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THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE VANGUARD

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Cover by Jocelyn Rios

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CLUB HOURS
118 ROOSEVELT HALL
THURSDAY: 12:30 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

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MTA Sues U.S. Government Over Funding for Subway Projects

By Emily Nixon
News Editor

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) sued the U.S. Government for breach of contract when the government failed to distribute previously allocated funds for one of two development projects. The Second Avenue Subway Project has been progressing with its second phase, which intends to expand subway service from 96 St. to 125 St., but that work has not been paid for, according to MTA Chair and CEO Janno Liber.

“When we put the paper in and make requisitions, and they’ve refused to do it, and then, when we kept putting the paper in through the online portal, they shut down the online portal, so we’re just going in what they call the federal court of claims, because it’s an action on a contract, to get them to release the money and let [the project] keep going,” said Liber in a New York City Council Budget Meeting on March 17.

Last October, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Russ Vought, announced on X that the Department of Transportation would freeze the funding designated for the Second Avenue pending a review “to ensure funding is not flowing based on unconstitutional DEI principles,” as previously reported by The Vanguard.

The government had no standing to revoke or freeze the funding, according to Liber.

“We were in no way violating any terms of the agreement. The Grant Agreement between the



MTA Logo./Courtesy of the MTA website

federal government and us obligates them to reimburse us,” said Liber in the March 17 meeting. “We intend to get every cent of what has been promised, and frankly, based on the agreements, what’s owed to New Yorkers — and we’re not afraid to fight for it in court.”

The Second Avenue Subway Project has been in the works for decades, and the MTA and New York Governor Kathy Hochul have doubled down their support to finally finish the project.

“Second Avenue Subway is an incredibly worthy project, long overdue transit justice for East Harlem, promised since the 1940s. Phase two is well underway, and it’s on budget, and it’s on schedule,” said Liber at the meeting. “We don’t want that work to stop because of this funding gamesmanship that’s going on in Washington.”

“For nearly a century, leaders have made big promises to the people of East Harlem about the expansion of the Second Avenue Subway,” said Hochul in a statement. “For nearly a century,

those promises have been broken. When I took office, I pledged to be the Governor who kept her promise to this neighborhood and finally got this subway built.”

According to Liber, more contracts are needed to continue the project’s progress, but the lack of promised federal financial support has become a major concern, prompting the lawsuit.

“We’re on the verge of awarding a roughly billion-dollar contract for excavation on Second Avenue, and we need to know the federal money is available, and that’s why we’ve had to take this action.”

The decision to withhold the funding has yet to affect the project’s timeline or the employees working on it, but the conflict has become a point of frustration for leaders like Hochul.

“Once again, New York has been forced to sue the Trump Administration to stop them from erratically shutting off billions of dollars in previously committed infrastructure funding,” said Hochul in a statement. “We have already made enormous

progress — work is underway, and the project is moving on schedule and on budget. But Donald Trump’s unlawful funding pause has put this entire project at risk.”

The Hudson River Tunnel Project — also known as the Gateway Project — successfully sued the U.S. Government when its funding was withheld for the same rationale as the Second Avenue Subway Project on Feb. 18, according to New York State Attorney General Letitia James.

“This funding freeze was unlawful from the start. We took swift action in court, and now every dollar that was illegally withheld has been released. This morning, New York and New Jersey received the remaining nearly \$130 million owed for the Gateway Project, finally unlocking all the funding that had been frozen,” said James in a statement.

The swift resolution for the Gateway Project has given MTA officials hope that the interruption of financial support will be short-lived, according to Liber.

Hochul has been a critic of the Trump Administration’s decisions, but feels the funding freeze will inevitably be lifted.

“His actions alone have jeopardized the commutes of over 100,000 New Yorkers and the jobs of thousands of union workers, but New York will not back down,” said Hochul in a statement. “Just like Gateway, Donald Trump has two options: restore the money now, or wait for a judge to force him to.”

Fatal Crash at LaGuardia Airport Highlights Staffing Concerns During DHS Shutdown

By Emily Nixon
News Editor

On March 22, an Air Canada jet collided with a Port Authority fire truck on the runway at LaGuardia Airport in Queens, causing two deaths and sending nearly 40 people to the hospital, as reported by the Associated Press (AP).

There were two air traffic controllers in the tower at the time of the collision, but they were allegedly distracted due to an earlier incident, according to an audio recording obtained by The New York Times (NYT).

“We were dealing with an emergency earlier. I messed up,” an alleged air traffic controller said to a different plane after the incident occurred, according to the NYT.

National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy said, in a press briefing, that the investigation would have to dig deeper into the full context before deciding if the controllers were distracted from their duties during the incident.

“I would caution pointing fingers at controllers and saying distraction was involved. This is a heavy workload environment,” said Homendy.

“We still have to determine what happened at shift change, which was around 10:30. We have to determine who else was in the tower, and the facility, and available at the time. We know that controller was still on duty for several minutes afterwards. Normally, they would be relieved. We have questions about that. We also have questions about what else was occurring- what other traffic they were dealing with at the time.”

Despite early assumptions that staffing issues caused the accident, the Department of Transportation Secretary, Sean Duffy, said, “We are a couple controllers short in total, but it is a very well-staffed airport,” according to NYT. According to the same article, LaGuardia has 33 of 37 air-traffic controller positions filled.

According to a press briefing by Homendy, the Controller-in-charge was performing the duties of the clearance delivery controller, who “provides pilots with their departure clearance,” on top of their other duties to ensure the safety of all operations during their shift.



NTSB agents investigating the plane./Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

During the same briefing, Homendy states that it is unclear who was acting as the ground controller during the incident. Ground controllers are responsible for all movements on the airport taxiways, “and that generally excludes active runways,” according to Homendy.

On the night of the incident, the Local Controller and the Controller-in-charge would have shared these duties, although it is unclear which controller was responsible for which duties at that time.

“So, these two positions were combined into two positions, and what we do know is that that is in the standard operating procedures for LaGuardia,” said Homendy. “It’s also common practice across the national airspace where you would have two controllers in the tower cab during the midnight shift.”

The midnight shift usually occurs from 10:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. This shift has been a point of concern for the NTSB in previous investigations.

“The midnight shift, as a reminder, is one that we have, many times at the NTSB, have raised concerns about with respect to fatigue. Again, I do not know- we have no indication that was a factor here, but it is a shift that we have been focused on in past investigations,” said Homendy.

Despite the incident, Homendy reassured potential

travelers that the aviation system has been fortified against such incidents occurring.

“We rarely, if ever, investigate a major accident where it was one failure. Our aviation system is incredibly safe because there are multiple layers of defense built in to prevent an accident. So when something goes wrong, that means there are many, many things that went wrong,” said Homendy.

Air Traffic Controllers are employees of the Department of Transportation (DOT), which has not been affected by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shutdown.

“The [One Big, Beautiful Bill Act] included \$75 billion in funding for immigration enforcement through fiscal year 2029, and that money is still available despite the rest of DHS being shut down,” reported Business Insider.

However, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) workers have not been spared from the DHS shutdown; some have been working without pay for over a month since the shutdown, according to Business Insider.

“Hundreds of TSA employees have quit, and thousands more have called out of work after going weeks without pay,” according to CNN.

In response to long lines and short staffing at airports, U.S. President Donald Trump has

deployed Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to help support TSA agents during the shutdown.

“On Monday, ICE will be going to airports to help our wonderful TSA Agents who have stayed on the job despite the fact that the Radical Left Democrats, who are only focused on protecting hard line criminals who have entered our Country illegally, are endangering the USA by holding back the money that was long ago agreed to with signed and sealed contracts, and all,” according to Trump’s post on Truth Social.

ICE Agents have been deployed to 14 airports, including LaGuardia Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport, according to CNN.

The role ICE officers will play in the security process has been unclear due to the lack of training provided to them, according to a press briefing by TSA Union officials.

“You can’t train [the security check process] in a day. You can’t train that in a few hours. That’s months of training with TSA for hired employees,” said Hydrick Thomas, a Marine veteran and TSA employee of more than 20 years, in the press briefing.

“They got ICE doing their little trainings today at certain airports, so I’m like, “how do you train them to do the job

TSA employees been doing for years?”

ICE has been highly contested in public opinion, as previously reported by The Vanguard.

On Monday, video footage of ICE officers arresting Angelina Lopez-Jimenez and Wendy Godinez-Lopez at the San Francisco International Airport went viral.

The DHS posted on X that this arrest occurred before ICE deployment to airports.

“This arrest of ILLEGAL ALIENS occurred yesterday on March 22, 2026 — BEFORE ICE officers were deployed to airports to bolster TSA efforts [...] While being escorted to the international terminal for processing, Lopez-Jimenez attempted to flee and resisted law enforcement officers. ICE is working as quickly as possible to repatriate the family unit to their home country of Guatemala,” stated the post.

The deployment of ICE agents has been contested and is seen as counterintuitive to industry officials.

Thomas told CNN, “If you want to bring a tactical force into an environment where you’re required to have customer service and a skill set – a mindset where you know what you’re doing, how to identify something that might be suspicious – they don’t have that training.”

In Pi, We Crust: Pi Day With BC's Math Club

By T'Neil Gooden
Features Editor

On March 17, Brooklyn College's (BC) Math Club celebrated Pi Day with over 75 students participating in a multitude of mathematical pie and baked pie activities. From pie-eating contests to drawing the perfect circle, BC students had the opportunity to be a winner on the annual celebration of the mathematical constant.

"You can have fun with Pi Day, no matter whether you're a freshman, upperclassman, professor, admin, whatever," said Nana Kiziriya, senior and Vice President of BC's Math Club. "Also, I really appreciate the strong math community here at BC, and I love that we all come together to make this celebration happen. It's 100% a community effort, and I think people are happier knowing they're welcomed into or part of a tight-knit, larger community."

Although Pi Day is held on March 14, the event was held the following Tuesday.

Students filled the Ingersoll 1310 boards with their "pi-ku poems," which were poems all about pi that consist of a two-syllable/one-syllable/ four-syllable format. Attendees also had the chance to compete in games, including a pie-eating contest, won by sophomore Hailiang Situ,



Free Pi pins for BC students celebrating Pi Day./T'Neil Gooden

and a Pi number memorization contest, won by Omar Mejia Aguilar.

"It was especially nice seeing people genuinely have fun with something that my E-Board and I put so much time and energy into," said Katherine Hepburn, junior and treasurer of the BC Math Club.

"I also loved that there was truly something for everyone to do, which made the event feel very inclusive and welcoming. Personally, my favorite moment was watching the pie-eating contest—it brought a lot of energy and excitement, and it was great seeing people have fun and cheer each other on."

Members of the math club want students to realize that math is an interactive collegiate major and a practice that should be continuously celebrated.

"It's so normalized for math to be seen as a dreadful field of study. Celebrating Pi Day at this scale allows students to strengthen rapport with their peers and, hopefully, ease the fear of mathematics with fun games," said Chanell Cunningham, senior and president of the BC Math Club.

Students who participated in these mathematical and physical competitions were able to win math and BC-related merch, anime-inspired collectables, math-related books, and fun mugs.

Participants remembered the day fondly.

"Crazy wacky fun! And bringing the community together. I don't think I've ever seen more humans buzzing and mingling at school than at Pi Day," Kiziriya said.

"Students and faculty often reside in separate worlds, and I think it's important we join

forces for a common purpose sometimes, even if it's just to be gluttonous nerds together."

Students and faculty indulged in free pie for the occasion and interacted with each other, as one of the activities was a professor-based two truths and a lie. All these games were created through collaborative efforts, allowing the math club and math department to share ideas.

"In our meetings, we all brainstormed what the best way to go about bridging math and festive activities would be; this was the math club's and the math department's collaborative ideas at play," said Cunningham. "For my ideas, I tried to pull examples from other fun events I've gone to, outside of the university."

"Pi Day is a celebration of curiosity," Hepburn told the Vanguard. "It highlights that math isn't just about solving problems—it's about exploring patterns, finding connections, and building a community around shared ideas. That's something I really value, both in my studies and in the math club."

Attention was also drawn to students' experience as attendees.

"As hardworking students swamped with work and life, we need to be intentional, to carve out time, to have fun, and be ourselves outside of all that. It's important to find happiness along the way to your goals and not just put it off indefinitely, because the way you live your days is the way you live your life," Kiziriya said.

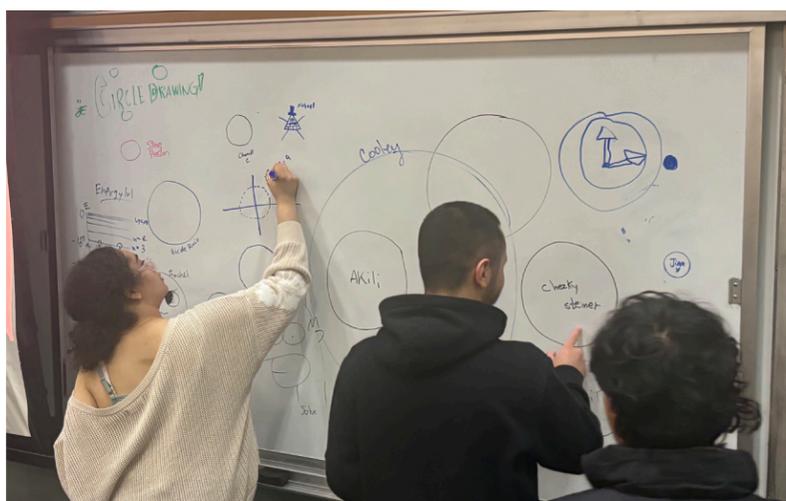
Members of the math club want students to feel free to join their team.

"[The Math Club is] really chill, welcoming space where you can just show up, meet people, and be part of a community," Hepburn said. "You definitely don't have to be a math major or be 'good at math'—it's more about hanging out with people who are curious and open to trying something new. We focus a lot on making math feel less stressful and more social, whether that's through events, games, or just talking and working through things together. It's a good way to meet people and be involved without any pressure."

Kiziriya wants to leave other students with a reminder to take care of themselves.

"We should not forget that we all work so hard for a purpose: for ourselves, for each other, for life. Our work shouldn't drain us of life; it should fuel it. We need to be mindful of the larger impact of the work we do, and it starts with taking care of ourselves and staying connected with our community."

Students interested in upcoming events from the BC Mathematics Club can check their Instagram, @bcmathematicsclub.



BC students drawing perfect circles to celebrate Pi Day./T'Neil Gooden

Brooklyn College's LGBTA Hosts Black Dandyism DIY Tie Workshop

By **Serena Edwards**
Opinions Editor

Across all CUNY schools, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender alliances (LGBTA) come together to host an annual Vogue Ball near the end of the school year. This year's theme is Black Dandyism; to understand this year's theme, Brooklyn College's (BC) LGBTA hosted a workshop educating students on the history of Black Dandyism and made Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ties to help prepare for the main event.

At the beginning of the event, there was a brief presentation on the impact of Black Dandyism through a cultural lens.

Black Dandyism is the fusion of African and European fashion, with many styles blending concepts from both traditions.

Connecting history to modern times, the LGBTA also discussed the Harlem Renaissance's impact on modern dandyism.

"Men adopted 'dandy' styles, featuring well-tailored, luxurious suits. A signature look was the zoot suit, featuring draped, long jackets with padded shoulders and high-waisted, wide-legged 'peg' pants. Women embraced new-lined freedoms with shorter, looser, calf-length flapper dresses, feathered headbands, and pearls," according to the National African American History Museum (NAAHM).

Another discussion topic was fashion as a form of counter-protest towards governmental pressure, as viewed through the lens of the Civil Rights Movement. Activist groups like The Black Panther Party (BPP) were mentioned with their fashion statement and use of leather as a symbol for power. Looking at fashion from a different perspective, the presentation informed attendees on the bigger impact fashion has had in a political context.

Other topics discussed were historical movements such as the Silent Protest Parade and how fashion curated a space for the

Black community.

"After a spate of brutal racial violence in the Midwest in 1917, an estimated 10,000 African Americans marched down New York's Fifth Avenue on July 28, 1917, in the Silent Protest Parade. The first mass demonstration by Black citizens in the nation, it included large groups of Black men in suits, ties and straw hats—a vision of dignity and resilience, demanding equal rights as Americans," the presentation stated.

Kayla McCoy, a junior double majoring in business and music studies, discussed her connection with fashion and embracing her creativity.

"[The BC LGBTA] definitely should have more events like this, where we're kind of like, just getting our hands dirty and just being involved in creating things. Ideas I probably have. I feel like we should kind of continue doing mission-based events or crafts," said McCoy.

She went into the reasons why she chose to attend the event.

"I chose to come to this event because I love working with my hands, and I saw ties and like making them. I love making things and crafts, and I think, yeah, that's the way to go," said McCoy.

Another attendee, Zach Walker, spoke on the appreciation for the teaching of the history of Dandyism.

"I feel like it's more that it helps us as students and people understand, like we're different things that we were interested in love come from. Like it helps us have a greater

appreciation of it, knowing the history of it. I feel that this is for me," said Walker.

Ahmed Fall, treasurer of LGBTA, spoke with the Vanguard about the vision behind the event.

"We did the event to prepare people for our ball this year [...] we did another similar event for our vogue ball in 2024, with that theme being

masquerade balls, in which we made masks. This time, because the theme is Black Dandyism and we're decorating ties, but also has more of a cultural tie to the event," said Fall.

Fall explained the cultural ties of this event to the Black community and the importance of Black Dandyism today.

"Black culture is behind dandyism, and also Black culture behind the ballroom as well. It really fits together, and being able to celebrate that through our event. And so why fashion is so important is something that we love to our community," said Fall.

Fall further emphasized the fluidity that Black dandyism

brings within fashion and ballroom culture.

"I think especially with dandyism, you can celebrate a lot of femininity, but also a lot of

theme was masquerade. After hosting a mask-making event before the ball in the past, Fall shared that the club plans to host events in



L to R: BC students Kayla McCoy and Caro Crosby holding their DIY ties./Allen Espinal

masculinity as well. And being able to let people express both those in that space is something that we really wanted our attendees in our community to be able to do," said Fall.

In 2024, the Vogue ball

preparation for this year's ball.

"We definitely will have another workshop. Actually, we're planning a clothing swap, which is another month. We do. So it's like a thrifting event where you can trade with other people. So we're gonna be having that before the ball as well to help people get ready."

Fall left words of wisdom about intersectionality within the LGBTQ+ community.

"We just want to, and our club is striving to have more events where we're like, exploring the intersections of queerness and other cultures, because queer people exist in all spaces, and we want to highlight their presence and their impact in the spaces that liberated black queer people."

The Vogue Ball is set to take place on April 30, 2026. For information, visit the LGBTA Instagram page, @brooklyn.lgbta.



DIY Ties from the event./Allen Espinal

Struggling, Striving, Thriving: Hess Week's AAPI Mental Health Panel With Russell M. Jeung

By Renae Visico
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, March 18, the Brooklyn College (BC) Ethyl R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities hosted a panel discussing the unique mental health challenges that Asian Americans face, as part of the annual Hess Week lecture series.

Co-sponsored by the Department of Psychology, the panel was moderated by Erika Niwa, an Associate Professor of the BC Psychology and Children & Youth Studies programs.

The panelists included Asian American psychology professors from across the nation: Dr. Clarissa S. L. Cheah from the University of Maryland, Dr. Cindy H. Liu from Harvard Medical School, and 2025-2026 Hess Scholar-In-Residence Russell M. Jeung.

Hess Week is an annual event at Brooklyn College organized by the Wolfe Institute, where a “distinguished individual representative of an academic discipline at the college” is invited as a Hess Scholar-In-Residence. This year’s Scholar, Russell Jeung, is a Professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco University who co-founded the Stop AAPI Hate organization and authored multiple books about Asian Americans’ relations to religion and faith.

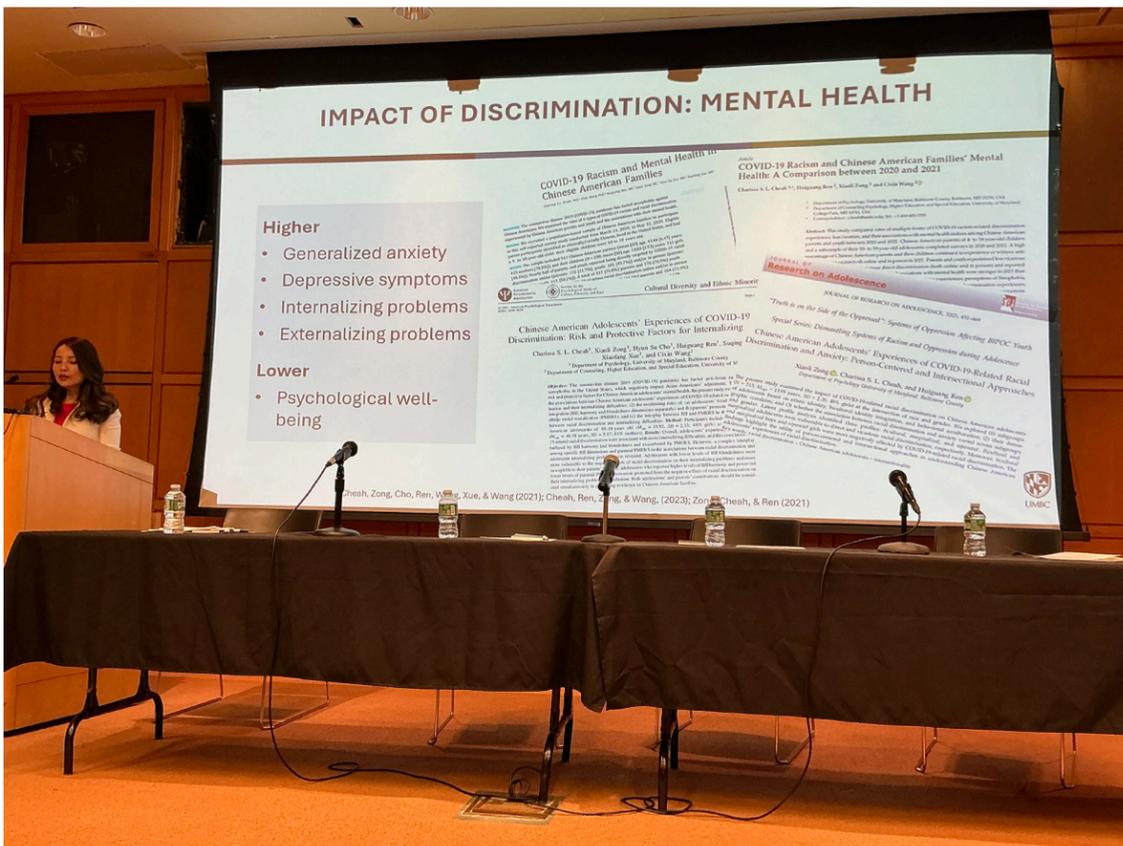
“You are in for a very important, and frankly urgent, conversation on Asian American mental health,” introduced Gaston Alonso, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Wolfe Institute.

The panel began with a ten-minute lecture from each professor.

Dr. Cheah stressed the importance of racial-ethnic socialization to improve mental health in Asian Americans, which has gotten worse ever since the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in anti-Asian discrimination.

“In the interest of trying to protect their children from these experiences of discrimination, some parents were encouraging their children to conceal their Asian or Chinese heritage,” said Cheah. “Concealing Chinese culture, connection, practices, and messages relate to greater child difficulty at all ages.”

Dr. Liu, who affectionately referred to this panel as the “Russell Jeung fan club,” discussed the broader public health impacts of race-based trauma, including the newly researched tendencies of Asian Americans to turn to Artificial Intelligence (AI) for mental



Dr. Clarissa S.L. Cheah describing the impact of racial discrimination on Asian American mental health./Renae Visico

health support.

“Asian Americans are six times more likely to trust AI more than a human counselor,” said Liu. “It’s also [because of] the cultural systemic factors that limit help-seeking like stigma, model minority myth, and just not having a lot of culturally competent providers.”

Dr. Liu further expanded on this tendency during the panel discussion, saying that AI’s constant validation and availability work against the processes that make therapy effective.

“For every prompt, [AI will] validate you. They say, ‘Great point!’, ‘Good question!’, ‘Glad you asked,’” explained Liu. “The therapeutic process works because, in between talking with people, you’re sort of processing it on your own. [...] That’s really regulating, and that’s sort of lost when you have AI who’s always there.”

Students found this point particularly interesting, as the perspective on AI was novel to them.

“I didn’t know before I got here how many Asian Americans are relying on AI for mental health. That really is so concerning for me,” said junior Ardita Zeqiraj. “If it’s drawing from inherently racist or old studies, then it’s just an echo chamber. And it’s not thinking for you.”

Collectivity was a major theme in Dr. Jeung’s lecture; he discussed the effects of collective empathy and racial trauma among Asian Americans and how they can address this trauma with collective care.

“I can argue that there were specifically Asian ways of responding to trauma that were really hopeful and useful,” said

Jeung. “I would encourage students to realize that a lot of us experience collective racial trauma, but it’s not the first time. We do have community resources and cultural wealth from our families and ancestors on how to deal with it.”

During the panel discussion, Professor Niwa encouraged the panelists to address the invisibility that many Asian Americans feel, suggesting ways to create spaces where they can feel comfortable fully expressing themselves.

“The concept of invisibility has been used very much in relation to being the model minority,” explained Cheah. “It also perpetuates this idea that we cannot speak up when we should.”

The panelists emphasized the importance of fostering spaces for community and diversity, including racial affinity groups, among Asian Americans in healing from collective racial trauma.

“Beyond fight or flight, you can flock,” said Jeung. “One way we can keep on building freedom is to continue flocking. To not isolate

yourself, but to learn that when we’re together, we’re a lot stronger.”

Many Asian Americans also bear the burden of unrealistic expectations, especially from their parents or teachers, to constantly be the best at everything they do. The panelists discussed how these expectations can further damage mental health in ways that often go unseen, as there are usually no behavioral issues present.

“Quite frankly, it’s a cultural value. We’re all students, so you all should get good grades, right? We should strive for that,” said Liu. “So there’s no disagreement there. The disagreement is

actually, ‘Don’t put me in a box. Do not assume anything about me.’ And I think that is a unique sort of U.S. experience.”

Dr. Jeung continued to advocate for collective spaces where Asian Americans can share their experiences and trauma, and where everyone can learn their part to play in the fight for racial justice.

“If we don’t tell our own stories, who will?” asked Dr. Jeung. “Each individual has certain capacities for their role in fighting racism. I’m grateful that it’s not just one voice, or one data set, but it’s the community coming to share their stories and address them.”

Students took the themes of community to heart, feeling motivated to look beyond their own interests and strive towards collective change.

“The most important thing I learned is that your struggles are not your own,” said senior Kevin Zou. “Everything is interconnected, and you can take steps to learn about other people and how to also give back to the Asian American community.”

To close the panel, Professor Niwa reminded students that one of the first steps in healing is looking out for each other.

“My dad used to tell me this all the time, as a Japanese American,” said Niwa. “From flocking, to socializing, to my kids who teach me things constantly, even when I don’t want them to, we belong to each other.”

Students interested in the Wolfe Institute can visit their Instagram: @bc_wolfeinstitute.

**Struggling, Surviving, Thriving:
Asian American Mental Health**







Leading experts discuss mental health, socio-emotional, and developmental challenges facing Asian Americans, with an emphasis on adolescents and college students.
Charissa S. L. Cheah, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Russell M. Jeung, San Francisco State University and Hess Scholar 2026
Cindy Liu, Harvard Medical School
Erika Niwa, Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center

Wed. March 18; 3:40 PM to 4:55 PM
Woody Tanger Auditorium, Brooklyn College Library

Flyer promoting the panel./Courtesy of @bc_wolfeinstitute on Instagram

“Writing Chinese American Memoirs” Hess Week 2026 with Professor Russell M. Jeung and Author Ava Chin

By Aameena Khan
Staff Cartoonist

On Wednesday, March 18, in the Woody Tanger Auditorium, Professor and Robert L. Hess Scholar-in-Residence, Russell M. Jeung, held the second day of the lecture series with guest speaker and author Ava Chin and Assistant Professor Alvin Khiêm Bui moderating the discussion.

Both speakers discussed similar themes of self-identity and discovery among the diaspora, highlighting the importance of family and ancestor history preservation among generations, and “comparing East Coast to West Coast Chinese American experiences,” according to the Brooklyn College website.

“A biography tells the story of a life, while a memoir often tells the story of a particular career, events, or time,” said Bui when introducing the panel, asking the speakers as to why they chose to label their books as “memoirs” instead of autobiographies.

Both speakers discussed their choice of labeling to emphasize the highlighted experiences of tracing back their ancestors’ history and personal connection to community and identity.

Ava Chin is a 5th-generation Chinese American New Yorker, journalist, Professor of Creative Nonfiction and Journalism at the City University of New York (CUNY), and award-winning author of “Mott Street: A Chinese American Family’s Story of Exclusion and Homecoming”.

The book addressed her childhood in Queens,

raised by a single mother, and how being reunited with her father made her realize that generations of her maternal and paternal ancestors had resided in the same apartment complex in New York City’s (NYC) Chinatown on Mott Street.

“So many generations of my family have lived in this building, great grandparents, and their siblings, parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and now me. Each wing of the family can trace its lineage back to an ancestor born and raised in the same fertile river delta, an ocean and continent away,” Chin cited from her memoir.

Chin further discusses her attempts to uncover her family’s history, as well as her relationship to them, questioning why so much of it was hidden, discussing her own feelings of exclusion, unanswered questions when interviewing family members, the impact of the Chinese Exclusion Act fabricating identities, and the erased history of her ancestors’ contribution to America, such as the nation’s first transcontinental railroad.

“It is a general rule of thumb amongst researchers and historians alike that it is a written record, that is the gold standard,” said Chin.

“But when you’re Chinese in America, with roots that stretch back to the exclusion era, it is the historical record that stretches that is a fabulous fabrication, and the oral stories passed down from generation to generation, like rare evolving heirlooms, that ultimately holds the keys to the truth.”

The Hess Scholar, Russell M. Jeung, a professor of



L to R: Moderator Alvin Khiêm Bui, and guest speakers author Ava Chin and Professor Russell M. Jeung./
Aameena Khan

Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University and co-Founder of Stop Asian American and Pacific Islander Hate (Stop AAPI Hate), discussed similar ideas in his own memoir, “At Home in Exile: Finding Jesus Among My Ancestors and Refugee Neighbors”. The book explored his own experience of uncovering family history origins and his own sense of identity and belonging, along with his Chinese-Hakka roots. Jeung compares his journey of finding identity with Disney feature films, beginning to recognize his own Chinese roots.

“There are 47 million other Chinese in the diaspora. That’s not special Disney material at all. Luckily, I knew that in my blood, I’m Hakka, a distinct linguistic group in China,” Jeung shared from his memoir.

“So, when I had a free afternoon while probably in Hong Kong, I went in search of my written Chin Wan district.

There, I hope to find clues about my Hakka heritage. Perhaps they could have cool styles of

art for music. Maybe I could find records on my ancestors and trace my lineage back for centuries.

I long for a metaphorical home, where I could hang my hat, or maybe better yet, in Disney fashion, I could be a descendant of a Hakka king crawling. So I took the subway to this museum for Hakka in Hong Kong.”

Jeung describes his early efforts to retrace his steps and uncover his family’s unique origins, his excitement at uncovering clues and establishing identity, and the moments of disappointment when his expectations weren’t met, leaving him even more uncertain about his identity.

“I expected to enter more interesting exhibits in the other spaces, and the inner rooms were quite barren, too. The living room had a wooden bench and a small shrine, but no specific lattice work, no exquisite pottery, not even decorative flooring. I became increasingly dismayed as the bedrooms in the closet containing typical

Hakka clothing further revealed the simplicity of my people.”

When asked about future projects, Chin discusses her current project of a “follow-up book to Mott Street,” focusing on the 1965 Immigration Act and ideas of a potential Mott Street television show project.

Jeung is currently working on publishing a book about “countering Anti-Immigration rhetoric and narrative,” in the rise of anti-immigration sentiment and deportation threats, focusing on the gifts and values of the diverse immigrant community he grew up in.

“I’ll just say for young people,” Chin concludes the panel. “It’s really important if you’re interested in these stories to start now. So, just start asking questions of family members, and because if you don’t do it, then there will come a day where you’re not able to do it.”

Bassist Melissa Auf der Maur Celebrates 90s Rock Memoir with Mark Ronson at Brooklyn Brewery



Melissa Auf der Maur reading an excerpt from her memoir./Margot Dragos

By Margot Dragos
Arts Editor

Former bassist of the bands “Hole” and “The Smashing Pumpkins”, Melissa Auf der Maur, celebrated the release of her memoir “Even The Good Girls Will Cry” on March 18 at the Brooklyn Brewery. Hosted by Word Bookstores, the event featured Auf der Maur and Grammy-award winning producer Mark Ronson for a conversation on the music, misogyny, and culture of the 90s.

Auf der Maur is a musician and photographer from Montreal who came into the spotlight in the 90s as the new bassist of Hole, a rock band fronted by Courtney Love. She played with the band from 1994-1999, then briefly joined The Smashing Pumpkins for their 2000 tour. Her memoir spans from 1991 to 2001, a decade she says defines her and her generation. Released on March 17, which was Auf der Maur’s 54th birthday, the 90s rock memoir details her nontraditional rise to fame.

Fans of Auf der Maur filled Brooklyn Brewery’s tables and bar. The brewery crafted a special “50 Million Year Trip Brown Ale” exclusively for the event. Inspired by “50 Million Year Trip (Downside Up)” by Kyuss, the brew was a tribute to “analog grit, feminine ferocity, and the beautifully messy magic of the alternative era,” as stated on a flyer.

The event was added after Auf der Maur’s book release at Strand Bookstore the night before quickly sold out.

“I saw the event at The Strand, and I didn’t get tickets in time, so I grabbed tickets to this one,” said Elizabeth Moylan,

40, from Flatbush. “I was super stoked they added a second night.”

Attendees were excited to hear Auf der Maur talk about her experience in Hole, where many attendees first heard of her. She joined Hole shortly after their sophomore album “Live Through This” was released in 1994.

“I remember the first time I heard Live Through This. I’d never heard a woman be angry before,” Moylan recalled. “It was like ‘my people are out there.’”

“My dad and I bonded a lot over music, and he would kind of guide me towards these strong female characters,” said Sarah Paterek, 26, Bushwick. “So Hole was just kind of a natural progression.”

A nod to the memoir’s title, Auf der Maur was seen as the good girl of Hole amid the chaos of the band. “Live Through This” was released a week after Love’s husband and Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain passed away. Rumors spread that Love was responsible for Cobain’s death, adding to her polarizing persona.

“People hated [Courtney], and people hated her for no reason,” Moylan said.

“I’m really curious to know what it was like to work with [Courtney] and to deal with that, especially as a young woman herself, wanting to make noise in that world and having so much pushback.”

Auf der Maur has frequently rooted for Love and told The Guardian their relationship is “the best it’s ever been.”

“She’s made a point of saying that rooting for Courtney has always been a big part of her life, but I’m not sitting here just being like ‘Oh, talk about

Courtney,” said Paterek. “She’s multifaceted, she’s explored other bands and genres, so whatever it is she has to say, I’m all ears for.”

The event began with Auf der Maur reading an excerpt from “Chapter 35: First Loves Save The Day,” which recalls the summer of 1999 when Hole played Canada’s Edge Fest alongside Marilyn Manson. She wrote how Brian Warner, frontman of Marilyn Manson, and Love were publicly feuding, and that this pairing was meant to cause drama.

“What annoyed me was that Hole kept on being pushed with them, as if the monster and the monster should be together,” Auf der Maur told Ronson. “It made me annoyed because it was not an obvious [choice] other than the bad drama.”

Auf der Maur refers to her rise to fame as a “grunge Cinderella story,” with a beer bottle thrown by her friend at a 1991 Smashing Pumpkins concert acting as the “glass slipper.” She apologized to frontman Billy Corgan for her friend’s behavior, and the two became pen pals. Her band, Tinker, then opened for Corgan’s, leading to him recommending her to Love to join Hole.

Auf der Maur had only been playing bass for a year when she was thrust into the spotlight.

“I had played six rock concerts when I joined Hole and played in front of 65,000 people for my first show,” Auf der Maur told the audience. “So everything was like an A-Z Cinderella story. All of a sudden, I was at the ball.”

Auf der Maur comments on how her memoir reframes

Love in the history of 90s rock.

“It was this illusion of this ‘women’s power’ time, and then they are burning this woman at the stake and saying she killed her husband,” said Auf der Maur. “She is a single mother, a widow, with a drug problem, and no parents. So a big part of this is reclaiming and framing that story.”

“It is the thing that you really leave this book with: feeling the visceral power of Courtney, feeling your love for her, feeling this more than anything I’ve ever read about her,” Ronson told Auf der Maur.

“It was like you’re giving her her flowers in some ways, but in a very no-holds-barred way.”

Hole’s third album, *Celebrity Skin*, came out in 1999, which Ronson mentions was made when music went from analog, physical records and tape, to digital, binary code on computers. At the time, Auf der Maur was upset that her takes were being perfected in a lab.

“I play the best I’ve ever played, I’m told so as well,” Auf der Maur recalls about her recording sessions for *Celebrity Skin*. “I ask this random guy who’s showing me this machine, and I’m like, ‘What do you mean you’re—what about the human touch? Isn’t that an important thing here?’ and he’s like ‘Beinhorn [Celebrity Skin’s producer] likes it perfect.’ I’m like ‘What about imperfect is perfect? I don’t understand.’”

Auf der Maur refers to the 90s as the last analog decade and discusses how technology changed music.

“I’m not saying there’s not positive things that have happened with technology, and you can’t make cool music,” Auf der Maur said. “There is cool music, it’s just the abuse of it and the loss of the magic.”

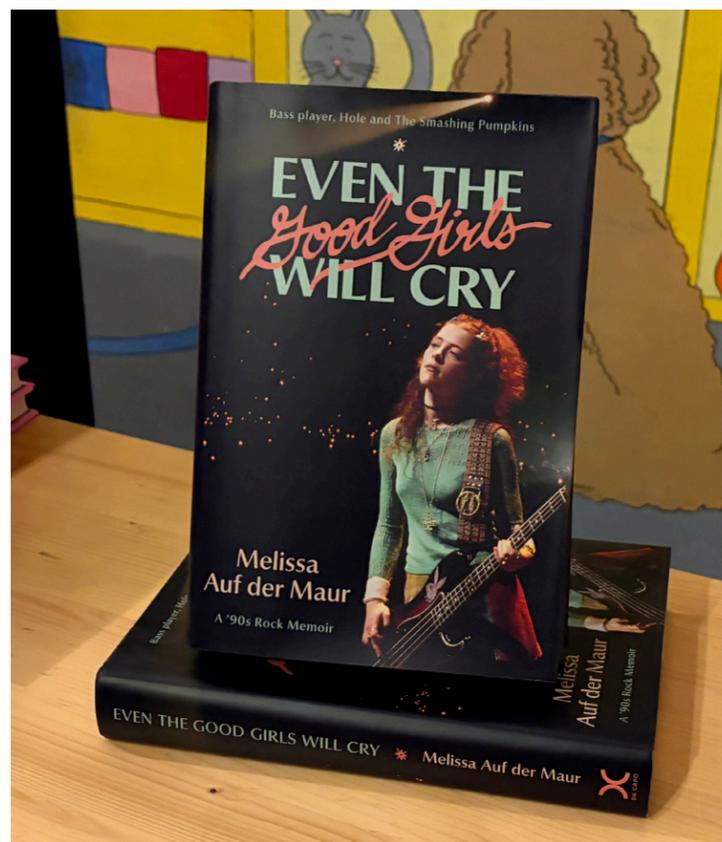
The event was being recorded for an upcoming documentary publicly funded by the National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) about the last analog decade. Attendees were asked to talk to a camera after the event about what they miss about analog media.

“What we’re trying to do is make a documentary that captures you here right now in the 21st century that know that we’re losing something,” Auf der Maur told attendees. “What it is that you want back or want more of, tell the camera so we can get it on record.”

Auf der Maur’s memoir revisits the magic of the 90s and reframes the decade’s portrayal of women.

“This is a long time coming,” said Moylan. “In the 90s, it was much more about the look, the photograph, and not what these women had to say. And it’s about damn time.”

“*Even The Good Girls Will Cry*” by Melissa Auf der Maur is available for purchase at bookstores across the country.



Auf der Maur’s memoir “Even The Good Girls Will Cry” on display at the event./Margot Dragos

Are You Smarter Than An American?: How America Influenced Ignorance

By Serena Edwards
Opinions Editor

Have you ever watched the show “Are You Smarter Than A Fifth Grader”, where adults test their intelligence against children they feel are inferior in certain topics? Throughout the world, different education systems and media outlets ultimately shape people’s knowledge. Throughout the developmental stages, Americans have been taught to think that ignorance is bliss. The United States (U.S.) has fueled ignorance through its abuse of censorship within the media and the education system.

To build a level of ignorance, you have to start from the beginning, which, in the case of many Americans, school is the beginning of life.

The way the U.S. education system regulates what is taught shapes the knowledge people gain when entering the real world.

The first notable change in the education system was when the U.S. introduced the Common Core State Standards, which was created to ensure high quality consistency in education.

“The Common Core State Standards arose from a simple idea: that creating one set of challenging academic expectations for all students would improve achievement and college readiness,” according to Education Week.

Though Common Core was expected to be viewed positively, the curriculum taught was lackluster and whitewashed. Thinking about what students from 2000 to 2010 have been taught in grade school, Black history was taught through the lens of trauma and rarely mentioned any Black icons past three notable figures: Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X, without diving into the complexities of Black history. But the erasure spreads across the diaspora with many students being

taught to look at Christopher Columbus as a savior and unifier; however, when diving into the true history, we are hit with the gruesome reality.

Spending years being taught a “beat around the bush” curriculum trains Americans for blindness to truth and shapes a negative perception of other cultures and perspectives.

Intelligence took a major toll during COVID-19, dealing with trauma and having to adapt to virtual learning was a deficit to many students, causing an increase in lack of essential knowledge in the core subjects: math, English, social studies,

stressed with reaching the standards set for them. In the same way, schools gave participation trophies to promote “inclusivity”, NCLB prevents students from encountering challenges.

“NCLB held schools accountable for how kids learn and achieve. It did this through annual testing, reporting, improvement targets, and penalties for schools,” according to Understood.

This portrayed students as test scores instead of humans. This became even more prominent after COVID, when the curriculum

of bans,” according to PEN America.

Within republican majority states, citizens are unenlightened about the knowledge of our country and international issues, making them a huge target for manipulation. Take President Trump’s supporters, Make America Great Again (MAGA) supporters, who have been noted to be severely undereducated in the basic practices of knowledge politics.

“At the individual level of analysis,

a new level within the Trump administration. For example, major news channels are funded by advertisers, which then curate what can and cannot be published or broadcast.

Channels like PBS and NPR that provided free broadcasting have been defunded by the Trump administration.

“When Congress decided this summer to eliminate \$1.1 billion allocated to public broadcasting, it left some 330 PBS and 246 NPR stations, each with unique issues related to their communities and history, to figure out

what that means,” according to PBS.

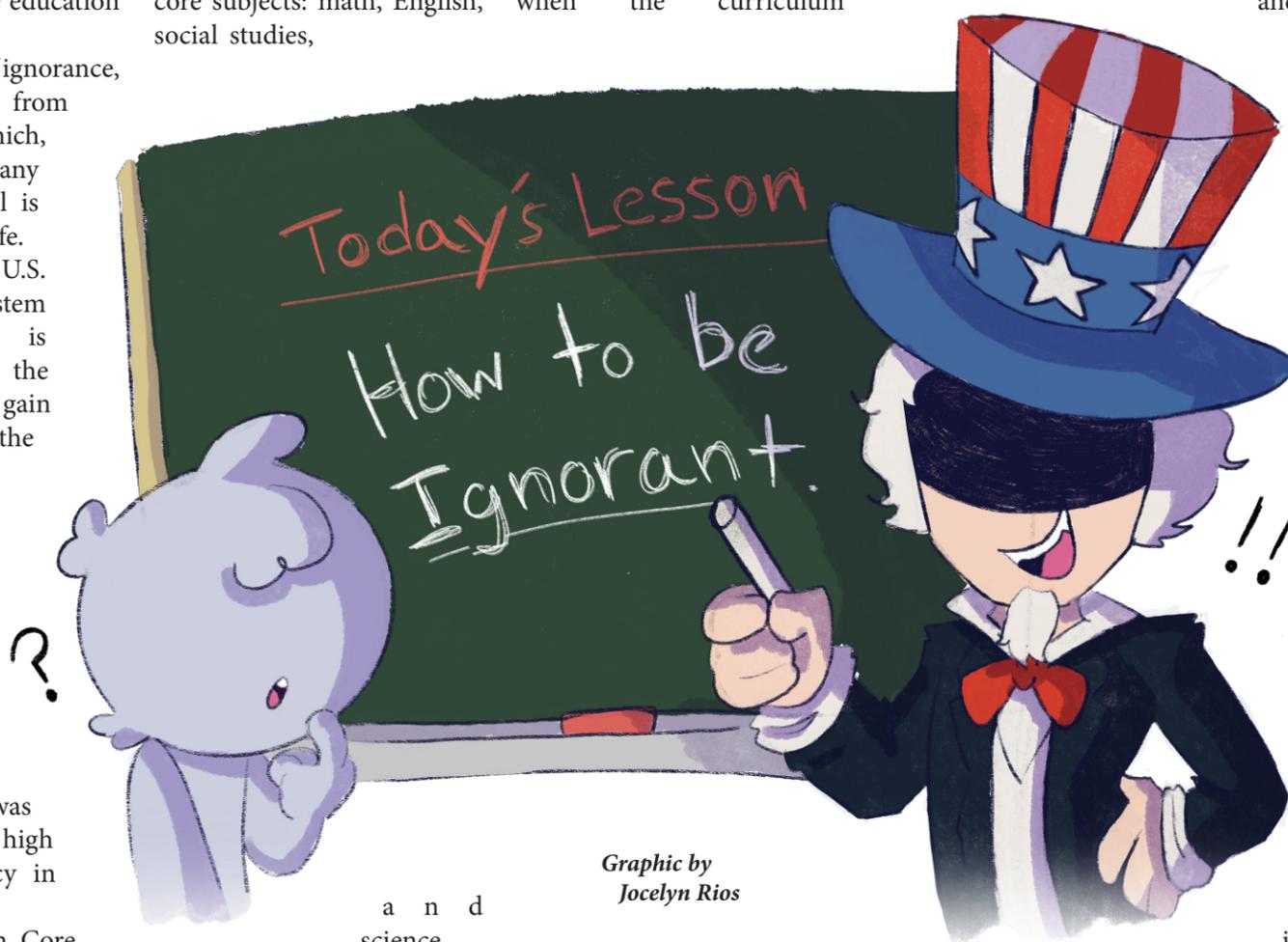
This limited the amount of accessible resources to Americans.

The lack of knowledge within America has become apparent in recent foreign political conflicts. With the narrative of foreign countries being poor, uneducated, and more, we are conditioned to think that America is the greatest. Being willfully ignorant comes at a cost; being the biggest target.

“Feigning ignorance is a manipulation

tactic that can be used to avoid accountability, confuse the other party, or gain the upper hand in a negotiation. By acting uninformed or confused, a person can deflect criticism, evade responsibilities, or manipulate others into revealing more information than they intended,” states Bryant and O’Connor Law Firm.

In the current political climate, we must pay attention and take the initiative to stay informed and on top of the information around us. Whether that’s reading a print newspaper, watching a documentary, or visiting a museum, we must take action for our students, past and present, to remain educated.



Graphic by
Jocelyn Rios

and
science.

Isolation affected basic social skills since after-school programs were being defunded due to economic struggles. The lack of third spaces fueled an isolated mindset. Due to limited exposure to other cultures, we are conditioned to think that only one can exist.

After the pandemic, ignorance took another level: the education scores were dropping, and screen time was rising. The transition for Americans was harder with a lack of educational interactions.

The result of the decline in scores was the implementation of “No Child Left Behind,” (NCLB). Although the initiative meant well in helping educate the new generation, NCLB left educators overwhelmed and

provided a range of literacy and prevented students from stepping outside of their comfort zones. A perfect example of this is reading levels. As you progress as a student, your reading level advances as well, usually based on a letter in the alphabet. When a plethora of reading choices is provided, overwhelming emotions arise, leading the student to choose comfort over challenge.

In states like Texas and Florida, book bans within schools have been on the rise, causing a generational drift from the books we know as classics.

“Bans were found in 23 states and 87 public school districts, with Florida and Texas leading in the number

conservatism scores correlate negatively with SAT, Vocabulary, and Analogy test scores. At the national level of analysis, conservatism scores correlate negatively,” according to ScienceDirect.

We used to have an abundance of educational shows that would compensate for the information the school didn’t teach, but over time, the shows faded, and ignorance became prominent.

But the educational system only takes on the developmental years of our lives. For those choosing to pursue higher education, the media we consume influences what we believe and how we function. There have always been rules and regulations within the media; however, policing and censorship took

Anti-Haitianism in the U.S.: The Horrors of Apathy

By Josiah Sanon
Staff Cartoonist

When we see injustice in the world, the worst thing we can do is get used to it.

This is exactly what we see happening with the rampant hate and discrimination against Haitians (Anti-Haitianism) that America has been brewing for a long time now, and has gone almost completely unaddressed. It is not shocking to see prejudice against Haitians in a place like America, where people who aren't rich or white are systematically mistreated, but the animosity towards Haitians seems to be very targeted.

America has made Haiti and its people a target for xenophobia through a systematic manipulation of the media.

When people think of Haiti, the first thing that comes to mind is the country's struggles with poverty and natural disasters like the 2010 Haitian Earthquake, in which the government's official death count was 300,000 people, officially making it one of the most catastrophic natural disasters in recorded history. The constant documentation of Haiti's decline doesn't humanize them or shed a light on their suffering; it instead perpetuates the image that the entire country and, by extension, its people, American or not, are lost causes and not worth caring about. The increase of Anti-Haitianism in America



The Haitian National Palace (Presidential Palace), located in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, heavily damaged after the 2010 earthquake./Courtesy of Logan Abassi /UNDP Global via Wikimedia Commons

can also be attributed to the statements made by America's public figures. During his presidential campaign in 2024, President Trump made comments about how Haitians were "eating the dogs and eating the cats" of Ohio, which were extremely harmful to Haitian Americans and only served to make dehumanization that much easier. Amidst the rise in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and looming fears around safety, Haitian immigrants are at risk.

Since the 2010 earthquake, Haitian immigrants have earned Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which gives them the ability to work and live in the United States, as well as protects them from deportation.

The Trump Administration attempted to end the TPS

that keeps up to 350,000 Haitians safe and able to work and start families in America, away from the humanitarian crisis going on in their home country. The request was denied, but the mere attempt at ending TPS to no doubt start mass deporting Haitians, despite what is happening in Haiti currently, shows the pure malice of our government towards Haitians.

Though protected, Haitians remain under the watchful eye of ICE and live in fear of possible detention. Recently, in Alabama, Reginald Toussaint, husband and father of four children, was forcibly taken out of his minivan by ICE agents claiming he was "under arrest for being in the United States," leaving his wife, Tyshiana Toussaint, and his two children, who were present in tears and hysterics. Emmanuel

D a m a s died of an untreated tooth infection inside an ICE detention facility. These incidents were cases of intense racism and extreme negligence, and both were able to happen and were barely talked about in the news because the mistreatment and misfortune of Haitians is normal to the people of the US.

In fact, it has become so normal that the discovery of 4 decapitated bodies of Haitian women on Feb. 2 near the Haitian-Dominican border has gone almost completely untouched by any major news outlets. The women were reportedly deported from an ICE detention center in Puerto Rico and just weeks later were found beheaded in a river. A Puerto Rican community leader, Leonard Prophil, claims gangs might

be responsible for the crime.

The fact that all of these horrific moments of anti-Haitianism have gone under the radar shows how strong the apathy towards Haitian issues really is. Not even beheadings are enough for the community to get the well-deserved attention their struggles need, and maybe even some support from communities going through similar hardships. All of this goes to show how terrified we should be of letting things like this be normalized and constantly swept under the rug. Anti-Haitianism is a real issue that grows more and more pressing every day, and it is up to everyone, Haitian or not, to stay aware of it and speak up against it.

Stop! In The Name of Education: Why We Need To Stop The Handholding

By Rami Mansi
Editor-in-Chief

I love holding my friend's hands, I really do! Handholding brings me closer to the people around me, emotionally when I'm standing next to them and physically when we want to stay close during a busy exit from a concert.

Although I love hand-holding with my friends, I don't feel comfortable seeing young students being hand-held through their formative years. I'm not talking about our four-year-olds holding their parents' hands, or grown-ups giving youngsters tablets and electronics to subdue their misbehavior.

Younger generations are being held into adulthood alongside Artificial Intelligence (AI) and coddling parents who are doing more harm than good.

Whether as a future educator or simply a bystander in society, seeing the next generations not get the full experience of going through the motions of life is frustrating, especially knowing that growing up with guidance rather than navigating life blindly made me a stronger adult in the long run.

Help is always a great thing for anyone to have. However, when that "help" is someone doing the work for you, then you're not being helped, you're being put at a disadvantage.

Many parents do not allow their children to critically engage with difficult topics



Two people holding hands./Courtesy of The Swaddle

and take the time to learn about those topics, even when they have a hard time understanding. This concept, also known as productive struggle, is a dying form of critical thinking outside of the classroom.

Parents aren't supporting their students in productive struggle, which prevents them from making mistakes. What ends up happening is that students will copy the behavior that their role models have set for them, not feeling comfortable making mistakes because they have never had the space to safely make those errors.

But this handholding is just one side of the coin. There is a thin line between being overly helpful and overbearingly controlling.

Any parent wants their child to feel safe and sound in their care; it's only natural that restrictions will be placed on a child to protect them, both in person and online. In a digital age, parents are hyper-aware of the dangers the internet can pose to their children. Therefore, some

parents will take on an overbearing nature for their children in an attempt to fully protect them.

This overbearing nature has been shown to hinder kids' development and prevent a successful transition into adulthood, causing more anxiety for new adults and making more room for mistakes, a topic I previously reported on for The Vanguard.

Both of these forms of handholding are dangerous and painful for growing people. Everyone needs help, but no one is helpless, needing guidance at every step. Let your child figure out which shape goes in what hole, and let the people you care for understand it's safe to make these mistakes.

This handholding is not only due to parents or guardians, but also from the corporations that see children and minors as their new clientele.

With AI transforming itself from making blurry photos to now being used in various educational platforms, the controversial

technology has made its way into the palms of our young students.

With the rise of Artificial Intelligence and the digitization of information, students have easy access to the entire world's information at their fingertips.

Students have been found to use AI websites like ChatGPT to solve schoolwork at a faster pace. However, consistent use of AI decreases students' comprehension and critical thinking skills, and for young learners who are building these foundational skills, the use of AI can detrimentally affect their fragile literacy skillset.

As someone who has worked in and studied education for the past three years, teaching and studying students from preschoolers to seventh graders, I have seen how students are easily drawn to the peace of mind AI provides. Pre-schoolers are watching AI short-video content designed around nonsense jokes, otherwise known as "brainrot" content, and middle schoolers

are using ChatGPT to do their homework assignments.

These children are becoming accustomed to the safety net AI is giving them. Fueling the beast that is ChatGPT and continuing to be one of the largest populations using AI, and giving investors more reasons to keep pouring money into AI.

With students taking the easy route with their work and parents being either too strict or too loose, all of this raises a serious question: How can we fix this issue and give our young students back their individual sense of strength?

It takes a village to raise one child, and it's gonna take communities to change the damage that's been done. We, as a collective, need to understand where our students' strengths and weaknesses lie and help them both at school and at home. Making spaces where our students know it's safe to make mistakes and to embrace their own productive struggles is key to helping them experience their own minds.

The question of how to teach the next generation is as old as time, but if anything is certain, it's that this is not something we can fix in one layer or in one day.

To all students of all ages: never be afraid to make mistakes and let yourself just relax and enjoy the process of learning. Nobody's perfect, you just have to work it.

Standing Alone: Venezuela Wins the World Baseball Classic



Team Venezuela's celebratory post after winning the 2026 WBC./Courtesy of @WCBBaseball on X

By Manuel Polanco
Sports Editor

"This country gives you an opportunity to change your life," said Venezuelan native and Cincinnati Reds third baseman Eugenio "Geno" Suarez.

"And now you feel pressure. Now you feel scared because you don't know what's going to happen if you're driving down the highway and somebody stops you. Even if you are a citizen."

Suarez shared this in an article from The Daily Express US and discussed his fears of deportation amid the rise of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids around the country. Suarez went on to say his U.S. citizenship process was canceled last December.

"They shut down everything, so I couldn't have it. Because of the Venezuela thing. [...] It is what it is. I respect the decision," Suarez said. Despite the hardship to obtain his citizenship, Suarez would strike gold and hit the key double that helped Venezuela beat the United States in the World Baseball Classic (WBC).

Venezuela's win in the WBC demonstrates the underlying resilience of Latin American countries.

Venezuela, whilst being a powerhouse in the majors, wasn't really thought of as a team capable of reaching the WBC and taking down a team like the U.S. However, they disproved all those theories by eliminating Team Japan in pool play and advancing to the semifinals. Japan was the reigning WBC champions and a team that always made it out of pool play every year they participated in the WBC.

This is something the players themselves understood; no one believed in them or considered them a worthy final opponent. But as the tournament went on, it was clear they were special this year and coming for gold. This sentiment was shared by Team Venezuela manager Omar Lopez as he said in a pre-game interview.

"God gave me the opportunity to be here again, and I accepted the challenge, and here I am," he added. "I am humble. I'm a person that wants the very best for my country from the baseball players or, in this case, a manager's perspective."

Before they faced off with Team USA, Venezuela had to go through the surprisingly hot Team Italia in the semifinals. A team managed by former baseball player Francisco Cervelli, who shares both Italian and Venezuelan heritage. Both teams were in the midst of a Cinderella run, and both were led by a new

manager with a new mindset instilled in each player.

During that game, Venezuela rallied in the 7th inning, scoring three runs, which helped them win 4-2 and head to the WBC finals for the first time in history.

Their next opponent? The mighty Team USA. One team was energized by their love of their country and people, and the other played with a mindset that some took as "act like you've been there before", painting them as boring, dry, and unlikable.

The stage was set, and it couldn't have been more politically charged: Team USA vs Team Venezuela. In early January, the U.S. conducted a military raid in Caracas, Venezuela, and captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife. The couple was extradited from their home country and sent to the U.S. to face crimes, including narco-terrorism and cocaine importation. Despite the public's perception of Maduro, it wasn't lost on many that the players were gonna fight for their country.

Lopez understood the public opinion of Venezuela ahead of the WBC.

"In all parts of the world, the same things that they say about us, those countries have the same problems, but they look at us like we're bad people. That was more fuel for me, to demonstrate that this team, working together, we can unite 30 million people," Lopez said in an interview with ESPN.

New York Mets rookie pitcher Nolan McLean was set to start for Team USA, and lefty pitcher Eduardo "E-Rod" Rodriguez was slated to start for Team Venezuela.

Both pitchers

gave it their all, and by the 8th inning, the score was 2-0 Venezuela. They got those runs via a sac fly from veteran and team captain, Salvador Perez, and a home run coming off the bat from Boston Red Sox outfielder Willyer Abreu.

Perez said in the same ESPN interview, "But when you play for your country, it's a little bit beyond that. That feeling, the country where you were born and raised, the sacrifices your parents make, the people who helped you. That's why this means a lot to me and a lot to Venezuela too."

The Venezuelan bullpen was dominant after E-Rod departed and held Team USA scoreless for four and a third innings, but in the bottom of the 8th, Bryce Harper hit a home run against Andres Machado, tying the game and silencing the Venezuelan faithful in the crowd. All

was not lost, however, as a leadoff walk in the top of the ninth inning led to Venezuela pinch-running for Javier Sanoja, who later stole second base.

Up came to bat Suarez, hitting one of the most important doubles of his career to left center field, scoring Sanoja and helping Venezuela take a 3-2 lead. Daniel Palencia came to close, and in a perfect bottom of the 9th inning, he made easy work of the U.S. and struck out the last batter.

History written, and Venezuela stands alone as the winners of the 2026 WBC. Kansas City Royals player Maikel Garcia earned the honor of most valuable player (MVP) for the tournament.

In his victory speech, Suarez thanked God and his people.

"They deserve it. Venezuela, as a country, everyone who

Potato Salad Recipe

By Key Jones-Ford, Content Creator
Graphic and Layout by Jocelyn Rios, Layout Editor

Potato Salad Recipe

By Key Jones-Ford

Ingredients:

6-7 Potatoes (white or Yukon Gold)
3 Hard-boiled eggs
1 1/4 Cup Mayonnaise
1/2 Cup Dijon Mustard
Paprika
Onion powder
Optional: 1/4 cup Sweet Relish



Steps:

- 1) Peel and dice your potatoes into smaller chunks
- 2) Fill a pot with water until potato chunks are covered and boil until the chunks are softened, but not mushy; a fork should be able to comfortably spear them without completely mashing them. This process should take about 15-20 minutes.
- 3) Dunk potatoes in a bath of cold water for 5 minutes to immediately stop cooking
- 4) Boil your eggs until hard-boiled, for about 12 minutes. The yolk should be solid upon cracking. Dice the eggs into small pieces.
- 5) In a large bowl, fold the mayo, dijon, and relish into the potatoes and eggs until chunks are evenly coated. 6) Add in paprika and onion powder to taste and color.

Keep this dish refrigerated and covered until serving time.

Enjoy!