What’s News

Thanking Veterans

QC saluted veterans on Zoom on Tuesday, November 10. President Frank H. Wu, Vice President for Student Affairs Adam Rockman, and Veteran Support Services Associate Director Dennis Torres were among the speakers at the event, which featured photos from activities held on campus in previous years; Larisa Yegorova was among the honorees. Veterans in the remote audience were invited to enter their name and military affiliation in the chat box. “We offer our thanks for all veterans have done in service to our country and continue to do in service to the community,” said Wu. “Perhaps no group of Queens College students and alumni better embodies the motto of our school, Discimus ut Serviamus: We learn so that we may serve.”

In a separate ceremony held outdoors in Manhattan on the same day, 77 WABC Radio honored several veterans—including
Torres—for their continued commitment to the veterans community of New York City. “I wasn’t able to attend the event in person due to our very own virtual tribute event,” he says. “But I was able to receive my plaque afterward.” The plaque reads: 77 WABC is proud to recognize and honor Dennis Torres for your continued commitment to the Veterans community of New York City. Your actions have helped to ensure that no American veteran goes forgotten, unrecognized, or unappreciated.

Alum Headed to Albany

Khaleel Anderson ’19 won the race to represent southeast Queens’s District 31 in the New York State Assembly, becoming—at age 24—the youngest Black man ever elected to that body, as reported by NY1. He will assume office on January 6, 2021. A neighborhood activist and Urban Studies major, Anderson—seen here with Tarry Hum (Urban Studies)—was profiled in QC’s semi-annual report in 2018.

Economics Professor Documents COVID-19’s Impact on Low-Income Students

Núria Rodríguez-Planas (Economics) recently completed “Hitting Where It Hurts Most: COVID-19 and Low-Income Urban College Students,” documenting the immediate and short-term educational burdens faced by QC students during the pandemic and whether these burdens were greater for low-income students. The study is the first of its kind to be published as a discussion paper.

Rodríguez-Planas conducted an online survey of more than 3,000 QC students between July
24 and September 18 and found that low-income students (defined as students receiving financial aid from the federal Pell Grant Program) were 8 percent more likely than general students to experience challenges while attending online classes—mostly due to child care responsibilities, lack of reliable internet access, being sick, or stressed. Lower-income students also saw their GPA decline compared to the rest of the student body, and they were 11 percent more likely to drop a course due to concerns that a poor grade would jeopardize their financial assistance.

**Pandemic Impact**

In addition, her findings showed that half of those students who were working prior to the pandemic have lost their jobs and close to two-thirds expect their annual household income to decrease because of the pandemic. Low-income students were also more at risk of experiencing financial distress, including securing basic food needs (46 percent higher) and shelter (62 percent higher), facing job loss (15 percent higher), or losing their financial aid (12 percent higher).

“Our findings underscore the need to target a variety of services and assistance to both QC’s general student population and low-income students to prevent the current public health crisis from further affecting our students’ academic continuity and performance, widening inequality and increasing poverty in New York City,” said Rodríguez-Planas.

Rodríguez-Planas, who holds a PhD from Boston University, has published research in numerous academic journals. Her work has been cited in *The New York Times*, *Science Daily*, *The Wilson Quarterly*, and many others. She previously worked at the U.S. Federal Reserve under Alan Greenspan, as well as at IZA in Germany, regarded as one of the best research institutes in Europe on labor economics. Her research primarily focuses on policy intervention aimed at vulnerable populations and the effectiveness of those policies.

**More Research Under Way**

“My research tries to understand what are the incentives and decisions of individuals regarding their employment trajectories,” added Rodríguez-Planas. “At the same time, I’m interested in understanding whether the different programs and policies improve the labor market experience of the most vulnerable workers.”

In the next few days, Rodríguez-Planas will conduct another online survey to learn about QC students' adjustment to life during this pandemic, as well as their receipt of non-tuition financial support from the CARES Act or other funding sources. In addition to helping QC better assist students coping with the new challenges they face, findings from this fall survey could be used to raise more funds for QC students. She is also in the process of evaluating the Chancellor’s Emergency Relief Grant Program, which was recently implemented to assist qualifying CUNY students financially during the pandemic. Rodríguez-Planas hopes the data she gathers can be used to raise more funds for CUNY students as well as better help them continue with college, prevent them from dropping out, and provide services to improve their online education and well-being.
The Queens Borough President’s Office is holding its eleventh virtual job recruitment fair today, Wednesday, November 18, from 2 to 3:30 pm. The fair is being held in partnership with CAMBA Inc., Child Center of New York, Commonpoint Queens, Council for Airport Opportunity, Empire Vets, Food Bazaar, Forest Hills Financial Group, Metro One Loss Prevention, New York City Children’s Center, New York City Fire Department, New York Life, Quality Services for the Autism Community, Queens Centers for Progress, R.A.I.N. Total Care Inc., U.S. Census Bureau, Watch Guard 24/7, and Workforce1 Career Center. Registration for the event has already closed, but the public can tune in to the livestreamed event at queensbp.org/recruitmentfair.

**Talk of the Town Halls**

All members of the campus community are urged to participate in the strategic planning process through four virtual town halls in November and December. Each session will focus on two of QC’s five institutional priorities. Reservations are required for attendance. To RSVP, click the link next to the date you prefer.

**Monday, November 30, 12:30 to 2 pm:**

**Tuesday, December 1, 12 to 1:30 pm:**

**Friday, December 4, 10 to 11:30 am:**

**Monday, December 7, 4 to 5:30 pm:**

A fifth town hall, on Thursday, December 10, 2:30 to 4 pm, will be an open forum for **students only;** [https://bit.ly/2IqB44V](https://bit.ly/2IqB44V).

**Information about the strategic plan is posted here**

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**From the Farm to the Pantry**

In what has become an annual event, the Queens County Farm Museum launched a drive to support the [Knights Table Food Pantry](https://bit.ly/2IqB44V), which provides stigma-free food for CUNY students in need. Through December 31, the museum’s store will accept donations of unexpired
canned goods; nut butters; cereals and crackers; dried rice, pasta, and beans; packaged fruit and vegetables; and shelf-stable milks.

QC established the Knights Table in fall 2018 as part of Governor Andrew Cuomo’s No Student Goes Hungry Program, a statewide effort to address the significant incidence of food insecurity among college students. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the pantry expanded its reach beyond QC’s student body to make food available to all eligible CUNY students.

“The services of the pantry are even more vital now as we continue to adapt to COVID-19-imposed challenges,” said President Frank H. Wu. “Our students benefit from both the tangible results of our partnership with the Queens Farm and the cooperative model that it provides—an approach that is needed now more than ever.”

“No one should go hungry,” said Jennifer Walden Weprin, the museum’s executive director. “CUNY students represent the future of New York City. This food drive is an extension of our work to help feed New Yorkers. We invite the community to join us to serve those in need this season.”

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**Take an Unused Coat off Your Back**

Once again, QC is participating in the coat drive led by the nonprofit organization New York Cares. This annual campaign is even more important in a year that has caused widespread hardship and loss throughout the five boroughs. Although the college will not have on-campus drop-off site this semester, volunteers around the city and surrounding counties are making arrangements to accept coats in a manner that protects the safety of all involved. To donate a coat, or become a New York Cares volunteer, send an email to qccoatdrive2020@gmail.com.

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**Saving Lives by the Pint**

Reserves are shrinking at blood centers, as reported in a recent episode of “219 West,” the TV magazine produced by the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. (The relevant segment starts at 11:25.) Blood banks usually maintain an eight-day supply of blood; now local banks have enough for only three to four days. At the moment, schools, houses of worship, and other institutions are not holding their customary blood drives.
But blood centers are open and, to make the donation process as safe as possible, have introduced additional protocols that include taking the temperature of prospective donors and placing barriers around seats in the post-donation snack area. If you’re age 17 to 70, weigh more than 110 pounds, are in good health, and have identification, you can donate blood and help save someone else’s life. For more information, go to https://www.nybc.org/donate-blood/.

Wow! What a College

Among the 83 distinctions highlighted now in Wow are several related to the armed services.

#11, Victory Media designated QC a 2021 Military-Friendly® School and a Military Friendly Spouse School.

#15, A cargo ship was named Queens Victory in honor of the college, which hosted the Army Specialized Training Program during World War II.

#16, The World War II Veterans Memorial Plaza on the quad—a gift from Arnold Franco ’43 (pictured), who served in the war as a code breaker—is dedicated to the over 1,100 faculty, students, and staff who served in World War II.

Watch for social media featuring your favorite “Wows” about the “College of the Future,” as it was dubbed in 1937.
Anna Maria Bounds (Sociology) is quoted in a *National Geographic* article about disaster preparation. . . . Tarry Hum (Urban Studies) had an opinion column, “A Flushing Tragedy Underscores Acute Affordable Housing Crisis” published in the *Gotham Gazette*. . . . Michael Krasner (Political Science) will share his insights into the presidential election with the nonpartisan civic organization Let’s Talk Democracy on Thursday, November 19, at 5 pm. The Zoom link will be posted to www.letstalkdemocracy.org prior to the event. . . . Gregory O’Mullan (SEES) is featured in the documentary *City on the Water*. . . . Maaza Mengiste was interviewed by the New York Times for “the ‘Detective Work’ Behind a War Novel”, a Q&A about the research she did for her Booker Prize-nominated novel, *The Shadow King*. . . .

Francois Pierre-Louis (Political Science) was quoted by the *Haitian Times* in an article exploring Haitian attitudes about the U.S. presidential elections. . . .

Douglas Rushkoff (Media Studies) signed with W.W. Norton & Company to write *Survival of the Richest*, a book about the Silicon Valley mindset. "Exponential," a documentary series he will write and host, was greenlit for European TV and Netflix. Rushkoff’s graphic novel *A.D.D.* was purchased by AMC as a TV series, and he will be executive producer.

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The Q View is produced by the Office of Communications and Marketing.

Comments and suggestions for future news items are welcome. Send them to jay.hershenson@qc.cuny.edu.