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THE KNIGHT NEWS



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Breaking News & Video

Journalism in the Interest of the Queens College Community

ROUNDTABLE

WITH

SA PRESIDENT

The Knight News sat down with Christopher Labial to discuss his first semester as Student Association President

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Photo courtesy of Kenneth Camera

Professional Staff Congress
plans next moves for contract

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Petition created for
a 24/7 library

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EDITORIAL

When will tuition hikes end?

Last month, CUNY announced it would increase tuition by \$300 at all senior colleges. Disinvestment by New York State forced CUNY to rely on students to fill the budget gap.

After expiration of a “rational tuition plan” setting tuition increases for five years, CUNY now holds the option of increasing tuition when needed. But, just like “rational plan,” this is irrational.

Students should not continually shoulder the cost of keeping CUNY running without an effort by administrators to demand money.

An expected criticism is the low cost of CUNY. In fact, this is the argument CUNY is raising. It did not request tuition hikes at community colleges, but only at senior colleges. They said the relative affordability of CUNY to other colleges could still make it cheaper even with a tuition increase.

But it is not like CUNY is increasing its resources. Professors and staff have no contract, some colleges are facing large class sizes and other courses at other colleges are being cut.

For example, City College’s budget includes a deficit of \$14.7 million. In a Gothamist article released Nov. 12, Tammie David, a junior at the college and vice president of public affairs for student government, said the lack of funding would drastically affect the education of students.

“There’s no other way to say this: Students are doomed,” David said.

Moreover, students face difficulty in living in New York City. Between housing costs and growing necessity of juggling another job, an undergraduate today is not receiving the same education an undergraduate received over a decade ago.

For example, living in Queens County, N.Y., is no easy task. A living wage for one adult is \$14.30 per hour, according to MIT’s Living Wage Calculator. For an adult with a child, it nearly doubles to \$27.44 per hour.

Chancellor James Milliken, in testimony to the CUNY board of trustees on Nov. 23, understood frustrations among students and faculty about tuition increases. However, he cited it as a necessity to cover costs.

“I think we can stipulate that no one likes tuition increases, and if I had a choice there is no question what I would choose—that the state would provide more support and the need for tuition increases would be minimized. The reality is that nationally a general disinvestment in public higher education has taken place for decades,” Milliken said.

We’re glad Milliken recognizes this austerity agenda happening across the country.

But there is one option—student power.

Despite reactionary rhetoric, students across the country are standing up for their beliefs and making change. Imagine the same at CUNY where students unite and demand an end to the state government’s refusal to properly fund CUNY.

This does not have to be a utopian dream. It can happen.

The University Student Senate, led by CUNY students to manage affairs across all campuses, is organizing efforts to stop tuition hikes. We commend these efforts and urge students to sign a petition found at www.uscuny.org.

But organizing protests, like what the Professional Staff Congress did, seems to be more effective. As Frederick Douglass, famed abolitionist, once said, “Power concedes nothing with a demand.”

Our demand is simple: freeze tuition and reinvest in CUNY.

The board of trustees approved tuition hikes last week, but it doesn’t mean this is over. We can make sure the voice of students is heard.

MISSION STATEMENT:

“We aim to serve the Queens College community through a tireless pursuit for truths that may be hidden, obstructed or otherwise unknown, to empower our readers with the information they need to inspire change.”

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

REV Challenge

One million dollars and a beautiful, renewable energy-filled campus. Those are the stakes here for Queens College if we win the REV Campus Challenge. That is enough to motivate both the most enthusiastic environmentalists and the least, alike!

So what is this REV Campus Challenge? Renewable Energy Vision, or REV, is a new initiative started by Governor Andrew Cuomo that will push New York toward renewable energy.

In order to motivate people to support the initiative, Governor Cuomo has started the REV Campus Challenge, which invites colleges statewide to submit their designs for a renewable energy campus. The top three colleges will each win \$1 million dollars.

But the best part is that it’s open to all

students at Queens College. It’s a student-led project. So students get to submit their own ideas and work together to make them a reality.

Although the main focus will be solar energy, many other topics will also be included. For example, composting, which seems to be a very common interest.

If we succeed, we can really make a major change. Let’s get started!

For more information, go to either <http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/rev-campus-challenge/> or <https://www.facebook.com/queensconsortiumsustainability>.

- Monika Brzostowska, senior

The Knight News would like to wish

Yongmin Cho

the best as he finishes his last semester.

Thank you for the help you have given us this past year.

Christopher Labial reviews his first semester as president

YONGMIN CHO

News Reporter

It all started at Midnight Breakfast during spring 2013.

During election week, Christopher Labial voted for Students for Change after a discussion with SFC member Jennifer Hwang. He glanced at card given by Hwang and noticed something new not offered in fall 2012—Midnight Breakfast.

The event lacked a sponsor the previous semester, so Labial offered to co-sponsor with F.L.I.G.H.T., a Filipino club he recently joined. From then on, he continued working with Student Association.

Today Christopher Labial leads SFC and is Student Association President after voted in last semester.

Labial is familiar with Queens College's functions as he attended Academic Senate meetings when he was a student representative. Meetings with administrative officials ignited his interest and curiosity.

"I remember getting out of a meeting with a budget sheet. I'd have these numbers and ask my friends, 'Did you know this?' and they would say 'Wow,'" Labial said. "You can learn from practically volunteering to participate [in the meetings], and it was my intrigue in how the school works."

At the beginning of his tenure was Welcome Day, which featured recording artist Omarion, on Aug. 26. Labial gave his first speech to a crowd that broke the event's attendance record.

"The administrators were really happy with my speech. It let them know that our students can connect together with something as simple as a speech," Labial said.

Labial also gave a speech at the Sept. 11 Memorial. SA collaborated with athletics in preparing for the event, which Labial noted does not happen often.

Labial thought his biggest



PHOTO BY BRANDON JORDAN

Student Association President Christopher Labial explained his beginnings with Students For Change, a party he now represents as president.

accomplishment so far was the number of co-sponsorships made for events.

In the first Campus Community Partnership meeting, SA held a workshop on filling out a Student Association Event Funding application that clubs were confused about.

"Co-sponsorships, that's like our favorite thing. Our e-board's mentality this year is that we don't want to compete with clubs with their events, but we want to find ways to make their events better," Labial said.

In addition, SA sought to implement participatory budgeting, a democratic process allowing people to decide and formulate a budget. Labial communicated with colleges with a similar model, and he saw both their design and implementation.

The process would bring students, clubs and non-voting administrators to "see what they

care about" and formulate a budget, Labial said.

"It's going to be awesome. We're investing a lot of energy into this," Labial said.

Labial said his administration would also assist in stopping tuition hikes. Labial and other SA members worked with the University Student Senate, an organization of student government members from different CUNY schools who discuss university-wide issues.

"It's a scary thing. If [CUNY] passes it, five years max with \$300 raise on tuition, it has the potential to be \$7,000 or \$8,000 a year for CUNY students," Labial said. "Also, in the proposal, [the Tuition Assistance Program] isn't reformed. What happens to students who rely on TAP for going to school?"

Labial said the tuition hikes would not improve education resources, but instead "keep the

lights on."

"This is something I've been proud of and have a chance to learn more about what's happening in CUNY. I literally have a say to testify against it. I feel like that is the biggest duty that I have—to speak for the students," the SA president said.

Despite his work, Labial felt slightly disconnected from students. In a literal sense, he started from the basement of the Student Union to the third floor.

He was a "basement rat" for his first three years at QC. He loved interacting with clubs and saw the basement as a flourishing neighborhood. But that interaction became a luxury with schedule full of meetings.

With administrators, he acts as a student ambassador. For example, Vice President of Finance and Administration William Keller notified Labial about vending machines now

accepting credit cards. However, Labial used the new system that morning, confirming it was implemented.

"They're the people who manage these kinds of things, but they spend their time in the offices. Only a student like me, who lives a daily life by going to the vending machine or looking at the food trucks, would know," he said.

Labial realized, as president, he represented the student body. But, at the same time, he felt like another student.

"I'm no longer a bystander, but, when I walk on campus, a great amount people don't know who I am, and the same thing for the administrators," Labial said, "It's like I play this role, but I just wear the hoodie like anyone else."

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I am also in the process of starting a new club in Queens College called Martial Arts Therapy which is old/new techniques for pain management and rehab. I am seeking student interns to work for me on this project and another with film and media.

www.garymoskowitzfilms.com



Union urges CUNY for new contract

BRANDON JORDAN

News Reporter

The Professional Staff Congress increased pressure on CUNY in past month for a new contract and intended to continue with its strategy.

On Nov. 4, the PSC, the union representing more than 25,000 faculty and staff in CUNY, demonstrated in front of CUNY's central office. 53 members sat in front of the building's door and, consequently, were arrested.

However, CUNY gave its first offer to the union on the same day. The proposed contract, from 2010 to 2016, would increase total wages by six percent.

PSC President Barbara Bowen rejected it and sent an email to members saying, if accepted, CUNY staff would earn the lowest salary among all city and state public employees.

"The total, before compounding, is six percent over six years. That means a salary 'increase' below the level of inflation," Bowen said. "In other words, a salary cut."

Glenn Kissack, a retiree representative of the union's executive council, was one of the 53 arrested at the protest. He said the union's tactics led to an immediate response from CUNY.

"I felt good. I felt we had made our point. I felt a lot of solidarity with other people, not just arrested but hundreds of people [at the protest]. I think it was a wake-up call to the CUNY administration," Kissack said.

Kissack said CUNY understood their offer was not much, but pointed out that it came from their own budget.

"Yeah, they came out with an offer. But the offer they made was self-financed. It wouldn't come from the state, but it came from the reserves, which wouldn't



A button left at the Professional Staff Congress' mass meeting at Cooper Union on Nov. 19. Adjuncts make up 59 percent of faculty in CUNY, according to the CUNY Adjunct Project. However, they are paid only \$2,300 for each course they teach.

be enough," Kissack said.

Another tactic is voting to authorize use of a strike.

At a mass meeting at The Cooper Union on Nov. 19, the union called for one-on-one meetings with members about a strike authorization vote.

In response to the administration's proposal, Bowen said the union offered a 14 percent salary increase along with other benefits like long-term security for adjuncts, reducing teaching load of full-time faculty and more.

"I believe we can win this fight," Bowen said.

The strike authorization vote also came up during the meeting as leaders explained it did not signal a strike. Rather, the union would use it to pressure CUNY and the state for a new contract.

"Strike authorization is not about scaring the boss, but about being prepared," Bowen said.

During the meeting's question-and-answer portion, some members felt cautious about a strike and asked what may happen to adjuncts with no security, especially with the Taylor Law.

The Taylor Law, passed in 1967, allows public employees collective bargaining rights, referring to the power to negotiate an agreement. However, it prohibits them from engaging in strikes and penalizes their union if a strike happens.

Bowen addressed concerns and said the union would make a strike reserve fund for members needing funds. In addition, the union would work one-on-one with members across CUNY about a vote authorizing a strike.

Jonathan Buchsbaum, a professor of media studies and chair of the union's Queens College chapter, said members did not wish to strike, especially with

the Taylor Law's penalties. But he felt it was a tactic to pressure CUNY for a contract.

"We wish we could have gotten a contract years ago, so why haven't we? What is it that we have to do to convince the administration and the state to properly fund the university?" Buchsbaum said.

Buchsbaum said professors were dedicated to working with students. The problem was salaries did not keep up with cost of living and it forced some to leave CUNY altogether.

"Many professors want to be here because it's CUNY and because of the students it educates," Buchsbaum said.

Chancellor James Milliken told the CUNY board of trustees on Nov. 23 that he was determined to get a contract. Yet lack of proper funding from the state would either force layoffs or increase tuition to fund a contract,

said Milliken.

"These are facts. People can disagree about choices that should be made, but I don't believe they can dispute the possible sources and availability of funding," Milliken said.

Kissack pointed out New York State's General Fund held a surplus of \$10.7 billion that could fund a contract for the PSC. He criticized Governor Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, for refusing to help fund not only CUNY, but also a contract for the PSC.

"He wants to impose a pattern on the union. He's determined to do that and we're determined not accept it," Kissack said.

Kissack believed the union might vote on authorizing a strike early next year. However, he noted the union could not achieve a contract without the help of students, whom hold a stake in getting a better education.

"If we fight together, we have a chance," Kissack said.

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Tuition at senior colleges to go up \$300

ERICA FINOCCHIO

News Reporter

The CUNY board of trustees approved tuition to increase by \$300 at all senior colleges as part of CUNY's budget request. The vote occurred Nov. 25.

CUNY, which is known for its affordability, continued a rational tuition plan that first began in 2011.

The rational plan increased, from 2011 to 2015, tuition by \$300 every year. The state legislature, in 2011, allowed the board of trustees to increase tuition in conjunction with the plan.

By 2015, the total cost after five years came to \$1,500. Tuition

is currently \$6,300 per year at senior colleges, which is more affordable State University of New York colleges at \$6,470 per year.

The plan excludes community colleges as CUNY only preferred tuition at senior colleges to go up. Elizabeth Rangel, a junior, said the tuition increase was unnecessary for students.

"CUNY is supposed to be about affordable college and the extra money per year will accumulate over time," Rangel said.

The tuition increase was meant to support CUNY's system as the state decreases its financial support. From 1987 to 2012,

the share of revenue from the state to Queens College fell by 28.1 percent, according to an investigation by the Chronicle of Higher Education last year.

Miguel Nelson, a sophomore, covers most of his tuition with financial aid, which thousands of other students do as well. He understood the increase may affect the ability of students to pay for their education.

"[It's bad for] the young adult who is struggling to pay for their rent along with their tuition that might make a world of a difference," Nelson said. "I feel sorry for those having to pay for the extra tuition."

This increase is for different student services that are to be provided on campus and to provide for the higher education. The hike in tuition is also intended to increase graduation rates and to make class sizes smaller.

Joseph Tse, majoring in mathematics and English, questioned CUNY's intentions after their announcement that tuition would increase.

"It's not fair for the students that the tuition has to go up. The commitment for students to pay extra money will make it harder for them if they have to work to pay for their schooling," Tse said. "You have to consider what they

are doing with the money in the budget. While I am thankful for the services they do, I have to ask myself if they are really necessary and beneficial as a whole."

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PSC meeting details upcoming actions

BRANDON JORDAN

News Reporter

The Professional Staff Congress held a mass meeting Nov. 19 at The Cooper Union about current contract negotiations and its plans for the next few months.

CUNY professors and staff are working without a contract since 2010. The PSC, which represents more than 25,000 members, is negotiating with CUNY to obtain one. Over the past 18 months, the union and management held 23 collective bargaining sessions with CUNY.

In recent months, however, the union increased pressure against CUNY by planning a strike authorization vote and demonstrating in front of the university's central office on Nov. 4, where 53 members were arrested.

Michael Fabricant, first vice president of the PSC, explained the union responded with a counter-offer to CUNY in two weeks. He noted their offer took six months in contrast and did not keep up with inflation.

"Clearly, our sense of our urgency is not theirs," Fabricant said.

Dexter Roberts, president of Medger Evans Student Association and University Student Senate delegate, said the USS would ally with the PSC in the ongoing contract talks.

"If there is no you and no me, then there is no CUNY," Roberts said.

Andrea Vasquez, a staff member at the Graduate



PHOTO BY BRANDON JORDAN

PSC leaders explained to members the union's future plans and its latest counter-offer to CUNY. From left to right: Treasurer Sharon Persinger, President Barbara Bowen, First Vice President Michael Fabricant, Secretary Nivedita Majumdar and Vice President of Cross Campus Units Iris DeLutro.

Center who was arrested Nov. 4, sarcastically referred to the administration's media push of CUNY Month, which highlighted the benefits of CUNY for students.

"Have you all heard by now that November is CUNY Month? The Chancellor [James Milliken] says it over and over on NY1," Vasquez said. "Well I know what I want for CUNY Month: a decent contract and a better university."

James Davis, a professor at Brooklyn College and another arrested Nov. 4, said professors and staff across the country were following the union's negotiations with CUNY.

"Our colleagues are

watching the PSC closely," Davis said.

The union then played videos of other teacher unions across the world, from Seattle to South Africa, showing solidarity for the PSC's efforts. Special messages from individuals, like Chicago Teachers Union President Karen Lewis, were also included.

PSC President Barbara Bowen spoke about five different strategies the union would take: target New York Governor Andrew Cuomo over a new contract, rally more labor and student allies, amplify the union's message to the public, submit a counter-offer with better benefits

and immediately organize.

In fact, Bowen said the union, in contrast to CUNY's six percent pay raise from 2010 to 2016, requested 14 percent.

Bowen criticized Milliken for appearing in the press when praising CUNY's values, but not speaking about the lack of a contract.

"I'm tired of hearing Chancellor Milliken talk about CUNY as a value. It's almost as if the only reason you would go to CUNY is because you could shop more cheaply. It's making CUNY the Wal-Mart of education," Bowen said.

Bowen also said New York

Governor Andrew Cuomo was also to blame as he refused to help. In fact, she said the Democratic governor would veto the Maintenance of Effort bill that keeps stable funding for CUNY.

"Governor Cuomo, you cannot present yourself as a progressive if you are not progressive on CUNY. You cannot be a progressive and pursue austerity economics on the higher education system of this city and the state. We will not let you do that," Bowen said.

The following day, the union delivered over 35,000 signatures to Governor Cuomo asking for the bill to pass.

At the end, the union sent cards to members about one-on-one meetings about the strike authorization vote. The union did not say when it would happen, but it would first discuss any concerns at different colleges.

Glenn Dyer, an adjunct at Queens College, said he reviewed CUNY's offer and said it did not keep up with cost of living in New York City.

"I thought it was kind of a joke," Dyer said.

Dyer, however, said he wanted to see in a new contract better pay and more full-time spots for adjuncts.

"It's important the structure [of CUNY] isn't undermined," Dyer said.

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Living with depression as president

YONGMIN CHO

News Reporter

Student Association President Christopher Labial began his first semester with a diagnosis he never expected would happen—depression.

"I never even entertained the notion of having a mood disorder in my life," Labial said.

Labial said his girlfriend, Natasha Chait, saw him have difficulties over the past year and suspected there was a problem.

"She noticed how hard it was for me to sleep. I had a lot of trouble sleeping and I'd have trouble getting out of bed. I would have these depressed fits where it was hard for me to do anything," Labial said.

Over the past summer, Chait suggested Labial try the Counseling Services at Queens College, located at the first floor of Frese Hall, as it is free for students.

"I said 'Whatever, if it's

going to make you happy,' but she said, 'It's hard for me to see you like this,'" Labial said. "I knew this was something completely normal to me, but I started to realize this could have an effect on people in my life."

Labial went to the center and met Dr. Barbara Moore, director of Counseling Services, for help.

"Dr. Moore is great. She teaches the peer counselor and her having that background and me being in my position, I just felt so comfortable knowing that there's someone at the school who is looking out for student like us in the way that she does," Labial said.

Moore said Counseling Services consists of counselors that are already professors, so they are able to help students with valuable resources.

"The Counseling Center is one of the only places on campus that students can go to discuss

things that concern them, perhaps things they've not told to others, and be assured confidentiality," Moore said.

Labial felt better after two months of counseling, but struggled with anxiety.

Before major events, he felt anxious and sometimes did not sleep before it. After it, he would feel mentally exhausted and depressed.

After Labial booked an appointment with a psychiatrist in October, he was diagnosed with depression. He received antidepressants as a prescription.

Labial, once officially diagnosed, discovered a stigma attached to mental illness.

"I was rudely awakened when I decided to tell my mom and she was upset. She said, 'You don't need that, you're completely fine. Everyone has these problems, just snap out of it.'" Labial said. "I

told my dad and he said, 'You're taking antidepressants? I hope it helps you clean your room.' He was cool about it."

Moore said the stigma is not as prevalent with more people seeking help.

"People are less ashamed of going to counseling and more likely to come than they used to be. People used to think that, if you go to counseling, it must mean you're crazy, but that's not the case," Moore said.

The beginning of the fall semester was difficult for Labial. For a month, he did not attend class or SA meetings and avoided online communication.

"I felt such a burden but at one point I just said enough," Labial said. "I sucked it up and told my chairs, my board and eventually told my whole student government."

Labial found the more

people he told his diagnosis, the more others either affirmed his courage or admitted they too struggled with depression. He found it reassuring to have support, but wanted to personally deal with it.

"The hardest part about seeking treatment was that I did not want to belittle the people around me," Labial said. "But I'm doing this for them. I want to be the best I can be and that's my reason behind getting help."

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QC community gets active shooter response training

PHIL VALLONE

News Reporter

New York Police Department's SHIELD unit members, a counterterrorism program, visited Queens College on Nov. 18 to talk about campus safety and active shooters.

The event, held at Rosenthal Library 230, comes after many mass shootings across the country with over 290, according to an article from The Washington Post on Oct. 1.

Juan Colon is a junior majoring in political science and a Marine Corps veteran who served in Iraq. He said the event was a good idea in teaching students what to do.

"Even though my military background gives me the reassurance that I would know what to do if I were in a scenario like that, attending the program and seeing how big of a turnout it was gave me new information.

The fact that my school and our community is doing its part to ready us for the unimaginable is encouraging," Colon said.

Matthew DiPietro, an NYPD police officer for 15 years, spoke at the event. He spent three years with the counterterrorism division, tasked with responding to active shooters in New York City.

DiPietro currently works in the private sector to help deter, detect and identify terrorist activity in NYC as a member of SHIELD unit.

The SHIELD unit shares information with the private sector to achieve better security.

DiPietro advised existing systems can assist in responding to an emergency.

"You should be able to find out in real time what is going on your campus. Sign up for emails, sign up for CUNY alerts

[and] whatever you have at your disposal," DiPietro said.

DiPietro encouraged students and faculty members to abide by an ABC system: avoid, barricade and confront.

In addition, DiPietro urged students and faculty to know where exits and evacuation were. He informed students that most active shooter scenarios end within five to seven minutes.

"The first thing to do, if an active shooter event going on, is to not be there," DiPietro said. "Do not use elevators and escalators because they provide you no alternative means to escape if confronted by an assailant."

If unable to escape, DiPietro instructed students to find potential safe rooms to hide in.

"Lock the doors and place anything you can in front of the doors and make the area secure. Once the door is locked, do not

open the door and wait for the police," DiPietro said.

Confronting the aggressor or aggressors should only be done if there are no other options or if the person feels confident to stop the assailant, said DiPietro.

"Only if you have the mindset to do so, the last thing to do is confront the aggressor. Take whatever weapons you can, whether it's a pen, chair, knife or computer monitor, and confront the bad guy," DiPietro said.

Colon said he enjoyed the event and learned valuable tips, something he felt others should know.

"I believe that this program should be given on every campus in America at least once a year or every semester. Because the more people that are knowledgeable about this subject, the better prepared each community will be for a catastrophe that this country

has fallen victim too far often," Colon said.

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Have a story idea?

Send us a tip at

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Writing at Queens offers opportunities for students

BRANDONHERNANDEZ

News Reporter

What do Revisions and QC Voices have in common? Both are offered by Writing at Queens.

Writing at Queens, part of the English department, provides the two resources for students and faculty to submit their work.

Revisions first began in spring 2004 and publishes annually. Each issue deals with a set topic like general change.

Students and professors write about the issue and submit their piece by deadline. Once reviewed by editors, writers are notified if their work was chosen.

Erin Spampinato, an English professor, said this year's topic would deal with free speech and censorship.

"The topic of speech is vital to students' lives. We'd like to get our readers thinking about the complexities of speech. Our larger goal is to get a conversation started at Queens about how the complexities of speech affect our writing and our lives," Spampinato said.

QC Voices is another resource from Writing at Queens.

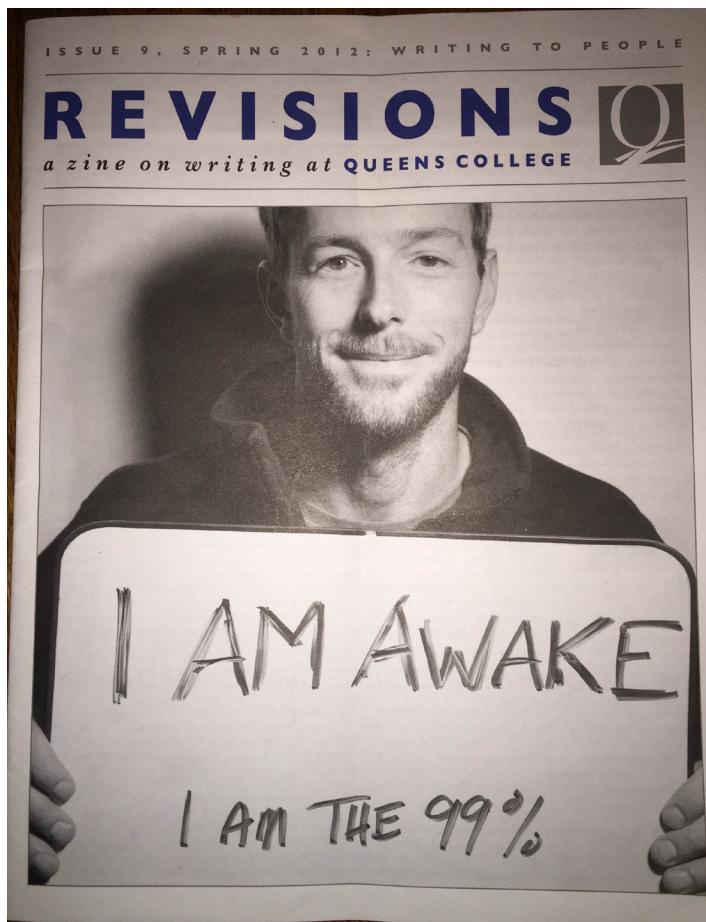


PHOTO BY BRANDON HERNANDEZ

Revisions is a magazine offered by Writing at Queens for students and faculty to submit essays on topics like inequality.

Instead of writing papers and assignments for a typical English class, students can blog about topics they feel are relevant for the QC community.

"The project is about giving students a voice in the campus community, in addition to showing off our students' talent for writing. This year's group includes bloggers who focus on travel, DIY crafts, Queens neighborhoods, language and education, math, politics and Humans of QC." Jason Touglaw, English professor and director of QC Voices, said. "It's not uncommon for QC Voices bloggers to pursue careers in the fields they blog about."

Touglaw said blogging offers a chance for students to get involved with the digital writing culture.

"The digital platform enables a lot of flexibility and variety. [It] adds something really tangible and human to the college's public profile. It's also a window into the variety of ways our students understand and engage the world. [They] make connections between what they study in their courses and the world beyond our campus," Touglaw said.

Revisions is available in print, but is found at <http://revisions.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/>. QC Voices is also found at <http://qcvoices.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/>.

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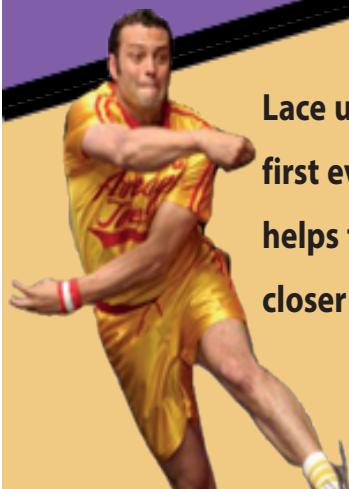
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TEDxCUNY challenges borders and promotes belonging

PHIL VALLONE
News Reporter

The TEDxCUNY conference returned to the Tribeca Performing Arts Center on Nov. 20 and examined borders dividing and uniting people.

Speakers shared personal stories of barriers they experienced in their lives. Physical borders of walls and immigration policies along with racism and bigotry were a few topics brought up.

"There couldn't be a timelier theme," Ann Kirschner, dean of Macaulay Honors College at CUNY, said.

Speakers were people like CUNY students to a firefighter and even Jorge Ramos, a journalist for Univision and Fusion.

Cheyne Shah, a senior at Queens College, helped organize the conference. He felt pleased with the speakers' ability to share

their experiences.

"We think they've done wonderful work and they really brought themselves 100 percent to the talks that they gave," Shah said.

Shah expressed concern with problems in CUNY, and said these conferences would help bring a diverse group of individuals together.

"I think that CUNY has a community problem and there is a lack of student involvement," Shah said. "But these conferences bring together people from all over to get involved and, even though I am graduating, I hope this lives beyond me."

Each speaker criticized not only physical borders like walls and prison bars, but also political and social borders causing divisions between cultures.

Sean DesVignes, a poet and Brooklyn College student, spoke

about the power of music and poetry when bringing people and ideas together.

"Music can happen when change doesn't, and beyond these borders we are influencing each other," DesVignes said.

Aashna Shah, a senior at Macaulay Honors College and a winner of the Student Speaker Competition, brought up difficulties undocumented immigrants face in the U.S.

"The life of an undocumented immigrant is more challenging than simply crossing the border makes life unbearable and no aspect of our lives is guaranteed," Aashna Shah said.

Jess X Chen, an artist, filmmaker and activist, criticized U.S. immigration policies and its culture of racism.

"We are made invisible by a hetero-normative, white-

supremacist and xenophobic culture. We refuse to be silent. We are radical activists dedicating our lives to creating a free world for future generations," Chen said.

In addition, the conference highlighted the adversity many overcome to achieve their dreams.

Jason Ramos, a firefighter, is someone often found in big wildfires across the country. He talked about his job and how he helps firefighters by refusing to let others doubt his own capabilities.

"It's all about making a difference. A lot of people point out that I don't have a degree in engineering and I tell them they're right," Ramos said. "But I have a degree in passion and a lot of people don't have that."

Cheyne Shah felt optimistic about TEDxCUNY's future and hopes it grows in the future.

"I want to see it get bigger.

I still want to highlight CUNY students and faculty and I still want to emphasize the diversity and inclusiveness. But I want to see higher-profile speakers and just grow across CUNY and the world," Shah said.

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FILM REVIEW

“Brooklyn” depicts lovable fairytale about immigration

DAVID RAFAILOVICH
News Reporter

“Brooklyn,” directed by John Crowley, shows hardships and homesickness Eilis, a young Irish woman, experiences as she leaves Ireland for a better life in Brooklyn.

“Brooklyn,” though occasionally stepping into the realm of melodrama and sanitizing the immigrant issue, is a touching portrayal of leaving home and the task of conquering the unknown.

Elias, played by Saoirse Ronan, lives at home with her mother and sister in a small-knit community in Ireland.

Elias can't find any strapping, young lad for her to marry. She is stuck at a dead-end job at a grocery store under a devilish woman that condescendingly comments on customers' attendance at church on Sundays. In sum, life in Ireland is dull for her.

Elias' mother and sister understand there is not much in Ireland for her, and they purchase her a ticket to America for a better opportunity. She agrees to leave.

Eilis leaves with a heavy heart as she moves toward a new life in Brooklyn. From the onset of her journey, she is miserably homesick and regrets her decision. But she



PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.COMINGSOON.NET
“Brooklyn” is about an Irish immigrant coming to the U.S., but looks past some aspects of immigration like prejudice.

is lucky to come across others willing to give their kindness and understanding to her.

After arriving in Brooklyn, an Irish priest, also a family friend, not only offers Elias emotional support, but also pays for her education at Brooklyn College.

In Brooklyn, Elias stays in a boarding house of other girls from Ireland. In the beginning, she can't socialize or even feign a friendly face; the longing to go back home

is too much.

Slowly, Eilis adapts and takes advantage of the opportunities in America. She excels in her accounting classes, picks up American culture and meets a nice Italian guy who falls in love with her. As her roots start to finally sprout in Brooklyn, a dramatic event pulls her back to Ireland.

In Ireland, things are different and opportunities are opening for her. With her

accounting education, she is able to get a good-paying, part-time accounting job. She meets a redheaded gentleman whom, despite her love interest in Brooklyn, she can't help fall for. She is pulled between her old and new life.

The issue with this film is that it is a fairy tale. The story brushes aside the darker aspects of immigration, like poverty and prejudice. Her immigration from

Ireland to Brooklyn is paved with characters only with the best intentions and Brooklyn is a friendly haven full of seamless cultural assimilation.

This lack of grit and complexity prevents the film from properly taking on the issue of immigration. Nevertheless, the story is upbeat, heartwarming and funny.

The soul of this film is Ronan, who carries the film with a subtle, yet powerful performance. She is believable, even when the story is not, and gives the story an emotional realism. She is at once subtle and shy, and later transforms into a confident woman making her own choices.

The supporting characters are unrealistic, but redeemed by their sharp and hilarious humor that is enough to suspend disbelief.

Overall, “Brooklyn” is a fairytale of the immigrant experience. The film is more likely to resonate with a transfer student at Queens College than an Irish immigrant who came to Brooklyn post-World War II. However, there is a lot of heart and humor in the film as it profoundly understands of what it means to be homesick and rootless.

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Students wish for a 24/7 Rosenthal Library

ERICA FINOCCHIO
News Reporter

Finals are coming up, and the need for easy, reliable access for the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library for students is important.

Some students would like the library to stay open 24 hours every day. In fact, a petition on Change.org was created for this reason. As of Dec. 1, 358 people signed it.

Isioma Ononye is a senior who agreed with this idea.

“If I'm on campus, I want to have access at any time to the library to do my work,” Ononye said. “It would make things easier.”

The library is open from 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. from Monday to Thursday. But on Friday, it is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Saturday and Sunday, it is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Last May, levels two and three of the library were open for 24 hours for finals.

Javier Morales is a graduate student who took advantage of the library when it was open during finals week, going in around 11



PHOTO BY CHRISTINA CARDONA
Students signed a petition to keep Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library open 24 hours a day each week, something the library does during finals week.

p.m. He also supported the idea, but felt it would face problems.

“I think everyone would benefit. But I can see why CUNY would be against it for budget issues, such as staffing library personnel and security,” Morales

said. The library also offers desk services. Bryan Matz, also a graduate student, worked night shifts and observed when students require the most and least help.

“During my shifts after 6

p.m., I may help one or two people at the front desk. During midterm and finals week, I'll get up to 20 people between 4:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.,” Matz said. “I think it would be great to study whenever

you can, but I don't see the hours being used resourcefully.”

Kate Landsorf, a graduate student, usually studies at the library. She said the library should open for all students, especially those who work.

“I don't think the library should be restricted to students who have a non-traditional work schedule,” she said.

Twaambo Moyo, a senior, said students who live on campus could benefit more from the idea than commuters.

“I think it should be 24 hours, besides Saturday and Sunday,” Moyo said. “In consideration to the students who live on campus, they can go whenever they want.”

The Rosenthal Library will open 24 hours again for finals week. But Brian Dunlop, a senior, said the library open day may help students with their work.

“It would feel good to know I can always go to the library to do research,” Dunlop said. “It is a convenient idea.”

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Nicole Krauss talks latest novel at Evening Readings

CHRISTINA CARDONA
News Reporter

Nicole Krauss read from “Great House,” her latest novel, on Nov. 17 at the LeFrak Concert Hall for the Evening Readings series.

“Great House,” released on 2011, is about a desk that connects three people and their stories in its many drawers. There is a power over anyone who owns or gives it away.

Nadia, an American writer living in New York, receives the desk from a friend of Chilean poet Daniel Varsky, who leaves to Chile. However, he disappeared under Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean dictator.

The writer continues to hold the desk until one day, a woman claiming to be Varsky’s daughter comes to request it and Nadia allows her to take it away.

“Great House” bring up issues like change and destruction as found in a story about an antique collector reassembling memorabilia from World War II.

Joseph Cuomo, founding director of the Evening Readings, began the event by summarizing Krauss’ novels, including “Man Walks into a Room” and “The History of Love.” He praised her writing and talked about “Great House.”

Cuomo introduced Krauss and she recalled the last time she was a guest at Queens College for an Evening Reading event three years ago.

Leonard Lopate, who



PHOTO BY CHRISTINA CARDONA
Nicole Krauss (center) visited Queens College for an Evening Readings where Joseph Cuomo (left) introduced her and Leonard Lopate interviewed her.

interviewed Krauss, started the discussion on the novel but his nose began to bleed. Yet, he refused to stop the interview and proceeded with a tissue shoved up his nose.

Lopate said Krauss often used an old Jewish man as a character in her writing and asked for her reason.

“For me, writing is always

about becoming what I can’t become. Writing is not limited to a reflection of my own experiences in life,” Krauss said.

During the Q&A portion, the author responded to an audience member asking about the idea behind the desk.

“Like the characters in the book, I had inherited that desk. The prior owner of my house

designed it. It’s a brutal desk, it’s absolutely ugly; I would never choose it for myself,” Krauss said.

Another person asked about the Holocaust in her work and if any family members were affected. She said her grandparents were both Jewish and European in a time of political upheaval.

“Their lives were basically directed by [the Holocaust], and I

exist because of that event. If not, my grandparents would not have met each other. Therefore, my parents would not have met each other,” the writer said.

She then explained how original stories do not really need one setting, rather, it can come from anywhere.

“I think the sense of which we are a family doesn’t come from here or there, it comes from everywhere,” Krauss said. “The sense of not ever being certain about any kind of palpable home, I think all of that deeply affected my work and my grandparents’ stories.”

The next Evening Reading is Dec. 16 with Zadie Smith. Admission to the event is \$20, but free with a CUNY student ID.

For more information on the Evening Readings series, visit www.qcreadings.org.

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Queens College to improve academic quality in four-year plan

IRVING CRUZ
News Reporter

Queens College released its Draft Strategic Plan 2015-2019 that details the college’s intention to improve campus experience for students.

The proposal’s four goals are: connect the QC community and the campus, provide support for faculty and staff, ensure academic success for students and improve QC’s infrastructure and operational capacity.

President Felix Matos Rodriguez held two town halls on Sept. 29 and Oct. 1 as part of the plan, first conceived under former President James Muyskens. At the town halls, he received feedback on issues facing students on campus.

In an email to QC students and staff, President Rodriguez thanked people who attended the town halls to help improve the report’s goals.

“Your comments and

questions will help us chart a meaningful and collaborative course for the college,” Rodriguez said.

One part of the Draft Strategic Plan focuses on first-year transfer students, whom “require more support than others.” Transfer students actually account for 61 percent of new undergraduates at the college.

“Unfortunately, our transfer students are faring more poorly academically than non-transfer students. These students, who often come from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, accumulate fewer credits per term, and their retention and graduation rates are lower than those rates for non-transfer students,” the report found.

One proposal is a Transfer Student Center to help transfer students with academic advisement. The center would connect students with a mentor

and professors.

In addition, the college would coordinate and create agreements with other colleges to make the transfer process more efficient. Students would benefit by losing less credits lost when transferring from schools.

“If better academic outcomes are achieved for this group of students, helping them integrate in QC, we can ensure students success for the majority of our students,” the report found. Graduate students are another important demographic in the report. There are 3,500 graduate students enrolled at QC, but 85 percent stay for their second year. Retention rates for this group fell over the past three years.

The college would create graduate programs over the next four year, like more night and online classes for students.

“A key factor we will keep in mind is that the majority of

these students, 87 percent in recent years, attend QC graduate programs part-time and in the evenings,” the report found.

The college would track retention and graduation rates for transfer and graduate student over the next four years. They hope the graduation rate for transfers would increase from 56 percent to 60 percent. For graduate students, the one-year retention rate is expected to increase to 90 percent.

Anthony Harris, a senior, said he would obtain a master’s degree at QC after completing his undergraduate studies. He liked the efforts the college made accommodating graduate students.

“It is good to see that QC is helping the needs for graduate students. Many other schools have strong alumni [programs] that help current students with different questions about their majors. I hope these changes will

create some type of connection between students and professionals and have more QC students in big companies,” Harris said.

The Draft Strategic Plan is found at www.qc.cuny.edu/stratplan.

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Event focuses on racism and reflection in poetry

EDIS RADONCIC

News Reporter

Sharon Olds and Robin Coste Lewis, both poets, were guests at the “Literary Legacies” event Nov. 16 at the Godwin-Ternbach Museum.

Kimiko Hahn, a distinguished professor at QC, welcomed the audience by introducing both poets.

Lewis praised both Olds and Hahn as she was familiar with them.

“Hahn was my teacher. I have learned so much from her,” Lewis said. “Sharon lays a foundation builds a plant for writers. I read every book of hers, and I got terrified in a good way.”

Lewis is the author of “Voyage of the Sable Venus” that explains the history of black women and discrimination against them. It came out last September.

The book takes place at different times in history and contains narratives on slavery for example. Passages from it were read by Lewis.

“Head of a black woman, resurrected and powerless. Female resembled by a monkey. Standing a woman holding a staff surrounding a human head. Black



PHOTO BY EDIS RADONCIC

The Godwin-Ternbach Museum held an event featuring Sharon Olds (left) and Robin Coste Lewis (center) talk about their poetry with QC professor Kimiko Hahn.

female has a black symmetrical mouth,” Lewis said.

Olds followed Lewis and spoke about the changing form of poetry.

“I don’t know what poetry is. Poetry is changing. What it will be in the next ten years, I do not

know,” Olds said.

Olds’ wrote “Stag’s Leap,” released in September 2012, and is filled with poems about her personal life and how it feels to no longer love.

“Have faith old heart, what is living but dying? I have this

feeling, when I wrote that last line, I asked myself ‘is that poetry?’ I felt smart. I did not know what it was until today,” Olds said.

A question-and-answer session at the end of the event led a student to ask Lewis about fear.

“I think fear is a sign. If I am

afraid to do it, then it is a sign that I must go towards it,” Lewis said.

Lewis referred to a time when, in Olds’ class, she was afraid to read poems about sexual abuse, but she acknowledged the wisdom in them.

“When I encounter scary material that I have to read, I read it. Often, scary material can be educational. That was an example of it and I believe that young people need to learn more about sexual abuse as well,” Lewis said.

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Fight for 15 struggle is mixed issue for students

MICHAEL TRINDAD

News Reporter

The Fight for 15 campaign is growing across the U.S., but some Queens College students doubt whether it is possible to do.

The campaign calls for the minimum wage to rise to \$15 per hour. Under the federal law, minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour.

But some states and cities have it higher, like Seattle where it is \$15 per hour.

Giovanni Deleo, a sophomore, said higher wages may help cover expenses like tuition for students.

“With a raise in wages, it could definitely make paying off future loans a lot easier,” Deleo said.

Students are fearful of taking out loans without paying it off. One in five Americans over the age of 25 have student debt, according to a June 2013 report from the Urban Institute. A \$15-per-hour minimum wage may help pay off such loans.

However, some students felt the proposed measure may lead to bigger issues, like inflation or job loss.

“By raising the minimum

wage by such a large amount, you’re leaving other jobs with a substantial increase in wages, inflation and [other] big problems,” Florence Yuen, sophomore, said.

The Fight for 15 movement received support from some politicians like democratic presidential candidates Martin O’Malley and Bernie Sanders. Hillary Clinton, also a democratic candidate, prefers \$12 per hour.

Meanwhile, republican presidential candidates, like Donald Trump and Ben Carson, rejected calls to increase it.

New York Governor Andrew

Cuomo announced in November that the minimum wage for state employees living in New York City would increase to \$15 per hour by Dec. 31, 2018. In addition, his administration approved raising it for fast-food workers by the end of 2018 as well.

“If you work full-time, you shouldn’t have to live in poverty—plain and simple,” Cuomo said.

Angelo Zamudio, a senior, said increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour is too much as such jobs earning the lowest pay did not deserve a high hike.

“\$15 an hour? Most

paramedics don’t even get paid \$15 an hour, so why should people who flip burgers and take orders get that amount?” Zamudio said.

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A professor’s journey from the seas to Queens College

VICTOR HILLEGREN

News Reporter

Dr. Gregory O’Mullan is no ordinary professor. He is a marine biologist who travelled to places like Antarctica for research.

O’Mullan, professor at the Science and Environment Studies department, attended Rutgers University for his undergraduate studies. Initially, he decided to major in pharmacy but after taking a course titled “Exploration of the Oceans and Environmental Intro,” he changed his major to environmental science with a

focus on marine biology.

The marine biologist credited networking to discovering his niche in the field as an undergraduate.

One of his professors offered a spot on the Atlantis ship to the student who scored the highest in the class to join him in research at the Atlantic Ocean. O’Mullan’s enthusiasm and persistence got him a seat on the ship.

“[It was] a golden ticket,” O’Mullan said.

During the six months on the Atlantis, he joined teams of divers that submerged in a

submarine to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean on multiple occasions. The experience gave him new insights in what he did.

“You gain such a new perspective out there, you appreciate land more and it makes you feel so tiny,” O’Mullan said.

After spending summers working at a shellfish farm to gain experience, he completed his master’s degree and focused on his new career.

“First, it was ‘how do I get that experience?’ By the end of my Master’s, it was ‘how do I do this as a living?’” O’Mullan said.

His research took him to places like Antarctica where he was dropped off by a jet on sea ice. He spent three months building shelters and practicing survival training.

“It was like putting ourselves in the shoes of early explorers, in being self-reliant,” O’Mullan said. “We had a survival kit and some training. That’s it. There was no 7-Eleven on the corner or a supply store we could run to.”

He felt lucky to obtain such experiences and grateful for opportunities that came his way. However, he said there is still a lot

more to explore and learn.

“This is an unlimited field. It’s engaging and it’s definitely exciting,” O’Mullan said.

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SPORTS

Queens College dance team cheer their way to victory

PHILIPP REGALA

Sports Reporter

Queens College's dance team is always at sporting events on campus, cheering for their fellow Knights.

But, since 2004, the dance team also maintained a high standard in their own events.

"The Queens College dance team is a nationally-ranked team that travels to nationals in Daytona, Florida, every spring to compete against other dance teams from all around the world," Alana Ceremeli, assistant coach, said.

The team enjoyed multiple

victories with head coach Shaw Garnier and Ceremeli.

From July 26 to 28, the dance team attended the 2015 Boston University Dance Camp, where they placed third. Securing the bronze, they qualified for the national competition next spring.

Besides participating in competitions or cheering on the basketball teams, the dance team also held technique clinics for those interested in performing during Welcome Day at the beginning of the school year. They also have some community service events.

The feats the team

accomplish comes from a combination of their passion for what they do, and their incredible work ethic.

"Every member brings something special to the dance team. We have girls that excel in technique, turning, jumping, and community outreach. Our team is like a puzzle, and if one piece is missing, it cannot be complete," Ceremeli said. "The dance team practices four to five days a week so they spend a lot of time with one another. Without the bonds and friendships on the team, we could never be as successful as we are."

In last year's spring tournament, which took place at Daytona Beach, the dance team placed second in the team performance, which is the highest the team has ever placed. The team is not contented to rest on their laurels and hope to win first place this year.

The spring national tournament is home to over 5,000 student athletes from all over the world. With that amount of competition, the dance team holds try outs every year around the end of April or the beginning of May, based on the coach. They welcome all who wish to try out

and become part of their winning tradition.

The team will cheer the women's basketball team at their next home game Dec. 5 against American International.

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We will return in the
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SPORTS

QC alum Michael Cohen reflects career in roundtable

ALBERT ROMAN

Sports Reporter

Michael Cohen is a producer and director for major networks like ESPN, NBC and FOX. He was head of production for two FIFA World Cups and nine Olympics Games, nominated 15 times for the Emmys and produced the first-ever Extreme Games or X-Games.

He is also a Queens College professor.

Cohen graduated from QC in 1983. He came to the college in September 2014 to speak. Afterward, he worked with Michael Weisman, his business mentor, to create a class in the media studies department.

Cohen currently teaches a sports broadcasting class at the Campbell Dome on Thursdays from 10:05 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

"I treat it as if I'm producing a show. I create a format, and every class I make sure I provide the top level of expertise or bring an expert to teach it with me so the students understand exactly what it takes to do the job at hand," Cohen said. "It was important for me to bring back to the college my experience and professionals from the field."

Guests brought by Cohen include President of Women's Sports Foundation Angela Hucles, Senior Vice President of Global Media Tag Garson and ESPN SportsCenter anchor Max Bretos. His class also went to MSG Network's studios.

"I've never taught any university, but I feel being a producer that you're a teacher," Cohen said.

Cohen grew up in Kew Garden Hills, Queens, and finished high school early. Despite initial interest in being a dentist, he was curious about media.

He interned at WNBC for their news division, but was not satisfied. He knew a lot about sports, so he approached a sportscaster and, after bothering him for several weeks, was allowed to work in the sports division.

That sportscaster's name?



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL COHEN
Michael Cohen is an eight-time Emmy winner and 15-time nominee.

Marv Albert.

After graduating from QC, Cohen freelanced with his experience and his NBC connections. In 1984, he got an interview with a young network called ESPN and was hired.

At first, Cohen's job required him to log videotapes, screen games and time shows because ESPN did not have a big program inventory. He learned graphics coordinating, editing, producing and directing.

As ESPN grew, he was brought into ABC to make it more efficient. He worked on events like the 1988 Winter Olympics, the

1987 World Series, Super Bowl XXII, Indy 500 and the Kentucky Derby.

In 1989, Cohen created a company called Bizzy Signals Entertainment.

"I wanted the opportunity to package shows, so I didn't just direct or produce for these companies. I would say to a network, instead of them hiring producers, directors and announcers for a particular show, they would hire my company to package programming. I basically delivered them a completed show," Cohen said.

Cohen understood the

importance of business with sports production. Because of his economic degree from QC, he was able to spend a budget effectively and efficiently.

"The great thing about this business is you get paid as you go. For example, if ESPN needs you to package a volleyball show, there's a budget you use to get the best TV trucks and crew. You make your money on what you don't spend," Cohen said.

Cohen noted some producers may spend too little and not get a quality show. Other times, they may spend too much to get little back.

"It's a fine balance between knowing how much to spend and how to do it cost efficiently as possible. Coming from ESPN, we only knew how to produce efficient television so it was an advantage."

Finances are not the only worry. Producers must plan the show for days or even weeks.

But, when covering live sports, there is no script. For example, an underdog player could score two touchdowns in the first seven minutes of the game.

"Being a live producer is like being an orchestra conductor. You're pulling together all the pieces, technical pieces, and making sure they all work in sync," Cohen said. "The producer is like the general manager and the director is the head coach. The head coach executes the game plan, while the general manager makes sure they have the right personnel on the field."

Cohen said travel was one challenging aspect of the job. Events happen everywhere and it could affect a work-life balance.

"It's a lot easier to travel when you're young and have more energy. You do give up a little of your social life, but you have to be committed. You miss birthdays and holidays. What keeps me going, when that happens, is I love what I do," Cohen said.

Working is not the usual nine-to-five job for Cohen.

"I probably work about 10 to 12 hours on a one show every day. When you're at an event, you work for as long as you need. You could work 15 to 16-hour days," Cohen said.

But Cohen's favorite part of the job? Creating.

"It's not just about creating television shows, but creating franchises. You create these franchises and you want to build something to last," Cohen said.

Cohen is a huge fan of soccer and, after the success of the X-Games, became the first producer of Major League Soccer on ABC/ESPN until 2001. A year later, he became executive producer for the 2002 FIFA World Cup in South Korea and Japan.

"This World Cup was one of my favorite events because of all the challenges it took to pull it off were massive. Soccer wasn't what it was today so it was a big event, but we didn't have a big budget. We had to cover 64 matches in two countries," Cohen said.

Despite winning the Emmys eight times, Cohen felt the nomination of the 2006 World Cup in Germany for Outstanding Live Sports Special was a meaningful one, even if it didn't win.

"Soccer had never received a nomination in any format of any kind and, despite not winning that year, we got nominated. We thought it was an unbelievable statement that soccer made it. It arrived," Cohen said.

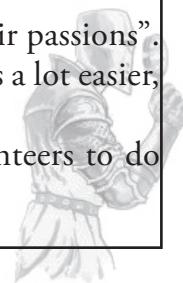
Cohen is preparing for the 2018 World Cup in Russia and is helping athletes build their media presence.

"I came from Queens College, and I know a lot of other people that came from QC. If you work hard and make your own opportunities, there is nothing you can't do," Cohen said.

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Five pieces of advice from Michael Cohen

- 1) "Best advice I ever received was 'listen to everyone.' You never know where the next best advice is going to come from."
- 2) "So many people are afraid. They're so rigid on how they do things, but it's okay to take chances because you may fail, but you could also strike gold."
- 3) "When you love what you do, and you can get up excited to do it, that's worth everything. Students should go with their passions".
- 4) There are more opportunities now than there was when I started. You can produce anything you want. The entry point is a lot easier, but the competition is greater."
- 5) Show your commitment. Show your drive, always be the last one out of the office, and always be the one that volunteers to do whatever needs to be done."



KNIGHT NEWS SPORTS

MEET THE MAN BEHIND THE SCENES



Photo courtesy of Michael Cohen

**A roundtable discussion with
sports producer Michael Cohen**

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