

**BC Professors Join Mamdani’s
Transition Committees**
Pg. 3

**LGBTQ+ Center Hosts
“World Aids Day” Panel**
Pg. 5

THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE VANGUARD

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ANCIENT VASES



BC Classics Department Host Vase Painting Event
Pg. 10

**Opinion: Delayed But
Not Denied**
Pg. 12

**A Look Ahead at the
WNBA**
Pg. 14

**Sports Recaps (12/01-
12/05)**
Pg. 16

Cover by Bert Eugene

GENERAL INQUIRIES
THEBCVANGUARD@GMAIL.COM

CLUB HOURS
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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
RAMI MANSI
RAMI.MANSI66@BCMAIL.CUNY.EDU

MANAGING EDITOR
JAIDA DENT
JAIDA.DENT1@GMAIL.COM

BUSINESS MANAGER
JASON LIN
JLIN82752@GMAIL.COM

LAYOUT EDITOR
AMIRA TURNER
ARIMARENUT@GMAIL.COM

DIGITAL EDITOR
ADRIAN SKEANS
ADRIANJSKEANS@GMAIL.COM

PHOTO EDITOR
BERT EUGENE
BERTRANDEUGENE85@GMAIL.COM

VIDEOGRAPHER
LUIS ANGEL PEREZ MARTINEZ
LUISAPMARTINEZ26@GMAIL.COM

CONTENT CREATORS
KEY JONES-FORD
KIARATATSUJF@GMAIL.COM
MARS MARTE
VICTORIA0731M@GMAIL.COM

PODCAST MANAGER
YASSIR AZZAM
YASSIR.AZZAM07@BCMAIL.CUNY.EDU

SECTION EDITORS

NEWS: VICTORIA KERAJ
KVICTORIAK1@GMAIL.COM

FEATURES: T'NEIL GOODEN
TNEILGOODEN617@GMAIL.COM

ARTS: KHALAILAH BYNOE
KHALAILAH.BYNOE10@BCMAIL.CUNY.EDU

OPINIONS: SERENA EDWARDS
SERENAED103@GMAIL.COM

SPORTS: MANUEL POLANCO
MANNYPOLANCY764@GMAIL.COM

STAFF WRITERS
ALFONSO ABREU
EMILY NIXON
EMILY SUHR
GIOVANNI RAVALLI
MARGOT DRAGOS
RENAE VISICO
ANASTASIA GIGAURI
ELIANNA TSIGLER
RENAE VISICO
REAGAN MCLEAN
GISELLE RODRIGUEZ
EDDY PRINCE
SAMUEL MORTEL
KIRA RICARTE
MAX RANIERI
MIA MUSKAN
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STAFF COMIC ARTISTS
NICOLE RUIZ
JOCELYN RIOS
CHAVELY REYNOSO
JOSIAH SANON
SANDRA PANTALEON
GENNA AYYAD

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS
TERRANCE BOBB
TIFFANY EDWARDS

FACULTY ADVISOR
MJ ROBINSON

NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services Promotes Jobs to BC Students

**By Rami Mansi
Editor-In-Chief**

On Dec. 9, a parked brown truck began delivering freshly poured cups of hot chocolate to all who came up to its window. The car came from the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (NYC DCAS). DCAS is responsible for providing training for all NYC government employees, and they visited Brooklyn College (BC) to encourage students to apply for the jobs available.

In attendance was the Commissioner of DCAS, Louis A. Molina, who spoke with the Vanguard regarding this collegiate visit.

“To young people, we want you to be part of the change you want to see in New York City, and part of that change comes from services that we provide to city residents.”

“[NYC DCAS] has thousands of vacancies in the city job market, and what [DCAS] has done is set up a website and host these hiring halls

because we realize that some individuals need some navigation about finding job opportunities.” Commissioner Molina continued, emphasizing the importance of reaching students in inner-city schools. “To young people, we want you to be part of the change you want to see in New York City, and part of that change comes from services that we provide to city residents.”

Many of the available jobs had representatives who helped prospective students explore their opportunities. One of these speakers is Alyssa Jones, Program Coordinator for the NYC Teaching Fellows program, who spoke about the importance of allowing prospective



Student scanning QR code./*Rami Mansi*

degree in education; then the teaching fellows program would be an alternative certification program.” Jones encouraged future educators to observe classrooms and lessons, taking in what they would learn in a classroom, but in practice. “Reach out to the schools in your local neighborhood and ask if you can maybe sit in on the class for one day[...] See the classroom in action, ask your questions, and be open-minded.” Encouraged by workers to visit the truck and scan the QR code for the definitive list of available job opportunities, students were guided by workers on Campus Rd. to the brown truck for a free cup of hot chocolate.

Commissioner Molina stated that the job opportunities presented are across multiple fields, including taxi and commission services, education, and more. “We’re recruiting for New York City public school teachers. We’re recruiting for assistant school safety agents. We’re also looking for laxi and limousine commission, and enforcement officers.” We have a number of opportunities where you can call us, go to our website, and somebody will call you.” To learn more about NYC DCAS, visit their official website or call 212-386-5000.

Five BC Faculty Members Land Roles in Mamdani’s Transition Team

By Jaida Dent
Managing Editor
Amira Turner
Layout Editor

In an interview with ABC7 NY on Nov. 16, mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani announced that he received over 50,000 applications for his transition team, from every zip code in the city except one. By Nov. 24, the 400 members of his transition committees were announced. Among the group were 20 CUNY faculty members, including five Brooklyn College (BC) faculty members, hailing from BC’s Sociology, Psychology, Humanities, and Political Science departments.

“The sheer number of applicants speaks to the excitement at the heart of this movement — one that has inspired people to believe that government can put working people first,” said Mamdani in a press release on his official website. “This was a movement built by and for New Yorkers – and our administration will reflect that.”

Mamdani’s transition team consists of 17 committees, ranging from Housing to Worker Justice. The 400-member team consists of leaders with experience in nonprofits, government, community organizing, and the private sector. Between now and his inauguration, the transition team will advise the mayor-elect on policy and staff applications.

“Because oftentimes transitions are pageantry. They are the moments where you announce all of the people that you know that you owe favors to, this, that, and the other,” said Mamdani to ABC7. “We want this to be a moment where we’re actually preparing ourselves for January 1. And that means spending these next 46, 47 days that we have actually

preparing. Alex Vitale, a Sociology and Humanities professor and author of the book “Stop Policing,” will be an advisor on the mayor-elect’s committee on Community Safety. Vitale also serves as the Coordinator of the Policing and Social Justice Project, an organization of BC community members that researches and advocates for safer communities.

Psychology professor, environmental activist, and Professional Staff Congress (PSC) CUNY member Nancy Romer, Ph.D., has been appointed to the committee on Transportation, Climate, and Infrastructure. Romer is the Co-Founder of the Brooklyn Food Coalition and has decades of experience in feminist, labor, and environmental activism.

Celina Su is an associate professor in political science at BC and serves as the CUNY Marilyn J. Gittell Chair in Urban Studies. Su will be serving on the committee for Community Organizing. Alongside her work at CUNY, she has authored three books on government budgets, grassroots organizing around education, and global health.

PSC-CUNY President James Davis is currently on leave from his role teaching in the BC American Studies and English department, and has been appointed to serve on the committee on Youth and Education. Prior to his time as PSC-CUNY President, Davis served for six years as union chapter chair at BC.

“CUNY faculty and staff bring unmatched knowledge to the issues that shape daily life in the city,” said CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, in a CUNY press release. “Their service demonstrates how essential the University is to creating a more



Photos courtesy of BC, graphic by Amira Turner

equitable and affordable New York, and we look forward to contributing insight and experience at this important moment for the city’s future.”

Rodríguez will also serve alongside Davis on the committee on Youth and Education.

The mayor-elect isn’t waiting until his inauguration to implement new changes, as he introduced two new committees that previous mayors have not had: the Committee on Worker Justice and the Committee on Community Organizing.

“These are two critical parts of what it means to be a New Yorker today. We have workers across the city who have to deal with conditions that should frankly ashame us,” Mamdani said, according to CBS News.

Mamdani’s transition team is stacked with leaders from across politics on both the city and federal levels, who all reflect the policies his campaign ran on. The day after his election on Nov. 4, he announced his all-female transition team, spearheaded by Transition Executive Director Elana Leopold. Leopold previously worked under Bill de Blasio’s administration during his time as mayor.

The team includes four co-chairs, who will also oversee the transition committees: Grace Bonilla, Lina Khan, Maria Torres-Springer, and Melanie Hartzog.

Bonilla comes with experience in the nonprofit sector as the President and CEO of United Way of New York City.

Khan served as Chair and Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission from June 2021 to January 2025, and is an associate professor of law at Columbia Law School.

Torres-Springer has previously served as Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce; First Deputy Mayor to Eric Adams; and a Senior Fellow at the Ford Foundation, a social justice-focused private foundation.

Hartzog is the President and CEO of the New York Foundling, a nonprofit organization that supports and advocates for families in the city. She also previously served as the Deputy Mayor of New York City for Health and Human Services under de Blasio, and was the first woman of color to be the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Mamdani’s team also

includes Elle Bisgaard-Church, who will serve as Chief of Staff, and Dean Fuleihan, who will be the First Deputy Mayor.

Fuleihan is no stranger to his current role, as he held the same one in 2018 under de Blasio and served as the Director of OMB. Bisgaard-Church has been a key member on Mamdani’s staff since 2020, when he was an assemblymember. She would continue to be a shoulder to lean on for Mamdani as she served as his campaign manager throughout his election run.

Stated by Leopold, “Excellence is the guiding light driving this transition, and today’s committee appointees are no exception. Together, these leaders will help prepare Mayor-elect Mamdani’s administration to take on the city’s toughest challenges—from housing access to emergency preparedness to the day-to-day operations of city government that must be exceptional.”

Beyoncé Knowles and Venus Williams Join as Co-Chairs For The 2026 Met Gala

By **Serena Edwards**
Opinions Editor

The Met Gala is held annually in New York City on the first Monday of May. The Met Gala is a fundraising event for the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met). Each year, the Met Gala has a theme for all attendees to follow that is connected to the exhibition shown inside the museum itself.

For the 2026 Met Gala, the category is “Costume Art.” Set to take place on May 4, A-list celebrities Beyonce Knowles-Carter and Venus Williams will be joining chairwoman Anna Wintour on this year’s committee.

According to The Met, “The Costume Institute’s collection of more than thirty-three thousand objects represents seven centuries of fashionable

dress and accessories for men, women, and children, from the fifteenth century to the present.”

Starting in 1948, the Met Gala was a modest dinner event to fundraise for the costume department. Since 1973, there has been a theme guests are encouraged to dress for. Before Anna Wintour, there was the fashion legend Diana Vreeland, who served as chair for The Met Gala.

According to Vogue, “In 1972, Diana Vreeland, the imaginative editor in chief of Vogue from 1963 to 1971, applied her unending creativity to the Costume Institute as a consultant for the Met. After Vreeland’s passing, there wasn’t a chairperson until 1995 when Anna Wintour took over as chair temporarily.”

According to EBSCO, “Anna Wintour, who served as a one-off chairperson

in 1995 and 1997 before becoming the permanent chairperson in 1999.”

This year’s theme is to help launch the new Condé Nast Galleries, according to Vogue. The gallery’s focus is on diverse body types that have often overlooked. Showing variety from the “classic body” and the “naked body.”

Actress Nicole Kidman, Singer and Entrepreneur Beyoncé Knowles, and Athlete Venus Williams are the co-chairs.

According to W Magazine, “Beyoncé has not set foot on those Met steps since 2016.”

The last time Knowles attended the Gala, the theme was “Manus x Machina,” and she wore designs from Ricardo Tisci for Givenchy Haute Couture. This, however, isn’t Knowles’ first time serving as co-chair; she previously served as honorary chair in 2013.



Beyoncé at Atlantis Dubai./*Courtesy of Mason Poole/Parkwood Media, Getty Images For Atlantis The Royal*

This will also be Kidman’s third time serving as co-chair, with her previous times being 2003 and 2005.

However, this will be Williams’ first time serving in the position. They will help curate the big night from the guest list to the menu; they make decisions on all decisions, from big to small. According to Marie Claire, “A Met Gala co-chair will also help to create atmosphere inside the event by selecting specific decor and working with interior designers to bring the space to life.”

With the most exclusive invitation in the world and A-list celebrities planning their outfits months in advance, the 2026 Met Gala will be one to remember.

Netflix Buys Out Warner Bros Company and Acquires HBO Franchises



Netflix and Warner Bros. logos./*Courtesy of Netflix and Warner Bros.*

By **Serena Edwards**
Opinions Editor

On Dec. 5, Netflix made an \$83 billion deal to buy the Warner Bros franchise, after a bidding war with Paramount and Comcast. This transaction has also given Netflix the HBO franchise, which includes HBO and its streaming service HBO Max.

This agreement came after Warner Bros Discovery (WBD) and

Warner Bros split in June of this year. In the divorce of the Warner Bros companies, WBD became its own entity, keeping its Discovery channels and separating into two sections: Streaming and Studios, and Global Networks.

The press release from WBD states what the two sections consist of. “The Streaming & Studios company will consist of Warner Bros. Television, Warner Bros.

Motion Picture Group, DC Studios, HBO, and HBO Max, as well as their legendary film and television libraries,” stated WBD.

The press release continued by stating that the “Global Entertainment” sector will consist more of entertainment television, which includes news and sports. “Global Networks will include premier entertainment, sports, and news television brands around the world, including CNN, TNT Sports in the U.S., and Discovery, top free-to-air channels across Europe, and digital products such as the profitable Discovery+ streaming service and Bleacher Report (B/R).”

“This acquisition will improve our offering and accelerate our business

for decades to come,” said Greg Peters, co-CEO of Netflix, in a press release. “Warner Bros. has helped define entertainment for more than a century and continues to do so with phenomenal creative executives and production capabilities. With our global reach and proven business model, we can introduce a broader audience to the worlds they create—giving our members more options, attracting more fans to our best-in-class streaming service, strengthening the entire entertainment industry, and creating more value for shareholders.”

Through this agreement, Netflix will be able to expand where they produce their shows now that they have gained access to Warner Bros production

sets. “This acquisition will enhance Netflix’s studio capabilities, allowing the Company to significantly expand U.S. production capacity and continue to grow investment in original content over the long term, which will create jobs and strengthen the entertainment industry,” stated the press release.

Though it has not been fully stated what this will look like for Netflix or Warner Bros. as far as aesthetics, the separation of Warner Bros and WBD will officially occur during the third quarter of 2026.

Understanding AIDS: Brooklyn College’s World AIDS Panel

By T’Neil Gooden
Features Editor

Brooklyn College’s (BC) LGBTQ+ resource center and BC’s Art Gallery, worked together to provide students with a panel of successful individuals to share their understandings of AIDS through their own internal understandings and being exposed to the works of Keith Haring, a world-renowned American artist who emerged in New York City’s art scene within the 1980s and lived with AIDS. Before this panel occurred, BC’s art gallery had Haring’s apocalypse exhibition that also brought attention to Haring’s legacy and life with AIDS.

The event started with students and faculty watching a few videos of Keith Haring to understand the importance of his art.

“I paint to stay young in a way,” Haring said in a video about his art that was shown to the attendees.

Along with learning about Keith Haring, students learned about Brooklyn College’s history of acknowledging AIDS. In October 1988, over 8,000 panels of quilt were shown at the White House during a national display. Brooklyn College created a quilt to commemorate AIDS in the year 2000.

The panelists involved in the event were Jack Waters, a choreographer, filmmaker, and performance artist; Enrique Rodriguez Pouget, a social epidemiologist; Matthew Burgess, a poet, educator, and author of *Drawing on Walls: A Story of Keith Haring*; and Joe Scarpetta, a programming assistant at the LGBTQ+ Resource Center at BC and host of the talk. The panel discussions

revolved around the topic of AIDS and each artist’s connection to Haring.

Burgess spoke about the inspiration and teachings he learned from Haring, including where Haring would go to find inspiration for the art he created for murals, the public eye, and children.

“Keith took a lot of inspiration from the dance floor and from boys and dancing and felt that there was a connection between the spontaneity of dancing

he was in graffiti culture. He was a white boy in this culture, and he’s giving back to the community.” Haring was not seen only as an artist in the 1980s, but as an activist in his own terms, who impacted many people who were in and around the AIDS crisis.

“There was a factionalization and a marginalization of people who considered themselves political artists,” said Waters.

also spoke about the importance of understanding what AIDS is and how individuals can learn more about the disease.

The first drug that was effective for AIDS was called “AZT,” said Pouget. “It was approved by the FDA in 1987. It was approved under an emergency approval, which would exist at the time, but that emergency approval made it only available to a very small

infected,” said Pouget. “If you give somebody a treatment drug as soon as they get infected, that infection may never take hold in the person. The concept started to be developed to give people who are sexually active, who may be exposed to HIV, this anti-age drug, pre-exposure prophylaxis, before they get infected.”

Bringing it back to present-day drugs and who is exposed most to AIDS, Pouget explained that, “mostly gay men of color are exposed these days, so it’s important in that population, especially the life stigma population, it’s an effective way to get people to prevent infection with HIV if you’re exposed.”

The event ended with students learning about how to get involved in AIDS prevention in their environments.

Scarpetta told the audience, “The best course of action could be either involving yourself in activism in one way or another, or even better, going somewhere to see key hearings in person. And then you can make your own personal reflections, and you can make your own assessments, and maybe it’ll inspire you.”

Students interested in the LGBTQ+ Resource Center can visit their website, <https://www.brooklyn.edu/lgbtq-center/>. Students interested in HIV testing can visit the Health Clinic located at 114 Roosevelt Hall or email bchealthclinic@brooklyn.cuny.edu to schedule an appointment.



Brooklyn College’s World AIDS DAY Quilt, which was made in the year 2000./T’Neil Gooden

and the spontaneity of drama,” Burgess told the audience.

The panelists not only spoke about the impacts of Haring’s art, but they also spoke about the environment that surrounded the 1980s as the AIDS epidemic began to rise in New York City.

“LGBTQ people from all over the country and all over the world could come here [the East Village] and find cool people to hang out with. So it was, you know, my favorite thing about [the 1980s] was the community of it. For me, it was probably the East Village,” said Pouget.

Pouget continued by explaining, “That kind of environment brings together so many different people from different backgrounds. Keith is like that. I think of Keith as a pop artist, whatever, but

“And I think this is the breakthrough of Keith and I, where it’s [art is] not didactically political in that way. It’s very simple, it’s very easy, it’s very free-flowing as opposed to, and I’m not putting it down, but someone who puts the didactics and the detail of what a political position is in the work itself.”

Burgess joined this understanding of political activism within art and the idea that art can be a balance of both politics and fun.

“Rather than thinking I’m a singularly political artist and therefore all of the content, everything I create has this particular point of view or agenda or politics, he was making political art, and he was also making art that was less political or more joyful.”

Panelists and attendees

number of people. So hardly anybody got the AZT notice.”

This was then changed due to the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), which “made it more accessible to people. I should say that to be clear. The activism of ACT UP and the shame that they put on institutions, including the government, forced the government to change the approval process that allowed thousands of people to get effective NDA drugs,” Pouget told he audience.

Since this drug was the first of its kind, many people had passed due to the side effects, leading to more drugs being developed.

“10 or 15 years ago, there was an idea that we could do prevention by giving people treatment drugs before they got

Hess Scholars Melissa Murray and Russell Jeung Discuss How to Obtain Justice with the Wolfe Institute

By **Serena Edwards**
Opinions Editor
& **Eddy Prince**
Staff Writer

On Dec. 3, the Wolfe Institute held a virtual discussion with Robert L. Hess Scholars Melissa Murray and Russell Jeung. During the event, both speakers and attendees discussed what “justice” means to them and how to achieve it in these times.

Justice has long been tied to historical inequality, as is the case with the Jim Crow laws from the 1800s. How do we reconcile the tension between individual justice in the courts and collective justice within our society, especially when these inequities persist?

Murray is a legal analyst for MS Now (formerly known as MSNBC), a law professor at NYU, and co-host on the podcast “Strict Scrutiny,” where she breaks down Supreme Court rulings and other legal culture. She served as the Hess Scholar for the 2024-2025 school year, which was previously reported by the Vanguard.

Jeung is an Asian American studies professor at San Francisco State University, co-founder of Stop Asian American and Pacific Islander Hate, and an author and producer of a plethora of projects. He currently serves as the Hess Scholar for the 2025-2026 school year.

Gaston Alonso, the director of the Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute, moderated the conversation, asking how they were introduced to the topic of justice and how they have fostered it through their careers and upbringings.

Murray started the conversation, highlighting the role law plays in the lives of people of color.

“I think you can not be a person of color living in the United States without understanding

the role that law, especially constitutional law, has played in making society one that we are participating in the way we are now,” Murray stated.

She acknowledges that times have changed for people of color. “All you have to do is look back 250 years. You can see how different it was for people who looked like me [...] Much of the change really broke by way of law.”

Murray also spoke about how having an immigrant family changed her perspective on law.

“As someone who grew up in an immigrant family in the south, it was just clear to me from the beginning that so much of my life had been made possible through law.”

Jeung, who worked closely with marginalized communities, spoke on the impact these communities had.

“Community-led justice looks like, for me, when people feel safe and secure wherever they are. Going beyond a defense of one’s rights that entails everyone taking responsibilities for each other and doing what’s right,” Jeung told The Vanguard.

Jeung defined his morals and what they look like from a personal standpoint.

“For me, doing what’s right involves making sure people are housed, making sure people are fed, and making sure people have the right healthcare,” said Jeung.

Jeung shared advice for those who are beginning to become independently involved in their community.

“I think right now people in our polarized society don’t want to hear each other or empathize with one another, so sharing stories is really important to change people’s hearts and minds.”

Jeung states that it doesn’t have to be a big initiative at



Melissa Murray and Russell M. Jeung./Photo Courtesy of The Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities

the start; it can start right at home.

“People can begin to tell their stories to their families and to their friends, so we have a greater sense of how people are hurting and how people can comfort and support one another.”

Both Murray and Jeung emphasize the importance of fighting for justice collectively rather than individually.

“The American system is very, very individualistic, not something that focuses on group rights in a really focused way.” said Murray.

Murray explains that at times it is not about you and the group you identify with.

“If you think about American anti-discrimination law, it is about what happens to you as an individual and then only tentatively about what might be happening to you because you are part of a group,” stated Murray.

Jeung followed it up with his thoughts on the divide between individuality and collective activism.

“I think we can balance the need to protect individual rights. We also need to recognize that public policy affects all groups. Public policies affect and treat certain groups differently than others,” said Jeung. He continues by explaining further that we can combine individual activism with collective activism. “How can

[individuals] work and collectively break policies that target entire groups? We need to protect individual rights, but when groups are negatively impacted or mistreated, then we need to find group solutions.”

Justice can be achieved through cross-racial activism, especially through marginalized groups. “The Oak Park Story,” Jeung’s short documentary about a legal battle between immigrants and a landlord in Oakland, California, showed how, when people band together, justice can be achieved for all marginalized communities.

“We have to organize around common issues that we all experience and feel,” said Jeung. “I don’t think the Cambodians were organizing as Cambodians, or the Latinos [as Latinos] [...] we all saw ourselves as neighbors who faced similar housing conditions. That gave us our solidarity. I’m proud that we stood up together,” said Jeung.

“Multiracial organization isn’t about organizing [as a certain race]. It’s partially that, but it’s also, we need to relate beyond our identities and connect along our common personhood and around our shared issues,” Jeung concluded.

During the talk, Alonso pitched the question of

whether or not justice can actually be achieved as a society. “I think the alternative to not pursuing justice is apathy, it’s cynicism,” said Jeung. “We don’t know if we’ll ever achieve justice. But we pursue justice because it’s the right thing to do.”

“I like the idea of justice as a constant work in progress,” Murray followed up. “[Justice is] something we’re always working towards, and we’re never entirely finished with the project of achieving justice.”

Jeung argued that justice is often a product of circumstance. “I’m a fifth-generation American,” said Jeung, “but I was raised in a very Asian environment. And I have family members who grew up in the same family, but they may have different opinions and perspectives. We all have our own histories which come from our own circumstances, that shaped how we see the world and how we try to make change. Our individual circumstances are often our gifts. Everybody is different, and everyone has their own perspective.”

Spreading Holiday Joy: BC Professor Dr. Pham Hosts Annual Class Christmas Party

By Rami Mansi
Editor-In-Chief

On the second floor of Whitehead Hall, a classroom could be heard filled with joy and celebration. With music, snacks, and business students all together for just a few moments in time, a BUSN. 3125 class hosted a party for the holidays.

The class, led by esteemed Brooklyn College (BC) Professor Dr. Ngoc Pham, is titled “Principles of Selling.” In Dr. Pham’s words, the course aims to teach students about the relationship between consumers and sellers in greater depth.

“While students do learn sales techniques, the heart of the course is relationship building, listening, problem solving, and professionalism,” said Dr. Pham. “These are life skills. They help students not only in sales careers, but also in

interviews, and everyday interactions.”

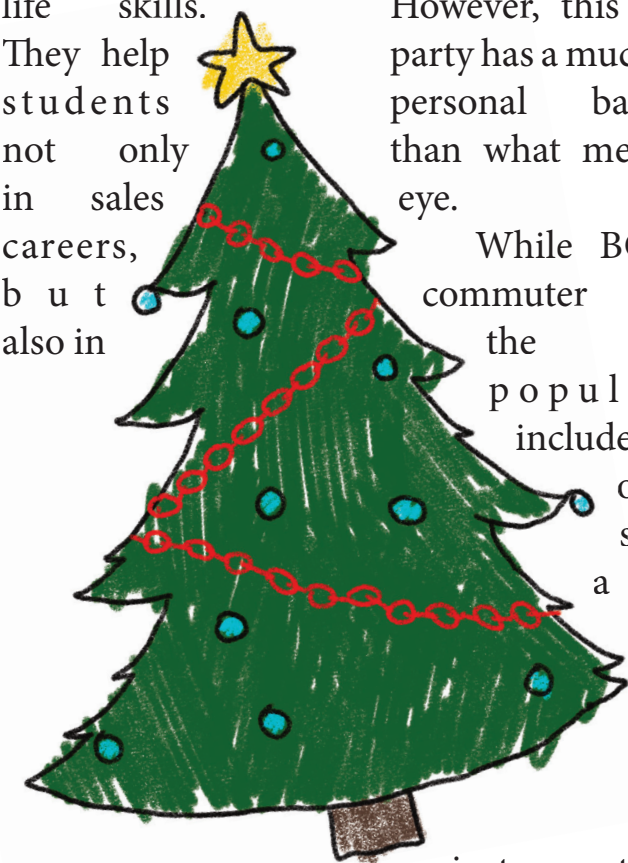
The coordinator for the party was none other than a student Dr. Pham had encouraged to lead and host the event.

Abigail Louis enjoyed her semester, largely due to the comforting energy of Dr. Pham.

“Literally the first day of classes and as soon as I walk in, [Professor Pham] says ‘look at the fashionista’ and ‘wow, you look so nice.’ From then on, I knew that she was gonna be a good professor. She is very kind, and all my anxiety for my first day at a new school went away completely because she just welcomed me with open arms.”

Dr. Pham extends a warm hand to all her students, making a point of hosting Christmas parties open to all past and present students. However, this gleeful party has a much more personal backstory than what meets the eye.

While BC is a commuter school, the student population includes many out-of-state and



international leadership roles, students. As an entrepreneurship, immigrant, Dr. Pham



Attendees of the party with Dr. Pham./Courtesy of Dr. Pham

understands what shared food with me it means to be away and gave me a small from family and to gift. That moment have no one to spend stayed with me.”

“When I was an international student, the holidays were lonely [...] One year, a kind neighbor invited me to celebrate with their family. They shared food with me and gave me a small gift. That moment stayed with me.”

the holidays with.

“When I was an international student, the holidays were lonely. I remember walking through cold, quiet streets while others hurried home to their families. One year, a kind neighbor invited me to celebrate with their family. They

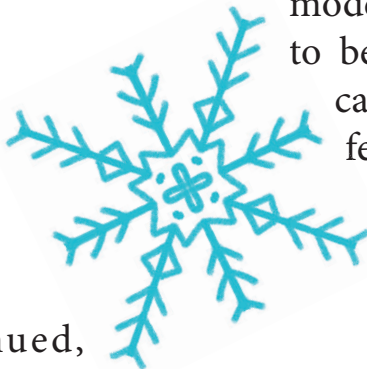
Dr. Pham

continued, “It taught me how powerful kindness and generosity can be, especially during the holidays. I carry that

memory with me and try to give that feeling back to my students, knowing that some may not have a holiday celebration at home.”

With that life-changing Christmas dinner, Dr. Pham created a holiday tradition in her classroom that she has continued for the past 10 years. A tradition held in warmth and is carried into her own teaching practices.

“Many Brooklyn College students are first-generation college students and may not always have professional role models at home. I try to be someone they can look up to and feel supported by as they grow personally and professionally.”



Farewell From Vanguard Layout

Editor Amira Turner



Photo courtesy of Stanley Ligon


By Amira Turner
Layout Editor

It's crazy to think that only three and a half years ago, I had no friends who lived in New York, let alone Brooklyn. As I prepare to graduate, I can genuinely say I now have a whole new family in Brooklyn thanks to The Vanguard. I, of course, have to thank my incredible friends and family (if you're not in Renton, wya?), who have always been incredibly supportive in my dream to move across the country to pursue journalism. I cannot understate how much their support and love mean to me. Mama,

Papa, Ahah, you know I love all of you to the moon and back, even when I don't answer your texts. I've always had a passion for journalism, but thanks to my incredible professors and peers in the JAMS and TREM departments, I can graduate with a full understanding of what it means to be a student journalist. I also own three copies of Kovach and Rosensteil's Elements of Journalism; I'm sure they'll all come in handy someday. My time on the Vanguard has been filled with stress, late nights, successes, failures, but most importantly, love. My

time as a staff writer affirmed my love of journalism. My time as Arts Editor fed my love of all the culture Brooklyn has to offer, and my passion for collaboration. My time as Layout editor has reminded me to love taking risks and solidified my passion for design and print. None of this would've been possible without Kate Dempsey, Paulina Gajewski, and Tony Lipka. Thank you for seeing potential in me that I didn't see in myself, and for passing down all of your knowledge to me. Now, three and a half years later, I can say I've been in the photo pit at a Rico Nasty concert, covered fashion shows, attended symposiums, made new friends across campus, published zines, and honed my graphic design skills. None of those things would be possible without the Vanguard, and I wouldn't want to share those memories with any other staff. Some of my proudest memories at the Vanguard have been watching my peers grow their confidence and experience. Whether it's a staff writer celebrating their first cover story or CUNY Dateline feature, or an artist or photographer seeing

their work in print for the first time, getting to share my passion and excitement with our team has been life-changing. I'd love to say my time at the Vanguard has been all sunshine and rainbows, but even my fondest memories here are marked by late-night editing sessions, last-minute graphics, and a few minor crashouts. I hope that if you all learned one thing from me, it's to put your photos in the drive with a caption before Monday night!!! T'Neil, Khalailah, Serena, Key, Mars, and Emily, you all have become sisters to me. I really cherish all of our juicy post-meeting gossip sessions. I think we should all co-host a daytime talk show together. Rami 'angel baby' Mansi. I don't have to tell you how incredible you are; I think you've known since you stepped into the Vanguard office. It's been a pleasure to watch you blossom and spread your passion and enthusiasm to everyone you meet. Jaida Dent, what can I say? You're truly a joy to be around, brilliant, loyal, and a hard worker. Every single day I get to see you on campus has

been made infinitely brighter. I feel so lucky to have had the opportunity to work with you, and so should everyone else who is awarded the privilege. More importantly, I feel so lucky to get to laugh with you and be your friend. All my BC girlies (you know who you are), I love you and all of the college experiences I've gotten to have with you. You've all made Brooklyn feel like home! I came to The Vanguard sure of what I wanted and who I wanted to be, but not quite sure of who I was. I want to thank all of the incredible people I've met at BC for embracing me and helping me grow into the person I am today. I couldn't be prouder to be a BC graduate and a Vanguard alumnus. Keep print journalism alive! Sincerely,  Amira Turner



Collage by Amira Turner

BC Classical Society’s Vase Painting: A Creative Break Before Finals

By Khalailah Bynoe
Arts Editor

You don’t need to be a history major or an art student to find your inner classical artist. On Dec. 4 at the Brooklyn College (BC) Student Center, the BC Classical Society held a vase painting event. Many attendees came with friends to enjoy snacks and express themselves creatively.

“So we’re related to the ancient classics like ancient Greece, ancient Rome, ancient Egypt, and then the Mediterranean world, they had vases. So this is an event inspired by that,” said the President of the BC Classical Society, Emma Bodzin.

“I think this is our second or third year doing vase painting, and it’s always like a big hit. [...] It’s always [...] fun to do vase painting, and it seems to be something everyone loves. And, you know, it just shows how important creativity is,” said Sabrena Hassan, club connector for the Classical Society.

Attendees were given an informational guide on the history of vases in ancient Greece.

Ancient Greeks used several vase types: amphoras for storage and transport, kraters for mixing wine at

symposiums, skyphos for drinking, and lekythos for oils. Greek myths commonly decorated these vessels.

“The most famous ancient Greek pottery designs come from the Black Figure and Red Figure techniques. After a vase was made, designs were painted on with black and red Slip, a mixture of water and clay. These designs are either a red background with black figures or a black background with red figures,” according to the BC Classical Society.

“Getting people to relax and unwind when they have, like, studying for finals, but also engaging in some classics-related activity. We share a lot of inspiration for Ancient

“We share a lot of inspiration for Ancient Greek-inspired vases; they can copy if they’d like, or just express themselves in any way that they can.”

Greek-inspired vases; they can copy if they’d



Shania Persaud (left) and Thomas Balotska (right) painting their vases./Khalailah Bynoe

like, or just express themselves in any way that they can,” said Vice President Khadijah Fall.

Some attendees took this opportunity to create a gift for their family members for the upcoming holidays.

“Since Christmas is coming up, I just wanted to make [...] a little something for my mom because she [...] loves flowers and she loves faces and stuff. Her favorite color is pink, so that’s what inspired my design or pattern,” attendee Shania Persaud told The Vanguard.

Others were introduced to the world of vase painting by tagging along with their friends.

“My friend Shania invited me, and I wanted to hang, and vase painting sounds fun. Now I have a vase. [I] actually brought a flower the other day and it died because I didn’t have a vase, so now I do,” said BC student Thomas Balotska.

With finals season in full swing, vase painting was just what many needed to relax.

“[This] is a good stress reliever [...] before finals and final papers and projects,” said BC student Libby Trietel.

Fall hopes that these events shed more light on the Classics Department.

“It’s also a way to get a lot of students who might not have ever heard of the Classics Department at Brooklyn College, which is kind of a small department in comparison to a lot of other ones. Kind of get them introduced in a way to little aspects and get them to appreciate classics more because, despite it see[m]ing maybe not as related to other fields. It definitely is a topic that can help a lot [of] people in a variety of different majors and interests.”

The Classical Society

offers multiple events for students to combine creativity with a new knowledge of the classical world, including their end-of-semester Saturnalia event. “Saturnalia was basically what became Christmas in ancient Rome [...], and we’re gonna be decorating Wreaths,” Bodzin told The Vanguard.

The BC Classical Society is open to all.

Bodzin stated, “Anyone can join, you don’t have to be a classics major. You don’t have to be a history nerd. You just join [and] have fun. We always have many events throughout the semester.”

For more about BC Classical Society’s upcoming events, visit their Instagram @bc_classicalsociety.



Painting materials and completed vases./Courtesy of the BC Classical Society

The Vanguard Eboard’s 2025 Recap

By Jaida Dent
Managing Editor
& Amira Turner
Layout Editor

As 2025 comes to a close, the Vanguard presents our own 2025 Recap! Read through to hear our Eboard’s favorite music, television, and movie recommendations, fashion trends, and pop culture moments that kept us entertained throughout the year!

Music

Amira Turner, Layout Editor
“La Perla” by Rosalia (Song)
I have listened to this song so much since this release that, despite knowing next to no Spanish, I have caught myself mumbling phrases like “una de mucho cuidado” and “El mayor desastre mundial” under my breath. This track does an incredible job of balancing playful melodies with scathing lyrics that read like Tea App warnings. Rosalia perfectly blends the flamenco and art-pop elements of her previous hits with the more operatic tone of LUX.

Rami Mansi, Editor-in-Chief
“Abracadabra” by Lady Gaga (Song)
“In her tongue she said, ‘Death or love tonight’/ ABRACADABRA!” Lady Gaga returned to her dark pop roots with her newest album, “Mayhem.” With a thumping bassline and lyrics that depict going through the challenges life throws at you, Mother Monster has never been more comfortable in her skin and sound, and for that, we are eternally grateful.

T’Neil Gooden, Features Editor
“The Start Chapter: Together” by TXT (Album)
I recently got into the group this year after being exposed to them by my friends and fell in love with the variety of vocals and emotions that filled the album. This album allowed the boys to not only have songs displaying their vocals as a group, but they all had solos that showcased a new version of their vocal talents. I recommend this album for people who are looking to think deeply and clear their minds at the same time. There is a genre of music in this album that everybody will love

Key Jones-Ford, Content Creator
“Princess of Power” by Marina (Album)
Princess of Power serves as a reminder of who Marina was when we called her “Marina and the Diamonds.” For old listeners, this album feels like Electra Heart has grown up and is entering our reality. The



Collage by Amira Turner

album’s electronic dance sounds mesh with Marina’s lyrical dissonance and clichés that she’s been loved for, and even features interpolations from major pop hits “Hollaback Girl” and “I Will Survive.” My standout tracks: “Cuntisimo,” “Digital Fantasy,” and “Final Boss.”

Movies and TV

T’Neil Gooden, Features Editor
“Dancing with the Stars Season 34”
I really enjoyed the Dancing With The Stars season this year, as Robert Irwin was someone I grew up watching. Seeing him win gave me all the feels. I remember when Bindi Irwin won, and it was just a full circle moment for me this year. I enjoy competitions, so Dancing With The Stars was a repeat watch for me this year!

Serena Edwards, Opinions Editor
“Stranger Things” Season 5 Volume 1
Being able to see the growth of each character and to also see the end of an era was amazing. The dynamic of each character’s stories was engaging, and I can’t wait to see Volume 2.

Amira Turner, Layout Editor
“Eddington” directed by Ari Aster
This film is the first depiction of the pandemic I’ve seen that handles the absurdity and political tension of 2020 artfully and realistically. The film’s neo-western influences help explore heavy themes (BLM, quarantine, political violence, alt-right internet rabbit holes) that other filmmakers haven’t been brave enough to explore head-on, while still having some laugh-out-loud moments. If you aren’t a fan of Ari Aster’s previous work, the tone of this film may not be for you, but if you’re into absurdist political satire, thrillers, and westerns, I highly recommend you check this one out.

Mars Marte, Content Creator & Manuel Polanco, Sports Editor
“The Long Walk” directed by Francis Lawrence
A haunting tale that warns us of a future that’s given into entertainment.

It’s a Stephen King adaptation and about a group of men who embark on a long walk for millions of dollars and glory. Good film

Style Trends

Khalailah Bynoe, Arts Editor
Cheetah print
I love that it made a comeback this year. It brought me back to my favorite era of fashion, the early 2000s.

Adrian Skeans, Digital Editor
Baggy Pants
Baggy pants are back, and for me, they are perfect. They’ve got that grungy ‘90s vibe that makes you feel like the main character. They’re super comfortable, and you can style them however you want, whether you’re going for a laid-back look or something a little more out there. And my favorite thing is its functionality, I have so many pockets and space to carry all of my essentials with me in style.

Key Jones-Ford, Content Creator
Perfumes
While not specifically something you can see, perfume and scents were a big part of the beauty sphere in 2025. We were learning how to layer, how to find your “signature scent,” and how to make your tiny sample last for weeks. Ranging from the growth in popularity of “dupe houses” to the interest in gourmands and warmer scents, there’s a scent for just about everyone. It’s been exciting seeing and smelling all the new scents that have come out!

Amira Turner, Layout Editor
Heavy blush

Growing up as a Black girl, one of the most common makeup tips I had received over the years was to wear minimal, neutral/ dark blushes. But after Ayo Edebiri’s iconic Met Gala beat, and the rise of MUA Painted by Esther, I’ve embraced the blush. There’s something so playful and lively about a bright, rosy cheek, and I don’t care if I look like a clown, at least I’m a cute one!

T’Neil Gooden, Features Editor
Babydoll blouse over long skirts or jeans

I know this is very generic, but when you are someone who is learning about fashion trends, you tend to take it nice and slow (like myself). I enjoy this style because it allows me to be simple yet have a little something extra. I also would say I really enjoy the Zara Larsson 2025 Barbie pop of color that has been going around on my TikTok page. One more thing, I really love the matching sweats vibes because it is another subtle trend that makes you stand out!

Pop Culture Moments
Serena Edwards, Opinions Editor

Anok Yai winning Model of the Year at The British Fashion Awards
Her statement in her speech, “Your color is not a curse,” not only gave confidence to the dark skinned women who got picked on for their skin in school or lacked opportunity because of their appearances, but also showed that they can do anything.

T’Neil Gooden, Features Editor
Zara Larson fan interactions
I really enjoy wholesome interactions, and seeing Zara Larsson dance with her fans on stage is something that I feel

like is so pop and a perfect way to end the year. Zara Larsson is coming back, and I am so happy and proud of her for that!

Rami Mansi, Editor-in-Chief
Adela’s “Superscar” music video
When rising pop singer Adela released the music video for her second single, “Superscar,” and the dance break in the video went semi-viral on Twitter, it was a moment in time. The girl who was eliminated from the competition show that would go on to create the girl group Katseye has become a performer. Vogue Magazine called her “born to be a pop star.” A Slovakian girl, based in LA, with big dreams and a talent for dancing, mixed with a love of electronic music; from the moment I watched that music video, I knew Adela was the pop music provocateur of my dreams.

Manuel Polanco, Sports Editor
“6-7”
6-7 has been the greatest meme of 2025, and its simplicity and childlike humor are what make it funny and also generational.

Key Jones-Ford, Content Creator
Cynthia Erivo’s “The concept of” meme
Cynthia Erivo’s “The concept of” meme is possibly the funniest thing to happen in the latter half of the year. It’s so simple, and yet effective at communicating confusion at an otherwise impressive feat. Bonus points when someone who does it is also bald.

Luis Angel Martinez, Videographer

John Cena Turning Heel
My favorite pop culture moment of 2025 has to be John Cena turning to the dark side in March. When the Rock came out with Travis Scott to talk down to Cody Rhodes, it felt like the whole of pop culture was aligned with the big stars. Then, when Cody said “Go F*ck yourself,” that is when the whole crowd and people at home were happy. When Cena hugged him, and the Rock gave the finger on the throat gesture, that’s when the wrestling world was shaken. Cena has never been a bad guy in his career, and this happened during his retirement tour, which made me feel both excited and shocked from that moment. Seeing The Rock, John Cena, and Travis Scott standing side by side while Cody’s blood is on the floor is a sight to be seen.

Delayed Not Denied: Finding the Perfection In an Imperfect Journey

By **Serena Edwards**
Opinions Editor

Everyone’s process is different because everyone’s purpose is different. Some people are called to be doctors, lawyers, social workers, or journalists. Everyone is on a different course of life, and sometimes it may take longer than others. Take that moment as a preparation stage instead of something negative. You never know that the delay in your process can function as a redirection rather than a rejection.

I think of the journey as a marathon rather than a sprint. It takes more than just trying to get it done fast, but accuracy is key. You have to pace yourself and learn to build strength. Sometimes, in the moments where we are waiting to get to the finish line, we should reflect and see the beauty in having more time to grow in that area. Especially within the world we live in today, with competition and such a slim selection of options in the job market, we must stay optimistic and see rejection as realignment.

In today’s society, it feels like we are constantly falling behind. Whether that’s in school, a job, or in materialistic objects. We constantly compare ourselves to those who have gotten it “easier.” But

in reality, they have their own journey and battles that they’ve faced to get to where they are. Everyone has a purpose, and comparing yourself to another person when you have two different purposes.

In college, it is expected to graduate in four years; however, for many students, that is not the reality. This expectation alone can cause discouragement and diminish the accomplishments underway. It can even just stop you from appreciating the moments that got you there. The longevity in the matriculation of your college years leads to experiences you would’ve never had and people you would’ve never met if you went at the “normal pace”.

According to NBC News, “fewer than two-thirds of students manage to finish within six years.”

In my own college experience, I took a year off from school after realizing that I mentally wasn’t doing school for myself, and my mental health wasn’t at its best. At the time, I felt like a failure, and compared my matriculation to those I started school with, but looking back, had I not

transferred and taken that break, I would not have been able to reach my fullest potential.

Step away from the image of meeting traditional standards of success and start thinking about the importance of non-traditional routines.

I found the beauty in taking the “longer route” because not only am I accomplishing things I never thought I would, but I have gained experiences that I wouldn’t trade for a lifetime. If I had graduated in my expected year, I would have never been able to land a position at this wonderful publication

or run the radio station.

to find stable jobs in the field they studied. Applying to over 100 jobs only to continuously get rejection letters is tiring, discouraging, and overall frustrating. Leading people to feel like they settled for another path just to make ends meet. But what if that other path is preparing you for your ultimate opportunity?

Finding an internship during your matriculation alone is already hard, but it is especially hard after graduating. For example, I want to pursue a career in journalism, so when I worked with kids, I wondered why I was there rather than in the media. But I wouldn’t trade that experience for anything.

I learned the importance of patience and of meeting people where they are. If I hadn’t worked in childcare first, I wouldn’t have developed the skills that helped me become the journalist I am today.

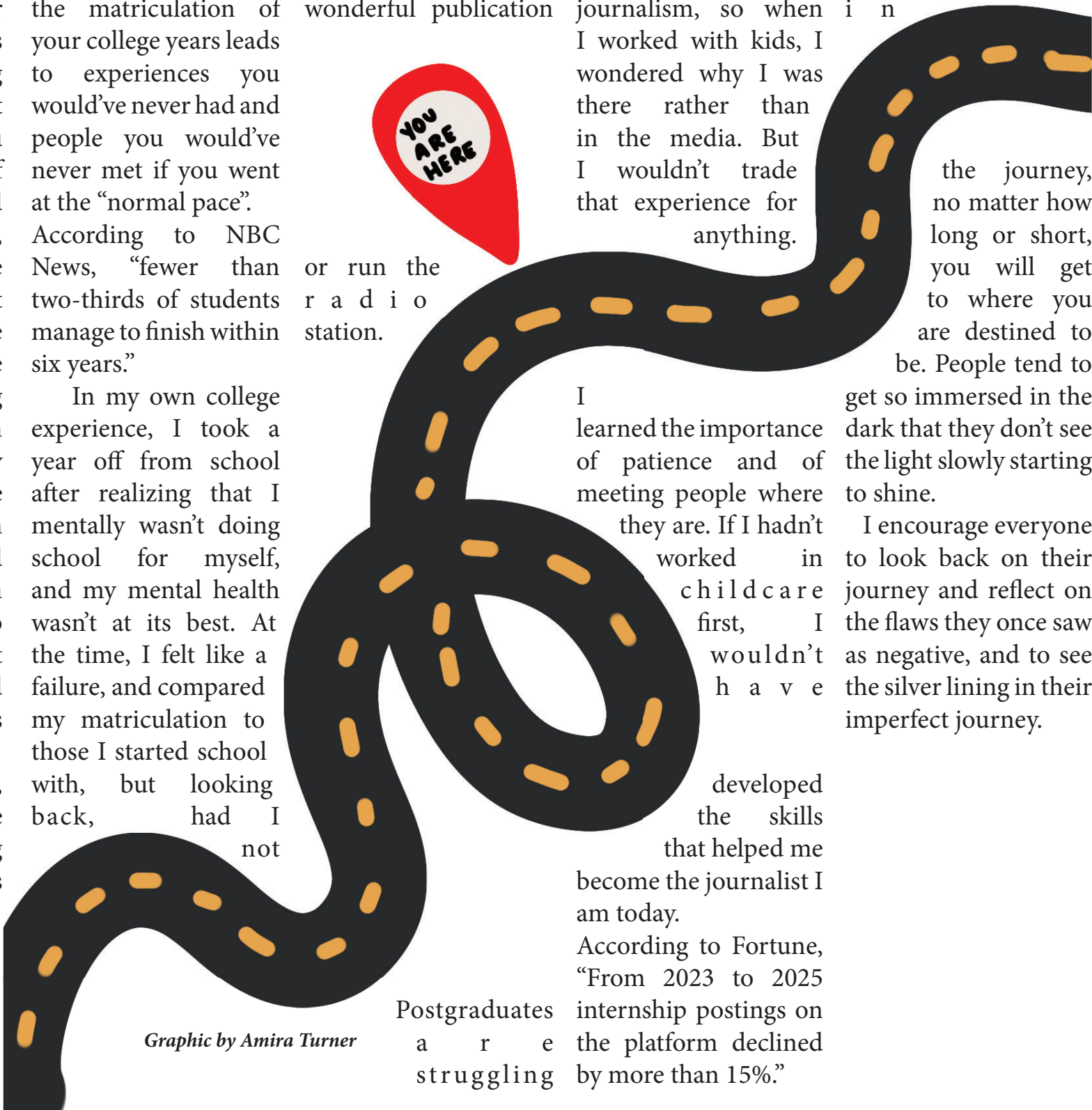
According to Fortune, “From 2023 to 2025 internship postings on the platform declined by more than 15%.”

Networking is important, and in this journey of life, you meet people who will not only teach you but also put you in places and environments you never thought you would be in. If you ever have to change your environment, whether that’s transferring schools or just taking a pause, you must find the silver lining in the ways that these changes work in your favor. If you never transferred or chose the schools that we

Just because you’re in a dark tunnel doesn’t mean there’s not a light at the end. Have peace in

the journey, no matter how long or short, you will get to where you are destined to be. People tend to get so immersed in the dark that they don’t see the light slowly starting to shine.

I encourage everyone to look back on their journey and reflect on the flaws they once saw as negative, and to see the silver lining in their imperfect journey.



Graphic by Amira Turner

Postgraduates
a r e
struggling

Hazbin Hotel: Has the Show Redeemed Itself?

By Jocelyn Rios
Staff Comic Artist

“Welcome to the Hazbin Hotel! Where sinners come to be redeemed!”: the opening line of a thematic promise following television show “Hazbin Hotel” from its viral pilot released on Oct. 28, 2019 to its full first season in early 2024, followed by its extremely ambitious second season a year after.

However, the question circling the fandom is whether the show itself is capable of redemption following the release of season two. After turbulence arose from season 1, receiving mixed reviews and creator controversy surrounding Vivienne Medrano, (also known as Vivziepop) season two arrived under significant review.

But against expectations, season two may have done what the series itself preaches: improvement, evolution, and redemption from its own narrative weaknesses.

In summary of this neo-lit version of Hell, “Hazbin Hotel” follows Charlie Morningstar, Princess of Hell, as she attempts to create a rehabilitation program for the sinners: people who’ve committed sins that lead them down to hell in their afterlives. Her aim? To prove that even the damned are worthy of redemption, a radical idea in a world built on eternal punishment.

Alongside characters such as her girlfriend Vaggie and demon Alastor, the protagonist navigates moral complexity, personal doubt, and the political structure of Hell’s power-hungry overlords.

The 2019 pilot captivated audiences with its bold character designs, musical energy, and raw passion. But as fans quickly learned in season one’s Amazon adaptation, passion alone doesn’t guarantee cohesion.

Though visually striking, the season struggled with pacing issues that left scenes very underdeveloped.

More significantly, controversies surrounding Vivziepop herself changed the positive perception of the show overall, criticism on her writing choices, character portrayals that were inconsistent from what they were made to be in the pilot, and social media behaviors that made people

Graphic by Jocelyn Rios

feel cringed by associating themselves with the show in the first place. While much of this discourse was exaggerated and misinformed, it shaped audience reception.

According to Reddit users, “Season one felt like a downgrade from the pilot. The pacing was weird, the plot felt rushed, and a lot of characters didn’t get the development they deserved.”

The show still has a large amount of support, but even fans like myself acknowledge that season one didn’t quite land the emotional and narrative goals it hoped to achieve: “The 2019 Pilot was pretty good and pretty original. Then there were 4 years of silence. Then we finally got a HH series – and it failed pretty hard,” stated another Reddit user.

That’s why season two’s release was shocking, not just because it was smooth, but because it was significantly better.

From the release of season two, the show had a much clearer direction for the plot, as well stronger writing and pacing between events. According to Reddit users, they “like it had direction. Unlike Season 1, the buildup paid off and the final episodes finally felt like something they planned instead of scrambling to finish.”

It also had a deeper dive into a character’s motivations that the first season lacked when it came to the delivery. The absolute standout of the season, Vox, the media overlord, is only proof of that growth.

In season one, he was little more than a flashy antagonist with a digital aesthetic and an extreme grudge against Alastor.

Season two, however, elevates him into being more manipulative and calculating of those who have large influences he can use as a means to his goal of taking over heaven and hell. His actions carry weight, and his development reveals layers of corporate power, media control, and manipulation that enriches the show’s worldbuilding.

In terms of the plot, the climax, being the final battle, felt extremely impactful with deliberate storytelling and steady story-pacing rather than a rushed attempt to wrap loose threads: “Season 1 didn’t feel finished. But Season 2 finally made me care about the characters and the stakes. It actually felt like a finale this time,” one fan says under a youtube

meaningful. Despite mildly mixed reactions, I felt “Hazbin Hotel” showed extreme improvement that was meaningful and measurable compared to its first season.

As someone who went into season two with slight disappointment and confusion from season one, I found myself much more invested in the story. The writing felt more confident and the thematic threads about redemption, loyalty, and moral conflict finally aligned with the show’s original vision.

Also, for once, I felt I was actually watching a final battle that had stakes, something that the first season never quite achieved.

The finale felt like the writers had put a lot of effort towards world building. Especially with the shift towards Vox, which not only helped the intentionality of the season, but made the show feel refreshing

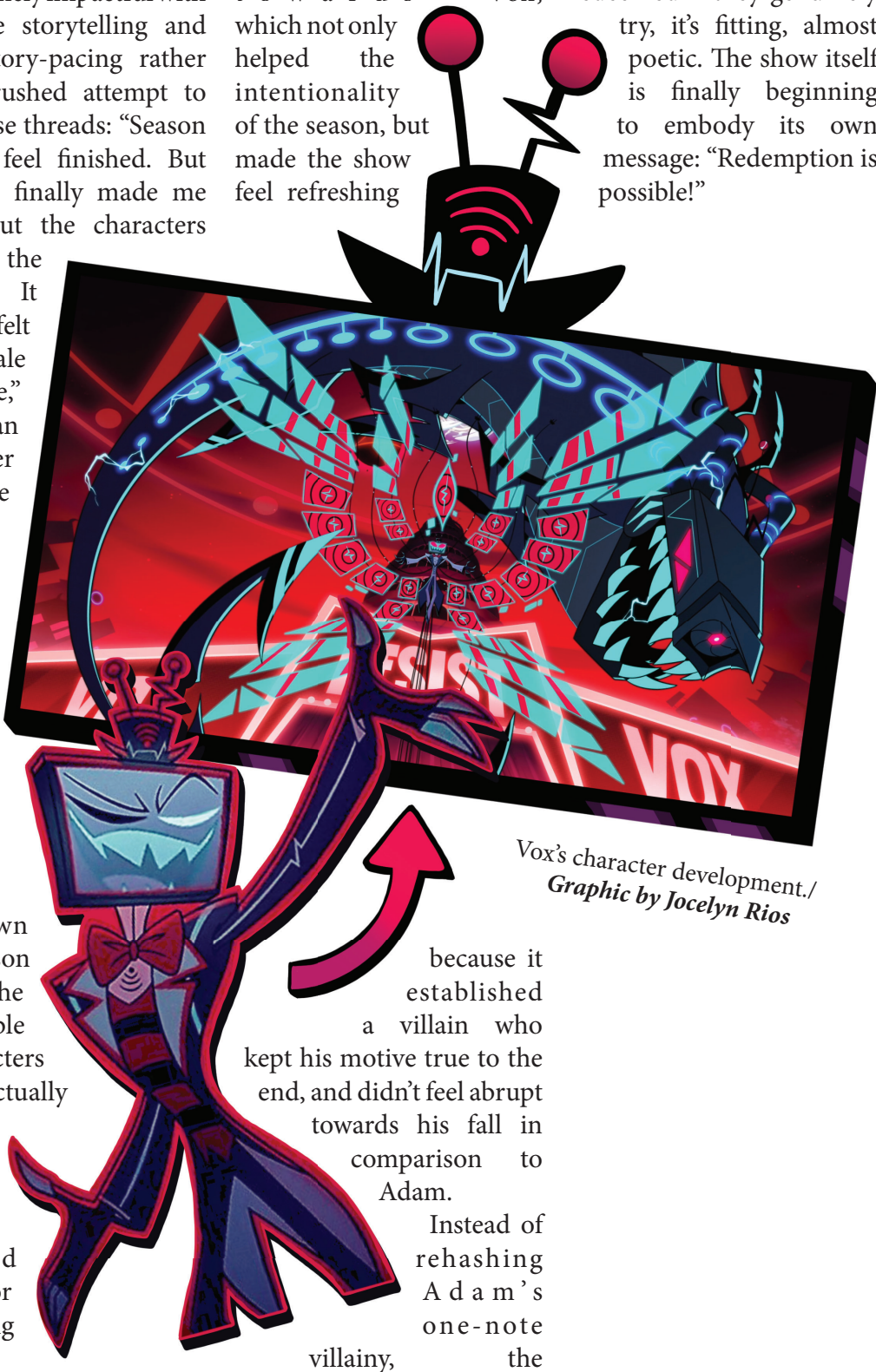
season emphasized a layered antagonist whose manipulative control over Hell’s media ecosystem added depth, strengthening the narrative overall.

No show is immune to flaws and “Hazbin Hotel” still has plenty of room to grow, but that growth is exactly what season two has demonstrated. Redemption isn’t about perfection; it’s about progression.

For fans seeking polished writing and airtight plotting, perhaps the series isn’t quite there yet.

For those looking for artistic growth, character depth, awesome musical songs, and an earnest attempt to refine past mistakes, season two delivered.

But in a series built entirely around the idea that the damned can be redeemed if they genuinely try, it’s fitting, almost poetic. The show itself is finally beginning to embody its own message: “Redemption is possible!”



A Peek into the Looking Glass: The WNBA Off-Season and The Road to Unrivaled

By Reagan McLean
Staff Writer

Within the past two years, the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) has been soaring. Given the media attention top players such as Paige Bueckers, Caitlin Clark, and Angel Reese have been receiving, you’d expect they are paid well; however, players are currently fighting for better pay and playing conditions during the high-stakes Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

If the conditions players want aren’t met, a lockout could be looming as the players are currently fighting for their value. They believe they are worth far more than their paycheck reflects. Thus, with two fronts: negotiations underway in the

Collier and New York Liberty player Breanna Stewart.

There have been many updates on the progress toward a CBA agreement. One of the main focal points in this CBA is the salary. The current WNBA maximum salary is \$249,244; however, the average salary is approximately \$130,000 with a salary cap increase of 3%. To address this problem, according to CBS Sports, the league proposed a \$1 million maximum salary with an increased salary cap of \$5 million in year one alone.

There is a catch: the WNBPA opposed this proposal.

An article from Sports Business Journal stated, “The concern of the players’ union is the league’s proposed revenue share system that —

Guard Kelsey Plum said on “All The Smoke” podcast with Matt Barnes in July, “We’re asking just the same percentage of revenue or a similar percentage of revenue.

the 3-on-3 basketball league created by Collier and Stewart, Unrivaled. According to the Associated Press (AP), this league “sets a new standard for women’s

including: a personal chef, housing, a “glam room,” a better salary, and childcare.

With Unrivaled’s foundation being “created for players by players,” this model is



Lunar Owls Skylar Diggins (#4) driving to the basket while Mists’ Breanna Stewart (#30) defends the ball at Unrivaled’s opening game at Wayfair Arena on Jan. 17, 2025./
Courtesy of Sports Illustrated

And right now, that’s not the case. That’s what we’re fighting for.”

Plum refers to the basketball-related income (BRI). The NBA has a system in which players receive 49% to 51% of the money from media rights, merchandise, and ticket sales. Looking past financial concerns, the league has also proposed cutting housing and starting training camp much earlier. Meaning it is much harder for players to secure income participating in playing overseas for more money. With the deadline pushed from Oct. 31, Nov. 30, and now to Jan. 9, if an agreement can’t be reached, there will be a lockout.

The second front is

basketball.” Debuting Jan. 17, on TNT and HBOMax, this league has an average salary of \$220,000 and a 15% equity stake divided among the initial players.

The reason behind making this league, according to Collier and Stewart in an interview with Ramona Shelburne, is “...their goal is to help players get paid more while complying with the WNBA’s prioritization rule.” The rule is that players must return to their respective teams on time for training camp; if not, they will face a suspension for that season. Now, Unrivaled is a crucial bargaining chip in the new CBA deal. This is due to the many amenities offered,

placing pressure on the WNBA to essentially do better. Players have been advocating for years to make the league much better and sustainable in the long run, but people choose not to listen to the complaints; people just have to suffer the consequences.

. The future is currently unknown for the WNBA. The players are advocating for better salaries and to have a roof over their heads. With Unrivaled setting a standard for what the league could become, the WNBA is placed under a lot of pressure to implement the changes players want to see happen in the league.



Seattle Storm player Brittney Sykes holding pay the players sign after WNBA All-Star Weekend game at Gainbridge Arena Jul. 19, 2025./*Courtesy of Michael Conroy/AP*

Women’s National Basketball Players Association (WNBPA) and the 3-on-3 basketball league founded by Minnesota Lynx player Napheesa

after expenses and other miscellaneous items — actually would dwindle the players’ portion to 15% or less.”

This is important because, as LA Sparks

A Bittersweet Farewell: John Cena’s Disappointing Retirement Tour



The Rock and John Cena when Cena turned Heel./*Courtesy of the WWE*

By **Manuel Polanco**
Sports Editor

When John Cena announced his retirement on July 6, 2024, he shook the wrestling world up, and many fans, myself included, were hit with a whirlwind of emotions. The legend I grew up watching and the wrestler who made wrestling feel like something much more than it was had said his time was up, and it was time to go home.

“Just because I physically feel I’m at my end, doesn’t mean I need to distance myself from something I love,” said Cena in his retirement speech. “The time is now” was the catchphrase for this run, a nice spin to his iconic phrase from his entrance song, “You can’t see me, my time is now.”

While writing this, it has been confirmed that Cena’s last opponent in his wondrous career will be the notorious heel, Gunther. Gunther beat fellow wrestler LA Knight in the “Last Time Is Now”

tournament, earning him a shot against Cena in his last match at Saturday Night Main Event on Dec. 13.

But before we get to the end, let’s backtrack and analyze this run from the start and consider what could have been.

What made Cena a special wrestler was that he arguably was the biggest baby face ever in wrestling history, and whether you liked him or not, he played the role of the good guy well, and fans loved it. Not only did Cena revolutionize the United States (U.S.) Championship with a spinning title, but his iconic gimmicks, including Dr. Thuganomics, helped catapult his career as a whole.

Chances are, if you’re reading this and don’t watch wrestling, you may not know what a face or heel is, so let me explain. A babyface or face is the hero or ‘good guy’ of the story, and the fans love and cheer for them. When you think of babyfaces in wrestling, think of CM Punk and Kofi

Kingston as some of the best Babyfaces of our time.

A heel is the opposite of that; they are the villains of the story and will do anything to win, even if it means cheating, humiliating, or disrespecting the fans. To be a really good Heel, you have to be good at being hated and being a villain, something that is not for everyone. Some notable heels are Vince McMahon (both in wrestling and irl) and Randy Orton.

Cena turned heel in his final run and said he would “Ruin Wrestling for everyone.” If he meant that playing a horrible gimmick would ruin wrestling, then he came through.

The cracks in the foundation were starting to show, and it began early on when Cena began a feud with fellow baby face Cody Rhodes, who held the Undisputed WWE Championship. This feud saw Cena finally turn heel with help from The Rock, who said he wanted to take Cody’s soul (We still

don’t know what he meant by this.)

The Rock was supposed to be an integral part of Cena’s heel run and help Cena claim the world title during his WrestleMania 41 match against Rhodes. Not only was this match horrible and one of the worst WrestleMania matches in a while, but for some reason, Travis Scott appeared and hit Rhodes with the title before he could pin Cena.

This resulted in Cena low-blowing Rhodes and winning the title for himself and earning it for the 17th time in his career. If this were any other heel than maybe it would’ve worked with the fans, but it just fell flat, and the fans were not happy.

Many, rightfully so, blamed The Rock for inserting himself in a needless feud so he could be the center of attention, but also ruin this heel run because he was the main reason it happened. The WWE writers didn’t have any idea how to write a heel Cena; his promos were not good, his material was lackluster, and The Rock not being there hindered this run by a lot.

With Cena only scheduled for 36 appearances in his final run, we’ve wasted at least half of it with lackluster booking and a failed heel run. This resulted in Cena himself reverting back to a babyface and challenging Rhodes to a

match at Summerslam.

Cena would lose but this match was far and above better than their previous Mania match.

Cena was not a good heel, and personally, I don’t think he ever could be, so deciding to go with this gimmick in his final run was not only a bad decision by Chief Content Officer, Triple H but also shows how TKO relied on old memories to make a quick cash grab for a potential heel run.

That isn’t to say I didn’t enjoy everything, one of my favorite things he did was a pipebomb promo against CM Punk where called him out for being a hypocrite and mentioned other wrestlers he had burned in the past.

Cena had flashes where it seemed like things were going places but ultimately it all fell flat.

A lackluster retirement tour for one of the best to ever do it, it almost feels disrespectful that this is how fans will remember Cena’s last run in the fed, a failed experiment to make a quick buck. When this article is published, we will be days away from Cena’s final match in the WWE and we can only hope he goes out with the respect he has earned.

Sports Recaps (12/01-12/05)

By Manuel Polanco
Sports Editor

Congratulations to Joe Charles for being named the CUNYAC Player of the Week! The women's basketball team is heating up as usual and started their CUNYAC opener with a bang.

Women's Basketball

With a 6-1 record, the women's basketball team opened CUNYAC play with a statement, winning 88-20 on Dec. 5. Their opponent, the CCNY Beavers, were overmatched, failing to score double-digit points in any quarter and surrendering 44 turnovers.

By the end of the second quarter, BC was up 41-14. During the second half, they outscored CCNY 47-6, continuing their dominant play. Dior Dorsey had a great game with 16 points and six rebounds. Junior guard Brianna Jackson had

14 points with seven assists in the game, and junior guard Anna Kitch had 18 rebounds with 11 points to cap the game. Freshman guard Adunoluwa Akinduyi had 11 points off the bench.

The team looks to continue its successful run as they face New Jersey's Stevens Institute of Technology on Dec. 9 at 6 p.m.

Men's Basketball

Coming off two encouraging wins, the men's basketball team hoped to continue their hot play against Pratt Institute on Dec. 1. In a close game, headed by junior forward Altin Kukaj, who had 14 points and five assists, BC would lose this game 78-66.

A strong second quarter saw BC put up 44 points, but it wasn't enough to come up with the win. Center Tyler Gordon had 12 points and 11 rebounds, ending with a double-double. Sophomore guard Joe Charles had 12

points as well, and Thomas Hall had 10 points and seven rebounds.

BC returned home on Wednesday, Dec. 3, and played against Albert Magnus College.

Although BC had home-court advantage, the Bulldogs lost to the Falcons 88-54. The Falcons ended the first quarter up 51-28, asserting their dominance early on. Hall had 14 points with seven assists, and Gordon ended with 12 points and seven rebounds. Senior guard D'aze Hunter had 10 points off the bench.

However, this loss wouldn't shake BC as it entered its CUNYAC conference match against CCNY on Dec. 5.

If this game were judged by the first quarter alone, it would have been a back-and-forth affair; however, despite a tight first quarter in which BC ended 35-32, they took the win with a dominant second quarter.

Outscoring CCNY 39-12,



Thomas Hall dribbling./*Courtesy of BC Athletics*

BC won its CUNYAC opener 74-44. Junior center Herbert Gary played a vital role in the win as he came off the bench in a crucial moment and ended with a double-double.

Gary had 11 points and 11 rebounds in his time off the bench. Charles had 13 points, eight rebounds, and Hall ended his night with a great performance with 15 points, eight rebounds, five

assists, and two steals.

Junior guard Jordany Martinez had a great game with 12 points, five rebounds, and one steal. Their next game will be against Lehman College on Dec. 11 at 7:00 p.m.



Graphic by Jocelyn Rios, Ameena Khan, Nicole Ruiz, Josiah Stanton, Chaveley Reynoso, Genna Ayyad, and Sandra Pantaleon