



# CR/NC POLICY DEBATE SHAKES UP QC ACADEMIC SENATE

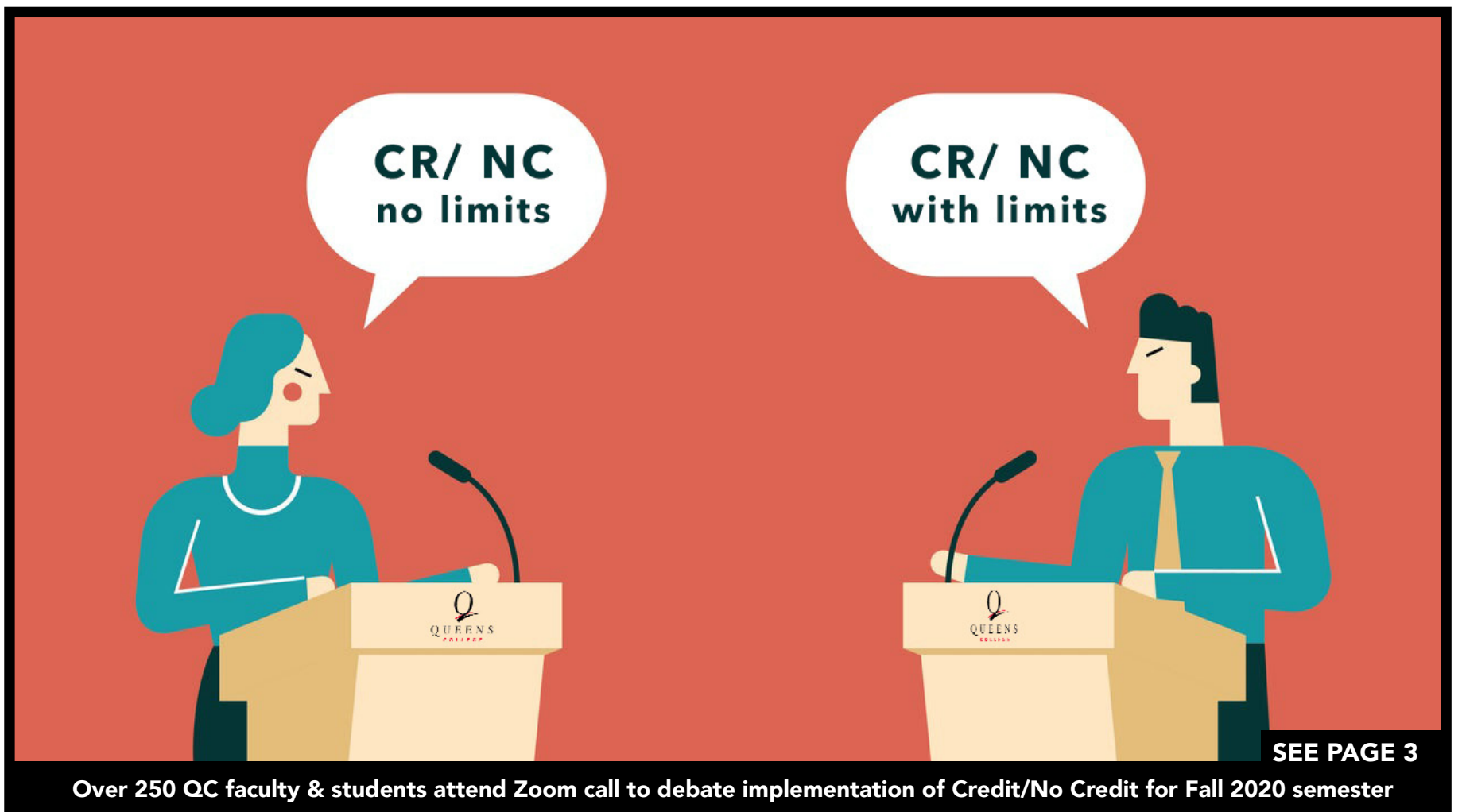


Photo by 123rf.com

**STUDENT LIFE HOARDS ACTIVITY FEE**

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New budget policy implemented earlier this year, removes individual club budgets

**QC FOOD PANTRY REOPENS**

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The Knights Table Food Pantry at QC finally reopens its doors to CUNY students amid pandemic

**"THE MANDALORIAN"**

**SEE PAGE 12**

The latest innovative spin in The Star Wars universe.

# How a Better Busway Will Help Save Jamaica Avenue

Ashley Joseph  
Writer

Jamaica Avenue is a key commercial corridor to the neighborhood and region of Jamaica, Queens. Commonly known as The Ave. by residents and people who frequent the area, it is lined with small, locally owned shops, restaurants and corporate-owned stores. These businesses sell a variety of goods to shoppers from across the region.

What makes Jamaica Avenue so important for so many people are the businesses and transit services. Many of the businesses here are owned by and frequented by people of color. Some of these businesses include beauty supply stores, African braiding salons, small African and Caribbean food markets, and small delis. The beautiful red-colored brick sidewalks make for a pleasant and aesthetically-pleasing pedestrian experience. As for transit, “Downtown Jamaica is the busiest bus hub in NYC, with over 45 NYCT, MTA bus and NICE bus routes with connections to the [E and J/Z lines].” The LIRR and the buses on Jamaica Avenue serve 147,000 daily riders according to the Better Buses Plan. But even with busy service there have been challenges and problems Jamaica Avenue has faced for a long time — which has only increased during the pandemic.

Congestion has returned to pre-pandemic levels; buses often go slower than human walking pace. Additionally, bus lanes are used and enforced ineffectively. This largely contributes to the pre-pandemic levels of congestion. The vehicle usage for both the bus lanes and commercial lanes is reversed. Passenger and commercial vehicles often tend to use the bus lanes to pick up and drop off passengers and deliveries. They also use these lanes as parking spaces, thus pushing buses into the general traffic lane.

Essential workers have had to bear the brunt of this congestion issue which adds to their already stressful lives. These workers have been relying more on buses than the subway, but the buses haven't been reliable. In addition to this, small businesses are shutting down which is leading to national retailers moving in, thus making Jamaica less affordable.

To counter these issues, Mayor Bill de Blasio and the Department of Transportation (DOT) are planning on creating better busways and bus lanes for Jamaica Avenue stretching from Sutphin Boulevard to 168th Street. The project, which is called the Better Buses for Restart, is part of “a total of 20 miles of bus lanes that are slated for Queens” according to Restart Better Buses program. The new lanes would speed up bus speeds by 25 percent according to advocates, but the paint has yet to hit the streets. If the project doesn't start now it will have to be held off until spring 2021, as the lanes cannot be painted on the asphalt in cold weather. Despite this, the project still has some opposition.

Residents and Southeast Queens elected officials would prefer a better busway on Archer Avenue. Archer Avenue currently has more daily bus passengers than Jamaica Avenue at 225,000 according to the DOT, which also claims that “bus speeds [on Archer Avenue] are higher than on Jamaica Avenue.” Queens Council Member Daneek Miller, a former bus driver, states that Archer Avenue is “far more important” because it has more bus routes than any other corridor. He also brought up the fact that once buses get to the end of Jamaica Avenue, they are “nearly empty.” Though he and his colleagues recognize that Archer Avenue does need help and the community surrounding Archer Avenue does more than just shop along this street, they don't want the Jamaica Avenue project halted.

I believe that both corridors immensely need help. Many people do more than shop in Jamaica — students go there to attend school, such as CUNY York College, and passengers transfer from bus to train and vice-versa to connect to other parts of the city. I also believe helping to fix the situation on Jamaica Avenue will help prevent the potential displacement of residents. This would help local businesses and aid essential workers that travel through that corridor. Jolyse Race, a senior organizer for Riders Alliance, has stated that, “this is a social justice issue.” Being that a majority of riders are essential workers and a part of the working class, improving bus commutes will improve the lives of both groups.

## A message from the Editor in Chief:

Dear Readers,

I'd like to thank Arwa Ali, Victoria Young and Daniel Lubofsky for their service thus far on the Executive Board of The Knight News. When I took office as Editor in Chief this summer, I inherited this paper knowing that there was plenty of work to be done. Without hesitation, Arwa, Victoria and Daniel pitched in their time, their energy and editorial skills to build this paper up to where it is now. Though The Knight News will keep striving to reach immeasurable heights, it definitely would not have been possible to get to where we currently are without their support. Congratulations to Daniel Lubofsky on graduating with a Bachelor's of Arts in Media Studies.

I'd also like to thank Jayla Cordero and Kasia Lipa for graciously agreeing to serve as Secretary and Treasurer respectively, starting Spring 2021. Jayla has been a reporter for The Knight News throughout this year and has demonstrated her commitment to The Knight News. She'll also be joining the editorial team, welcome aboard!

Lastly, thank you to our readers who have enjoyed our content this far and have supported us. Stay tuned for more content from The Knight News in the Spring 2021 semester!

Sincerely,

Sidd Malviya  
Editor in Chief, The Knight News  
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Queens College Student Union LL35

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# Fate of CR/NCR policy hangs in balance after academic senate meeting

**Johnny Sullivan**  
Editor/ Reporter

Due to the continued waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, students have been pleading with college administrators to provide some sort of academic relief. In the case of the CUNY system, students have requested an extension of a Credit/No-Credit policy. The policy in question is essentially analogous to pass/fail, where students who suffered academically due to the circumstances of the pandemic can opt to swap a passing grade with “CR,” representative of credit. This comes at no cost to the student’s grade point average. The controversy of reinstating the aforementioned policy had faculty and students arguing at the latest Queens College (QC) academic senate meeting, held on Thursday Dec. 10.

Academic Senate Chair Simone L. Yearwood cleared up a misconception spread prior to the meeting that the academic senate would be voting on the Credit/No-Credit policy. Yearwood indicated that the senate was merely providing feedback & testimony for Queens College President, Frank H. Wu, to take under consideration.

The senate deliberated over three options. For the first option, the Credit/No-Credit policy would be applicable to all courses; the second option would allow the policy to be applied to certain classes if the College

deemed it acceptable; the third option was a flat out rejection of the policy.

The QC Student Association (SA) introduced a resolution in support of the first option. With over 200 students present in the Zoom call, an outpour of support flooded the chat. Live testimony came from the student senators, citing the many issues students are facing amidst the pandemic.

Senator Alexander Kestenbaum, a junior majoring in Jewish studies, cited the recent passing of one of his relatives. Kestenbaum criticized QC for expecting students in his situation to be prepared for finals in the coming week (the one following the senate meeting), while dealing with immense grief. “My uncle passed away this morning... and now I’m expected to be mentally prepared for a final the following week on Monday” said Kestenbaum.

In light of these remarks, Senator Cayla Kempf, a junior majoring in psychology, emphasized the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on the mental health of students. Kempf also touched on the difficulty of students’ ability to access mental health resources to support themselves.

Whereas Kestenbaum and Kempf threw their support behind option one, faculty members remained skeptical about how liberal the policy is. An anonymous source in the QC Committee on Personnel and Budget confirmed that

some department chairs fear that by allowing students to freely opt into the Credit/No-Credit policy, the long-term consequences would outweigh the short-term benefits. Simply put, faculty are concerned that if students opt to swap low grades for a notation of “CR” on the transcript, and those same students progress within the major, they will be ill-equipped after graduation for both the job market and graduate schools.

On a similar note, senator and professor in the School of Education, Theresa Gurl, noted that a policy like this would not be applicable to education majors. As Gurl explained at the senate floor, New York State sets GPA requirements for undergraduates, therefore negating the Credit/No-Credit policy’s use for students in the School of Education.

Nonetheless, many students made impassioned appeals to the administration in favor of enacting the policy for the fall semester. Student Association President, junior sociology major Zaire Couloute, argued that the pandemic has actually worsened since CUNY’s initial decision to enact the policy for the spring semester, and that the administration should act accordingly. Alexander Kestenbaum agreed and went further in saying that the adoption of the CR/NC policy for this semester would be the very least that QC could do for its embattled student body. Former SA Presi-

dent Joseph Cobourne, when given the opportunity to speak, made the case that the push to get the policy enacted did not come from a desire for grade inflation, but rather grade preservation. Others, like Cayla Kempf and Enrique Peña, gave their accounts of COVID-related struggles and noted that there were many others with similar situations who would not be able to speak that evening on their own behalf. Those in the chat gave their unanimous approval of the policy.

The meeting was not without its hiccups. President Wu established early on in the proceedings that the purpose of the conversation would not be to arrive at a decision then and there, but to gain insight into the perspectives of the student body at large, which he would then use to inform the decision that he would ultimately be making. This surprised some of the attendees, who believed that the decision would be made at the meeting. Senior delegate Andrea Buzon acknowledged that the confusion came down to a “miscommunication issue.”

The following day, President Wu sent out an email in which he acknowledged the “significant support for instituting a form of the Credit/No Credit option” and promised a prompt decision on the matter. As of the writing of this article, an official statement regarding the status of the policy has yet to be made.

## Student Life exerts control over Student Activity Fees

**Siddharth Malviya**  
Editor-in-Chief

On Sept. 10, The Queens College (QC) Office of Student Development and Leadership (OSDL) dealt a strikedown of freedom, towards club leaders on campus, when it announced that clubs would no longer have individual budgets. The Office offered a new operating system to soften the blow: a smaller budget committee moderated by student life will take charge of the large sum of student activity fees. However, many feel as though the old system was much more effective.

With the new system in place, QC clubs now have to go through a lengthy process in order to receive student activity fees for their events. As per the OSDL’s protocol, clubs will need to provide a W9S form, a direct deposit form, a Queens College Association (QCA) payment re-

quest form, a contract, a flyer of the event, and an invoice. On top of this, the clubs will have to defend their request for funding before the QCA budget committee.

In a statement from Adam Rockman, Vice President for Student Affairs at Queens College, he defended new changes, citing that this tightly regulated and thorough approach ensures that clubs won’t possess surplus funds, as they allegedly did in times past. As per Rockman’s statement, “It ensures that all student fee monies are completely utilized, resulting in increased and improved programming for students.”

Though the QCA will benefit by maintaining tighter control of student activity fees, not all club leaders were enthusiastic about the changes. The Knight News spoke to Mariam Aslam, President of the Gender Love and Sexuality Alliance (GLASA), a club that is known to frequently

collaborate with the OSDL. Aslam questioned the transparency of the OSDL with this

sudden shift in the budgetary operating system: “The Office [of Student Development and Leadership] hasn’t been transparent with students and it’s been very disorganized. I understand they are trying their hardest and I recognize the amount of pressure they have, however it seems like they are no longer working with the students [they serve].”

Abid Khan, a QC graduate student who currently serves as the president of Ascend, one of QC’s business clubs on campus, explained the challenges his club has faced: “The Office of Student Development and Leadership definitely made our jobs harder to operate as a fully functional and attractive club from Queens College by adding extra steps to access any money in general,” he commented. “Seeing as money has not been as accessible as before, we had to get more creative in figuring out how to make the club more

attractive and doing activities together with students and club members for free.”

Rockman added an afterthought about potentially reverting to the former operating system for RSO budgets. “QCA board members are within their rights to make a motion to revert to the former method of allocating RSO funds, which would then be subject to a full Board discussion and vote,” he stated.

It’s important to note that QCA meetings are poorly advertised to the QC community. Following The Knight News’ previously-published article, regarding potential open meetings law violations, the QCA subsequently posted meeting dates and links on the QC calendar to meet the minimum requirements outlined by the law. For club leaders looking to insert their individual input, the only option is to reach out to the Student Association (SA) leadership, who hold six seats on the QCA board. The Knight News has failed to find any announcements or outreach from the SA leadership prior to the implementation of this policy.

# QC Alum Khaleel Anderson: the youngest black member in the NY State Assembly

Arwa Ali  
Editor/ Reporter

After winning the open seat for Queens' Assembly District 31 during the primaries in June, it was widely predicted that former CUNY Queens College (QC) alumnus and runner-up for the New York State Assembly, Khaleel Anderson, would have no trouble sealing the deal on November 3. Sure enough, the political forecasting was deemed correct, as Anderson managed to secure in-person votes by an overwhelming majority of 89 percent. At only 24 years old, Anderson has now made regional history as the youngest black New York State Assembly member on record.

Originally from Far Rockaway, Queens, Anderson has always been politically engaged. This is largely due to the fact that his parents are both former union members and activists, who instilled in him the importance of community-organization from a young age. His involvement in politics began at the age of 19, where he was part of the Queens

Community Board 14, the Far Rockaway NAACP chapter, and the New York Police Department's 101st Precinct Community Council. Alongside the work he was doing for his borough, Anderson was also enrolled at Queens College, where he graduated with a Bachelors of Arts degree and Masters of Arts degree in Urban Affairs.

Anderson's professional career started post-graduate in 2019 when he announced his candidacy to represent Southeast Queens in the State Legislature. On June 23 of the primaries, Anderson defeated the five other democratic candidates running to replace incumbent Michele Titus, and on November 4, he officially took home the victory as a New York state lawmaker. After the big win, Anderson spoke out about the significance of his accomplishment. According to the Queens Daily Eagle, he said, "this historic and impactful moment for our district marks the beginning of a new fight on behalf of working-class families in our diverse communities." City & State NY, a New York-based newspaper,

relayed another post win announcement by Anderson where he says, "I am encouraged that my work as the soon-to-be youngest assembly member in the state and youngest Black assembly member in New York State history will inspire other younger leaders across Assembly District 31 and all of New York."

According to Shaniyat Chowdhury, a former Democratic candidate for Congress, Khaleel Anderson is "someone who's been able to gain the trust of a community for his own childhood basically." Chowdhury went on to support Anderson's credibility, citing, "He's been an activist – a youth activist, a teen activist – so he knows his community pretty well. So even if they were part of the county establishment or if they were not, just your everyday voter, people trusted him so I think that because he's had all these years of experience."

According to the Queens Daily Eagle, Anderson aims to not waste a single moment of his two-year tenure: "We're facing a homelessness and a housing crisis across this city so we need housing, but we also need to make sure we have the ameni-



Photo: Khaleel Anderson

ties to cater to those people, so that means better schools, better hospitals, better opportunities," the newspaper wrote. "I will be a champion for those causes because I know what this community needs."

Khaleel Anderson has a clear vision for the safe and equitable neighborhoods he wants his constituents to live in. From fighting the negative effects climate change has on his District, to pushing for cheaper and more accessible transportation, he is committed to ending the social and economic disparities that directly affect the community he has chosen to represent.

## QC's Knights Table Food Pantry Reopens Amidst Pandemic

Veronica Kordmany  
Executive Editor

After the abrupt switch to online education back in March, many services at Queens College were forced to shut down operations, leaving many students in stressful situations. Homelessness, mental health issues and unemployment rates all skyrocketed as many struggled to find answers to their biggest challenges. However, after months of uncertainty, some parts of QC are resuming once more. The Rosenthal Library and the Knights Table Food Pantry are starting to become available again, offering accessible resources to students in need.

According to a press release written by Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Jennifer Jarvis, "... with the support of the Student Association [and]

the Health Services Center ... Queens College will hold [its] first "Turning the Table on Hunger," a food distribution program to feed Queens College and CUNY students." Jarvis reports that there will be three locations throughout the Queens borough — Flushing, Corona and Jamaica — where the food pantry will ship out food, medical supplies and flu shots. The College is also offering free transportation via shuttle buses.

The "Turning the Table on Hunger" event will take place every Tuesday in December, beginning on the 8th. All those in attendance will be required to RSVP in advance and must adhere to COVID-19 restrictions by wearing a mask and social distancing at all times. As of yet, the exact times and locations have not been announced.

The Knights Table Food Pantry was generously aided by a grant that came

from the Carrol and Milton Petrie Foundation. According to its website, [www.petrie.org](http://www.petrie.org), the foundation is a nonprofit organization, founded in 2004, that "... seeks to expand opportunities for individuals and families from low-income and marginalized communities by providing technical and financial support to innovative nonprofit organizations and colleges in New York City."

Thanks to the large sum of the grant, the food pantry is now able to provide \$25 grocery gift cards to all CUNY students in dire situations. The cards will be mailed to currently enrolled CUNY students who have completed the google application, which you can access here. It is imperative to note that only one CUNY student per household may apply to the program. The gift cards are only distributed to the individual once per academic year, and the system is based upon availability.

QC Academic Senate Chair and associate professor of library studies, Simone Yearwood, noted, "We sometimes forget the struggles of those less fortunate than us, especially during this pandemic," she said. "The food pantry will benefit the QC and CUNY Community by reducing food insecurity. It is important that we provide a means to assist those who need it most, especially those in the QC Family."

According to the official website, <https://knightstablefoodpantry.org/>, the new hours of operation are Monday - Thursday, 12 p.m. - 4 p.m., by appointment only. Prior to visitation, all students are asked to fill out a form available here; no answer will affect eligibility. To schedule a visitation appointment, click here. For more information, email [knightstable@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:knightstable@qc.cuny.edu).



# QC Board games and chess club keeps students in touch

Ralph Matamoros  
Writer

With a calm environment and hours of games planned each week, the Queens College (QC) Board Games (BG) and Chess club provides QC students with a way to stay in touch with each other while having fun.

“The actual answer is we wanted something to put on our resumes!” said President Zach Farrell about the formation of the BG and Chess club. Initially, Farrell and his friend Rani Milberg, the vice president of the club, formed the club in March of 2020 to have an extracurricular activity that reflected their interests in board games and chess. What

started as the two getting ten signatures in the library has grown into an active online club, with the two regularly hosting party games and chess meets each week.

As the semester stays online, the BG and Chess club stays connected through Discord, a messaging platform where users form communities based on shared interests. The BG and Chess club’s Discord server is used to announce what games are scheduled for weekly meetings, as well as to plan events. Currently, the club meets three times a week through Discord, with Thursday night being dedicated for party games.

Farrell hosts meetings for party games such as the Jackbox games collection, Among Us, and Skribbl.io, while Rani

holds meetings for chess and puzzles. “We play each other, and then I’ll analyze the games after,” Milberg said. “Sometimes I do lessons, and try to teach people the fundamentals of chess. You don’t have to go to the chess part if you don’t want to.”

“It’s important to note, by the way, that these aren’t mutually exclusive, you can do one or the other, you don’t have to do both.” Farrell adds.

Alongside regular meetings, the two have also hosted special events, including a chess tournament and a movie night over Thanksgiving break. There are also plans in the future to host another chess tournament, as well as a charity event. However, Farrell hasn’t decided if the club should wait another semester before hosting a charity event, or if the club will host it during the spring semester.

Farrell is also passionate about hosting Tabletop Simulator games during the spring semester after the game goes on sale for the holidays. “It really should be the ‘Party Games and Chess club right now, but ‘Board Games’ sounds better,” Farrell said. “I want to play actual board games soon.”

Despite the limitations placed on clubs

in light of the pandemic, QC students find a way to stay connected through the BG and Chess club. “I knew that all of my classes were going to be online, so I decided I wanted to find a club that would allow me to make friends,” says Nerissa Martinez, a freshman.

“I chose the Board Games and Chess club because they advertised that they play games such as Jackbox, which drew me in because I wanted a club where I could relax and be myself.” Saira Ahmed, a first year graduate student, joined the club as a way to meet other QC students. “The only real place to interact with students is online,” she said.

Since there wasn’t a chess team on campus prior to the formation of the BG and Chess club, the club attracted chess players of various skill levels. “I’m not really much of a chess player,” says Steven Maltz, a junior. “It’s something that I’m trying to learn and people in the club are friendly to beginners.” he added.

If any QC students are interested in joining the club, the Discord server link can be found on the BG and Chess club’s Instagram account: @qcbgc.

# CUNY’S Journalism School gives its creators program a modern makeover

Johnny Sullivan  
Editor/ Reporter

This past October, CUNY’s Newmark Graduate School of Journalism continued its decade long tradition of offering the Entrepreneurial Journalism Creators Program. Although the program is normally conducted in-person at the school’s New York City campus, for the first time, it is fully online.

Jeremy Caplan, director of teaching and learning at the Graduate School, cited flexibility and increased opportunity as significant factors in prompting the switch. Writing in a Medium blog post, Caplan acknowledged that “many

journalists are realizing they not only can — but want to — operate independently. They display a hunger for ... moving beyond the legacy employer and going it alone.” Caplan sought a program that was more reflective of what he calls “the media ecosystem” as it exists today, one in which more and more people are turning away from “legacy news organizations” in favor of more individualistic production alternatives. The revamped program, per the journalism school’s website, “allows for mostly asynchronous learning so that participants in any time-zone ... can proceed at their own pace.”

Many of the fundamental aspects of the original program have been retained. It still features an “all-star team” of exper-

perienced figures in the fields of journalism and media production who complement faculty from the journalism school. Its goals remain to guide aspiring entrepreneurs in the development of their brand and products. The program has simply adapted to adequately provide for students who would otherwise be unable to participate due to barriers of inequity.

In spite of the fact that many educational courses and programs have gone online due to COVID-19, Caplan clarified that the plan for a digital course was curated prior to the pandemic’s onset. He acknowledged the timeliness of the program’s online launch: “... the only role COVID-19 had was to reaffirm the value of offering a program that people could participate in without having to move to New York City.”

The benefits of an asynchronous, online program are readily apparent, even before the conclusion of the inaugural edition. Caplan revealed in a separate blog post that the online program received applications from 56 distinct countries, a definitive testament to its worldwide appeal. In the end, the program accepted candidates from 11 coun-

tries. 60 percent of this pool are people of color and 65 percent are women. These figures are in line with the journalism school’s website, with the stated goal of “more journalism entrepreneurs ... [that] come from and cater to under-represented communities.” In addition, the tuition for the new-look program is \$4,000 down from the previous cost of \$10,000, a change which can be attributed to the fact that, in general, fewer resources are needed for online learning.

Caplan’s goal for those in the program is that they leave “with new project momentum and a head start toward sustainability.” Journalism entrepreneurs, upon completion of the certificate, will have the tools necessary to establish their own niche in the industry as “armies of one” with “real-world, actionable insights” and personalized projects that are adapted to the changing landscape of news media.

Although the current program is already underway and concludes in January, those interested in participating are encouraged to apply for the Spring 2021 iteration.

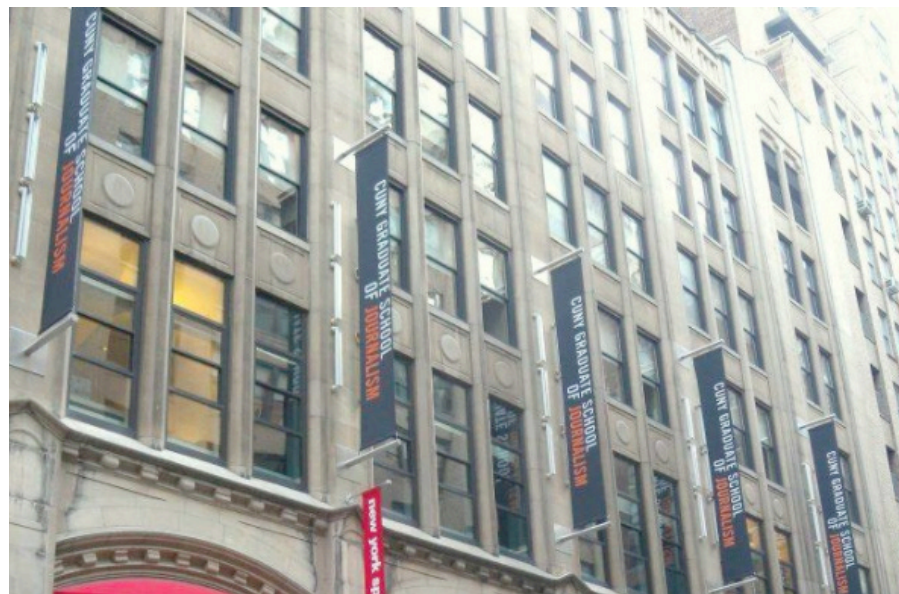


Photo: Nieman Labs





## With eyes to the future, Felicia Singh makes her bid for city council

**Johnny Sullivan**  
Editor/ Reporter

Those who go to cast their ballots in the NYC Primary Election next June, will see that one of the new names they see is that of District 32's Felicia Singh, an Ozone Park schoolteacher. Singh sat down with The Knight News for an exclusive interview in which she outlined her background and her campaign goals.

Singh, who started her campaign last year, cited education reform as one of her main reasons for running, saying she aims to ensure that students in her district and other districts "...have an equitable pathway to college." Singh served in the Peace Corps as an instructor in China, an experience that she credits with giving her a sense of the value of quality education. She noted that she has used this experience to inform her ideas about "how we serve our own people".

Singh is hardly a single-issue candidate, though. She spoke about confronting issues as diverse as utility reform — one of the most frequent complaints in District 32 is a lack of heat and hot water, per 311's official report — and women's empowerment, which is reflected in her track record working with women's advocacy group AmplifyHer. Of course, Singh and her community have also had to reckon with the COVID-19 pandemic which cropped up several months into her campaign. In combating the pandemic in District 32, she emphasized the importance of identifying "What people need first - more testing centers and COVID outreach in New York City's Housing Authority."

The daughter of immigrants, Singh draws great inspiration from the other young Congresswomen of color, speaking about their influence

on herself and her work, Singh explained, "We don't currently have South Asians in City Council... I think it's really important to coalition-build."

The fact that she would be the only South Asian member of the City Council is not lost on her District 32 hypothetical constituents. Sophomore Tanjinal Hoque, a Queens College computer science major of the class of 2023, is also a resident of Ozone Park, and he related the importance of Singh's candidacy: "As more South Asians step up in political office, they will make sure that we are represented where it matters and that the city pushes policies... for those who are feeling the fallout from the COVID-19 crisis and haven't been able to recover from it."

Singh, a Democrat, is running for a seat currently held by a Republican, Eric Ulrich, even though the district is overwhelmingly Democratic. She attributed this discrepancy to both "low primary vote turnout" and the fact that "people vote for who they're comfortable with". Though her appeals are primarily to the Democratic majority, Singh hopes to reach across the aisle by "building a resiliency plan for the people" and addressing issues that "impact our most marginalized first."

Why vote Felicia Singh for City Council? Concluding the interview, she answered the question with the affirmation that her campaign was about "empowering community members to be agents of change" and disrupting the status quo. "(It's hard to overstate) how important it is to have members of a community feel like they're stakeholders." Anyone interested in following or learning about Felicia's campaign and getting involved can visit her website at felicia2021.com or follow her Instagram @feliciasingh2021 and Twitter @FSingh\_NYC.

## Georgia's senate race: Taking a look to the past, the present and the future

**Avi Koenig**  
Writer

Currently going head-to-head in an intense runoff election are Georgia's incumbent Republican Party Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue. Loeffler and Perdue went up against Raphael Warnock and Jon Osoff, the Democratic nominees for the Senate, earlier in November. However, neither candidate received a majority of the votes, thus setting the stage for a special election on Jan. 5 next year. This special election will determine which party controls the Senate.

The stakes here are enormous. Riding on this special election is whether or not President-elect Joe Biden will have an easier time passing legislation that will be key to his proposed agenda.

As of right now, the U.S. Senate has 46 Democrats, two Independents and 50 Republicans. Given that the two Independents side with Democrats on almost all key issues, it is safe to chalk the total up to 48 Democrats. If the two Democratic candidates win Georgia in this election, the Senate's composition will be split evenly between Democrats and Republicans. However, given that the vice president (i.e. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris) is empowered by the U.S. Constitution to vote in the Senate when there is a tie, the Senate can be deemed as a Democratic majority under those circumstances.

The fact that it is Georgia of all states that is going to determine the balance of power in the federal government is astounding to many. For many years, Georgia had been a solidly red state, not having voted for a Democratic president since Bill Clinton's first term in 1993 and not having voted for a northern Democrat for president since John F. Kennedy in 1960. This begs the question, what changed such a solidly red state into one that has now gone blue?

In the opinion of Michael Krasner, longtime Queens College (QC) political science professor and co-director of the Taft Institute for Government — an independent not-for-profit organization that promotes political participation — two things in particular: "One, there's been an influx of Hispanic voters into the state and secondly, there's been a very effective campaign to register and get out to vote the black vote in Georgia ... led by ... [former Georgia gubernatorial candidate] Stacey Abrams ... and spurred lately by the Black Lives Matter movement formed after the death of Trayvon Martin and which saw such spectacular growth after the murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd."

This trend of increased minority voting, when combined with an alienation of suburban women from Donald Trump's rhetoric and policies, has changed the voting demographics of

Georgia enough to give the election to Joe Biden, as well as put the futures of both Senate incumbents in jeopardy. When considering the shifting demographics of Georgia, those changes alone cannot make a major impact on the electoral race unless those citizens, many of whom are first-time voters, can be turned out in significant numbers. With Georgia, this is particularly vital as the issue of turning out new voters has been threatened by voter suppression through the wide-spread accusations of voter fraud.

For Republicans, they have to contend with the impact of President Trump and much of their party (Senators David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler) repeatedly claiming that there was voter fraud in Georgia during the 2020 presidential election. For the Democrats, they have to contend with many voters, particularly minority voters, feeling as if their vote doesn't matter in light of Georgia's history of voter suppression. Georgia's voter suppression was most notable in the 2018 gubernatorial race where Republican Brian Kemp beat the aforementioned Stacey Abrams by 50,000 votes amidst allegations that Kemp — who was at the time Georgia's Secretary of State — engaged in voter suppression tactics in order to win the race. Due to Georgia's history, efforts to turn out more votes on both sides is more vital than ever.

This race is an interesting one but at the end of the day New Yorkers are wondering, how does this race in Georgia affect us? Both professor Krasner and QC professor of urban studies James Vacca, told The Knight News that there is a much stronger chance of meaningful legislation getting passed in some form with a Democratic, rather than a Republican, controlled Senate. There would be potentially a legislative gridlock until the 2022 midterm elections.

However, even if Democrats don't regain control of the Senate, all hope is not yet lost for Joe Biden's agenda. Two Republican Senators in particular, Susan Collins (R-ME) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), have proven to be moderates who may work (and vote) with the Democrats on certain legislation; though they would probably limit the scope of such legislation in the process if they agree to vote for it at all.

For people looking to get involved from New York in determining the direction of this country, it is quite easy. Simply contact the campaign of choice or one of the many voting registration organizations, like Fair Fight currently active in Georgia, and ask how to help. Most campaigns will ask for help texting potential voters and phone banking in people's spare time. The future direction of the government is in our hands. Let's make our voices heard.



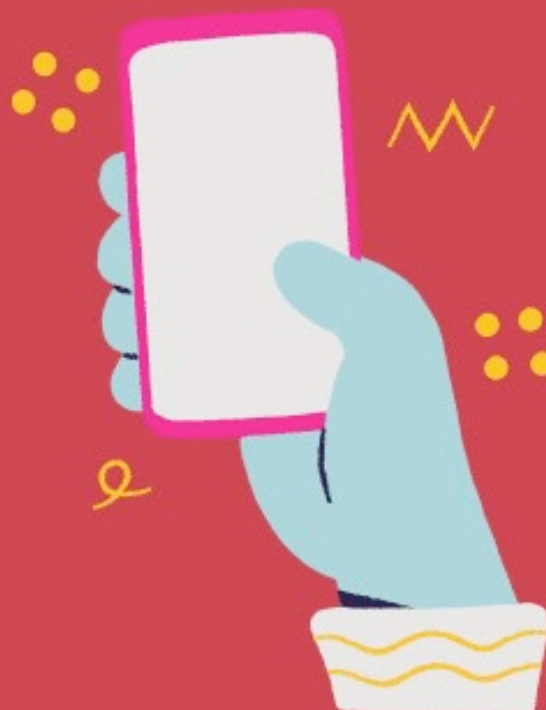
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# President Trump's voter fraud rampage

Chloe Sweeney  
Editor/ Reporter

The presidential Trump campaign continues to hold onto baseless claims of voter fraud post-presidential election, despite accepting the start of President-Elect Joe Biden's transition into the White House.

The talk and tweets of voter fraud coming from the President of the United States (POTUS) and his team are nothing new. Each day is another headline with a recount being requested or a lawsuit being filed by the Trump campaign. Yet, to say President Trump has been unsuccessful in his efforts, would be an understatement.

The President's team has already lost or withdrawn over 50 lawsuits post-election. One of the more well-known losses was in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Trump's legal team had sued Philadelphia after claiming that their poll watchers were too far away to supervise the ballot counting. The state's supreme court ultimately ruled against these accusations on Nov. 17. The court stated, "The Election Code does not specify minimum distance parameters for the location of such representatives."

The same day that Trump lost his Pennsylvania court case, Georgia had completed its manual recount of approximately 5 million ballots, which left Biden with a 0.3% lead. Georgia's governor certified the state's win for Biden on Nov. 20. POTUS, however, was convinced that a substantial amount of those ballots was cast illegally, through ballots like those of the deceased, for example.

He was quick to tweet, "The Governor of Georgia, and Secretary of State, refuse to let us look at signatures which would expose hundreds of thousands of illegal ballots..." However, there is no way to track mail-in ballots back to the voters after they've been removed from the envelope. Despite that, the Trump campaign still called for another recount, this time done by scanners. Biden was once again announced the winner of this automated recount on Dec. 4.

Alongside Georgia, the liberal Wisconsin counties of Milwaukee and Dane were also requested by the Trump campaign to perform a recount. The net result of the two recounts ultimately gave Biden an increase in his margin over Trump. It came as no surprise when the President tweeted that he would be filing a lawsuit against Wisconsin, but the state's supreme court refused to hear the case.

Still, the Trump campaign insists that over 221,000 absentee ballots were illegally cast in Milwaukee and Dane and need to be thrown out. Interesting-

ly enough, POTUS is only calling for throwing away ballots in the two counties that tremendously supported Biden.

It's not expected that there will be any considerable change after the recounts and lawsuits are said and done. Professor Lipsitz of the Queens College (QC) political science department commented, "The legal challenges were designed to cultivate the impression that the election was stolen among his followers as well as to raise money to retire some of his campaign debt. He will continue to claim that the election was stolen and use his followers' anger to fuel his movement and its takeover of the Republican Party."

In the midst of all this, Trump made a big move on Nov. 17, firing the director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Christopher Krebs. Krebs had called the 2020 election "the most secure in American history," which prompted his removal by POTUS.

Many government officials, both Democratic and Republican, were saddened by the news and found it to be very telling of Trump's character. U.S. Rep. Jim Langevin shared via email statement, "The president's... lashing out as those willing to speak the truth about his lies has gone from petulant to downright dangerous."

On Nov. 23, President Trump accepted the moving forward of the transitional period, granted by the General Services Administration (GSA). However, he also tweeted that same day, "What does GSA being allowed to preliminarily work with the Dems have to do with continuing to pursue our various cases on what will go down as the most corrupt election in American political history? We are moving full speed ahead..." Evidently, the fight is far from over.

When asked how she thinks this election period will affect future elections, Professor Lipsitz shared her concerns that "...wherever Republicans control state government, they will make voting less convenient and accessible to take out whatever small gains they might get from such tactics. For instance, they could eliminate early voting and no-excuse absentee ballots in states where they are currently available."

Evidently, there are citizens of this country who are concerned about losing the very things the United States was built on: democracy and the power of the people's voice. Going forward, it is imperative that both government officials and everyday Americans ensure that the democratic process is upheld in all future elections and that the people's voice always prevails.

# DACA recipients secure victory in latest legal fight

Alba Echeverry  
Writer

On Dec. 4, a federal judge in New York ordered the Trump administration to begin accepting new applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The following Monday, the federal government announced that they would resume reviewing new applications. Almost a month ago, that same judge declared that the Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Chad Wolf, was not authorized to implement new rules from last July that forbade new DACA applicants, and reduced the renewal period from two years to one year. This comes after four long years of court battles that have threatened the fate of the program that has provided more than 800,000 young immigrants with documentation that allows them to work and go to school.

DACA, was created by President Obama in 2012 through executive order. The extensive legal battle surrounding DACA started in September 2017 when the Trump administration attempted to rescind the program, arguing that the Obama administration bypassed Congress in issuing the executive order, thus making the program illegal. Trump's revocation of DACA was challenged in states like California, New York, and Maryland, to varying results. The battle made its way to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in November 2018 and kept the preliminary injunction put in place against the termination of DACA. Finally, in June 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear arguments in the case for DACA. This past June, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 5-4 decision that blocked Trump's attempt to rescind DACA, arguing that the way the Trump administration went about terminating the program was unlawful. The decision also ordered for new applications to be accepted

again. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals confirmed this decision in July.

The decision to keep DACA comes as a temporary relief for many young immigrants who rely on the program. However, as much as DACA is a protection, it is also not a definitive solution. Since it was created by an executive order, the program can be easily undone, as Queens College (QC) political science professor Michael Krasner explains: "...just as Biden can undo what Trump has done, Trump could undo what Obama did." This puts a program that hundreds of thousands of immigrants depend upon in jeopardy. As Diego Fernando Ortega, a DACA recipient who attends Queens College, puts it, "DACA's like a safety net solution for much larger problems US institutions face, but it targets one of the most vulnerable groups." It's important to remember that DACA does not provide a path to citizenship or even residency and to renew a permit alone costs \$495 every two years. Ortega describes Photo: NBC News it as "being

bound to pay that much money every few years just to reside in a country I'd been living in for over 13 years for free."

With that being said, the fragility of DACA was shown under the current administration. Almost 650,000 DACA recipients were left in a state of limbo as courts fought out the lawfulness of the termination of the program and the program itself. With a Biden administration immigrants are hopeful yet skeptical about what immigration reform would mean under the next administration, although President-Elect Biden has promised to reinstate DACA. Immigrants can't vote but their lives are directly impacted by the decisions made by the government.

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas will be hearing an argument in *Texas v. Nielsen* which argues



Photo: politico.com



# OP-ED: I was a poll worker for the 2020 Presidential Election

**Holden Velasco**  
Writer

Prior to this year, I've never even voted in any election in my life. However, in what turned out to be one of the controversial elections in United States history, I had cast my first ever ballot to make my voice heard. To me, however, that wasn't enough. That's why I decided to work at a local polling station on Election Day.

Getting the job was quite simple, as all I had to do was go online and fill out some basic information about myself. From there I got a call inquiring whether I was still interested, which I confirmed I was. However, it didn't really hit me that I was actually working the polls until I had to complete my mandatory training. As a poll coordinator, I had the task of directing voters to the right election district table. In addition, I had to maintain social distancing within the building and know how to fix jams on various machines. The training for this was perhaps

the longest three hours of my life. We watched video after video until it felt as if my eyes were going to bleed. The same boring voice went on for what seemed like days. Eventually, we got to sit up and actually get some hands-on experience clearing jams on various machines. This was exactly what I had in mind when I signed up for this. Not. Regardless of how "entertaining" the training session was, the information I learned was critical not only for my performance, but also for the preservation of our democracy.

A month passed before the big, bad Election Day finally came around. I woke up at five in the morning to ensure I had enough time to get to my location. Voting started at six am sharp, so there was no room for being late. I eventually made my way to the location, albeit still half asleep, and to my surprise everybody was already there. I was intimidated at first, but everyone there greeted me with open arms. Since I was new, I slowly made my way

through the opening tasks I had, awaiting my partner. It's worth noting that every polling location has Democratic and Republican counterparts for each position to ensure everything is done in a bipartisan manner and that there is no voter fraud.

However, it was already 5:50 a.m. and my partner still hadn't arrived. I had to rush through the rest of my tasks to ensure that I was at the front door ready to greet my fellow Americans. The first hour was a complete disaster, because of my aforementioned phantom partner, and two other election districts were missing a poll coordinator as well. Typically, poll workers look to the coordinator for guidance, but this was my first time and I didn't have an experienced partner to bounce ideas off of. Still, I, along with my election worker crew, managed to work through the rush. The first hour was by far the busiest and most stressful period of the whole day. From then on, it was just cleaning privacy booths, fixing machines,

and helping out voters as they came in.

I certainly faced a couple of challenges while on the job though. What do you do when someone who hasn't registered in their district wants to vote? What if a person moved? Do they have to register again under their new address or should you send them to their old polling location? With the guidance of one of my coworkers I was able to get through all of the nuances. Working with my coworkers was extremely weird in all honesty. It was like we were living together for the day. For 16 hours we all ate, conversed, and sometimes slept in the same space with complete strangers. It was definitely weird interacting and building relationships with these people knowing I probably would never see them again.

But, at the end of the day, the voters got to vote, and their voices were heard. That's all that matters. However, it's extremely upsetting seeing the President of the United States try to delegitimize the election because of alleged "voter fraud." It's quite disheartening, as it feels like he doesn't value the hard work us poll workers put in. Regardless, we did our jobs, and the nation's people were the true beneficiaries of it.

## Holidays in the era of COVID-19:

**Raveena Nabi**  
Writer

The second wave of COVID-19 came with an increase in death and hospitalizations, ripping apart a divided nation that was already scrambling to sweep away the rubble. Government officials have enacted color-coded restrictions to disable the rapid pace of the pandemic spreading. This of course, unfortunately means that festive annual celebrations, that generally attract large crowds, are at risk of being cancelled. Amongst them are Christmas Day, New Years Eve, and even Mardi Gras, which will take place in the year 2021.

The first sign of how COVID-19-restricted holidays will be conducted was initially experienced during Thanksgiving weekend. The iconic Macy's Day Parade, which has aired in New York City since 1924, was entirely virtual and aired as a TV-only event. The customary crowds that are always pictured on television, basking in the delight of seeing the festivities first-hand, were notably absent this year, in an effort to abide by

social-distancing regulations. Even the trademark balloons were not flown by human handlers, but instead were flown by special vehicles in order to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

The New York Times (NYT) recently reported that New Orleans, Louisiana, will not be hosting their annual Mardi Gras festivities in 2021. Daniel Victor, a London-based reporter for the New York Times, stated that "The city has solicited ideas for how to safely celebrate under the current coronavirus restrictions, but the typically joyous colorful affairs that attract seas of tourists will not go on as usual". New Orleans city officials made sure to respect the religious observations that transpire on Mardi Gras while abiding by the regulations. In a statement, it was said that "Mardi Gras... was not being canceled; there were still likely to be smaller events planned. But they would bear little resemblance to the enthusiastic bacchanals long associated with the city." The New York Times added that although the festivities would be drastically different next year, staples of the culture's celebrations, such as the



Photo: [discoveries.childrenshospital.org](https://discoveries.childrenshospital.org)

flock to Bourbon Street and Frenchmen Street for late-night parties, is still set to take place, albeit with capacity restrictions and other existing COVID-19 precautions that may exist at the time.

However, statistics from the Mardi Gras 2020 celebrations exhibit signs that Bourbon Street is a "hot spot for the virus", as reported by The New York Times. Dr. F. Brobson Lutz Jr., a former health director of New Orleans and a specialist in infectious dis-

ease, was quoted saying that it was "a perfect incubator at the perfect time."

Although it is essential to take precautions by planning these types of events ahead of time, the bitter truth is that there is only so much that can be done to keep the peace. Efforts to control what has not yet transpired are arguably useless, although there is some use in preparing for any type of situation. Authorities urge all citizens to wear a mask in public, remain six feet apart from each

# After months of anticipation, a COVID-19 vaccine has been created

**Veronica Kordmany**  
Executive Editor

It seems like a lifetime ago when a world without COVID-19, or just coronavirus, existed. On Jan. 3, 2020, China notified the World Health Organization (WHO) about the outbreak, and by Feb. 10, the U.S. confirmed its 13th case. The very next day, the international number of confirmed deaths surpassed 1,000. As of Dec. 3, 64.7 million cases have been reported globally.

After a year of anticipation, several health care companies have finally surged forward with a COVID-19 vaccine, seeking emergency approval from both the U.S. and the U.K..

After getting a green light from the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), both Moderna and Pfizer have boasted near-perfect success rates. According to a Pfizer press release, dated Nov. 9, the study's results were "... more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 in participants without evidence of prior SARS-CoV-2 infection in the first interim efficacy analysis."

According to the Center for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC), to understand how the vaccine works, one must first learn how the virus works. There are three components to the infection: "Macrophages," which are white blood cells that swallow up and digest germs and dead or dying cells; "B-lymphocytes," which are defensive white blood cells that produce antibodies to fight off the remaining bits of the virus left behind by the macrophages; and "T-lymphocytes," which are another type of defensive white blood cell that attack cells in the body that have already been infected. In every vaccine, there are weakened T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes — dead cells that are injected so that the body remembers how to fight off that particular infection.

The CDC has said that "The first shot starts building protection. A second shot a few weeks later is needed to get the most protection the vaccine has to offer."

On Dec. 2, the U.K. became the first country to approve the COVID-19 vaccine. It is estimated that the vaccine will begin to be administered a week later. On Dec. 12, the U.S. followed suit and approved the COVID-19 vaccine as well.

The National Institute of Allergy and

Infectious Diseases (NIAID) director, Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., was initially skeptical about the speed of the process, sharing in a CBS interview that he believed that the U.K. had rushed to approve the vaccine. After facing backlash, however, he pedaled back and apologized for his initial comments: "There really has been a misunderstanding, and for that I'm sorry, and I apologize for that," he said. "I do have great faith in both the scientific community and the regulatory community in the U.K.."

According to an article published in *The New York Times*, the main difference between the U.K. and the U.S., in regards to vaccine approval, is that while American regulators analyze raw data gathered from clinical trials, British regulators rely more on companies' analyses of their own data, rather than conducting independent government research.

Queens College's biology department also weighed in on the matter. Professor Daniel Weinstein, the dean of math and natural sciences, commented that "... my understanding is that there has not been much evidence for the sorts of mutations — in the region

of the virus that is being targeted by most of the vaccines in the pipeline — that would render the vaccines useless."

Biology professor Esther Muehlbauer, and her son Dr. Stefan Muehlbauer, the director of emergency medicine and an infectious disease specialist at St. Francis Hospital, also shed some light on the matter: "[We] feel very confident in saying, based on publicly released data, that mRNA vaccines are very safe," they shared. "Based on the mechanism by which mRNA vaccines work — there is no reason they should pose a risk to human health. There is still further work being done before final approval — but [we] urge everyone who is eligible for the COVID vaccine to get vaccinated under the Emergency Use Authorization when [the vaccine becomes] available."

The bitter pill to swallow is that there is still much unknown about COVID-19. The vaccine has not been released for public consumption yet, so whether it safely and effectively works across a large population cannot be determined immediately — though early efficacy studies are optimistic. The U.S. government has shared, despite the vaccine's prolonged release, that vaccination administration costs will be covered by Medicaid, so the cost of administration is not expected to be too high.

## Disabled people taken off ventilators to give other patients a better chance at life

**Jessica Alexander**  
Writer

Disabled people have faced discrimination in the healthcare system for ages, and with COVID-19 at its peak, many individuals within the disabled community are feeling more marginalized than ever before. Questions of general treatment-prioritization have been looming over hospitals for months now, and disabled people have suffered the consequences of it.

With these questions in mind, the disabled community is concerned that their needs will not be met during the pandemic. Ever since COVID-19 hit, triage policies have changed in many hospitals. Triage policies are when health care workers sort patients based on patients' immediate needs and chance of survival. Many of these new policies exclude people based on "their intellectual or developmental capacity, explicitly or implicitly assessing a person's quality of life,

assuming long-term survival thus disadvantaging people with disabilities, failing to incorporate modifications in getting treatment like longer times on ventilators for those who need it, and the reallocation of ventilators from chronic ventilator users to other patients," according to the American Bar Association (ABA).

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are all laws that were implemented to ensure that no one is prevented from receiving adequate access to health care. Yet, many disability advocacy groups like the Center for Public Representation (CPR), The Arc of the United States and the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) filed complaints with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in March 2020 when these new triage policies were first released. Since then, states like Washington, Alabama, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Utah, Oklahoma, North Carolina,

Oregon, and New York have all claimed that these policies are in violation of the ACA, ADA and the Rehabilitation Act.

In an article published by *The Progressive*, reporters cite how disabled individuals and their families keep hearing the phrase "most vulnerable," yet they know that "most vulnerable" does not pertain to those with disabilities. The article cites how a quadriplegic man and his wife were told bluntly that "he would not be put on a respirator because 'as of right now, his quality of life — he doesn't have much of one.'"

The Knight News asked CUNY Queens College (QC) students about their opinion on the matter. A senior QC student, who wished to remain anonymous, offered a response: "Well COVID has laid out a lot of things for everyone to see. Ableism is really coming out. I work with a lot of kids and now it's moved online. So anyone with special needs is working very hard to stay afloat in school. My nephew has pretty

significant special needs and we were worried he would regress without his routine and in-person school. Seeing as students in school are slipping through the cracks in online school it doesn't surprise me that the health care system isn't looking out for disabled people.

Senior Tiffany Zorrilla, a sociology and English major at CUNY Hunter College, explained that, "It's been awful especially having a cognitive disability for functioning — routine and therapy has been key to keeping myself stabilized. In a lot of ways, the pandemic reshaped how I experience academia and what I am actually motivated / drawn to regarding career prospects. Been dealing with mental illness — I'm fortunate enough to have the resources I need. It's a weird space to be in."

COVID-19 has impacted everyone regardless of health status, and the disabled community fears that because of this, they will continue to be overlooked by the health care system.



# Gray wolves to return to the Rockies

Kayleigh Kearnan  
Writer

Gray wolves are often regarded as a popular predator in Colorado but have since become endangered. In the November 2020 general election, voters have decided to give gray wolves the opportunity to reclaim territory in Colorado. The narrowly passed proposition (#114) gives Colorado Parks and Wildlife a mandate to introduce and establish a population of gray wolves to the western part of the state by 2023. The margin was narrow: 51% of voters voted in favor of the initiative and 49% voted against it. The majority of the support for the initiative was concentrated in the urban areas to the east of the Rocky Mountains, including the Denver metro area.

The urban support for the proposition was in stark contrast to overwhelming opposition by rural residents west of the continental divide that will actually interface with the wolves. Ranchers opposed the reintroduction due to concerns that the wolves will harm their livestock populations, despite the state government offering to reimburse any losses. Colorado hunters also opposed the measure, citing concerns of the wolves potentially harming wildlife primarily sought after for hunting (e.g. elk).

Proponents of the proposition expect to see the wolves restore ecological balance in the state. A similar reintroduction was carried out in Yellowstone National Park in 1995 and since has led to increased resilience and stability in resident elk populations, caused a rebound in beaver populations, and even increased the health of willow trees.

For skeptics of the newly approved measure, it's worth recognizing the ecological context behind it. Gray wolves are apex predators, meaning they occupy the top of the food web and do not have any natural predators themselves. Apex predators help to maintain eco-

logical balance in a food web by keeping smaller predator and prey populations in check. For example, the Yellowstone wolves increased the resilience of local elk populations by hunting sick and elderly elk, resulting in decreased competition among healthy elk for food resources and greater overall population fitness.

Joel Berger, a wildlife ecologist featured in National Geographic, hopes that the reintroduction of gray wolves to Colorado will ultimately create a continuous population of gray wolves from Mexico to Canada, which would be a genetic boon to the heavily inbred and isolated Mexican gray wolf populations in the southwest. It remains to be seen how successful the reintroduction program will be and whether we can expect such a continuous population; a major difference between the Yellowstone reintroduction program and proposition 114 is that the planned introduction region in Colorado is more densely populated by humans than that of Yellowstone.

The Knight News spoke to Queens College (QC) biology professor and ecology expert Professor John Waldman, who explained that he does not see proximity of wolves to humans as an inherent problem, but notes that anti-wolf individuals engaging in "poisoning or trapping or shooting" is a possibility to be aware of.

Anti-wolfers aside, the complicating factor in the rollout of proposition 114 is the delisting of gray wolves as an endangered species by the federal government. The United States Secretary of the Interior, David Bernhardt, released a statement on Oct. 29 stating that, "The gray wolf has exceeded all conservation goals for recovery". There are currently over 6,000 wolves in the lower 48 states, but many environmental groups oppose the removal of endangered species protections and some, including the Sierra Club, intend to sue the federal government over the decision. The outcome of the decision will affect whether the gray wolf introduction program needs the approval of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If the species is relisted, the program will require a federal permit. If it is not, the program can proceed under state supervision alone.

Delisting gray wolves as an endangered species may also affect the grants that the program is eligible for. Administrative complexities aside, the voters have spoken: they welcome the gray wolves home.

# Harry Styles: The first solo male featured on the cover of Vogue

Victoria Young  
Editor/ Reporter

For the first time in the magazine's 108-year-long history, Vogue debuted its first ever solo male to be displayed on its cover this past November. The issue features singer-songwriter and fashion icon, Harry Styles.

Styles, 26, took his first step into the spotlight at age 16 when he auditioned to be on The X-Factor UK. He, along with four other boys, was put into a boy band called One Direction, which turned out to be a huge success. One Direction toured all over the world for roughly five years straight, releasing five studio albums and selling 70 million records worldwide. In 2015, the band decided to go on a 'brief' hiatus and went their separate ways, but Styles wasted no time at all. Since the split, Styles has made his solo debut as a musical artist and actor. In the past five years, he has released two studio albums, performed in front of nearly 800,000 people, starred in the film "Dunkirk" and has even begun shooting the psychological thriller, "Don't Worry Darling", in which he plays a main role.

In an interview with Vogue, Styles opened up about his experience quarantining with friends, his thoughts about karma and the evolution of his fashion and music. Like many of us, Styles admitted to having a hard time being alone in the beginning of the quarantine. He decided shortly, only days after it began, that he would quarantine with a small pod of friends. He claims the experience has been a "really good lesson" in what makes him happy. Meditation has also played an important role in his learning to be more present, and he believes that it also "brings a stillness that has been really beneficial, I think, for my mental health."

The interview briefly segues into one of the many impactful moments of the year, the Black Lives Matter movement, that pushed Styles towards thinking that it's time "for opening up and learning and listening". "I've been trying to read and educate myself so that in 20 years I'm still doing the right things and taking the right steps," said the singer. "I believe in karma, and I think it's just a time right now where we could use a little more kindness and empathy and patience with people, be a little more

prepared to listen and grow."

Musically, the artist believes his second album, *Fine Line* (2019), captures his growth and evolution as an artist. *Fine Line*, which sold 393,000 records in its debut week, was extremely "joyous" and freeing for the artist to write, and the experience seemed to open up quite a few doors for Styles who was still trying to figure out his sound. When discussing the sound of his debut, self-titled album, he compares it to sounding like he was "bowling with the bumpers up" which is certainly not the way he feels about his most recent music release. The style in both the fashion and music that Styles has taken to over the years has turned quite a few heads. Silky pink blouses and high waisted white trousers has become something of a uniform amongst Styles and his loyal followers, much like the single drop earring he wore to the 2019 Met Gala. Styles' fashion has taken quite a turn for the dramatic, going from wearing jeans and t-shirts for the first five years of his career to now wearing sheer Gucci blouses and high-heeled boots.

Styles is pictured on the Vogue cover wearing a blue flowy dress with black lace trim designed by Gucci's Alessandro Michele paired with a black tuxedo jacket. The look triggered a series of responses from millions around the world, both supportive and negative. Candace Owens, a conservative political activist, took to Twitter to tweet: "Bring back manly men" in response to Styles' Vogue cover. Owens received a ton of backlash from Styles' supporters and people within the fashion industry. Men's fashion has been progressing as the invisible barriers surrounding 'men's' and 'women's' clothing have begun to be broken. Many are beginning to completely erase the genders attached to clothing. For example, women wearing suits and men wearing dresses or skirts. Styles, as a form of comeback to Owens, posted a photo of himself in a pastel blue suit and frilly shirt with the caption, "Bring back manly men."

Harry Styles has remained one of the driving forces toward the evolution of men's fashion while sporting pastel painted nails and frilled blouses. Fashion has no boundaries and there seems to be no pause in the steps being taken toward the normalization of gendered clothing erasure.



Photo: dazeddigital.com



# Queens native Kim Ng becomes first female general manager in North American history

Holden Velasco  
Writer

The Miami Marlins have hired Queens native Kim Ng as their new general manager. This hiring makes Ng the first female general manager in Major League Baseball (MLB) history. Also, she is the first female hired to fill a general manager role in any of the professional men's sports teams across North American major leagues, including the MLB, National Basketball Association (NBA), National Football League (NFL), and National Hockey League (NHL). She is also the second person of Asian descent in MLB history to lead an operations department. Ng was the senior vice president of baseball operations in the commissioner's office since 2011 before this hiring, as she reported directly to Joe Torre, the Office of the Commissioner's primary liaison. She has been the highest-ranking Asian-American female in baseball since taking that job. She has also been the assistant general manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Yankees. During her run with both teams, she saw eight postseason appearances, six league championship appearances, and three World Series victories. She was more than qualified for the position to say the least. "This challenge is

one I don't take lightly. When I got into this business, it seemed unlikely a woman would lead a Major League team, but I am dogged in the pursuit of my goals," Ng stated after the hiring went public. "My goal is now to bring Championship baseball to Miami. I am both humbled and eager to continue building the winning culture our fans expect and deserve."

Ng's first hands-on experience in the MLB began in 1991 when she was hired as an intern for the Chicago White Sox. She handled 'special projects' and salary arbitration cases. She was impressive enough to catch the eye of former New York Yankees general manager Brian Cashman. So much so that he offered her the assistant general manager position with New York in 1998, making her the youngest assistant general manager in the league and one of only four women to hold the position. From there on she continued to impress the league with her complex understanding of rules, procedures, and other nitty-gritty aspects of the game.

Ng spent most of her childhood in our tri-state area of Queens, where her family (coincidentally enough) became Yankees fans. She attended Public School 173 in Fresh Meadows, Queens, and she often enjoyed playing stickball in the streets with friends and used whatever materials they had so they could enjoy the game.



Photo: Rob Leiter/MLB Photos via Getty Images

Ng's family then moved out to Glen Cove on Long Island, and it was here where she played in her first organized softball league. Before her high school years began, the family moved again, this time to Ridgewood, New Jersey, where she played softball and tennis for the Ridgewood High School Rebels. She eventually attended the University of Chicago, where she played four years of Division III softball. She was named team captain and ultimately team MVP and was pres-

ident of the Women's Athletic Association during the 1989-90 academic year.

As a prominent figure of a major sports franchise, Ng will serve as a beacon of hope to other minorities looking to break onto the sports scene, just as tennis stars Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova did for Ng through their tennis greatness. Both fought for gender equality in sports and, in Ng's words, Navratilova "changed the idea of what it looked like to be a female athlete." In all likelihood, Ng will be Navratilova to somebody else one day.

## The 2020 NBA Draft: Emotion, determination, and development

Lorenzo Llanera  
Writer

Seeing how the National Basketball Association (NBA) made enormous strides to finish its 2019-20 season with zero COVID-19 cases down in the bubble, it was no surprise that draft night would be a similar experience. This year's draft, originally scheduled to be held at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn in late June, was instead a virtually live streamed event in November conducted by commissioner Adam Silver.

The 2019 Draft included star-studded names like Zion Williamson, Ja Morant and RJ Barrett. 2020's draft pool looked a bit more underwhelming in comparison, with no true leader of the pack.

Despite rumored entertainment of trade offers for the No. 1 pick, the Minnesota Timberwolves wound up standing pat to select wing Anthony Edwards out of the University of Georgia. Only 19 years of age, Edwards displayed impressive finishing abilities around the

basket. Edwards also displayed his elite court vision with his passes from the lane. The biggest question about Edwards' game comes from his ability to shoot from outside the arc; he hasn't shown any rhythmic consistency in his jumper and his stats back that up. With the Bulldogs, Edwards only hit 29 percent of his 3-pointers. Edwards will have to prove to opposing teams that he can be a threat from downtown to help All-Star Timberwolves Karl-Anthony Towns and D'Angelo Russell to push the Wolves into the playoffs for the first time since 2018.

An unfortunate season for the Golden State Warriors left them with the worst record in the NBA at 15-50, netting them the No. 2 overall pick. With players Klay Thompson and then Steph Curry both enduring season-ending injuries, the noise in the Bay Area has finally dwindled. It was the Warriors' chance to bounce back to championship contention with a high-upside talent. Lacking in size, the Warriors beefed up their frontcourt by selecting James Wiseman out of the University of Memphis. The Tigers' cen-

ter displayed elite rim-running abilities despite only playing three games before being suspended by the National College Athletic Association for violations. With Thompson's Achilles tear that will keep him out for the upcoming 2020-21 season, many analysts have counted the Warriors out of playoff contention. This unfortunate circumstance may accelerate Wiseman's development to help get Golden State back atop the league standings.

The No. 3 pick was a logical one for the Charlotte Hornets. Despite a non-traditional path to the NBA that included dropping out of high school to play overseas, many believe Lamelo Ball's size and playmaking ability as a point guard give him the chance to be the best player in the draft.

The New York Knicks used the number eight pick of the draft to select forward Obi Toppin from the University of Dayton. The Brooklyn native had an emotional entry into the NBA, stating his tears of joy to be a result of appreciation and motivation to play for his hometown city. Toppin was regarded as one of the

more exciting players in the draft, where his career with the Flyers included elite athleticism and high soaring dunks. ESPN's Stephen A. Smith referred to him as a skywalker, having the most amount of dunks in the NCAA this past season. Despite his elite athleticism, many analysts are skeptical to praise such an attribute from a 22-year-old. The extra three years of development should allow a young college player to use more physicality in a now seemingly one-and-done league.

For every player selected in the draft, their entry into the league stands out from those who came before them. With less than two months between the draft and the start of the new season, they have little time to uproot their lives and join their new franchise. They only have so many opportunities to acclimate themselves to their new surroundings both on and off the court. Luckily for us basketball fanatics, we'll get to see just how much that affects their play when the season begins on Dec. 22.



# "The Mandalorian": TV show review

Ralph Matamoros  
Writer

On Oct. 30, the second season of "The Mandalorian" was released on Disney+. The show follows the Mandalorian, a bounty hunter, as he travels the galaxy with The Child, a 50-year-old alien baby. Even if one hasn't seen the "Star Wars" movies, "The Mandalorian" is still an enjoyable show because of its writing, visual effects and costuming.

"The Mandalorian" is set after the events of the original "Star Wars" trilogy, but it does a good job of telling its own story exclusive from the events of the "Star Wars" franchise. The second season, like the first season, follows the Mandalorian as he completes bounty missions, with an overarching main-quest that unites all the episodes in the season. Because of this structure, coupled with some exposition in the form of dialogue, "The

Mandalorian" is an easy watch. Even though the "Star Wars" franchise is sci-fi, "The Mandalorian" resembles a western, since viewers tune in to see what adventure the protagonist goes on each week.

Part of the show's appeal as a space western is the use of visual effects through cinematography. Many of the shots throughout the show are wide shots of the Mandalorian traveling through desert landscapes. They highlight the Mandalorian's life of solitude, showing that it is him versus the world as he tries to keep The Child safe. Wide shots are also used to show the scale of creatures and other battles, which, for example, is used in the season premiere when the Mandalorian has to fight a krayt dragon. This particular use of cinematography gives the dragon a sense of scale within the scene.

The use of practical visual effects also blends seamlessly into the show, most notably the use of LED walls on set. Ac-

ording to Indiewire, instead of using green screens or blue screens, Director Jon Favreau opted to use large LED walls with backdrops broadcasted onto them. While this is a relatively new alternative to green screens, the actors felt as if they were in a physical setting when they were acting in front of the LED walls, something that is not possible and, at times, off-putting when using green screens. Not only were practical effects used with the LED walls, but they were also used for The Child. The Child is actually a puppet built for the show; the benefit of this being the actors had something that they could physically interact with on set rather than a post-production CGI character.

Visual effects help to make the world of "The Mandalorian" feel alive, and the costuming of the show helps to flesh out characters. Specifically the armor the Mandalorian wears is appealing because it distinguishes him from the other char-

acters. In the season one finale the Mandalorian is gifted a jetpack by the Armorer. Instead of having straps or a harness, the jetpack clips into the Mandalorian's armor, signifying that he is the only one who is capable enough to fight as a Mandalorian. Similarly, a major belief of the Mandalorian people is that they and they alone may wear their armor. The Mandalorian is willing to fight anyone to keep his armor. The character's strict adherence to his beliefs highlights his inability to form close relationships with others. His treatment of this armor helps build the character arc of his relations with other characters throughout the show.

If you are a fan of "Star Wars", action films or sci-fi, I recommend you check out "The Mandalorian". Currently, season one and the first five episodes of season two are on the streaming service Disney+.

Photo: Disney Plus

