



THE FIGHT TO KEEP JOURNALISM ALIVE AT QC

Saving journalism at Queens College



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With the Journalism department closed for the foreseeable future, The Knight News & other orgs. partner together

Photo by Queens College

OPEN MEETING LAW VIOLATIONS?



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QC Administration covertly operates, despite what NYC laws state

CUNY STUDENTS PAY FULL TUITION



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QC students stuck paying full tuition despite 99% virtual semester

MICHELLE OBAMA'S NEW PODCAST



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Read more about the inaugural episode of Michelle Obama's Podcast on Spotify

Farewell to Professor McCarthy

Siddharth Malviya
Editor in Chief

“If you want the truth, you don’t go to an elected official... you go to a journalist, they don’t have an agenda” said Professor Sheryl McCarthy of the Queens College Journalism department. Truer words have never been spoken.

Professor McCarthy has been a part of the Queens College community since 2007. She’s served as a mentor to The Knight News, as a teacher to her students and as a TV show host on CUNY TV.

However, McCarthy is known for much more than her work at Queens College. According to her bio on the Queens College website, McCarthy’s journalism career has included, “being a reporter for The Boston Globe and The Baltimore Evening Sun. Additionally, she has been a reporter and education editor for The New York Daily News, a correspondent for ABC News, and a reporter and columnist for Newsday and New York Newsday, where she received The Meyer Berger Award from Columbia University for her columns about the people and issues of New York City.

She has received awards from the national Education Writers Association and The New York Association of Black Journalists, and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America gave her its “Maggie” award for her coverage of such issues as the attacks on women’s reproductive rights, the need for access to effective contraception and the need for accurate sex education for young people.”

Though her career has been notably successful, McCarthy was initially on the path to become a lawyer. She notes that her family urged her to pursue law. McCarthy graduated from Columbia University and obtained her Juris Doctorate, but still felt that journalism was her true calling. She eventually ended up returning to Columbia to obtain her masters degree in journalism.

She looks back on her career, stating, “I had so much fun as a journalist, what

an interesting field to be in!”, adding, “journalists are better advocates than the people we put into office”. McCarthy explained that when it comes to elected officials, you’re going to get the same textbook statement, whereas with journalists, you’ll get the straight facts. “Politicians are self serving and corrupt. With journalists, their agenda is to get to the bottom of things”. It’s worth noting that McCarthy’s award winning career has primarily consisted of uncovering injustices across the nation, communities and other forms of hard news.

McCarthy’s parting words to the readers are, “I hope people appreciate what journalists do. The most important information that helps people make decisions comes from journalism... it’s a noble profession.”

Parting words from the Editor in Chief:

I’d like to thank Professor McCarthy for her service as a mentor, as a professor, and as an outstanding colleague to everyone she worked with at Queens College. She came to QC in 2007 after being recruited by Jay Hershenson, the CUNY Senior Vice Chancellor at the time. Only those who have worked on The Knight News in the recent years can attest to the powerful impact of McCarthy’s critiques. Professor McCarthy never held back in letting the staff of the paper know about the quality of their writing and how to build. Needless to say, everyone always worked harder on their assignments for the following issues. Though the journalism department is gone, Professor McCarthy’s legacy at Queens will live on, and her efforts to inspire the students at QC to partake in journalism will be carried on by The Knight News.

On behalf of staff for The Knight News, thank you for everything Professor McCarthy.



Photo: The Knight News

A message from the editor in chief:

A huge thank you to the staff for The Knight News who worked tirelessly to produce our past issues throughout the summer. This year’s staff for The Knight News is one of the first that has been committed to publishing over the summer. I look forward to seeing many more students join our team and contribute to The Knight News!

I’m pleased to announce that Professor Jason Tougaw from the English department will be serving as the faculty advisor for The Knight News for the current academic year. Jason is stepping in after Sheryl McCarthy’s retirement from Queens College. Professor McCarthy was formerly our advisor for 13 years (2007-2020). Jason also serves as the faculty advisor for QC Voices. I’d like to thank Jason for stepping in so quickly, and on behalf of The Knight News, we look forward to working with you!

Lastly, I wish everyone the best of luck for the coming fall semester.

Sincerely,
Sidd Malviya
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Professor Jason Tougaw
QC English dept

How Queens College hopes to keep Journalism alive

Serene Klapper
Reporter

One of a number of historic changes made in Queens College over the past semester is the closing of the Journalism program, which has made it increasingly difficult for students to have a collective voice on campus. Many students and faculty members impacted by the change have banded together to preserve the last of the Journalism clubs in QC by combining the efforts of a number of writing groups on campus.

Up until the end of the Spring 2020 semester, QC's Urban Studies Department offered an 18 credit Journalism minor. This program provided students with the opportunity to keep up with the ever-evolving technical skills necessary to pursue a successful career in Journalism, as well as the resources with which to hone their verbal and written communication skills. Offered courses included News Reporting and Writing, News Editing, and Broadcast Journalism.

Journalism careers are widely acknowledged to be competitive, and having

completed a minor in the subject could easily be a deciding factor for employment in the field. However, the Queens College Journalism program is closed for the foreseeable future, meaning that QC students no longer have the opportunity to study this discipline. Students currently in the midst of a Journalism minor have been left scrambling to finish the program in whatever way they can. Those who are near completion have been told to search for writing courses that could work to fulfill their remaining requirements. Others who still have a while to go must drop the minor altogether.

In addition to this harsh development for QC Journalism, QC Voices, a Queens College publication that serves as a platform for students to write about a wide variety of topics, has been disbanded for the next academic year due to a lack of funding. This arguably leaves the majority of the responsibility of providing students with the opportunity to pursue Journalism on campus to The Knight News.

"Though resources are scarce, and the Journalism department is gone, I feel an obligation to make sure QC students know that The Knight News is pres-

ent and welcoming to students looking to get involved with Journalism," said Sidd Malviya, the Editor in Chief for The Knight News. "We are all about reporting in an honest, informative manner, and I'm actively working with my team to get the word out that students of any major or class standing are welcome to write for The Knight News."

Despite the current lack of Journalism resources available in QC, there is still hope for a revival. The English Department has spent the last two years working on creating a writing minor which they intend to propose to the academic senate this coming September. Such a program could eventually come to include more Journalism courses. However, since Professor Sheryl McCarthy, the director and last full-time faculty member of the Journalism department, retired this year, there has been no one available to teach such courses.

Meanwhile, the English Department is doing its best to support The Knight News. It has officially become the newspaper's sponsored department and Professor Jason Tougaw, who previously oversaw QC Voices, will be the new

faculty advisor for The Knight News. These changes are considered acts of solidarity among the writing clubs of Queens College as the efforts behind QC Voices and The Knight News will be partnering in light of budget and department cuts in order to keep the spirit of Journalism alive on campus.

"Is Journalism dead in Queens College? I think it's up to The Knight News to decide," said Professor Karen Weingarten, outgoing Chair of the English Department. "I've been reading The Knight News more than I ever have in my 15 years at Queens College. I think the current editors are doing a great job disseminating information and circulating it and I encourage them to keep doing that."

In the microcosm of a university, student-run Journalism plays a significant role in promoting student opinions and rights as well as keeping the student body informed as to decisions that will greatly impact their education and future. The Knight News regularly covers topics relevant to QC students and strives to fulfill their goal and "...serve the Queens College community through a tireless pursuit for truths that may be hidden, obstructed or otherwise unknown."

Students interested in joining The Knight News as writers or editors are encouraged to reach out at info@theknightnews.com.

CUNY Budget Cuts Affect Office of Student Development and Leadership



Photo: Cayla Kempf

Siddharth Malviya
Editor in Chief

As if the CUNY budget cuts weren't bad enough, its impact has spiraled to all corners of the CUNY community. One in particular is the office of Student Development and Leadership here at Queens College.

The Knight News was informed via an anonymous source that the budget for four positions within the Office of Student Development and Leadership (OSDL) has been cut. Ordinarily, the

OSDL would be staffed with an office manager, an assistant director, two associate directors and one director.

At the present day, Dwayne D. Jones, Director for Student Life, stands as the sole member of his department. Jones is currently responsible for serving as an advisor to 400+ club leaders, an advisor to Student Association and planning and organizing the annual Queens College Welcome Day. He's also responsible for ensuring that on our campus of 20,000+ students, all are aware of the student life community.

(Gender Love and Sexuality Alliance) shares the concerns held by many club leaders about the fate of student life. "Because of the budget cuts, I am worried that it will affect programming for the upcoming Spring semester." Kempf's concerns originate from the need of student leaders to consistently interact with the Office of Student Development and Leadership in order to successfully organize and carry out events.

Jenna Choi, a Sophomore Film major and President of Asian Students in Action at QC, shared Kempf's sentiments. "Right now there's a lot of uncertainty with how smoothly the semester will go. Clubs just won't be able to function properly because they're remote, but cutting the budget of the OSDL definitely will have more drawbacks than we can anticipate at this moment." When asked to comment on potential drawbacks, Choi explained, "Dwayne is doing everything solo [or with limited staff], I expect things to be slower. If we [ASIA] need to contact someone in regards to an online event... my only concern would be how long it will take for a response."

The consequences of budget cuts to Student Life are damaging, to say the least. Student Life is meant to properly train club leaders to prepare them for their role. Additionally, the Office of Student Development and Leadership serves to moderate the actions of the Student Association.

In times past, The Knight News uncovered that the President of Student Association, Japneet Singh, was allegedly involved in forging meeting minutes of the Student Senate, as well as providing monetary stipends to close friends using the Student Association's budget. With Dwayne Jones being the sole member of his department, this leaves for plenty of room for Student Association to operate quietly and covertly.

Cayla Kempf, a Junior Psychology major and active member of GLASA

It should be noted that, despite Jones serving as the sole member for his department, he continues to ensure that students receive his undivided attention and persists throughout the various struggles of the pandemic. Even though the Office of Student Development and Leadership is understaffed as a result of the CUNY budget cuts, Jones tirelessly works to keep student life alive on our campus.

Is Queens College in violation of NYC Open Meeting laws?

Siddharth Malviya
Editor in Chief

College officials and student government delegates often claim that they promote full transparency to the student body in their everyday business practices. Yet, how much of this holds true? For example, CUNY Queens College has several administrative boards that govern its finances, but meetings of these boards occur quietly and behind closed doors. Are they being fully transparent with students and faculty as to how funds are managed at Queens College? The Knight News conducted thorough research to find that Queens College may be in violation of New York City's Open Meetings Laws.

NYC's Open Meetings Laws mandate that public bodies, i.e. student governments, make their meetings accessible, via advertising those meetings and allow for the public to view records of past meetings, otherwise known as "meeting minutes." Given that Queens College falls under the banner of the City University of New York, a New York City funded institution, the NYC Open Meetings Laws apply to QC.

The Open Meetings Laws lay out the

following requirements: Firstly, public notice of meetings scheduled a week in advance, or earlier, must be sent to news media and conspicuously posted 72 hours prior to the meeting. Secondly, notice of the time and place of a meeting must be posted on the website of the public body (in this case, the public body would be QC), in accordance with the first requirement previously mentioned. Lastly, minutes (i.e. record) of meetings of all public bodies shall be available to the public in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Law within two weeks from the date of such meeting.

The Knight News has failed to find any evidence fulfilling the first two of the aforementioned requirements. This conclusion was reached by conducting research in the following manner: An in-depth, detailed examination was done of the Queens College website, the official Queens College calendar, as well as a search across the Internet. The webpage for the QC Office of Finance and Administration revealed meeting minutes for only a few meetings from this past year, which were for the College Association and the Student Services Corporation, but none for the Auxiliary Enterprises

Corporation. However, The Knight News failed to find a meeting schedule for any of these boards or any records of past public notices. It's also worth noting that The Knight News had to request an invitation to these administrative board meetings, despite what the laws state.

Student government officers work alongside college administrators and serve on three major administrative boards that govern the university's finances. Those three boards are the Student Services Corporation (SSC), the Queens College Association (QCA) and the Auxiliary Enterprises Corporation (AEC). The first, SSC, manages student activity fees and revenue from the Student Union building on campus. The second board, QCA, manages student activity fees that pertain to student life (e.g. club budgets). The third board, AEC, provides auxiliary enterprises, such as food services, a bookstore, parking, etc., for the benefit of the Queens College students, faculty, and staff.

The NYC committee on open governance's legislative declaration, indicating the purpose of the Open Meetings Laws, states, "It is essential to the maintenance of a democratic society that the public business be performed in an open and

public manner and that the citizens of this state be fully aware of and able to observe the performance of public officials and attend and listen to the deliberations and decisions that go into the making of public policy. The people must be able to remain informed if they are to retain control over those who are their public servants. It is the only climate under which the commonwealth will prosper and enable the governmental process to operate for the benefit of those who created it."

As a result of The Knight News' investigation, the Queens College administration will now be uploading the dates and times for all administrative meetings on the Queens College calendar. It remains to be seen whether or not they will actively comply with NYC open meeting laws and advertise administrative meetings in a timely manner.

At the time that this article was written, The Knight News has reached out to the Office of Finance and Administration and Student Affairs and has received no comment, other than a notice of updating the webpage for the Office of Finance and Administration.

How funds at QC are organized

Siddharth Malviya
Editor in Chief

CUNY Queens College takes the colloquial phrase "money is power" to a whole new level, as do other universities. It's not often clear how budgetary decisions are made at QC; the so-called 'transparency' that the upper level administration and student government claim to promote, is seemingly absent at times like these. Nevertheless, The Knight News conducted thorough research to properly inform its readers.

Funds at QC are organized depending on their purpose, and fall under one of the four governing boards on campus. The boards have the same general structure: Each governing body has a board of directors, which are individuals who have voting power in how funds are managed. Then there's "ex-officio" members, who are part of the board because of the position they have, but aren't allowed voting rights. Some boards have a large number of voting members, making it difficult to arrange a meeting. As a result, they have various committees with a portion of the members from the board, who meet on a more daily basis to craft recommendations on how funds should be managed. These recommendations are then proposed to the full board of directors,

and are subject to approval. Most boards follow parliamentary procedure, specifically being Robert's Rules of Order.

The Auxiliary Enterprises Corporation, The Student Services Corporation, The Queens College Association and The College Personnel and Budget Committee (P&B) are boards responsible for managing the funds at QC. Each board is entrusted with a different purpose of managing different types of funds. For most of these boards, with the P&B being the exception, six student government officers constitute a portion of the membership, with two of the six being the annually elected Student Association President & Vice President. The other four students are appointed by the Student Association President, with the consent of the Student Senate.

The Student Services Corporation (SSC) is one of four administrative boards on campus. The Corporation collects all student activity fees obtained from students paying tuition, as well as any and all revenue obtained from the Student Union (e.g. space rentals). The corporation has a 18 member board, with four ex-officio voting members. The corporation managed approximately \$2.6 million in fees in the last fiscal year, according to the 2019 fiscal year budget on the college's website.

The Queens College Association

(QCA) is a board that moderates the student activity fee given to clubs, Student Association, the QC Committee for Disabled Students (CDS) and anything else related to student life. The board consists of 13 voting members. Six are the aforementioned officers of the Student Association. Three are professors, who are appointed from a panel of six annually elected by the Academic Senate. The other three are college administrators, the last being the college president himself.

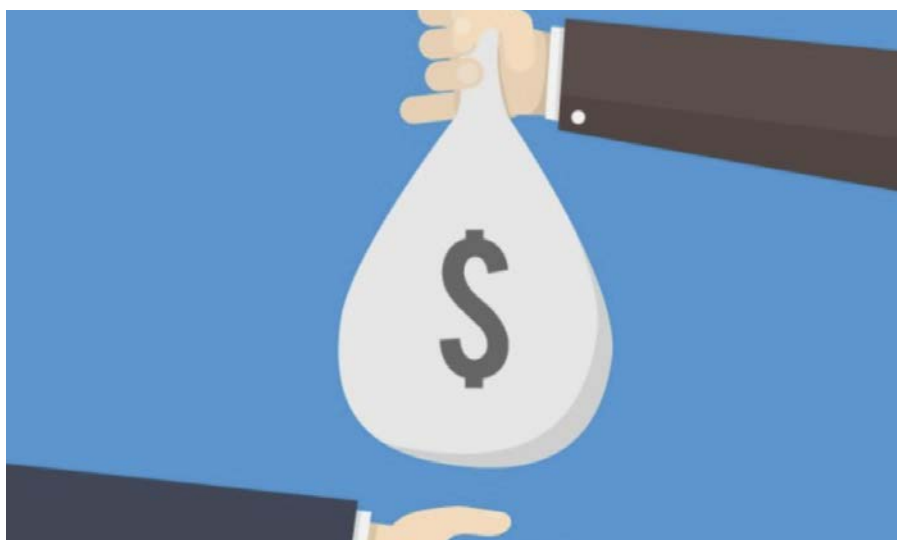
The College Association's funding is obtained from an allocated portion of the finances from the Student Services Corporation. The operating budget of the QCA board is unknown; however, the Student Association's budget for this year is \$106,399. The budget for clubs and organizations is also unknown for this fiscal year, but the Student Association leadership on the board has a past history of being fiscally conservative when it comes to proposing club budgets.

The Auxiliary Enterprises Corporation (AEC) is an administrative board entrusted with providing auxiliary enterprises, such as food services, a campus bookstore, parking, etc., for the benefit of the Queens College students, faculty, and staff. According to its bylaws "the Corporation is organized under the New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and

is operated exclusively for the charitable purpose of supporting Queens College." In layman's terms, the AEC collects revenue on campus from dining services, venue rentals, the shuttle bus fee, parking, etc. In the past fiscal year, the AEC (and ergo the college) obtained nearly \$3.7 million in revenue according to an estimate from the 2019 fiscal year budget.

Lastly, QC has a Personnel and Budget Committee, which according to CUNY bylaws, Article 8, Section 7, is responsible for approving promotions of faculty members to higher ranks such as assistant professor, associate professor, full-time professor and so on. The Personnel and Budget Committee (P&B) has a membership consisting of all department chairs. The P&B is chaired by the College President and co-chaired by the Provost. It is unknown what the budget for the P&B is.

What this information demonstrates is that it's important - now especially more than ever - that Queens College, particularly its student body, takes note of the people running for student government. The people elected into office have more influence than the general public is made aware of, and as payers of QC tuition, students have the right to know what they're investing in.



CUNY Queens students charged full tuition despite primarily online semester

Nika Nuñez
Reporter

Many household name universities have announced that due to the Fall 2020 school semester term predominantly being online with virtual instruction, tuition costs will be reduced. This measure has been adopted in hopes to relieve students of financial burdens as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting job security for many. Students attending universities such as Georgetown University are fortunate enough to receive comprehensive services and options that make up for the lack of certainty the fall semester will bring.

While colleges and universities across our nation have been pressured to decrease tuition costs by parents, students, and lawmakers, a small minority of institutions proceeded to acquiesce to their pleas. Queens College, however, has not followed suit. They have yet to release a statement regarding the possibility of any tuition breaks in the near future. As the Fall semester is swiftly approaching, we as students deserve the utmost transparency and consideration. In a time where existential circumstances have gravely affected people's financial situation, one must consider that full tuition may be excessive and unpayable for many students.

This past week, QC President Frank Wu sent out an email regarding the finalized agenda for the fall 2020 academic term, citing that 99% of classes will be conducted online. Given that practically all courses will be conducted online, it would make sense to offer some sort of financial relief for students that are not planning to actively use on-campus resources. One particular word that consistently came to mind whilst reading the email was "ambiguity". The President's message felt vague and non comforting. Preventing ambiguity

and uncertainty should be of primordial importance to the administration before relaying messages about tuition and other relevant college activities

It is within the best interest of Queens College to consider financial breaks for undergraduate students given the current crisis affecting our world today. Many families are unemployed, making it difficult for payments to be made in full. Additionally, oftentimes graduate students feel neglected, hence it's important to consider their needs and lower their tuition as well.

A few different plans are being carried out by Gallaudet University, Georgetown University, and the Catholic University, giving students the option of either having their tuition reduced by ten to twenty percent or offering lower rates on student activity fees. They are also facilitating student payments.

One possible suggestion for Queens College to ameliorate the heavy costs would be to offer three different levels of payment options in accordance with financial needs. For example, tuition costs could be lowered from increments of 11, 15, and 20 percent, meaning those with less financial need would pay 11% less than the full tuition, while those with significant financial needs will pay 20-30 percent less than the total. These plans would assure Queens College doesn't suffer any astronomical losses either. Another considerable option would be to keep the in-full tuition while eradicating activity fees for those students who will not access technological resources, science labs, art rooms, and music rooms.

As a student body, we are the driving force behind this marvelous institution. It is only fair that QC gives back to its community of driven, dedicated, and unique students during these uncertain times. As a college, we should strive for a collaborative effort towards success.

OP-ED

OP-ED: Is QC becoming more like a private institution?

Raveena Nabi
Reporter

Summer sessions at QC have a wider range of course offerings, compared to the fall semesters. Essentially, only students who can pay the high prices of the summer session can get a better education. I agree that this is extremely unfair and that summer session should be more accessible to students of all income levels at QC however, I don't agree with the idea that this unfair practice is causing QC to become more of a private institution.

The Summer session at QC (and by extension Winter Session) have always been known for being expensive and requiring most to pay huge amounts out-of-pocket. This is primarily due to lack of funding and that for most people, FASEA and TAP (i.e financial aid) only covers the fall and spring semester. The summer session is a crucial aspect of the academic experience here at QC and if financial aid doesn't apply that prevents a huge amount of the population from increasing their numbers of credits and experiences which helps them to graduate on time.

Many feel that while QC isn't classified as a private institution they have already started to behave like one. "The rapid privatization and restructuring of the CUNY public college system continually threatens our legacy as a tool of economic mobility in New York. As the state repeatedly guts our budget, more and more students are left with a decision between inescapable debt and the inability to attend college", said Gav Meiri, History and Secondary Education major at Queens College.

While behaving like a private institution doesn't automatically mean that you will become one, it is very clear that budget cuts are hurting our college and the

CUNY system. At a time when academic institutions require more funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the result is that they are given less. This lack of support forces academic institutions to not only raise the price of tuition itself but to also raise the prices of services provided by the college. For students, many of whom have a hard time paying for tuition as it is, it becomes even harder to pay for services such as summer sessions which helps to keep them on track for graduation.

David Gerwin, Chair of the QC Chapter of the CUNY PSC (professional staff congress) was the one to bring this concern to the attention of The Knight News. Gerwin stated that when the college isn't able to open enough seats for courses during the Fall/Spring semester the courses are offered during the summer session. This is dangerous because in order to take summer classes students need more time and money to do so. This causes our college to become enrollment-based meaning that students have to pay out of pocket cash rather than the flat rate tuition payment which is made possible by financial aid. As a result, students who depend on financial aid are not able to take advantage of summer sessions whereas other students, who can afford to pay out of pocket without assistance from financial aid, can.

When asked about possible solutions to this issue, Gerwin said increasing and funding TAP aid is key. Gerwin added that, "the state should give colleges funding to allow them to offer courses during Fall/Spring semester with enough seats and enough sections so that students will be able to take the classes they need and it also prevents existing classes from overcrowding."

QC deserves better and the CUNY system deserves better. Students shouldn't be priced out of a good education.



Photo: Brian A. Jackson, IPC Photo Metadata.



THE KNIGHT NEWS

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Are you looking to understand Queens College better?

Join us on Instagram Live where The Knight News will answer all your questions!

Submit questions here <https://bit.ly/3arYXTu>

Date: September 9th, 2020

Time: 12:15-1:30 PM.





Photo: Queens College

Arwa Ali
Editor/ Reporter

Queens College is a school that has long touted the diversity of its students, but what about its faculty, staff, and administration? Although diversity amongst the student body has never been exemplary, it has been especially lacking the farther up you move along the totem pole of hierarchy. In 2019, it was reported that 6.3% of the full-time faculty was Black and 7.3% was Latinx. It was also reported that 5.9% of the part-time faculty was Black while 9.7% was Latinx. Three departments with a shockingly minimal number of Black faculty include the Biology, Physics and Library department. These statistics showcase only an iota of the blatant racial disparities QC faces, something

the Black Latinx Faculty Staff Association (BLFSA) has been actively fighting.

The BLFSA is a group that supports the needs of Black and Latinx faculty, staff, and students on campus where there is underrepresentation. Following the national outcry against police brutality in June, the BLFSA released a lengthy public statement listing a set of demands for QC to effectively address Anti-Blackness systemic oppression within the institution. The statement makes it clear that racism on campus has played out through “recruitment, retention, academic and financial resources, scholarship and mentoring support for Black and Latinx faculty and beyond.”

To expand on the necessity of the statement, Nathaniel Smith, a leading member of BLFSA, claims that “we must learn and unlearn the racist practices inherent throughout CUNY and Queens College.

Although these practices may not be overt, due to the nature of white supremacy, these practices are very much covert.”

Some of the BLFSA's demands include filling 50% of the Dean and Administrative positions with diverse Black/Latinx leaders by Fall 2021, developing a fund for a Black/Latinx staff and administration mentorship program by 2021, providing a hazard-free safe space for Black/Latinx students, faculty and staff to facilitate healing from racial trauma, and giving constant academic and financial support to Black/Latinx faculty beyond the Diversity Hiring Initiative. The association would also like to see QC commission experienced academic scholars and staff who focus solely on the diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives the college undertakes, transition the Africana Studies Program into a Department with full financial support from administration, ensure consistent resources for the incoming Director of Africana Studies with faculty, mentoring, and professional development services, and maintain culturally appropriate mental health services by hiring diverse staff that is representative of the students seeking help.

Smith has made it clear that when it comes to inclusion, the BLFSA wants to be at the table and in spaces where the needs of their communities are heard. “We don't want those in power to direct the work or redirect it in a way that fits their agenda.”

Many of the demands made by BLFSA advocate for an increase in Black and

Latinx hires, something students are in dire need of. QC Alum Rufaro Padmore, former president of the Black Student Union and Vice President of the Caribbean Students Association, wishes she saw herself in the faculty during her time in college. “I've had a total of six Black professors during my four and a half years. In those classes, I felt comfortable, but I have been in plenty of classes where I was the only Black person in the classroom and it's the worst feeling ever. You feel so tiny and like you want to disappear, specifically when you're in a sociology lecture hall and the topic of race comes up. People always look around for a Black person.”

In response to the growing concern for lack of diversity, President Frank H. Wu had the following to say on the matter: “I have pledged to take action on diversity, especially to ensure equity and inclusion of those communities and individuals that have been historically excluded throughout society and who remain underrepresented in many areas. That is why I came to Queens College. I want to move as quickly as practical, within the appropriate processes”.

Smith is hopeful that President Wu will be receptive to demands for change and is certain that BLFSA will make its mark on QC. “We have a mission that is long-standing, and we hope that other folks will be interested in the work. This is a pivotal moment where we are in a double pandemic: the coronavirus and racial hostility. We are not going away unless these issues are addressed head-on”.

QC's Torrid Relationship With Its Black Population

Samantha Galvez-Montiel
Editor/ Reporter

In light of the national outcry against systemic racism, it's integral we discuss the historical initiatives taken at Queens College (QC) to combat the issue, starting with recognition of the SEEK Program. This program was born out of the Civil Rights Movement - an often unknown and uncelebrated fact on our campus. It was also named after one of New York's most respected civil rights activists, Percy E. Sutton. Although this program has encouraged diversity amongst the student population, there is still much racial justice work to be done.

Dr. Soribel Genao, a professor at QC, is part of the Black Latinx Faculty Staff Association (BLFSA). When explaining BLFSA's purpose, she believes it aims “to

foster a greater sense of community and mutual support among the Black, Latinx and other faculty and staff of color at Queens College through networking, organizing and supporting in an effort to provide a communal support system that will enhance the cultural, ethnic and intellectual diversity within the college”.

On the conversation of diversity on campus, Dr. Genao claims that QC is “not a comforting place when it comes to diversity. You find your pot and you become the lid. You go where it feels most comfortable whether it's because people aesthetically look like you or there's an intellectual diversity where the capacity is there.” We see the different clubs that have their own culture to it and that's where people find their place to fit in.

In terms of faculty, Dr. Genao wishes she had faculty that looked like her. “We don't have enough faculty that re-

semble the population we are trying to bring in. QC used to do a much better job with hiring faculty and supporting the faculty that are going to support the students that look like them.”

Professor Simone Yearwood, an Associate Professor of Library, has mentioned to the Knight News in the past that the faculty of QC could be more diverse. “I believe the college can address this issue by making a commitment to recruit, hire, and retain BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) faculty,” Yearwood commented.

According to Data USA, “The enrolled student population at CUNY Queens College is 30.2% White, 27% Hispanic or Latino, 26.4% Asian, 8.8% Black or African American, 1.39% Two or More Races, 0.352% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders, and 0.322% American Indian or Alaska Native.”

Steven Gordillo, a senior drama major discussed the barriers Black, Indigenous, and other people of color face at QC: “I think that BIPOC students face economical barriers in the sense that most of these students have to work in order to study and if they

don't, they won't be able to afford classes even with the help of their parents.”

New college students are often overwhelmed and seek acceptance for their unique backgrounds. Dr. Genao mentioned that most students don't get that “unless you have an advisor that is willing to really get to know you from a community sense, not ‘I want to get to know you individually’ but ‘I want to get to where you come from, what brought you here, and what you identify as the best way to create some type of map to assist you to get there where we hold each other accountable for. Very few advisors do that”.

This is why programs like SEEK play a crucial role in garnering a diverse student body. The same could be said about the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program (MMUF), which was established in 1988 as a response to the shortage of racially diverse faculty in higher education. Mellon Mays accepts minority students and others who have a demonstrated commitment to eradicating racial disparities. Here's to hoping these programs are just the beginning.

Breonna Taylor: A Young Life Full of Potential Taken Too Soon

Victoria Young
Editor/ Reporter

When George Floyd, 46, was murdered by four police officers in Minneapolis, MN, the effect caused a shockwave impact throughout the nation. As a result, the American public has begun calling out the state and national government, police, and elected officials to eradicate the common occurrences of racially based crimes within America's justice systems. But before George Floyd's life was unjustly taken, Breonna Taylor, 26, faced the same fate just two months previously.

Just after midnight on March 13, 2020, Jonathan Mattingly, Brett Hankison, and Myles Cosgrove used a ram on the door of Breonna Taylor's apartment to enter her home where she and her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, lay asleep. Upon hearing the loud banging on their front door, the pair woke up. After a brief exchange between Taylor, Walker, and the three officers on the scene, Walker fired his gun resulting in the police firing multiple shots striking Taylor eight times. According to The Louisville Courier Journal, Mr. Walker told the investigators that Taylor "coughed and struggled to breathe for at least five minutes after she was shot" and did not receive medical attention for over twenty minutes, which is supported by dispatch logs. The Jefferson County Coroner reported that Ms. Taylor could not have been saved as she "most likely died less than a minute after she was shot".

Taylor, 26, was an emergency medical technician from Louisville, Kentucky

who was shot by three officers of the Louisville Metro Police Department, while she was asleep in her home on the night of March 13th. Outraged at the atrocity of the officers' actions, the people of Louisville, and eventually the rest of the country, took to the streets to protest in her honor, holding demonstrations that pushed Louisville officials to ban no-knock warrants; a lawful practice which allows the forcible entrance by police into people's homes in order to search without warning. On June 23rd, Louisville Metro PD fired Brett Hankison, one of the officers involved in the shooting.

The police believed that two men, who the department was actively investigating for dealing drugs, had been using Ms. Taylor's apartment to receive packages, although they lived far from her home. However, Walker's lawyer reports that there were no drugs found in the home. One of the officers, wounded by Mr. Walker was shot in the leg and is expected to make a full recovery. Walker was later charged with the attempted murder of a police officer, although the charge was dropped back in May. Meanwhile the officers who took part in the murder of Ms. Taylor have not faced any criminal charges; two of the officers were reassigned by the administration, even though they remain on the force.

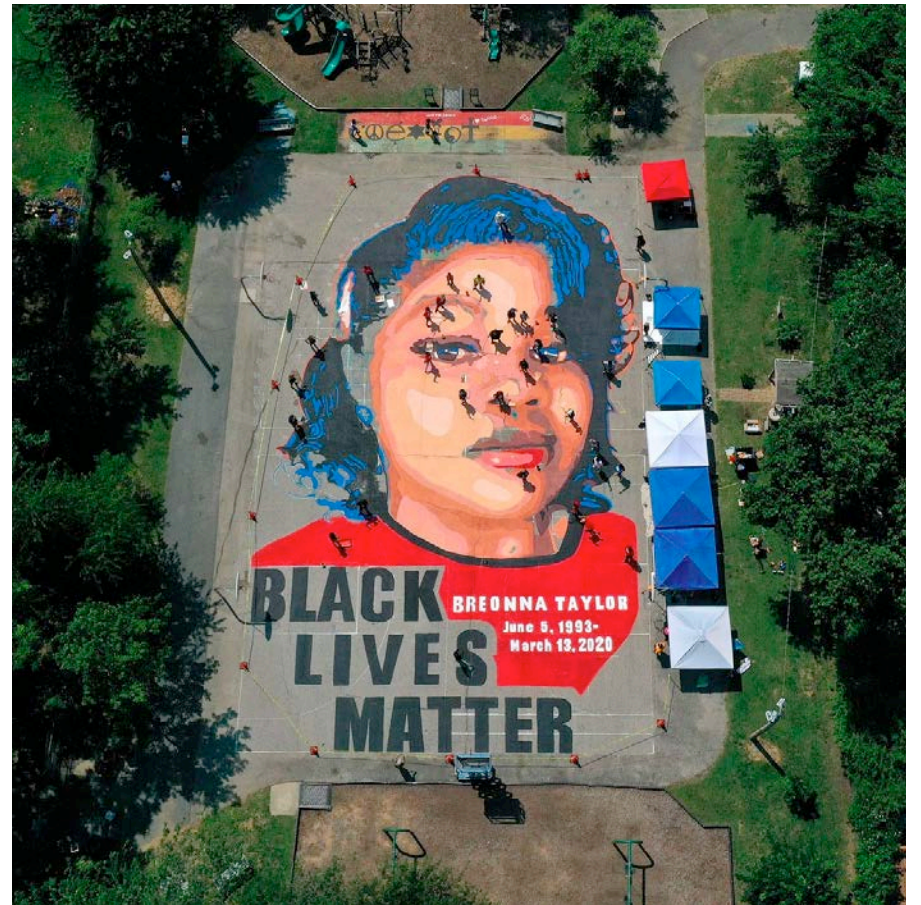
Breonna Taylor's lawyers say that the law enforcement officials never identified themselves upon entering the home, despite the officers' claims that they did. Kenneth Walker was licensed to carry a gun and fired his weapon believing the

apartment was being robbed: "He didn't know these were police officers and there were no drugs in the apartment - none. He was scared for her life and his life," said Walker's lawyer, Robert Eggert. The incident report also consists of many fallacies and incorrect claims, such as listing Taylor's injuries as "none", even though she was shot eight times before bleeding to death. It also stated that the officers

did not force their way into the apartment, even though a battering ram was used on the front door to break it open.

Breonna Taylor was a young woman with a bright future. According to her mother, Tamika Palmer, her daughter planned to have a long and fulfilling career in healthcare after working as an EMT; **S h e** wished

Photo: nytimes.com



George Floyd: the public trial

Victoria Young
Editor/ Reporter

New video footage in the George Floyd murder case involving four Minneapolis police officers on May 25th of this year has surfaced courtesy of the British news outlet, The Daily Mail, who has yet to comment on how they acquired the body cam videos.

The murder of George Floyd was caught on camera by multiple bystanders who were present at the scene. When the footage went viral, many were outraged which caused an uproar across the nation and even in many other countries. This unfortunate event has resulted in a vast majority of the public participating in protests, petition signing, fundraising, and contacting their local and state representatives to show their support for Floyd

with many others who have shared his same fate at the hands of law enforcement.

In the new video footage captured by the body cams of two of the now ex-officers, Floyd is shown struggling in the back of the squad car. When one of the officers asked him why he was having trouble walking, he responded with, "Because, my hands are hurting." When the officers tried putting him in the car, Floyd was visibly struggling to breathe while begging "please don't do this" to the officers.

Many have seen the video taken by bystanders of Derek Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck while he lay motionless on the ground. Floyd was calling out that he couldn't breathe and even that his whole body was in pain, but Chauvin did not move. In the new footage from the body cameras, one of the officers asked Chauvin if they should roll

Floyd on his side and Chauvin responded, "No, he's staying put where I got him."

The recently released footage captured by the body cameras of Officer Thomas Lane and Officer J. Alexander Kueng's were filed with the court on July 7th by Lane's attorney in an effort to dismiss the charges against Lane. Lane, Kueng, and Officer Tou Thao who are facing the same two charges: aiding and abetting second-degree murder and aiding abetting second-degree manslaughter. Chauvin has been charged with second-degree murder and all four officers have been fired.

None of the involved officers has entered an official plea, but Thao and Lane have asked for their charges to be dismissed while Kueng reportedly intends to plead not guilty. Minnesota Attorney General and prosecutor of

the case, Keith Ellison, has denied the claims regarding his team leaking the video evidence to the Daily Mail, but promises that they will continue taking strict precautions to ensure a fair trial.

Floyd's family attorney, Ben Crump, feels strongly that the leaked videos do not show Floyd posing a threat to the officers or anyone else around him. Crump made a statement on Monday, August 3rd, "the police officers approached him with guns drawn, simply because he was a Black man. As this video shows, he never posed any threat. The officers' contradictions continue to build. If not for the videos, the world might never have known about the wrongs committed against George Floyd."

AOC's speech and Microaggressions Women Face At Work

Samantha Galvez-Montiel
Editor/ Reporter

According to a report by The Hill, Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL) was coming down the steps on the east side of the Capitol on Monday, July 20 as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) (D-NY) was coming up. Then, in an exchange overheard by a reporter, Yoho began to berate her, saying she was “out of your freaking mind” and “disgusting” because she suggested, “that poverty and unemployment are driving a spike in crime in New York City during the coronavirus pandemic.” Ocasio-Cortez then responded that Yoho was being “rude,” and as the two parted ways, Yoho joined Rep. Roger Williams (R-TX) and called Ocasio-Cortez a, “f***ing b***h.”

On the House floor Wednesday morning, July 23, Rep. Yoho delivered a sort-of apology for the confrontation that didn't seem to cover the extent of what he said to his fellow coworker.

“I rise to apologize for the abrupt manner of the conversation I had with my colleague from New York. It is true that we disagree on policies and visions for America, but that does not mean we

should be disrespectful,” Rep. Yoho said. “Having been married for 45 years with two daughters, I'm very cognizant of my language. The offensive name-calling, words attributed to me by the press were never spoken to my colleagues and if they were construed that way, I apologize for their misunderstanding.”

AOC said that the language used by Yoho, who was accompanied by Rep. Roger Williams (R-TX) during the incident, was not new or incidental to her or any woman in America, but rather the product of a larger cultural problem.

“It is a culture of lack of impunity, of accepting of violence and violent language against women, and an entire structure of power that supports that,” she said, noting that she has previously been spoken to disrespectfully by other lawmakers as well as President Trump, who last year told her and several other women lawmakers of color to “go back” to the countries they came from. In her statement, Ocasio-Cortez also referenced the abusive comments she's received while working service jobs at bars in New York City.

Professor Soribel Genao, who teaches Education Leadership at Queens College, offered her remarks on the

situation.. “I think AOC is a great representation of what our young black, brown and women of color are in need of. Her fearless ways are a true example of what it is we question every day.”

“I'm very unassuming and petite,” Dr. Genao mentions micro-aggressions she faces at work as a Latinx woman who looks younger than she is. “My first day as a professor, I had a student telling me once, ‘What could I possibly learn from you?’”

Alba Echeverry alum Political Science major commends Ocasio-Cortez's speech. “Her speech shed light on a bigger issue many women in all different workplaces face: abusive language by men who think it's okay to treat women like garbage but then try to justify it by saying they like women enough to have kids with them.”

Echeverry spoke on micro-aggressions she faced at work as a woman. She worked as a summer camp counselor from 9 AM - 5 PM with no air conditioning most of the time. As a result, wearing appropriate clothes was a concern for the staff. “We obviously can't wear something like booty shorts since we work with kids. Us girls would mostly wear either shorts with the same material as leggings or the cotton basketball shorts guys sometimes wear but never were the shorts super short.

“Anyway, one day one of our program directors sends someone to tell every single girl that worked there to meet her in the cafeteria. When all of us get there the program director (a woman by the way) tells us to stop wearing shorts that show off our bodies because we were putting on a show for everyone. She wanted us to wear basically the baggiest clothes so that

everyone else doesn't see that we have curves because it would be too distracting. We had to hide our bodies. It wasn't a problem that everyone else thought it was okay to stare at our bodies and then complain about it but rather it was a problem that we even dare have bodies and wear shorts in 95-degree weather.”

Ocasio-Cortez is a public example of the remarks and aggression women face in the workplace. That whenever a woman is trying to speak out on issues or their opinions, they are marked off as a “b***ch” or “crazy” or “overreacting.”

According to LeanIn.org, for 64% of women, microaggressions are a workplace reality. Women have to provide more evidence of their competence than men and are also two times as likely to have been mistaken for someone in a more junior position. Black women deal with a greater variety of micro-aggressions and are more likely than other women to have their judgment questioned in their area of expertise.

“Women are not ‘incapable of controlling our emotions’ or PMSing, we're fighting back against a society that is constantly trying to push us down and silence us. We are just as talented, intelligent, and capable as men, probably even more and therefore we should be able to use our voices without backlash. For me she's become a role model, she's inspired me to demand more respect from men and to demand more equality in the environments I'm in whether it's at work or at home,” Echeverry comments.



Photo: New York Magazine

country of Cypress. Civilians, rescue teams and public officials are desperately searching for bodies amidst the rubble. Electricity in all of Beirut faltered, delaying search efforts until a few hours following daybreak on Wednesday.

The explosion annihilated the city's port, a thriving economic center. It also destroyed numerous homes and businesses. The scraps and debris left behind resemble an apocalyptic warzone. With 300,000 individuals left homeless, the government has declared a state of emergency in the city.

The destruction also worsened other current crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, causing a backlog of gravely-ill patients in already-saturated hospitals.

Health officials and government leaders remain uncertain as to the exact origin of the explosion, but ammonium nitrate (also referred to as AN), a chemical compound present in fertilizers, was identified as the material largely responsible for the blast. It's susceptible to oxidation and explosivity.

“AN does not burn, but if exposed to heat, it can melt, releasing combustible gases,” said CNN reporter Jessie Yeung. This suggests that an unidentified heat source catalyzed the fatal explosion.

According to The New York Times,

Lebanese officials attribute this event to unresolved conflicts originating from a Russian-owned cargo ship headed for Mozambique that made an unscheduled stop in the city in 2013.

An investigation is underway as officials work to identify the exact cause of the blast, although members of the public place some of the blame on the incompetence of Lebanese leaders, who have been condemned for failing to take effective action to safely dispose of the ammonium nitrate located at the explosion site.

Suggestions included the exportation of these chemicals or a donation to the Lebanese army. Despite this advice, Lebanese officials stalemated.

Prior knowledge of the probability of a fatal explosion doesn't look good for the country. For this reason, the public took to Twitter and other social media platforms to bolster a truth-seeking campaign and spread global awareness by spreading images of the explosion.

As per the 14-day emergency declaration, law enforcement officers in Beirut are permitted to carry out house arrests and apprehension of suspects.

Please see the New York Times guide on how to help those impacted by the explosion: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/world/how-to-help-lebanon-beirut.html>

Lebanon in crisis

Nika Nuñez
Reporter

Illicit explosives allegedly barred from being stored in Beirut were detonated at dusk on Tuesday in Beirut, Lebanon, causing numerous casualties.

At approximately 6:00 P.M., the explosion struck the capital city of Beirut,

killing over 100 civilians and injuring at least 1,000. Lebanon's prime minister said in an official statement that preliminary investigations show that an estimated 2,750 metric tons of explosive ammonium nitrate were stored at a warehouse at the time of detonation.

The magnitude of the detonation caused tremors felt in the neighboring

Uyghur, China Muslim Population: Victims of inhumane treatment

Photo: eurasiantimes.com



Serene Klapper
Reporter

In an era in which it is typical for people to take to the streets to protest a cause, there has been an overwhelming silence regarding a particular human rights issue: the Chinese oppression of the Uyghur population. Recent media releases, including New York Times footage of the forced labor of the ethnic minority, have brought forth the question- Who are the Uyghurs and why are they suffering in silence?

The Uyghurs (pronounced wee-gr) are a mostly-Muslim minority ethnic group that mainly inhabit Xinyang China, which is also referred to as East Turkestan or the Uyghur Autonomous Region. About 12 million Uyghurs are assumed to live inside the Uyghur homeland, while data from a sample census taken in 2013 suggests that about 10 to 15 thousand currently live in the U.S. It is estimated that a total of only about a million Uyghurs live outside of Xinyang.

For decades there have been reports of brutal treatment of Uyghurs in China. Over the past four years discrimination of the Uyghurs has drastically increased.

The Chinese government has implemented a policy of total surveillance and control based on racial profiling which has allowed for over a million Uyghurs to be taken to “re-education” camps and many placed into forced labor. Children are often placed in government-run schools at a young age for the purpose of indoctrination and separation from their cultural roots. The reasoning for this policy is that the Chinese government believes that the Uyghers hold extremist views as well as a separate cultural and religious identity that could come to threaten the country.

The United Nations addressed the issue in August of 2018, expressing concern over claims of Uyghurs detention camps and asking the Chinese government to release anyone unjustly imprisoned. However, all accusations were vehemently denied and the severe mistreatment of the Uyghurs in China has yet to cease.

It is presumed that China has been able to continue these atrocities due to its powerful role in the world economy. “The leverage of the China market gives them the power to continue these programs.” says Louisa Greve, the Director of Global Advocacy for the Uyghur Human Rights Project. “There should be no China exceptionalism when it comes

to genocide. Being passive in the face of vigorous Chinese government diplomacy and information warfare has terrible consequences for the diplomats of the countries that wish to uphold norms of human dignity and avoid terrible wars.”

A Huffington post article entitled, “If Only the Uighurs Were Buddhist and China Was Israel”, published in May of 2011, also touched upon this controversial point, lamenting, “...if only the Uyghurs weren’t the wrong kind of minority in a country that produces half the goods we use.” According to the Harvard Business Review, China has loaned a total of about 5 trillion dollars to other countries. The U.S. alone owed China 1.1 trillion dollars in debt as of 2018. Over 56 billion dollars in goods came from China to the U.S. in that same year. Economic retaliation from China is a prospect so daunting that it has enabled the CCP to continue this terrifying project with minimal intervention.

A possible additional cause for the lack of widespread knowledge about the Uyghurs may be the fact that it is a punishable offense for them to have relatives abroad. Other such offenses include downloading WhatsApp on their phones and observing Islamic customs. Engaging in such actions could have consequences

such as separation of families, long prison sentences, mass detention and destruction of cultural landmarks and mosques.

The coronavirus pandemic has had its own particular effect on the Uyghurs in China. Amidst a pandemic that has to date claimed over 700 thousand lives, Uyghurs are reportedly being forced to produce masks. According to the New York Times, the Chinese government has been directly sponsoring the program enabling mask companies to put Uyghurs to work against their will.

The Uyghurs are in fact used as cheap labor to create many more typical products. According to Business Insider, companies that benefit from Uyghur labor include Amazon, Apple and Nike. Many of these companies claim to be concerned with human rights and openly support movements such as Black Lives Matter. Unfortunately, they seem to have largely turned a blind eye to this issue.

According to Greve, there is minimal Uyghur awareness among people in New York City. Students looking for more information and footage showing Uyghur mistreatment are encouraged to visit the Uyghur Human Rights Project website as well as enduyghurforcedlabour.org.

Living in Color: 'People of Color' a phrase divided

Ashley Gines
Staff Writer

The minimization of the minority has been a common trait of our society for centuries and has evolved over time in many different ways. Yet no matter how drastic the change, the oppression faced by minorities has continued to constrain any progress that could come. With the rise of Black Lives Matter movement, many are questioning whether or not the phrase 'people of color', often abbreviated as POC, is appropriate in this day and age. Some contend that the phrase undermines the struggles that certain minority communities face, in contrast to others.

From the beginning, people have been stripped of their rights and identities, seen only as the lesser kind due to the color of their skin. The term 'citizen of color' was a way to identify the mass majority of those who did not fit the standard of those in power. However, instead of letting this minimization bring them down, they used it to unite the various communities that were ostracized and form them into a united front.

The term slowly turned into the commonly used phrase 'people of color' (POC). This promptly gave off the implication of color being the one thing that caused the racial division to begin with rather than citizenship. Now, during one of the most recent movements in civil rights has brought up the question of whether it does more harm than good.

There is a lot of division on whether or not the phrase is truly of importance within society mainly due to history it has. When speaking to Kobe Brunson, an engineering major at a City College of Technology he stated "I don't feel like the phrase ['POC'] is offensive- it doesn't specify who it pertains to. Sometimes the phrase is thrown out of context and gets used in a derogatory way." His issue wasn't with the phrase itself but the misuse of the phrase and the negative connotations that tend to follow and make the phrase harmful, "It [the term 'POC'] usually is attached to a very poor statistic, like low class economy, but it's not like that all the time. It's just a fact that it tends to follow up with a negative statistic". This occurs in modern society that the phrase was only associated with the concept of poverty or even crime within the mainstream media.

"The terminology is less specific, which allows many minorities to come together based on complexion which seems to be the larger issue at hand", said J. Melendez, a junior psychology major at Queens College. 'People of color' does absorb all nationalities into one vast majority, yet this idea is not meant to overlook the past struggles that they have faced.

According to a study conducted in 2015 by Kassia E. Kulaszewicz at St. Catherine University, in which they analyzed racial microaggressions towards black people compared to white people within various news outlets Kulaszewicz



Photo: mic.om

wicz found that, "[t]he word black was used 196 times throughout the articles. This is 76%. In contrast the word white was used 63 times, about 24%. These numbers concluded that the word black or African-American was used 300% more white as the identifier". The issue concerning the image of the phrase 'POC' mainly pertains to the use of the phrase and less of the history it holds.

There is a bigger issue within the

world than the terminology we use to describe ourselves. The fact of the matter is until big issues such as social injustice and racial inequalities are fixed, the concern towards phrasing that have little effect on reality fails to reach the surface of minorities' struggles. The actions we take in the future will be bigger than any phrasing that was used against them at a point in history, and that is something that we as a society should strive towards.

Coronavirus: debunking the rumors

Gloria Stoyanova
Columnist

To a normal citizen, the scientific method of trial, error, and repeat can be overwhelming. To some, it might be easier to reject new information that becomes available. The COVID-19 pandemic has inevitably forced the American public to confront the scientific process. Recently, The United States reached a new peak in coronavirus cases during July. Caseloads were exacerbated early reopenings in the sunnier states – Arizona, Florida, and Texas. In times like these, it's important more than ever to debunk some of the commonly spread myths about COVID-19.

To recap, public health agencies have constantly shifted course with their recommendations to stay safe, explaining why many are confused about the proper procedure to stay safe. National guidance has differed from state and local guidance consistently. Early in March the Cen-

ter for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advised Americans against wearing a mask unless they are ill. However, now, the scientific data shows that wearing a mask in public can help prevent community transmission of the virus. Additionally, the CDC recommendation is to wear masks when you cannot stay six feet apart from others in a public setting.

The early days of the pandemic were outlined with hopes that the warmer weather would slow the coronavirus. Genetic material, like DNA or RNA, can indeed be damaged by the sun's UV rays, yet the multiple heatwaves nationwide have failed to stop the spread of the virus. The logic behind it all is that extremely high temperatures do cause proteins to unfold and lose their function, but such temperatures would also damage human cells and proteins, thereby debunking the myth that heat can kill the virus.

Another commonly spread rumor is centered around the initial cluster of

SARS-CoV-2 cases that was linked to a live seafood market in Wuhan. As the virus ravaged much of the world, speculation quickly shifted to whether the virus was genetically engineered in a lab. Science points to the notion that it is more likely the virus was of zoonotic origin (i.e. was transmitted from animals to humans). As animals became domesticated, zoonotic diseases became more prevalent. According to the World Health Organization, at least 60% of all human diseases come from animals. Coronaviruses are notably common in bats and pangolins. Researchers believe the coronavirus was transferred from a bat to an intermediate before infecting the first human.

Nevertheless, keeping in mind the facts and science of the COVID-19 pandemic, one should keep in mind some key facts. The most effective, preventative measure against the coronavirus is to wear a mask. People mistakenly claim that wearing a mask can lead to breathing difficulties or

health problems, but this is simply not the case. Masks are designed with breathing in mind, as medical professionals wear them all day. If your mask is the correct size, it should have sufficient airflow. Cloth masks are recommended for ordinary people so surgical masks and N95 respirators can be reserved for doctors and nurses. The American Medical Association recommends exceptions for people with breathing difficulties, children under two, and those who cannot remove their mask.

Science was never meant to be set in stone. Its purpose is to inform and find the truth according to data. Accepting new information in times like these will only help us combat the virus. The spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. Even as we stay apart in these difficult times, we can come together by understanding that as science changes, we can change our behavior with it.

QC's student senate confronts its lack of graduate representation

John Sullivan
Reporter

The Graduate Center provides services for, among others, QC graduate students, who find themselves without a representative in the Senate.

The Queens College Student Senate is the legislative branch of the Student Association. As outlined on its website, its primary responsibilities are to “consider such bills and resolutions as may concern the general welfare of the Queens College student body and moderate the actions of the Executive Branch.”

By this measure, there's a glaring problem in the Student Senate: the inadequate representation of Queens College's graduate students.

Of the 20 students that comprise the Senate, only one is involved in graduate study. Without the contributions of someone with a thorough understanding of their experiences, the needs of several

thousands of graduate students attending Queens College often go unaddressed.

It is a problem that the Chair of the Student Senate, Siddharth Malviya, readily acknowledges. Regarding the conspicuous lack of graduate senators, Malviya explains, “It's the Senate's purview to declare standing committees each year at its first meeting. The constitution [of the Student Association] outlines in Article VIII, Section 9, item 7, that a Graduate Students Committee may be declared. However, I have yet to see it be declared.”

Malviya believes that the delay may have something to do with the position of committee chair being too great a commitment for anyone as busy as the average graduate student to take on. He notes: “Graduate students tend to be fully immersed in their field of study. Finding one to chair the committee is difficult, as the chair for that committee is tasked with organizing graduate students and representing them accordingly.”

It's not as though graduate students haven't been involved in the politics of

the student government in the past. Jay Hershenson, Queens College alumnus, Class of 1976, and Senior Advisor to the President, strongly remembers the previous advocacy groups formed on behalf of Queens' graduate student body.

“In the 1970s, there were several student government associations at Queens College, including a Graduate Student Association. The president was Michael Gilman,” Hershenson said.

The Graduate Student Association was one of many similar organizations, such as the Adult and Continuing Education Association, which addressed the needs of a particular group of students. Over time, these separate organizations became a conglomerate organization – what is known today as the Student Association. Members of the Academic Senate were taken from there to become the Student Senate.

“According to Academic Senate Parliamentarian Dave Fields, there were five seats set aside for graduate student representation,” Hershenson said. “Over

time, for many years, there were no candidates who expressed interest in running for those seats. The student seats were vacant. So instead of setting aside five designated seats, graduate students were encouraged to run for Senate at-large seats.”

The seats were eliminated in response to what was assumed to be graduate students' waning interest in participation. Going by Chair Malviya's observations, though, the more likely cause may have been an inability to participate due to time constraints.

Nevertheless, graduate students' lack of participation in the Senate should not preclude their consideration during Senate proceedings. Whether a liaison is appointed to speak on their behalf or graduate advisors appear before the Senate with their observations, it is paramount that graduate students receive the same audience for their concerns afforded their undergraduate peers at Queens College.

A Guide For incoming QC students: How to get involved on campus

Victoria Young
Editor/ Reporter

Although everyone's expectations of the “perfect college experience” tends to vary from person to person, it differs based on preferred campus size, amenities, or even the number of quiet floors in the library, everyone has the same question in mind: “will I be able to make friends here?”

Any guidance counselor or college tour guide will tell you that the best way to truly get involved in your school and put yourself out there is to join clubs. Although intimidating, this truly is the best way to actually get to know your campus, your peers, and even potential lifelong friends.

We have an extremely diverse campus that is the force behind our broad array of student clubs and organizations. This same characteristic allows for us to have any kind of club you could possibly imagine from cultural clubs to academic clubs to clubs based around any potential hobbies you may have. As a freshman student, it is imperative that you attend club events such as Welcome Day and club fairs in order to really weigh all of your options and see exactly how many clubs you have to choose from

even if you don't feel completely ready to submerge yourself in activities just yet.

Kimberly Wyllie, President of the Political Science Club here at QC, believes that there is no “right time” to get involved in clubs stating that “the right time for someone to join and get involved is whenever the person feels ready.” There tends to be a lot of pressure surrounding first year students and quickly getting involved on campus very early on, but as Wyllie reported that “it can be very hectic as one is adjusting.” When you feel that you are ready to get involved, it is suggested that you reach out to friends, club members, student government, or walk around the club basement in the Student Union building as there are always club representatives and members hanging out in their respective club's room.

Many students who join clubs in college are more likely to get acclimated to their new surroundings and peers quite quickly and oftentimes feel a sense of belonging early on. For example, Jenna Choi, President of ASIA (Asian Students In Action), told The Knight News about how she felt when first joining the club compared to now. Choi said, “I was intimidated last year as I was an incom-



Photo: Asian Students in Action QC

ing freshman, but I warmed up to the club very quickly and I am proud to be close friends with many of them.”

Jenna is just one example of a freshman student who was able to find a community of people who “share the same interests, struggles, and even hobbies” as she does and even refers to the

members of her respective club as “family.” Jenna also wanted to let incoming students know that they should “not be afraid of the numbers” as many clubs at QC have a large number of students, but that just means there's an even bigger chance to make great new friends!

Do professional sports bubbles work?

Holden Velasco
Sports Writer

Bubbles. What comes to mind when you hear that word? Perhaps the childhood bliss of blowing and popping them with friends. Maybe, for the more scientific minds out there, you thought about the perfect spherical shape they possess and the fact that they don't allow any foreign substances inside. Both are relevant to "bubbles" in professional sports during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the context of today's sports, bubbles are when athletes, coaches, and other essential staff are placed in a restricted area in a near college campus type of environment. There are typically restrictions on allowing anyone to leave, and nobody is allowed into the bubble if they are not essential. The specifics vary from league to league.

The pressing question is: do bubbles work and are they worth it? Long story short, yes, they do work. But the parameters around them are extremely hard to work out. They're difficult to organize, costly, and potentially detrimental to those who enter them.

In a report by ESPN Senior Writer Brian Windhorst, we learned that operating the NBA bubble at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida will cost the association over \$150 million. Players will not see their families for up to three months and will have no direct outside contact for the foreseeable future. Michele Roberts, Executive Director of the NBA Players Association, expressed that, "Months of life in this bubble is not an extended vacation. I'm reminded of this every time I see a player doing FaceTime with a young child."

For the two teams that make the NBA Finals, their stay in the resort could last until October. Being in a locked-down environment for that long is emotionally and mentally draining for anybody, no matter the situation.

However, at the end of the day, the bubble concept only works if those inside comply. Take LA Clippers guard Lou Williams, for example. Williams was

granted permission to leave the bubble to attend a family funeral but was seen at the Magic City strip club in Atlanta, Georgia. Unfortunately for Williams, rapper Jack Harlow posted a picture to his one million Instagram followers of himself and Williams together in Magic City. The photo went viral and Williams was prompt in his response. He claimed he only went for the food, as it is his favorite restaurant and he has a dish of chicken wings named after him. A report by the Los Angeles Times contradicts that. Magic

incident, the NBA has seen major success thus far. The NBA has not reported a single case of COVID-19 for weeks, as all 346 players' tests since July 29 have come back negative. At the end of the day, it's ultimately up to the people inside the bubble to keep each other safe.

The bubble concept isn't practical for every league. It works for the NBA because only 22 teams with 15 players each, at most, are present. The Women's National Basketball Association's bubble only has 12 teams with a maximum of

"We would have had to have multiple locations probably just to have enough facilities to make it work. The number of people involved and the numbers of people to support the number of players was much, much larger in our sport."

How is not having a bubble fairing for the league? 18 players and two coaches on the Miami Marlins tested positive, and the league was forced to postpone multiple games because of this. We recently learned that seven players and six staff members of the



Photo: NBAE via Getty Images

City dancer Aries claimed Williams received a "socially-distant dance" and that he "tipped well." Williams was placed under a 10-day quarantine upon return to the bubble and was fined \$150,000.

If behavior like this becomes the norm, then no matter how much time and effort is put into them, bubbles will fail. However, since this was an isolated

12 players on each roster. The National Hockey League allowed 24 teams with 31 players on each roster into the two separate designated bubbles (Edmonton, Canada; and Toronto, Canada) based on which conference they are in.

Major League Baseball, however, is different. Commissioner Rob Manfred opposed the idea of a bubble stating,

St. Louis Cardinals also tested positive.

So, not great. Only time will tell of its impact on a league trying to do what the rest are: Maintaining a sense of normalcy that would otherwise have rippling ramifications.

Thoughts on the inaugural episode of Michelle Obama's Podcast

Nika Nuñez
Reporter

Partnering with Spotify's Higher Ground Podcast, The Michelle Obama Podcast debuted on July 29, where the former First Lady discussed relevant topics encompassing the drastic shift after ending her eight-year White House tenure. Mrs. Obama vicariously takes her listeners into her own home and life, unveiling the curtain of the trials and tribulations accompanied by growing up an African American woman in the South Side Chicago area. She also reminisces about her upbringing and life in hopes of empowering youth and adults with similar contentions. Other topics included the juxtaposition of classism and racism both in the 1970s and 1980s and in present-day society.

The first episode featured a special guest, her husband and former President

of the United States, Barack Obama. Together, in their well known affable, affectionate, tender, and congenial manner relay important aspects of their respective lives. Topics of concurrence included their distinct upbringings in terms of nuclear families, values, dysfunctionality, and poverty. These aspects of their lives not only shaped them in terms of who they are as individuals but also contributed to their growth as the nation's leaders.

President Obama candidly reveals that while his family wasn't the conventional mother, father, daughter, and son, there was unconditional love and support from his mother and grandparents. Nevertheless, he emphasized the notion of childhood friends and acquaintances becoming an integral part of a family unit. He mentions some of his longtime friends by name and confesses that "all of them were akin to a crew; they came from broken homes, studying in predominant-

ly Anglo-Saxon elitist schools." Thus, President Obama and his friends turned to each other for support both morally and academically. This notion remains especially prevalent today. Families with a socioeconomic disadvantage still seek out to send their children to better quality schools. Oftentimes, minority groups are at a disadvantage, becoming ostracized for their identity. Events like these evoke empathy within youth communities that face daily struggles to succeed and embark on a journey of wealth and success.

Michelle Obama also discusses the idea of suburbs in terms of "White Flight," this notion of the White American ideal that everyone should live in a spacious home in a white-centered community that disregards and un-welcomes minority groups. She contends that her father remained skeptical and wary of suburbs, granted that they were designed to be for white folk. She briefly men-

tions an incident where her father's car was scratched for the mere fact that the Robinson family was African American.

From an early age, both spouses prioritized education and communal success. It is the inherent fraternal instinct that brought these two erudite individuals together. Mrs. Obama eloquently describes and breaks apart a present-day ideal regarding young people and personal triumphs by articulating, "Success was not defined by the ability to leave your nuclear unit." In other words, she shares that the notion of close familial ties are meant to foster love, care, and promote empowerment. Both Obamas were raised with the idea that the support of parents, relatives, community members, and friends catalyzes success. These core values were imbued in the Obama family's life in the White House; both prioritized the virtue of public service and addressed the concern of groups rather than individuals.

Taylor Swift Folklore music review

Siddharth Malviya
Editor in Chief

On July 23rd, Taylor Swift surprised the world by announcing the release of her latest album entitled, "folklore."

The album is a heartfelt tale of many different stories. Swift's fans, often referred to as "Swifties," have shown nothing but complete adoration for Swift's recent release.

Whereas I wouldn't necessarily categorize myself as a Swiftie, the album certainly had me "in the feels." My personal favorites from the album were "cardigan," "seven," "the last great American dynasty," and "illicit affairs."

The debut song, "cardigan" premiered on YouTube with its own music video had many (including myself at one point) reaching for a tissue box. It reached number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 upon its debut and the music video has accumulated approximately 44 million views on YouTube.

The song paints a rather somber story, telling a tale of sweet moments with a significant other. Swift incorporates the phrase "cardigan" into the song via the lyric, "and when I felt like I was an old cardigan, under someone's bed, you put me on and said I was your favorite."

The song then takes a heart-wrenching turn, as the lyrics depict the significant other leaving, "I knew you tried to change the ending Peter losing Wendy." Swift can be seen dismissing the notion that young people have nothing to contribute to meaningful discussions in the one lyric that is notably repeated in the song, specifically, "when you are young they assume you know nothing."

Swift did make sure to include some lighthearted beats on her album though. "The last great American dynasty" was one of those songs that will appeal to those of you who tend to daydream and waltz through life, regardless of people's opinions. This song is about Rebekah Harkness, a popular socialite in the 1960's who was a significant philanthropist to the arts, specifically ballet.

Rebekah Harkness is introduced in the song as a young middle-class divorcee who marries a man named Bill, the

heir apparent to the standard oil name, and money. Quickly after their marriage, Bill passes away due to a heart attack, and Swift sings about a judgemental town who blames Harkness for Bill's death. The town's woes are described in the lyrics, "there goes the last great American dynasty" and "there goes the most shameless woman this town has ever seen." The song then goes onto discussing Harkness partying with her socialite

friends and getting into trouble by notably dyeing her neighbor's dog green in a feud. Nevertheless, the song then shifts gears at the end, from Swift's perspective. She places herself in the fictional town she sings about with the judgemental town folk, who seem to judge her by saying, "there goes the most loudest woman this town has ever seen." Swift responds in the song, adding "I [Swift] had a marvelous time, ruining everything".



Photo: kissottawa.com



Veronica Kordmany Executive Editor

After a year-long hiatus, Netflix's hit TV show *The Umbrella Academy* debuted its second season in July.

The first season, which came out in 2019, followed the six members of *The Umbrella Academy*, an adoptive family of seven siblings overseen by an absent father, a robot mother, and an ape caretaker as they fought to save the world from its impending end.

The first season revolved around one of the main characters, Vanya, unlocking her distempered powers, which had been moderated for almost her entire life, and causing the end of the world to go into effect. In the final moments, the family ensemble clasped hands and zapped into a different time period just as a meteoroid destroyed their world.

The second season takes place in Dallas, Texas, between 1961 and 1963. Each character was strewn across the years as they catapulted into this new world, each one living a new life on their own.

Once again, Number 5, as he's only

referred to throughout the series, learns that the end of the world is only a few days away. Since the expected last day of human existence coincided with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, it's a race against time to prevent his assassination from transpiring.

Luther became a fighter named King Kong while working as a bodyguard for a nightclub owner named Ruby. In exchange, he received housing at a unit for 'solitary men.' He is mostly alone until Number 5 finds him, and they venture on together to find the rest of the siblings as a pair.

Diego was committed to a mental institution shortly after his arrival in Dallas due to being perceived as a threat to society, with his abundance of knives and crazy conspiracy that the President was going to be assassinated. It was there that he met, and fell in love with, fellow inmate Lila.

Allison started working at a black hair salon shortly after her arrival – there, she met her future husband, Raymond Chestnut. Due to the last season's events, Allison revealed that she couldn't speak for an entire year, something

that taught her how to use her powers of persuasion properly. Shortly after meeting Raymond, Allison joined his effort by becoming a civil rights activist.

Vanya, still distraught from her actions last season, is promptly hit by a car in the beginning of this season, completely erasing her memory and leading her to her future soulmate, Sissy, and her son Harlan. Throughout the season she takes a 180-degree turn from who she used to be, growing from being powerless to a fearless young woman.

Klaus, the only person able to see and communicate with his deceased brother Ben, mistakenly but gladly becomes a cult leader. Intent on finding the love of his life, Dave, Klaus develops his cult as he travels throughout the world, preaching inspiration and spirituality to people who decide to follow him. Ben unearths his ability to possess people, which he utilizes when he falls in love with one of the female cult members.

Number 5, who has the ability to travel between different time dimensions, strikes a deal with a woman known as The Handler, in which he gets to res-

Photo: <http://dkoding.in/>

cue his family in exchange for murdering the group of people that oversee all forms of time travel. His actions lead to The Handler assuming the role of Director, basically making her the most powerful woman of all time (literally).

It's only when Number 5 bounces between the timelines, bringing the other five all together, that the *Umbrella Academy* learns how to function as a family for the first time. Together they band together to save the world once again, bringing about new and very personal challenges for each of them.

What makes this season much more fulfilling than the first is the personal growth that each character endures throughout the ten episodes. Last season, the characters seemed to have led separate lives despite their growing up together; in this season, their differences are finally put aside, and *The Umbrella Academy* becomes a true family.

This is definitely a must-watch TV series for those who are interested in exciting yet feel-good shows. It currently holds the number one spot on Netflix's "Top 10 in the U.S." list.



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