1982. The Cagers marched through the tournament as underdogs, and pulled off heart-stoppingly close victories against the likes of Ithaca, CSI, and Roanoke College. With the National Championship within reach, some thought the magic would never stop. Unfortunately Brooklyn lost 50-49 to previous champion Potsdam State.

The Cagers played tough, holding Potsdam scoreless for the final seven minutes. The Cagers would go on

to play in the third place consolation game against Cal State Stanislaus. Brooklyn won that game and would officially be recognized as the third best team in Division III. Center Rick Davis earned a spot on the All-Tournament team.

After an incredible season which saw the Brooklyn campus stirred into a frenzy, the Cagers fell just short of the ultimate goal. At the time, there seemed no greater honor than winning the National Championship, but now comes a silver lining. Decades later,

Brooklyn College will finally recognize the 1982 final four team by inducting them into the BC Hall of Fame.

“It’s one of the top honors of my life, and to share it with these guys is one of the most special things ever,” forward Eddie de la Guardia said about the induction. This team put together the strongest season CUNY basketball has seen since 1950 when CCNY won the NCAA and NIT tournaments. Many of them feel that this honor should have come a long time ago, but nonetheless, they are proud to have their

names etched in history. Assistant Coach Ted Gustus spoke candidly with his players as their interview with The Vanguard wound down, “I’m so proud of you guys, and I know he [Coach Reiner] would be proud of you too... Congratulations and I can’t wait to celebrate altogether.”

The Hall of Induction will happen sometime in December, according to players.

It’s not easy to form chemistry as athletes. Only the greatest teams develop a connection deeper than sports. The 1981-82 basketball team has that

very connection. Forty years after they dominated the hardwood, it is easy to feel the comradery these men shared. They were good players with a good group of coaches, but their connection off the court gave them the boost needed to make a run at the final four. While a national championship may have been nice, nothing beats the lifelong friendships which they forged. “We didn’t just like each other, I think we all loved each other,” Rich Micallef said.

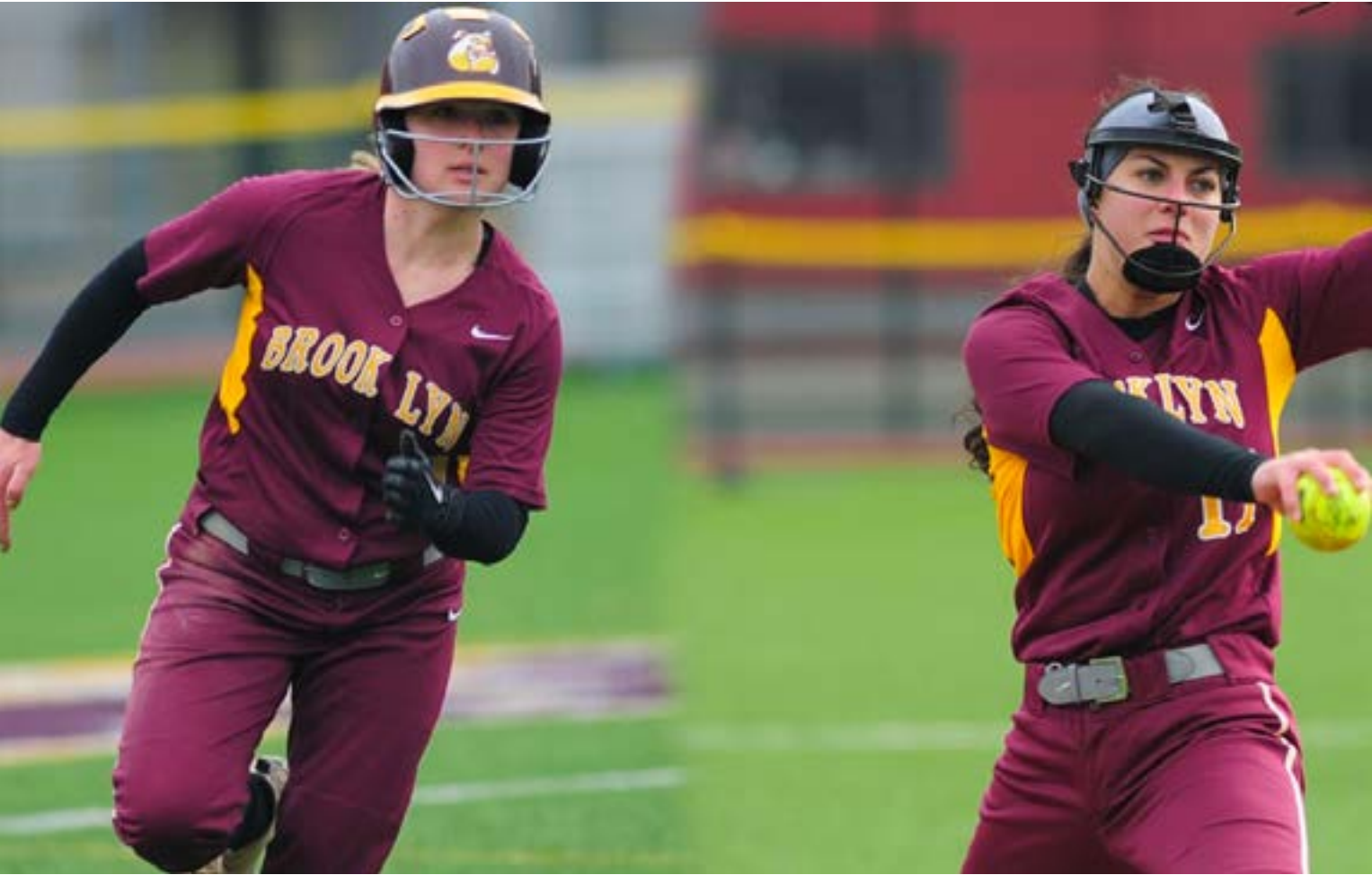
# BC Sports Recap (May 3)

## Women's Softball Season Closes With A Loss Against Lehman

By Owen Russell  
*Sports Editor*

The women’s football team closed its season with a match against Lehman College on May 3. The Bulldogs faced the Lightning in the CUNYAC Postseason play-in game. Brooklyn had played Lehman four times this year, having lost each of those four games heading into Tuesday’s meeting. Both Brooklyn and Lehman were vying for a spot in the CUNYAC Tournament, but in the end Brooklyn came up short. It was a scoreless day for the Bulldogs as Lehman scored six runs against them (though only two were earned). It was not a terrible day for the Bulldogs. Brooklyn committed a few costly errors which turned into runs and allowed multiple sac-flies. In the batter’s box, Brooklyn managed only three hits.

Brooklyn closed the season with a record of 6-21. It wasn’t a picture perfect season for the Bulldogs. The Bulldogs were shut out in seven of their 21 losses. That said, the 2022 season marked Brooklyn’s



Stella Witkowski and Danielle Guzzardi./BC Athletics

first softball season since COVID. Despite suffering an early playoff exit, this year’s team will go down in history as the first post-pandemic.

Center fielder Stella Witkowski was one of three Bulldogs to record a hit. Though it was not an ideal year for the Bulldogs

as a whole, Witkowski and others achieved individual success. Witkowski was named to the CUNYAC All-Star team along with pitcher Danielle Guzzardi, who was also named to the CUNYAC Sportsmanship team for softball.

With softball’s season coming to an end, thus ends

the sports year at Brooklyn College. It has been a year filled with ups and downs. Amongst the whirlwind of wins and losses, one thing is true about each and every team at Brooklyn College. Despite all the uncertainty created by COVID-19, every Bulldog who stepped onto a court, field, or a starting line,

helped transition CUNY out of the pandemic and back to a sense of normalcy. As fall sports resume next semester, athletes and fans alike hope that crowds will remain.

Congratulations to every athlete who competed for Brooklyn this year.



# See You Soon!



**This issue marks The Vanguard's final spring 2022 issue. We will run a midsummer issue in July. If you are interested in pitching a story for then, please email [thebcvanguard@gmail.com](mailto:thebcvanguard@gmail.com) or visit Roosevelt 118.**

**Best of luck with finals, Brooklyn College!**

**—The Vanguard Editorial Staff**