

April 22, 2015

Volume 21

Issue 10



THE KNIGHT NEWS



theknightnews.com
Breaking News & Video

Journalism in the Interest of the Queens College Community

HOSTILE ELECTION WEEK CONCLUDES WITH SFC VICTORY

During elections week, both parties accused each other of erasing or writing over their tags as seen above

SEE PAGE 3

Photo by Jaime Zahl

Students pressuring CUNY
to divest from fossil fuels

SEE PAGE 4

A spotlight on the iTones,
QC's a capella group

SEE PAGE 9

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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Corrections: In Issue 8, the date appeared as April 22. It was March 25. The issue appeared as Issue 10, it was Issue 9. Both photos on the front page were not appropriately attributed. For the photo of Mohammed Hassan, photo courtesy was from Erick Urgiles. For the photo of Christopher Labial, photo courtesy was from Kenneth Camara. We apologize for the errors.

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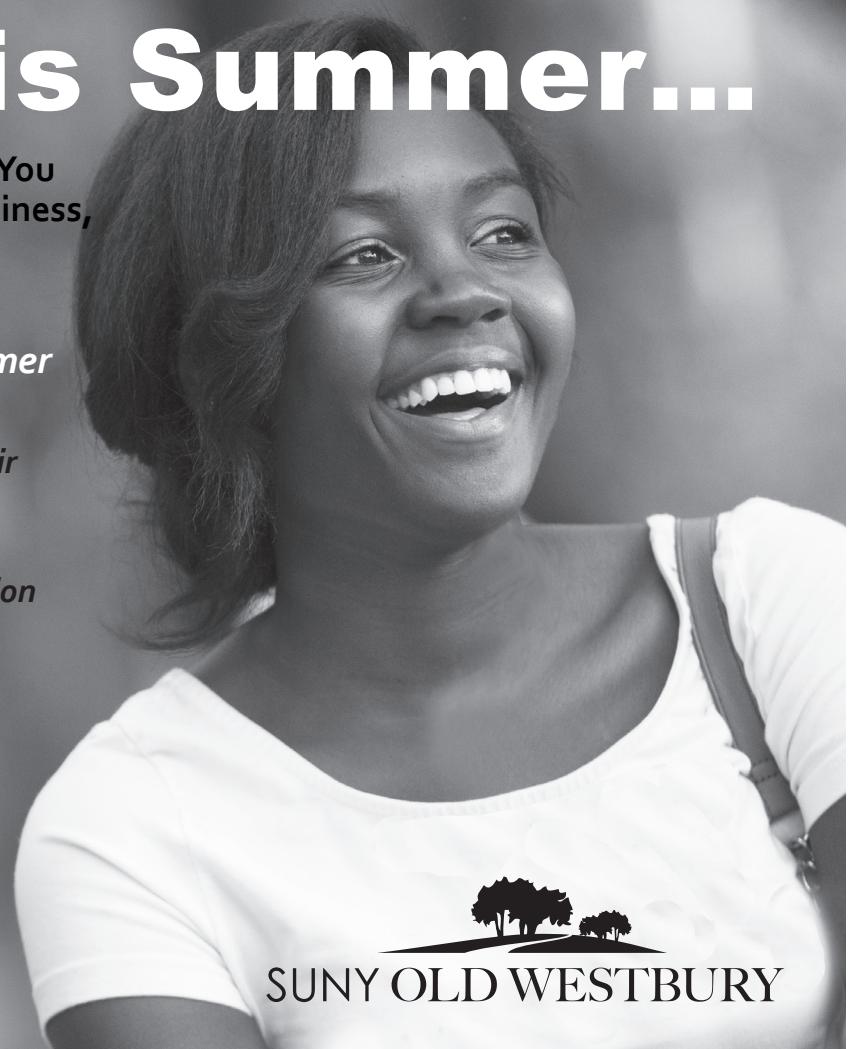
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SUNY OLD WESTBURY

SFC win overshadowed by dishonorable election conduct

JAIME ZAHL

News Reporter

A mild morning on the vibrant, green lawn of the quad turned into turmoil when classes resumed on April 13 as members of the Independent Alliance and Students for Change confronted one another about each party's allegedly dirty campaign tactics.

In the tradition of election week, each party tagged the sidewalk with chalk murals and campaign slogans. However, many tags were visibly smeared and erased, causing upset between the parties.

While SFC's near clean sweep was announced later in the week, the various actions by candidates and supporters left a damper on what is meant to be a display of inter-student democracy.

Hosay Mehnat was an IA candidate for the Faculty Disciplinary Committee. On Monday morning of election week, she was one of many candidates and supporters who were forced to guard their chalk murals after their tags were allegedly erased or defaced with water.

"Yesterday at 11 p.m. a bunch of us were on our knees doing this and it took a lot of work," Mehnat said.

IA candidate, Mursal Khan, also gathered with fellow candidates to inspect the damage.

"If you look at [the mural] it has IA all around it and in the middle they just put SFC," Khan said.

He said SFC members were allegedly filling up buckets of water in the Student Union with intentions to erase IA tags and murals.

These erasures were visible on the path from Rosenthal



John Khalily, current SFC official, rips up an IA platform card during election week while shouting, "IA baby!" in YouTube video.

Library all the way down to Kiely Hall, but it was unclear who caused the damage. SFC tags were also erased or smeared.

Erica Davis, newly elected Senate at Large official, was walking around the quad that morning with fellow SFC members. She had a spray bottle

and chalk in hand, but she said she replacing the SFC tags that were allegedly replaced with IA symbols overnight.

"The only places we're going with water are our hard work where our names have been replaced," Davis said. "We're just putting them back."

Davis said she witnessed her own friend, an IA candidate, spitting on a SFC mural.

"I just had [her] come up to me and admit that she was spitting on our murals. I asked, 'Why?' and she said, 'I don't know, seemed like the right thing to do.'"

Mehnat spoke with Davis about this issue and agreed that behavior on both sides was inappropriate.

"There's members of each party that when the heat of elections come about they act in ways they don't normally act, but it's our responsibility to control them," Mehnat said.

However, multiple confrontations erupted later in the week, some of which were recorded and posted on YouTube and Facebook.

Michael Bento, administrator of Queens College Memes on Facebook, posted a video showing one student holding another in a chokehold in front of a crowd of students. When the student being held wriggled away, his attacker then proceeded to throw a bottle of water on him.

The students could not be identified as members of either party. The video was later removed from the page.

Bento alleged it was an IA member attacking a SFC member. However, many other posts on QC Memes displayed bias toward SFC with numerous unsupported accusations, discriminatory comments and outright insults aimed at IA members and supporters.

"SFC has won the student government elections. F**k off IA, you suck!" Bento wrote in a post on April 17.

Davis said SFC came out and actively condemned QC Memes' posts on Facebook.

"We saw to it that when he posted something we saw as discriminatory he took it down," she said. "We made sure people knew it wasn't in our name."

Many posts, such as his post on April 17, remain on the Facebook page at this time.

Davis said another popular Facebook page, Queens College Secrets, showed a bias toward SFC. Many SFC members were allegedly blocked from commenting on posts directed against their party. However, unlike Bento's page, the posts on QC Secrets are written by QC students instead of one sole administrator. The administrator of QC Secrets is unknown at this time.

Another video, filmed at SFC's headquarters, was also released during election week. In it, current SFC official John Khalily rips up an IA platform card while shouting, "IA baby!"

IA members were generally disturbed by the act of disrespect and lack of sportsmanship.

"Hardworking and dedicated members of Independent Alliance paid for these platforms out of their pockets, in order to inform Queens College students about our party two weeks in advance," an IA member said, referring to the video. "To see this handwork be ripped up into shreds by a member of our current student government is a shame. I honestly don't know what to say."

SFC, including current SA President Raj Maheshwari and his successor Christopher Labial, did not respond to inquiries about the videos.

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American millennials are highly educated, but least skilled, report says

YONGMIN CHO

News Reporter

Americans born after 1980 trail behind their international associates in terms of skill, despite acquiring the most education out of the previous generations, a new Education Testing Service report said.

The report shared data from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, a comparative international assessment, which tested the aptitudes of people ages 16 to 65 in 22 countries. The authors chose the millennials as the focal point for the research for several key reasons.

"First, these young adults include the most recent products

of our educational systems. Second, according to recent reports, they have attained the most years of schooling of any cohort in American history. And, finally, millennials will shape the economic and social landscape of our country for many years to come," said Irwin S. Kirsch, director of the Center for Global Assessment Educational Testing Service.

"Millennials may be on track to be our most educated generation ever, but they consistently score below many of their international peers in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments," the report said.

How bad were the results? In literacy, U.S. millennials scored lower than 15 out of the 22 countries. In numeracy, they ranked close to last with only Italy and Spain beneath. Millennials also ranked third to last in PS-TRE, which was especially surprising given that the millennials hold a superior tech savvy reputation, the report stressed. Even the best performing and most educated millennials with a master's or research degree fell short in the standings.

"While it is true that, on average, the more years of schooling one completes, the more skills one acquires, this report suggests that far too

many are graduating high school and completing postsecondary educational programs without receiving adequate skills," Kirsch said.

The ETS report was not the only educational survey that concluded similar results. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, which tests high school seniors, yielded similar results and the College Board reported in 2013 that 57 percent of SAT takers did not qualify as "college ready."

The report challenged the education system to recognize the issue and strive for change.

"If we expect to have a better educated population and a more

competitive workforce, policy makers and other stakeholders will need to shift the conversation from one of educational attainment to one that acknowledges the growing importance of skills and examines these more critically," said Kirsch.

As a nation, we can decide to accept the current levels of mediocrity and inequality or we can decide to address the skills challenge head on. The choices we make will provide a vivid reflection of what our nation values."

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CUNY invests nearly \$5 million in fossil fuel companies

FERNANDO ECHEVERRI AND BRANDON JORDAN

News Reporter

CUNY invested more than \$4.9 million last year in fossil fuel companies such as ExxonMobil, Chevron and Royal Dutch Shell, according to documents provided by CUNY Prison Divest obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

CUNY Divest, a student-led organization founded in spring 2013, is pushing CUNY to divest from fossil fuels. The group uses methods to pressure CUNY to divest on social media and hosts regular meetings throughout CUNY to spread their message.

Dan Asselin, a Brooklyn College alum and a founder of the CUNY Divest campaign, explained the group formed at a march in Washington D.C. two years ago.

"A handful of CUNY students and alumni had been involved in Forward On Climate action in Washington D.C. [in late 2013] and we were eager to stay involved in the fight. With a little help from 350.org, we linked up with representatives from different CUNY campuses and started having regular meetings," Asselin said.

Ian Trupin, an organizer with the Responsible Endowments Coalition, currently works with the CUNY Divest campaign and spoke about what divestment is.

"Divestment means disposing of financial assets like stock. A divestment campaign typically pushes institutions or individuals to divest from investments in certain companies for political or moral reasons. This may take varying amounts of time, depending on how complicated the investments that are being targeted," Trupin said.

The REC is an organization working with students and faculty to ensure "the investment and use of endowments promotes sustainability, equity, human rights, democracy and prosperity for all."

From Harvard to Yale and now CUNY, students at universities around the U.S. are pushing for divestment from fossil fuels through protests, sit-ins, petitions and flyers exposing how much is being invested.

CUNY Divest, in spite of a small core membership, built a network of hundreds of supporters and allies, including the University State Senate.

The USS, founded in 1972,

| | Company | Money Invested | Country of Origin |
|----|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Exxon Mobil Corp | \$ 1,205,600.00 | USA |
| 2 | Chevron Corp | \$ 680,800.00 | USA |
| 3 | Royal Dutch Shell | \$ 410,900.00 | UK |
| 4 | Lukoil Oil Company | \$ 280,900.00 | Russia |
| 5 | Petrochina | \$ 230,000.00 | China |
| 6 | Occidental Petroleum Corp | \$ 227,200.00 | USA |
| 7 | Hong Kong & China Gas | \$ 204,300.00 | Hong Kong |
| 8 | Woodside Petroleum | \$ 203,100.00 | Australia |
| 9 | Petrobras | \$ 193,300.00 | Brazil |
| 10 | Devon Energy Corp | \$ 150,300.00 | USA |
| 11 | Occidental Petroleum Corp | \$ 126,000.00 | USA |
| 12 | National Oilwell Varco | \$ 99,300.00 | USA |
| 13 | Petkim | \$ 92,500.00 | Turkey |
| 14 | Devon Energy Corp | \$ 86,800.00 | USA |
| 15 | Marathon Oil Corp | \$ 78,500.00 | USA |

A list of the top 15 fossil fuel companies CUNY invests in, courtesy of FOIA records provided by CUNY Private Prison Divest. As a note to the reader, Petrobras appears twice in the record with \$23,600 as another separate investment..

is a student-led body representing students across CUNY campuses. In the past, they passed resolutions supporting divestment from fossil fuels with the most recent vote held last September.

In addition, CUNY Prison Divest - a student-led group pushing for divestment from private prisons - was praised by Denise Lescano, a CUNY Divest organizer and Baruch College student, as an ally for their campaign.

"We recently met with CUNY Prison Divest and have become great allies of each other's campaigns. We hope to continue supporting each other in any way we can," Lescano said.

Although both campaigns stand for separate issues, we both agree that we need to expose the hypocrisy between CUNY's values and their investments."

Divestment would be symbolic, said Dr. George Hendrey, chairperson of the Queens College's School of Earth and Environmental Science.

"[It would] send a signal that CUNY understands the issue of climate change and is on the side of science and humanity," Hendrey said.

Climate change refers to abnormal changes in the Earth's climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change continues to warn of "severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts" should greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase.

"Ninety-seven percent of climate scientists concluded human-caused climate change is happening," reported the

American Association for the Advancement of Science in a recent publication.

Moreover, a study conducted earlier this year in Nature found a third of oil reserves, half of natural gas reserves and more than 80 percent of coal reserves would need to remain in the ground "from 2010 to 2050 in order" to keep global temperatures from radically rising more than 2 degrees Celsius.

Hendrey noted how CUNY recently invested in new technologies utilizing alternative energy. Although divestment and reinvestment in green companies would accomplish even more, he said.

"CUNY has a policy to increase its 'greenness.' They are investing in photovoltaic energy systems, so using these resources to invest in photovoltaic companies or other 'green' businesses would be a positive move," Hendrey said.

Trupin said the director of the CUNY board holds the final say on divestment and explained how it could be accomplished.

"If a university directly owns stock in a set of companies that it wants to divest, then it can sell those stock fairly quickly on the stock market," Trupin said. "The university adopts a negative screen or an official policy not to reinvest in that kind of company, in order to make the divestment permanent. Lastly, students and others may successfully push the university to reinvest the money in new investments that addresses the harms done by the original investment."

CUNY currently invests the most in ExxonMobil with more

than \$1.2 million. Rex Tillerson, the CEO of ExxonMobil, told journalist Charlie Rose in an interview for Bloomberg how important it was for the firm to increase revenues.

"My philosophy is to make money. If I can drill and make money, then that's what I want to do. For us, it's about making quality investments for our shareholders," Tillerson said.

When The Knight News previously asked Michael Arena, director for communications and marketing for CUNY, about the universities' investments in private prisons, he explained how the funds were used to finance scholarships. Lescano, meanwhile, respected CUNY's stance, yet questioned the use of stocks held in fossil fuel companies.

"The institution claims to be leaders in sustainability in New York State and a provider of accessible higher education, but are invested in energy companies that go against these leadership values, especially for an institution that states their investments are used 'for the benefit of future generations of students,'" Lescano said.

CUNY Divest held a major rally last April on Earth Day, where city officials, students, faculty and supporters demanded CUNY Chancellor James Milliken take a stand on divestment.

Lescano stressed the importance of divestment in the context of climate change's consequences.

"The current rate of our fossil fuel consumption is creating a climate imbalance to our planet.

As our planet's ecosystem is trying to adjust to this imbalance, civilizations around the world are suffering in the process. If we do not stop our addiction to fossil fuels, eventually all of human civilization will be in jeopardy, including us here in New York City," Lescano said.

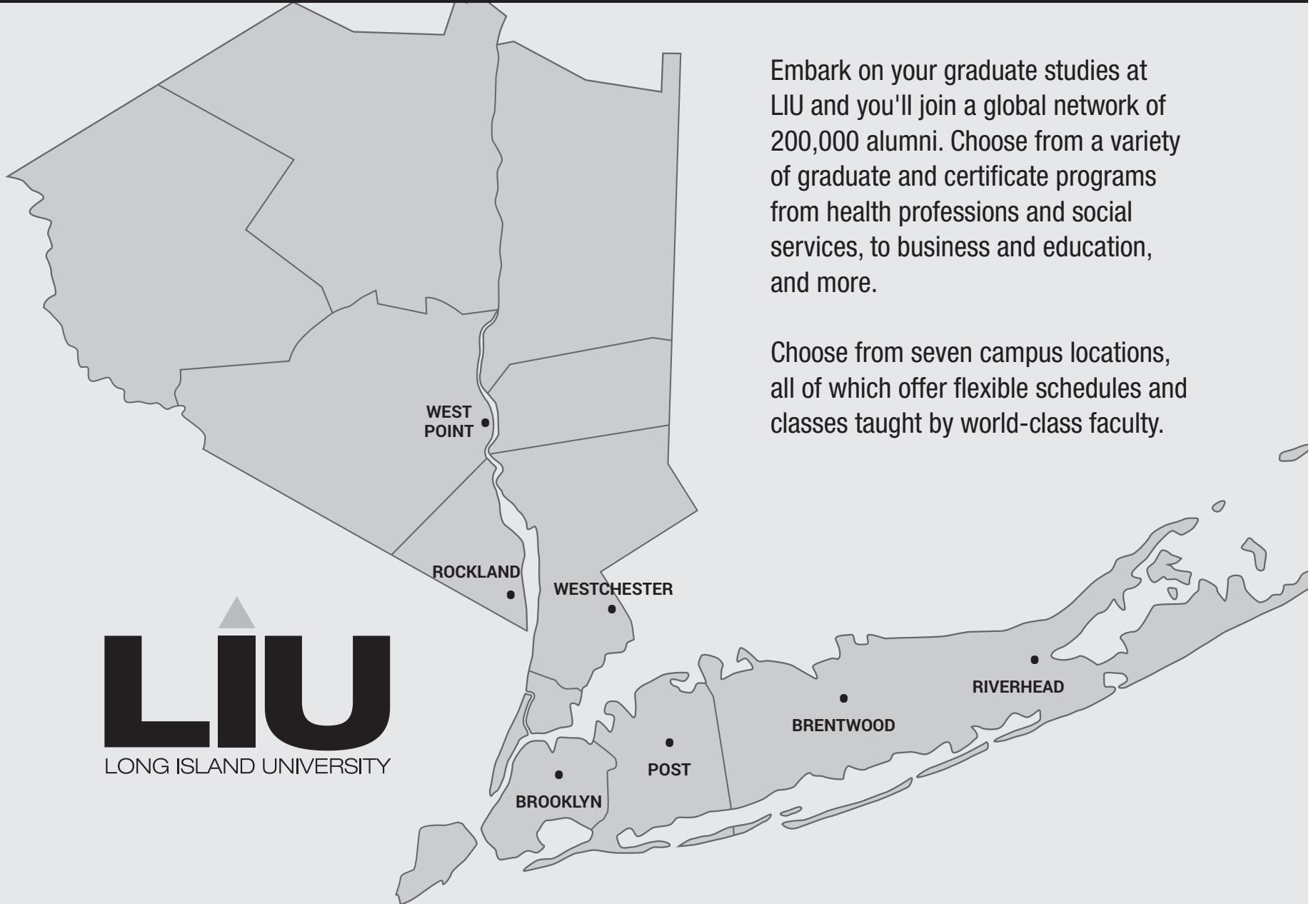
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Queens College president joins the 2015 class of Aspen Institute Ascend Fellows

OYINKANSOLA FALANA

News Reporter

Queens College President Felix Matos Rodriguez was chosen to participate in the Aspen Institute Ascend Fellowship.

The Ascend Fellowship launched in 2011 with its primary mission of combating intergenerational poverty using a two-generation strategy.

"I look forward to using my experience as an Ascend Fellow to explore ways to improve the educational outcomes of college students who are parents both at Queens College and throughout the City University of New York system," Rodriguez said.

The announcement was made on March 10.

"Too many families are struggling, and it is time for a

new generation of leaders who have the vision, innovation, and drive to develop a portfolio of solutions focused on building an intergenerational cycle of opportunity," Anne Mosle, Ascend vice president and executive director said.

In his former position as President of Hostos Community College, Rodriguez successfully launched student success initiatives such as the Two Generation Student Retention and Degree Acceleration Pilot Program, which yielded positive outcomes such as an increase in graduation rate.

The Ascend Program includes "a range of emerging and established two-generation programs from across the United States that provide opportunities

for and meet the needs of vulnerable children and their parents together."

The idea is to cater to parents and children concurrently rather than focusing on one while ignoring the other. To achieve this goal, the program assembles a team of smart, diverse leaders from all over the nation who are passionate about low-income families.

During the 18-month fellowship, they brainstorm together and share ideas and knowledge on how to successfully run the initiatives under the program.

The program also works with their philanthropic partners, which include foundations such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates

Foundation, who are dedicated to impacting low-income families and increasing educational success.

According to an anthology from the Aspen Fellowship, a motivating factor of the program is the "growing recognition that, despite our deep seated belief in its importance as part of the American Dream, social and economic mobility in the United States is well below that of most of the countries we compare ourselves with."

The anthology also quotes a statistic that states that "less than 8 percent of children born to U.S. families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution reach the top fifth, compared to 11.7 percent in Denmark."

QC students are also looking

forward to the positive impact the program would have on campus. Leigh Sanchez, a freshman student of the SEEK Program, which supports students with academic and financial problems, shares the vision of the Ascend Fellowship.

"I think it's important for not just kids but parents to get educated, that way people can get to the middle class faster. I don't see a problem with that. It's a beneficial program and I'm glad that Queens College is participating in it," Sanchez said.

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Author Mona Simpson discusses youthful innocence at Evening Readings

ESHELLE GARNETT

News Reporter

Queens College President Felix American author Mona Simpson spoke at the Queens College Evening Readings series on April 14 to share her sixth novel, "Casebook," a suspenseful coming-of-age story.

Sharing only a brief excerpt, Simpson described a bittersweet account of a married couple as they undergo the process of a divorce narrated from the standpoint of their son's pre-teenage eyes.

The evening reading began with the reading of the book's "note to reader," eluding into a personal memoir honoring the narrator's "fledgling of publishing concern." It pays homage the seed of inspiration and creativity that was planted into their imagination

as a child, which was a comic book series he lamented.

The note to reader of "Casebook" takes the reader away into a comic book store where the narrator first met the creators of the comic book series "Two Spoofs" in its initial years.

According to the narrator, "Two Spoofs" turned out to be the first "breakout seller" of Emerald City Press and has earned its title as a cult classic.

"With an advanced run of three-hundred, the comic book, [Two Spoofs] was re-printed ninety-one times and is still shipping at a rate of one-hundred copies per month," the narrator said.

The actual storyline of "Casebook" begins under the

bed of his parents' bedroom. The main character, Miles would often sneak into the room when no one was there and hide under the bed until his parents fell asleep. "The first time [Miles snuck under the bed] he was nine years old," which became his habit and as a result he indirectly experienced his first exposure to sexuality.

Miles' main goal in sneaking under the bed was to eavesdrop on his mother, but one night he eventually discovered what he at most "didn't want to know." For the first time while he was under the bed Miles overhears his parents' dialogue of separation.

"It's nice to write from the point of view of somebody that doesn't really have any sort of sophistication," Simpson said.

"What's so appealing about a young person's voice is that they're [still] encountering things... [As young people,] the big moral concepts just come to us sometimes."

The evening reading focused on the account of a night when Miles' mother invited friends over for dinner unannounced. Miles' father left the room as the friends arrived. When they left, his father returned, and asked, "How was it?"

The evening reading ended when she said, "this is 326th day that we haven't eaten together and its only June."

Kupferburg Center for the Arts at Queens College hosts a series of Evening Readings showcasing the literature of a wide range of contemporary authors.

More information can be found at www.qcreadings.org. Admission is free with CUNY ID and regular admission is \$20.

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Children's music concert enchants LeFrak Concert Hall

NINA BAKOYIANNIS

News Reporter

The Aaron Copland School of Music hosted a concert titled "A Program of Children's Music" on March 27.

The concert was part of the Chamber Music Live concert series, which takes place Friday mornings throughout the spring semester in LeFrak Concert Hall.

The program featured a unique playlist by world-renowned artists Arbie Orenstein and Gerald Robbins.

The first segment of their performance consisted of pieces by Claude Debussy, Robert Schumann, and Gabriel Faure, with songs titled "Dolly's Garden," "Kitty Waltz" and "Minuet".

The songs were four-hand arrangements composed in the 19th century that were specifically constructed for people to play and enjoy in the comfort of their own home with family and friends.

The tone of the concert was youthful, consisting of pieces designed to take listeners on a trip back to their childhood.

"I'm really enjoying the concert. It's the first time I've heard four-handed piano and I love Arbie Orenstein, he's my professor. They're unbelievably talented, both of them," Pinchas Fiber, Queens College student, said during intermission.

Part two featured a selection

of pieces by Maurice Ravel and Georges Bizet, with songs "The Doll," "The Merry Go Round," "Soap Bubbles" and others.

After intermission, Orenstein introduced the piece titled "Mother Goose" by Maurice Ravel.

"This next piece was performed by two young ladies whose combined age was 25. These are really among the most wonderful, enchanting, pieces that he wrote. Ravel said himself, 'I wish to evoke the poetry of childhood,'" Orenstein said.

The combined skill of Orenstein and Robbins provided for a lovely morning concert,

filled with beautiful music and a relaxing environment for all listeners. Although meant to sound youthful, the pieces were also very sophisticated and intricate.

Orenstein, QC alum, received his PhD in Musicology at Columbia University. He is a published author who recorded the world premieres of several works by Ravel. He also studied in France and has taught at the Aaron Copland School of Music for over 45 years.

Robbins has performed throughout Europe, Japan and the US. He has also been featured on numerous radio and television broadcasts and is the co-founder

of the Lyric Piano Quartet. He is a member of the chamber music faculty at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City.

Chamber Music Live will be holding four more concerts throughout the remainder of the semester in LeFrak Concert Hall, all of which are free to QC students with a valid Queens College ID.

The Queens College Orchestra will perform the last concert of the semester on May 15.

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Students unable to work a full-time job and pay tuition, data finds

BRANDON JORDAN

News Reporter

The average full-time student needs to work more than 900 hours to pay for one year of tuition and fees. In 1979, for the same person, only 182 hours were needed.

Randal Olson, a graduate research assistant at Michigan State University, originally reported the data after a conversation with his grandfather.

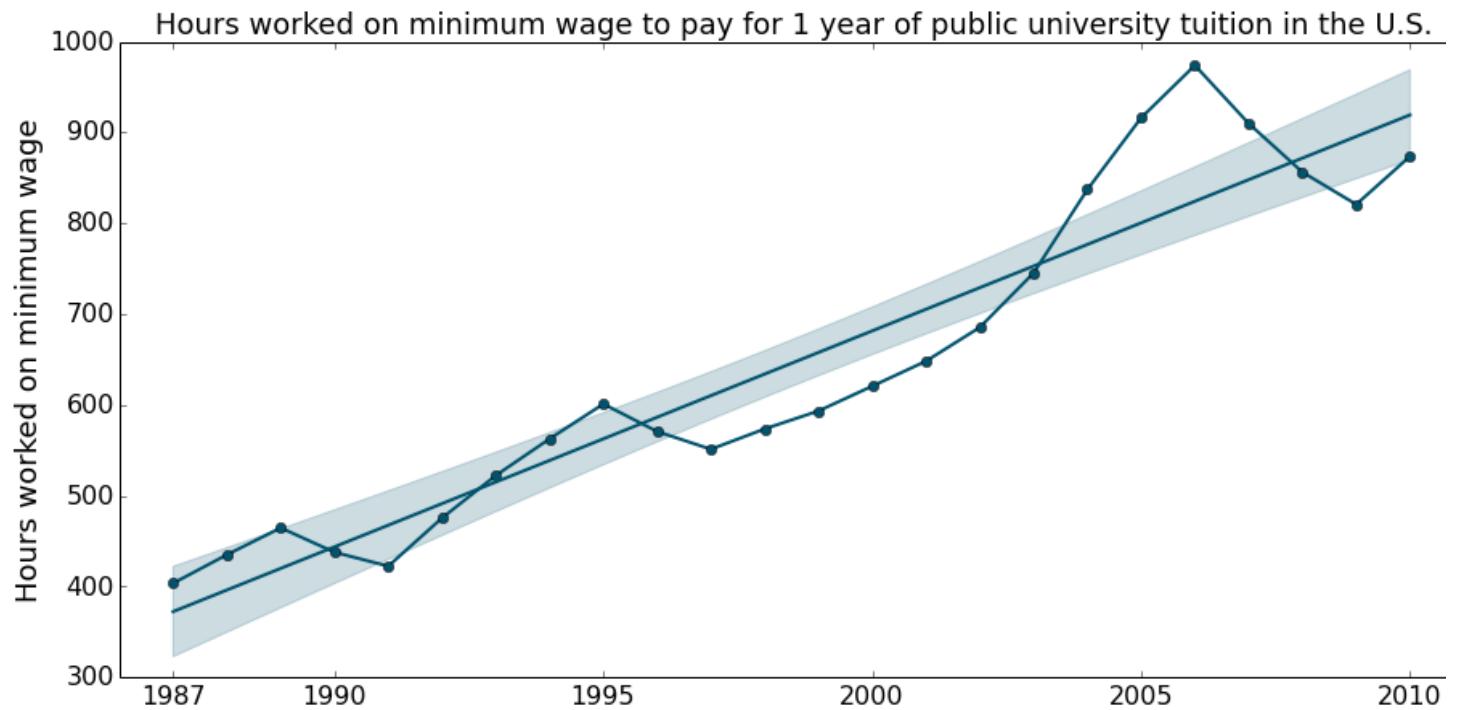
“It’s a topic that many Millennials have in the back of our mind, really,” Olson said. “The [original] post and the accompanying analysis were inspired by a conversation with my grandfather: He was explaining to me why it was such a great thing that I worked my way through college, when all I remembered was struggling to juggle classes, homework, and a job while keeping my grades up.”

Olson omitted other factors such as books and more as he feared “the plot would only look even more dismal if I factored those costs in.”

Concerns over the affordability of higher education are an ongoing national concern amongst Americans. A Gallup poll, released on April 16, said 79 percent of Americans said college was expensive for families.

Olson analyzed the changes in the federal minimum wage, which is currently \$7.25 per hour. The last it was raised by the U.S. Congress was in 2009 from \$6.55.

John Schmitt, an economist with the Center for Economic Policy and Research, released a report in 2012 declaring the minimum wage was too low. If



Data sources: www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/deltacostproject & www.dol.gov/whd/minwage/chart.htm | Author: Randy Olson (www.randalolson.com / @randal_olson)

GRAPH COURTESY OF RANDAL OLSON

It is simply impossible for a student to work a full-time job and pay for tuition.

it kept up with inflation, then it would be, in 2012 dollars, \$9.22 per hour. If it kept up with full productivity rates, then it would be, also in 2012 dollars, \$21.72 per hour.

Olson noted how the idea of working a job and paying for tuition is not a new phenomenon for Americans.

“I think it’s ingrained in the American mentality. Many of us want to believe that if we work hard enough, we can accomplish anything we set our minds to. These findings show that in some cases, the odds are stacked against us and hard work alone won’t cut it,” Olson said.

Jemal Rahyab, a senior majoring in history, believes it is

difficult for any incoming college student to obtain a high-paying job to pay for school, which forces them to take minimum wage jobs.

“Many freshmen who enter college never held a job before so they are forced to work minimum wage jobs. Employers are not always understanding they hire students because they know students are desperate and need jobs, which is why they ask students to work just under full-time status like 35-38 hours a week to avoid benefits,” Rahyab said.

Moreover, Rahyab said a minimum wage job was not a guarantee to pay for tuition.

“Even if a full-time student works at a minimum wage job

and saves up all the money, the student still wouldn’t be able to pay off their tuition in full for that semester,” Rahyab said.

Olson stressed that the problem may get worse, as tuition rates and enrollment rates are projected to increase over the next few decades.

Still, he emphasized how important it was for students to look into alternatives, such as trade school, scholarships, community college and the military. In addition, he criticized the “study what you love” approach as detrimental for the future of college students.

“‘Study what you love’ is the worst advice I’ve ever heard; I know dozens of college graduates

who ‘studied what they love’ and now they’re stuck with a worthless college degree and overwhelming student loan debt because ‘what they love’ isn’t what employers want to pay them for. Most of the time, it’s better to get a degree in something that will land you a stable job and you can pursue what you love as a side project,” Olson said.

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New play promotes minority representation in theatrical works

JORDI SEVILLA

News Reporter

A small audience gathered on stage for a reading of Nandita Shenoy’s play “ESSPY” in Colden Auditorium on March 26.

Socially awkward Taiwanese-American medical student William Chen (Chester Poon) learns how to communicate with his patients through his repeated encounters with his patient Anu Shilpa (Jolly Abraham), who turns out to be his equal. At the same time, he is under the wing of his immigrant Filipina mentor, Dr. Mendoza (Ching Valdes-Aran), who is more concerned with the science of medicine rather than emotional relationships.

“ESSPY is based on my experiences as a standardized patient at NYU medical school,”

Shenoy said in an interview with Flux Theatre Ensemble. “After experiencing some real life drama with family illness, I realized firsthand how important it was for doctors to be trained in the art of speaking to patients. So this play is my way of recognizing the gravity of the work while (hopefully) entertaining people.”

Shenoy received the opportunity to work on “ESSPY” after receiving a grant from the First Acts: New Plays in Development program, provided by the Kupferberg Center for the Arts.

The program is set up to help minority and immigrant playwrights produce plays from their unique perspectives to represent issues unseen in commercial theater.

“It can often be very difficult for minority playwrights to get their work produced, so the idea is to try and elevate these voices which are lacking in the theater genre in general,” Sophia McGee, artistic director of “First Acts” said.

Most often it is white male playwrights who are considered “American playwrights” and their experiences are represented far more than that of women and people of color. Shenoy is proud to be an Asian-American woman and wants to see the day where she will be considered an American playwright, rather than the “other”.

“As an Asian-American artist, I always want to write roles for diverse casts, and a medical school seemed like the perfect place to set an entirely Asian-American play.

Growing up in a family of doctors, I spent a lot of time in hospitals and felt like the television shows and movies don’t come close to representing the actual diversity of the medical field,” Shenoy said.

“ESSPY” brings up issues common for children of immigrants. Parents usually push their children into what they consider as secure careers, such as doctors as opposed to actors.

“I think at the end of the day, the story you see in “ESSPY” is an American story, it’s a story about compassion, learning how to communicate and dealing with what people think you should be and how you really are,” Shenoy said. “I think those are experiences that anyone could relate to, and what the skin color or cultural background of any of the

characters, while very important to each character in terms of their experience, I don’t think it makes them un-relatable to anybody else. My goal as a playwright is to tell stories with a diverse, culturally rich cast that anyone can laugh and relate to, and have a feeling about.”

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Spotlight on the iTones: QC's first official a capella group

CANDICE SAMUELS

News Reporter

Queens College's iTones is a co-ed a capella group founded in 2012 by President Taylor Blanket and Vice President Jessica Altieri.

A cappella is technically defined as "singing without instrumental accompaniment." While some groups use their voices to emulate instruments others are more traditional and focus on harmonizing.

"I met Jessica in a jazz history class. I pitched the idea of starting an a capella group on campus. We both came from choral backgrounds during our years in high school," Blanket said.

"With a lot of determination and a little bit of luck, we were able to fill out all the paperwork, write up a proposal, and collect 20 signatures from prospective members before winter break of 2012. That was how the iTones were born."

The iTones currently consist of 16 students chosen through a competitive audition process.

"During audition season, we usually have each prospective member prepare a solo piece to showcase their voice. After they perform for us, we execute a few other exercises to determine their range, voice part and how they blend with other voices," Altieri said.

The group's repertoire includes various genres of music, from old-time classics to pop and jazz.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAYLOR BLANKET

The iTones performing at the 2015 pre International Competition of Collegiate A Cappella showcase in The Godwin Ternbach Museum.

"We usually have the group suggest one of two songs at a time then have our members vote on which ones they'd like to perform. We like to have a wide variety of styles in our repertoire so we keep genre in mind when deciding. My favorite genre is jazz because of the intricate harmonies and how they sound in our voices," Altieri said.

Like many clubs on campus the task of receiving funding can be a rigorous process.

"The iTones applied for school funding in the fall of 2014 and received it in November of that

year. We were finally a legit club on campus," Blanket said. "This money contributed to our first ever ICCA audition submission."

The ICCA's are the International Competition of Collegiate A Cappella, where selected groups compete all over the tristate area for the grand title of ICCA Champion.

"The iTones were both anxious and excited to submit our video filmed in the Copland School of Music. We were accepted on our first try," Blanket said.

"We spent the next 3 months preparing for our quarterfinal at the University of Hartford in Connecticut. We competed with 12 other groups and placed 5th. While we did not have the opportunity to move on in the competition, we were extremely proud of ourselves!"

Despite only being an official club for one year, the iTones have brought innovative musical ideas to QC's campus. Last fall, the first ever a capella festival "Voices Only!" was held in Lefrak Concert Hall. Unlike

other iTones concerts, this event featured seven other a cappella groups from across 3 states.

"One thing that's particularly unique about our group is that it is predominantly comprised of non-music majors," Altieri said.

"There are many instances when high school students don't get to experience choir or a cappella in college because most on-campus ensembles are reserved for music majors. Our members enjoy their time making music together and I love being able to give them the means to do so."

Upcoming auditions for the 2015-2016 school year will be held in Copland School of Music on April 24 and 26.

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Memory project celebrates Queens' rich history and culture

ARIEL BAGLEY

News Reporter

Natalie Milbrodt, while working on her master's thesis, decided to create the Queens Memory Project to document and preserve the memory of ethnic groups in Queens.

"Queens County is the most diverse county in the United States, and, since other counties have their own documenting projects, we felt Queens should have their own as well," Milbrodt said.

The Queens Memory project is collaboration between Queens College and the Queens Library.

"I think it's great to have a digital archive of all the various ethnicities in Queens, since it strengthens our own understanding of these different communities," said Oren Dayan, a freshman at QC.

The archive collects

photographs and newspaper clippings from current and former Queens residents as well as interviews with current residents into a digital database for documentation.

"We conducted 286 interviews in 53 neighborhoods with participants hailing from 23 countries," Milbrodt said.

QC provided initial funding for Milbrodt as well as successive funding for each year thereafter.

The project relied on several unique ways to document the historical life of Queens in addition to standard interviews.

One such contribution was to tap into the QC student body. As one of the most diverse colleges in the United States, Milbrodt first elicited the help of faculty to document their students' communities.

Professor Dranah Viladrich

offered her students a two semester-long project studying the culinary traditions of immigrant communities. Students interviewed community members and asked for them to share their recipes.

Another unique contribution was St Albans' musical history.

St. Albans became a haven for jazz musicians in the 1960s. Lena Horne, Fats Waller and Ella Fitzgerald were all former residents.

Many residents still remember their presence and project members interviewed them and collected memorabilia to preserve the memory of that great time.

St. Albans played a role in the hip-hop scene, with many famous artists, such as LL Cool J and Q-Tip, hailing from the community. The project contacted

several hip-hop artists to interview them about life growing up in St. Albans and the effects of jazz artists in the community and on their careers.

However, the project did more than document individual or communal histories. Several communal events sponsored by the project brought people from all over Queens to come and share their personal items. Volunteers scanned and digitized the items or conduct interviews. In addition to digitizing items, they taught participants, many of who are elderly, digital literacy.

"I think digital literacy is very important to teach to elderly people, as many of them are not as connected to their family members as they could be," said Max Fruchter, a freshman.

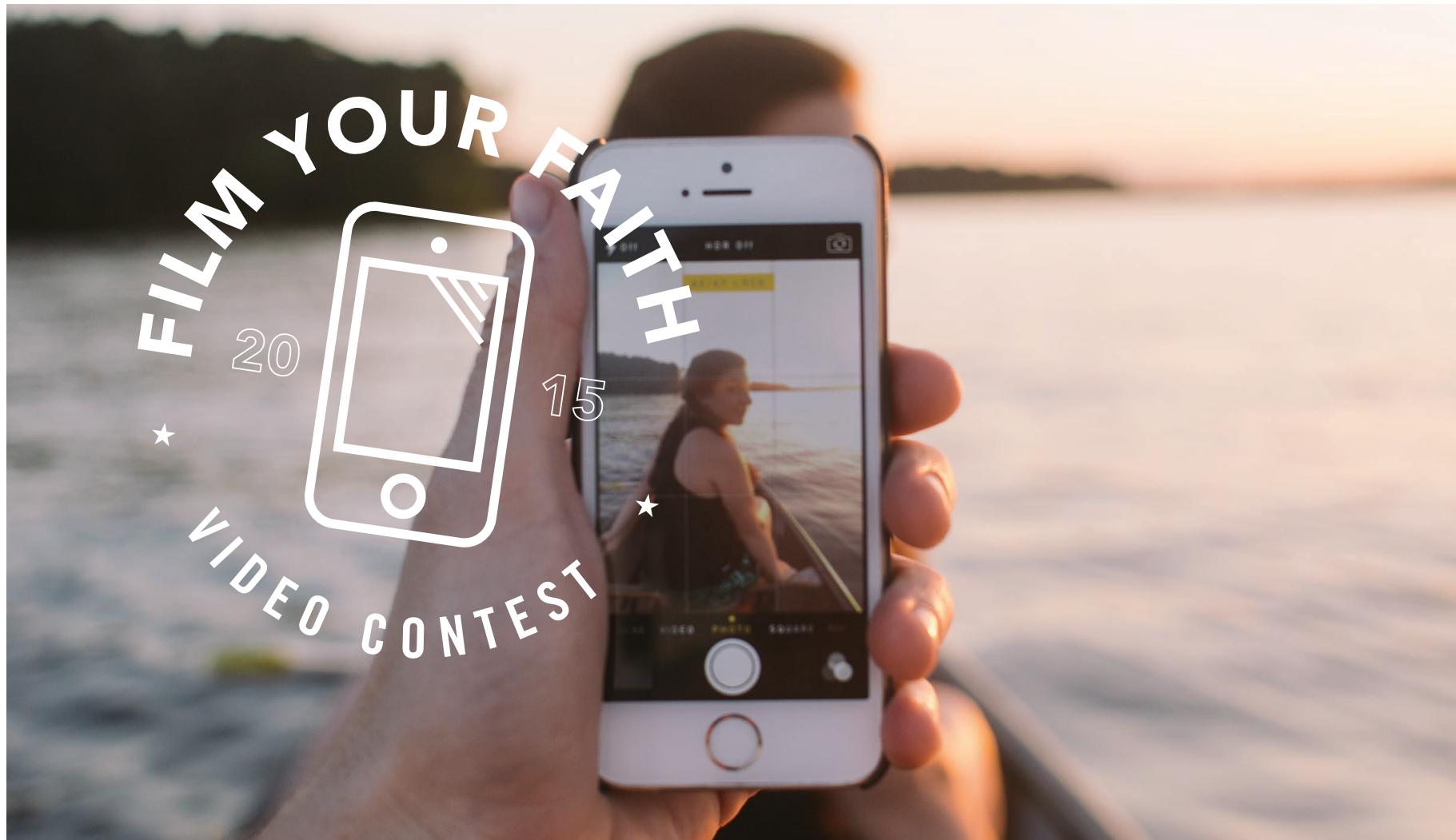
Because the project is open-ended, it doesn't plan to stop

until all groups in Queens are represented.

"The goal of the program is to fill in the gaps to represent as many people as possible," Milbrandt said.

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THE CALL

What does the world look like through your unique lens of faith? Flip out your phone, pull out your camera gear, tap record, and show us in two minutes or less how faith changes lives, relationships and communities for the better.

Tell a story that makes us laugh, brings us to tears, inspires, entertains, or all of the above. Let your imagination run wild and your camera follow. You don't have to be the next Spielberg to play—you just need a phone and an idea.

IMPORTANT DATES

Contest launch: April 16, 2015

Entry deadline: June 15, 2015

Winners announced: August 28, 2015

PRIZES



Grand Prize Winner / \$20,000 and a trip to Philadelphia, PA for the big announcement



Honorable Mention (2) / \$2,500



Fan Favorite / \$10,000

CONTACT

For more information, visit FaithCounts.com or email us at videocontest@faithcounts.com.

FaithCounts.com

Project Sunshine hosts multi-cultural fashion show for charity

YARAH SHABANA

News Reporter

Project Sunshine hosted their first annual multi-cultural fashion show on April 15 in the Student Union Ballroom.

Fifty-five models from 38 different countries walked the runway to raise money for hospitalized children. QC students came together to represent their cultures through style and entertainment.

Students took turns representing their countries, wearing traditional garb from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt and more.

QC Fanaa and the QC Step Team performed in between catwalks. Project Sunshine also welcomed The Wanted Ashiqz, winners of “So You Think You Can Dance” for Best Dance Crew.

The QC chapter of Project Sunshine was founded in 2013 and has created innovative events ever since.

“Project Sunshine is a nonprofit organization that provides free educational, recreational and social programs to children facing medical challenges and their families as described on their Facebook page,” Aadil Ilyas, president of Project Sunshine,



PHOTO COURTESY OF AADIL ILYAS

A few of the models in the multi-cultural fashion show hosted by Project Sunshine.

said.

Project Sunshine continues to have events to raise money for children in need and their fashion show was another innovative way of doing it.

“Being a part of Project Sunshine at Queens College has been a very rewarding experience for me,” Rezwana Khan, model

and active member, said.

Khan, who represented Bangladesh, said she was nervous, yet became confident after hearing cheers from the crowd. She also said how amazing the event was for the children.

“To be able to make children in a hospital smile and to bring them happiness, for them to forget

about their problems and pain is truly worth the cause. This was our first fashion show and it was an amazing turn out,” Khan said.

Project Sunshine empowers dedicated corps of more than 10,000 volunteers to bring programming to over 60,000 children facing medical challenges and their families. The services they

provide include recreational like arts, educational like tutoring and mentoring and social service like HIV and nutritional counseling to 175 major cities across the U.S. and in five international satellite sites like Canada, China, Israel, Kenya and Puerto Rico.

“I think it was one of the most successful events at Queens College,” Saira Chaudhry, senior, said.

I’ve been to a lot in the past years, including fashion shows, and this was one of the better ones. Plus the turnout was great which has completely lacked in other such events. It was fun, entertaining, catered to a college audience in every way, culturally relevant, colorful, had a friendly environment and well put together,”

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New York Times journalist speaks about ‘stop and frisk’

EMILY DECEMBER

News Reporter

Jim Dwyer, a journalist with The New York Times, spoke in front of an audience of 45 people about “stop and frisk” on April 15.

Dwyer joined The New York Times in 2001 following a career where he won two Pulitzer Prizes, prestigious awards given to journalists, and wrote six books.

Dwyer stated that 700,000 individuals were stopped and frisked in 2012, with 3 percent of those arrests ending in conviction based on possessing and openly using marijuana. Generally, either black or Hispanic men under 25 were arrested, despite, as Dwyer noted, whites using marijuana at higher rates.

Dwyer then showed video clips exemplifying police misconduct. The first video explained what happens when a police lineup and suspect selection goes wrong.

The second video showed a similar case where the police provided too much information to someone they interrogated.

“[The police lineup in the first video was] wrong, and the

change in lineup caused for the accusation of innocent people,” Dwyer said.

In another video, a woman confessed to a crime she did not commit. Dwyer said the officers pressured individuals to choose a person who was the suspect. Moreover, officers who knew the answer changed the tone of their voice when they introduced a suspect.

“These people should be picking the right, not best person,” Dwyer said.

As a possible solution, Dwyer advocated that only one picture be presented at a time. Thus, it would provide a “better chance to pick the right person.”

Dwyer shifted to the history of police brutality with the case of Clifford Glover, a 10-year-old black child killed by a New York Police Department officer in 1973. Dwyer said Glover was with his stepfather when officers Thomas Shea and Walter Scott stopped them both in south Queens over suspicion of robbery. Shea shot at them and killed Glover as they ran

away.

“[It was] the first case in New York City to have an on duty officer tried and acquitted for killing a civilian,” Dwyer said.

Tensions rose not only as a result of this case, but because of major issues between the police and communities.

“The public was accusing the police of only protecting the upper class,” Dwyer said.

Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani introduced Compstat in 1994, which mapped out crime in each district as it continued to rise. At its peak, there were five to six murders per day in 1990.

In general, Dwyer noted how the police were either fiercely supported or opposed by residents.

“We don’t have a picture beyond picturesque or admiration; the [police] are either extremely good or extremely bad,” Dwyer said.

Several students left with more questions than answers.

Patrick Moses, a junior and member of the Ethnic Media

Collection said he wished there was more to the discussion, as it did not go in-depth.

“I thought the event played it ‘safe’ and failed to touch upon many sensitive issues that are often discussed in regards to stop and frisk, such as the phenomenon of fearing black bodies or how these policies affect black and Latino communities on a personal level,” Moses said

Moses noted the audience was mostly people of color who understood the economics of stop and frisk, while Dwyer was not a person of color. As a result, he felt there was a “host-audience disconnect.”

Amir Khafagy, a transfer student, believed one solution would be “community control of all institutions influencing our lives.” In addition, he said he wished the speaker was someone with more experience with stop and frisk.

“It should have been a community activist with experience with broken windows and stop and frisk policies,”

Khafagy said.

Khafagy concluded the presentation missed key points such as the connection between militarization of the police as well as gentrification.

Gentrification refers to renovations of communities where rich residents are able to afford housing at the expense of poor residents, who are then displaced.

“You cannot [discuss] one without the other,” Khafagy said.

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Additional reporting by Johanna Cadet



OP-EDS

Hard-learned lessons from a year in the workforce

BY ISAAC SOBEL

LinkedIn recently congratulated me this week on my one-year work anniversary with Centers Health Care. I was prompted to reflect on year one of my professional career—and whether the liberal arts properly prepared me for the workforce. As you might expect, my brief professional exposure cannot help me resolve the above-referenced debate simply. Meanwhile, I learned the hard way that there are some stark realities that a young, liberal-arts-trained professional will be presented with as they transition from the halls of the academe.

For one thing, the professional world - the business world in particular requires effective time management skills. In college, there is substantial flexibility. For me, a typical schedule in college may have included classes from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday off, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, and 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, while freeing three or four evenings a week - leaving ample study time. You can imagine my shock then, entering the fast-paced, post-acute-care

arena. At Centers, my typical workday might include two meetings, 10 phone calls, 100 emails, and one or two main projects to be completed - all between 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Only after consulting my new colleagues, who helped me to create a strong schedule before the week begins, did I begin to adjust. As time went on, I picked up rules of thumb, such as scheduling only 60 percent of a week, as a supervisor suggested. I also learned hacks like the zero-inbox method, and carving out designated times to address emails, to streamline my day. Finally, after a while, my circadian rhythm adapted to the new demands.

Once in the swing of things, it became clear that in order to succeed at work, there is no substitute for hard work. Now, I am not suggesting that college is easy. But, I will point to the oft-repeated Woody Allen quote, at the tip of many a professor's tongue.

"Eighty percent of success is just showing up," Allen said.

Granted, with test scores as the metric for achievement in school, there is some truth

to Woody Allen's aphorism. Augmenting class attendance with some study is the simple guide for the honor-roll student. That said, I cannot help but look back at my year at C.H.C. and attribute my small success to grit, a willingness to put in long hours and a willingness to step up to the plate when called upon. Each evening in the early months of employment, spent side by side with my supervisor, while all others were gone for the day, felt like a small accomplishment. Being accessible by email 16 plus hours a day, in this hyper-connected age, felt like a victory. And gladly accepting a months long revenue-cycle project, calling upon general skills cultivated in college and elsewhere, was a badge of honor for me. Now, each day I walk into the office looking to say yes to hard work, eager to contribute, while keeping my head down.

Similarly, the understanding of office politics can make or break a budding career. For its part, college requires mastery of subject matter. As an economics student, learning to discount cash flows would

earn me passing grades and scholastic recognition. Insofar as professors are people, each class is a universe unto itself; having bad rapport with one professor will rarely translate into a poor relationship with another. It is only in the office, though, that you must learn "to be soft on the people, and hard on the problems," as Fisher and Ury suggest in their seminal work "Getting to Yes." I learned this lesson the hard way, when a supervisor sat me down to admonish me that "you catch more flies with honey." This same supervisor taught me to begin a search for information by starting with the people who know the most - seems obvious, right? After I inflamed a dispute between team members. Granted, colleges will teach of organizational charts, but only once in the workplace can you learn your colleagues' likes and dislikes, whether your company lauds those who break the chain-of-command as courageous or spurns them, or what it feels like to be in a decentralized vs. centralized workplace.

Reflecting on this past year, it seems that the skills

discussed above are learned in spite of the liberal arts education, in the school of hard knocks. Specifically, I have found that learning time management is a trial-by-fire experience, in which only the capable survive. The hard work requirement of the workplace, meanwhile, is something that can be learned through some attentiveness and willingness. And learning the ropes of office politics is an ongoing affair, which demands increasing finesse as one progresses professionally. Still, as I eagerly embark on year two, I ask wouldn't it make sense to teach these skills in college, so that young professionals can learn the easy way?

Isaac Sobel is a recent Queens College graduate who studied economics and political science. He currently works for Centers Health Care.

GMO Or No? Consumers can decide for themselves

BY MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ

The Washington Post's editorial board came out with an opinion piece last month in opposition of labeling genetically modified foods. They note that proponents of labeling genetically modified organisms demand "transparency about what they're eating" while also claiming that consumers "exaggerate the worries about 'Frankenfood.'" In other words, the Post fears that mandatory labeling on the part of any state would imply public hazards that don't exist, and that grocery shoppers would be scared off from buying foods that aren't dangerous at all.

But I think that we as consumers deserve more credit than this. Essentially, their editors imply that grocery shoppers are so misinformed and ignorant

about genetically modified foods that they can't even be trusted with the extra information provided by a label. It's strange to see the paper of Woodward and Bernstein actually argue in favor of withholding information from the public.

But the real problem is that the Post misses the entire point of the GMO debate. It isn't about "Frankenfood" or accommodating special diets. It's about providing the public with more information and more choices. For example, why shouldn't consumers be clearly informed that 94 percent of the country's soy is genetically modified? Why shouldn't shoppers be able to easily know what is in the products that they use their hard earned money to purchase? People have incredibly arbitrary criteria

in deciding which products to buy, including the name of a brand or even the celebrity they saw on a commercial. Genetic engineering, too, is a viable factor for consumers to consider.

And yet the Post's editors claim it isn't, as though anyone has the right to determine how consumers should make their buying choices for them. The paper goes as far as to cheer Congress for a policy which "preempts states from requiring such labels." They are basically in support of keeping the American public in the dark, which should be an outrage to consumers everywhere.

All in all, the point is that GMO labeling isn't about the potential of genetic engineering. It isn't about declaring GMOs "good" or "bad." It's about living in an

incredibly large and diverse country where people at every level of society, from individuals to cities to entire swaths of the nation, view and interact with the world differently. It's what makes us "contain multitudes," as Walt Whitman said, and it's what makes us innovative in fields ranging from the arts to Silicon Valley. When politicians or major publications simply declare that they know better than the masses and that's that, they weaken the spirit of self-determination that makes our country unique.

If this is important to you, come to the GMO Free NY Labeling & Rally Day! Take part in a huge rally with an entire coalition fighting for you to know what's in your food and lobby your own representatives

face-to-face. If you've ever wanted to get involved in the legislative process directly... this is your chance. Sign up at <http://gmofreeny.net/eventscalendar.html>

Michelle Rodriguez is a project coordinator for NYPIRG.

OP-EDS

Mercy, mercy me and why the ecology needs to be protected

BY BRANDON JORDAN

Originally, for this op-ed, I intended to shame students obsessed with making astronomical salaries in their career and how they were ignorant of an upcoming climate catastrophe. I felt such an idiotic perspective should be challenged.

However, after listening to podcasts like “Citizen Radio” and reading about Fight for 15, I began to reconsider what I was doing and looked at my personal rules I follow in journalism. One of them is get out of the way for the story.

I began to think to myself, “Am I placing myself in a major issue to feel great about myself?” Is it right I report on the divestment movement to empower myself? What’s the point of even writing anymore if I am a narcissist like the students on campus obsessed with high-paying salaries at major firms?

I am proud of the work I did with Fernando Echeverri in our story about divestment. I support CUNY Divest and stand with them in their efforts. Yet, I feel it is important to focus on the issue of climate change than my own beliefs.

As a note to the reader, it

is important to describe what is happening to our planet.

Take California, for instance: a place where climate change is already making an impact. The state is suffering from a stubborn drought to the point where Jay Famiglietti, a NASA scientist, warned that water reserves would last until next year in an op-ed for the Los Angeles Times.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, an agency of the United Nations, warned last year that global warming, if unchecked, would cause massive and unprecedented changes to the entire planet.

“Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems,” the authors said.

There are an incessant amount of headlines ranging from the extinction of 26 percent of species on Earth to the potential of a mega-drought affecting the southwest. I cannot help but remember a piece written by the excellent journalist Dahr

Jamail on “Truth-Out,” where shares the most appropriate response to global warming – depression.

“This work has emotional consequences. I’ve struggled with depression, anger and fear. I’ve watched myself shift through some of the five stages of grief proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. I’ve grieved for the planet and all the species who live here, and continue to do so as I work today,” Jamail said.

Professor Corey Bradshaw, the director of ecological modeling at the University of Adelaide, is my favorite for reasons the staff of “The Knight News” are aware of. Bradshaw cites his frustration and anger with the “greedy, lying bastards” not doing anything about climate change.

“Mark my words, you plutocrats, denialists, fossil-fuel hacks and science charlatans – your time will come when you will be backed against the wall by the full wrath of billions who have suffered from your greed and stupidity, and I’ll be first in line to put you there,” Bradshaw said.

I do not want to feel so cynical and pessimistic that I become bitter, but it is not easy dealing with the consequences of global warming, especially considering inaction by major governments too lazy to deal with large problems.

Part of me, perhaps the rational one, believes it is far too late to do anything as individual actions truly do nothing for a communal problem. Yet I also feel, if one follows the potential of the “Fight for 15” and “Black Lives Matter” movements, that the environmental movement will move out of irrelevancy to a bigger space.

Therefore, I think divestment is a valuable movement to support and am glad I was able to cover this with my colleague.

Yet, there needs to be more done going forward to the point where we truly need to reconsider our society.

I loathe op-eds as I feel my voice is nothing to contribute in a debate where the answers are already there. Who cares about talk, there needs to be action done. As the old adage goes, actions speak louder than words. But I think this is different as I am tired of exploitation. I am tired of injustice. I am tired

of oppression. I am tired of capitalism.

There needs to be a new movement going forward to truly bring the situation under our control or else we may be facing the reality of a Sixth Extinction already underway.

I, and certainly no other person in my generation, wants that to happen, but it is happening. The question is, will we do anything about it? But I do not want to end on that somber note. I want to end with a quote by Malcolm X inspiring me in the darkest of times.

“Usually when people are sad, they don’t do anything. They just cry over their condition. But when they get angry, they bring about a change,” Malcolm said.

Get angry.

Brandon Jordan is a junior studying political science and economics. He is the co-Editor-in-Chief of The Knight News and a journalist with Firedoglake. He can be reached at brandon@theknightnews.com.

Reforming the Energy Vision: Our Chance for a Cleaner Future

BY ANIK NATH

On September 21st, 2014, New York City became the site of the largest march against climate change in human history. The People’s Climate March, attended by over three hundred thousand people, called upon the world’s leaders to address climate change and other environmental issues. In December, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a statewide ban on hydraulic fracturing, a form of natural gas drilling opposed by environmentalists as a threat to public health. New York is now the only state other than Vermont to ban the practice – and with 19 million people, 29 electoral votes and the biggest city in the country, the state’s ban represents a massive environmental victory.

There’s no question that 2014 was a very good year for the environment in New York. Unfortunately, we’re still feeling the ill effects of climate change, and as global temperatures continue to rise, they will only increase. One 2012 study from the journal Nature Climate Change found that increasing ocean temperatures lead to thermal expansion of ocean water and a corresponding rise in sea level. The study predicted an increase in New York’s severe flooding risk, and Hurricane Sandy battered the city the very next year. In California, a 2014 Stanford University study found a like between atmospheric pressure caused by carbon emissions and the state’s historic drought. Even last fall’s Ebola scare had a link to our changing environment

– as rising global temperatures lead to food scarcity in the third world, desperate people turn to bush hunting and other unconventional food sources. That means people eat animals such as fruit bats, which the World Health Organization considers the natural animal carrier for the Ebola virus.

We can’t ignore the effects of climate change on the world, but we can do something about it. New York State’s Public Service Commission is discussing an initiative called Reforming the Energy Vision or REV. It’s aimed at completely overhauling the state’s regulation and generation of energy and moving us towards a more sustainable future. This is our opportunity to make the state a national,

if not global, leader in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. Environmentalist groups such as NYPIRG are pushing for ambitious goals including an 80% reduction in climate pollution by 2050, as well as half the state’s energy coming from renewable sources by 2025. Now that the state has banned hydraulic fracturing, New Yorkers who care about a sustainable, greener future have momentum on our side.

We have every reason to think that the same special interests who pushed for more natural gas drilling in the state will try to sink the REV. At best, their vision of “sustainability” would turn the state’s most serious reform efforts into a meaningless piece of paper. Meanwhile, groups like NYPIRG want

to see a strong, assertive set of policies – an initiative with the will and the way to actually fight climate change effectively.

If this sounds good for you, please go to <http://www.nypirg.org/climatechange/> and leave a public comment to the Public Service Commission in support of a cleaner, brighter future for the state. Even just a sentence or two saying that we need to move away from fossil fuels or towards renewable energy would make a powerful statement, as the PSC reads every single comment.

Anik Nath is a project coordinator.



BE OUR GUEST

Comedian Ted Alexandro opens up about life as a comedian

ALEXANDER HUGEL

Guest Contributor

Queens College is known as the alma mater of some of the funniest men in comedy such as the legendary Jerry Seinfeld and Ray Ramono, but it was also the old stomping ground of lesser known comedian Ted Alexandro.

A local man born and raised in Bellerose, he attended Queens College during the 90s. Now he's a well-respected comedian seen by millions on late night TV, performing on "Conan," "Jimmy Kimmel Live," "Late Night With David Letterman," and most recently, "The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore."

Alexandro's animated style and ability to captivate the crowd caught the attention of Jim Gaffigan and Louie C.K. He opened C.K.'s show at Carnegie Hall.

Ted most recently wrote and filmed two hour-long specials, which aired on Comedy Central. In his comedy special "As Much As You Want," Ted acknowledged his QC roots.

"I went to school at Queens College, which is a commuter school. Not a real party atmosphere. All your friends going off, 'yeah party whoa!', and away to school. Commuter schools, what's the craziest thing you could do? Park illegally. 'Dude I'm at a hydrant right now,'" Alexandro said.

While a student at QC, Ted was apart of a sketch comedy group that founded by his comic counterpart Hollis James, another QC alum. Together they wrote sketches and performed their comedy bits on campus.

"It was one of those things



Ted Alexandro is a Queens College alum who currently is known for his stand-up comedy as well as his activism.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TED ALEXANDRO

where you feel at home. It was fun [and] it felt very familiar. 'Saturday Night Live' was something I always loved. So this just felt like 'ok man, were going to do our thing.' That was the first time the light bulb went off that not only can I perform on stage, but I can write stuff that people laugh at," Alexandro said.

For Ted, sketch comedy was a gateway that inevitably led him to stand up.

"I always loved comedy, but I never really thought of it like 'I'm going to do that'. But I was a student of it and I loved it from a young age whether it was Bill Cosby, George Carlin, Richard Pryor or Eddie Murphy. Those

were my guys," Alexandro said

Now Ted and Hollis are award-winning writers for their web series "The Teacher's Lounge." Stars like Lewis Black, Judah Friedlander and Dave Attell make cameo appearances as members of the faculty on the show.

Aside from writing and performing comedy, Ted is also

an activist. He protested during "Occupy Wall Street" and more recently in "Black Lives Matter" protests.

"I love what I do as an activist. I put my opinion out there and almost have a dialogue with people. Lets focus our attention on this issue and lets have a discussion on this. Not even that I have the answers but let's talk about it and give it its proper attention," Alexandro said.

Alexandro said activism helped guide him to where he is today.

"It's weird man because in recent years it's been less of a plan. Like when I was younger it was more of a plan and I had blinders on for just comedy. So now I've kind of surrendered that idea of a plan and just really go where the energy feels right," Alexandro said.

"When Occupy Wall Street came up, that felt right and you know the people that were there. The activists that I met. Very smart, very driven and very compassionate. So that's where I put my energy."

Alexandro also offered advice for students graduating from college.

"The first thing I would say is don't be too hard on yourself. Set your goals and your compass for what direction you want to go in," he said. "It's going to take time and realize that you had a lot of structure in your life, to the point where you graduate college. All of a sudden your going to have no structure and that path to follow is up to you. But don't stop being a student."

Attention students, faculty and staff!

The Knight News is interesting in hearing your voice

on any major stories affecting you or your club

Please send all op-eds, tips and letters to

info@theknightnews.com

SPORTS

Students and community can get cool in QC's pool

ALBERT ROMAN

Sports Reporter

Did you know there is a pool at Queens College?

Not many students are aware of the Olympic sized, 25 yards long and six-lane wide pool located in the Fitzgerald Gymnasium.

The Queens College Aquatics Department offers two programs for the pool. The first makes the pool available to students to be used during recreational hours. All students have to do is present their current QC ID and they are given a pass.

Students swimming can use the four lanes that vary in speed, including slow, medium, fast and freestyle. There are 25 certified lifeguards on staff and are always present on the pool deck.

Alicia Lampasso-Dillon is the Aquatics Director and head coach of the woman's swimming team for 27 years. She is aware not many students know about the facility the school offers.

As a department we try and put our name out there. During club day, we are there handing out fliers. We are a commuter school and that's part of the problem," Lampasso-Dillon said.

Students can also take swimming classes for college credit. Three classes are offered: beginner, advanced beginner, lifeguarding and water safety, as well as two scuba classes.

Students aren't the only ones who can enjoy the benefits of the pool; it is open to the community.

"We try to utilize the pool



The QC pool is open to anyone for college credit courses and swimming lessons.

PHOTO BY AMANDA GOLDSTEIN

as much as possible. It's open seven days a week for the students and faculty. We try to use all the hours we can for lessons, physical education classes, the community, special need groups, the swimming team, and rentals. We cover everything," Lampasso-Dillon said.

Those 16 and older can purchase a one-year membership for \$360 or a six-month membership for \$255.

The Aquatics Center offers classes for children as young as 1. There are parent-child lessons for children aged 1 to 3, tiny tots for children ages 4 to 5 and children's levels one to six.

Levels one and two teach

the fundamentals of swimming including backstroke and freestyle. Level three focuses on more advanced strokes and introduces diving. Level four through six stresses endurance.

All classes follow the American Red Cross curriculum and are taught by certified Red Cross lifeguards and water safety instructors.

Shoshana Burns, head lifeguard, has been with the Aquatics Department for 10 years. She understands the reward the pool provides to the community.

"Being able to access swimming lessons is important for safety reasons," Burns said.

"We are beginning to

work with the Swim for Life organization, where free lessons would be offered to autistic children. We are trying to turn it into a course for students who are second education majors might be able to teach these children to swim for college credit."

The Aquatics Center also offers adult beginner and intermediate classes. In addition, there are semi-private lessons. A woman's only class is available as well.

"It's important that Queens College serves the community around it. That's what we're here for to educate everyone. There aren't many pools in NYC so it's our job to serve as many people as

we can. Teaching people to learn swim and be safe is our passion," Lampasso-Dillon said.

All times and rates for lessons and recreational swim are available at queensknights.com/communityRec/aquatics.

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Men and women's track and field team surge at the right time

HANS THEMISTODE

Sports Reporter

Both Queens College's men and women's track and field teams are picking up steam heading towards the final leg of the season.

Both were dominant all year long recently broke the school record for the 4 by 4 relays at the Rider Invitational at the University of Florida.

The men's team is looking to defend their back-to-back titles, while the women's team is hoping to capture glory with a Conference Championship run.

The Lady Knights are thrilled with the opportunity of becoming champions after the growth the team has experienced over the last few years. It was just two years ago that the thought of competing for

a conference title on the women's side seemed ludicrous.

This year however is a completely different story. They are currently sitting forth and have the opportunity to bring the title to Queens College.

Nichole Vann was promoted to Head Coach for the men and women's teams in June 2014. The added pressure and expectations hasn't affected her team at all, Vann said.

"I don't want to say that we feed into the added pressure. I just know that we just focus on us and I feel that's what works for our team because we don't worry about the outsiders. We just focus on our team. If we go out there and run

to our capabilities than I like our chances," Vann said.

The men's team is in familiar territory. They successfully won the 2013 and 2014 East Coast Conference Championships. Although a few of this year's team's key players sustained injuries, - most notably senior runner Tyler Bay, who made all ECC first team last season - they are still in prime position to defend their titles.

Tyler said it takes more than just pure talent for the team to be successful.

"We're entering a period of stability and growth and that's been one of the main reasons why we've been so successful," Bay said.

On April 18 the men's team

went on to finish second in the ECC Championships behind Roberts Wesleyan University's 161 points.

Senior Andrew Nadler won the 10,000-meter race with a time of 33:39.85, earning QC 10 points. Bay finished in third with a time of 35:27.28.

The women's team placed fifth in the same competition with a total of 70 points. Graduate student Ashley Armand finished first in the 800 with a time of 2:20.47. Junior Tshani Mitchell came in second in the 200-dash with a time of 0:25.26, earning the team eight points.

Despite losses, the teams will continue to compete at the highest

level and focus on their record-breaking achievements.

The Knight's next competition is the Penn Relays at Philadelphia, PA April 23 - 25.

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KNIGHT NEWS SPORTS

DIVE INTO A REFRESHING EXPERIENCE

QC pool offers benefits for students and community



SEE PAGE 15

Photo By Amanda Goldstein

Track and field teams stride towards triumphant final lap

PAGE 15