

THE COMMUNICATOR

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The New Wave of BCC Filmmakers

By Alcy Leyva

There is nothing greater than seeing a long project come to fruition and being recognized by your peers for your outstanding work. On February 14, 2014, The 26th Annual United States Super 8mm Film and Digital Video Festival took place at Rutgers University. Media and Digital Film Production (MEDP) students were honored for their outstanding achievements in cinema. For the first time ever, five students had been placed within the top-tier finalists. These visionaries had not only found the recognition they had been striving for, but have also established BCC as a new haven for upcoming filmmakers. Edgar Matos, Ian Findlay, Ke'Yonna Johnson, Sebastian Rothwyn, and Joshua Cruz had been working on their films for the 20th Annual BCC Film and Video Festival last June and were selected as finalists. Edgar Matos (*Vigil*), Ian Findlay (*Two Sides, One Story*), Sebastian Rothwyn (*Double Agent*) and Joshua Cruz (*The Perfect Day*) were selected as finalists while Ke'Yonna Johnson (*Skin Deep*) nabbed an honorable mention award. Members of the BCC Media and Digital Film Club were in the audience, along with MEDP Perkins Tutors supporting the filmmakers. This is the first time that so many BCC students have been honored at this highly recognized festival and so it is only right to catch up to a few of these up-and-coming filmmakers and find out what their inspirations and goals are.

For Sebastian Rothwyn, whose film *Double Agent*, a spy thriller with fight scenes and special effects, the challenge of putting a great story on the screen also equaled the rewards received in the end. "I found that thorough planning and a great crew allows for a much smoother production," he states. "It helps to have great people. Nothing is more personal than filmmaking, in my experience. It starts with an inspiration that leads to a

script and ends with a great journey you can share with your friends." Sebastian, not to be caught sitting idly, is currently planning on going to Brooklyn College to study TV and Broadcasting and is currently working on launching a major video game convention for his company called MVG.

Edgar Matos, the mind behind the life and death love story *Vigil*, also agrees that creating a cinematic experience should not only fall on the shoulders of one person. He says, "You cannot play a sport with just one person. Support is heavily needed." He goes on to explain his inspiration: "I have none. I prefer it that way, moving with my own will, discovering what the world has to offer, and sharing my unique personal vision." Matos is currently working on several scripts and developing video games as well.

Ian Findlay, writer and director of the multi-layered *Two Sides, One Story*, explains that his inspirations lie within the films he watches himself. "My biggest influences are watching great movies, creating stories myself that people love, life itself, and classes that Professor Wisotsky teaches." Findlay expresses the strength and exhilaration needed to achieve something so complicated and making a film when he states, "I learned that if you want to become a filmmaker you have to jump off a cliff, yell 'Geronimo!' and make the movie! Also, that it takes everyone involved in the production process to help make a movie!" Findlay is currently also keeping



(From left to right): BCC Filmmakers Edgar Matos, Charlie Gomez, Ian Findlay, Joshua Cruz, and Professor Jeffrey Wisotsky pose outside of Voorhees Hall before student film screening at The 2014 United States Super 8 Film and DV Festival held at Rutgers University. This is the first time at the festival that five finalists' films from the same college were screened. The thirteen finalists' films were selected from over 123 works submitted by film and video makers from around the world.

busy. Not only is he now working towards his bachelor's degree, he has recently wrapped up production on his own reality show.

Some people like to write off BCC because of the stigma that community colleges (and especially schools in the Bronx) tend to have. These five students are breaking the mold; they are showing that in a quiet little space in the Bronx, we filmmakers can make some real noise and compete with any other programs.

Students interested in further information about the Media and Digital Film Production Program or Media and Digital Film Club may contact: Prof. Jeffrey Wisotsky, Meister Hall C02, jeffrey.wisotsky@bcc.cuny.edu.

Professor Makes a Lasting Impression

By Sherri Dillon

Each semester students and faculty enter into a partnership to advance one another's understanding of the world. Faculty hope to teach and inspire the next generation in subjects, and students keep faculty on their toes and up to date with modern times. Just like in any partnership success or failure, depends on the efforts put in by both parties, yet when a student succeeds or fails to succeed, it is only the student who receives acknowledgement. Phi Theta Kappa would like to bring acknowledgement of the efforts faculty commit to the partnership not by complaining about the terrible, but by announcing and thanking the outstanding. Professor Dawn Cotter-Jenkins is one of the outstanding. To her students she is an "upbeat inspiration." Her students know she is preparing them well for the future because she provides a plethora of additional information, videos, and websites as well as "provides clear instances where the course is relevant and skills learned can be utilized."

Professor Cotter-Jenkins made quite an impression on her students. The first day of classes, she started a passionate rant about Bronx Community College's low graduation rate, and challenged everyone in the room to raise that statistic through their own success and peer encouragement. She knows her students' struggle, and appreciates their "fighter" spirits. An immigrant citizen herself, Professor Cotter-Jenkins struggled though her school as a child who was never at any school long enough to fit in and make friends. Attending fewer than two years at any school she was in contact with, and moving from England to Trinidad, back to England, and then to Louisiana during a time when her skin tone was definitely an issue she sees as a major struggle in her life, but also as the source of her independence and understanding of the importance of having cultural acceptance for one another.

Professor Cotter-Jenkins did not always know what career path she wanted to follow. Inspired by Dr. Maya Angelou for her brilliant command of dialectics and vocabulary in six languages that draws respect and interest worldwide and having in high school participated in Future Teachers of America program and as a tutor, she feels she has found her dream career in teaching. She takes her position seriously, and her biggest peeve is when she sees students not trying to discover or reach their potential. She attributes her success in life to her drive to always be better today than she was yesterday, and tries hard to



Professor Cotter-Jenkins

encourage those she interacts with to do the same.

The main message Professor Cotter-Jenkins has for students is to live life to the fullest by challenging yourself, trying new things, and seeking new adventures and horizons; "take breaks if you need to, celebrate milestones such as college graduation, but instead of becoming complacent, keep moving toward new adventures." To sum up her message she offers a quote from Arthur Ashe, "Success is a journey not a destination."

For all her efforts toward student success in and out of the classroom, Professor Dawn Cotter-Jenkins is being acknowledged as an outstanding faculty member. Thank you for going above and beyond to inspire, encourage, and support student success. Thank you for stepping up and truly supporting Bronx Community College's faculty/student partnership of learning. Thank you.

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“I Am Not My Credit Score!”

By Marcus Charlton



It is a tragedy that people seeking employment can be discriminated against when applying for a job. It is even more tragic that people did not even know that they were discriminated against. Even those who are aware of it may often feel powerless to do anything about it.

Currently, employment credit checks allow employers to check your credit history. Credit agencies, eager to make money on their product (your credit information), have

sold the idea to employers that a person’s credit history determines how good of an employee that they will be. However, there is no evidence of one’s credit history having any correlation with their ability to work.

On top of that, credit reports are not accurate. Credit reports may include mistakes such as confusing you with another person or wrongly attributing transactions to you. The fact that minorities are often the ones with lower credit scores due to external factors like predatory banking practices also makes the use of credit histories in employment a serious matter of economic injustice.

NYPIRG and other organizations have been leading the fight against employment credit checks. There have been attempts in New York’s City Council and even in the federal government to ban this practice. Recently, members of the City Council have announced that they

are reintroducing a bill that would ban employment credit checks.

On Thursday, April 10, 2014, Bronx Community College students joined NYPIRG and other organizations for a press conference announcing the reintroduction of this bill. Leading up to this event, NYPIRG has been informing the BCC community about this practice and inviting students to the press conference. For those who were not able to attend, they were encouraged to call their City Council member and urge them to support this bill. As constituents of the City of New York, they are in a perfect position to see this practice banned.

As we begin to see graduation around the corner and consider job prospects, employment credit checks must be banned to ensure that student debt doesn’t price us out of a job we deserve.

A Letter from a Concerned NYPIRG Member

Dear Editor:

The more we learn about high-volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing, better known as fracking, the more we see the grave danger it poses. We have an obligation to pass on a safe and clean environment to the next generation; however, as we have seen in places like Pennsylvania and Ohio where fracking is already taking place, this drilling method is anything but safe and clean. Instead, fracking has wreaked havoc with its toxic chemicals, enormous water usage, methane releases, and diesel-powered trucks tearing through rural communities.

The question of whether or not to allow fracking in our state rests with Governor Cuomo. Recently, I joined other New Yorkers in protest outside a fundraiser at the Doubletree Hilton in Tarrytown to urge the Governor to heed the warnings of what fracking has done elsewhere and do the only responsible thing: ban fracking. The only way we can ensure a safe environment and clean energy future for generations to come is to hold Governor Cuomo accountable to stand up for all New Yorkers by banning this danger to our water, our air, and our state’s future.

Sincerely,
Bryan Wigfall
Project Leader for Clean Air and Energy
NYPIRG at Bronx Community College



Supporting the Hungry and Homeless

By Richard Feliz and John Okrah

Every semester, NYPIRG unites to address the problems of hunger and homelessness in the Bronx by coordinating actions here on campus and in the wider community. This semester, NYPIRG’s efforts came out in our Bottles for Bread drive, Peanut Butter and Jelly Jam, and serving at local pantries.

For the Bottles for Bread Drive, our goal was to collect as many bottles as possible which would then be exchanged for cash. We also posted signs and did tabling all over the campus to make students aware of this drive and how they could contribute to this cause every semester. After collecting several bags of bottles we walked to our nearest supermarket to exchange each and every empty bottle for cash.

Thanks to our NYPIRG interns, volunteers and students we collected over \$50 worth of bottles to buy bread and peanut butter and jelly. NYPIRG, as well as the Economics Club assisted during the PB&J Jam by making and delivering the sandwiches to Part of the Solution Food Pantry.



On the April 14, 2014, NYPIRG members volunteered at Creston Baptist Church. Members from

NYPIRG’s BCC chapter went to Creston Baptist Church to prepare food packages and coordinate distribution to those who are in need. In addition to Project Coordinator Armando Chapelliquen, BCC students John Okrah, Richard Feliz, Scarlet De La Cruz, and Ivana Floyd participated in this volunteering event CUNY’s spring break. The program began at 9 AM, and distribution ended at 2 PM. The event was so interesting because everyone found it a joy to help people who needed help.

About a hundred people came to collect the food. To organize distribution, they were given numbers so when their number was called, they would just come and pick up the food. As students, we showed that we care about our community, feel their pain, and were happy to give back.

It was very much fun taking part in helping our community because many generous students and volunteers were involved in this event to put an end to hunger and homelessness.

Campus News

B&H Photo, Video & Pro Audio Holds a Training Day for MEDP Students



Students in the Media and Digital Film Production Program (MEDP) received training in the use of the new Black Magic Cinema Camera. B&H staff members, Zeljko Cvijanovic, Chros Fain and Danielo Garcia also distributed B&H Edu cards for student discounts and educational materials for future student training. B & H Photo, Video & Pro Audio is also a proud sponsor of the annual BCC Film and Video Festival.

MEDP Students Judge Panasonic 2014 KWN Competition



Seventeen students and alumni in the BCC’s Media and Digital Film Production Program (MEDP) served as preliminary judges of their high school and middle school entries in the Panasonic 2014 Kid Witness News Video (KWN) Competition.

KWN started in a New Jersey school in 1989. This is the 25th anniversary of the program and the fifth year that BCC MEDP students served as the preliminary KWN judges. Today, 622 schools worldwide participate in KWN program. Panasonic, in conjunction with local public school systems, supports KWN teams in 75 participating schools in the U.S. and 29 countries internationally.

KWN is a hands-on video education program with an emphasis on team-centered learning that encourages students to develop valuable cognitive, communication and organizational skills through the use of state-of-the-art, high definition video products and technology, provided by Panasonic. Using this equipment, students are free to communicate stories that are important to them and their communities. Under teacher supervision, students research, write, act in, produce, direct and edit a variety of videos which bring to life subjects they study in school and/or encounter in real life situations. In other words, it is “The World through Their Eyes.”

Mildred Iatrou Discusses Her Work on Hollywood Feature Films

Mildred Iatrou, supervising sound editor at 20th Century Fox Studios, lectured on the art of sound in feature films with members of the Media and Digital Film Club. While at Fox Ms. Iatrou has worked with some of the best contemporary filmmakers including Steven Spielberg, Cameron Crowe, Denzel Washington, Adam Shankman, and James Mangold. And Iatrou’s work as an ADR supervisor has brought her together with actors like Tom Cruise, Anthony Hopkins, Helen Mirren, Bradley Cooper, Hugh Jackman, Bryan Cranston, Russell Brand, Cameron Diaz, and Ashton Kutcher, just to name a few. “Every day on every film presents new challenges and opportunities to expand my knowledge of sound and its impact on storytelling.” In 2012 she was invited to become a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



(From left to right): Ronald K. Gray (Cinematographer - Branford Marsalis: The Music Tells You), Adrian Best (Videographer - Good Morning America), Prof. Jeffrey Wisotsky and Mildred Iatrou pose with students in the Media and Digital Film Production Program. Gray, Best, Wisotsky and Iatrou were classmates at CCNY’s David V. Picker Film Institute.

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CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE
MEMORIES & FRIENDSHIP
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
COMMUNITY SERVICE
SCHOOL SPIRIT
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For more information about joining or starting a club, contact the Inter-Organizational Council office:
BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Roscoe Brown Student Center, Room 309
718-289-5201/5962
www.bcc.cuny.edu/studentlife

Campus News

John F. Davis, Production Designer and Storyboard Artist, Lectures to Media and Digital Film Club

As a storyboard artist and illustrator for over 75 major motion pictures, John F. Davis has designed camera shots and scenes for directors such as Sydney Pollack, Martin Scorsese, Sam Mendes, Robert De Niro, Baz Luhrmann, Lasse Hallstrom, Jonathan Demme, M. Night Shyamalan and Barry Sonnenfeld, among many others, with an initial collaboration in 1983 with Jim Henson and Frank Oz. Dejan Georgevich (cinematographer) and John F. Davis discuss the collaboration between storyboard artist and cinematographer to Media and Digital Film Club members.

Georgevich is a respected professor of cinematography (NY's School of Visual Arts). He is also a national executive board member of the International Cinematographers Guild, Local 600, I.A.T.S.E., and member of the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC), and the Directors Guild of America.

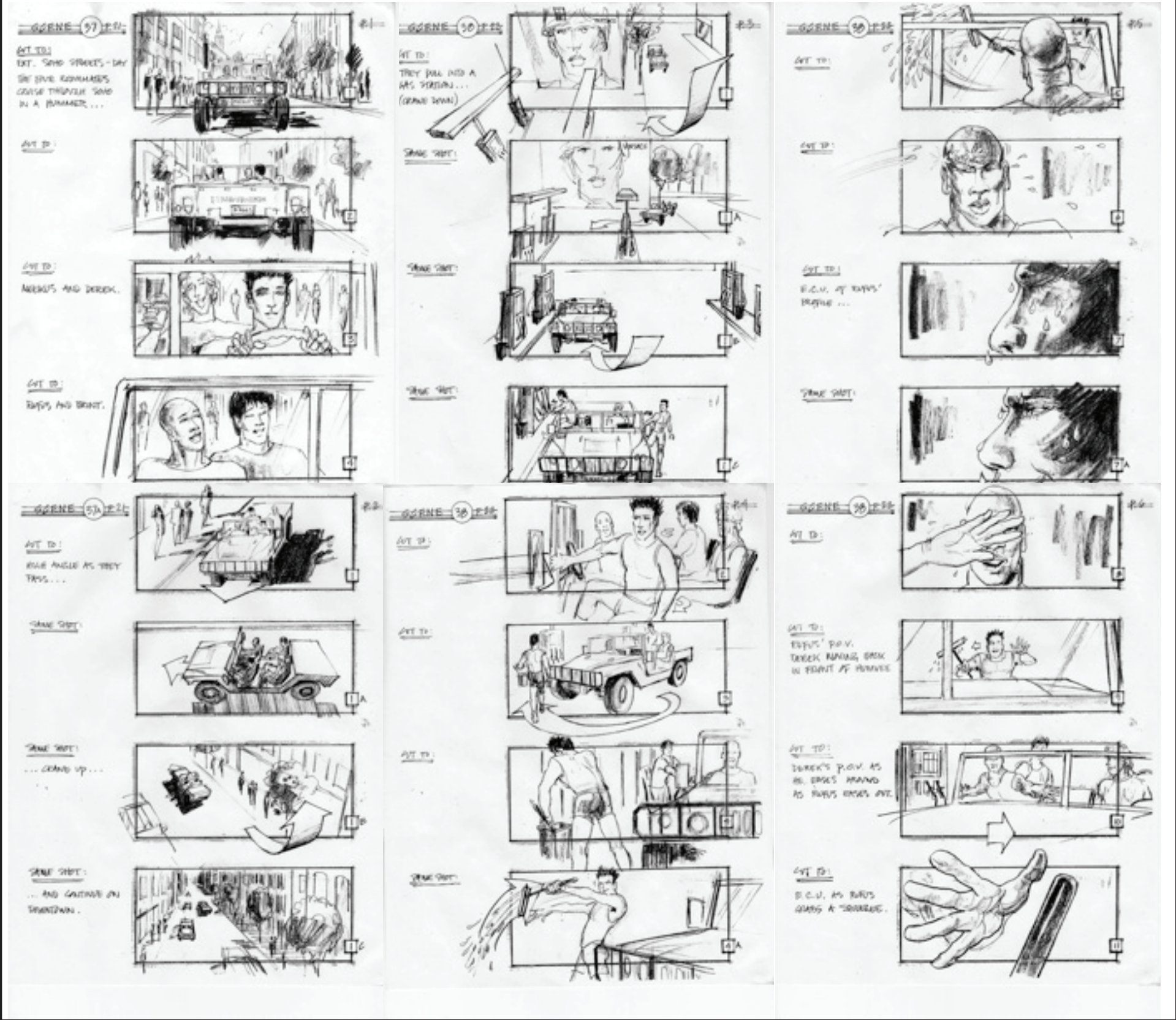
His cinematography credits also represent a diverse range of genres of over 500 commercials, a 3D TV production, *In Deep/Broadway*, featuring excerpts from five Broadway hit shows and a challenging live TV teleplay broadcast, *PBS Hollywood Presents: Copshop* (with Richard Dreyfuss, Rita Moreno, Rosie Perez) emulating the 50's Golden Age of TV.



BIO RESUME STORYBOARDS SET DESIGNS

JOHN F. DAVIS

ZOOLANDER
Director: Ben Stiller



Outside the Quad

Writing Center Tutors Gain from National Conference

Tampa, Florida: Berkeley Preparatory School, with Spanish Colonial architecture, outdoor stucco-roofed walkways and atriums lined with green palms and gardens, is a school for the smart and the privileged. It was the home of the 2013 National Conference of Peer Tutors of Writing, November 2-4, 2013. Generously supported by Academic Affairs and Bronx Community College’s Auxiliary Board, seven Bronx Community College tutors flew down to this conference to attend the many enriching sessions, to network with peers from across the country and to present their student survey project and findings. There is always a lot to report on, but a few choice moments provide food for inspiration. The title of this year’s conference was “The Year of the Writer,” and with the Bronx Community College Writing Center’s recent introduction of the ESL tutor-training project, every related session jumped out of the program and caught our attention.

The first session we went to addressed idiomatic expressions in English and the challenges they present to ESL students. There was a lot of discussion about conversation circles, which we, also, could start in our Writing Center. Out of this session and subsequent discussion of idiomatic expressions, I got the idea to reincorporate the ESL listening lab in the Writing Center. We could begin holding conversation circles and workshops. I thought about holding a workshop on idiomatic expressions that would include international students bringing their own idiomatic expressions which the group would translate, interpret and discuss. The students could also bring idiomatic expressions that

they may find difficult to understand. The workshop leaders would address the idiomatic expressions in some of the CATW topics.

In this same series of discussions, a PhD candidate spoke about his dissertation which addressed the preservation of a nearly lost Puebla language, Tewa. This kind of linguistic study is fascinating. He talked about the Tewa people’s push back against the preservation of their language through writing since there has never been any written form and because the Puebla people do not want their language to be appropriated by those who want to “capture it” in writing. It is another aspect of their culture that they fear could be stolen.

The notion of a people’s language is fragile, teetering high on a tight rope of human psyche. Language is at the heart and soul of cultural identity. It defines our worldview, the way we see reality. English-only believers cry “Don’t speak your language in our world!” ESL students struggle, not only to make another language their own, but to incorporate it into their thinking and behavior. The Tewa and many other Native American cultures struggle to prevent their language from becoming someone else’s. The struggles continue through generations. Writing Centers can be at the center of the teetering, helping to keep the balance and continuing to reach across to those who are trying to hold on to whatever it is they need to hold onto.



The Berkeley School in Tampa, Florida.



Devon Fagan (tutor since 2011)

The National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing is where writing centers from across the country meet and discuss “the good, the bad, and the ugly” where writing centers are concerned. This year’s conference was the best I have been to so far and I returned to BCC as a better tutor. I met some interesting people at this year’s conference and I made friends with a few fellow tutors as well. Their stories opened my eyes to new problems that other centers face and it gave me some relief that the face problems similar to ours. I attended several sessions, but one that stood out to me was “The Novice as Tutee: First-year Writing.” This session was about the methods tutors at Spelman College use when helping freshman students with writing assignments that all first year students have to complete. The main thing that stuck with me from the Spelman ladies’ session was that the writing center needs the support of faculty and the institution as a whole to reap the best results possible.

The presenters mentioned that professors who teach certain writing courses at Spelman have meetings before the start of each semester to discuss the assignments that students will have to complete for that semester. These dialogues lead to tutors being far more helpful to students when they show up for tutoring. The tutors can also offer their opinions on said assignments and make suggestions to professors. I believe that this type of writing center involvement would prove to be beneficial to students, professors and the college as a whole. Students would be able to receive better help from tutors, student pass rates would improve, and fewer students would be dropping classes and dropping out of college because of the frustration that comes with being unable to pass that one class that they need to graduate--something that we here at BCC know all too much about.



Devon, Chris, and Amanda networking with new friends at the convention.

The staff arrives in New York after a wonderful and informative convention experience.

Daniel Tehrani (tutor since 2009)

We were privileged to attend a national conference like this. It takes our work to the next level. We tutors come back from conferences feeling as if we are part of a national, even global, community of writing tutors dealing with similar issues using a shared theoretical foundation. At a conference like this we meet tutors from all over the world who have the same goal as we: to empower and educate writers; to ask questions that elicit critical thinking; to guide writers toward better writing without telling them what to write; to leave the pens in the hands of the students so we can see them in action and assess how well we’ve taught them. It’s a complex and recursive process that can feel isolating at times, but the conferences bring together hundreds of people who share in this process and have not only attached great importance to it but have, in many cases, allowed it to change them personally.

Just as we saw what we share with writing tutors across the nation, we also saw how unique we are. In a field of predominantly white upper-middle class tutors, our tutors are mostly people of color. It reminds me how much we have to contribute to the field. Where other writing centers talk about needing to increase cultural diversity, the BCC writing center is a model of multi-culturalism, a truly rare and special example of a group of people of all different backgrounds and beliefs working together closely—physically, emotionally, mentally—in an academic environment, dedicated to intellectual goals. Our writing center is a place of ideas—sometimes contentious—but because we are reflective and thoughtful practitioners, our differences enrich rather than hinder collaboration. We are a model for other writing centers just beginning to grapple with issues brought on by increasing numbers of students of color at their institutions. I’m reminded of the short film we showed at the last Northeast Writing Center Association conference which showcased the diversity of our writing center. The film was a hit with the conference attendees.

One presentation at the conference dealt with issues of race in the Writing Center. The audience discussion that followed was one of the most dynamic discussions of race and queer issues that I have ever participated in. One attendee, a tutor himself, remarked that what many people term offensive language is, in fact, “oppressive language,” and that it is often more accurate to use the latter term. I left feeling that it’s not enough for tutors to be sensitive to issues of race and class; rather we should educate ourselves and know how to intervene when such issues come up, whether the issue be in a student’s paper or in an interaction between people in the writing center.

Outside the Quad

Reflection by Christopher Moseley

The NCPTW (National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing) is an occasion for writing center staff from across the country to come together and share ideas and feelings about their experiences. Over the years, I have learned many different things from many different viewpoints and have come to understand that though we all have the title of “Writing Center,” we have many different problems and even more different ways of solving them. It’s amazing how one issue can be solved in multiple ways, depending on the writing center. That’s what this conference is about: the sharing of thoughts, the expression of emotions, and the visualization of successful writing centers that will create better writers in every field of study. At the 2013 NCPTW, that goal could not have been clearer. There is no doubt that I have walked away from this conference a better person, which can be seen in my academic life, my professional life and my personal life. There are four things in particular that I have learned from this conference. One was from a great session I attended and the others are from the guest and keynote speakers.

I’d like to introduce you the writing center of Spelman College. It is an intimate center where the tutee-tutor relationship is described as a sisterhood, as it is an all-female school. As in a sisterly relationship, tutors emphasize the importance of recognizing boundaries: when to give tough love, when to encourage, and when to overlook things for the greater good. In their session “The Novice as Tutee: First Year Writing,” Jenna Ray, Nicole Rabiou, Kendra Mells, and Jani Mikel all explained the uniqueness of their writing center and how they deal with first year students, who make up roughly fifty to sixty percent of their visits. These students are required to take specific courses as first year writers that will hopefully prepare them for their rigorous academic career at the college. In their session, the Spelman Writing Center staff looked to examine the writing identity of the first-year student and investigate the methods with which tutors can support these new writers effectively.

First, I must say that I found it astonishing how similar their writing center is to ours at BCC. They have a diverse student body filled with an enriching sense of culture. In too many instances I have found myself in a session catered to a specific population. It was refreshing to see that there are other colleges and universities outside of New York City that deal with such a complex and diverse student population as ours.

Secondly, I found their approach to managing first-year students to be very useful. Each of the Spelman tutors discussed traits and strategies that they find useful in a session with a tutee (particularly first year tutees). What I learned from this session is invaluable. If I were to explain one thing that stood out in the session, it would be how they stressed the expression of the writer’s own ideas and how first year writers can feel intimidated by the prospect of voicing their own thoughts in their paper. The presenters explained that in a lot of cases, students hesitate to incorporate their thoughts in a paper because they don’t feel that they have the credentials or authority to do so. These students often feel that since they aren’t highly educated, their opinions do not matter. That could not be any further from the truth, as the Spelman tutors expressed. They gave an example of one of their tutees’ using quotes for her whole her paper and having few of her own thoughts incorporated. The tutor photocopied the essay, began to cross out every quote, and showed her tutee how there was little of her own thought in the paper and that her essay was a regurgitation of what she had read. I find this to be a useful tool. It’s hard

explaining to a tutee that there need to be original ideas from her head and that the quotes are merely there to support her own ideas. Something as simple as this can show why this is important and gives the tutee something tangible that he can actually see and refer to, as opposed to just asking “where are your own ideas?” This was one of many things that were explained in great detail in this specific session.

Kristin Gillis, a guest speaker at the conference, gave a speech on her past accomplishments and the work she is currently doing with the Mulago Foundation which “looks for the best solutions to the biggest problems in the poorest countries.” She currently is the associate portfolio director and has the responsibility of managing where money will be allocated in order to help solve crises. During her speech she underscored the importance of goal setting, and I found myself intrigued by this notion. She described what her job entails and how when people offer her proposals to help with certain crises, she asks them to write an eight word goal. This way, there is a focus and direction for the program and it can be evaluated based on whether this eight word goal was met. We all know that setting goals is a necessity when trying to accomplish anything. But, try to describe your goal with eight words or less and you might see how hard but useful this can be. Gillis inspired me to keep clear, concise goals in mind whenever I take on a task. That can relate to every aspect of my life: personal, academic and professional.

We had our share of writing celebrities including Martin Baron, the current executive editor of *The Washington Post*. He was the keynote speaker for this event and is an alumnus of the hosting campus Berkeley Preparatory School. Accomplished in every sense of the word in the world of writing, Baron is. During his speech, he mentioned his previous employers such as *The Boston Globe*, *The Miami Herald*, *The New York Times*, and *The Los Angeles Times* and some of his awards which include “Editor of the Year” in 2001 by *Editor & Publisher Magazine*, “Editor of the Year” in 2004 by the National Press Foundation, and an election into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2012. And while this is impressive in its own right, nothing compares to his actual understanding of writing, and how he is able inspire writing by manipulating words to form masterpieces with both conceptual and practical relevance. During his speech he encouraged writers to be unorthodox, use creativity and write to be understood as opposed to conforming to what is accepted in the writing world. We could see how Baron detests what he considers “the law of writing,” feeling that these rules were formed out of preference and have no real value. In fact, they stifle creativity and thought, the very things that make writing so special. He used the Gettysburg Address as an example of great writing that possibly would have been scolded by today’s standard, as it contained 81 words in its last sentence and by today’s standards in it is inconceivable to have such a long sentence. Yet the Gettysburg Address is one of the most revered pieces of writing in U.S history. Baron’s speech was eye opening. I consider myself very lucky to have been part of the audience for his speech. I hope to have such courage when I write, letting go of these chains that often have me shackled.

I enjoyed all of the presentations that I attended. They have proven valuable in most aspects of my life. In my effort to explain the conference, I realize that I could never do justice to NCPTW 2013, and I encourage whoever reads my recap to take the time to attend a conference to have the experience yourself. Then maybe you’ll understand my emphatic praise for these conferences and what they stand for.



Archna Jaiman (tutor since September 2013)

As a new employee at BCC’s Writing Center, I was still exploring the pedagogy of tutoring this fall when I attended the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW) in Tampa, Florida. Director Jan Robertson has taken such pains to train me, and I have learned so much from readings, such as the 12 Steps of the Tutoring Cycle, which impart simple but essential lessons like the idea that a good tutoring session should open with a warm greeting. But my experience at the conference was eye-opening. There were sessions that encouraged dialogue on every aspect of tutoring imaginable from clothing choice to race.

Skimming the program, I was instantly drawn to a session called, “What’s a Little Barbed Wire Between Peers?: The Challenges and Possibilities of Peer to Peer Tutoring with Incarcerated Students.” There might as well have been a session on how to tutor in space, the scenario seemed so foreign, the obstacles so formidable. Once the presentation began, I was immediately engaged by the inspirational young presenters from Goucher College. With the support of professors and administrators, they had founded a satellite campus to Goucher College in two nearby prisons, the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women and the Maryland Correctional Institution - Jessup. The program offers bachelor’s degrees from Goucher College to students from these two “prison campuses” that are equivalent to what they offer students enrolled as traditional students at the main campus.

While I was impressed by the energy, dedication and vision of these young peer tutors, I realized we face many of the same challenges - or “opportunities,” as they

wisely called them. Many of their students work full or part time in the prison. All are non-traditional students who come from very diverse ethnic, religious, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Many are ESL students. The tutors are committed to providing an excellent liberal arts education and they hold their students (never referred to as “inmates”) to the same standards as students on their home campus. In order to support students not yet prepared for college, they established preparatory programs similar to the CUNY Language Immersion Program. Educational institutions often divide students into “good” and “bad” students and underserve the students labelled “bad.” They also separate student populations into those “deserving” and “undeserving.” People who have been convicted of felonies are often deprived of the right to vote, to work and even to get an education. Goucher’s program challenges the idea that there is a whole category of people that do not “deserve” a good education.

This was my first conference and I left feeling more confident in my abilities and committed to the project of educating BCC students, supporting them beyond the walls of the classroom. Just as we know that there is not one kind of student, we should not forget that learning needs to happen in many places. I believe that the Writing Center provides the most important support to the learning that goes on in classrooms, especially for non-traditional students. This sentiment was echoed by our peers in writing centers across the country. We have so much to learn from each other.

Outside the Quad

Help Us to Help You:
Reflections on Designing a Student Survey for the Writing Center
By Anjali Jaiman and Jose L. Reyes Medina

We live in a data-driven society; data means money, data means power, and many believe data means success. In spring 2012, along with Shazia Alam, we, Anjali Jaiman and Jose L. Reyes, started to create a survey to capture students’ opinions about our writing center at Bronx Community College (BCC). We thought our jobs were so cool, and we wanted other people to realize how awesome our center was. The tutors in our center told stories of moments of brilliance we helped elicit, fascinating sessions, intellectual connections and meaningful friendships. Corey related a student’s joyful realization that he finally had a coherent organization for his essay. Daniel described a student’s creative manipulation of sentence structure after struggling with syntax for weeks. Shazia described her scaffolding approach to teaching how to correct a fragment, and all of the handouts she had collected for student to use for practice. We loved the stories, but we wanted more than stories; we wanted data.

We had three objectives for our survey. First, we wanted to evaluate the writing center. We wanted to know if students believe that the writing center had a deep impact. Does the writing center help them to feel more confident as writers? Do they like writing more or do they feel their grades improved after they came to the writing center? We also wanted to evaluate the practices of individual tutors. Every semester we have two full days of staff development, and we have mentor groups that meet throughout the semester with the goal of improving our practice as tutors. We wanted to know if tutors effectively practice writing center philosophy. Are tutors asking Socratic questions instead of telling students the answers? Do they listen to students or do they talk a lot? Are they effectively using handouts? Finally, we had a specific research question. As tutors at the writing center, we come from diverse backgrounds and speak a variety of languages, including French, Spanish, Urdu, Farsi and Bangla. Many times, we conduct bilingual sessions with ESL students, and we wanted to know if this had an impact on the success of the tutoring sessions.

We went into this project without much background in survey design or data analysis but with a lot of passion for the project. In fits and bursts, over the course of two years, that passion led us to sacrifice early mornings before work and Friday evenings to draft and re-draft the survey, analyze questions, enter data and examine the results. The process was not always smooth. Sometimes, we fought zealously over design, theory and objectives. Ironically, that is what made this project fruitful and rewarding.

One ongoing debate was over the wording of questions. The writing center serves many ESL students, and our concern was that many students might not understand the language of the questions. So, we piloted the survey with ten students from different levels. The students filled out the survey in front of us, and we took notes on where they paused and where they had questions. At the end, we asked them which parts of the survey were confusing. Using these responses, we edited the survey three times, attempting to improve the language and the scope of the survey.

Finally, we had a draft that we felt was acceptable and we ran it between the summer and the fall of 2012. That summer we learned about sampling and about effective distribution of surveys. In total, 165 surveys were collected in a colorful box that appeared to have been designed by kindergarteners. In spite of the high level of participation, we learned that paper surveys present some difficulties—many students do not fully fill them out or choose multiple answers, and sometimes these surveys are not properly copied.

With support from Chris Efthimiou from BCC Institutional Research, we began the Sisyphean task of entering the surveys into an Excel spreadsheet. As we did what is probably the most boring part of surveying, we began to edit the survey again, noticing patterns in the student responses. This was the moment when we realized that having some background in survey design would have been pretty good. There were redundant and confusing questions and questions that did not capture what we were looking for. There were concepts that, we realized, a student survey would never be able to capture. We made an exhaustive list of correlations between different questions. For example, if students have bilingual tutoring sessions, do they feel “more confident in [their] writing” or do they “like writing more?” We went to Chris and asked him to help us use the data to answer such questions.

All of this work culminated in our 2013 NCTPW presentation entitled “Help Us to Help You: Designing a Student Survey for the Writing Center.” We gave writing centers from around the country the opportunity to pick apart our survey. We challenged them to look at the survey critically, asking “What could have been improved?” The workshop created a space for a group of twenty five participants to discuss best practices

for student survey design and ways that writing centers can measure their success.

This project opened our eyes to more complicated issues around how we measure and use data in our society. Increasingly, data is used to evaluate the success of educational enterprises. Graduation rates and test scores can effectively be used to motivate institutions, teachers and individual students. These statistical pieces of information, however, can only show us some correlations which we then extrapolate into probabilistic cause and effect relations.

The writing center has data on frequencies of attendance, and we wanted other indicators of our success. The effects of the writing center on graduation rates and test scores are important pieces of the puzzles, but can they paint a complete picture of what happens at the writing center? A student survey is valuable because it centers on students’ voices, and it gives them the opportunity to have their own input on what defines effective education. Overall, our survey found that students value the writing center. Overwhelmingly, our data suggests that students feel positively about their tutors, their tutoring sessions and the writing center’s impact on their college experience.

We could dismiss this data by arguing that students answered positively in order to please us. But that positivity may result from the intense one-on-one intellectual relationships in our center, relationships which can serve as anchors to school. The immediate impact of those intellectual encounters— whether they happen once for 30 minutes or three times a week for a year— might not be measurable; however, our survey suggests that such encounters are happening.

So, if the results of our survey are all warm and fuzzy, what is the value of a student survey? Well, one of the things that we learned is that quality improvement will come from looking at variation in positivity. That means comparing areas with very high frequencies of positive feedback to areas with lower frequencies of positive feedback. For example, 89.5% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Since coming to the writing center, I am better able to see my own mistakes,” while 75.8% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “During this session, my tutor made me think.” So, students believe both that their proofreading skills have improved and that they engaged in critical thinking during their session. However, there is a difference in the frequency of positive responses to these two statements. This suggests that encouraging critical thinking is an area we can improve at the writing center. Of course, the next step is figuring out how exactly to achieve that improvement. Data can suggest a direction for quality improvement, but it does not offer us a specific strategy. The challenge then is not what to do, but how to do it.

We also learned that evaluating specific tutors through a survey might be the wrong approach because the evaluation of a particular tutor is especially situational, involving the specific tutor, the tutee, and the subject. The beauty—and difficulty in terms of measurement— of a tutoring session is that it is dialogic and dynamic, so it is hard to use one checklist that always applies, session by session and moment by moment. A good tutor has a tool box with an array of teaching techniques, and the tutor needs to select which approach may work on an individual basis. Good practices, after all, often depend on the content of the conversation and the individuals involved.

Tutor evaluation has to be a much more dynamic and supportive process. We can have mentors, for instance, observe a tutor and offer feedback then collaboratively come up with solutions. We also can tape record ourselves during sessions and see what we could have done differently, what we did well and what patterns emerge in our tutoring practice. We can even interview students, especially regulars, after a session, obtaining useful qualitative data. We have already implemented some of these methods as part of tutor training and mentoring.

Public education has become high stakes and increasingly involves checklist evaluations of educators and institutions. Data, we believe, helps us measure our growth and progress. Our survey found that students feel that the writing center has had a positive impact on their academic lives. Such results are valuable because they give insight into what students think, but also because the variations in their positive responses suggest directions for improvement. However, data is just one useful piece of a larger puzzle. In the drive to quantify success, we may be overlooking important aspects of teaching and learning. The fact that something cannot be measured with numbers doesn’t mean that it does not have a permanent impact on a student’s life. Ultimately, we need mixed methods to truly evaluate and improve the writing center.



Final Thoughts by Jan Robertson

Anjali Jaiman and Jose Reyes, along with Shazia Alam (who was unable to attend this conference) worked diligently to create a student survey which would reflect the progress that students make when coming to our Writing Center. They learned that creating such a survey and assessment was not a quick and easy job, but through trial and error, they explored many possibilities and outcomes. Working with Chris Efthimiou, they learned about tabulations, cross correlations and the possibility of further research. They presented their findings to a full room of NCPTW attendees at 9 am. Their presentation, for which they used PowerPoint and a hands-on activity engaging the participants, was received with praise and gratitude.

Each conference the Bronx Community College tutors attend becomes a more enriching experience than the last. We have begun to form relationships with many of the regular attendees, including the professors and Writing Center directors from colleges and universities all over the country. What Bronx Community College can feel most proud of is not just the networking and continual extending of the boundaries of our college as a whole, but also the work that our tutors are doing and the scholarly contributions they are making to the world of rhetoric and composition, as well as Writing Centers.

Campus News

Eminent Scholar from the University of Vienna and the Salzburg Global Seminar Impresses BCC's Muslim Student Association

Dr. Farid Hafez, a professor at the University of Vienna and the Salzburg Global Seminar's Global Citizenship Program, addressed a large group of students sponsored by BCC's Muslim Student Association in New Hall during club hours on Thursday, May 8, 2014. A leading expert on Islamophobia and racism in Europe, Dr. Hafez presented an historical overview of issues facing Muslims in both Europe and the United States.

From the beginning of his presentation he engaged the students and other attendees, asking about their experiences with prejudice in the US, and in New York specifically. He was quick to encourage the students to define themselves and to not let any negative acts directed towards them prevent them from hard work at BCC to reach their goals.

Dr. Hafez also dispelled any notion that he was going to make scapegoats of any one group in his wide-ranging discussion of Islamophobia and racism. In fact, in response to one question, he noted that there has been a long-standing positive relationship between Islam and Judaism in Europe.

Students expressed their gratitude to Dr. Hafez for taking time to speak with them and invited him back. He has been in New York since March on a fellowship, and he and his family will be returning to Vienna soon.

For his part, Dr. Hafez stated that the reception that he received at BCC was warm and heartfelt, and he stated that he appreciated the attention the students gave to his remarks and that they so thoroughly engaged him through their questions and comments.

This presentation was a follow up to a lecture he gave in 2013 at Queensborough Community College, also a CUNY Salzburg Global Seminar partner. During that visit last year, he worked with Professor Andrew Rowan and Ms. Melissa Kirk, former director of student life at BCC, and Professor Lorena Ellis from Queensborough to bring a well-received panel discussion to Deutsches Haus at New York University – *Black History in the German World* – which also involved scholars from Fordham University and Columbia University. BCC and QCC were invited guests of NYU.

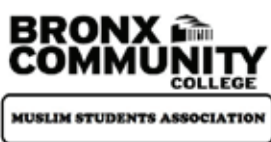


MSA president welcomes Dr. Farid Hafez to BCC.



Dr. Hafez takes questions from MSA students.

Dr. Hafez discusses points from his presentation with Dr. Ismail Kamal (Department of Chemistry and Chemical Technology).



BCC MSA invites you to their spring 2014 Event.

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Time: 12:00pm – 1:45pm

Location: North Hall and Library Building (Room 109)

- Event:** 1. Islamophobia and Racism
2. Awarding Dedicated MSA members

Speaker: *Dr. Farid Hafez* (University of Vienna, Austria)

(He's an author, lecturer and a visiting scholar to many universities around the world such as Colombia University, Indiana University in Bloomington, University of Minnesota, University of Chicago and New York University.)

For more info, visit: www.faredhafez.com

Refreshments will be served

There are lots of gifts to take home with you; so don't miss the excitement

This event is open to **ALL BCC STUDENTS**.

For further information contact: Dr. Abass Abdullahi (Biology Department)

718-304-4413 or email: bcc.msa@outlook.com



MSA club members ready to welcome other students to the event.

The Global Lens

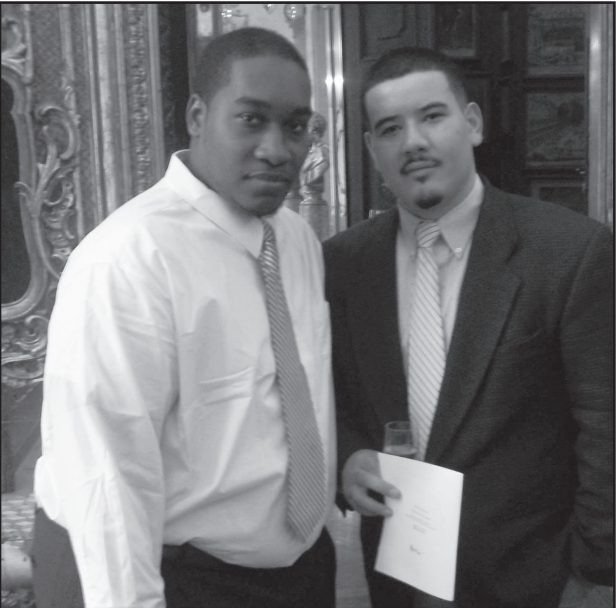
BCC Joins KCC and QCC to Attend the Salzburg Global Seminar

From April 12 to April 19 six BCC students joined with groups from Queensborough Community College and Kingsborough Community College to participate in the annual Global Citizenship Program (GCP) at the Salzburg Global Seminar. Traveling more than 4,000 miles, Sherri Dillon, Shawn Lackerson, O’Brien Awuah, Machirouf Koli, Anuoluwapo Bolarinwa, and Michael Segarra plunged into an intense work of exploring global themes and issues associated with global citizenship, from lecture/discussions, to group projects, to a memorable trip to the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.

After arriving in Salzburg at 2.30 PM on Saturday, April 12th, students

encountered their first session at 4 PM, followed by a tour of the beautiful buildings and grounds, dinner, and an evening lecture as students grappled with current issues and historical events all related to the Seminar’s theme: *Global Citizenship: America and the World*. Lecture/discussions were given by a faculty from Europe and the United States.

A Salzburg forum will be held in fall 2014 with students and faculty who have attended the GCP. A BCC Broadcast announcement will be made at the beginning of the semester giving the date, time and location for the forum as well as information for students about the application process for the spring 2015 GCP.



Shawn and Michael enjoy the pre-concert reception in the Venetian Room.



Students, faculty, and advisors wait for the classical piano concert to begin prior to the closing night banquet.



(From left to right): Kevin (Salzburg intern), Koli and O'Brien take a moment to pose and smile before returning to the lecture/discussion.



Students take a short break and enjoy the rare warm day between lectures.

Anu, O’Brien, Shawn and O’Brien lighten the mood after an intense afternoon at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.



Sherri shares a moment with Anne Yetman.



O’Brien prepares for his group’s presentation in Parker Hall.

The Global Lens



Sherri and Anu enjoy the reception before the concert and banquet.



Anu, Koli, Shawn, and O'Brien in global harmony with students from Kingsborough and Queensborough community colleges on the Schloss terrace.



(From left to right): Michael Segarra, Sherri Dillon, Professor Andrew Rowan, Marie Elgirus (director, Office of International Education and Study Abroad Programs), Shawn Lackerson, Anu Bolarinwa, Machirouf Koli, and O'Brien Awuah, after a discussion of their Salzburg experience. (Photo: Peter Swift)



The view from the terrace.



Another view from the terrace.



Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal
stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

I first heard this poem in a high school English course, and it has stuck with me ever since. At the age of three or so, my mother and dad separated. From that time my life was covered with the dark shadow that drug abuse casts. Both my parents were drug addicts, so my brothers and I went in and out of foster care for several years. Even though my father recovered, my mother didn't—she died from her addiction. Because of this past, education wasn't a serious ambition for me. I concerned myself with becoming a teen peer mentor, educating people on the horror of drug and alcohol abuse instead. My eldest brother, being my legal guardian at the time, knew this and

The Writer's Corner

My Journey to Graduation By C. Lionel Spencer

pushed me tirelessly to finish high school. It took me five years, and I barely finished graduating with a 67.5 grade point average. I didn't look at a college education as my saving grace; staying away from drugs would be.

In high school, while I was still finding my way, I began meeting amazing instructors. They were all English teachers, and they encouraged and inspired me to pursue my fragile dream of being like Langston Hughes and becoming a writer. I didn't think I was good at much other than singing until my English teachers told me so. They taught me how to go about getting my writing copyrighted and such. Some of them were poets as well, performing at our poetry readings which furthered my admiration of them. They became my first flesh and bones academic role models—I wanted to be like them. Moreover, I wanted to have the same impact of others as they had on me. The journey to be that man isn't finished, but from sixteen to thirty I have learned much. My journey to graduating this spring has been a long and trying but blessed on as well.

It was in the fall of 2007 that I decided to go back to school. I was working full time at a law firm as an office clerk. It was the best-paying job I had ever held, but those examples from high school were etched in my mind. I was sure by the age of twenty-three that I wanted to be an English professor. However, paying for school was a huge challenge, for though I made good money at the firm, I didn't make enough to attend school full time. So, I started by taking two classes that first semester. I took the next two semesters off to pay off what I owed, and in the fall of 2009 I went back taking two more courses. It was a frustrating process, for I knew that at that rate I would be well into my forties before I could become a professor.

However, with the encouragement of my best friend, I quit my full-time job at the law firm and started attending Bronx Community College full time in the fall of 2012. Even then it was a challenge finding my way

because I quickly learned that taking twelve credit classes while working and being an active member of my church couldn't work. I had to cut something out, and it couldn't be work for I needed to work to pay rent and such. This left school and church. I couldn't cut church, for it was my relationship with God and my church family that kept me half-way sane. So, from 2012 until now I continually took three classes each semester, striving toward my goal. It took courage to pursue my education this way when others that I admired took twelve credits and more seemingly with ease. Many have come and gone while now I stand to graduate this semester.

As I was settling in from work the other night, I opened a letter from school and it read: with the completion of the spring 2014 semester you will receive your Associates Degree in Liberal Arts. This is began is reflection.

I have come across so many students who feel the pressure to perform at the level of their peers and forget that they must navigate the best path for their lives with their abilities. Most of my peers and I don't have the same pasts; therefore, the only thing I can imitate is their hard work. That has served me well. I learned to be much more discipline. I have better learned how to asses my needs and wants. I have learned, for now, what I am made of academically.

Even though, my academic journey is far from over, I want to encourage all those whose paths seem longer than others: don't give up! Don't compare yourself with others. Life for you probably hasn't been a crystal stair, but keep climbing and pushing toward your dreams and goals. It may take you seven years to get your associates degree, but when you do, it will come with experience that is unparalleled.

My Visit Home By Ogunloye Elizabeth

‘Home sweet home’ people say, and that is what I wanted my visit home to be. But things do not always happen as you plan.

I arrived at the Muritala Mohammad Airport in Lagos, Nigeria, on Tuesday August 14, 2012 at about 9:20am. It was bright and sunny outside and I could feel the gentle breeze on my body. Then, my phone rang. It was my dad, and he was supposed to pick me up at the airport, but he called to tell me he was going to be late because of some official meetings. So he told me that if I could not wait for him, then I should get a cab to take me home. I have waited many years to see my family, now I'm out of patient so I decided to call a cab. My luggage were heavy for me to carry, so instead of walking to the cab park, which is some distance from where I am, I decided to call any passing cab.

Finally, I saw one. The driver is short and fat, he was wearing a sky-blue shirt and navy-blue trousers. He helped me put my luggage in the trunk and I got in his car, he was really nice.

Our journey wasn't so long but I saw a lot. Many things have changed and they look so much beautiful now. I usually don't fall asleep until it is night not to talk of falling asleep in a cab, but this time around I did. I woke up only to find myself tied to a metal chair tied to a pole. My hands were tied at my back and my legs were tied to the chair firmly. My mouth was wrapped with cloth. I tried to move, but I couldn't. “Could I be dreaming? No, I wasn't. Could this be what I am thinking? Yes, it is. You've been kidnapped!” Those were the thought that rushed through my mind, but what can I do when I could not even move. Now I wish I were some Charlie's angels or some super heroes, so that I could untie myself and escape. But “no”, I told myself “you are not even close.”

Then I heard some voices coming to my direction, so I quickly pretend that I was still asleep, although it doesn't make any difference. They were two men, both tall and dark. They search through my luggage that was laid in the corner of the room I was. They took nothing apart from my phone and left.

The sun sank rapidly. Years seem to have passed between the morning and now. So much has happened, it is just as if the whole world had turned upside down. But I am still alive, that is the main thing, I wonder what will be happening in my home now that they've not seen me. Hunger stole upon me so slowly that at first I was not aware of what hunger really meant.

Then again I saw one of those men, this time around I didn't pretend I was asleep because I was very hungry. He brought along with him some piece of bread

and a bottled water. Naturally I don't eat a piece of bread with just water, but I don't really care now as long as it's food.

The night was clear as if it had rained heavily the previous day. The moon was full. The shadows of shade trees reflect into the room and was almost as sharply defined as on a bright sunny day. It was late, but I feel like never sleeping in my life again. Thoughts runs through my head, “this is going to be a long night for me.”

In the morning the men came to my room, now I could see their faces clearer and with them was a figure I remembered very well, the driver that took me from the airport. I suspect I had falling asleep in the car due to something the driver had done to me which I can't remember, and that is why he was being nice to me. I'm like a ram brought to slaughter that has been well feed and cared for.

They brought out my phone and dialed a number I soon know to be my dad's. The other man, not the one that brought food to me last night, spoke with my dad. The usual ‘ransom’ talks went on. The phone was later held close to me so that I could speak. I didn't want to at first, but the driver brought a knife close to my throat, so I was force to say something. Then the phone was off and they left.

From the conversation on the phone, I have just till the evening before I am killed if my dad didn't bring some amount of money to the location they mentioned. Now I thought to myself, “this is not a movie but real life, will I actually be killed if my dad didn't show up?” All I could do now is to wait and enjoy probably my last moment in life.

The sun came down so fast, I think it is the fastest day I've ever experienced or maybe I am just exaggerating.

All three of them came in again. One of them, which I can't remember who particularly, said, “It's time.” “Time for what. Are they going to kill me? Is my dad not coming or are they taking me somewhere else?” These were the thought that rushed through my head as they untie me from the chair. Now I'm free from the chair, but my hands were still tied together at my back and so is my mouth with cloth. They took me and my luggage to a van.

Inside the van was so dark because I was at the back and there were no windows. The man that brought food to me last night stayed with me at the back of the van, while the other man that spoke on the phone with my dad and the driver where at the front. The driver was the one driving. We soon arrived at a deserted place and the car was pulled over. The other man got off and I soon heard him talking to a familiar voice. Oh yes, that's my

dad's voice! Now I feel relieved and I could hear the voice even clearer. Moment later that man came back and told the one with me at the back to get me and my luggage out of the van. I felt like a rabbit coming out of the hole after a very long winter. I could see my dad, but I was held from running to meet him. My dad was asked to bring the money out in exchange for me. He did just so. And I was let loose to meet him.

I'm so happy to finally be with my dad. The joy in me was so much that it busted into tears and rolled down my cheeks. I was so excited that I didn't notice when those men drove off. My dad was supposed to come alone which I thought he did, but he didn't. Unknown to those men my dad had brought in the cops with him, but they were hiding so as to safely get me back from their hands. Now that I'm safely with my dad, the cops came out of their hid out and pursues those men. I got into my dad's car with my luggage and some cops escorted us home safely.

I never thought I would see my home again, but here I am save and sound. I have heard cases of kidnappings that the victims never return alive. I am so happy to be alive and back home. My family were so happy to see me. They would have been also happy to see me if I haven't been kidnapped, but these happiness can be said to be double because they were happy to see me after so many years, and after being kidnapped.

I had a cold bath and ate some food. I was so tired I could not narrate the whole story for my family and a cop that was with us, so I was let to go to bed.

Today is Thursday August 16, and of course, 2012. The morning was so beautiful. I got off my bed and opened the curtains to see the beautiful sun rise, got dressed up and went to the dining room to join my family for breakfast. After breakfast I told them all that happened. Just as I was finishing my story two police officer came in and told us that the kidnappers were caught last night. The officers brought back my dad's money that was retrieved from the kidnappers and also told us that why trying to escape they shot one of them, and that one is dead. From the descriptions of the man shot, I knew it was the driver because he was the short man among them. What a sad ending for him! The other two were arrested and are in police custody and will soon be taken to court.

I learnt one very important lesson from my experience, always to be patient. If I had been patient, I wouldn't have been kidnapped and that would have save me the stress I and my family went through. I am so happy that I'm able to live to tell the story. I will always remember “better late than the late.”