



Discimus ut serviamus: **We learn so that we may serve.**

#73

What's News

Queens College Emergency Relief Fund

College Creates Emergency Relief Fund

No one could have envisioned a pandemic with such serious consequences around the world and right here, on the Queens College campus. Faced with unprecedented challenges, the college has created the Queens College Emergency Relief Fund. This fund, described in detail [in this letter](#), will assist students who need the technology and supplies required for remote learning or, even more critically, lack food and shelter. QC has a long history of mobilizing in response to crises; here is another opportunity to demonstrate the strength and generosity of the extended college community. To make a donation, [click here](#).

Dimitri Toumaras, a graphic design major, submitted this selfie of attending ARTS 250 (Design Thinking), taught by Chat Travieso. "It was a little daunting at first, but I'm glad to have

professors with the patience and understanding to take on the task of moving classes online," says Dimitri of his distance learning experience. "They've been flexible, accommodating, and improving each class session to be more streamlined than the last."




Keeping a safe distance from each other, the extraordinary Buildings and Grounds staff take a break from the nonstop work of cleaning campus facilities. Due to the masks covering their faces, some employees couldn't be identified. From left to right, this photo includes Richard Campbell, Frank Tate, Ricardo Esquivel, Berdena Simpson, Youdesh Ram, Treisha Ramasami, Cutie McCray, Corey Rosenberg, Gloria Roberts, Kevin Graffeo, Bidishi Basdai, Corine Reece, Beatrice Cuellar, and Brendell Mentore.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, there's no way to quantify the value of a **video**, particularly one that illustrates the economic impact of Queens College. Special thanks go to Allison Eng of the Office of Communications and Marketing for creating this video, based on the February 2020 release of a study by labor analytics firm Emsi, which calculated that QC contributes \$1.8 billion to the economy of metropolitan New York.

TOTAL IMPACT

QC generated **\$1.8 billion**
in added income for the
NYC Metro Area economy

Watch Video 



CTL's Extraordinary Efforts Central to QC's Remote Instruction

Over the past four weeks, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has been hard at work assisting faculty in prepping for the rapid and unprecedented transition to distance education.

CTL has faced many challenges during the shift to remote teaching and learning. Typically, CTL staff would guide faculty members through a much longer and thought-out planning process of transitioning courses online, but the fast-moving nature of the COVID-19 crisis did not allow for that. The instructors' level of proficiency with digital tools varies, as does their access to devices and the Internet, which has created additional hurdles.

In order to meet these challenges, CTL has created and presented a number of group workshops and online that focus on the tools, modalities, and pedagogy of online instruction. Their [Keep Teaching](#) website includes tutorials, recorded workshops, and collections of helpful resources. During the recalibration period, live online workshops were created in response, too. In addition, one-on-one support through email, video conferencing, online drop-in hours, and on the phone has been available. Staff has also been meeting remotely twice a day to address any issues that may arise.

"The level of support CTL has been able to provide is due to the collaborative efforts of our entire team," said Michelle Fraboni, director of CTL. "We do our best to make ourselves available when faculty need us, offering workshops and other support into the evenings and weekends. Encouraging community exchange among the faculty, and a commitment to the wide-ranging needs of the students is a priority for us."

Fraboni and Nathalia Holtzman, CTL associate director, as well as the department's three full-time instructional technologists—Jean Kelly, Rachel Stern, and Rob Garfield—have all been instrumental in providing the needed support. Part-time CTL tech mentors and members of the HSI-STEM Bridges Across Eastern Queens team (directed by Associate Provost for Innovation and Student Success Eva Fernández) have also been extremely important in supporting faculty. The administrative staff has been vital as well by ensuring that the many phone calls and emails get sent to the right people for support. Any faculty needing further assistance should visit keepteaching.qc.cuny.edu, and view the contact options there. They can also mail ctlonline@qc.cuny.edu.

"Our advice to faculty is to keep their work student-centered, and communicate clearly and often," added Fraboni. "We've all had our lives turned upside down, so keep things simple, be flexible, and be kind to your students and to yourself."

Wu-ing Additional Media

President-designate Frank Wu made his local television debut on the [NY1 program "One on One"](#), interviewed by Cheryl Wills. The [Queens Gazette](#) covered his appointment and shared

congratulations to President-designate Wu from Congressman Grace Meng, who represents the Queens district that includes the college, and New York State Senator Toby Stavisky, chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee. Meanwhile, as a guest speaker in a **webinar** just presented by *ASBMB Today*, the member magazine of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, President-designate Wu was identified in his new role.



In February, before his appointment was announced, he was interviewed for an **NPR story** about the federal government's response to China's recruitment of U.S. scientists. The following month, President-designate Wu published "**Coronavirus Is Not a 'Chinese Virus'**" in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.



Project ExCEL students: (l to r) Tiffany Willingham, Diego Ortega, Pythagore Charles

Project Continues To Help Students ExCEL

Though services to students often occur behind the scenes, they are vital to the college's educational mission, providing support and guidance to learners from widely disparate backgrounds. One exceptional program—Project ExCEL—has grown tremendously since its beginnings in a cubicle in the Academic Advising Center; with the help of some 70 students currently serving as peer mentors, it also offers intensive advising and other services to over 130 students from underrepresented populations. Its diverse resources include a computer lab, writing coach, workshops, leads on internships and scholarships, and access to early registration. Rewarded last fall with a bright, spacious suite of its own in Kiely



232, the program has shifted to remote operations during the coronavirus emergency.

Funded by both the CUNY Black Male Initiative (BMI) and Academic Advising, Project ExCEL assists not only African American men but also all students of color, including women. At its most fundamental, Project ExCEL consists of peer mentoring by high-achieving students who rank in the top 15 percent of the college academically and who are matched with compatible mentees. Mentees, who begin the program as freshmen or transfer students, are guided through the rest of their college years.

Making the Grade

Academic progress is the overarching purpose of the project, explains Program Director and Academic Advisor Rajiv Singh. "My goal as an advisor is to make sure a student is doing well, and if not, we take the necessary steps to ensure that they get back on track," Singh says. "The whole goal of the program is to see the growth of a student and see if they can benefit from the many things we provide."

Yet that requires going beyond the academics to build a sense of community that fosters student success. "I see things now very differently than as an undergraduate with tunnel vision: 'Go to school, get good grades, there's a job waiting for you at the end,'" observes Singh. "You realize that networking is paramount. After an advising session, I want to make sure they leave knowing there's something here for them. So many of our students come in very shy, and then we see their growth." These qualitative goals are buttressed by tracking each student's progress. "Data is something BMI is very big on," he adds. "It's one thing to have an initiative, but everything goes on numbers and performance. I'm all for it."

A 2016 graduate of Queens College, Singh has worked for Project ExCEL since his own undergraduate years, when he started as a mentor under then-director Jorge Alguera (now university assistant director of BMI). The son of Caribbean immigrants, Singh is a Queens native who moved to Trinidad until high school, then returned to enter John Bowne. After attending LaGuardia Community College, where he received department honors in English and was many times on the dean's list, he transferred to QC. Here he majored in English, with a special interest in African American literature, and graduated magna cum laude. The recipient of several college awards, Singh was inducted into international honor society Phi Theta Kappa. Today he is taking graduate courses in English.

Working Together

Although Project ExCEL has its own history and mission, it works closely with other student services on campus, especially SEEK, NYC Men Teach, and CUNY Service Corps. Singh also hopes to increase the services Project ExCEL offers to students. It was at their request that he hired a writing coach. "The next thing is to offer math support. That's a big one."

Reflecting on his responsibilities, he says, "I count my blessings. Every day I come into work, there's a goal. I come with a smile, knowing that I'm helping someone. I'm doing the right thing and I'm enjoying it. And my students feed off that—the positivity." Even now, with the new offices temporarily closed, Project ExCEL continues to work remotely, with Singh and Program Coordinator Megan Pindling in frequent communication electronically with mentors and mentees. In Singh's view, "There are so many pillars within the programming here, but going back to what we do holistically, at the core it's a peer mentorship." Their robust peer network—now relying on phones and email—remains firmly in place to help students through the COVID-19 crisis.

Virtual Library Support Stacks Up

It's the next best thing to being there: QC's library personnel and extensive resources are enabling students, faculty, and staff to conduct their work remotely.

Library faculty and staff are working remotely, too. They field questions via email and chat, upload and check new electronic resources, and share news through social media and updates to the library website. Everyone is invited to follow Instagram (@qclibrary) and Twitter (@LibraryQc) for updates.

"The good news is that more reference materials are available than ever before," comments Chief Librarian Kristin Hart (above). "Many academic publishers are providing free or enhanced access to their content for a limited time." [Click here](#) to see what's new. As always, students, faculty and staff have remote access to hundreds of databases, thousands of journals, and streaming video sites.

The key to all this material is the QCard ID, which is also the college's library card, thanks to the unique library barcode on the back of the QCard. If you don't have your barcode, lost or never activated your QCard, or experience other access issues, contact librarians for assistance at <https://qc-cuny.libanswers.com>.



How To Get Help

As far as reference is concerned, virtual help is available seven days a week. Service hours are posted at <https://library.qc.cuny.edu/hours/>. Students can email a question and receive a response from a QC librarian within 24 hours. To make an appointment for one-on-one help with a subject specialist, or connect to the library's chat service, with a nationwide network of librarians available 24/7, visit <https://qc-cuny.libanswers.com/>.

The library's research guides are a great place for students to find [electronic sources relevant to their studies](#), including art and music. "We encourage students to chat with a librarian, so that we can help them find electronic resources relevant to their studies," says Hart.

Document delivery service is still available to students, who can request ebook chapters, e-journal articles, and other digital materials at <https://qc.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/logon.html>

"This is also a great time for students and faculty to explore openly licensed material available through the growing 'open educational resources' movement," adds Jeremy Czerw, outreach communication librarian. "To get started, check out the CUNY OER portal: <https://opened.cuny.edu/>."

Free Newspapers Online

Through the library's site licenses, students can download the appropriate app, set up a free account using their QC email, and stay logged in all year to two newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. For free off-campus access to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, [click here](#) OR [here](#).

Special Collections and Archives staff are ready to help faculty and students work with primary sources. "The college's own civil rights collection is available at <https://archives.qc.cuny.edu/civilrights/>, and many other high quality digital archives are online," says Annie Tummino, head of Special Collections and Archives. Digital copies of the *Silhouette* Yearbook from 1941 to 2011 can be shared on request.

Special Collections and Archives is also working with the Queens Memory Project on an initiative to document life under the pandemic in Queens and at the college. The program will include a hotline to submit testimony, long-form oral histories, and photographs and documents. Contact Queens Memory Outreach Coordinator Lori Wallach at lori.wallach@qc.cuny.edu to get involved in recording history as it happens.

Godwin-Ternbach Wins Virtual Challenge from Upstate

Faced with a MuseumFromHomeChallenge from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, QC's Godwin-Ternbach came out on top.

In a contest held on Twitter from April 10 at noon to 11 am the next morning, each museum posted an image of an item in its collection and asked followers to vote for their favorite. The GTM's **Huari Mummy Bundle Mask** outpolled Albright-Knox's entry, Constantin Brancusi's "Mademoiselle Pogany II."

"Many museums and cultural institutions have been grappling with how to connect with audiences while we social distance from home," explains Maria Pio, co-director of the Godwin-Ternbach.

"Hashtags like #MuseumFromHome and #CultureFromHome have been used to describe various experiences audiences can be a part of while museums have their doors closed." The Albright-Knox started doing friendly institutional match-ups after achieving success several years ago with a similar program inspired by the NCAA's March Madness.

"We hope that by participating in the MuseumFromHomeChallenge, audiences who were not previously familiar with the GTM got a little glimpse into our collection," adds Pio, who encourages art lovers to follow the museum on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. "We also have been posting weekly, highlighting objects from GTM and engaging audiences the best we can from home."



Incubating Solutions for Local Companies and Nonprofits

The Tech Incubator, in collaboration with the Small Business Administration and LaGuardia Community College Small Business Development Center, is presenting a series of programs for businesses and nonprofits affected by coronavirus. Here is a list of upcoming events this month.



Tuesday, April 14, noon-1 pm: SBA's five programs for businesses and nonprofit organizations affected by coronavirus
Please register; limited to 500.

Wednesday, April 15, 9:30 am-11:30 am: Meeting the Paycheck Protection

Program (PPP) Lenders, a panel discussion of eight PPP lenders
Please register; limited to 500.

(In Chinese)

Wednesday, April 15, 1 pm-2 pm: SBA's five programs for businesses and nonprofit organizations affected by coronavirus

Please register; limited to 500.

Thursday, April 16, 9:30 am-11:30 am: Opportunity Zone 101: Learn something new for a better future

Please register; limited to 500.

Friday, April 17, 2 pm-3 pm: SBA's five programs for businesses and nonprofit organizations affected by coronavirus

Please register; limited to 500.

Wednesday, April 22, 10 am-11:30 am: Women-owned Business Certification for Government Contracts, featuring Jennifer Krottinger, Business Opportunity Specialist, SBA

Please register; limited to 500.

To sign up for updates and check the incubator's FAQ page, [click here](#)

Heard Around Campus

Arturo Casadevall '79, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of Molecular Microbiology & Immunology at Johns Hopkins University, is among the leaders of the National COVID-19 **Convalescent Plasma Project**, which studies how plasma from recovered coronavirus patients may be used in the COVID-19 pandemic. Last month, **Casadevall** and **Liise-anne Pirofski**, chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases in the Department of Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, published "The convalescent sera option for containing COVID-19" in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*.

**The Q View is produced by the
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**Comments and suggestions for future news items are welcome.
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