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THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE VANGUARD

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SAVE Act Changes Threaten To Complicate Voter Registration Process

By Key Jones-Ford
Content Creator

The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act—herein the SAVE Act—was first introduced on May 7, 2024. According to the official Congress website, it is sponsored by Representative Chip Roy [R-TX-21], and it passed the House in July of that year but did not make it fully to the Senate floor. Representative Roy officially re-introduced the bill on Jan. 3, 2025.

The SAVE Act would require all election officials to verify the citizenship of potential voters either upon registration or when updating voter information. All registrations would have to occur in person. Updating voter registration would also need to be done in person.

“The SAVE Act would make it impossible for a voter to mail in a registration application. And it would eliminate the ability to conduct voter registration drives,” according to the League of Women Voters of Oxford. Failure of election officials to verify documents would result in “a private right of action” and potential criminal penalties against the official. According to Newsweek, the bill is “[...] intended to amend the National Voter Registration Act to ensure that all people registering to vote are U.S. citizens.”

The language between H.R.8281, the bill introduced in 2024, and H.R.22, the bill introduced in Jan. of this year, remain much the same, with the H.R.22 version adding to the second line: “The bill specifies what documents are considered acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship, such as identification that complies with the REAL ID Act of 2005 that indicates U.S. citizenship.” H.R.22 also does not include the time limit that the Election Assistance Commission would have to adapt to implementing the bill’s requirements.

Voter fraud is punished at the federal level, along with additional penalties that vary from state to state; however, it is not common. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, “[...] incident rates between 0.0003 percent and 0.0025 percent” were reported for voter fraud during their seminal report in 2007. Brookings also reported similar numbers more recently in 2024, with a chart that shows less than 1% of potential fraudulent cases throughout 13 to 38 years.

The bill would also require states to establish proof of legal name change if any portion of the person’s name does not match what is listed on their birth certificate, U.S. passport, or other citizenship-proving



Rep. Chip Roy attends the inauguration of President Trump in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 20 in Washington, D.C./
Courtesy of Getty Images

documents.

The Dispatch stated, “The bill requires states to establish a process to resolve potential discrepancies present in voters’ documentary proof of citizenship. Supplementary documentary proof that confirms one’s legal name change, such as a marriage certificate, could be used to verify citizenship, although the bill’s language does not state that option outright.”

As the bill only allows citizen-proving documentation, “[...] most Americans would be unable to register to vote using their driver’s license or other state-provided identification alone,” according to a One Pager on the bill. This would make it more difficult for people who do not have passports or birth

certificates available to register.

“More than nine percent of American voting-age citizens, or 21.3 million people, don’t have a passport, birth certificate, or naturalization papers readily available,” wrote Wendy R. Weiser and Andrew Garber for the Brennan Center for Justice. “Voters of color, voters who change their names, and younger voters would be most significantly affected.”

Since its reintroduction to the House Committee, there have been no further actions taken on the bill.

This is a developing story. The Vanguard will provide updates as they are made available.

Roberto Clemente: Afro-Latino And Puerto Rican Sports Hero

By Manuel Polanco
Sports Editor

Humanitarian, activist, and MLB hall of famer Roberto Clemente was the first Caribbean player inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame (HOF), and thus immortalized forever. Born in Carolina, Puerto Rico in 1934, Clemente would embark on a life full of achievements and glory.

A four time batting title champ, 12 Gold Glove Award winner, 15 time all-star, and a two-time world series champ; it’s no secret why many Puerto Rican baseball players look up to him. He was honored by the Puerto Rican government, who named two stadiums after him: El Coliseo Roberto Clemente and Estadio Clemente. Clemente was also dubbed a national hero by the Puerto Rican government, bestowing him the title of prócer.

What made Clemente special is that he, like many other POC baseball players of his time, played during an

era of segregation and racism. Being an Afro-Latino player, he still faced discrimination, but through his activism fought for racial equality and better treatment of Latin American baseball players.

“The racism extended to the names the sportswriters used to identify him. They called him Bobby or Bob, instead of his preferred name, Roberto. Baseball card companies and other merchandisers followed suit even through the end of his career [...] Sportswriters also made fun of his accent, quoted him in broken English, and paid little attention to his powerful intellect and social conscience. He knew little English when he joined the majors, and naturally spoke with a Spanish accent,” according to the Society for American Baseball Research.

MLB awards out the Roberto Clemente Award to players who showcase philanthropic and humanitarian values on and off the field. This honors Clemente’s legacy as a humanitarian, while also promoting the humanitarian

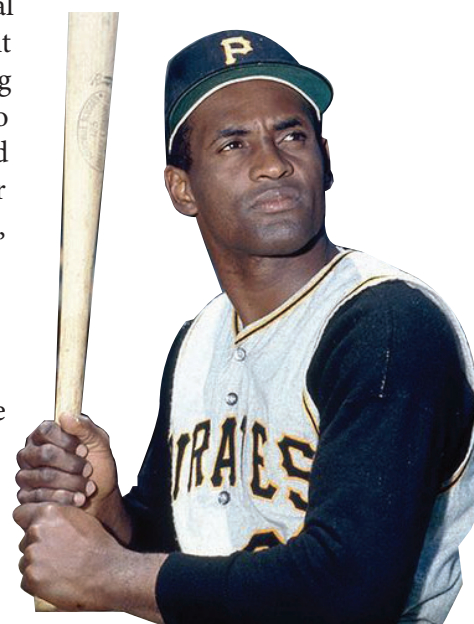
efforts the players made. Mets shortstop Francisco Lindor was nominated last season for the award, and as a Puerto Rican native, this honor meant a lot to him.

“I love education. I love helping baseball players and helping softball girls in Puerto Rico, stuff like that. It means the world to me to be able to help,” Lindor stated according to Mets reporter Anthony DiComo. “Also, to help parents have a little financial freedom when it comes to getting a scholarship so they can go and pay for their education. To me, it’s amazing.”

After Nicaragua was devastated by an earthquake in 1972, Clemente boarded a plane full of aid and would make his final voyage to the country to help those devastated. Unfortunately, the

plane would go down due to an engine failure. At just 38 years, old Roberto Clemente had passed away doing what he loved, helping those in need.

The Boricua icon would be inducted into the HOF on Mar. 20, 1973 and would forever etch his name in baseball history. Clemente will always remain a hero and inspiration to the Puerto Rican people.



MLB Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente./Courtesy of Getty Images

Trump Administration Continues Contentious Congestion Pricing Battle

By Victoria Keraj
News Editor

On Feb. 19, a letter sent by the Secretary of Transportation (SOT), Sean Duffy, to Governor Hochul announced that federal approval for New York's congestion pricing plan would be revoked. The points made in the letter echo the sentiments made by the plan's opposition. "I share the President's

concerns about the impacts to working-class Americans who now have an additional financial burden to account for in their daily lives," Duffy stated in the letter.

President Trump has expressed his disapproval of congestion pricing, previously stating he would do away with it. "I will TERMINATE Congestion Pricing in my FIRST WEEK back in Office!!! Manhattan is looking for business, not looking to kill business!" he posted on Truth Social.

A meeting between Hochul and Trump was originally planned for Feb. 19 to discuss the matter but was called off. On Friday, Feb. 21, Hochul met with Trump at the White House to convince him the plan was working and necessary.

According to Politico, "Governor Hochul also presented President Trump with a booklet on the early success of congestion pricing," as mentioned



New Yorkers rally against the decision to terminate congestion pricing./Courtesy of Streetfilms®

by spokesperson Avi Small.

After the meeting, "Hochul left without any commitment from Trump to change his position on congestion pricing," according to CNN.

Before congestion pricing was originally approved, opponents of the plan held similar sentiments to those in the SOT's letter. The New York Post reported that "GOP lawmakers told Trump that congestion pricing is a symbol of Hochul and other Empire State politicians' 'overreach in every aspect of government,'" when Hochul was considering advancing the plan.

In a statement following the federal decision to rescind congestion pricing approval, Hochul maintained the importance of congestion pricing and that New York would go against the Trump administration's decision.

"I don't care if you love congestion pricing or hate it. This is an attack on our sovereign identity, our independence from Washington." Since the statement, New York has continued to collect tolls. Hochul also announced that the MTA filed a lawsuit against the federal government which continues to affirm the necessity of the program. The lawsuit claims that "[t]he Administration's efforts to summarily and unilaterally overturn the considered determinations of the political branches—federal, state, and city—are unlawful, and the Court should declare that they are null and void."

In Hochul's statement, she described Trump's actions as being part of a "revenge tour against New York."

Since becoming president, Trump has made it clear that states that do not comply with new policies will

have their federal funding taken away when it comes to issues such as immigration. On the day of Trump's inauguration, he signed an executive order "to ensure that so-called 'sanctuary' jurisdictions, which seek to interfere with the lawful exercise of Federal law enforcement operations, do not receive access to Federal funds."

Aligning to enforce new immigration policies, the Trump Administration had ordered the case against Mayor Eric Adams to be dropped, as previously reported by The Vanguard.

Many New Yorkers called upon Hochul to use her powers as governor to remove Adams from office after four of his mayoral deputies resigned.

Those against Adams felt betrayed and accused him of trading his seat for a pardon by the president. Reuters states that Adams "[...]

endured months of mounting calls for his resignation or removal and Hochul said she had heard from many New Yorkers who feel 'outraged, hurt, betrayed' by the mayor."

At a meeting on Feb. 20, Hochul announced she would not be removing Adams for the time being, but would limit his mayoral powers. In the press statement, she again referenced "[...] the Trump Revenge Tour".

"Given how aggressive the Trump administration has been, including its attempt yesterday to dismantle a previously approved congestion pricing program, and how deeply disturbing the comments from the President's Border Czar were," Hochul stated, "we know they'll stop at nothing to try and exercise control over New York."

Department of Education's Two-Week Deadline

By Emily Nixon
Staff Writer

On Feb. 15, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) sent a letter to schools, giving them two weeks to review and cut any programs supporting “racial preferences.” Schools found in violation could have their federal funding pulled in retaliation.

In the first footnote, the letter clarifies that ‘school’ is used generally to refer to preschool, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance from the Department [of Education].” These parameters include universities such as Brooklyn College.

“The test is simple: if an institution treats a person of one race differently than it treats another person because of that person’s race,” states the “Dear Colleague” letter released by the DOE, “the educational institution violates the law.”

The DOE gave schools two weeks to review and

change programs that use “race in decisions pertaining to admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, financial aid, scholarships, prizes, administrative support, discipline, housing, graduation ceremonies, and all other aspects of student, academic, and campus life,” according to the letter.

In 2023, the Supreme Court ruled that “the consideration of an applicant’s race as one factor in making an admissions decision particularly to realize the educational benefits of diversity, is unconstitutional,” according to Stanford Law School’s Center for Racial Justice. The DOE is using this ruling to reinforce the standing behind their deadline.

In addition to this deadline, the DOE has been canceling, “[...] over \$600 million in federal grants to institutions and non-profits that were using taxpayer funds to train teachers and educational agencies on divisive ideologies,” according to a press release from the DOE on Feb. 17.

According to the DOE

press release, the grant funds had been used to buy inappropriate materials, such as, “training materials [bought with taxpayer funds] included inappropriate and unnecessary topics such as Critical Race Theory; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Social Justice Activism; ‘anti-racism’; and instruction on white privilege and white supremacy,” stated the press release.

The DOE also stated, “[...] school[s] may not use students’ personal essays, writing samples, participation in extracurriculars, or other cues as a means of determining or predicting a student’s race and favoring or disfavoring such students,” in the letter.

Additionally, the letter deemed “eliminat[ing] standardized testing to achieve a desired racial balance or to increase racial diversity,” as unlawful and discriminatory and barred schools from cutting testing requirements.

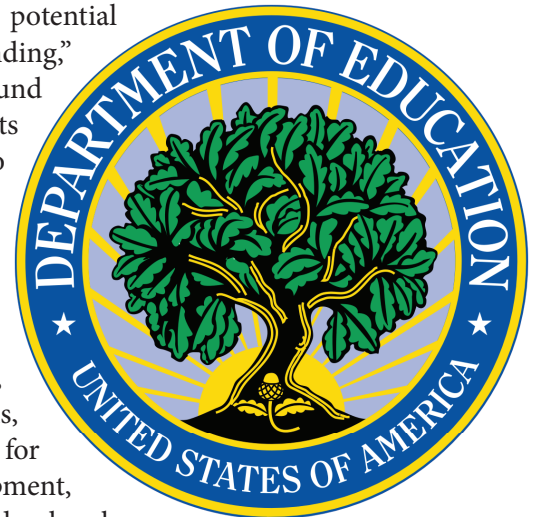
If schools do not comply with the deadline and requirements in the letter,

they risk “[...] potential loss of federal funding,” if they are found violating civil rights law according to the letter.

“The funding at risk includes Title IV [Federal Financial Aid Legislation], student loans, state funding for curriculum development, free or reduced lunch programs, and students with special needs among others,” according to NPR.

The fight against President Donald Trump’s executive orders concerning DEI began on Feb. 21.

“A federal judge in Maryland temporarily blocked some enforcement of a series of executive orders by President Trump targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, halting a widespread crackdown on such initiatives across the federal government,” reported the NYTimes. The presiding judge from Maryland said, “[...] the defendants shall not ‘pause, freeze, impede,



The U.S. Department of Education seal./Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

block, cancel, or terminate any awards, contracts or obligations,’ or ‘change the terms of any current obligation’ related to equity programs. The executive orders had required a halt to spending on diversity initiatives throughout the federal government.”

This is a developing story, as new lawsuits and civil actions are being filed in retaliation to the executive orders.

‘Rooted in Rhythm’: WOC and BSU Hold Black History Month Rap Session

By Shannon Dyett
Staff Writer

Women of Color (WOC) at Brooklyn College along with the Black Student Union (BSU) at BC hosted their very own rap session event, entitled “Rooted in Rhythm,” on Feb. 18 in the Student Center. Both clubs co-sponsored this event in honor of Black History Month and gave students a chance to unwind, relax, and create music together.

The event’s format allowed participants to collaborate on rapping about various topics, blending both fun and educational elements. During the event, each table was assigned a different topic and tasked with coming up with a rap for that topic, as the club is trying to divert from traditional lecture-based events.

“[...] We’re trying to have a bunch of events during

Black History Month and we wanted to do something a little more fun, to stray away from lectures,” stated the vice president of both WOC and BSU, Abigail Edouard.

The rap session provided students with an opportunity to engage in creative expression while celebrating Black culture during Black History Month.

“We’re going to have people come in and each table is going to be assigned a topic and a beat where they’re going to rap about black topics. For example, we have a topic of Soul Food Sunday. We also have a topic of Black historical figures and impacts [...] We have fun topics and we have informational topics where we just come and have fun with each other,” stated Dakota Mitchell, president of the WOC Club.

The event aimed to foster a sense of community and relaxation, while

highlighting the influence of hip-hop as an integral part of Black culture. Kelsey Ganthier, president of BSU, stated that this event was important not just for coordinators from both clubs, but also for the students that took part in the event.

“During Black History Month, I think this is a good time to have students come and socialize. The month is really short, so we try to have as many Black events as we can. It is open to everybody, but this is a very good event, so everybody can network, and have fun, while school is going on and classes. This is kind of a relief break time for them,” Ganthier stated.

Both clubs wanted to host this particular event because of the extensive impact Black culture has had on music.

“Because hip-hop is a huge part of American culture,



Participants spitting rhymes and dropping vibes./Shannon Dyett

specifically Black culture, we took the time to try and create music of our own, listening to different beats and cadences and trying to have fun with it to see if we can make our [own] music,” Edouard stated.

Students interested in more information about Women of Color or Black Student Union can check their Instagrams: @womenofcolor_bc and @bc_blackstudentunion

Jamelle Bouie Reflects on Post-Inauguration Democracy

By Serena Edwards
Content Creator

The Brooklyn College Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute hosted an event on Feb. 20 featuring New York Times (NYT) columnist Jamelle Bouie to discuss the state of democracy post-inauguration. Professor Anna Law introduced Bouie and touched upon his subject for the following discussion.

Bouie was a columnist for the NYT and a political correspondent for the publication "Slate". Bouie is known for his pieces on history and politics; one of his notable works focuses on the 1619 project, entitled "The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story." Bouie has received a film prize for opening analysis in journalism and was recognized in "Forbes 30 under 30 in Media" in 2015. He co-hosts the "Unclear and Present Danger" podcast, which covers the world of 90s post-Cold War thrillers.

Bouie introduced his assessment by recognizing that it has only been a month since the inauguration, and yet so much has happened that needs to be unpacked.

"I realized that when I woke up this morning, it was the 20th, and I was giving this talk and it's exactly one month since the inauguration, where it feels so much longer," Bouie said. He continued by debriefing the executive orders that President Donald Trump has signed within just a month.

"Trump is inaugurated on January 20, and he then pardons the 1500 rioters for January 6, with his attempt to stay in power [...] he issued an executive order stating that he has the right to fire and will and this is all

for the first week," Bouie explained.

He then delved more into Trump's executive orders, some of which included ending gender-affirming care for all transgender Americans and taking control of the Department of Education. Bouie went in-depth on the executive orders that have taken a bigger hit on society as a whole.

"A more significant order was to freeze the entire operation of the federal government in order to root out what he says is illegal DEI of what reverse the diversity, equity, and inclusion these are our programs that violate civil rights and are unconstitutional discrimination against Americans," Bouie explained.

Bouie then assessed the way that the new administration's handling of certain plans thus far and what that may mean for the future.

"One way to look at all of this is to say that we have a president who is advancing a quite radical theory of executive power and doesn't simply have broad discretion, but he's something like the sovereign of the entire federal government,"

stated Bouie.

Bouie also explained that the signing of these executive orders does not immediately put them into effect – they must still be approved by Congress. "People think Congress is a useless power at first, but bear with me. We're gonna give some grace and benefit of the doubt to Congress would not really have much to do without the power of the first," he stated.

Bouie pivoted to dismantling the concern surrounding Elon Musk and his influence on government figures. "Elon Musk is just some guy. Yes, he's famous, yes, he's a president's big dog, but in a constitutional sense, he's just a guy who's there," Bouie emphasized. Bouie continued to emphasize his dissent with Musk's position in the Department of Government Efficiency, "Elon Musk is just a guy, who's exercising incredible authority despite having no particular constitutional sanction," stated Bouie.

Bouie talks about the statements that Trump had made about being king and what that means for us as US Citizens.

"It's easy to dismiss stuff like that as being like jokes



Jamelle Bouie delivers his presentation./Courtesy of David Rozemblyum, Brooklyn College

and why are you taking him so seriously [...] once you're announcing you're unchecked by either the legislative or judicial government, then in a real sense you are claiming something like a royal prerogative," said Bouie.

He urged us to take the actions and words of this new administration more seriously due to the changes we have seen this last month. "He does not believe that he can be legitimately checked by any other institution in the government and has unleashed the richest man in the world on the federal government to unilaterally change it to cut it as that person sees fit," Bouie continued.

On the subject of the federal government, Bouie proceeded to

question the lawmakers who hold office within the government. Bouie stated how uncertain the fate is for America as from the actions of other lawmakers.

"We're already seeing Republican lawmakers to be at the very least begging Trump to not cut appropriations that they themselves passed. That's wild to see if I'll be perfectly honest." He expressed how the acts of checks and balances have been torn apart. "You passed the appropriation, the law says that the president has to do it, the president said, 'I don't think so,' and rather than exercising your constitutional authority to make the president do what you told the president to do, you go to them, you know, hat in hand, 'please, Mr. President, can you give me your money back?'"

Bouie left the audience with advice on how to bring change and how to the outcome of the next four years around.

"I think there's a real reluctance to engage in politics on a level but I would say that's exactly what needs to happen," Bouie stated, "we need to be making claims about what we think the Constitution means to us."



Jamelle Bouie delivers his presentation in the Woody Tanger./Courtesy of David Rosenblyum, Brooklyn College

Celebrating Our Heart Health with a BC Heart-to-Heart Conference

By T'Neil Gooden
Features Editor

Many Brooklyn College Health-based communities came together to bring awareness to Feb. as American Heart Health Month. The collaboration organizations, the Brooklyn College's Women's Center (WOC), the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANAPISI) Project (BCAP), and the Health Programs Immunization Requirements Office (BCHPIRO), created an event to shine a bright light on heart health and the steps needed to protect it.

Dr. Lisa Millsaps-Graham, the assistant director of BCHPIRO, and Cynthia Cummings, a registered respiratory therapist, led the conference with questions for the educational leaders within the call, which included Alice Blair, a registered nurse, and Suzette Graham-Hill, an internal medicine doctor.

"Without your heart, you cannot function. You need your heart to survive day to day," Hill told the audience. "If you have problems with heart disease, it will interrupt your entire life."

Students learned the importance of exercise, movement, and taking care of their bodies. They also listened to educators speak on the importance

of diets, stress, and blood pressure in understanding our hearts.

"We can experience a heart attack. We can experience a stroke. The number one killer for all adults in the United States is heart disease,"

damage that smoking and stress can cause to many parts of our bodies, especially our hearts.

"Get smoking sensation, get patches, see the doctors. Most hospitals: Kings County and Woodhull,

function testing and 20-year-olds lungs are performing like 60-year-old's lungs. It's very important and we're educating them on smoking, whether it be vaping, whether it be marijuana or a cigarette, they are all

"We need to send the message. Let's drink water instead of soda. And if you can get your friends and family to drink two bottles of water versus that soda that they're buying, that's what I want people to start doing," Blair told the audience. "Leave the sweets and the carbonated drinks alone."

According to the CDC, students should understand that heart problems are not only due to smoking or stress but can be genetic, brought down by family members, and problems in other areas of our bodies. Heart problems can stem from problems that already occur in our kidneys, liver, and many other organs.

"If you have any sort of history, of hypertension, diabetes, stroke," Hill told the audience. "If you have any family history of hypertension or diabetes. Anything that you have that can possibly be cardiac related, you need to get it checked out."

For students who are interested in learning more about their heart health, you can access the Comprehensive Care that is in our community. Students can contact the Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals at 1542 Remsen Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11236 or (718) 469-5817.

HEART-TO-HEART VIRTUAL CONVERSATIONS AMERICAN HEART HEALTH MONTH



(L to R): Alice Blair (RN, MSN, FPN), Suzette Graham-Hill (MD), Cynthia Cummings (MPA, RTT)./Graphic by Amira Turner

Hill told the audience. "We have to realize that if we don't control our blood pressure, if we don't watch our diet, if we don't exercise, we don't try to take down the stress, and we don't start it early, we can feel the repercussions of an elevated blood pressure, which is a heart attack or stroke."

Educators not only spoke about the implications that follow high blood pressure, but students also learned about the

offer free medication to help you to quit smoking," Cummings told the audience. "So it's very important that we educate folks and we let them know that the stress, as Dr. Graham says, stress is another thing that impacts the heart."

Cummings continued to explain the lasting effects that smoking has on young students' bodies as they continue to smoke first or secondhand.

"We do this pulmonary

harmful substances that you're introducing into your lungs," Cummings stated. "So I think education, most definitely education. It's very important to make sure that we continue to stress the importance of heart health and lung health."

Educators explained to students that they could positively impact the length of their lives by speaking to family members about heart problems and perfecting their diets.

Community and Inclusivity: BC's New Mural 'Creative Spark'

By Jaida Dent
Arts Editor

Unveiled on Tuesday, Feb. 4, "Creative Spark" was a mural developed throughout the fall 2024 semester by the students of the ARTD 3414: Mural Art class, taught by Professor Julia Cocuzza. The mural was also created in collaboration with the Brooklyn College Art Department, Office of the President, Office of Finance, Office of Diversity & Equity Programs, Office of the Provost, and the Dean of the School of Visual, Media and Performing Arts (SVMPA). The mural sits in the Boylan Hall Basement, outside of the new Art Gallery (Boylan 0400).

"Art has infinite possibilities, and as members of the Brooklyn College community, everyone should feel empowered to bravely share their perspectives and create boundless possibilities," said Qin Huang, a senior

at Brooklyn College (BC), and one of the artists involved in painting "Creative Spark", a new mural on campus.

The mural took the entirety of the fall semester to create, with the first half consisting of the planning phase. Students in the class brainstormed and consulted the BC community for ideas. Not only were themes and colors a part of the design process, but the students had to consider the architecture of the wall where the mural would sit. The mural was painted in sections on paper in the studio, and then installed in Boylan Hall.

"The mural project has been a marvelous addition to the BC community. By engaging students in a communal and creative process centered on our shared spaces [...] it has not only enhanced our surroundings but has provided elements of beauty in previously

overlooked places on campus," said interim dean of SVMPA, Paula Massood.

While the mural serves as a means to beautify the campus, it represents much more to the artists. The title of the mural, Creative Spark, speaks to the creation process that occurs while creating art. Though the students discussed certain concepts, the mural would take on a life of its own as it was being created.

"The mural is about creativity and its capacity to build new worlds. In visual art, as with every academic discipline taught, it always begins with an initial spark, that first mark made, pencil-to-paper, from which imagination expands and futures can be built," Cocuzza told The Vanguard.

The mural also reflects the work and effort that the artists put into the piece. This piece's creation served as a way to highlight the creativity that exists on campus and

share a love for art and the communities it is birthed from.

"Those who contributed feel a special sense of legacy, but future students will feel their own subtle sense of connection and encouragement while in the space. To do a mural like this – the time, labor, resources, and creativity required – it's essentially a big expression of affection for the community it sits in. I'd like to think that ripples out," said Cocuzza.

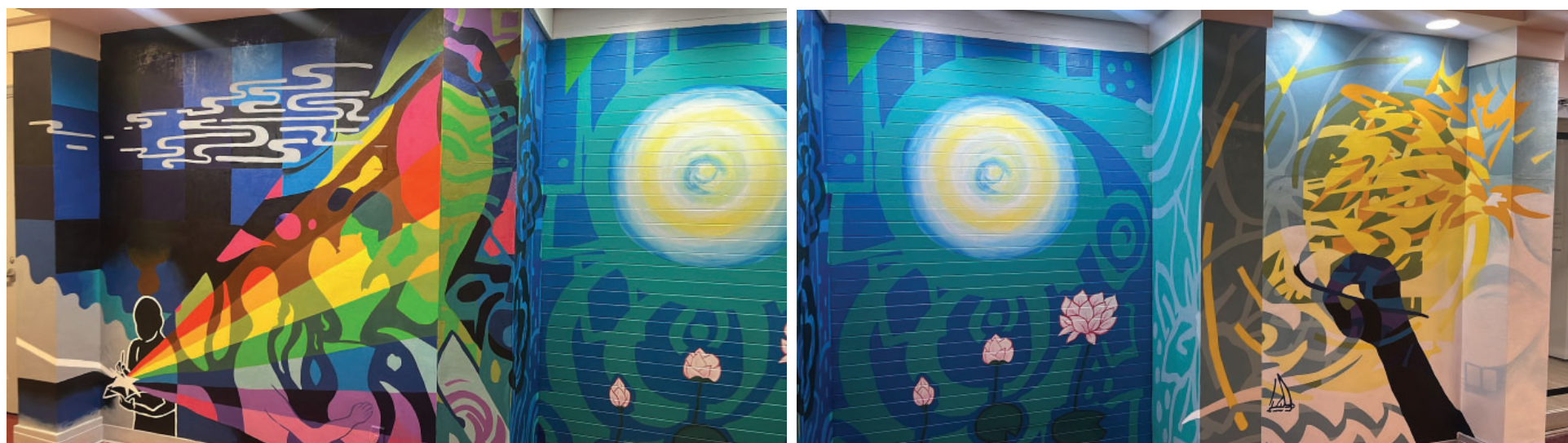
The creation of the mural was also an empowering process for students in the class. The artists were able to work with one another for an entire semester on a large piece that will live on campus, a visual representation of their contribution to BC.

"It was refreshing to start painting on a larger scale that I haven't done. Doing it in a group, I didn't find it intimidating, but rather relaxing," said Cassey Benitez,

a fall 2024 graduate, and artist who worked on Creative Spark.

The mural's creation and installment has cemented students' creativity on campus and the ARTD 3414 class provided students with the opportunity to leave their artistic marks. The BC community can expect to see more murals across campus as the class is set to take place again in the upcoming fall semester.

"This mural reflects the BC community's inclusivity and encouragement of student participation in community art projects. Throughout the process, it strengthened communication between teachers and students, connections between students and staff, and collaboration among faculty," said Huang. "For the community, teamwork is always essential. It also showcases the spirit of BC—creativity and inclusivity."



"Creative Spark" mural located in Boylan Hall./Paulina Gajewski

“Who in the World Has Any Talent”: A Talent Show Extraordinaire

By Rami Mansi
Managing Editor

A singer, four comedians, and a drag king magician all came together for a night of comedy and laughs in the Brooklyn Art Haus on Feb. 22. Hosted and created by local Brooklyn roommates Mitchell Goecke and Tony Lipka, the duo hosted the event to a packed audience.

The show, entitled “Who in the World Has Any Talent,” is a talent show centered around six contestants all vying for the mystery grand prize and the audience’s admiration. Contestants each received five minutes to perform their talent, followed by an interview by co-host Goecke. This show however had an extra twist: reminiscent of Valentine’s Day, all the contestants were put on blind dates with random members of the audience.

Before the show, The Vanguard was able to talk to Alex Cadabra, one of the contestants and a drag king magician based in New York City with a thick New York accent and a sequined suit to match.

“I wanted to be a king because I felt that there’s not enough representation... I just want to inspire people who look like me or who want to do something a bit different.” Cadabra, whose been doing drag for two years but magic since he was twelve, speaks on what it means to be able to have a stage to show off his talents. “I was the only girl at magic camp so I was always the assistant. So it became my goal to be the magician and not the assistant.”

Starting the show off with an opening monologue from Goecke, speaking on the old-as-time question “What is Love?”, a silent introduction from Lipka, a loud introduction of the

security guard staple of the show Bob Lombardi, and applause from an excited audience, the show began with its first contestant: Corin Hughes.

Hughes began with experiences surrounding homeschooling, calling it an “all-family school” and pivoted to his bit on wanting the trend of male beauty standards to settle into “a young Mitch McConnell.” When his five minutes ran up, his blind date came to the stage: an “ex-FBI agent” who did not want to make a match with Hughes.

Coming up second was Cadabra, teaching the audience a magic trick, in which he put handkerchiefs inside an egg, revealing the egg as real in the end. With gasps of affection and claps of awe, Cadabra sat down with Goecke for her deeply personal interview and her blind date. This date was with contestant #32 who introduced herself as “trying to be a mom.” Needless to say, this was a successful attempt and it was a match on both sides. The audience soon then raptured into applause and laughter after the two shared a kiss on stage, revealing each other to be already dating. A true crowd-pleaser.

The next contestant, Max Whaley, began to juggle without skipping a beat or an introduction. He juggled three oranges in intricate patterns to the audience’s amusement, which was then amplified by the whiplash of immediately pivoting to his history as a nanny for children. Whaley then proceeded to have the audience in an uproar by juggling and simultaneously delivering his lines with efficiency. After his performance, he sat down for her blind date with the third audience member chosen for the date, who described herself

as a “librarian, and not in a sexy way”. The two shared their thoughts on the city of Minneapolis and their mutual connection with Tufts University, and formed a successful match.

A proclaimed “classic” within the talent show’s running history, David Rey Martinez, went on the stage and sang a song. The audience proceeded to snap along to the song, which was abruptly drawn to a close as per Martinez’ comedic requests. Martinez would spend almost the entire five minutes singing a song to the laughter of everyone in the audience. After the award-winning performance, the blind date was brought on stage with a curse and an introduction to start: “I have substance abuse problems.” After the deep dive interview revealed Martinez’s drag alter ego, “Anita Job,” the two became a match and shared a side hug.

Before the last two performances, the show premiered a segment where they shared “a message from their sponsor”, the sponsor being Meta’s Virtual Reality Headset. Narrated by Lipka and performed by Goecke, the demonstration of the headset was followed by a visit by Adam Malev who looked and acted quite similarly to the founder of Meta: Mark Zuckerberg.

After the sponsor’s notice, the fifth contestant was Aria Noetzel, who played the guitar and sang an original song. A break from the comedians took the audience into Noetzel’s world, enamoring the audience with lively vocals and a string display of artistry with her guitar-playing. Following the musical-inclined performance came a review and analysis of Noetzel’s working resume



Promotional poster featuring host Mitchell Goecke./

Courtesy of

@whointheworldhasanytalent

circa 2018. Her blind date, a young man with the number #1000 and who introduced himself as: “I’m having a great time,” decided to swipe left on Noetzel due to wanting to “focus on himself,” to both the uproar and hysteria of the audience.

Last, but certainly not least, was the self-proclaimed “Viola Davis of Comedy” and the “Diversity Hire for Tonight,” the comedienne Frankie Benz. Following her performance, she sat down for the last blind date of the night with a man who described himself as: “I work in banking. I like to ice-skate and bike.” The two shared the sentiment of being young, dumb, and in love, and it was a match.

Before the audience could choose their final winner, Shelley, portrayed by comedian Ann Tankersley, came and confessed her love for Lombardi, much to the audience’s joyful shock.

The last segment, and show finale, entitled “Yeji’s Edgy Questions,” featured interactive audience questions. Yeji Chung walked around asking questions regarding Black History Month, crabs, and playing an explicit game with both the audience

members and the three leading generate man of the night. The segment was met with laughter from Chung’s comedic timing and the audience members’ participation.

Finally, the time came to announce the winner. The winner was decided on by the audience, via online voting through scanning a qr code. The winner was announced to be the orange juggler and ex-nanny himself, Max Whaley, earning himself the title of winner, a card congratulating him, an electric cord, and a trophy with Goecke and Lipka’s face in the photo slot. A victorious end to a joyful night.

“Everyone comes together for this one night and it feels good to have helped create that kind of space for people to come and get together and have a good time,” Lipka stated.

Those interested in “Who in the World Has Any Talent” can learn more information on the show’s Instagram, @whointheworldhasanytalent.

Anticipation for WWE's Newest Game Reaches New Heights



WWE 2k25 video game cover./Courtesy of 2K Games

By **Eden Lawrence**
Staff Writer

On March 14, 2K Games will release their new wrestling game, WWE 2K25. A lot of hype has been built up for this game, and it's shaping up to be a good one. This doesn't mean that it is without fault, as certain features are leaving a sour taste in consumer's mouths.

One major change that 2K Games announced was the implementation of intergender matches. Typically, in WWE games, male wrestlers could only fight the same gender, and the same with the women. However, 2K Games stated that this barrier will be gone in 2K25. This gives more freedom to the players, allowing them to make whatever match they want, regardless of gender.

In both professional and amateur wrestling promotions, it isn't uncommon to have people of different

genders face each other in a match. I think this is great for breaking down barriers, however, men and women don't wrestle with each other in WWE.

In 2008, WWE switched up its programming to cater more to a childlike audience. Some of these changes included removing curse words, blood, and intergender matches, only using these things as shock value. This would be replicated in their video games as well, even with a T for Teen rating.

Although a great change, I can't say that this decision entices me to buy the game. Other wrestling leagues have been broadcasting intergender matches for a while now. The decision for WWE to only allow these types of matches in their games does not demonstrate their full commitment to the format. It feels like they aren't fully committed to breaking down the gender barrier completely.

People were excited

to have intergender wrestling but were left disappointed to find out that the game would still be released on last-generation consoles, the PlayStation 4 and the Xbox One.

The PlayStation 4 and the Xbox One operate on older, weaker hardware compared to their popular successors: the PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X/S. Because of these differences, certain features are not attainable for users who own either one of the outdated consoles. One of these changes is hair physics.

In past WWE games, the physics on a wrestler's hair isn't great, typically staying in one spot. This becomes more obvious with highly dynamic wrestling moves like slams and suplexes. However, to improve this, 2K Games has to ditch last-gen consoles and only focus on the newer models. Creative Director, Lynell Jinks, commented on this in an interview, saying, "We'd have to adopt the spline or fur techniques that are very intense on graphics, and we just don't have the capacity to support two different pipelines for current-gen and the older-gen consoles. One day when we're focused on the next-gen hardware, I'm hoping we can make that jump."

This only ignites the civil war that the franchise has been going through since the new-gen consoles were released in 2020. Players who own the new-gen consoles are aware that the old-gen consoles are holding the game developers back in terms of changes they can make and features that

they can add. However, old-gen console players don't want to be forced to upgrade and spend up to \$500 for a new console.

While I understand the old-gen players' point, I don't feel like 2K Games is producing these games on old-gen hardware out of generosity. I think these games are still only being made to support the PS4 and the Xbox One for financial gain. If they only made the game for the current-gen, there isn't a guarantee people would buy the updated console to play the new game. Releasing the game on both ensures that they will make more money. At the end of the day, 2K Games is a business that needs to make capital, and sacrificing a better gaming experience for more income doesn't seem far-fetched for them.

The walls between last-gen consoles and new-gen consoles get even worse with the new game mode: The Island, which will only be available on new-gen consoles.

This mode will work similarly to The City, a game mode in the NBA 2K games where players can make a custom character to play against others online. This worries WWE fans due to the threat of more microtransactions.

Microtransactions are a common tactic in video games where players purchase virtual currencies (VC) to buy in-game items. With The Island, VC will be used to upgrade players' MySuperstar characters. Many foresee people buying VC and maxing out their MySuperstar's stats, making online

play unbalanced. Players who can make these purchases will outrank those who can not afford these currencies.

While The Island doesn't grab my attention, something that does is the return of promos and chain wrestling. On wrestling shows, promos are segments where wrestlers speak directly to the audience.

Promo minigames were a feature of past WWE 2K games but were removed in WWE 2K20. This angered a lot of players as gameplay was being stripped from the product. With this feature returning I'm excited to see what's changed since its last iteration.

The second returning feature is chain wrestling. Chain wrestling allows players to simulate real-life matches on TV with different holds. Using either a wrist lock, side headlock, or waist lock, players can wear down their opponents the same way their favorite wrestlers do.

I'm excited for these two features to return purely because they add more simulation gameplay. I am a big fan of features that let players feel immersed in the game. Promos and chain wrestling allow players to replicate what they see on TV.

I usually buy these games out of tradition because I'm a big fan of WWE. I loved playing the game when I was younger, but the last few game releases haven't been exciting for me. This time around, it feels different. With the features they're bringing back, I'm feeling oddly optimistic about the game and can't wait to play it.

The Price of Masculinity: Toxic Masculinity in Today's Society

By Yassir Azzam
Podcast Manager

Masculinity: what is it, really? According to Webster's Dictionary, masculinity is defined as "the properties characteristic of the male sex" or "the trait of behaving in ways considered to be typical for men." As a man, I would describe the qualities a man should possess as confidence and having emotional awareness. But lately, I've come to realize that toxic masculinity has taken root in our society in a way that has become damaging.

Toxic masculinity refers to societal pressure that imposes rigid and unrealistic standards of what it means to be a man. It reinforces traits like aggression, emotional suppression, and hypersexuality while discouraging vulnerability or any deviation from traditional gender norms. Men who express emotions, aren't aggressive enough, or don't fit these narrow expectations may be seen as losing their masculinity status. This idea is often used in a joking or sarcastic way, implying that masculinity is something that must be constantly proven.

Social media has

not only embraced this toxic idea of masculinity but has also weaponized and commercialized it. In recent months, there has been a surge in content promoting a hyper-masculine lifestyle: cold plunges at 4 am in the morning, lifting weights, hustling nonstop,

But what happened to trying? What happened to self discovery, to going to college, or taking time to explore different paths? It's baffling to see grown men profiting off "masculinity courses" that charge \$300 for personal coaching. For example, a masculinity coaching

insecure in their own masculinity.

Who knew you had to pay to be more masculine?

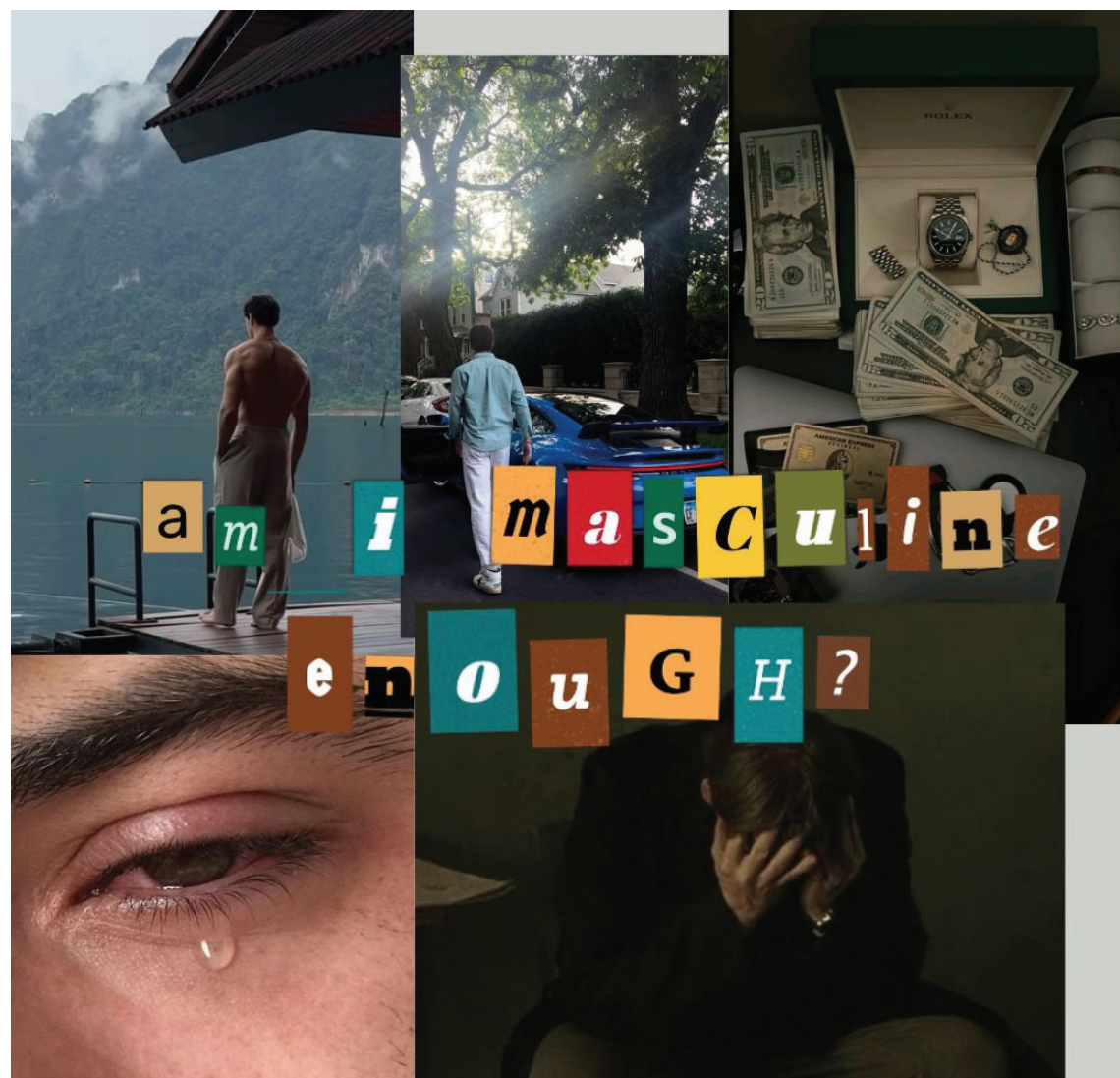
Social media has turned masculinity into a competition, creating unrealistic benchmarks that men must reach to be considered "real men." But masculinity should be something

in which examples of individualism work to free the modern man from socially induced incarceration," according to Tate's website. What a blatant description of manipulation.

Thankfully, some people online challenge these toxic ideals and encourage self discovery, but the noise from the hypermasculinity machine often drowns them out.

When I talk to men around me, I hope to find people passionate about education, community, and self-growth. Yet, the prevailing belief is that success is measured by material possessions. While these are valid goals, they shouldn't be the sole definition of success. Success should be personal, defined by one's own aspirations rather than an arbitrary social media checklist.

Masculinity shouldn't be a rigid framework sold to the highest bidder. It should be a journey of self discovery. One that isn't dictated by external pressures, but by an individual's own values and passions.



Graphic by Yassir Azzam

eating excessive amounts of protein, having financial independence, and, of course, living in your own apartment. If you're not waking up at 4:30 a.m., working a job that pays eight figures, and running a side hustle by the time you hit your early twenties, you have already failed at life according to this narrative.

session at Kykeon will run you \$447. Seeing these so-called experts flaunt luxury lifestyles, expensive cars, and modern homes makes you wonder: how did they actually make their money? More often than not, it's not their masculinity that made them wealthy, rather the profit they made off of making men feel

one discovers for themselves, not something dictated by Instagram influencers with a financial incentive to sell a dream.

Individuals such as Andrew Tate have learned to manipulate their audiences full of young men. Tate's "War Room", sold for \$7,979.00, and is described as, "[...] a global network

Possible Opening Day Lineups and Rotations for the New York Mets and Yankees

By Noel Xavier Vadi III
Staff Writer

As the concrete jungle begins to thaw, its two Major League Baseball teams, with renewed hopes, pack up and head to Florida to prepare for the 2025 season. The New York Mets and Yankees made deep playoff runs this past Oct., but both fell victim to the seemingly inevitable Los Angeles Dodgers. The Mets pushed the series to six in the National League Championship Series. Their crosstown rivals met their fate in only five games. Though Mets star slugger Juan Soto has traded the four trains for the seven, the Bronx Bombers still believe they can win. Let's take an early look at what the lineups and rotations could look like on Opening Day, which is only a month away.

Yankees Lineup:

1. Jasson Dominguez, LF
2. Aaron Judge, RF
3. Cody Bellinger, CF
4. Paul Goldschmidt, 1B
5. Jazz Chisolm Jr, 2B
6. Austin Wells, C
7. Anthony Volpe, SS
8. Oswaldo Cabrera, DH
9. DJ LeMahieu, 3B

Yankees Rotation;

1. Gerrit Cole, RHP
2. Max Fried, LHP
3. Carlos Rodón, LHP
4. Luis Gil, RHP
5. Clarke Schmidt, RHP

Designated hitter Giancarlo Stanton, who has been dealing with elbow pain in both of his elbows, is an unlikely candidate to start on Opening Day. Cabrera, who averages .233 and is an average to slightly above average defender in the field boasting a career Defensive Runs Saved (DRS) of 12 per baseball-reference, will likely take

his place. He is projected to bat 240 this season, certainly in a plug and play role.

The one-to-two punch of Cole and Fried at the top of the rotation will surely strike fear into the hearts of their opponents, but if Rodón can find the

doesn't mesh well with the Yankees, a team not known for their defense, which arguably lost them the World Series. He has also come out and states that he is a starter and rejects a move to the bullpen, which is where relievers watch the game

9. Jose Siri, CF

Mets Rotation:

1. Kodai Senga, RHP
2. Sean Manaea, LHP
3. David Peterson, LHP
4. Tylor Megill, RHP
5. Clay Holmes, RHP
6. Griffin Canning, RHP

that once again, taking project pitchers on cheap deals and trying to fix them. It worked last year with Manaea and Luis Severino. The Mets are hoping they can recreate this, namely with Canning, and Paul Blackburn who was plagued with injury last season.

Holmes, who also made the jump across the river from the Bronx, is converting back to a starter and is rumored to have a new pitch. All of this is part of the Mets pitching lab, which is likely a data-driven program designed to help improve pitchers. Some iteration of the eight pitchers listed above will likely make a turn through the rotation.

Moving on to the lineup, Winker and Marte will platoon as designated hitters depending on the handedness of the pitcher. In 2022, McNeil won the batting title with an average of .326 in the two years since he hit .270 and .238, respectively. The 2026 season is the last year of his contract. If he doesn't show enough at the plate, he may get traded to make way for younger players such as Luisangel Acuña (younger brother of Braves star Ronald Acuña), Brett Baty, Ronnie Mauricio, or Jett Williams. With the resigning of Alonso, the Mets remain a threat offensively with three players likely to hit the 30 home run mark.

Both teams look to improve upon last season while keeping lineups that are quite similar to the 2024 campaign, hoping to have better strategy against the Dodgers in Oct.



A close look at the upcoming baseball season./Courtesy of sny.tv

form he had before he put on the pinstripes, then the rotation is a significant threat.

Gil, who had an Earned Run Average (ERA) of 3.50 last year, could jump ahead in the rotation if Rodón struggles. Schmidt rounds out a five man rotation with huge upside, as in the 16 games he pitched in last year, he had an ERA of 2.85. Waiting in the wings is Marcus Stroman, who as a ground ball pitcher

and warm up in case they are called in. However, he may find himself in the rotation if things go awry elsewhere, or he may be traded out.

Mets Lineup:

1. Francisco Lindor, SS
2. Juan Soto, RF
3. Brandon Nimmo, LF
4. Pete Alonso, 1B
5. Mark Vientos, 3B
6. Jesse Winker/Starling Marte DH
7. Francisco Alvarez, C
8. Jeff McNeil, 2B

The New York Mets have the most questions surrounding their rotation. With Frankie Montas out on injury and likely not playing until mid-May, the Mets have a few rotation spots to fill, especially if they go with a six-man rotation as they have been rumored to be going with this year, in an effort to prevent injuries.

Last year, the team cobbled together a serviceable rotation, and they will try to do

Women's Basketball Team Advances to CUNYAC Finals

By Manuel Polanco
Sports Editor

Nearing the end of their seasons, both the men's and women's basketball teams notched great wins throughout the CUNYAC championship. The men's basketball team would progress to the CUNYAC semifinals. The women's basketball team would be victorious in the semifinals and advance to the CUNYAC final game.

Men's Basketball

Tuesday, Feb. 18, the men's basketball team took to the road to face off against CUNY College of New York (CCNY).

Coming into this game on a two-game winning streak, the Bulldogs hoped to make it three. Notable player, senior David McFadden, played 39 minutes this game and ended his night with 17 points and three three-pointers made. The game would be tied 31-31 at the end of the first quarter.

Senior guard Malik Dale had a good night on the court as well, ending the night with 33 minutes and 15 points, three steals, and three three-pointers. Within 32 minutes of play, Stephon McGill had 11 points and five free throws made, along with four assists. Jaden Cassanova had nine points, two free throws made, and made one three-pointer within 20 minutes.

The Bulldogs would go on a 7-0 run late in the second quarter to narrowly beat CCNY and as a collective shot 8-14 from the field goal. Their top-notch defense in this game limited CCNY to just 3-12 from the field goal. In their last game of the season, the Bulldogs won a gauntlet of a game 68-66 and clinched their ticket to the next CUNYAC game.

On Saturday, Feb. 22, the Bulldogs continued their winning streak in a home game against CCNY. The Bulldogs started on a 5-0 run, which influenced the rest of their game



Freshman forward Danae McMullen./Courtesy of BC Athletics

immensely, as they outscored CCNY 13-4. CCNY closed the gap in the first half, taking a close 38-34 lead. Bulldog Casanova would score 11 points right off the bench, fueling momentum for the team, as the Bulldogs celebrated a 55-53 victory.

The Bulldogs are set to move on to the CUNYAC Semifinals against Baruch College on Tuesday, Feb. 25.

Women's Basketball

The women's basketball team's victory against the CCNY Beavers helped garner a three-game winning streak going into the playoffs. On

Tuesday, Feb. 18, the Bulldogs won 82-37.

Starting off the game with a 14-0 offensive run, the Bulldogs were aggressive out the gate, and by the end of the first quarter they led 28-6. Dior Dorsey had a great game with 20 points, six steals, six rebounds, two assists, one free throw made, and one three-pointer made within 16 minutes of playtime.

Junior Anna Kitch had a memorable game with a double-double, and her stats were 10 points, 11 rebounds, and one assist, one block, and one steal. The Bulldog led in each quarter except the fourth, during which CCNY would go on to score 14 consecutive points. The Bulldogs would go on many runs this game as well, including a 20 consecutive point run where their defense helped create more opportunities for the scoring players.

Senior Aleah Rafat had 11 points with three free throws made in 20 minutes of gametime. Senior

Mary Dolgin ended her night with 12 points, two free throws made in 18 minutes of play. This strong win was good momentum going into the playoffs.

On Saturday, Feb. 22, the team played a home game against Medgar Evers College. Medgar Evers scored the first bucket of the game, but the Bulldogs rebounded with a 12-0 run, led by Kitch with a pair of three-pointers. Dolgin aided in extending the Bulldogs' lead to 24-8. The Bulldogs went into halftime with a 37-18 lead under their belt. The Bulldogs were victorious in the game, scoring 66-34 against Medgar Evers.

On Wednesday, Feb. 25, the women's basketball played against Baruch College in the semifinal game of the championship. The Bulldogs won by a landslide of 62-48, and will be advancing to the final game of the CUNYAC championship at Hunter College.



Senior guard Stephon McGill./Courtesy of BC Athletics