What’s News

In-Person Work To Resume on August 16

CUNY has moved the start date for in-person work from August 2 to August 16, in response to requests for additional preparation time. “The decision to delay our return to campuses and offices grew also from our commitment to the protocols for health and safety walkthroughs that we developed in consultation with labor leadership,” Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez explained in a notice sent to faculty, staff, and students and posted online. Campus leaders and managers retain the flexibility to determine that some employees need to come in before August 16 to be ready for the start of classes on August 25.

CUNY will use the modified schedule to finalize a systematic, university-wide testing protocol. Starting August 16, anyone entering a CUNY facility will need to be fully vaccinated (two weeks beyond the last vaccination shot) or have a negative COVID-19 test taken within the past seven days. Employees who voluntarily provide vaccine information and supporting documentation in CUNYfirst will not need to undergo routine testing.

Fall Plans in Brief

President Frank H. Wu and other members of the administration will discuss QC’s reopening plan for the fall semester during virtual briefings on Thursday, July 29 at 6 pm, and Wednesday, August 4 at 6 pm. Audience members will have the opportunity to ask questions and share their concerns. Advance registration is required for attendance. RSVP for the briefings at...
https://bit.ly/2T7wHBr by 5 pm the day before the briefing you would like to attend. On the morning of each briefing, a Zoom link will be emailed to registrants.

**QC Receives NASM Accreditation**

The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), an organization that establishes standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees and other credentials for music and music-related disciplines, has conferred accreditation to Queens College/Aaron Copland School of Music.

QC/ACSM joins nearly 640 institutions accredited in the United States, such as the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, the University of Michigan, University of Delaware, and two dozen schools in New York State (including Eastman School of Music, Ithaca College, SUNY Binghamton, SUNY Fredonia, and SUNY Potsdam/ Crane School of Music).

“Queens College/ACSM is now the first and only CUNY school to have NASM accreditation,” reports Michael Lipsey, director of ACSM. To receive accreditation, ACSM had to demonstrate that its programs met standards set by NASM. Certain modifications were required, such as the creation of a B Mus in Music Education, which provides those students with hour-long individual lessons, and an MM in Conducting. “Many—actually, most—of the curricular changes to our undergraduate degrees were not to accommodate NASM, but to comply with New York State requirements that students be able to complete their degrees in 120 credits,” adds Lipsey.

Dim sum by the box was the order of the day on Wednesday, July 7, as President Frank H. Wu and his wife, Carol L. Izumi, hosted a luncheon to thank staff who have been reporting to campus, helping to maintain services and facilities, while most employees are working remotely.
Corps Values

More than 4,000 students have been placed in paid summer internships through the CUNY Recovery Corps. Over ten percent of those interns come from Queens College. Thanks to the efforts of Taruna Sadhoo (CUNY Service Corps) and Allan Edmond (Learning Collectives), QC has placed 450 students in in-person, remote, or hybrid positions. Recovery Corps interns work within the university or at one of many New York City organizations, earning $15 an hour for 150 hours—a total of $2,250.

Through the CUNY Dance Initiative (CDI), QC alumnus Jiemin Yang and his colleagues took steps to refine their repertoire at a rehearsal in Rathaus 101A on June 26. CDI, spearheaded by the Kupferberg Center for the Arts, offers residencies on 13 CUNY campuses to emerging and established New York City choreographers. Each year, about a dozen dancemakers from diverse cultural backgrounds are awarded a residency that includes an honorarium and studio or stage time. Participating artists present a master class or open rehearsal for CUNY students and/or community members; most residencies culminate with an informal showing or a fully staged performance.
The leaders of two important local institutions met earlier this month when President Frank H. Wu swung by Gino’s to introduce himself to its proprietor, Alfredo. The pizzeria should see a rebound in business as members of the QC community come back to campus.

The Louis Armstrong House Museum honored its namesake’s memory 50 years after his death with a block party featuring food, children’s activities, house tours, and of course, lots of music.
Everyone was up to code on July 12, when President Frank H. Wu greeted participants in this year’s Queens College-Google Computer Science Summer Institute Extension program. Presented online, as it was in 2020, the four-week bootcamp immerses incoming first-year students in computer science basics. QC began partnering with Google on the summer program in 2018, working with about 30 students each year.
Latin jazz band Supermambo headlined the opening concert for Live at the Gantries on the evening July 20. The free music series, presented by Kupferberg Center for the Arts in collaboration with Queens Theatre and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, moved online last summer in response to the pandemic.

Shane and Hannah Burcaw were the guest speakers on July 26, when the Committee for Disabled Students gathered via Zoom to mark the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Burcaws are known for documenting their inter-abled relationship through their YouTube channel, Squirmy and Grubs. Their presentation was followed by a trivia game based on facts about the ADA, with prizes awarded to the top three contestants.

**Giving Safety Their Best Shot**

As of the fall semester, CUNY students who want to participate in on-campus classes must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Anyone who receives the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine by August 10 will be able to meet the deadline. Individuals who have not already initiated two-dose protocols—the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines—will not achieve complete vaccination before classes start on August 25. For information about CUNY policies regarding
Three New York City teachers educated at QC—Azucena Quintuna, Jennifer Schecter, and Jonathan Schulman—have been recognized with Big Apple Awards. Presented by the city’s Department of Education, these awards celebrate public school faculty who inspire students, model great teaching, and enrich their school communities. In addition to continuing their outstanding work in the classroom, honorees will serve as Big Apple Fellows during the 2021–22 school year.

Quintana is a bilingual education teacher at PS 108, Sal Abbracciamento, in Brooklyn. Schecter teaches instrumental music at MS 158, Marie Curie, in Queens. Schulman teaches fourth grade civics and sustainability/English language arts and debate at PS 110, the Monitor School, in Brooklyn.

QC supported diversity and inclusion in June with a pair of Pride events last month.

On Thursday, June 3, from 7 to 8 pm, organizers from CUNY Law School, LaGuardia Community College, Queens College, Queensborough Community College, and York College hosted the CUNY Queens Consortium 2nd Annual Virtual LGBTQI+ Pride Celebration. The party featured live music, student performances, drag numbers, and cameos by community leaders, including City Council Member Daniel Dromm—Queens Pride co-founder—and other members of the New York City Council.
The 4th Annual CUNY Pridefest at Queens College was livestreamed on YouTube on Friday, June 25, from 4 to 6 pm. A DJ, PRIDE dancers, and other performers were on the lineup. Festival-goers were able to capture their favorite moments through a virtual photo booth.

Video footage from both the Queens Consortium Pride Celebration and the CUNY Pridefest will be preserved in the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives/CUNY.

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**McHugh Elevated to Top University Ranks**

In recognition of her exceptional scholarship and contributions to her field, Cecilia McHugh (School of Earth and Environmental Sciences) was named CUNY Distinguished Professor of Marine Geology with specialty in Sedimentology. McHugh is the first Latina to be named a CUNY Distinguished Professor. Working as nearby as Sandy Hook Bay and as far away as the South Pacific, she studies ancient sediment and maps sea floors to learn more about past earthquakes and perhaps, anticipate future natural disasters. Read more about her research [here](#).

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**Executive Transitions**

Summer is a time of change at Queens College, which is seeing the departure of several longtime executives and welcoming new personnel to campus.

Richard P. Alvarez, vice president for Enrollment and Student Retention since 2015, is retiring effective October 1, 2021. Alvarez has been supervising the areas of Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions, QC Hub, Enrollment Services, Academic Advising, and the Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Program. In addition, he oversaw the groundwork and creation of the QC Hub and the development and
Michael Das has joined QC as Title IX coordinator and director of compliance and investigations. For nearly three years, Das was a hearing officer for the New York City Department of Education, where among his duties he conducted administrative hearings regarding student violations of the student disciplinary code. Prior to that position, he was an assistant district attorney in the Bronx. A native of that borough, he holds a BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Law from SUNY Binghamton and a JD from the University at Buffalo School of Law.

Natanya Duncan is the new director of Africana Studies and Research Institute. Duncan comes to QC after teaching at Clark Atlanta University, Morgan State University, and most recently, Lehigh University. Her research interests include 20th century African American history, the modern African diaspora, the civil rights continuum, women and gender studies, and Diasporic women in social justice movements. She majored in history at Clark Atlanta and earned her doctorate at the University of Florida. Duncan succeeds Deidre Flowers, who served as interim director of Africana Studies.

Eva Fernández becomes interim provost at CUNY's Stella and Charles Guttman Community College on August 1, 2021. Fernández joined Queens College 20 years ago as a faculty member in the Department of Linguistics and Communications Disorders. Over the past 11 years, she has held a series of executive leadership roles in the Office of the Provost, including as director for the Center for Teaching & Learning, assistant provost for Teaching Excellence and Experiential Education, and associate provost for Innovation and Student Success.

Kristin Hart, chief librarian of Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library since 2017, moved over to CUNY as university dean for Libraries and Information Resources on July 6, 2021. Among other achievements, Hart reimagined the Rosenthal
Three-time QC alumna Simone Yearwood has been appointed acting chief librarian of Rosenthal Library. In her previous role as deputy chief librarian, Yearwood represented the library at campus, university, and national levels on issues and policies relating to research and scholarly delivery and communication.

SEEK Turns 55

The Percy Ellis Sutton Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge Program marked its 55th anniversary on July 15 with a virtual event featuring alumni, faculty, and staff. Presenters included Professor Emerita Jessica B. Harris, producer of the Netflix documentary “High on the Hog,” based on her book of the same name; Natanya Duncan, incoming director of Africana Studies; Barbara Williams Emmerson, former director of SEEK; and Margaret Prescod, former SEEK faculty. Alumnus Donaldson Conserve, founder of Black Male Professors and Researchers Collective and an associate professor of the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University, hosted a panel discussion of Black men in STEM.
HAP Show Commemorates Greek War of Independence

To mark the bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence, which started in 1821, the Hellenic American Project is presenting a virtual exhibition, *The Solace of Antiquity: Sketches and Drawings by John ‘Yanni’ Fotiadis*. Using charcoal, graphite, and Prismacolor pencil, Fotiadis depicts structures from Greek antiquity, such as the Parthenon and the Temple of Poseidon. These images are paired with passages and poetry to symbolize how the Greek “freedom fighters” of 1821 identified themselves with their ancient forbears, cultivating a national imagination that helped establish the modern Greek state. The show was curated by Nicholas Alexiou (Sociology).

Writing at Queens Publishes Latest Revisions

For the Spring 2021 edition of *Revisions: A Journal on Writing at Queens College*, students, staff, and faculty were invited to explore the theme, “I Write Digitally, Therefore I Am.” Contributors addressed the topic through essays, poems, and images. “We received a remarkable number of strong and varied submissions, and we’re pretty proud of this issue,” reports Kevin Ferguson, director of Writing at Queens, which publishes the annual journal. In a case of art reflecting life, this issue is available only in digital format.

In Memoriam

Robert Cowart

Vocal coach Robert Cowart, head of linguistic studies at the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, passed away. Cowart was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and Queens College. Widely admired as an expert in all aspects of languages for singers, he held master classes across the United States, Western Europe, Australia, Latin America, and Israel. Cowart began his affiliation with the Met in 1981 and joined the faculty of the Juilliard School in 1992.

Reynold Ruffins

Painter, illustrator, and graphic designer Reynold Ruffins, a QC professor emeritus, died at his Sag Harbor home on Sunday, July 11, at the age of 91. A native New Yorker, Ruffins studied at the High School of Music and Art and then Cooper Union, where he met classmates Seymour Chwast, Milton
Glaser, and Edward Sorel. Together, the four men co-founded Push Pin Studios, which created designs and logos for IBM, ATT, Time Life, and the U.S. Post Office, among a host of notable clients.

Leaving the firm to pursue his own projects, Ruffins went on to illustrate juvenile fiction, more than 15 titles in all. His work on *Running the Road to ABC*, a story about Haitian children going to school, won him the American Library Association’s Coretta Scott King Award. He also collaborated with actress Whoopi Goldberg and musician Herbie Hancock on a video for children, *Koi and the Kola Nuts*, based on an African folktale.

Despite a high-profile career that saw him co-found a second design studio and be included in group shows around the world, Ruffins readily took on volunteer projects. He is fondly remembered for creating materials for the Coalition of Neighborhoods for the Preservation of Sag Harbor and designing a poster for the 65th anniversary of Sag Harbor Hills.

Predeceased by his wife, Joan, an artist and Cooper Union alumna, Ruffins is survived by their four children and six grandchildren.

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**Mimi Stern-Wolfe**

Pianist and conductor Mimi Stern-Wolfe ’58, MM ’62, died on June 21 at the age of 84. The daughter of left-leaning Jewish immigrants who gave her piano lessons from the age of six, she grew up in Ozone Park and the Rockaways. In her teens, she commuted to the High School of Performing Arts in Manhattan.

With a resume that included degrees from QC and the New England Conservatory and private studies with Nadia Boulanger, Stern-Wolfe—who retained her hyphenated name after her marriage ended in divorce—went on to work with the Lake George Opera and the Aspen Music Festival. But she was best known for founding Downtown Music Productions, which presented socially conscious programming, such as concerts that celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. or featured repertoire written by women. In 1990, she launched the Benson AIDS Series, showcasing composers and musicians who had AIDS or had died from it. Stern-Wolfe is survived by her partner, poet Ilsa Gilbert; her daughter, singer-songwriter Laura Wolf; and a grandson.

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**Sheldon Soffer**

Manager and mentor to generations of performers and arts professionals, Sheldon Soffer passed away on June 23, in Fort Myers, Florida, in the company of his aide of 3 years, Ron Wendell, and his cherished puppy. Soffer was 93.

Born on August 20, 1927, to immigrants who valued education, Jewish traditions, and the arts, Soffer grew up in the Bronx, the youngest of six siblings. He graduated from the High School for Music and Art and Queens College. Continuing his education at UC Berkeley, he studied composition with Roger
Sessions and earned a master’s degree in conducting. He subsequently studied conducting with Fritz Stiedry at the Metropolitan Opera.

After a brief career at the podium, Soffer founded his eponymous firm. He ran Sheldon Soffer Management until his retirement in 1999, working with singers, including Elly Ameling, Gerard Souzay, and Lucy Shelton; conductors, including Robert Spano and JoAnn Falletta; and musicians as diverse as Ravi Shankar and Empire Brass Quintet. Pilobolus, Twyla Tharp, Mark Morris, the Boston Ballet, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane & Co., and Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo were among the dance companies and choreographers he represented. “He did what no other manager would do,” said Peter Anastos, founder of the Ballets Trockadero, an all-male comic troupe. “He honored us for who we were.”

After meeting Japanese violinist and music educator Shinichi Suzuki, Soffer created a pilot program with the Eastman School of Music to introduce the Suzuki Method to the Rochester area in the mid-1960s, and then nationwide. For 30 years, Soffer would bring top students from the Shinichi Suzuki School in Matsumoto, Japan, on tour in the United States. A passionate advocate for the Gay Men’s Health Crisis in the 1980s, Soffer worked with Judith Arron, executive and artistic director of Carnegie Hall, to create the 1993 AIDS benefit concert “Music for Life,” featuring Kathleen Battle, Jessye Norman, Pinchas Zukerman, and Kurt Masur.

Among numerous honors, Soffer was named a distinguished graduate of the Queens College Division of Arts. He was a long-time board member of Young Concert Artists and endowed the Sheldon Soffer New Music Fund to support young composers.

Soffer loved tennis, golden retrievers, travel, fresh fish, sunshine, classical music, making new friends, and offering advice. He reveled in a good tan and wearing a Mexican serape, shorts, and sandals from Memorial Day to Yom Kippur.

Soffer was predeceased by his parents, siblings, and devoted partner of 28 years, Stanley Segal, PhD. He is survived by dozens of adoring nieces and nephews, the many artists he nurtured, friends around the world, and an arts community made better and more vibrant through his efforts.

Heard Around the Virtual Campus
Lorenzo Bisogno, who holds an MM in jazz from ACSM, was awarded the International Massimo Urbani Prize for 2021. As the contest winner, Bisogno will participate in an eight-concert tour, and have support for recording a CD. Here’s an account in Italian from AroundEventi . . . . Anna Maria Bounds (Sociology) is featured in an episode of “America’s Book of Secrets” on the History Channel. She appears on the Doomsday Scenarios episode sharing details about prepping and a secret government project . . . . Daisy Cocco De Filippis has been appointed president of Eugenio María de Hostos Community College in the Bronx, part of The City University of New York (CUNY) system. Cocco De Filippis has served as interim president of Hostos since August 2020. She holds four degrees from CUNY: a bachelor’s in Spanish and English literature and a master’s in Spanish literature from QC, and a Master of Philosophy in Spanish literature and a PhD in Spanish literature from the CUNY Graduate Center . . . . Dennis Elsas ’68 marked his 50th anniversary in radio on Monday, July 12, with a four-hour show on WFUV. The program included highlights of favorite interviews with artists such as John Lennon, Elton John, and Joni Mitchell, as well as songs that define the soundtrack of Elsas’s career. He began as a disc jockey on WQMC, 590 AM, the college radio station . . . . Antonio Hart (ACSM) led members of the Queens Jazz Orchestra in a musical tribute to its founder, the late Jimmy Heath, who started the jazz master’s program at QC . . . . Ariel Francisco Henriquez MFA ’21 has accepted a tenure track job in the MFA program at Louisiana State University . . . . Alicia Meléndez (Biology) was quoted in an article published in The Scientist about a study of an autophagy-related gene and its role in neurodevelopmental disorders . . . . Rajiv Mohabir MFA ’12 has a tenure track job at Emerson in the MFA program. His latest book, Antiman: A Hybrid Memoir, was reviewed on NPR . . . . Kara Schlichting (History) and John Waldman (Biology) each contributed a chapter to Coastal Metropolis: Environmental Histories of Modern New York City (University of Pittsburgh Press) . . . . Joseph Sciorra (Calandra Institute) received the Studs Terkel Award for Single Published Articles or Series, Broadcast Media, Multimedia, and Film in Media and Journalism for “Protesta Per Sacco & Vanzetti” . . . . Micheal Mossman (ACSM) recently completed a series of recordings with the WDR Big Band and Andrea Motis, leading the band in his own arrangement of Motis’s composition, “Brisa.” Mossman can be seen and heard singing near the end of this video . . . . Sifat Razwan, a QC student who runs the NYC Walking Show, was quoted in the Post in an article about New Yorkers making money by livestreaming their strolls around the city . . . . Edward Smaldone (ACSM) recently returned from Copenhagen, Denmark, where his composition Murmurations for Clarinet and Wind Orchestra was performed by Den Kongelige Livgardes Musikkorps (The Life Guard Music Corps)—the Danish equivalent of “The President's Own” U.S. Marine Band. Clarinet soloist Søren-Filip Brix Hansen had been an exchange student at the Aaron Copland School of Music in 2010. Brix Hansen is now the concertmaster of the Life Guard Corps, which commissioned Smaldone to compose the piece . . . . Arturo Soto, an incoming first-year student who became blind last year, was profiled by the Queens Chronicle for
starting a support group for other young adults who have lost their vision . . .

**Anthony Tamburri** (Calandra Institute) has published *Signing Italian/American Cinema: A More Focused Look* (Ovunque Siamo Press) . . . **President Frank H. Wu** ranks 23rd in *City and State’s 2021 Power of Diversity: Asian 100*. In an interview with Roslyn Nieves for Queens Perspectives on QPTV, the president discusses the video series Big Ideas. The interview aired on July 20 on Spectrum Channel 1997, RCN Channel 85, and Verizon Channel 37. Wu is quoted in a *Technology Review* article about Anming Hu, a Chinese-Canadian faculty member at the University of Tennessee who was accused of being a spy.

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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**.