What’s News

Stating Vision for College

In his first State of the College address, which was covered by the media, Queens College President Frank H. Wu announced plans for the creation of arts and business schools that draw on the expertise of faculty and new collaborations with corporate and community partners. His address, livestreamed on YouTube, was followed by a tribute to college staff who have continued working on campus during the pandemic. Anyone who missed the address can view it here.

Stars Come Out To Honor Marvin Hamlisch ’69 at Free Virtual Event
Clockwise from top left: Barbra Streisand (photo credit: Russel James), Johnny Mathis, Maria Friedman, Idina Menzel, Lucie Arnaz (photo credit: Michael Childers), Quincy Jones, Sir Howard Stringer, Melissa Manchester.

A galaxy of stars—Lucie Arnaz, Maria Friedman, Quincy Jones, Melissa Manchester, Johnny Mathis, Idina Menzel, Barbra Streisand, and Sir Howard Stringer—will be the presenters next Monday, March 22, at the 2020-2021 Marvin Hamlisch International Music Awards hosted by Queens College. Prizes in this contest for youth and emerging composers will be issued in the categories of film/movie scoring, classical composition, jazz, and musical theater. The awards celebrate the legacy of Marvin Hamlisch, one of America’s most decorated composers, who produced his first of more than 40 motion picture musical scores shortly after graduating from Queens College in 1969. The free event, open to the public, will include performances provided by the renowned Aaron Copland School of Music.

Composers from around the world were eligible and encouraged to compete, by registering online. “We are so grateful and humbled by the immense, diverse, and extremely successful participation of composers in all music genres worldwide,” said Betsy Walters and Peter H. Gistelinck, co-founding board members of the Marvin Hamlisch International Music Awards. “We are so grateful to all of our celebrity presenters for their unconditional support.”

“I speak for everyone at Queens College when we say we are so proud that Marvin Hamlisch is an alumnus of Queens College,” said Queens College President Frank H. Wu. “Nearly nine years after his passing, Hamlisch continues to impact the lives of so many through his work. We are honored to partner with the Marvin Hamlisch International Music Awards for this incredible event. Although this year’s celebration will look much different and is presented virtually, this is sure to be an exciting evening filled with memorable appearances and wonderful music.”

A portion of proceeds from event sponsorships will support the Marvin Hamlisch Scholarship Endowment at Queens College. Established in 1984, it is a merit- and financial need-based scholarship awarded to a graduate music student.
The ceremony, which is free and open to the public, starts at 7 pm on March 22 and will be broadcast simultaneously at www.hamlischawards.tv and on CUNY TV. Please click here for more details and here to register. View a trailer here.

New to the College

Rachél Fester joins Queens College this month as interim dean of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). She succeeds Cheryl Littman, who returned to the CUNY Central Office to become acting chief data strategist in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Like Littman, Fester will also serve as QC’s accreditation liaison officer to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Most recently, she was assistant provost for Assessment, Accreditation, and Institutional Effectiveness at Baruch College, where she led the development of its first institutional effectiveness model, and served a key measurement and assessment consulting role in development of its strategic plan for 2018-2023.

Fester is co-chair of the CUNY Middle States Council as well as an active member of both the CUNY Assessment Council and the CUNY Institutional Research Council. She holds a BA from Harvard University, an MA from the University of Chicago, an MSEd from the Austin W. Marxe School of Public and International Affairs at Baruch College, and a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, where she was a U.S. Department of Education Institute for Education Sciences pre-doctoral fellow in Interdisciplinary Methods for Field-Based Research in Education. Her research focuses primarily on access to and success in college and graduate education for underserved, low-income and/or first-generation students.

Littman spent nearly five years at QC. She came here in September 2016 to help establish OIE, which united institutional research (analytics and reporting), assessment, and accreditation under one umbrella to expand and systematize the activities in each area. For the past two years, she was deeply involved in technology implementation and utilization. Most notably, Littman served as a co-lead for the EAB Student Success advising and communication platform known as QC Navigate, working in partnership with Associate Provost for Innovation and Student Success Eva Fernández and a leadership team.

Safety First

The college also welcomes Anastasia Koutsidis, who just joined QC as director of Public Safety. A CUNY employee since 1998, she has spent the last eight and a half years at Guttman Community College, most recently as its director/chief of Public Safety. Koutsidis has more than 23 years of experience in the private
sector, having worked at Radio City Music Hall as a security supervisor. She is also a New York State-certified EMT.

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Queens College, in consultation with CUNY and various stakeholders, has announced the return of intercollegiate sports for the 2021 spring season. Baseball, softball, and men's and women's tennis will proceed with regular season and championship competition in accordance with East Coast Conference, NCAA, school, local, and state regulations pertaining to COVID-19.

The men's and women's track & field teams will not compete in the spring 2021 season due to the lack of competition available in the Northeast region.

"We are excited and hopeful for our spring sports to compete," said Rob Twible (Athletics). "We are U-KNIGHTED in ensuring our spring student-athletes do not miss a second season of competition, and we appreciate the efforts of our administration, medical staff, coaches, and student-athletes to get back on the court and field.

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The ConEdison Science, Technology, Energy, Environment, and Math (STEEM) Distinguished Lecture—a SEES Colloquium taking place on Zoom this Wednesday, March 17, at 12:15 pm—features marine geologist Deborah Kelley of the University of Washington. Kelley researches how submarine volcanoes support life in the absence of sunlight. Her video-illustrated talk will include a...
tour of deep-sea habitats off the Pacific coast as seen through the window of the Regional Cabled Array, an underwater laboratory that streams live data from over 150 instruments to shore around the clock. To attend this event, register here.

Speaking of STEEM, ConEdison undergraduate fellowships are available this year for interns in environmental science. To be eligible for the $1,000 fellowships, full- or part-time undergraduates in QC’s School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences must complete an internship in environmental sciences or related fields in 2021. The internship must involve at least a 135-hour commitment by the student during the summer or fall semester. Awards are intended for students holding unpaid positions, but that is not required. Students may receive this award no more than two times.

To apply, email a one-page resume and a 250-word summary of what you will be doing during the internship, and how this experience will help inform your academic and career interest in environmental sciences, to Jacquelyn Bracco jbracco@qc.cuny.edu by March 31.

Media Studies Advertises New Major

The CUNY Board of Trustees has just approved an additional major within QC’s Media Studies Department: advertising. “As a major with 42 credits, it is readily compatible with other programs,” reports Mara Einstein, chair of the department. The new major, which is subject to the approval of the New York State Education Department, is intended to emphasize the critical and practical skills needed in the fields of advertising and marketing, while also offering students the opportunity to specialize through minors or certificate programs. To learn all about it, register here for an introductory webinar on Thursday, March 18, at noon. This is not a one-time offer. Students who cannot attend then can watch the webinar later at the link that will be provided.

Food Pantry Sets Table in Ridgewood

Next Tuesday, March 23, from 10 am to 1 pm, the Knights Table Food Pantry will be Turning the Table on Hunger in Ridgewood. The food distribution event will be set up at Fresh Pond Road opposite 67th Avenue. Students have to register in advance and must wear masks and practice social distancing while picking up food. The college has identified other locations, in Queens and surrounding counties, to serve as distribution sites this semester. Schedules and locations will be announced to students via email.

The Knights Table Food Pantry is sponsored by generous grants from the Carrol and Milton Petrie Foundation and the Queens College Foundation.

This Week’s Big Idea

On Thursday, March 18, “Big Ideas” catches up with Daniel Kaufman (Linguistics and Communication Disorders) in Words’ Worth: The Effort to Preserve Endangered Languages. “Big Ideas,” an online video series created by the Office of Communications and Marketing, explores the exciting work done by faculty at Queens College. The series airs on the college’s YouTube channel and Facebook page.
Fields of Service

Last fall, Dave Fields marked his 50th anniversary of service in the Academic Senate, where he is the parliamentarian, a member of the Executive Committee, and chairperson of the Special Committee on Governance. As a senior university dean (at $1 annually) at the CUNY Law School, Fields is no longer a member of the faculty or staff at QC, but he’s worked on behalf of the college community for longer than most people on campus. The rules of the Academic Senate allow for Law School and Graduate Center students and faculty to serve on Senate committees.

His involvement in the Senate predates its existence. A double alumnus of Queens College—where he earned his bachelor’s degree in history and interdisciplinary studies and his master’s in urban studies—Fields was among the student protestors who negotiated in 1968-69 for the creation of a new body to replace the existing Faculty Council, then comprised mostly of tenured faculty and college administration. He went on to serve as special assistant to three Queens College presidents, associate dean of the CUNY Law School, Higher Education Specialist in the Governor’s Executive Chamber, and special counsel to four CUNY chancellors.

Open to Change

“We helped change the governance of the campus,” Fields observes. “The Academic Senate is open [by election] to all faculty members and students. Administrators can make motions but cannot vote unless they also run for seats on the Senate and are elected by their respective faculty group. Students make up a third of the Senate body and half of the membership of all Senate committees—a greater proportion than at any other school I know of.”

The Senate brought students into the mainstream of campus governance and operates with greater transparency than its predecessor, whose meetings were closed to non-members. Some of the Academic Senate’s most significant acts were to revise the rules by which deans are selected and to recommend the establishment of the CUNY Law School, both resolutions put forward by Fields.

In addition to his current Senate titles, he has, over a half-century, held six others: deputy chair of the Senate, secretary of the Senate, co-chair of the
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, member of the Scholastic Standards Committee, chairperson of the Elections Committee, and chairperson of the Course and Faculty Evaluation Committee. He also served as executive director and general counsel of the QC Student Union and currently serves on the board of directors. But he is best known as parliamentarian, an office he has filled since some time in the 1980s. He has served in this role for the University Student Senate, the CUNY Law School faculty, the New York Public Research Group, the National Student Association, and the NYC Charter Revision Commission. In this capacity, Fields is charged with explaining rules and procedures. “The parliamentarian’s job is to reduce debate about process per se and let people focus on the purpose and substance of the merits of any proposal,” he says.

He has no plans to step down. “I’ll stay as long as they’ll have me,” Fields vows. “I owe Queens College a huge debt and service is one way to pay it back. I have enjoyed working with the faculty, staff and students here. It’s been a tremendous experience that I recommend to everyone.”

*Heard Around the Virtual Campus*

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**John Dennehy** (Biology) received a grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health, to research novel strategies for treating biofilm-forming pathogens with phage
Stephen Farenga and Salvatore Garofalo (SEYS), Nathalia Holtzman (Biology), and Gopal Subramaniam (Chemistry and Biochemistry) won an $1,198,017 award from the National Science Foundation for “Preparing Highly Qualified STEM Teachers to Support Effective Learning in Remote, In-person, and Hybrid Learning Environments,” starting this summer.

Kimiko Hahn (English) has work included in She Holds a Cosmos: Poems on Motherhood, for which she wrote the foreword; she also published “The Zuihitsu and the Toadstool” in American Poetry Review.

Markos Papadatos, a proud QC alumnus, was nominated in four “Bethpage Best of Long Island” categories (Best Author, Best Poet, Best Blogger, and Best Long Island Personality) and won all of them.


Frank H. Wu is a participant in a CUNY TV town hall, “The Other Pandemic: Anti-Asian Hate in the Wake of COVID-19,” airing on Friday, March 19, at 10 pm. The program will be rebroadcast on Saturday, March 20, at 12:30 pm; Sunday, March 21, at 6 am; and Monday, March 22, at 7 am and 1 pm. The show can be seen in New York City on Spectrum & Cablevision/Optimum 75; RCN 77; Verizon 30; and Digital Broadcast 25.3.

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