

THE COMMUNICATOR

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Dedicated to Informative Excellence

Issue 4 Spring 2012

The Nursing Club Is on the Move

By Rochelle Goodlitt and Nadeen Lindsay-Brown

As the Bronx Community College (BCC) Nursing Club, our goal each semester since our inception has been to promote health and wellness within the BCC community. This semester we have chosen to vigorously chase this goal and also to attempt to make a tangible impact on the wellbeing of the people of the South Bronx and our global community. After all, the nursing club is composed primarily of soon-to-be nurses who by virtue of their career ambitions are mandated with the protection, promotion and optimization of health for all world populations.

We started out by deepening the connections among our members. On this campus, the nursing program is recognized as rigorous, challenging and competent at turning out some of the best nurses this side of the equator. Sadly, there is also a high attrition rate within the department with anecdotal reports suggesting that to attempt the registered nursing program here at BCC is to attempt academic suicide. Against this background, the nursing club has instituted a mentoring program to pair junior nursing students with senior nursing students so that the seniors can provide advice and guidance out of their own experiences and help to motivate the juniors to stick with the program, hopefully improving their chances of becoming BCC nursing graduates. This program, titled, "NUR-Toring" to signify the combination of the concepts of *nursing*, *nurturing* and *tutoring*, is only in its first semester so it is far too early to say whether this program will have a lasting impact on the progression of the students who have been involved in it. We expect great results, as approximately 50 students have asked to participate within this semester alone.

As a club we exist, not only to help our members but also the wider college community. We see the 40th Annual Spring Health Fair as a

wonderful opportunity to do so. At this health fair we will offer screening for one of the main indicators of poor cardiovascular health, high blood pressure (hypertension). In addition, we will be providing much needed health teaching based on individual results. By combining our detection and our expert teaching on the topic of hypertension we intend to make a positive impact on the health of the college community. Let's face it, it is not enough to tell someone that they have a problem, it is much better to tell them they have that problem and provide them with resources to help solve it.

On September 4, 2012 BCC will become a smoke-free campus. The Nursing Club strongly supports this initiative, as there is well-documented evidence that smoking negatively affects both smokers and non-smokers. We are collaborating with the BCC Smoke-free Taskforce to increase awareness of this change on campus and also to help the smoking members of our community to locate the resources they will need to help them live tobacco-free lives.

Within the communities surrounding the college, many residents lack adequate access to the basic human needs of food, clothing and shelter. Healthcare is even more difficult for them to obtain. With this in mind, the nursing club in collaboration with the Relief Bus service, offered hypertension screening to members of the community on April 19, 2012. The 5 members of the team (from left to right: Esther Ogunloye, Fatim Camara, Nadeen Lindsay-Brown, Rochelle Goodlitt and Frances Jah) are photographed in front one of the modified school buses out of which the Relief Bus organization has served food to the less fortunate for over 20 years. There were so many people in need of more specialized healthcare than we could

provide but we still made a difference and have made the commitment to go again.

Our club has also been active on the international scene. Six senior nursing students, also members of the Nursing Club, joined forces with the Organization for International Development (OID) for a five-day medical humanitarian mission trip to Haiti. Three professors from the Department of Nursing and Allied Health, one of whom is recently retired, were also in attendance. Photographed standing from left to right are: Dr. Marcia Jones, Prof. Marva Watford (retired), Norma Fernandez, Diana Orsini, Melissa Sun, Rose-Marie Leachman-Russ, Nadeen Lindsay (Club President), Chantal Rivera (Club Vice-President), and Dr. Virgena Bernard. Sitting in front, are four first year nursing students from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The members handed out hygiene kits, and donated stethoscopes of their own and those collected from other club members, to the nursing students in Haiti. They assisted with providing medical screening and dental care to hundreds of Haitians living in "tent cities" who remain in desperate need, two years after the earthquake. The BCC Nursing Club students were humbled by their experiences and are proud to be called advocates for health!

So you see, the BCC Nursing Club is on the move and we have no intention of slowing down. If you are interested in being a part of a vibrant, motivated group of people who care about the wellbeing of their community then the BCC Nursing Club is for you. No, you don't have to be a nursing or pre-nursing student to become a member, so look out for our announcements and join us. Together we will continue to promote health and wellness at BCC and around the world.

Rochelle Goodlitt is Secretary of the BCC Nursing Club and Nadeen Lindsay-Brown is President of the BCC Nursing Club.

BCC's Biology Club

By Roy Nuñez

In the short time I have been president of the Biology Club, my officers and I have made it our responsibility to ensure that every time a student attends our club meetings, he or she learns a valuable lesson that will assist them in their academic journey. The Biology Club focuses on issues pertaining to living organisms--cells, plants, animals and human life forms--and matter that affects these living organisms, such as bacteria, diseases, viruses and possible treatment to counteract these parasitic elements. And ascertaining such information will on occasion take us beyond our comfort zone to places such as museums, science fairs and information seminars that stimulate our thought processes.

On April 5, BCC hosted a science fair and the Biology Club presented research elucidating a potential H.I.V. cure, originally reported by *The Scientific American*. On April 15th, the Biology Club and the Math and Computer Science Club went on a class trip to the Bodies and Dialog in the Dark exhibitions at South Street Seaport. Our group of 34 students was accompanied by Dr. Charles Maliti, the chair of BCC's biology department, who explained in detail the anatomy and physiology of the human body as we walked through the Bodies exhibition, further enriching the experience for the students. We were also accompanied by Jameelah Muhammed, the [former] Community Program Coordinator at the Center for Sustainable Energy, who has worked with the Biology Club on multiple projects, including a mentor program with high school students from Banana Kelly High School.

At the exhibition, there were different sections that dealt with the various parts of the body (the organs), and the diseases and conditions that are likely to affect these organs, such as cancer that affects the lungs, disorders that cause liver inflammation and kidney stones. The room showing the developmental stages of the fetus was impressive, simply because of the intricacy and attention to detailed put into this section. I thought the structure of muscles and skeletal frame was a nice bit of humor to the overall trip. Also, it was fascinating how they copied with precision the various systems in the body such as the circulatory system and reproductive system. There is an overview of how the different systems function, as well

as several specimens showing some type of pathology that can harm or distort that particular system.

The highlight of this trip was entering the room of perfectly displayed blood vessels within the human anatomy. The overall experience was good and the presentation showed the human body from a new perspective and raised awareness of the harmful pathogens and diseases that can potentially take over any anatomical system and ultimately destroy the body. The only downside to this exhibition was the limited profile of the brain parts and nerve disorders. It would have left a greater impact had these topics been expounded upon.

Another event the Biology Club took part in was Earth Day. Seven of our members selflessly volunteered in coordinating the Earth Day event on April 19th, which promoted green sustainability and environmental awareness on campus. This event encouraged curiosity among the campus community that attended the event. It was exciting to see how interested and stimulated the college students were after obtaining information from the various booths about ways of going green. The event sizzled with music from the DJ and drew a large crowd. The day ended quietly with the few evening visitors. A continuation of Earth Day followed for April 21-22, 2012 at the Jacob Javits Center. A few students attended the Earth Day festival at the Center, where they were exposed to various organizations that attributed to environmental awareness.

The Gardening Club has graciously allowed us to use a section of the garden to cultivate produce, like herbs, fruits and vegetables, in an attempt to foster healthier eating and healthy dieting. Small alterations in our diets promote better health. For instance, increasing vegetable intake increases iron in the blood, and serves as fiber for the body. Herbs stimulate metabolic reactions that boost the immune system to aid in the fight against germs and pathogens. These are but a few of the many advantages small changes make, that when practiced, encourages proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle habits.

Also, by working with other clubs and organizations on campus, we have encouraged an appetite for learning about issues spanning from cultural, social



and environmental aspects of our college society and the community at large.

Our aim is to educate BCC students about the many resources on campus available to them, which afford numerous benefits, such as scholarships, grants and internships that they would not otherwise be aware of. We intend to gather and retrieve these resources as a team, package and present them to our club members, with the hope of enriching our students' experience and facilitate growth.

"Our mission is to enrich the academic experience for our BCC students. We intend to promote diversity in student culture and to help broaden our team's view of the world. Our conviction is to satiate their thirst for biology and the supporting sciences."

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The Communicator urges students to submit articles and editorials to the newspaper.

We also encourage students to respond to the articles and editorials found in this newspaper.

The views expressed in by-lined articles and in published letters are solely those of the writer, and they do not necessarily represent the view of *The Communicator*.

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We reserve the right to refuse publication to any article or letter due to space considerations as well as those articles or letters deemed inappropriate because of profane language, non-verification problems, or slander.

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Notes:

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JPEGs must be submitted as email attachments and should not be embedded in the Word copy.

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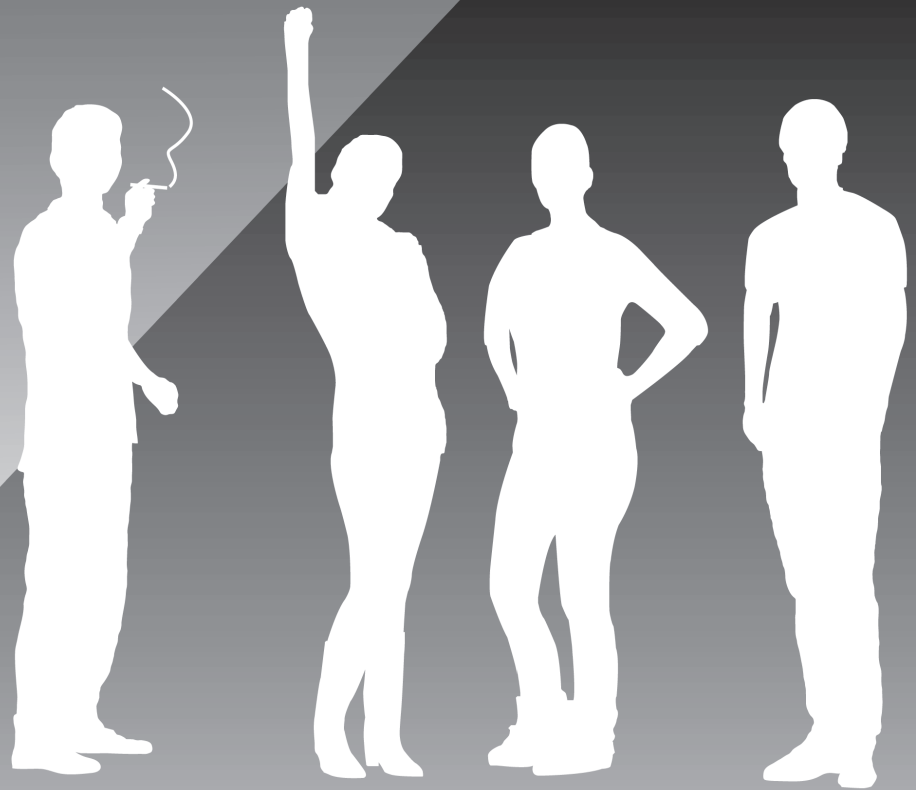
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Campus News

CUNY Adjuncts: Supporting the System that Neglects Them

By Charlotte Witherspoon

Academia is a dog-eat-dog world. A cliché, yes, but with several PhDs competing for every single job on the market, the landscape has gotten significantly drearier. Rather than getting tenure-track positions upon graduation, many PhDs have to turn to adjuncting in order to supplement their incomes and gain teaching experience while waiting for full-time positions. Adjuncts are not just PhDs; they are graduate students, professionals who enjoy teaching. Far from rare, CUNY's faculty workforce is comprised of more than 60% adjunct labor. Simply said, without adjuncts, we couldn't have a CUNY. Despite being the driving force behind CUNY, adjuncts are disgruntled. They do not always earn a fitting wage and their rights are being stripped away by the system. This is not just a CUNY problem, but one that permeates through academia.

Because the market for professional academics has been glutted in recent years, universities have been more powerful than ever before. It is more economical to replace a retired tenured professor with two or more adjuncts than with one full-time. The unprecedented number of PhDs coupled with the recent economic downturn has led to a deterioration of adjuncts rights. The market is so flooded with people willing to do work in compromised conditions that the adjunct body does not hold the bargaining power that it once could have.

There is a stirring in the adjunct community, both outside CUNY and within. On BCC's campus, adjunct Adam Tripp has been attempting to organize the adjunct community. The Professional Staff Congress (PSC) has mounted a campaign to win adjunct health insurance. Professors and students alike wear buttons asking CUNY

to do the right thing and recognize adjuncts as the invaluable assets that they are.

CUNY has capped how much each adjunct can feasibly work within the system. Adjuncts are permitted to work nine hours at one college, and one course bearing no more than six hours at a second school. At the average rate of \$2900 per course, per semester, an adjunct teaching four courses in two semesters only makes \$23,200 per year. Most CUNY professors who make their livings from adjunct teaching tend to teach outside of the system. It is not uncommon for a professor to teach their maximum three classes at BCC, one at CCNY, and another at one of New York City's private colleges. Just counting the classes taught within CUNY, time spent on travel, grading, communication with students, and actual in-class teaching could amount to more than eighty hours per week. Using this math, the wage would amount to approximately \$9.50. Given their level of skill and training, this is a pittance.

Why should you care? The quality of teaching is affected by the adjuncts' outside lives. Students might get more individualized attention if their professors were not saddled with outside troubles. If adjuncts could earn a better wage, teaching fewer classes, they could likely pour more resources into their individual sections, improving the quality of teaching. In a school system with graduation rates that range from middling to abysmal, keeping the best quality teachers should be paramount. Students are more likely to stick around and finish school if they feel some sort of connection to it. If their professors consider their classes just another stop in a day of drudgery, why would the students think otherwise?



The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) is funded through the mandatory student activity fee (SAF). NYPIRG offers a refund of the portion of the current SAF earmarked for NYPIRG to any student who does not wish to contribute.

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The Impact of Leadership: Keep Leading! Keep Learning!

By Alex Luma

As I always say, leaders not only make the weather in their own minds and their own lives, but they use everything they have learned to change the weather in the lives of others. Leadership is a vital part of life in many different aspects. Some people are born leaders and some are shaped into them. In my opinion, once you become a leader, there is no turning back.

The very distinct aspect of the way my mind works is that I want to be an instrument of change in numerous ways. Many people in life know what career aspiration they want to pursue. There are several different options, some of which include the medical, paralegal, and technical fields. Some can't figure out their calling, even in the early stages of adulthood. I, on the other hand, don't like limiting myself and want to accomplish everything I possibly can. It's my motivation and sense of persistence that keep me going. When my time comes, I want to be able to say that I used everything God gave me to accomplish my dreams. I don't want to treat my life like a polynomial. Yes, I want to factor out the non-necessities, but not the potentially great opportunities that were never given a chance.

A great leader can make the most out of the least. The smallest effort can make the biggest difference. There are many ways to revolutionize the mindset or the state of the world we live in. As a leader, you have to have confidence in your own potential and be willing to dedicate yourself to working hard. That aura of leadership that you develop is what you are using to empower and uplift the people of the world, especially those

willing to receive your message.

Commitment separates the doers from the dreamers. In the eyes of a motivated student, it's going over the material one more time to make sure you've got it covered. In the eyes of a fighter, it's getting off the ground after you've been knocked off your feet. To the Olympic athlete, it is running or swimming another few laps before stepping out of the competitive arena.

To keep leading, you have to have the willingness to learn effectively, which includes taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and cycles of knowledge at your disposal, throughout your life, career, and educational journey among others. To keep leading, you have to have a vision. Vision is an important function for a leader. Vision leads the path of the leader and sculpts the target known as your goals. All that's left is to know how to use that inner ammunition you were blessed with to reach your destined target. Your vision sparks the flames within your heart and mind and helps you to light the candle within others that may have either been extinguished or never lit. Keep leading yourself beyond the finish line. Don't allow life to limit itself for you. Lead, learn, make a difference, and never give up on your dreams.

Campus News

Broncos Lose Title, Face Tumult

By Keyunna Singleton

The basketball season is officially over, and leave it to the BCC Broncos to go out with a bang. On March 22nd after taking the College's men's basketball team to their National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division III championship, head coach Shannon McKinnon was reportedly released for poor sportsmanship behavior. It's been three years since Coach McKinnon was promoted to the position of head coach from assistant coach for the men's basketball team. Since then, he has received several awards for his dedication to the sport, including the CUNY Head Coach of the Year, and the District Five Sportsmanship Award in 2011. Within his time as head coach, he has managed to lead the team into its back-to-back CUNY championship titles, a regional title, and a chance to win a national championship.

McKinnon and his all-star team of assistant coaches – Warren Thompson, John Ridley, Curtis Dixon and eldest son Raymond McKinnon – have transformed the team to one of the worst in the division to 5th in the nation. Bringing their record from 4-21 in the 08-09 season to 28-7 in the current passing season.

McKinnon came from very humble beginnings. A resident of the Bronx all his life, McKinnon's adolescent years resemble that of the youth in today's urban society. From the young age of fifteen he acted as a product of his environment. His interactions in the street led him to a close call with both death and imprisonment. According to McKinnon, it wasn't until the birth of his son Raymond that he decided to change the direction of his life. He also praises former assistant coach and big brother figure the late Troy Trusdale for encouraging him to encourage continue his education. He states, "If it weren't for Troy Trusdale I would have never gone back to school, and I would have never gotten the job." According to many of the Broncos, in his position as head coach McKinnon helped groom a very determined group of young men and brought the team to heights they may have never reached without him.

Not only did McKinnon help build the students' athletic skills and confidence, but he helped both men and women scholars that were not interested in the idea of higher education enroll in college institutions. McKinnon's advocacy for education has helped improve the lives of many students in urban community. Former BCC player John Simmons went to SUNY Purchase after BCC with the help of McKinnon and is currently pursuing his master's degree at L.I.U. McKinnon also helped Hector Hernandez, who played for the Broncos last year, move on to City College. In addition, he assisted students that

did not attend BCC, some of whom now play basketball overseas.

So the question that troubles the mind of the genuinely concerned is: How can someone who has made such a monumental impact for the school and the students be fired from a position they were obviously passionate about? The answer lies in the decision of BCC President Carole Berotte Joseph. According to Mary Rogan, Legal Liaison to President, the details to the president's decision cannot be disclosed to the public due to personnel matters. However, shortly after his termination McKinnon released a statement explaining his beliefs about why he was dismissed. The statement details the events and situations that McKinnon and several of the Broncos believe led up to the day of his termination. McKinnon spoke of conflicts that he had with the Athletic Director (AD) of Hostos and expressed that she repeatedly tried to get him fired throughout the season.

McKinnon's statement spoke briefly about the game that led directly to his termination admitting that "the athletes punched a wall [and] kicked over garbage pails." He also admitted to using foul language in an attempt to release his frustration at the end of the game, because the referees failed to make crucial calls during regulation and decided against a goal-tending claim in overtime that went in favor the North Carolina Sandhills, who beat the Broncos by one point in the second round of the Nationals and later went on to become Division III National champions. Although McKinnon admits to using inappropriate language, he claims to have displayed his reaction in front of BCC AD Eric Mercado and the CUNY Commissioner.

Eric Mercado did admit to being present at the game; however, he did not speak about the language that McKinnon used. Mercado recalled that he was sitting about 20 rows above the court only a few seats above the commissioner, who turned to Mercado in that last play of overtime and questioned whether or not the "block" was indeed goal tending. Mercado stated that in "live action" that was not a call that he was confident making; however, after reviewing the tapes he determined that in his point of view, it was.

Immediately after the play, the Broncos brought its attention to the referees, pointing at the rim and expressing how strongly they believed it was goal tending. After the referees denied the call that ended the game, the Broncos reacted aggressively, sprinting after the referees who followed protocol and scurried to their locker room immediately after the game. No one reported that they

believed that the team intended to harm the refs; however, Mercado states that in a situation such as this the head coach should be the first person on the scene in a pacifist role. This was not the case according to BCC's Dr. Donna Genova the NJCAA chairperson for women's basketball, who states that McKinnon failed to take control of the players.

Genova states that Region 15, which is the region that the BCC Broncos represent, has a coaches' code of conduct that was questioned at the time of the decision of McKinnon's termination. All parties agree that it was extremely unfortunate that the Broncos did not get to bring home the national title in addition to their others; however, AD Mercado believes in good faith that the school's name, which was McKinnon's argument as to why the officials did not allow the Broncos to win nationals, has nothing to do with the calls that were and were not made. The fact of whether or not the last play was actually goal tending was discussed and debated amongst the officials; some believe that it was, while others argue that it wasn't. Several ideas were brought up in order to prevent this situation from happening in the future, such as providing large screens at the games much like the ones that are present at National College Athletic Association (NCAA) tournaments. Nevertheless, even if the addition was possible goal tending, it is not a play that is reviewable during a game.

In an attempt to diffuse possible hostility from the players if a situation like this were to occur again, Mercado states that all the members of the team, coaches included, will have to take civilian sportsmanship training. In addition they will have to undergo the NJCAA Leaders for Life program. In the upcoming semester the athletes will also be required to partake in community service.

Mercado assures the team new and returning players that he will find a quality head coach that will help to maintain the status of the program and contribute to defending the titles that the team has acquired. Although McKinnon has left BCC, he continues to communicate and encourage the players and students of BCC. McKinnon ended his statement: "I love BCC!"

Having ended the season so dramatically and losing their head coach, the Broncos are going to need all of the school's support next semester in order to continue their great success. They are a strong team with many talented and ambitious players. Over the summer they will have time to recover from their losses this season and return a new team next season accompanied by a new team of coaches.

Empowering Groups: Transformative Leadership

By Josue Lopez

Perhaps the most important pillar of Phi Theta Kappa philosophy is leadership. Although members of Phi Theta Kappa may lead by example with academic achievement, a GPA does not define a leader. A leader is one who develops others by inspiring and empowering them to build on their abilities while creating new, lasting skills. Although leadership is more of an art than an exact science, the transformational leadership approach is more effective in leading groups than transactional leadership.

As presented by Rob Carey and Gigi Delk at the 2012 PTK convention, the primary factor of transformational leadership of groups is establishing an environment of full inclusion and participation. A group of individuals working towards a common goal may have separate roles and responsibilities but they are all co-producers of the end result. As co-producers they should receive full disclosure in real time as to the circumstances, progress, and needs of the group. This transparency helps create a sense of identity and unity within the group, as well as provides opportunity for individuals to take initiative in collaborating with and assisting other members. Such opportunities empower members to develop more skills than if they were confined to one set of assigned responsibilities and tasks.

The second factor of transformational leadership is accountability. Establishing an environment of accountability within a group will help build what Carey and Delk called "The Five Cs": Character, Competence, Commitment, Consistency, and Cohesion. In a group, each of these attributes is contagious and they are all conducive to achieving as a group as well as transformatively



developing individuals. A lack of accountability will discourage improvement as well create an environment where contributing is optional. Thus, effort and leadership will be transactional, based solely on the benefit one can receive for a certain amount of effort put forth.

Transformative leadership is empowering others to develop and achieve as a group through full inclusion and participation, while simultaneously developing individual leaders by fostering

a sense of accountability. Transactional leadership limits development by only allowing certain opportunities. Each member of the group should have access the skills and abilities of others, so that the opportunity for development of each individual is maximized. Ultimately, a leader should not be greedy with the power of a leadership role. Rather, a leader should hope to inspire others to become even greater, both individually and collectively.

Campus News

CollegeFish.org: Make Your Fish Bowl Come True

By Josue Lopez

As Phi Theta Kappa is an honor society, membership is a form of recognition for one's academic achievements and prowess. However, becoming a member of Phi Theta Kappa brings more than just bragging rights; a host of advantages are afforded to members, many of which can be accessed through the website CollegeFish.org. At a glance CollegeFish may seem like any other search engine for scholarships (i.e., FastWeb.com, CollegeBoard.com, etc.) especially since, more often than not, scholarships are the first thing to come to mind when we think of honor societies. What distinguishes CollegeFish.org is the fact that it is geared toward and provided free of charge for Phi Theta Kappa members; this focus provides several advantages which current and prospective Phi Theta Kappa members should be aware of.

CollegeFish understands Phi Theta Kappa members are highly valuable and competitive candidates for transfer to any four-year university we set our hearts on. This being the case, the tools provided by CollegeFish.org members plan their transfer experience and empower them to take the necessary steps to ensure the scholarships and institutions to which the member applies will be the best fit for the individual member. Members are first instructed to create a detailed profile, pick up to ten universities to add to their "fish bowl," standard practice with these kinds of websites. But before one jumps directly into applying to schools and scholarships, the most important aspect (reflected by it being placed at the very top of the tool bar) is planning. CollegeFish provides a detailed list of steps students should take in the transfer process from choosing top schools, and having one's transcript reviewed, to making housing arraignments and even registering for classes. The entire process is spelled out step by step and a fully customizable calendar tool is integrated to help students stay on track as they juggle the transfer process and their current course load.

Beyond the extensive tools provided to the student, an advantage afforded to the student which is often overlooked, is the convenience it provides the four university and scholarship boards. These institutions know student profiles on CollegeFish reflect highly valuable transfer applicants. We are members of an international honor society, leaders on campus, trail-blazing researchers; in short, we are exceptional candidates. Even before a student utilizes the resources of CollegeFish s/he is recognized as an attractive candidate simply by being a Phi Theta Kappa member. Too many of our members of the Lambda Nu chapter simply join Phi Theta Kappa, add it to their resume and do not pursue the fruits of their labor. To those prospective and newly inducted members, I implore you all to start early and fully capitalize on this wonderful tool and resource tailored just for you.

My Phi Theta Kappa Annual Convention Reflection

By Roswill Lyons

At the Phi Theta Kappa Annual Convention that was held from April 19, 2012 to April 22, 2012 in Nashville, Tennessee, I learned the art of proposing and debating ideas to promote a noticeable change for students, that not only attend community colleges, but any college or university. I grasped the importance of efficient collaboration and communication by attending and observing various workshops that were offered.

My time at this effervescent and productive place was one filled with learning, responsibility and simultaneous fun, instilling in me new levels of maturity and knowledge over a wide spectrum of information. The vibrancy of the place resonated from dedicated students from all over the world – some of whom I consider colleagues-to the devoted staff and speakers that were there. Keynote speakers like Amy Chua and Malcolm Gladwell were eye-openers to the whole public. Sharing their personal experiences made us understand that in order to be a great a speaker a person must select a topic they understand and that they can develop straightforwardly. With their speeches, I learned to radiate and promote respect for differing ideas and backgrounds. The display of optimism and resilience among my colleagues highly motivated me to learn more about Phi Theta Kappa and all the opportunities they offer.

Some of the educational forums I attended were the: "Phi Theta Kappa Scholarships Opportunities," "CollegeFish.org Member Corner," "Community College Completion Corps (C4) – Chapters as College Completion Champions," "Public Speaking – Making Great Presentations," and "Leading with Goals." These activities enlightened me on assuming a more effective leadership role in my campus. "The Public Speaking – Making Great Presentations" and "Leading with Goals Workshops" reinforced my knowledge on these topics. With the other three workshops that I attended, I feel that I can provide continuing students at Bronx Community College the material I learned.

This convention gave me an opportunity to learn more about the fields of education and communications, and I embraced how students are committed to complete their studies. The overall experience was very satisfactory and fully enriching, and I plan to use the things I learned there in my future endeavors. This experience has greatly enhanced my career and personal growth, supplementing my coursework achievements in campus classes.

Ambassadorship: Sharing Phi Theta Kappa's Message through Honors In Action

By Sharon Chin

Effective communication is a key leadership skill. As a Phi Theta Kappa member, you are a powerful ambassador communicating information about your Honors In Action Project is important for *all levels at any college campus*.

The Honors In Action project starts with PTK members starting a research project on worldwide issues. Honors In Action is a positive, enlightening group of academic achievers who display interest in their community. Phi Theta Kappa has honored me for my academic excellence and achievements. This would not be possible without the guidance of my wonderful chapter advisor, Yvonne Erazo-Davila. She has educated us on the importance of PTK and has given us hope that we can and will achieve five-star level.

We have begun to train our officers with the Honors Study Topic: The Culture of Competition. This will entail research amongst the chapter members and a campus project must be made that will:

1. Benefit the topic as far as solve part of the topic
2. Benefit the campus and our fellow students
3. Benefit the chapter and other chapters around the world
4. Assist the campus community and surrounding communities
5. Benefit and/or solve a world-wide issue

We intend to use our time during the summer to begin research on the Culture of Competition to educate our campus on the importance of working together as one, united towards a common goal to create a large impact on a bigger scale.

Sharon Chin is Chapter President of Lambda Nu Chapter at BCC.

Emotional Intelligence: Know Yourself

By Josue Lopez

Succeeding academically and professionally is challenging enough, but the added pressure and importance of leadership ability and interpersonal communication in today's competitive world can wreak havoc on one's emotional state. Stress can easily lead to self-doubt, lack of motivation, depression and poor judgment. Educational forum presenter Velda Arnaud lends insight to the art of improving one's emotional intelligence. A term familiar to psychologists and educators, emotional intelligence, according to Collin's English dictionary, is an "awareness of one's own emotions and moods and those of others, (especially) in managing people." Arnaud takes this definition further by adding honesty with these emotions being just as important as the awareness. After all, many of us are experts at denying our emotional troubles and/or suppressing emotional conflict. We each have two minds, one rational and the other emotional. Oftentimes our emotional mind dictates our behavior in one way or another; however, it is entirely up to us whether or not we will allow our emotions to run our lives.

Developing emotional awareness is crucial to empowering rational thought and behavior. One must be able to monitor one's emotions and ask, "Why do I feel/act this way?" One step to gaining emotional awareness is recognizing behavioral patterns. If we know exactly how we tend to react to certain stimuli, we have every chance to change this behavior and deal more honestly with the emotional foundation of that reaction. Once one addresses one's behavioral patterns, it is then possible to begin regulating one's emotions. Managing one's emotions means taking responsibility for these emotions, rather than playing victim to them. What is left is to plan new behavioral reactions to these emotional triggers.

While we identify our emotional triggers and plan to react accordingly, we must keep in mind that emotions are contagious. Emitting negativity can only breed negativity. Whether it be lashing out at those who frustrate us, or over-venting to those we confide in, outpouring of negativity can affect others. One must be mindful of the emotional energy we emit. Although working on one's emotional intelligence is a difficult and continuous process, the freedom to progress in one's personal development, free of emotional "deadweight," is well worth the effort.

Campus News

The Phi Theta Kappa Convention Experience By Sharon Chin

If you can imagine 5,000 people in the same room, with a minimum GPA of 3.5, the drive of geniuses to reach for the stars, and the common goal of using leadership, fellowship, and service to change the world, then you are picturing the Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Society's 94th Annual Convention which was held at the Grand Ole Opry Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee on April 12-15, 2012. Phi Theta Kappa is a prestigious honors society that values the four hallmarks it was built on, which is Leadership, Fellowship, Scholarship, and Service. The convention is set to network with individuals from over 550 chapters that were present and represented from around the globe. The networking sessions are created so that chapters can collaborate their ideas on the Honors Study Topic and this year the topic is "The Culture of Competition." The Honors Topics contain topics that are on the news, on an international level, and are necessary components to fix a worldwide issue. Phi Theta Kappa members are required to create campus initiative projects that will get members involved as well as their campus and the surrounding communities. This effort is held in unison with chapters collaborating with the same goals all around the world.

The convention is a necessity for any student let alone Phi Theta Kappa members. There are transfer fairs from over 100 schools within the United States, mini-sessions held regarding scholarships such as the Hites Transfer Scholarship, and special programs

for four-year colleges and universities. They also provide fundraising efforts information by other chapters to raise funds for their home-town chapter, and also for important items such as the Obendorf Life Scholarship Fund, which Phi Theta Kappa members have raised over \$125,000, and intend to double those efforts by June 1st. The Obendorf allows students who cannot afford a college education the opportunity to follow their dreams and give their contribution to change the world for the better.

The most intriguing part of this year's convention for me was being a campaign manager for Naomi Dias, a student at Cape Cod Community College in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts. Dias was a candidate for the International President of PTK. This honor is not possible without the leadership development the convention provides to become a five star member and a five star chapter. The campaign experience is a group effort and allows students to express their role in changing the world using the international officer position. Another important role of the convention was my voting delegate obligations. My responsibilities are to vote for international officers and use my vote to represent my chapter. The Phi Theta Kappa Annual Convention is, without question, an experience that has allowed me to develop my leadership skills.

Sharon Chin is president of the Lambda Nu Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa.

Phi Theta Kappa Growth By Rebeca Ruiz

I joined Phi Theta Kappa in the spring semester of 2012. Soon after joining, I attended the International Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. Here I attended orientation-based topics that would help my chapter, Lambda Nu, here at Bronx Community College to obtain a five-star status and also to assist our campus and surrounding communities.

One of the orientations I attended were the Hallmark Awards information session where I learned how to nominate candidates for awards based on candidate fellowship. I also attended a workshop for collegefish.com which is a website that helps you receive scholarships that meet the criteria you provided when creating your profile.

Being a part of Phi Theta Kappa has not only provided me with opportunities related with scholarships but opportunities where I can grow within academics by having the support of my team. For example, next semester, as the newly elected vice president for the Fall 2012 semester, I hope to continue to have success for chapter, my new incoming members, and myself.

What Next? The Role of Alumni By Josue Lopez

Establishing an alumni chapter is an excellent way to support current member activity and provide mentorship by those who have succeeded in moving on from this stage in our academic and professional career. Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) has regional, university as well as community alumni chapters. Community alumni chapters are composed of PTK alumni of a particular community college and/or alumni who happen to live in or near that community.

University alumni chapters are composed of alumni from different community colleges who currently attend the same university. Regional alumni chapters are composed of alumni who are alumni of schools in that region and/or happen to live in that region. Alumni chapters are meant to provide PTK alumni a means to support and give back to current PTK students.

Alumni can present skill-building workshops, provide ongoing mentorship, and can even assist financially by paying dues for continued membership in the alumni chapter. Alumni can also be members of multiple alumni chapters simultaneously; meaning one student can be part of the Bronx Community College PTK alumni chapter (coming soon!), the alumni chapter of the university they attend and their regional alumni chapter. This is good news for our Lambda Nu chapter because we can recruit alumni from local universities as well the regional alumni chapter to help establish a BCC alumni chapter.

Bronx Community College's Phi Theta Kappa Lambda Nu chapter could benefit immensely from an alumni chapter. Graduating members should stay in touch and give back to BCC, which has served as our foundation. Returning and future members should work to retain alumni for the invaluable support they can provide.

Campus News

STUDENT LIFE – DEAD: The Life of an Evening/Weekend Student

By C. Lionel Spencer

Thursday, April 19th

It was my first day back to class and a colleague had informed me in earlier weeks that there was going to be a Poetry Slam Competition taking place from 6pm to 9pm, so after my health class, which ended at 7:45, I rushed over to the Roscoe Brown Playhouse. I sat in the back, trying to catch my breath and not disrupt the on-stage performer while he spewed words of love and of pain about a relationship. The host walked to the back to speak with an on-looker and when he finished I tapped him; he was a friend, a fellow poet I met at an earlier semester's poetry event. He gave me the privilege to close out the second round of the competition with a performance. I was extremely grateful for the last-minute opportunity.

Friday, April 20th

I arrive on campus and there are droves of people leaving, which, now that I think about it, is funny when you consider it's only 5:45pm. I show my ID, head up the stairs and get ready to beeline it to Colston Hall for my sociology class. Since I have a few minutes before class starts, I decide to stop by the library to print out an assignment; it is closed. I head to class. When we get our mid-lecture break I head over to the Evening/Weekend Office to inquire about any open computer labs, it is closed. I head back to class.

After my class, which ends at 8:45pm, I want to unwind, relax a little, so I check the school calendar to see the list of activities for the evening. Nothing. There is no poetry slam, no dance, and no open space with some music playing for a hard-working and studying evening student to enjoy. There is nothing.

Saturday, April 21st

After my afternoon piano class, which ends at 3:45pm, I walk to the cafeteria to grab something to eat but it is closed. After grabbing a snack from one of the vending machines, I head over to The Writing Center to flush out some creative ideas but guess what...it is closed.

The Writing Center closed at 2pm

The Cafeteria closed at 2pm

The Library closed at 5pm.

The Computer Labs closed at 5pm.

Student Life is dead....

The college catalog for 2009 through 2011 states that Bronx Community has on top of its 9,000 students in its general admission and certificate programs, an additional 14,000 students enrolled in the Continuing Professional Studies and Community Program along with the Workforce Development Program.

Between general admissions and the other programs offered at BCC, there are at least 80 classes scheduled Monday through Friday after 6pm or on Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 2pm.

So let us just say each class has 25 students. If you do the math, that is 2,000 evening/weekend students who do not have an open library, cafeteria or writing center at their disposal. Not only that, but Bronx Community College does not provide many activities that help balance the workload with leisure for these students in the same manner it does for daytime students. There is NO student life for students like myself. There are a bunch of leisure events and times such as club hours, seasonal parties and movie nights for daytime students to enjoy, but evening and weekend students are left to catch the second half to poetry slam competitions.

Bronx Community College and all of its administration need to focus much more of their energy on providing better service to the evening and weekend students. I understand that staffing is thinner in the evening time, but in the same way that the staff stay later during midterm and finals weeks, or for school events they should for the evening session students. Instead of allocating thousand dollar stipends to college senators, or granting so much money to entertain daytime students, they should consider using some those funds to provide activities and services for the other 2,000 plus students at Bronx Community College. One can only hope we will get a break with some extended hours from the bigger library and renovated cafeteria now open.

The Truth Club

By Nii Nortey

Bronx Community College's Truth Club is about students coming together to talk about real issues using the Bible as our reference source. We meet in an environment unlike church as usual, so that everyone feels comfortable to ask questions and have an informal conversation about the Bible and its accuracy. The talks are designed to relate to our daily lives in practical ways, sort of like bringing the Bible alive today. One of the things that make our gatherings even more enjoyable is when we have two or more opposing sides presenting TRUTHS or questions directed at the opposing side. It creates for a great time of exploratory learning and coming to personal convictions about ones beliefs.

Some of the questions might sound like this: No one can measure reality; does it mean reality does not exist? How do you know God really exists?

Have you ever wonder why the billions of people on earth don't look alike? Do you have any questions about life and what is going on around us today?

The Truth Club seeks to address questions like these as best we can with our friendly facilitators who are eager to meet everyone's needs and bridge the gap between myth and truth.

Come and enjoy our informal discussions, but only come, if you can handle the TRUTH.

Meeting Days and Time

Thursday club hours: 12—2 PM

Meister Hall, Room 331

The Opportunity of a Lifetime Turned into a Family for Life

By Danielle Prince

My name is Danielle Prince and Phi Theta Kappa is my life. Phi Theta Kappa has given me many opportunities that I never thought was possible. Being a PTK officer has helped me to become more involved in my college community and other campus clubs. With the help of my chapter advisor, Ms. Yvonne Erazo-Davila, and Ms. Carol White, I was given the incredible opportunity to participate in the 2012 New York Coalition of 100 Black Women Role Model Program. I am the first and the student in the programs and BCC's history to participate in this event. This took place over spring break when my fellow PTK members were attending our annual convention. I received a certificate of completion from the program and now collaborating with members from the City College of New York to become ambassadors to help with future participants. The experience was an excellent and memorable one and I would encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity next semester and keep BCC involved.

I am extremely proud of the things that I have accomplished with the assistance of PTK. I have been accepted to many colleges, one of which is the CCNY. Another is Mercy College to which I have been given a PTK scholarship, a transfer scholarship, a stipend, and I have also been accepted into their Honors Program. Because of the help of the tutors within PTK and the hard work and dedication of over 20 others, colleges and universities, like NYU, are constantly requesting me to study at their university offering me up to \$60,000 in renewable scholarships. This all would not have been possible without my Lambda Nu chapter. We are a family and our goal is to support each other and our college campus.

Like we say as honor students: "A's All Day!" Hey, it's just our Nerd Swag!

The Impact of Leadership: Keep Leading! Keep Learning!

By Alex Luma

As I always say, leaders not only make the weather in their own minds and their own lives, but they use everything they have learned to change the weather in the lives of others. Leadership is a vital part of life in many different aspects. Some people are born leaders and some are shaped into them. In my opinion, once you become a leader, there is no turning back.

The very distinct aspect of the way my mind works is that I want to be an instrument of change in numerous ways. Many people in life know what career aspiration they want to pursue. There are several different options, some of which include the medical, paralegal, and technical fields. Some can't figure out their calling, even in the early stages of adulthood. I, on the other hand, don't like limiting myself and want to accomplish everything I possibly can. It's my motivation and sense of persistence that keep me going. When my time comes, I want to be able to say that I used everything God gave me

to accomplish my dreams. I don't want to treat my life like a polynomial. Yes, I want to factor out the non-necessities, but not the potentially great opportunities that were never given a chance.

A great leader can make the most out of the least. The smallest effort can make the biggest difference. There are many ways to revolutionize the mindset or the state of the world we live in. As a leader, you have to have confidence in your own potential and be willing to dedicate yourself to working hard. That aura of leadership that you develop is what you are using to empower and uplift the people of the world, especially those willing to receive your message.

Commitment separates the doers from the dreamers. In the eyes of a motivated student, it's going over the material one more time to make sure you've got it covered. In the eyes of a fighter, it's getting off the ground after you've been knocked off your feet. To the Olympic

athlete, it is running or swimming another few laps before stepping out of the competitive arena.

To keep leading, you have to have the willingness to learn effectively, which includes taking advantage of the numerous opportunities and cycles of knowledge at your disposal, throughout your life, career, and educational journey among others. To keep leading, you have to have a vision. Vision is an important function for a leader. Vision leads the path of the leader and sculpts the target known as your goals. All that's left is to know how to use that inner ammunition you were blessed with to reach your destined target. Your vision sparks the flames within your heart and mind and helps you to light the candle within others that may have either been extinguished or never lit. Keep leading yourself beyond the finish line. Don't allow life to limit itself for you. Lead, learn, make a difference, and never give up on your dreams.

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CLAIM YOUR ACCOUNT ON:

CUNYfirst
Campus Solutions



Go To: <https://home.CUNYfirst.cuny.edu>

Hint: • Make sure to add an "s" after http

Click: First time users

Enter: First Name
Last Name
DOB (m/m/dd/yyyy)
SSN (last 4 digits)

Hint: • Make sure DOB is entered in the format "two-digit month (forward slash) two-digit day (forward slash) four-digit year."
• If you are a student who has not been assigned a Social Security number by the Social Security Administration, go to <https://aa01.bcc.cuny.edu/cunyfirst/student-services/id>

Enter: Both words appearing on the ReCAPTCHA with a space in between each word.

Click: OK

Next: Select your Challenge Questions and Answers – you need five of them. Choose each question from the dropdown, and then type in your answer.

Hints: • Make it memorable
• Don't repeat questions
• Answers are not case sensitive and must be at least two characters long

Next: Choose Password

Your password must be at least eight characters long, and contain at least one UPPERCASE character, or at least one numeral or a symbol.

After you've entered your password and confirmed it, click OK

Your CUNYfirst account is now activated.

STEP

STEP TWO ON BACK

CUNYfirst Allows You To...

- Search For Classes
- Register
- Swap Courses
- Pay Your Bill
- View Your Transcript
- Apply for Graduation



LOGGING ON

After you have claimed your account you will receive a confirmation screen with your user name and EMPLID (Employee ID). It will be your first name, last name and the last two digits of your emplid.

(i.e. John Smith would be john.smith12)

Go to: <https://home.CUNYfirst.cuny.edu>

Enter: Username
Password

Your password is the password you entered when you claimed your account.

Click: Submit



CONGRATULATIONS!
You are now logged into CUNYfirst.

Click HR/Campus Solutions to view your academic records.

Learn how to navigate Campus Solutions:

1. Visit www.bcc.cuny.edu/cunyfirst
2. From the left navigation menu, expand "Students"
3. Click on the "Student-Self Service" link

NEED HELP?

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Go to the CUNYfirst homepage and choose "Forgot your Password?" and follow the instructions.
(<https://home.CUNYfirst.cuny.edu>)

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BRONX MUSEUM

GLOBAL AIDS AWARENESS Fashion Show

MUSIC Fashion Fun Refreshments

Featuring: Web chats with youth from around the world! Youth-made CONDOM DRESSES!

THURSDAY, MAY 17 4:30 PM—7:30 PM

Bronx Museum of the Arts 1040 Grand Concourse (at 165th Street) Bronx, NY 10456

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Building Your Career Starts Here!

- Search for jobs posted exclusively to Bronx Community College students;
- Search the Jobs Central® national job board and the Intern Central national internship board;
- Build a résumé with Résumé Builder, or upload a résumé file to Resume Central so it can be searched by employers (if you so authorize). Your résumé will be reviewed by our office and must be approved before it can be sent to employers or submitted online to posted jobs;
- Receive e-mails about programs, services and job-related topics;
- Gain access to announcements, upcoming events, career advice documents, career advice videos, podcasts and career articles from over 125 authors;
- Manage your on-campus interview schedules;
- Build an online portfolio in Career Portfolio Central to support your résumé and demonstrate your best work to employers.
- Register to all Career & Transfer Services workshops and events.

To create your College Central Network Account visit us at Loew Hall, Room 315 or attend one of the following workshops beginning March 12th-April 5th

Mondays	Tuesdays and Wednesdays	Thursdays (except 3/15)
10:30-11:15	11:30-12:15	10:00-10:30
11:30-12:15	12:30-1:15	10:30-11:00
1:30-2:15	1:30-2:15	
2:30-3:15	2:30-3:15	

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Ask around. The Network works!®

The Network works to get you hired!

College Central Network® works with our career center to help you launch your career, providing vital online job search resources that include:

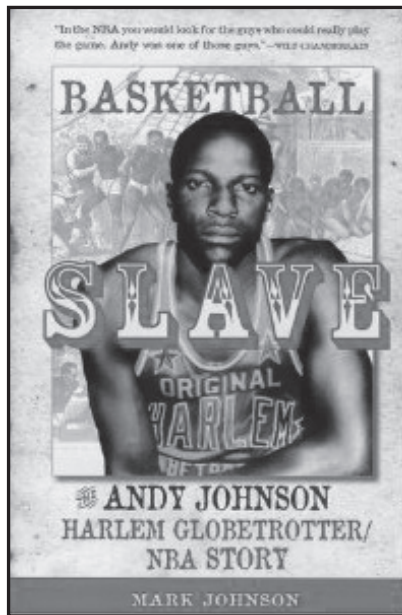
- ◆ Our school's exclusive Job Board
- ◆ Career Portfolio and Résumé Builders
- ◆ Jobs Central® and Intern CentralSM
- ◆ Career Advice Documents and Surveys
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Summer Reading Recommendations from Across Campus!

Continued from back page



Stephen Powers---Department of Education and Reading

***Basketball Slave* By Mark Johnson**

Basketball Slave: The Andy Johnson Story is filled to the brim with extraordinary tales from behind the scenes of the early Original Harlem Globetrotters and loaded with a wealth of historical information never disclosed about the slow, quota-based inception of African American athletes in the NBA. This book clarifies the role of the Original Harlem Globetrotters in making the NBA the multi-billion dollar organization it is today.

It is also a fascinating and inspirational story that weaves the heart-wrenching account of a young boy who became a man through the lessons of basketball. He grew up watching his family working in the cotton fields of Louisiana, to playing basketball barefoot in the streets of Hollywood, California. Having his education undervalued as a high school basketball star and being sent to a major university without any hopes of receiving a degree, to finally being sold on the professional basketball auction block three times without any ability to negotiate his pay or where he could play. Johnson turned every devastating event into another opportunity by staying positive in the game of life.

***The Death and Life of the Great American School System* By Diane Ravitch**

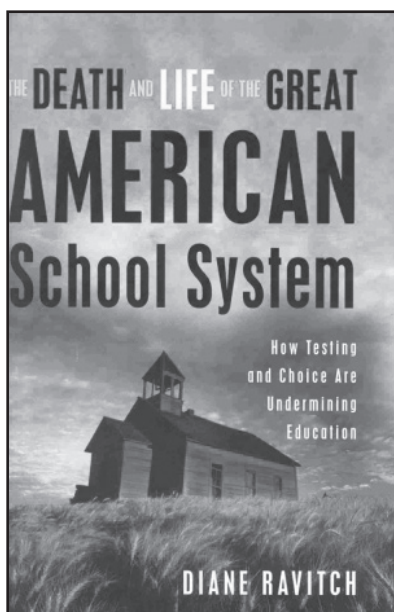
A passionate plea to preserve and renew public education, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* is a radical change of heart from one of America's best-known education experts.

Diane Ravitch—former assistant secretary of education and a leader in the drive to create a national curriculum—examines her career in education reform and repudiates positions that she once staunchly advocated. Drawing on over forty years of research and experience, Ravitch critiques today's most popular ideas for restructuring schools, including privatization, standardized testing, punitive accountability, and the feckless multiplication of charter schools. She shows conclusively why the business model is not an appropriate way to improve schools. Using examples from major cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, and San Diego, Ravitch makes the case that public education today is in peril.

Ravitch includes clear prescriptions for improving America's schools:

- leave decisions about schools to educators, not politicians or businessmen
- devise a truly national curriculum that sets out what children in every grade should be learning
- expect charter schools to educate the kids who need help the most, not to compete with public schools
- pay teachers a fair wage for their work, not "merit pay" based on deeply flawed and unreliable test scores
- encourage family involvement in education from an early age

The Death and Life of the Great American School System is more than just an analysis of the state of play of the American education system. It is a must-read for any stakeholder in the future of education.



Charlotte Witherspoon---Editor-in-Chief of this very newspaper

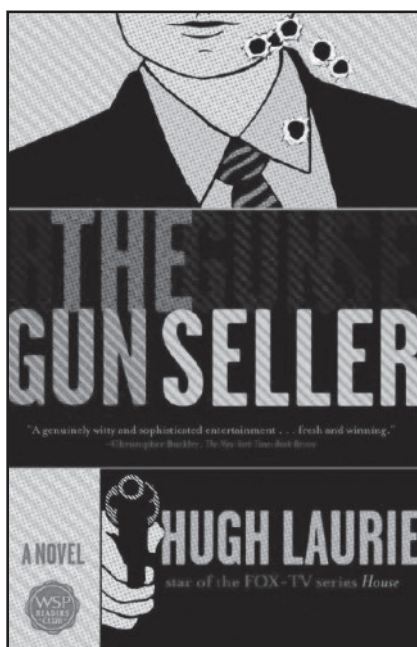
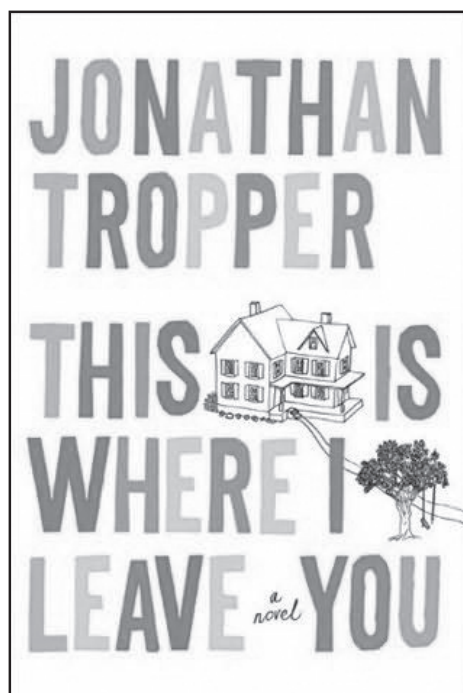
I have a terrible memory. I had to go through my Amazon order history to actually remember the books I've read and ordered through the semester because it has all been a blur. As it turns out, class has taken over my life, as I seem to read a lot books about poverty, war, and economics. When I'm not reading for school, I look for books that really draw me in. Given the nature of the books I tend to be assigned, I try my best to read things that don't involve famine, nuclear war, and economic ruin. Call it a personal preference.

***This Is Where I Leave You* By Jonathan Tropper**

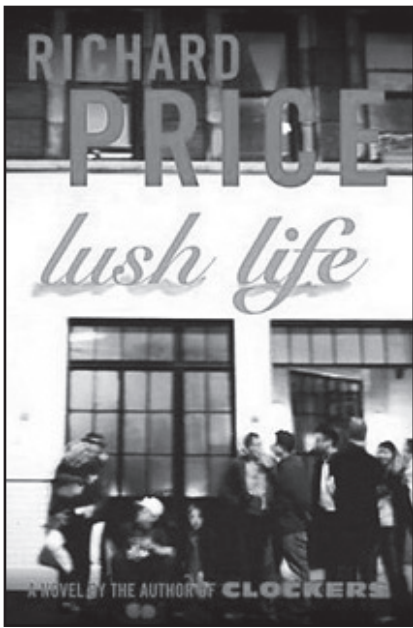
Judd Foxman's father is dead, and his wife has had an affair with his boss. If that isn't the making of a hilarious plot, I don't know what is. While its premise is depressing at face value, Tropper takes a week of sitting shiva with a dysfunctional family and turns it into a compulsively readable narrative. I almost asphyxiated myself with laughter. The saddest thing about *This Is Where I Leave You* is that it has to end.

***The Gun Seller* By Hugh Laurie**

Wait a minute, isn't he that guy from *House*? Yes, yes, he totally is. Don't let that deter you. Thomas Lang is a would-be assassin who can't follow through with his job. An attempt at goodwill goes awry and puts him at the locus of an international. If you like guns and girls and lightning-fast dialogue with a plot that never stops twisting, this book is for you. It is perfect for a lazy day on the beach or a long plane ride in the middle seat. Even if you'll go no farther than Burnside Avenue this summer, *The Gun Seller* is definitely worth a look.



Summer Reading Recommendations from Across Campus!



Summer is almost here, even though the schizophrenic weather might tell you otherwise. With a lighter course load and a longer day, it is the perfect opportunity to catch up on reading. Feeling a little lost? Luckily, we have a campus filled with voracious readers chomping at the bit to give you recommendations. We have everything from gritty Bronx tales to early-20th century fiction to a nanotechnology website. Surely you'll find your interests represented here.

Because I'm a total philistine, I'm also going to recommend that you settle in with your HBO Go and Netflix accounts and watch some television. Get thee to Aaron Sorkin and Stephen Moffat. Watch *Sports Night* and *Sherlock*, *West Wing* and *Doctor Who*. Go walk around MoMA---CUNY students get in for free. Grab your book and head over to Wave Hill, or sit under a tree right here at BCC.

Vicki Flaris---Department of Chemistry

An easy scientific read is the following website I subscribe to. It's FREE and you can get frequent new snippets of information on what's new and happening in the exciting field of nanotechnology. Go to www.nanotechweb.org and click on the box to become a member.

Joshua Halberstam--- Department of Communications

Choosing a book from the universe of possibilities is even more difficult than choosing an ice cream flavor at Ben and Jerry's. But here are two excellent books that come to mind, one fiction, and one non-fiction. Both are gritty New York City tales.

Lush Life By Richard Price

This fast-paced novel unravels a crime that takes place in the Lower East Side, but its tentacles soon reach much further –and deeper. If you want an example of how to write outstanding dialogue, this is a go-to book. The Bronx-born Price, by the way, wrote the screen play for many well-known movies, and the script for some of the best episodes of *The Wire*.

Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx By Adrian Nicole LeBlanc

This riveting narrative by LeBlanc, a journalist who worked ten years on this story, tells of the struggles of a cluster of young people in the Bronx back in the day of the crack epidemic. The tale is at once disturbing and inspiring, but always enlightening – and Bronx Community College has a part in the saga!

Theresa McManus---Chief Librarian

I enjoy reading. My tastes in reading change, for a long time I read primarily nonfiction, however I have once again been enjoying fiction. Two books I enjoyed recently are *Caleb's Crossing*, by Geraldine Brooks (Penguin Books, 2011) and *Shadow County: A New Rendering of the Watson Legend*, by Peter Matthiessen (Modern Library, 2008).

When I get caught up in these great stories told by talented authors I find it easy to leave the routines, worries and day to day concerns of my life suspended. I feel as though I see what life was like in times and places very different from my own and I am amazed at the detail and depth of the imagined worlds these authors develop on the basis of mere skeletons of historical facts. I sometimes feel Brooks and Matthiessen know the people they describe as they bring to life dreams and imagined everyday realities of people who passed away long before any of us were born.

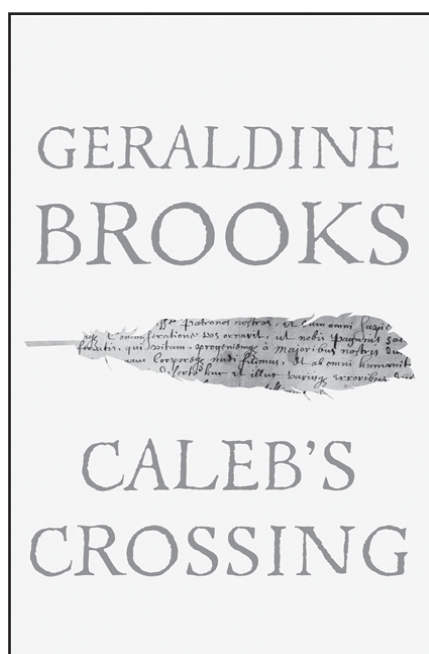
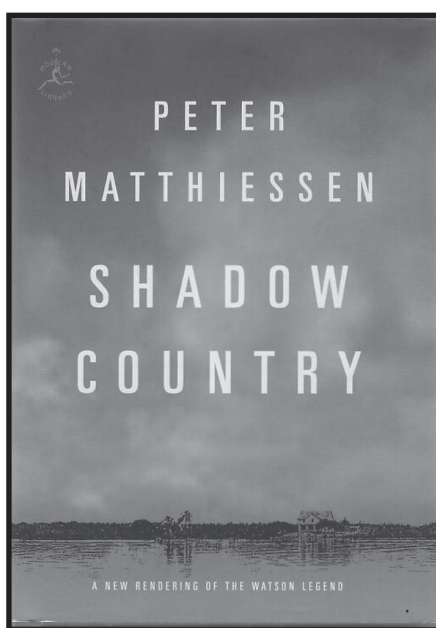
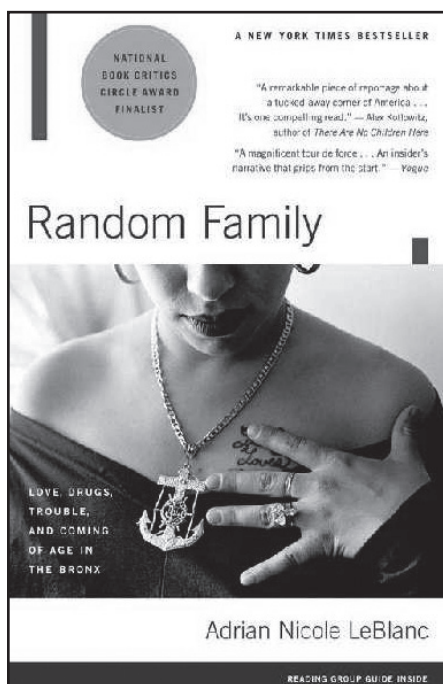
Caleb's Crossing By Geraldine Brooks

Caleb's Crossing is set in the mid-1600s in an island off of Massachusetts known today as Martha's Vineyard. The narrator, Bethia Mayfield, tells of her life and of her friend, a Native American of the Wampanoag tribe, Cheeshahteumauck (later given the English name Caleb). Cheeshahteumauck became the first Native American graduate of Harvard. The author's fictional account of being young, female and relatively powerless, tells of Bethia's life from childhood until she is an old woman, of circumstances that caused her to accept becoming an indentured servant. She tells of prearranged marriage that she did not have a say in, and that she managed to dodge, and she describes heroic acts as well as sacrifice, brutality and tragedy. As she tells of her life and the lives of her friends, she helps me imagine what it is like to be one of the first from a community to venture far from familiar culture, to be among the first of one's people to learn the language, beliefs and practices of a new culture. The book is beautifully written, there are descriptive passages of a natural world untainted by development, of friendships across cultures, of lives willingly dedicated to service, of acts of good and evil, of all of the elements characteristic of the human condition. As I read, I was reminded of the courage of some of our own students who leave cultures and people familiar to them and venture to places to live among people with different lifestyles and cultures. The book is challenging, but worth it, it provides the reader with insight into lives in the mid-1600s in North America, and into gender and race roles in particular places and communities.

Shadow Country By Peter Matthiessen

Shadow Country is set in the wild Florida frontier around the beginning of the twentieth century, and tells the story of E. J. Watson, an entrepreneur, an outlaw, a charismatic person who was capable of good and evil. It is written as a trilogy, with separate sections from different points of view. The author reveals life through the eyes of backcountry Americans whose lives are filled with hardship: he gives voices to them I hear as recognizable characters. Themes run like a common threads through the novel, themes of development, racism, destruction of natural wonders and habitat. There was a real Edgar J. Watson, he was born in South Carolina in 1855, spent much of his life in the Ten Thousand Islands region of the Everglades, an area considered a refuge for outlaws. Watson's life was legendary even before Matthiessen's epic novel, stories told of his having committed acts of violence and murder before meeting his own violent end in 1910. The book is also beautifully written, with its descriptive passages of pristine waters and islands in the Everglades of Florida, of individuals we become familiar with, who struggle to build lives in a remote and dangerous frontier, with all of the pain, joy, rewards and losses that were realities of daily life in that time and place. I highly recommend *Shadow Country* for a captivating and fascinating excursion into the imagined lives of an infamous man and his relatives, friends and enemies, as they sought to tame a wild, dangerous and bloody frontier.

Peter Matthiessen is a renowned author of both fiction and nonfiction, his *Shadow Country* won the National Book Award's price for Fiction in 2008. Geraldine Brooks, awarded a Pulitzer Prize for *March*, is known for her ability to breathe life into historical characters. My life is enriched by entering the worlds these authors create, with characters very different from me. Reading these books helps me to see parallels with my own life, I enjoy reading of their joys, pain and pleasure as they strive to achieve their goals and live through the births, deaths, romances, friendships and other realities that characterize our human condition. I highly recommend these well written and imaginative fictional accounts of lives from history; they offer a fascinating peek into other places, times and cultures.



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