



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

#49

## What's News

### **Personal Screening on Campus**



QC is holding a free, **special screening of "Personal Statement"**—a powerful documentary about the hurdles lower-income students face in the college application process—today, Tuesday, April 30, at 4 pm in Benjamin Rosenthal Library, Room 230.

Filmed in Brooklyn, **"Personal Statement"** follows three high school peer counselors who are applying to college and helping their classmates do the same. The movie, which was released last year, was accepted by the Margaret Mead Film Festival at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, the Black Harvest Film Festival in Chicago, and SXSW Edu Conference and Festival in Austin, Texas, among many other important venues.

One of the counselors in the documentary is Enoch Jemmott, the QC senior who wrote about his experiences in a recent *New York Times* op-ed, **"The Implicit Punishment of Daring to Go to College When Poor."** Enoch and the

film's director, Juliane Dressner, will be on hand for a Q&A session after the screening.



Professionals on Campus (POC), hosted by the Office of Institutional Advancement, brings accomplished QC alumni to the college to meet students and share career insights. On April 16, a panel of three women—Georgia de Havenon '93, Brooklyn Museum of Art research associate; Lowery Stokes Sims '70, Museum of Arts and Design curator emerita; and Susan Sills '62, artist and Brooklyn Museum of Art advisory board member—discussed "The World of Art." Warren Woodfin (Art) moderated.

Left to right: Georgia de Havenon, Laurie Dorf (Institutional Advancement), Lowery Stokes Sims, Warren Woodfin, Susan Sills.



Two days later, "From Queens College to Careers in Business" was the topic for Robert Lehman '83, partner and global director of real estate investment trust services at Ernst & Young, and Harris Horowitz '78, managing director and global head of tax at BlackRock, Inc. Finance professional Freda Johnson '68 was the moderator.



While there were no classes last week, plenty of discovery took place on campus on April 23-24, when the YCenter from Philadelphia held a workshop on **human-centered design at the QC Tech Incubator**. Students, faculty, staff, and local residents—including immigrants—learned about the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals and explored their applications to education, health, pollution, and transportation issues.

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Support staff received deserved recognition from the college administration, represented by Lee Kelly and Bill Keller, on Monday, April 29, at QC's annual breakfast for the college's administrative professionals. Attendees at the two-hour event, held in the Student Union ballroom, did not have to charge the time against their annual leave.



The Virginia opossum ranges across much of Eastern North America, enabled by the fact that it isn't a picky eater; this marsupial's diet can include plants, insects, and small animals. Easy access to the scraps in campus trash cans—and perhaps, hunger for knowledge—explains its sighting on a campus known for mammalian diversity.

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### **Queens Seeks To Crown Next Poet Laureate**

With current Queens Poet Laureate Maria Lisella, a QC alumna, reaching the end of her three-year term, the borough has opened its search for her successor. Applications may be filed at [www.queensbp.org/poet](http://www.queensbp.org/poet) through 5 pm on May 31.

"As the most diverse county in America, Queens seeks a poet laureate

whose work strikes a universal chord," says Queens Borough President Melinda Katz. "The poet laureate will also demonstrate an abiding affection for Queens and an ability to convey that affection through inspiring, thought-provoking poetry."

The unpaid position is open to published poets who have lived in Queens for the past two years or longer. The winner will be expected to plan and participate in events that promote appreciation of poetry throughout the borough.

Appropriately enough, interested parties have to submit multiple forms of writing: up to ten pages of original poetry, an essay of up to 500 words on why the individual wants to be the next Queens poet laureate, and a one- to two-page resume focused on the applicant's poetry-related work.

"Our hope is that the Queens poet laureate will be able to share the beauty and impact of Queens' diversity of cultures, languages, and people, and that what they write and express will resound among Queens residents as well as with readers across the entire globe," says QC President Felix V. Matos Rodriguez.

QC people play critical roles in the selection process. Poet, artist, and faculty member Nicholas Alexiou (Sociology) and poet Maria Terrone (former AVP for Communications) serve with Andrew P. Jackson (whose African name is Sekou Molefi Baako), director emeritus of Queens Public Library's Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center and a member of the board of trustees of the Queens Public Library, on the Queens Poet Laureate Administrative Committee, which will prescreen all applications.

Those that qualify will be reviewed by a panel of five judges: Lisella; Paolo Javier, who preceded her as Queens poet laureate; Walt Whitman Award-winning poet Nicole Cooley, director of QC's MFA Program in Creative Writing and Literary Translation; New York City Youth Poet Laureate Camryn Bruno; and Alice Quinn, executive director of the Poetry Society of America. The judges will choose three semifinalists. Candidates will meet in person with the judges and the members of the administrative committee, who will work together to name the winner.

Queens began designating poet laureates in 1997; the first person to serve in that capacity was QC's own Stephen Stepanchev (English), who held the title until 2001.



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## **College Means Business for Minority-and Women-Owned Firms**



At last week's Doing Business with NYC Public Education Conference, QC was cited for broadening its pool of vendors in fiscal 2019. CUNY aims to double its spending with New York State-certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises, or MWBEs. QC and City College were the only campuses that met the Chairman's MWBE Challenge.

"CUNY continues to break down barriers to doing business with the university," said CUNY Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer Matthew Sapienza. "The City College of New York and Queens College are great examples of our continued efforts, and I'm happy to recognize their hard work and dedication to CUNY's supplier diversity goals."

Sapienza described the half-day April 24 conference, hosted at the CUNY Graduate Center and co-hosted by the New York City Department of Education, as part of a strategic investment by the university to create an inclusive local economy, with real opportunities for MWBEs to support CUNY's operations. Government agencies and business development resource organizations had exhibitions at the event, which featured presentations by CUNY Trustee Lorraine Cortez-Vasquez and DOE General Counsel Howard Friedman. Sapienza moderated a leadership discussion on the topic of how MWBEs can win new contracts.

"So proud to have Queens College recognized for expanding business opportunities with minority- and women-owned business! We still have work ahead of us, but I'm happy that the results of our administrative team are being acknowledged," said Félix V. Matos Rodríguez.

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## **Grad Student Studies House Finch for a Song**

Mason Youngblood, a PhD student based at QC, has to be an early bird to conduct his research in comparative psychology and animal behavior. At dawn, Youngblood and two undergraduate assistants carry microphones to residential areas in Fresh Meadows, Forest Hills, Jamaica, Little Neck, and Queens Village in the attempt to record local house finch song.

Now through July, he is also taking advantage of QC's tree-filled campus to net finches—gently—and band their legs with tiny microchips that track where they go. When Youngblood nets a male banded the previous year, the bird gets a 24-hour trip to an indoor lab, where his song is recorded and his blood is drawn in a tiny pinprick to the wing. [Male house finches are easy to distinguish because of their bright coloring.] The avian subject is released the next day, none the worse for the trip.

QC has a long history in this field. In the 1970s, Paul Mundinger (Biology), a pioneer in exploring the cultural evolution of birdsong, compiled a large database of house finch recordings, which can vary by location and over time, like humans' regional dialects. That database is now housed in the lab where Youngblood works under the mentorship of David Lahti (Biology), another scientist prominent in the study of avian cultural evolution.

When Youngblood isn't studying house finches and their song, he is making other sound investments. An instrumental triple-threat—he plays piano, drums, and bass—he performs synthesized music in Brooklyn clubs. "It's basically me on stage with a computer and some hardware," reports the aspiring college professor. Lately, he has been incorporating house finch melodies into his own compositions.



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## Building Futures Profile: Kimiko Hahn

Author of nine books of poetry, CUNY Distinguished Professor Kimiko Hahn has touched many lives with her work in and out of the classroom, for more than 25 years. In that period, she has accumulated numerous honors, including the PEN/Voelcker Award for Poetry, the American Book Award, and the Shelley Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, as well as fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Hahn grew up in a bicultural household. Her parents—a Japanese-American woman from Hawaii, and a German-American man from Milwaukee—met at art school. Their heritage and sensibilities would prove hugely influential.

"My mother would read stories to me in Japanese," recalls Hahn. "Even though I couldn't understand what she was reading, the musicality of the language—hearing words and seeing the pictures and putting that together—inspired me from a young age."

Growing up in a family of visual artists, Hahn was encouraged to express herself, and poetry gave her a platform to speak up and be heard. She draws inspiration from poets Adrienne Rich and Louise Gluck, as well as poets from classical Japanese literature, which she studied in graduate school.

Hahn's writing often addresses difficult topics such as jealousy, betrayal, and rivalry. One of her early books, *The Unbearable Heart*—which is Hahn's personal favorite—focuses on the loss of her mother, who died in a tragic accident more than 25 years ago. In her last two books, *Toxic Flora* and *Brain Fever*, she combines the world of science with her personal experiences.

Since 1993, Hahn has been a member of the Queens College English department, where she teaches literature and creative writing. She has inspired many students, including recent QC graduate Rajiv Mohabir, who has already published two books of poetry.

Despite all her success, Hahn has new goals to achieve, such as publishing a book of creative nonfiction. She has no imminent plans to retire from Queens College because she loves the challenge of teaching.



Kimiko Hahn (third from left) mixes art and poetry lessons with her students in Queens College's Godwin-Ternbach Museum.

Click [here](#) to view additional profiles in the [Queens College 2019 Biennial Report](#)

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## **Making Plans This Summer**

Community-based design is about more than esthetics. Through assigned readings, historical research, field observations, and community engagement, Special Topics in Design—an introduction to the theories and methods of community-based design—challenges students to apply their creative skills to a real-world context. To learn about this and other courses and build a summer schedule with lasting impact, click on [www.qc.cuny.edu/summer](http://www.qc.cuny.edu/summer).





In recent coverage of the New York City Tech Festival, *QView* identified Farifta Sultana (wearing glasses, sixth from left in last seated row), as Charusmita Madan (middle of front row, with sunglasses on her head), who graciously says they are often thought to be sisters. We apologize for the error. There are many opportunities for mistaken identity within a community as large as QC's, and *QView* is eager to help reduce confusion. For possible future coverage, please notify us at [jay.hershenson@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:jay.hershenson@qc.cuny.edu) if you have encountered your "twin" on campus, and provide photographic evidence. [Permission from both parties is required for publication.]

## Heard Around Campus



**Ala Alryyes** (English) is among the experts quoted in a recent PBS News Hour program, "How the **Autobiography of a Muslim Slave is Challenging an American Narrative**" . . . **Ilana Blumenthal** won a prize in the poetry category of this year's Making Work Visible contest, held by LaborArts. The annual competition is open to all CUNY undergraduates . . . **Bob Engel** (Chemistry and Biochemistry; QuatCare), **Bill Blanford** (SEES), **Greg O'Mullan** (SEES), and Mario Mercado (QuatCare) won \$150,000 in funding for a year from PowerBridge NY for their project, "Antimicrobial Media for Pretreatment of Industrial Waters," based on Bob's patent and a more recent provisional patent by Bill, Bob, and Greg. They can apply for an additional \$50,000 later . . . **Joshua Freeman** (History) won the 2019 Sol Stetin Award for Labor History for his chronicles of New York's working class . . . **Michael Mirkin** (Chemistry and Biochemistry), in collaboration with Huolin Xin at University of California, Irvine, won a three-year, \$495,000 National Science Foundation award for a collaborative research project; \$240,000 of the funding is going to Mike . . .



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**Comments and suggestions for future news items are welcome.  
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