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# THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE VANGUARD

Spring 2024, Issue 5

[vanguard.blog.brooklyn.edu](http://vanguard.blog.brooklyn.edu)

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Monday, March 11th

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## BC Students Attend “Higher Education Action Day” at State Capitol



CUNY students attend “Higher Education Action Day” on Feb. 28 /*Courtesy of Damien Andrade*

By Kate Dempsey  
*Editor-in-Chief*

Brooklyn College students, as part of the New York Public Interest Group (NYPIRG), University Student Senate (USS), Professional Staff Congress (PSC) CUNY, and more, attended “Higher Education Action Day” at the New York State Capitol on Feb. 28.

The advocacy day centered on calling for more resources for universities, which advocates say must come without an additional financial cost to students. Among the goals was advocating for the passing of the New Deal for CUNY and increasing financial aid support for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP).

“The primary goal for participating was to advocate for increased state support for higher education. We’re demanding more accessible, affordable,

and high-quality college education for all students,” Sofia Maryiamis, a board member of NYPIRG and a junior at BC, said. “This includes pushing for policies that lower tuition fees, provide more financial aid options, and ensure that our educational institutions receive the funding they need to offer top-tier education without placing the financial burden on students.”

At the Capitol, students met with state legislators and held a rally to raise awareness for their cause. Advocates made sure that their voices were heard in order to bring representation on behalf of the larger CUNY student body.

“We wanted to show students from each campuses that we don’t mess around when it comes to higher education funding, and wanted to make sure students have a chance to be heard about issues around higher education,”

Damien Andrade, from Albany have helped, it hasn’t been enough to overcome the years of divestment.”

Student advocates stressed that their work does not stop at Higher Education Action Day, that they will continue to support efforts until higher education is accessible to all.

“The fight for affordable, high-quality education doesn’t end with Higher Education Action Day. It’s an ongoing effort that requires sustained attention and advocacy. We encourage everyone to stay informed, reach out to their representatives, and support initiatives aimed at making higher education accessible to all,” said Maryiamis. “It’s only through collective action that we can bring about meaningful change and ensure that future generations have the opportunities they deserve to succeed and thrive.



# PSC Rallies to Demand Contract Offer, Better Working Conditions



Protesters hope bargaining will end swiftly after the one-year anniversary of no contract /Giovanni Ravalli

By Luis Angel Perez Martinez  
**Staff Writer**  
  
Kate Dempsey  
**Editor-in-Chief**  
  
Paulina Gajewski  
**Managing Editor**  
  
**Reporting Assistance**  
Giovanni Ravalli

The sound of drums reverberated throughout campus on Feb. 29 as protesters circled and picketed to the percussive beat. Chants of “One struggle, one fight, students, faculty, staff unite!” and “Hey hey, ho ho, adjunct poverty has got to go!” provided a vocal accompaniment. The protest, organized by the CUNY Professional Staff Congress (PSC), saw over 100 in attendance to demand better working conditions and pay for Brooklyn College faculty.

The PSC is a labor union that represents 30,000 faculty and staff at CUNY and is dedicated to advocating for the rights and interests of its members as well as promoting better quality education for students, according to its mission statement. Since Feb. 28, 2023, CUNY has not made any offers towards PSC, according to its members. To highlight the year of stagnation, they organized to advocate for both the full-time and adjunct professors to receive an

increase in pay and better working conditions.

“We’re out of contract for a year which means that basically all of our pay is frozen at what it is,” Charles Karr, a College Laboratory Technician (CLT) at BC, told The Vanguard. “No matter what kind of inflation hits the rest of the country, and because our [university] has granted us these pay scales but they don’t update them in time for anything, we end up being underpaid, overworked, understaffed, and that’s why I’m here.”

The PSC outlined specific conditions regarding the treatment of CUNY staff, such as the absence of retroactive pay, no counter-proposals to PSC demands, denial of promotion due to “budget considerations,” and the exclusion of department chairs from the union, among other points. Protesters demanded higher job security and better wages that combat inflation. Adjuncts expressed the difficulties in maintaining their job and livelihoods with less relative pay.

“It’s been really hard to live in New York City teaching as an adjunct. Most people who are adjuncts can’t afford to do it for more than a few years,” Adam Bangser, an adjunct professor in the English Department at

BC, said. “It’s been tough [...] no one can just be an adjunct as a full-time job and if they were, they would require teaching three, four, or sometimes five a semester.”

Adjuncts in particular protested for the continuation of the CUNY Pilot Program for adjunct professors. This program states that when an adjunct teaches for a couple of years, they will be eligible to be offered a three-year contract.

“The CUNY administration wants to end that pilot program, the union is fighting to extend it and make it permanent. That’s the kind of shift that would make a real difference for adjuncts. That would increase job security, and

increase wages,” Joseph Entin, a professor of English Literature at BC, said.

Among concerns from professors is the BC administration not doing enough to support faculty in their advocacy for a contract, which they say will only impact the quality of education that students are receiving.

“This is affecting directly to the interests of the students [...] the crisis has to do with the way, of CUNY in general, but this particular administration in Brooklyn College has handled the crisis and the postcoming situation. But we are in a moment right now where everything is injury here,” Alex Alonzo, a professor in the Modern Languages and Literatures Department, told The Vanguard. “We don’t envision in the future for this if we don’t make a movement right now, nobody is making a move in this institution.”

BC administration released a statement to The Vanguard in regards to the protest, stating that “Although the Brooklyn College administration has nothing to do with contractual negotiations between CUNY Central and the PSC union, it does hope for a fair and swift resolution of those negotiations. The administration is working hard to generate funds to hire additional faculty and enhance student support with mentoring programs, completion grants, internship stipends, and facilities improvements,” according to Ludovic Leroy, Interim AVP for Marketing and Communications.

As the one-year anniversary passes, PSC members hope that their bargaining with CUNY will resolve swiftly so that they can get back to doing what they love most: supporting their students in their educational goals.

“PSC members’ working conditions are also students’ learning conditions,” Carolina Bank Muñoz, BC Chapter Chair of PSC, told The Vanguard. “We unite in our fight against austerity, for free tuition, and for decent wages and working conditions for faculty and staff across CUNY. We will continue to escalate pressure to force management to bargain in good faith and settle a great contract.”



100 protesters gathered outside of the Bedford Gates to advocate for a new contract /Giovanni Ravalli



# NYC City Council Joins Housing Program Lawsuit Against Mayor Adams

By Shlomie Katash  
News Editor

On Feb. 28, the New York City Council officially joined a lawsuit filed by the Legal Aid Society that would require Mayor Eric Adams’ administration to institute laws that would expand access to the City Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) rental voucher program.

The laws endured a lengthy legislative battle last summer amid broader budgetary clashes—the package was passed in May, vetoed in June, and overridden in July, leading to its official codification.

Adams justified his opposition by claiming the bills would cost \$17 billion over five years and open up voucher eligibility to the point of greatly diminishing the program’s efficiency. The bills’ proponents maintained that by expediting and increasing rental assistance, the growing burden on the city’s shelter system, induced by an influx of migrants, would be partly alleviated as people would be able to move out. They point to analysis from Win, the city’s largest family shelter, that demonstrated that providing a voucher is less than half the price to the city as placing people in a shelter, thereby arguing the bills would only cost \$10.6 billion over five years.

The administration has disputed this finding, arguing that



Mayor Eric Adams (left) and City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams (right) /City & State New York

the savings “would be minimal because our data clearly show that most [Department of Homeless Services] shelter entrants do not become homeless due to formal eviction,” per a document released by the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Reports that Adams would refuse to implement the laws first surfaced on Nov. 26 by City Limits. In the time since, the City Council has repeatedly threatened the administration with legal action if they did not reverse course. However, when the DSS confirmed on Dec. 15 that they have no plans to institute the laws, the Council authorized Speaker Adrienne Adams to sue the city. Speaker Adams chose to have the Council represented in an existing lawsuit alongside the Legal Aid Society, who were suing on behalf of two plaintiffs who had legal access to the CityFHEPS program but were administratively closed off.

Though this is the first time the City Council and Adams have engaged

in a legal battle, the two bodies have clashed in the courts previously. Mayors Rudy Giuliani and Bill de Blasio each had legal disputes with the Council once during their tenures, and Mike Bloomberg engaged in multiple lawsuits with the legislative branch multiple times during his time as mayor.

A precedent in a case such as the one filed on Feb. 28 would be in 2006, when the courts upheld Bloomberg’s ability to not enforce a law that would have required companies that do business with NYC to extend equal benefits to same-sex partners as they did with heterosexual spouses. During a time when same-sex marriage was not legalized in NYC and the United States, the court struck down the law itself and stated that Bloomberg did not need to enforce a law he deemed illegal while the courts have yet to rule on it.

Adams has continuously argued against the laws on their merits and legality and blocked them from being established. As grounds

for the latter, he has asserted that New York State’s Social Services Law preempts it and the laws’ high costs designate them as necessitating a referendum to become law.

The City Council and the bills’ proponents disagree on both fronts, pointing to other modifications to the CityFHEPS program being passed in recent years without any concerns regarding preemption or the need for a referendum being raised. Additionally, they have contended that, despite the 2006 decision, Adams cannot unilaterally declare the laws illegal without a challenge in the courts and still refuse to enforce them.

“While the mayor can assist the Council in proposing legislation, if and when a Mayor’s veto is overridden, his role as policy maker ends and his law enforcement role begins,” council lawyers wrote in one document, according to City & State. “Regardless of whether the local law aligns with his policy preferences, he is duty-bound to

implement the law. Actions to the contrary unlawfully usurp legislative authority and violate the separation of powers doctrine.”

The courts’ decision in this case could have rippling impacts on the future of policymaking in NYC. Though a legal expert told City & State that they don’t expect the courts to rule that the Council overstepped their authority in passing the laws, whether the laws and the 2006 precedent are upheld will shape the next actions from Adams and the City Council. Further escalation could lead to a deterioration in the working relationship of Mayor Adams and Speaker Adams, who maintain that they are still “cordial” despite an increase in their public disputes, according to NY1.





# Africana Studies Department Hosts

## “The Search for America’s Hidden Slave Ships”



Kamau Sadiki speaking in the Woody Tanger Auditorium /Daniel Afanasyev

By Daniel Afanasyev  
Staff Writer

Through the support of the Africana Studies Department and the Caribbean Studies Program, Brooklyn College hosted “The Search for America’s Hidden Slave Ships” on Feb. 27 with guest speaker Kamau Sadiki. Sadiki is the lead instructor in the “Diving With a Purpose” (DWP) underwater archeology program, and presented his experience in exploring and documenting the wrecks of vessels involved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Sadiki, a retired civil engineer, general aviation pilot, and scuba diver, is one of the discoverers of the “Clotilda”: the last slave ship known to have brought enslaved Africans to the United States. The “Clotilda” remains the most valuable shipwreck to have been found as it is

the only ship containing an intact cargo hold.

To Sadiki, the group actively engages with the issues of how best to remember the lives lost along the route. In contrast to the predominantly touristic nature of underwater exploration, DWP is a passion project led by a group of divers and archeologists seeking to resurrect an ancestral connection and cultural heritage. They do so by substantiating the vessels and the lives lost in this episode of history.

“One of the main issues that we engage with, is how do we decolonize, reframe the narrative around this experience of African enslavement,” Sadiki said. “Remembering, and bringing these people back into our memory is critically important.”

The group has previously documented vessels such as the “São José-Paquete de Africa,” “The Guerrero,”

and “The Clotilda.” DWP has previously partnered with the National Museum of African American Heritage and Culture in Washington D.C., which exhibits some of the shipwrecks that Sadiki worked on.

In his work with the vessels, Kamau said that one of the central objectives lies in, “raising those voices from the sea. Those 12 million or so voices that have never been heard—no one has ever acknowledged them—they have essentially been erased.”

It is estimated

that 12,000 vessels had partaken in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, making some 40,000 voyages, and 1,000 of which had been involved in some sort of wrecking event. According to Sadiki, only 10 out of the 12,000 have been archaeologically recorded.

Apart from archeology and science, Kamau stressed the importance of the “spiritual dimension” in his work, which he reported to have had a very tangible effect on him when he would descend to the vessels and the places where those aboard had last been alive.

“I remember when I first came around these rocks, and saw this wooden member, laid eyes on it, that was my first visual of any artifact recovered from a slave vessel. I went up and I just grabbed it. Once I touched it, I had this incredible sensation that went through my body,” Sadiki said. “I could actually hear the screaming, and the pain, and the suffering of those 212 people

as they went into the water. That was an incredible experience, and that carried me forward in doing this work.”

By discovering and documenting these vessels anew, Sadiki seeks to restore the collective memory and correct the historic injustice suffered by the people aboard these ships. In this effort to acknowledge these forgotten ships and the lives lost, Sadiki, along with the National Association of Black Divers, placed a 1993 plaque memorializing the lives aboard the “Henrietta Marie,” a British vessel that wrecked in the Florida Keys.

After the presentation, a screening of the Netflix documentary “Descendant” took place, in which Sadiki is featured. The film shows the descendants of those lost and the ways in which they try to memorialize them. Sadiki’s quest for honoring the voices lost continues, honoring their legacy through the dives.



DWP featured in an exhibit at the National Museum of African American Heritage and Culture /Kate Dempsey



# The National Association of Black Accountants Hosts Black Excellence Gala

By Kiara Jones-Ford  
Staff Writer

To close out Black History Month of 2024, the Brooklyn College National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) hosted their second annual gala, “A Night of Black Excellence,” in the Student Center on Feb. 29. The event was a collaboration with the Black History Month Committee (BHMC) and The Black and Latino Male Initiative (BLMI).

The Student Center’s Gold Room was decorated in shades of green with gold accents, with vases of pink flowers as centerpieces. Members of the BC community, both past and present, were glammed up for the occasion in tuxedos and gowns. Dinner consisted of sweet potatoes, oxtail, rice and peas, sweet plantains, and collard greens—foods that are commonly associated with several cultures across the Black diaspora. Outside, a photoshoot area captured the night all while a DJ played music by several Black artists.

The name of the gala stems from the term “Black excellence.” According to USA Today, the term is often used to recognize the accomplishments and advancements of those in the Black diaspora, especially in the face of anti-black and racist rhetoric. To the event’s MC, BC freshman Jay Perez, “Black Excellence” is more than just a term. “Black excellence to me means supporting and uplifting my community,” he told The Vanguard. “Just seeing Black leaders and knowing we’re there.”

The night’s theme consisted of floral arrangements, done purposefully to represent the progress of Black leadership.

“I wanted this event to show the current generation that blossomed from the past. Our history and what it has created,” Jessica Vaivo, NABA’s president and a senior at BC, told The Vanguard. “We are the Black community and being Black or even [Black, Indigenous, and People of Color] BIPOC is to understand that we are a part of a field of flowers that’s growing through concrete, hence why there was a lot of floral imagery during this event.”

The green color palette chosen also held significant meaning to Vaivo, made to represent the vast sources of wealth the community has. “I believe there’s a wealth of knowledge and talent with the Black community which was showcased at the gala with the awards, performances, the speeches and everything on display to show the talents of the Black and BIPOC community.”

Students were nominated for various categories, including: education excellence, community service and outreach, music, art, and writing, and social justice activism. Winners included leadership from the Anime Club, the Women of Color Club (WOC), the Caribbean Student Union (CSU), the Korean Culture Club (KCCO), and several BC fraternity and sororities present on campus. Awards given were based on the nomination and votes of the BC student population.

BC senior and USG senator Darla Moise was among those who were recognized for their work and impact, winning the award for Humanities & Social Science Academic Excellence.

“Winning the award is an acknowledgment of



Courtesy of Mousa (@flicxbymoe)

my impact on campus. Getting dressed up and being invited to an event such as a gala legitimizes the importance of the work I do,” Moise told The Vanguard. “It means a lot because though it’s voluntary, pushing for change and recognizing is the norm for me. So getting recognized for it is a reminder of how meaningful it is.”

Along with the awards ceremony, several performances were shown as dinner was served. Musical performances included members of the Steel Drum Club, and BC alumni Devon “Maestro Kaiso” Webster on his violin. A short film, “Agua ‘e Panty” by BC alumni

Astrid Perez, was played afterwards.

Vaivo expressed that the event was a culmination of Black history, recognizing not just the struggles, but the beauty of all the achievements that have been brought about by Black leaders.

“This event—for me – represented the accumulation of our history and accomplishments as the Black and BIPOC community. I feel like there’s so much focus on the hardships and pain of the past, for valid reasons of course, but less on the achievements and moments of joy within Black History,” Vaivo said.

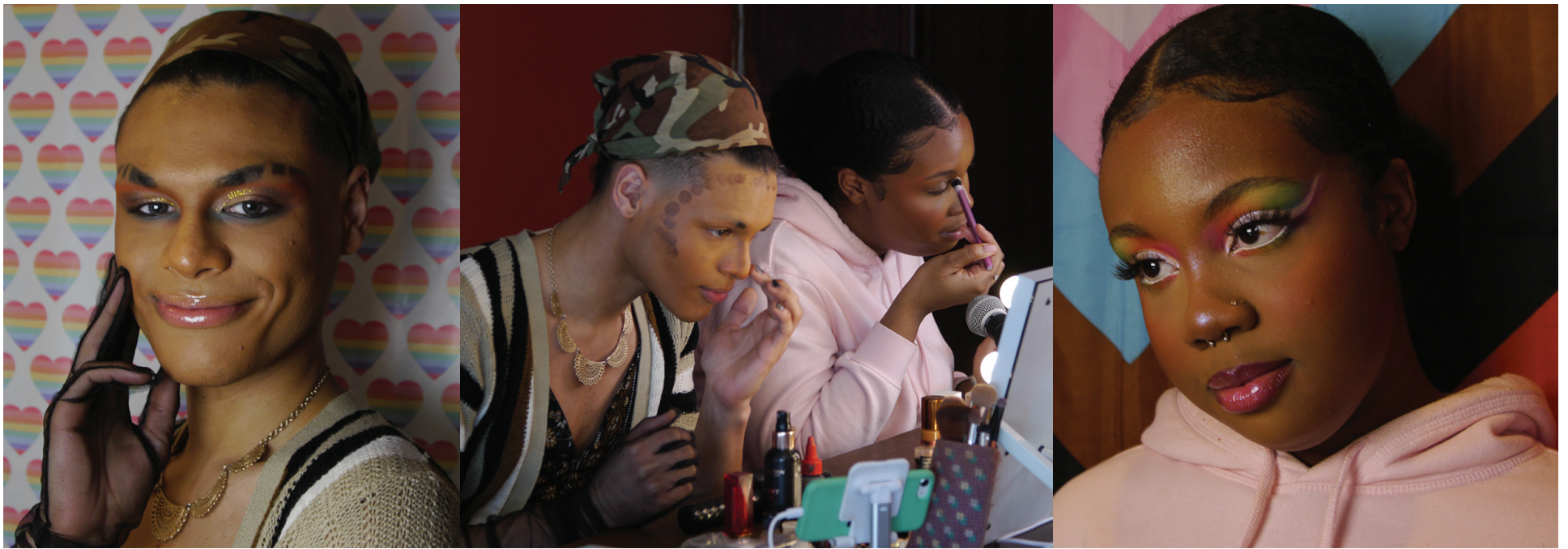
NABA will be hosting

financial literacy classes coming up as well as networking events with companies and firms to help students prepare for their careers. To Vaivo, the gala was part of the continued growth and success that will grow in Black leaders’ futures.

“I wanted this event to focus on the joy,” Vaivo said. “We are the creators of the future and the products of the past, and we shall flourish to allow the next generation to blossom into something greater than us.”



# LGBTQ+ Center Honors Black History with Gender-Affirming Makeup Workshop



*Courtesy of the LGBTQ+ Resource Center*

By Giovanni Ravalli  
Staff Writer  
&  
Kate Dempsey  
Editor-in-Chief

In honor of Black History Month, the LGBTQ+ Resource Center held its second annual Gender-Affirming Makeup Workshop on Tuesday, Feb. 27, in collaboration with LaGuardia Community College and the New York City Council LGBT Caucus.

The event included makeup kits at every table, and those who participated could take photos and selfies of their makeovers in a photo booth. To some attendees, putting on makeup has been a large part of expressing their identities since they were young. “Paint my face,” a colloquial term that translates to transformation, is an outlet for gender expression.

Documentaries such as “Paris is Burning” were some of the earliest exposures to the world of drag and makeup as a form of expression. It documented Ball Culture, an early form of drag shows. Participants named Octavia St. Laurent as an inspiration for their own self-discovery.

“Octavia St. Laurent, it was seeing how little makeup she wore and even when she wore a lot of makeup, she’s iconic, Brooklyn-

raised, trans woman in the documentary ‘Paris is Burning,’” Iggy Strickland, a staffer at the Resource Center and a sophomore at BC, told The Vanguard. “To be a brave enough trans woman to be able to walk outside every single day and then not just walk outside but walk outside boldly and like you can take up space. I think that for me was really inspirational and the point where it really resonated deep within me. My drag is a love letter to Black women.”

Attendees expressed that gender-affirming makeup is an intersectional issue, both with race and gender identity; those in the community may face both racism, and gender discrimination. The discrimination can come from within the beauty community itself.

“I think in the beauty space especially we are often times isolated and pushed to the side, especially Black women of a darker complexion and I think oftentimes even non-trans and non-binary black women just generally get comparisons to men a lot and experience some level of transphobia,” Starr Oakley, a sophomore at BC majoring in business management, said. “Your nose is too big to be a woman,” or one of my friends even heard ‘you’re too dark to be a woman’ which, what does that

mean?”

The workshop provided tips and tricks for applying makeup, including eyeshadow to accentuate the eyes, or finding the correct foundation shade. To the leaders of the Center, Ball Culture is at the center for more understanding of the power of gender-affirmation as attacks against the Queer community continue.

“The Black History Gender Affirming Makeup Workshop is a wonderful opportunity to showcase student talent and create a space for anyone to explore the world of gender expression through makeup. The legacy of the Ballroom scene and house culture is honored at this event too, as we recognize the Black and Latinx contributions to exploring gender expression through makeup, vogue, and artifice,” Kelly Spivey, Director of the Center, told The Vanguard. “Ball Culture has a long, largely underground history until much of the scene became co-opted, and fairly conventional since the late 1990s. However, as the attacks on LGBTQIA+ rights grow in this country, it’s even more important to remember the legacy of Ballroom.”

To attendees, the Center provides a space for them to openly express who they are. “It’s great to have a safe space for Black and Queer

individuals to express themselves authentically,” Andre Rickman, a journalism major and senior at BC, told The Vanguard.

Hosting the gender affirming makeup workshop during Black History Month also stood as a means to express their pride in Black beauty and inclusiveness.

“Black History Month is just an encapsulation of one month and it’s a beautiful month, but it’s almost like Black expression is an everyday thing and that’s something that we think about every day because we walk with it every day. Having something like makeup, which is intentional, it’s a beautiful intersection that makes people think,” said Strickland.

To the leaders of the Center, the workshop is part of their continued efforts to make sure LGBTQ+ students at BC feel heard and supported. The Center emphasizes that transgender people especially need support at a time when many of their rights are not secured.

“[It] is a space where all students are welcome and LGBTQ+ students build community, receive resources, attend events, and become aware of the issues our community faces. The hard-won rights for LGBTQIA+ are celebrated and protected, and students

can learn about their rights at the center,” Spivey said, “Trans students especially need our support, as their lives are more visible; they are automatically outed if they live true to themselves, and this is often rife with possible negative consequences. As the director of the Center, one of my biggest aims is to ensure all LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and faculty experience and prioritize queer joy.”

The workshop hopes to be part of a larger movement to ensure Black and Queer representation is protected, highlighting that beauty is more than the makeup put on.

“We’re coming to this turn in society where maybe representation isn’t at its peak, but people are still able to easily see people that look like them and they’re able to have a bit of a more understanding of the things that make people of color beautiful,” Strickland said. “Oftentimes they’re told to paint lesser and to not be as big and bold, and it’s important during Black History Month because I think it’s a time where people feel like they can shine a little bit brighter.”

*Students interested in learning more about the LGBTQ+ Resource Center can visit <https://www.brooklyn.edu/lgbtq-center/> or visit their office in 219-221 Student Center.*



# Moral Obligations in a World Afraid of Refugees

By T’Neil Gooden  
Features Editor

As part of continued discussions about immigration, the Wolfe Institution held “Moral Obligations in a World Afraid of Refugees” on Feb. 26.

The talk discussed ways in which Brooklyn College students can learn more about refugees and the hardships they face when coming to the United States. Author, Serena Parekh of “No Refuge: Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis” spoke with Professor Matthew Launder, a philosophy professor.

Migrants, which include many refugees seeking asylum, have been coming to the United States in big numbers, according to NPR. Parekh began the conversation by explaining how cities in the U.S. have played a role in how they are treated as they are fleeing their homes to come to America.

“In many cities across the US, large numbers of migrants arrived and cities seemed ill-prepared and unable to house, shelter, and place them in homes and provide them with services as they are more or less dependent on whatever government is in place,” Parekh said. “This has caused a lot of strains on social services and backlash against immigrants, where people feel like they have come and taken resources and crowded the population, this is the migrant crisis.”

Before getting into the obligations of refugees within the U.S., Parekh

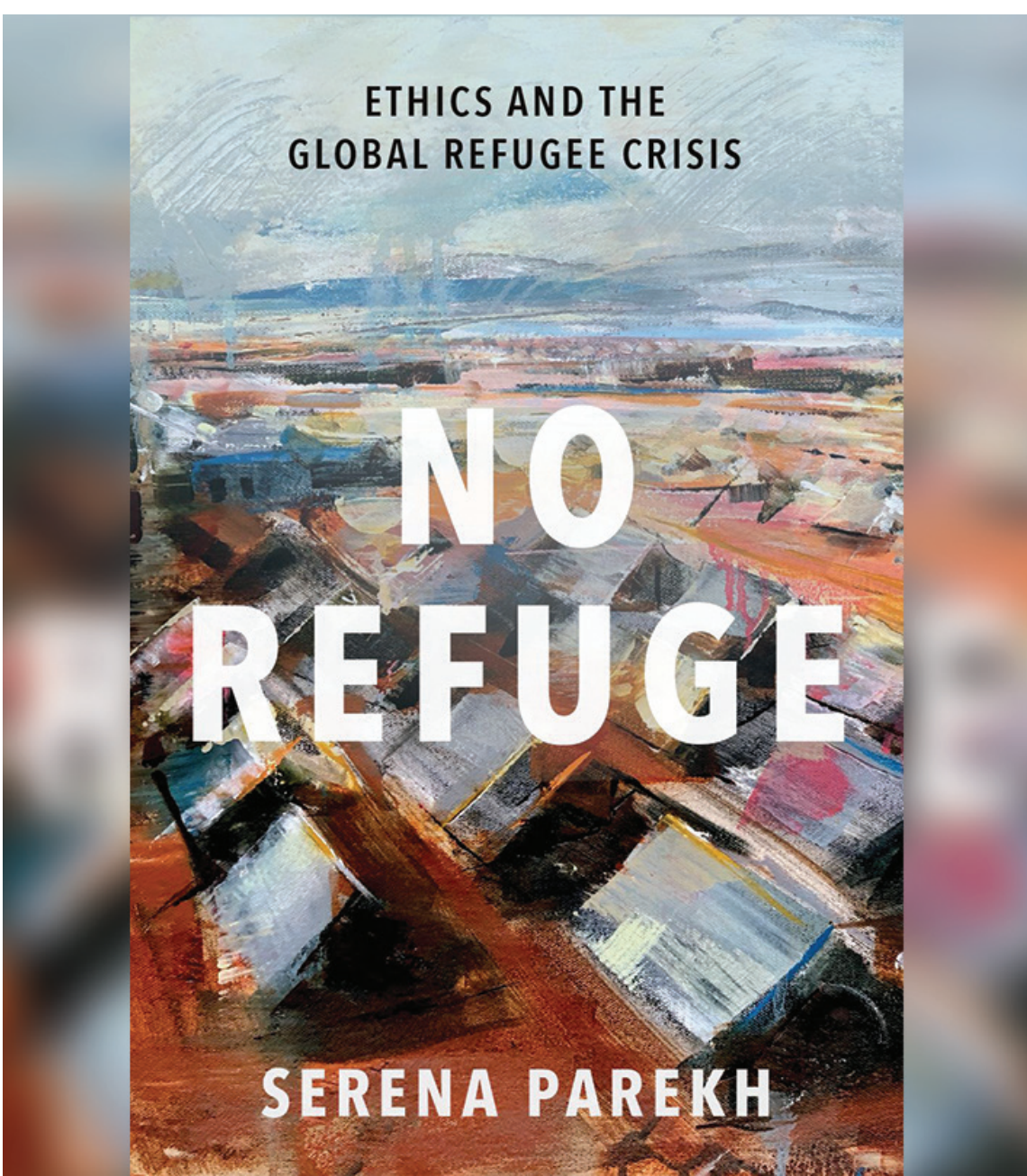
wanted students to get a correct definition to help distinguish the differences between refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants.

The people who have fled their countries are placed into the category of migrants, as that is what many people see them as. However, many of them are not as they are coming to these larger countries searching for contrasting forms of assistance allowing them to be organized as three different types of immigrants.

“A refugee is somebody who goes to another country and waits there. An asylum seeker is somebody who bypasses that third country and goes directly to the country they think should give them refugee status,” Parekh explained. “A migrant is a much larger term that’s used often in the media to talk about all people who are leaving their home countries, some of them will be forced, some of them will be technically illegal refugees or asylum seekers, and others are people who are leaving for a whole host of other reasons.”

Parekh explained that students must retain humility when deciding who is a part of which group when these people have recently fled their country. Taking the time to listen to their stories will let their voice shine through within a larger framework of narratives and generalizations.

After explaining the distinction between these individuals looking for help, Parekh continued



Courtesy of Northeastern University College of Social Sciences and Humanities

her presentation by speaking on how the United Nations and other countries believed they had been assisting these immigrants. In actuality, they are leaving them with false promises of asylum, and not combating the root causes of their displacement.

“One solution is to facilitate voluntary return, which just means the U.N. and various countries will work to facilitate the end to the war and the end of persecution,” Parekh said. “The second option is called local integration, which just means, you’ve crossed your border to escape persecution. Years go by, you fall in love, and you get a job and become a member of society, and the third option, is we still omit

the third country and a new country.”

These potential solutions provide immigrants with entrance to these larger countries, however, they have to make a living doing labor for up to 25 years before they can have the certification to try and become citizens. These factors only leave refugees with the hopes of creating a new life for themselves and their families, some never get to experience the day.

Parekh explained three options that refugees can expect when wanting to come to countries with big cities like the U.S. These are options that will leave them with little housing protection.

“One option are refugee camps, the second are urban settlements, and the

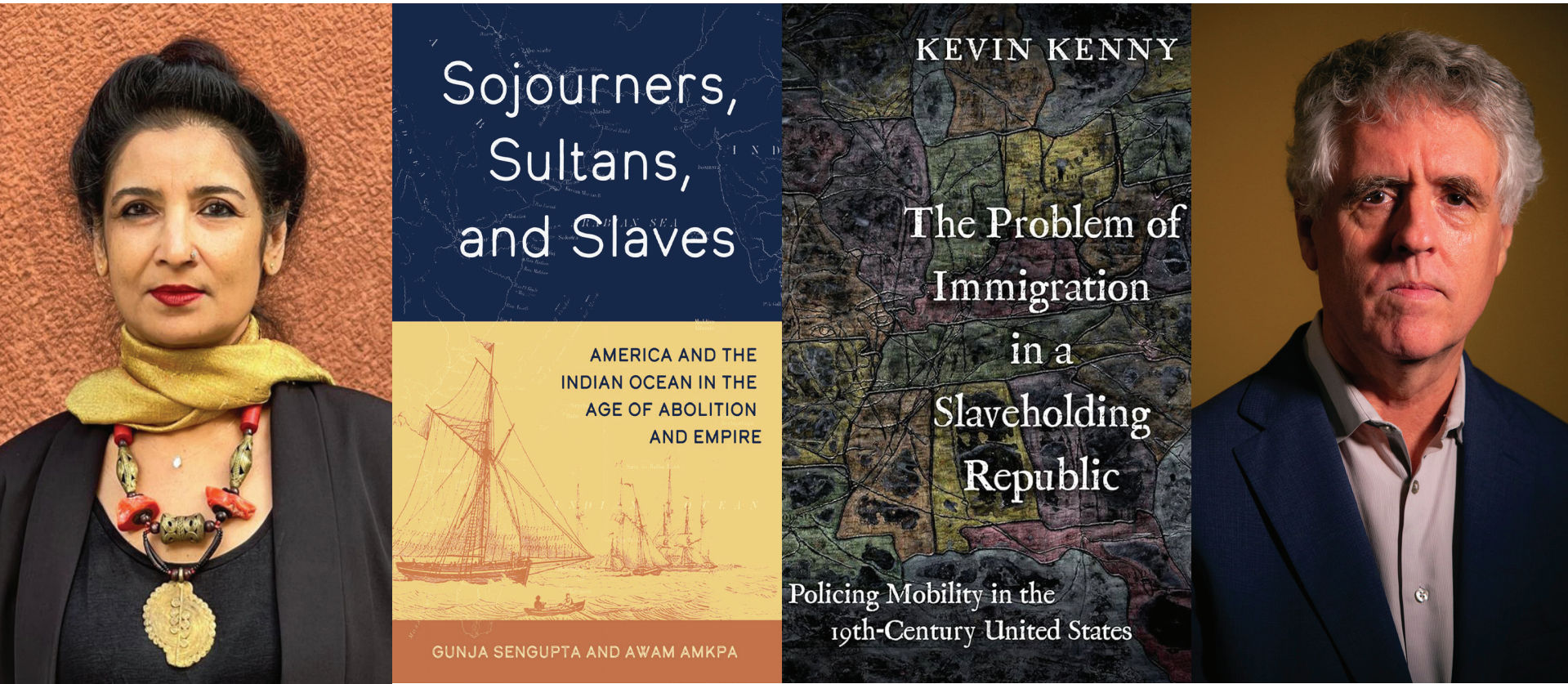
third is directly seeking asylum,” Parekh said. “Each of these options fails to provide the minimum conditions of human dignity.”

These options that immigrants fall into lead to understanding their motivations for pushing the southern borders and fleeing to any country they can. They believe that even in these conditions there is a chance. Immigrants are purely living in the hopes that they can escape the options that leave them with no human dignity no matter the timestamp.

Interested students in upcoming talks can visit BC Wolfe Institute on Instagram, @bc\_wolfeinstitute.



# Wolfe Institute Hosts “Defining Immigration, Empire, Race, and Slavery”



Courtesy of Gunja SenGupta, University of California Press, Oxford University Press, and Kevin Kenny

By Kaylin Guzman  
*Layout Editor*

The discussion “Defining Immigration, Empire, Race, and Slavery” was hosted by The Wolfe Institute on Feb. 27, focusing on research done by experts and immigration’s effect on modern governments.

The event occurred at a time when immigration to the U.S. is a focus for many in New York City. People from all over the world come searching for the “American Dream” and wish to start their new lives in New York City. However, the experts’ presentations focused on the past of immigration and its impact on its present and future implications.

Anna O. Law guided the conversation between the authors and the audience. Law is an associate professor of political science and Herbert Kurz Chair in Constitutional Rights at BC. The first guest, Kevin Kenny, professor of history and Glucksman Professor in Irish Studies at New York University,

spoke about his latest book, “The Problem of Immigration in the Slaveholding Republic.” Kenny teaches the history of U.S. immigration and global migration.

The second guest, Gunja SenGupta, is a history professor at BC and teaches at the Graduate Center. Her research focuses on 19th-century U.S. history within the global context of slavery and colonialism. She spoke about her book, “Sojourners, Sultans, and Slaves,” released in 2023.

“I am so glad that there is a synergy between these two books,” Law said. “There is a lot of overlap between what they talk about, but they address the same research question in very different ways that we’ll see.”

To begin the discussion, the floor was opened up to Dr. Kenny and his work. Kenny explained how his past research has impacted his latest work.

“A very different kind of history for me. A new kind of history because I spent my

career writing what we call history from below, history from the bottom up [...] In my previous work I never stopped to consider the question ‘who claimed authority over immigration and on what ground?’” said Kenny.

Kenny recalled the history of immigration and migration in the U.S. Topics spanned from the Native American people who were removed from their homes, to Chinese immigrants who were banned from entering the country. He asked the audience to reflect on laws in place in the U.S.

“In the history of the United States, you can look for answers to questions like that in the Constitution,” said Kenny. “The U.S. is very distinctive in having a written constitution that sets down rules and guidelines for who can do what. The really striking [...] thing is that if you go to the Constitution it is silent on immigration.”

As Kenny went over the main effects of immigration on groups

of people, SenGupta focused on specific stories she was able to uncover from the past.

“Now, migration stories lie at the heart of my book. These stories are set in the 19th century [...] many of you know there was the spread of capitalism,” said SenGupta. “Entire information technologies of print, transport, and communication were weaving North America with the rest of the world.”

“In this book what we do is track the movement of people, of commodities, of ideas, of goods among nodes of commercial exchange, imperial power rivalries, and human activists,” said SenGupta.

Much of the information SenGupta shared were very specific stories of women in her book. One impactful woman was Mary Ann Shadd Cary. According to The National Women’s Hall of Fame, she was the first Black woman to edit a weekly paper and journalist. She was also a teacher that

established schools all over North America for Black students.

“She advocated immigration to Canada which she represented as a colorblind, anti-slavery empire with a woman at its helm,” SenGupta said. “She was refashioning familiar American narratives about the supposedly liberating potential of westward expansion by relocating the promise of liberation.”

The Wolfe Institute will be continuing to host talks related to immigration as part of their “Philosophy of Immigration Series.” Their next scheduled discussion, “When We Decide: Plural Agency, Voluntariness, and Migrant Choice,” will be held on March 13.





# New Mural Brings The Color of Performing Arts to Campus



Courtesy of @bklyncollege411 on Instagram

By Amira Turner  
**Arts Editor**

Color, motion, and music burst off of the newly installed “Kaleidoscope Ballad” mural on the first floor of the Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts, mirroring the creative energy buzzing around the building.

The mural was a collaborative effort of Brooklyn College Professor Julia Cocuzza’s fall 2023 Art 3414 students, which include Mawada Ahmed, Juliet Dakin, Latifah Ford, Noah Hinds, Shuqi Li, Kevin Molina, Christina Nguyen, Jose Romain, Gabriela Suarez, To Uyen Thai, Vu Quyen

Thai, Filip Timerman, and Kyra Zelaya. The class received support from the Art Department, Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts, Office of Finance, Office of the President, Office of Diversity & Equity Programs, and the Dean of the School of Visual Media & Performing Arts to complete the project.

The mural took the class about eight weeks of collaborative drafting in class, and another eight weeks to paint. Some students came in outside of class time to make sure the project was completed by the end of the semester. The mural was created in smaller sections first,

which were projected onto the wall, and combined into the final pieces.

“It was tedious, but the end result makes it worth it,” Jose Romain, one of the artists, said.

A wide range of bright colors, reflected figures and abstracted shapes inspired the kaleidoscopic theme of the mural. “Kaleidoscope Ballad” centers around a white piano, bursting with colorful flowers and symmetrical, monochromatic tableaux of diverse performers. The mural plays with realism and abstraction while capturing and mirroring the energy and diversity of the BC arts community, similar to how kaleidoscopes

capture and mirror the world.

Senior Latifah Ford told The Vanguard that her motivating force in working on the mural was creating a sense of pride on campus. “I’m most proud that I get to say I painted a mural at my alma mater.”

This is the second mural spearheaded by Cocuzza and her Art 3414 class. More mural work from previous classes can be found on the second floor of the Film Department’s West End Building. The mural, titled “Cinematic Escape of Sight and Sound,” was created by

Cocuzza’s fall 2022 class, and is a collage of colorful vignettes paying homage to all of the film industry’s moving parts. Students who have been a part of the projects entered the world of mural work right from campus.

“I would definitely recommend the course to other students,” Ford said. “There were students who had never done a mural before and left the semester wanting to do more.”

Cocuzza will be continuing her mural class, with the next mural for BC slated for fall 2024.



“Kaleidoscope Ballad” is BC’s newest mural /Courtesy of Julia Cocuzza

COMIC OF THE WEEK

By @martoonsarts

Courtesy of BC Comics and Sequential Arts Club



# Saturdays At 8: A Deep Dive Into The Substance Of Children’s TV

By Rami Mansi  
*Opinions Editor*

Children’s shows have had a steady decline in recent times due to the lack of attention they grab in their designated age groups; this can be attributed to the rise in new technologies. But those Saturday cartoons used to be a defining feature in explaining children’s foundations in humor and education, even in how they function as tiny humans. Adults who grew up on these shows developed a sense of nostalgia and consider these shows as a fundamental part of having a childhood.

Kids shows like “Sesame Street” are loved and respected as powerful children’s media genre examples. However, some shows don’t experience the same prowess, such as “My Life As A Teenage Robot,” a show that was headed by Nickelodeon and revolved around a robot in the form of a teenage girl as she tries to live out her human life while battling the evils of high school. Yet like this show and many others, there’s a formula to follow and one miscalculation can lead to your show being forgotten and not having an impact on many childhoods.

This raises a question: How does child-friendly media define a generation? How is the development of animation furthering

kids’ love for the present technologies?

Let’s take a look at what shows impacted each generation. The ’90s were defined by popular shows such as “Reading Rainbow,” “Barney & Friends,” and “The Magic School Bus.” These shows focused on entertaining kids while impetuously discussing worldwide themes with the younger generation. Some productions stayed true to their mission of delivering childhood animation to fruition, “Pokémon” and “Blues Clues” being at the forefront of this goal. 90’s kids shows were exactly that, shows for kids with child-friendly themes. Most shows stayed in their lane with thematic scenes and focus.

Towards the end of the ’90s, new shows took on more mature themes and began writing scripts that appealed not only to the designated age groups but to an older audience. Late 90’s shows such as “Recess,” “Hey, Arnold,” and “Franklin,” brought more mature themes such as themes of love, puberty, and even politics in Recess. and messages of pre and post-teenagehood to the front and center stage.

The turn of the century ignited a cultural shift within the media. Teenagers in media became



Courtesy of Chloe Lewis for DenofGeek.com

subject protagonists by the 2000s, which in turn led children’s media in different directions. There were the rated Y-7 shows; usually animated and filled with bright colors and nursery rhymes, and those of the PG rating, characterized by teenage protagonists and darker thematic scenes.

The Y-7 shows in the 2000s included “SpongeBob Squarepants” and “The Fairly Odd Parents,” enticing audiences with light humor and interesting plot lines. PG shows like “Teen Titans,” “Ben 10,” and “Avatar: The Last Airbender” primarily included action scenes that entranced viewers, ditching the innocence of childhood, and delving into the idea of suspense.

Now, with all these shows airing, the biggest competition between television shows isn’t each other, but the rise of technology. This has caused another branch to form in the tree of children’s television: the

show that distracts kids and does not educate, and the show that pays close attention to detail with many educational features within the show’s premise.

Misguided forms of media stem from YouTube channels based on delivering education through nursery rhymes and attention-grabbing features. A prime suspect is the controversial yet extremely popular channel “Cocomelon,” which started as a wholesome attempt to help parents worldwide, yet the “solution” was discovered to have overstimulating colors and characters leading children to become addicted to watching it, according to the NY Post. The cinematography of animation cannot be easily toyed with, especially one that leans into a younger audience.

Shows like “Cocomelon” birthed a variety of internet shows, some of which can not be seen on

cable television. This change from cable to YouTube and other tech media adds up to a whopping loss of cable television, deals, and more additions to the newest tablets and a YouTube Kids subscription.

There are however still shows that are worth the kids’ hype; One case of a successful kid show in the 2020s is “Bluey.” A show that demonstrates the very definition of a kid’s show: educational, battles real-life issues, entertaining for all ages, and subjectively very funny with a clever sense of humor.

Children’s television has always been a third teacher to children for so many years. It truly is remarkable how kids’ shows are used as a character of growth in kids’ livelihoods. If you read this and become overwhelmed with nostalgia, why don’t you watch that old episode of “Phineas and Ferb” and find out what Phineas and Ferb are gonna do today?



# The Young OKC Thunder Are On The Rise

By Sean Markisic  
Sports Editor

The Oklahoma City Thunder currently hold a 41-18 record and are the second seed in the Western Conference. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander is a key player on the team, averaging 31.2 points per game along with five rebounds and six assists. Every game, Shai is putting up 25-30 points while making sure his teammates have opportunities to contribute as well.

Shai's teammate and rookie Chet Holmgren has taken the league by storm with his ability to shoot the ball from a great deal of distance. Throughout the season, Chet has been averaging 17.2 points per game along with seven rebounds and three assists. Even though that is a great stat line for a rookie, it does not tell the complete story of what makes Chet special. The rim protection that Chet provides for the Thunder is significant. He averages around two to three blocks a game, which is rare for a rookie, goes to show that Chet already understands how opposing NBA teams operate on offense. The sky's

the limit for the potential of Chet, and it's promising to see that he's a top defensive player. Given how young he is, it's fair to say he will contribute to the offense greatly.

Going into the season everyone expected the Thunder to take things slow and assess at what level all their young talent is at, but instead, they've exceeded all expectations and are way ahead of schedule. This season for the Thunder is now about the team gaining playoff experience. The two teams right below the Thunder in the standings are the Denver Nuggets, who are defending champions, and the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Nuggets and Clippers have star players who have a plethora of playoff experience. Therefore, it'll be interesting to see how the media will view the Thunder's playoff chances, because even though they are a top team during this regular season, playoff basketball is a completely different beast. If the playoffs began today, the OKC Thunder would be the



OKC Thunder/SLAM Magazine

number two seed, and with the play-in tournament being used to determine the seventh and eighth seeds, there's a high chance that the Thunder would either play the Golden State Warriors or Los Angeles Lakers.

It would be difficult for people to believe that the Thunder could beat the Warriors since they are a team with championship pedigree, but the Thunder have been consistently good all year, whereas the Warriors started poorly and have just started to get back onto their feet the last couple of weeks. In addition, Stephen Curry – highly

contested as the greatest shooter of all time – is someone that any team wants to avoid in a playoff series. If Curry is present in the game, there is not much that opposing teams could do. By that same token, playing against the Lakers is another team the Thunder would like to avoid because of the duo consisting of LeBron James and Anthony Davis, two renowned players.

The Thunder were supposed to be in another year of their continuing rebuild, but the emergence of Alexander as a superstar-level player has placed the Thunder ahead of schedule. Fans are excited to see their

performance for the rest of the season. The Thunder used to be viewed as one of the best teams when the team used to be led by Kevin Durant and Russell Westbrook in the mid-2010s. Once that fell apart, the organization didn't make any panic decisions. Instead, they were patient and acquired Alexander in a trade with the Clippers, which allowed Alexander to take his time for personal development. The majority of their other star players were drafted by the Thunder themselves, and the improvement will likely continue for years to come.