

February 17, 2016

Volume 22

Issue 7



THE  
KNIGHT  
NEWS

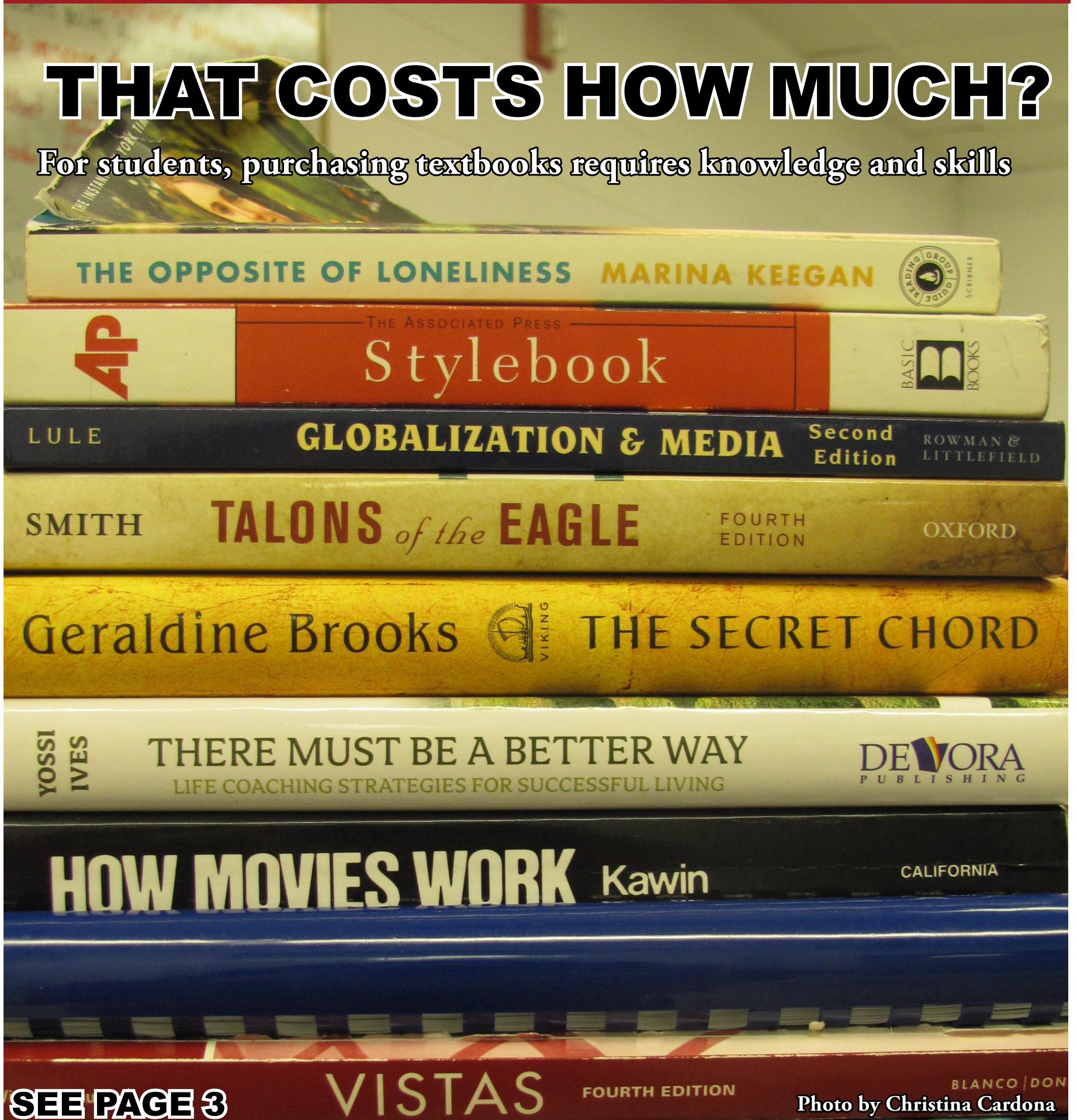


theknightnews.com  
Breaking News & Video

Journalism in the Interest of the Queens College Community

# THAT COSTS HOW MUCH?

For students, purchasing textbooks requires knowledge and skills



**SEE PAGE 3**

Photo by Christina Cardona

Students for Justice in Palestine  
under fire for actions

SEE PAGE 4

Mediator involved in  
contract dispute

SEE PAGE 5

# EDITORIALS

## A cold response from Cuomo

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo unveiled his Executive Budget early last month, and the news was not good for CUNY.

The Democratic governor wanted to shrink the state's responsibility over CUNY. In essence, it proposed a cut of \$485 million and make New York City pay that gap.

But Cuomo backed off from the plan after criticism from New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, known for his previous conflicts with Cuomo. He said the cuts to CUNY—and Medicaid—were unfair. At a press conference, the mayor said he will challenge the governor over the planned cuts.

"There are two items in the budget that are not fair to New York City. That will be harmful to New York City, that will set us back and will particularly set back our students at CUNY and will set back the people of this city in terms of healthcare," he said.

Cuomo told NY1 last month the city and state will review ways to ensure money is spent efficiently in CUNY.

"At the end of the day, there will be no cut to CUNY. I want to see more money at CUNY at the end of the day, and more money in the classroom," Cuomo said.

This is wrong. It is hard to believe a

governor who vetoed the Maintenance of Effort bill last December. The bill provided stable funding to CUNY, well, would have provided until Cuomo vetoed it. If Cuomo wanted more money, he would have signed the bill.

We applaud the Governor's actions on the minimum wage and infrastructure renovations. But his decision earlier this year is frightening to say at least.

Let's look at the facts. First, CUNY professors and staff do not have a contract. The problem is the lack of money in CUNY's pocket, which means a bad contract. Only sizable amount of money from the state could solve this.

Second, tuition is increasing across CUNY. CUNY officials might privately oppose this, but understand their hands are tied. Either its layoffs or tuition hikes. They opted for the latter.

Third, the lack of investment in CUNY is revealing. A Gothamist article last year highlighted how City College of New York needed to manage a \$14.6 million budget deficit. The most obvious solution is cuts to education as an exponential increase to tuition is out of the question.

We could go on, but the point remains the same. More money for CUNY.

## January snowstorm brings May flowers?

On Feb. 2, Punxsutawney Phil, predicted an early spring. We expect to get an accurate description of the weather for the next few weeks from a Pennsylvania groundhog. There's nothing wrong with a fun, silly tradition, but why?

No offense to Punxsutawney Phil, but it's hard to believe an early spring based off the weather so far this year. There's been an excessive amount of snow.

Snow meteorologists warned about the multiple feet of snow in NYC. News many New Yorkers did not want to hear.

Winter Storm Jonas was intense and it impacted the entire east coast.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio implemented a travel ban, except for emergency vehicles.

The storm broke records and caused problems for local residents.

Queens was hit with the most snow in the city, 34 inches, and many streets were still not plowed.

Bill de Blasio said 850 sanitation plows to Queens. He blamed the size of Queens for the lack of a response.

But sanitation workers tirelessly worked to clean the streets. Even at Queens College, workers woke up earlier than most students would do.

If regular classes were in session at QC, then problems would have erupted for students and faculty.

NYC missed an all-time storm record by a tenth of an inch, beaten by a storm in February 2006.

Let's hope, for the sake of the workers, May flowers come predicted by a trusted groundhog.

## Change we can believe in

It's a new semester, and it's a new look for The Knight News. Let us explain why.

Since February 2015, we were asked by one of our advisers about a new logo after the old one, made in 2009, just did not look good anymore. We agreed and asked a former graphic designer to create one. The final logo was not what we liked, so the issue was shelved.

However, a current graphic designer, Melisa Tekin, made a better-looking logo. This is now the permanent logo.

Now for the website.

In December, we were notified that malware was installed on our site. Despite our best efforts, it was taken down, and our database that stored all of our stories was lost.

We created a new site that is better than the last one. New additions are yet to come, but thank goodness most of our database was restored.

In addition, a new podcast by Albert Roman and Hans Themistode will happen either this month or next, depending on logistics. Stay tuned for more information,

### 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."**

Editor-in-Chief: **Brandon Jordan**

Executive Editor: **Christina Cardona**

Managing Editor: **Candice Samuels**

Managing Editor: **Phil Vallone**

Photo Editor: **Amanda Goldstein**

Social Media Editor: **Yarah Shabana**

Sports Editor: **Albert Roman**

### Reporters

**Oyinkansola Falana**

**Bianca He**

**Brandon Hernandez**

**Daria Kaczorowska**

**Cheyne Mulligan**

**David Rafailovich**

**Shoshana Wodinsky**

### Layout/Graphic Design

**Devin Lee**

**Bobby Soohoo**

**Melisa Tekin**

### Advisers

**Gerald Solomon**

**Sheryl McCarthy**

**Gavin McCormick**

**Phone: 347-450-6054**

info@theknightnews.com

Logo by: **Melisa Tekin**

including the first guest.

We introduced a new system of beats. Reporters may do the mix of stories, but others will focus on their beat.

After months of organizing an event, we may finally have one. We won't name the person, but, if everything works out, students will enjoy what we are planning. Location and time is to be announced, but check future editions or our social media for more information.

The Knight News will push for more Freedom of Information Law requests from government sources, including CUNY. FOIL is a vital tool not well known by journalists.

We worry journalists, especially around our ages, are unsure what is FOIL. FOIL, while the federal law is a somewhat a bureaucratic mess, is still helpful for state and local reporting.

Keep in mind, we are not interested in being rabble-rousers. Rather we point to a nomination for an award—Associated Collegiate Press Story of the Year—for our reporting on CUNY's investments in private prisons.

We didn't win, but we don't care about winning awards. If it is possible to sow the seeds for an outlet that'll grow, then that is the most important thing to do.

There's more to do of course, but we are taking it one step at a time.

## Tips and tricks for the expensive textbooks

**DARIA KACZOROWSKA**

*News Reporter*

Students at Queens College returned to classes earlier this month for homework, tests and the annoying part—textbooks.

There are two forms of textbooks, online and physical. But students want the best bang for their buck.

Alisa Ford, a freshman attending Nassau Community College, is new to the textbook-buying scene and, like other freshman students, was surprised at the high costs of her books.

“As a freshman, I don’t think that I was really aware of how much my textbooks would cost,” she said. “I ended up getting older editions of books since many of my professors said that they would be practically the same. In the end, I think that I spent a little over \$200 for four courses.”

Ford is not the only student searching for low costs. Piotr Gardocki, a senior at John Jay College, is an organizational wiz with textbooks.

“I create a spreadsheet of all my required texts and then spend a week analyzing which libraries I can get books from for free. I have an e-reader that gives me access to all of my texts at once. But some professors don’t allow e-readers in their classrooms, which makes it difficult to follow the text and save some money,” Gardocki said.

Talia Schaffer, an English professor at Queens College,



PHOTO BY BRANDON JORDAN

**The bookstore is one place students can buy textbooks. But other places, like Amazon, offer cheaper prices.**

confirmed this is the case in her classroom.

“First, [online] texts are often uncorrected scans from dubious originals so they are full of errors, and they may be using a bad edition. Second, those online texts usually don’t have footnotes, and since I teach stuff written in another century, sometimes with dialogue in other languages, students really do need to be able to look up terms they don’t know.

The type of machine a student uses is also crucial,” she said.

Schaffer added different electronics used in the classroom are harmful for a student’s engagement. She said laptops are the worst because they create a literal barricade between the students and class, preventing their participation.

“Kindles are not too bad, since they’re basically just flat and grey. But computers or iPads

pose a serious problem. It is just so tempting to check email, social media and shop online,” Schaffer said. “Students nearby get distracted and want to peek at the glowing screen.”

Sites like Craigslist and Ebay may scam students by offering books, sometimes international editions, at low prices. But reliable places are the popular Amazon website and even the publisher itself.

“If any books are unavailable at my school or local library for reserve, I then research the lowest prices. I avoid sites that look like scams and stick to those that I have used in the past,” Shyan Bhairo, a sophomore at QC, said.

Students often resort to textbooks from friends who took the same courses as them, but this is not always successful. Professors require specific editions of textbooks or editions for books difficult to find anywhere. In addition, some classes force students to buy special programs like Aplia with an e-textbook.

Gardocki added students should look for budget-friendly sites to spend less.

“Sometimes, retailers will give a discount for books if you purchase them in bulk, so I try to purchase all of my books at once from the same place,” he said.

Marines Gonzales, a sophomore at QC, recommended a few sites that she used to buy textbooks.

“I always get a list of my books from CUNYFirst or from the syllabus during the first week of school. [I then] open up several tabs on my computer and go searching for the best prices across the board. I recommend Thriftbooks for novels or other well-known literature and Amazon for textbooks,” Gonzalez said.

[daria@theknightnews.com](mailto:daria@theknightnews.com)

## Shuttle bus not for all students

**CHEYNA MULLIGAN**

*News Reporter*

Queens College’s shuttle bus, popular among students, is under scrutiny for its failure to accommodate students with disabilities.

This failure to provide special services to students is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The ADA, passed in 1990, forbids discrimination against disabled people with work, life, school and transportation. One section highlights reasonable accommodation to the disabled, unless it creates “an undue financial burden on the public entity.” This includes places like QC.

Many students use the shuttle bus that provides service for students, faculty and staff. One bus leaves from the campus to Jamaica, while another goes to Flushing. Moreover, the Flushing bus offers a quick path from Queens Hall to the Student Union.

Ahsanul Mojumder, a senior,



PHOTO BY CHRISTINA CARDONA

**The shuttle bus offers services to students to either Jamaica or Flushing. But it is not easily accessible for disabled students.**

uses the shuttle bus regularly. He said the shuttle bus is convenient, but felt it was not for disabled students.

“A couple of weeks ago, I noticed a student I had seen around campus, in a wheelchair, waiting for an MTA bus. I couldn’t help but wonder why he wasn’t waiting at the usual shuttle bus stop,” Mojumder said.

“I realized the stairs on the bus weren’t wheelchair accessible, and he would have a really hard time getting on to the bus.”

QC officials are aware of the issue, but a general change to the program may not come soon. Currently, officials move classes of disabled students if they require the shuttle bus to go to a building like Queens Hall.

Alexandra Aguilar, a senior, said it was unfair for disabled students to pay a fee for the shuttle bus and not have access to it.

“I don’t believe it’s fair to handicapped students to not have the necessary aid at their disposal. Students are paying for the shuttle out of their tuition money. The shuttle bus should accommodate

to students with disabilities if they are paying for it.” Aguilar said.

Students pay a \$40 semester fee to fund the shuttle bus program, which began September 2015.

Michele Jackson, a senior, encouraged the college to take necessary steps to help students with disabilities.

“I think it would be great for the college to provide a number of wheelchair-accessible shuttle buses for students. If not, I would love to see the college provide other ways for handicapped students to access free transportation directly on and off campus if there are not already provisions in place for them to do so,” Jackson said.

[cheyna@theknightnews.com](mailto:cheyna@theknightnews.com)



# Petition made to ban Students for Justice in Palestine

YARAH SHABANA

News Reporter

More than 5,000 people signed a petition, started last November, to ban Students for Justice in Palestine chapters in CUNY.

Andrea Karshan, a student at the College of Staten Island, started the petition after members at different campuses chanted allegedly anti-Semitic comments at Jewish students during the Million Student March in November. One sign called for CUNY to divest from “Israeli apartheid.”

SJP began in 1993 at the University of California at Berkeley. Since then, there are chapters across the country, including at CUNY colleges. The organization is controversial for criticizing Israel’s presence in Palestine. One tactic it uses is BDS, which means boycott, divest and sanctions.

Karshan did respond to questions from The Knight News, but wrote an article on her blog defending the petition. She described the backlash from students and the support she received too.

“I don’t regret starting the petition,” she wrote. “It was something that needed to be done. Our voices needed to be heard.”

Karshan worked at The Banner newspaper when she created the petition. But she was dismissed by the Editor-in-Chief. After a new one was appointed, she returned.

The Banner newspaper sent a statement to The Knight News explaining why removing her was wrong.

“While it was not right for Andrea to become a part of the story she was reporting on, the editors handled the situation appropriately by taking her off the assignment,” it reads. “Her dismissal was quite literally against the Banner’s constitution as we’re obliged to be a welcoming place to all students at the College of Staten Island, no matter their beliefs or convictions.”

But Sarah Aly, president of the SJP chapter at Brooklyn College, said Karshan’s petition cannot work.

“There is no way that these demonstrations actually can be used to suspend any SJPs,” Aly said.

“The CUNY-wide demonstration was organized by NYC SJP, which is an off-campus organization not tied to a campus.”

Aly added Karshan did not get along with Muslim students and caused problems with SJP chapters too.

“She complained that the prayer room on campus was ‘too Muslim.’ [She] forced Muslim students to clear the room of prayer rugs and Qurans, while Bibles and other religious items were left alone. She has also been known to harass CSI’s chapter of SJP in person and online,” Aly said.

CUNY Chancellor James Milliken said, in response to the allegations, that the remarks were not suitable and denounced them.

“While we will always embrace this openness to many voices, intolerant, hateful and bigoted speech, while it may be legally protected, is anathema to our values,” he said. “Those voices,” stop rather than encourage the dialogue and real debate that makes us stronger.”

In response to the Chancellor’s comments, Aly said

there were Islamophobic remarks and found it troubling that he did not address that. She brought up the New York Police Department’s spying on Muslim students as something he does not comment on.

“This has been the trend recently [where] issues affecting students and faculty of color are being pushed to the side and ignored,” Aly said.

The New York Civil Liberties Union released the NYPD’s handbook on spying on MSAs at CUNY. At Queens College, officers are told to look at online profiles of members and even follow them.

At QC, Aadil Ilyas, an alum, felt the backlash against SJP. He worked to make a chapter at the college.

Ilyas posted a status on Facebook calling Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a monkey. A Jewish student took a screenshot of his status and gave it to a staff member. Ilyas was told not to make the chapter after this and because the national “negative attention” toward the group.

“I left [the person’s] office

in disbelief,” Ilyas said. “I was so angry. I know why I started SJP, and QC is the perfect place to start it.”

But Ilyas said several club leaders supported his decision and starting the chapter.

“I had a presentation to do for SJP [in front of QC officials], since it was a new club, and I did great,” Ilyas said. “They had no choice but to approve it.”

Only the board of trustees can decide to ban SJP, but doing so is illegal, said Radhika Sainath, a staff attorney at Palestine Legal.

“CUNY absolutely may not shut down SJP because some New Yorkers disagree with the group’s message supporting justice for Palestinians. To do so would violate the First Amendment,” Sainath said.

yarah@theknightnews.com

# Katz speaks about growing changes in Queens

PHIL VALLONE

News Reporter

Queens Borough President Melinda Katz presented her annual State of the Borough address at Queens College on Jan. 21.

In front of a packed house at the Colden Auditorium, Katz—in her second address at QC—felt confident in the future of Queens. She emphasized the borough’s contribution to the city’s growth in tourism.

“I believe, [Queens] is the norm for the future of our country. We are creating an unbelievable template,” Katz said.

Katz also spoke on the diversity of the borough, seen in its media for example.

“It is here you will find the true international media capital of the world. [This] includes nine newspapers focused solely on Queens, over five newspapers and broadcasts in Spanish, over seven in Chinese, over seven in Korean and over five in Bengali and Urdu,” Katz said. “That doesn’t even cover the blogs.”

The Democratic borough president praised the high-quality education available in Queens’ public schools with student performance and reform.

“We have some of the best school districts in the city. In fact, three of our public high schools ranked among the top 10 in New York State and top 50 nationwide



PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE OF THE BOROUGH PRESIDENT MELINDA KATZ  
Melinda Katz returned to Queens College to deliver her State of the Borough speech. She did the same the year before.

in 2015 by U.S. News and World Report,” she said.

In addition to institutional changes, Katz addressed the addition of Muslim and Chinese holidays to public school calendars.

“Let’s acknowledge the importance of adding Eid and Lunar New Year to the official school calendar. It’s not just about having a holiday; it’s a matter of respect and, in itself, educational. It’s a template for the rest of our

changing nation,” Katz said.

Katz also highlighted the success of “early college high schools” in the borough.

“Bard College, for example, operates a public high school in Long Island City. They have over 500 students in grades nine through 12. Here, students earn both high school and college credits within four years through one curriculum and one set of faculty,” Katz said.

Katz understood the difficulties of affordable housing in Queens, including demand for it.

“The challenge for government will be to meet the ever-growing demand for affordable housing stock, while preserving affordability for those who already call the neighborhood home,” Katz said.

Katz concluded on the same positive note that she began on—

change.

“It’s an asset not just for Queens, but for all New Yorkers. It is the inherent opportunity to meet challenges with more creativity, more perspectives and more innovation,” Katz said. “Meeting the challenges won’t be easy, but they never are.”

Queens College President Felix Matos Rodriguez welcomed Katz’s return to QC for her address. He felt honored she worked to improve the borough with other local leaders.

“I want to highlight and thank our borough president for supporting a lot of our work here at Queens and many of our elected officials,” Rodriguez said.

Queens Public Television will air the State of the Borough Address on Feb. 18 and Feb. 25 at 6:00 p.m.

brandon@theknightnews.com

## Labor board to review CUNY contract talks

BRANDON JORDAN

News Reporter

CUNY submitted a petition to the state's Public Employment Relations Board calling for a mediator after it could not reach a contract with the Professional Staff Congress.

The PSC, the union representing more than 25,000 staff and professors, are in their sixth year of negotiations with administration for a new contract. The last contract expired Oct. 19, 2010. Since then, there were 27 meetings between CUNY and the PSC.

Rita Rodin, a spokesperson for CUNY, said the PSC rejected the first offer made on Nov. 4. The union rejected it because of the low salary increase.

"CUNY is offering a six-year contract with raises totaling six percent and other non-economic benefits," she said.

CUNY's petition highlighted its concerns with the PSC's call for a strike authorization vote. Union members are considering voting to declare the right to strike, which is illegal in New York State under the Taylor Law passed in 1967.

The PERB is an independent board to enforce the Taylor Law. One part of the law includes impasse, or mediation, procedures for labor negotiations.

The board assigns someone to act as a mediator. This person creates an agreement for both sides to accept.

Anthony Zumbolo, executive director of the PERB, explained the mediator's time on a case is impossible to know. Moreover, the mediator's role in a usual case is never the same.

"There is no one formula or



PHOTO BY BRANDON JORDAN

**Contract talks between the Professional Staff Congress and CUNY are at an impasse or stalemate. A mediator from New York's Public Employment Relations Board will come up with a possible contract. Above are some PSC members at the 2015 Labor Day Parade in Manhattan.**

procedure with how a mediator will handle a dispute," Zumbolo said.

If the agreement is rejected by one or both parties, then a fact finder will review the case and provide a voluntary agreement.

CUNY and the PSC both agree on certain issues, like a new contract and a percentage wage increase.

But CUNY's demands—fewer than the PSC's—include increasing the cap of distinguished professors, and allowing the Chancellor to increase salary-above-base limit for employees he

chooses. The PSC requests better job security and salary increases for adjuncts as well as reducing the workload for faculty.

Barbara Bowen, president of the PSC, told members the impasse does not affect the strike authorization vote.

"The union will negotiate with every drop of energy we have, and we will do everything we can to achieve a fair contract without a strike, but we cannot and will not apologize for organizing our membership to stand up for what we deserve," Bowen said.

The contract talks have

drawn not only local attention, but also national. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., wrote a letter to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo calling for a resolution to the contract dispute. The Democratic presidential candidate blamed Gov. Cuomo's refusal to invest in CUNY as a reason for the lack of an agreement.

"The contract with CUNY cannot be resolved without public funding from New York State. It is unrealistic to expect the University, already severely underfunded, to carve into its existing budget to cover the cost

of even modest raises for 25,000 faculty and professional staff," Sanders wrote.

CUNY Chancellor James Milliken said a contract with the PSC is still "the University's highest priority."

"CUNY is a great institution because of the thousands of talented faculty and staff who serve our students, city and state so well," he said. "We hope this step will help us reach a settlement."

[brandon@theknightnews.com](mailto:brandon@theknightnews.com)

## Fear and resistance in undocumented community

BIANCA HE

News Reporter

Recent deportation raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement took undocumented families by surprise. Because of this, most are afraid to leave their homes.

Jeh Johnson, Department of Homeland Security secretary, defended the actions as necessary, while acknowledging problems with it.

"I know there are many who loudly condemn our enforcement efforts as far too harsh, while there will be others who say these actions don't go far enough. I also recognize the reality of the pain that deportations do in fact cause. But, we must enforce the law consistent with our priorities," he said.

There are spaces for undocumented immigrants, including the DREAM Team. Named after the 2010 bill offering a path to citizenship through the military or education, different chapters exist throughout the U.S.

Queens College's DREAM Team President Raquel Matias, a senior majoring in mathematics, felt concerned with the effect of raids on students.

"It saddens me to know that they are not just being denied the rights of a student, but the rights of following their dream," Matias said.

The Dream Team offers resources and workshops to improve the lives of undocumented students.

Dulce Hernandez, a junior studying Graphic Design and

DREAM Team member, said she learned how to protect herself as an undocumented student.

"I educated myself well enough to be aware what I was allowed to do, where to go and how I could fulfill my goals. I made sure to apply for DACA, which gave me the opportunity to work in order to pay for school when I graduated from high school," she said.

DACA refers to the Deferred Actions Childhood Arrivals program, first created by President Barack Obama in 2012. It gives undocumented immigrants a work permit and deportation exemption if they arrived to U.S. before turning 16.

Efforts to create a safe space for undocumented students are also found outside of the

campus. In downtown Flushing, the MinKwon Center for Community Action works with the local community, including undocumented youths.

Jung Rae Jang, organizing fellow at MinKwon Center, used the word "tragedy" to describe the recent deportation stories.

"The system we have currently is very inefficient as well as very inhumane in a way," Jang said.

After working with MinKwon Center since 2012 and witnessing immigrants' struggles, Jang saw how the difficulty faced by undocumented students links to a bigger picture—isolation.

"This is not an issue that is just a problem within the undocumented population, it's actually an issue that affects

all immigrant families in the United States," Jang said. "I highly encourage people to do active participation in this issue because you never know who is undocumented. It could be your friends, your neighbor or it can be some of the peers you see in your school."

[bianca@theknightnews.com](mailto:bianca@theknightnews.com)



**The undergraduate literary journal of  
Queens College**

# **UTOPIA PARKWAY**

**Accepting applications 'till April '16**

**Share your art, poetry, works of fiction,  
non-fiction, drama and academic essays**



**Email [Daria@TheKnightNews.com](mailto:Daria@TheKnightNews.com)  
with submissions**

**UTOPIAPARKWAY  
JOURNAL.COM**

# Author Zadie Smith talks novel at Evening Readings

**CHRISTINA CARDONA**

*News Reporter*

Zadie Smith read from “NW,” a New York Times best-selling novel, on Dec. 16 at LeFrak Concert Hall for the Evening Reading series.

Previous novels Smith wrote include “White Teeth” and “On Beauty.” Her latest one, released in 2013, follows the lives of four people—Natalie, Leah, Felix and Nathan. The book is divided into four sections for each character living in northwestern London.

Felix and Nathan live different lives. While Felix is laidback and easygoing, Nathan is struggling with life.

But Natalie and Leah’s relationship is the main focus of the book. Both characters are friends since childhood. Yet the thought of mortality, death and disease affect the two women’s lives. They struggle with a sense of self, and whether they have a purpose at all.

Joseph Cuomo, founder of the Evening Readings, started the event by praising Smith’s work. He cited the role of empathy as one way she writes her characters, especially in “NW.” The characters in that book come from different backgrounds.

Cuomo introduced Smith to the stage, whom read a section from her book. Afterward, Leonard Lopate, the host of the event, asked Smith questions and commented on her novel to the audience.

Smith said, when Lopate asked about inspiration for the



**PHOTO BY CHRISTINA CARDONA**  
Zadie Smith read from her book “NW” at the Evening Readings series Dec. 16.

novel, she explored the topic of rewards for work.

“If you work hard you get what you deserve, and I wonder how true that is. Also, the things in society that make it difficult for people to get ahead no matter how hard they work,” she said.

Lopate wondered if someone living or lived in London would recognize the setting in the book. Despite taking place at the fictional

Caldwell, Smith said anyone in the city could identify it.

“They would know instantly [as] those places are incredibly mixed. They’re mixed racially, mixed economically [and there’s] extreme gentrification,” she said.

Smith said she did write with the concept of a melting pot—different cultures living together—in mind.

“The phrase melting pot

never meant much to me, but, when I was growing up, schools defined it, and they were large and mixed in terms of language and nation,” Smith said.

Lopate said Leah and Natalie, the two women, are white and black, respectively. In addition, Natalie’s previous name is Keisha.

Lopate asked whether friendship was possible between

both women after childhood, especially with their problems as adults. Smith doubted it.

“Deep friendships are hard to make, they do start young and you tend to be close to those you spend a lot of time with while you’re young,” Smith said. “Part of the story is that how hard it is in adult life to make intimate connections with all kinds of people.”

But Smith emphasized, no matter what happens in life, everyone will die, and that is beautiful.

The final Evening Readings is Feb. 16 with author Geraldine Brooks. Tickets are \$20, but are free for students with CUNY ID. For more information on the Evening Readings series, visit [www.qcreadings.org](http://www.qcreadings.org).

*christina@theknightnews.com*

## A student, a sex worker and a revolutionary

**BRANDON JORDAN**

*News Reporter*

Meli, preferring to use her first name, is a junior who transferred from John Jay College. She was born in the Bronx and finds not only Queens College, but also Queens, as a comfortable area.

“Queens is just dope for me,” she said.

But, Meli does two things on the side—activism and stripping. She said she started as a go-go dancer, an entertainer usually performing on a stage, because she needed money. Eventually, she became a stripper.

She said it was not an ideal job since abuses do happen, but feels people dramatize the industry.

“Not like every night is a terrible night. Certain places will be better than other places. I don’t have terrible feelings about it,” she said.

Sex work consists of

jobs like stripping, phone sex or prostitution. In her book “Playing the Whore,” journalist Melissa Gira Grant explained the combination of secrecy and stigma causes problems for sex workers.

“For sex workers, sharing honest information even anonymously means taking social, political and emotional risks. Even in more uniformly legal forms of sex work—which in the United States could include pornography and stripping—secrecy reinforces stigma and shame and can compromise sex workers’ ability to take control of their own labor,” Grant wrote.

As an activist, Meli is critical of capitalism, and sees its problems in the industry.

“Patriarchy and capitalism, that’s where they meet [in stripping],” she said. “They’re best friends in the sex industry.”

Even on campus, she finds a double standard for sex workers. While she said guys on campus see it as okay go to strip clubs, have fraternity parties with girls or take drugs, the same reaction was not for sex workers.

“If you do it for money, you’re the ultimate whore. That patriarchy sh-t, I’m so over it,” she said.

But she finds comfort in learning her rights, even with classes at Queens College.

“School is useful for sex workers,” Meli said.

As an activist, she helped create the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee, a student-led organization with chapters at some CUNY colleges. She is the President of Students Without Borders at QC.

Her work with SWB focuses on issues like CUNY’s investments

in private prisons, and said it is shameful because CUNY should teach incarcerated youths.

“It’s not about CUNY prison divestment. It’s [also] about a lot other issues, like access,” she said. “Looking at CUNY, the issue of underfunding for certain programs [like] the Africana Studies department.”

Movements outside of CUNY, like Black Lives Matter, inspired hope in Meli. But she noted reforms are not enough, and collective movements can only drive radical change.

“It’s about building power. Not just for students, but for people in the community too,” Meli said.

Meli is unsure about her future. She is not confident a degree will offer enough and prefers working as a community organizer. But she does not want

to lose her revolutionary spirit.

“I’m a revolutionary forever, and I don’t ever want to lose that,” she said.

*brandon@theknightnews.com*



# Promoting social change through art

BRANDONHERNANDEZ

News Reporter

“First Acts: A Doll’s House REMIX” offered audiences a different look at the famous play. It used perspectives of minorities instead of the traditional Western view.

The event took place at the Godwin-Ternbach Museum on Feb. 8 and 10. It is a project developed by the Kupferberg Center of the Arts to use historical plays and modernize them.

“A Doll’s House”, written by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, was written in 1879. It deals with issues like marriage, oppression and tradition values. The plot focuses on a money scandal. But the remix of it shifted to a secret love for belly dancing.

This is one example of how the project works. Queens College worked with the Epic Theatre Ensemble, a diverse group of artists exploring social issue, for the remix. Students could write, watch and act in plays on and off campus.

The ensemble works not only with students, but also artists to demand social change. The plays written engage the audience to get feedback on the participant’s creativity.

Caitlin Cassidy is one person who worked as both a writer and actor. She said the play offered a voice for people often ignored.

“It is always vitally important



PHOTO COURTESY OF MELISSA FRIEDMAN

“First acts: A Doll’s House REMIX” took place at the Godwin-Ternbach Museum on Feb. 8 and 10.

to promote minority voices and, I feel, at this particular moment in history, we are in dire need of women’s voices from Middle East, North Africa and the Arab world,” Cassidy said.

But “A Doll’s House” helped inspire other plays among the group. Others include “The Visit” and “Democratic Dickism,” which focused on homophobia in society. Cassidy found the time rewarding and surprising with other people in the group.

“It is so rare that, as an actor, I have the opportunity to meet the person I am playing. It has been an experience nothing short of extraordinary to be able to engage so closely with these women and their stories. Many times playing it out in real time as they were being shared,” Cassidy said.

Director Noelle Ghossaini said it is vital for the theater to use minority perspectives in plays.

“It is incredibly important that we are hearing the stories of

Middle Eastern women, especially in a time when so much bigotry and xenophobia is occurring in our country. To bring light the stories of women who have been marginalized in this country is essential to creating an equitable cultural landscape,” she said.

But Ghossaini said how the audience reacts is the most important part of it. If not, the message is lost.

“I hope some of the audiences are able to connect

with the material and feel that in the sharing of these stories,” Ghossaini said. “They see themselves, their history and cultural landscape, be present and heard.”

b h e r n a n d e z @  
theknightnews.com

## Report estimates cost of free CUNY community colleges

PHIL VALLONE

News Reporter

The Independent Budget Office released a report estimating the cost of free community colleges at CUNY—\$138 to \$232 million per year.

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams requested the report, and it is an idea President Barack Obama raised during the 2015 State of the Union address.

“I want to spread that idea all across America, so that two years of college becomes as free and universal in America as high school is today,” Obama said.

Adams felt concerned many New York City residents cannot access affordable, educational opportunities. This may cause problems for the city’s economy.

“For many students, the cost of tuition prevents them from completing an associate’s degree or substantially delays their completion,” Adams said. “As a

result, thousands of people each year are denied the benefits of graduation, which would allow them to achieve the American Dream and robustly contribute to our economy.”

Adams said the potential idea of free community college at CUNY would offer long-term benefits to the city and its residents.

“By reducing the tuition burden for city residents who attend our community colleges and providing the critical services that support our students, we will start to build success upon success, expanding opportunity for graduating classes of today and tomorrow,” Adams said.

Out of the 24 colleges in CUNY, seven are community colleges with Queensborough Community College and LaGuardia Community College as examples. Ending tuition at those universities would depend on a

number of factors, said Raymond Domanico, who worked on the report.

“We found that the cost of the program would depend upon the length of time that a student would be allowed to participate and whether part-time students would be eligible,” he said.

The estimates in the report assume state and federal funding will continue to the community colleges. If revenues decline or end because of a local tuition assistance program, the cost would rise.

But the IBO did not expect changes in enrollment or attendance behavior. Moreover, it was not able to predict how many students would likely enroll in or transfer to community college as an alternative to senior colleges. Domanico did acknowledge that the cost would rise as a result.

“We anticipate that a tuition-free program would likely induce some students to enroll in

community college rather than the senior colleges. To the extent that they did, the cost would rise. We are unable to predict how many students would make that switch,” Domanico said.

The IBO also could not determine the impact on graduation rates for the program.

The report found benefits to an associate’s degree. For example, technical education and health fields offer high incomes for graduates.

While President Obama pushed tuition-free community college last year, no New York City official expressed interest in making it happen.

“While the Borough President has endorsed the concept of tuition-free community college at CUNY, there are currently no active proposals in either the City Council or the Mayor’s budget proposals,” Domanico said.

Adams said, in light of the

IBO findings, efforts to eliminate tuition at CUNY community college could happen.

“The IBO’s analysis reinforces my belief that tuition-free community college is the future for New York City, and it is time to take steps toward achieving it,” Adams said.

philvallo@theknightnews.com

# FILM REVIEW

## “The Big Short” shows limits of American capitalism

DAVID RAFAILOVICH

News Reporter

A standard movie centered on the 2007-08 financial crisis could make anyone fall to sleep after the first sentence.

Americans, while familiar with the woes of the crisis, may find a movie on economics boring. But “The Big Short” is different as it understands their resistance and functions on this principle.

Despite its complex subject, “The Big Short” is riotously funny, delightfully clever and lighthearted; all of this occurs while doing justice to the subject matter.

The film is co-written and directed by Adam McKay, known for “Anchorman” and “Talladega Nights.” It is an adaptation of the 2010 best-seller “The Big Short” by journalist Michael Lewis.

Arrogant stock trader Jared Vannett, played by Ryan Gosling, narrates the beginning by explaining the remarkable, questionable world of banking.

Vannett begins at “ground zero” of the financial crisis—the advent of the mortgage-back securities. It is the moment that “brought banking from the country club to the strip club.” This would mutate and backfire, which causes the collapse in 2007-08.

From there, the story moves to other stock analysts who were able to see the crash coming. The first one is Michael Burry, played by Christian Bale, a socially-inept statistical genius.

After going through



PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES  
Actors Steve Carell and Ryan Gosling star in “The Big Short,” which deals with the 2007-08 financial crisis.

abundant amounts of personal mortgage payments, Burry realized there was a lot of unpaid debt in the American economy. But no one would accept it as true. To the disapproval of at his hedge fund, he bets big against the American economy.

There are two other groups who saw the crash coming and believe in Burry’s funding. The first group is led by Mark Baum, played by Steve Carell, and his team of cynical economists who find pleasure in betting against big business just to say “I told you so.”

Ben Rickert, played by Brad Pitt, is a disaffected Wall Street big shot. He leads the other group and prefers to invest in seeds than put money in the stock market. He is pulled into betting against the American economy by two young, naive and giddy bankers with profit on their minds.

The underdogs are the ones viewers root for so they can enjoy the “I told you so” moment. But victory, in this case, is bittersweet.

“What I hate about banking is that it reduces people to numbers,” Rickert said.

“Did you know that every time unemployment goes up one percent, 40,000 people die?”

The film’s clever education for the audience is use of hilarious cutaways and the slick, cynical and entertaining narration by Vannett.

But its use of hilarious cutaways to celebrities to explain the difficult information is smart. For example, instead of having the narrator explain subprime bonds, Margot Robbie in a bubble bath talks about it. It’s a wonderful way to get information across without simplifying it.

Once the film ends, emotions like anger and betrayal—felt in the film by its characters—are normal for seeing the worst of American capitalism.

“The Big Short” may lose Best Picture at the Oscars to “The Revenant,” but it is by far the most important, urgent and enjoyable film this Oscar season. It is a rare gem that, through its inventive storytelling, enthralls and educates audiences and gives purpose to the movies.

Get angry, get educated and get to a theater to see “The Big Short.”

*david@theknightnews.com*

## Questioning ethics in science tests

SHOSHANA WODINSKY

News Reporter

Scientists are viewed as objective researchers seeking out the truth without taking shortcuts. But that is being questioned.

Last month, a research team at Stanford University, after reviewing 500 reports, found two-thirds of animal experiments did not say if their subjects were dropped. Moreover, only 30 percent of experiments reported it.

This is important because dropping animals affects data in reports. When humans are involved, scientists say who dropped out, died or left the study. But if the same is not applied with animals, then no one can trust the data.

For some Queens College students, this is not a surprise.

Students studying the natural sciences work as associates in laboratories on campus. Usually, they work with animals like rats or worms.

Jeremy Pagirsky, a graduate student, is one of those students. He said the the figure was shocking.

“Here, if an animal is lost or dies, you report it. It’s just what you do,” he said.

Pagirsky was worried researchers would misreport their figures if they rushed their experiments.

“It can be very taxing to work day in and day out without any results,” Pagirsky said. “People might try to justify cheating the system a bit based on this alone.”

Another student who works at the college’s laboratory facilities was not surprised. She did not give her name to protect her career, but preferred Rachel Carson.

“Many researchers here see animals as little more than data fodder. Namely, if they aren’t useful, then they don’t matter. It’s very possible that animals aren’t being counted because the researchers involved simply don’t care,” she said.

Both students said the misreported data is because of one thing—funding.

“The industry is so competitive. The platform that some researchers are on gives them a lot to lose. They literally can’t afford it,” Pagirsky said.

But Pagirsky added the bureaucracy of science as another reason for the faulty experiments.

Carson agreed as many animal accident are not careful, especially at larger institutions with greater funding and a “tight” operation.

“As far as research labs go, the ones at the [QC] are so low on the totem pole. Any issues that we have here are usually accidental,” Carson said.

Pagirsky said there is a lesson in the report for other scientists to follow. If they are not truthful, then it hurts their credibility.

“We put so much effort into what we do [as researchers],” Pagirsky said. “But really, we need to be truthful about the data we provide and have a certain level

of respect for our animals. We wouldn’t be able to do this without them.”

*shoshana@theknightnews.com*



**NOMINATIONS--QUEENS COLLEGE STUDENT ELECTIONS 2016**

**ACADEMIC SENATE**

SEEK (1 position)

ACE (1 position)

Graduate (1 position)

Undergraduate-Upper Junior/Senior (3 positions)

Undergraduate-Upper Sophomore/Lower Junior (3 positions)

Undergraduate-Freshman/Lower Sophomore (3 positions)

At-Large (8 positions)

**STUDENT GOVERNMENT** (President and Vice President)

**FSDC - Faculty/Student Disciplinary Committee** (6 positions)

**NYPIRG – New York Public Interest Research Group** (4 positions)

**Nominations must be made electronically and submitted to the Elections Committee during the period starting 12:01 am on February 15, 2016 and ending at 12:01 pm on February 29, 2016 at the following web site:**

<https://sl.qc.cuny.edu/qcelection/StudentAppIns.php>

(Date of Record: February 19, 2016)

# RIGHT WRONGS

You have the passion... we have the tools.  
Gain the skills to fight social injustice.

**NEW** [ FULL-TIME & PART-TIME, EVENING PROGRAMS AVAILABLE ]

*The City University of New York*

**CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW**

*Law in the Service of Human Needs*



law.cuny.edu/prospective

**Have a comment about  
one of our stories?**

**Want to write an op-ed?**

**or send a letter**

**to the editor?**

**Email us at**

**info@theknightnews.com**

## SPORTS

## A fairytale ending for two players

OYINKANSOLA FALANA

Sports Reporter

Kristin Korzevinski and Mackenzie Rowland achieved a milestone last month—scoring 1,000 career points for the women's basketball team.

Korzevinski and Rowland, both seniors, are the 11th and 12th players to get this honor, respectively. Korzevinski got it at the Jan. 27 match against St. Thomas Aquinas, which the team won 67-58. Meanwhile, Rowland scored 1,000 points three days later in the match against Mercy College.

But the road to the achievement was not easy. Rowland played just six games in the 2012-13 season because of a severe injury. Korzevinski also suffered an injury during her sophomore year, missing half of the season.

Rowland said she felt proud and surprised with her new feat.

"It's a great accomplishment. It was exciting. I was really proud of myself that I did it in such a short amount of time," Rowland said.

Korzevinski held the same record in high school, but doubted she would repeat it in college.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN HIGGINS

Seniors Kristin Korzevinski and Mackenzie Rowland playing against Molloy College. Both players achieved the milestone of 1,000 career points.

goal.

"I definitely didn't think I would be able to achieve this in college," she said.

Both players did not know how close they were reaching 1,000 points until their head coach, Elizabeth Naumovski, brought it up. After hearing about it, they felt excited and used it as a

goal. "When I found out how many points I was away from it, I set a goal for myself every game so I could get it this season," Rowland said.

The two continued with the practice routines and did not take any risks during games to quickly get 1,000 points. Rowland said she

avoided forcing shots she would not take.

Naumovski said she was proud of the players. Under her leadership, three players surpassed 1,000 career points, including junior guard Madison Rowland. She explained the milestone just did not represent the players, but the team.

Korzevinski agreed with her coach's comments and said the team's potential was limitless.

"It just proves what talent the team really has this year. We're all very much capable," she said.

With only four games remain in the season, their careers are coming to a close.

"My whole life has revolved around the team," Korzevinski said. "To think that it's all going to be over soon is very crazy to me."

Rowland enjoyed her time with the team despite feeling sad it would end. One highlight she said was playing with her two sisters, Madison and Merrick.

Naumovski said the two seniors are special players that the team will miss. She felt proud of their help during their careers. But she is ready to recruit more athletes in the future with two commitments so far.

The Knights face Dowling College at home Feb. 18.

*oyinkansola@theknightnews.com*

## Inside Queens College athletics

ALBERT ROMAN

Sports Reporter

One-on-one with senior forward Elisabeth Gully. She was named team captain by head coach Elizabeth Naumovski at the beginning of the 2014-2015.

At what age did you begin to play basketball, and did you ever see yourself playing in college?

I started playing in third grade. I was about eight or nine. I always wanted to play college basketball. My Catholic Youth Organization team used to play at St. John University, and this made me want to play college basketball that much more.

Who are some of your inspirations?

Some of my inspirations would have to be my mom and my grandmother. They're the most amazing women I know, and I try my hardest to make them proud. They inspire me to be at my best all of the time and to work as hard as I get to where I want to be.

What is your major, and what are your plans after college?

I'm a psychology major. But I've



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN HIGGINS

Senior Elisabeth Gully enters her final season with the women's basketball team.

taken all of the prerequisite courses at Queens College for graduate school in order to become a physical therapist. I really would like to stay in athletics and work with rehabbing athletes to get them back into competition.

Any favorite foods?

That's a tough question. My favorite food is anything with cheese like pizza, cheesy bread and grilled cheese. I know, it's weird. I also really love bagels.

What's your favorite movie?

Is it weird to not have a favorite movie? A film I could constantly watch is "Bridesmaids."

Is there something people don't know about Liz?

I love to bake, and I say I'm pretty talented at it. I bake this funfetti with Nutella and marshmallow in it. It's actually amazing.

What is your favorite part of playing for Queens College or basketball in general?

Well, I have two. The first would be that I have grown up in Queens my entire life, so it's awesome to play for my borough. Second, my teammates are my best friends, and I enjoyed basketball bringing us together for the past four years.

*albert@theknightnews.com*



# KNIGHT NEWS SPORTS

## WELCOME TO THE CLUB



Seniors Kristin Korzevisnki and Mackenzie Rowland achieve 1,000 career points

Photos courtesy of John Higgins

**SEE PAGE 11**

**Skills, talent, and Nutella with Elizabeth Gully**

**PAGE 11**