Former SA President imparts QC with her final remarks.

Photo: Carmine Couloute

SA President Carmine Couloute Says Goodbye to QC

ASIAN-AMERICAN CENTER CELEBRATES
Asian-American Center awards merit-based scholarships to QC students.

SEE PAGE 4

ALPFA CHANGING LIVES
A spotlight on an all-inclusive student club influencing young professionals.

SEE PAGE 8

TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL
An exclusive review of a movie seen at the prestigious Tribeca Film Festival.

SEE PAGE 8

theknightnewsqc
the knight news
theknightnews.com
BDS: The underlying truth

Merle Dweck

The transition from high school to college can be daunting; when you leave the secure bubble of your hometown to travel to a space where all religions, beliefs, movements, clubs and words are accepted, you sometimes don’t know how to respond to the change. Finding the right words and knowing the facts can be essential to finding your niche on campus. One of these aforementioned movements is called BDS—Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions.

This movement rejects and undermines Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state by misinforming the public and distorting the media. Co-Founder of the BDS movement, Omar Al-Barghouti, clearly states BDS’s ultimate view of a Jewish state: “I clearly do not buy a two-state solution… Definitely, most definitely, we oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine. No Palestinian…would ever accept a Jewish state in Palestine.”

The Anti-Defamation League, a civil rights group, adds that BDS not only rejects Israel as a Jewish state but it further, “Denies the Jewish people the right to self-determination — a right universally afforded to other groups.” The only way to fight such an opposing movement is through education: this article is meant to expose the illegitimacy of the BDS movement and shine light on the myths spread in the media.

One of the most common myths is that Israel is an apartheid state. The movement will try and make comparisons to the Afrikaner government and draw similarities between Palestinians and South Africans to evoke similar responses against Israel that was taken in South Africa. Not only is this comparison offensive, but also insulting to the South Africans who suffered under apartheid.

Arab and Jewish citizens alike enjoy citizenship and all of its encompassing rights in the State of Israel: they can vote, be represented in government, go to school, work, travel and speak freely. Contrastingly, South Africans were murdered by their government and oppressed in every way. They couldn’t vote, weren’t considered citizens, and every detail of life for South Africans were discriminated by law: skin color or determined where you lived, your job, school, medical treatment, spouse, mode of transportation and even burial ground.

Benjamin Pogrund from The Guardian attests to his experience: “I know Israel today — and I knew apartheid up close. And put simply, there is no comparison between Israel and apartheid.”

Another misconception spread by BDS is that the Jewish people have no right to the land of Israel. However, the Jewish people were the indigenous people of the land for over 3,000 years. The historical and national right to the state was recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 29th, 1947. The international right to the state was legally accepted and recognized by the League of Nations in 1920 and established even earlier in the Balfour Declaration in 1917. This makes their right to the state a part of international law! Reservists on Duty, a non-profit organization established by IDF veterans to counter BDS on college campuses, solidifies this fact in a comparison: “There are 130 countries in the world with a Christian majority, 49 with a Muslim majority, 5 with a Hindu majority and only one Jewish state on an area representing 1/800 of the size of the entire Arab world.”

There are many other myths to address and be aware of, but the most important fact to take away is this: without knowing the facts and using education as a shield to media distortion, college kids are prone to losing their Zionism or Jewish identity. Without education, BDS will encourage students to keep their heads down and mouths shut wherever Israel is concerned. It will make students feel ashamed of their beliefs when they have every right to feel proud.

The BDS movement will propel narratives of good and evil; they will spin stories that wouldn’t be persuasive to anyone who reads up on the issue at hand or begins a discussion about it. This is why knowing how to respond to BDS on campus should be a fundamental imperative to any student on campus. Students can be taught to use words as tools instead of propaganda.

The most important thing to know when coming to campus, or even when walking down the street is to remember the following: keep an open mind and heart, be proud of your Judaic roots, have no shame for Zionism and keep the moral courage it takes to reject the BDS claims about apartheid and genocides because they are undoubtedly false.

Merle Dweck is a CAMERA fellow studying Corporate Finance and Economics graduating this May.
SA President Carmine Couloute says goodbye to QC

Carmine Couloute and President Matos opening the food pantry.

Siddharth Malviya

"Hopefully, the legacy that I’ve left behind is that nothing is impossible. If you have a dream, an event, you should be able to do it, and nobody should be able to stop you," remarked Student Association (SA) President Carmine Couloute. Couloute, a senior majoring in political science and sociology, is set to graduate this semester. She recently took the time to reflect on her senior year, the projects she takes the most pride in and the people who helped her throughout her journey.

For those who are not as familiar with the job of SA President, Couloute was happy to break it down for the readers. She explained, "Being president is simply being a liaison, someone who aims to help better the school or fix things. So really, a president is more of a fixer, as well as a really good listener." Couloute worked with her executive cabinet and administration in order to accomplish major projects around campus.

Couloute credited the team she has worked with this year as her support system. Couloute said, "The whole SA team is my backbone, they really supported me, motivated me... I couldn't see my year without them." In addition to her peers, she noted that she was inspired by the Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) program director, Norka Blackman-Richards, and Queens College former President Félix V. Matos Rodriguez. "Their leadership style is humble, kind," Couloute notes. Adding, "They’re everything that leadership embodies. I aimed to mirror their image, and in turn they motivate me to be like them."

Couloute also reflected on the successes she has had this year. She was able to get over $100,000 in funding for clubs, as well as accomplish several amazing projects. It was an amazing experience to see all the athletes cheering each other on, to see the basketball team come out, and all the teams introduced and having a role to play in the event." The events in particular stood out to her, as the fact that the whole campus was involved touched her. Despite all the success, Couloute emphasized that not everything was smooth sailing. One problem in particular was keeping people motivated. She explained by saying that getting people to actively participate, and stay actively engaged and motivated on a commuter campus is tough. "That’s the beauty of student government though, to keep trying to ensure that we have projects for everyone on campus," Couloute stated.

Couloute felt it proper to leave a message for the readers. "Thank you for an amazing year. Your patience, your kindness, your support... I loved the whole year because of Queens College. I enjoyed my 5 years here, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world. Thank you for your endless support!"
The Knight News, May 8, 2019

The generous donors of the scholarship.

toward my dreams with the support of for me. It's a pathway for me to progress take care of my one-year-old baby. Hearing added up when I had to leave my job to

Recipient Asma Amin, a junior majoring in psychology, said, "Financial challenges

Professor Hong Wu presented the sev-

eral A/AC scholarship award recipients. Recipient Asma Amin, a junior majoring in psychology, said, "Financial challenges added up when I had to leave my job to
take care of my one-year-old baby. Hearing back from the scholarship was a great hope
for me. It's a pathway for me to progress toward my dreams with the support of the

generous donors of the scholarship."

CUNY Explorers: Inspiring generations to attend university

Shaline Mahadeo

If you've ever seen a group of 30 or so middle-schoolers around campus, with faces beaming with excitement and awe, then you have probably seen CUNY Explorers. As the name implies, it is a CUNY-wide program, operating in roughly 15 of the CUNY institutions, including our very own Queens College.

Program coordinator and former QC student herself, Jaclyn Eng, describes that the mission of CUNY Explorers is to expose middle school students to the ins-and-outs of a college education so that every child walks away feeling like college really is for them and motivated to pursue their dreams.

Three times a week, yellow school buses bring middle-schoolers and their chaperones from every corner and every borough to the Student Union. The tour is conducted by a visit guide, sometimes in pairs and sometimes on their own, with roughly 10 to 30 students per group. They cover the main hotspots on campus, including the Quad, a lecture hall, the library, dorms, and gym. Each tour is wrapped up with lunch for the students, and a fun game that tests the students on basic college trivia that they learned on the tour.

"Through this program, we're able to reach out to all students on a deeper level, especially those who are reserved by nature through engaging and informative activities," remarked visit guide, Zaykyn Mejia, who is a post-bachelor's student who majored in biology at Queens College.

The visit guides are all current students or Queens College alumni, which allows them to share their own personal experiences (and inside jokes), with the students. They also share fun facts about Queens College; however, visit guides also go beyond QC-related material. They inform students of basic college facts, such as explaining the types of college degrees, majors, credits, making of schedules, and of course, how to pay for college.

"Most middle-schoolers might think college is not for them because they don't think they can afford it," explained Hamza Tahirovic, another visit guide and current sociology and drama/theater sophomore at QC. Students are given vital information on financial aid, as well as scholarships that all lessen the cost of college expenses. Visit guides also use this opportunity to encourage students to study hard for their tests, maintain good attendance, get involved in their school and community, and build relationships with their teachers. These guidelines create a well-rounded student who can accept college.

An important goal of CUNY Explorers is to make sure that middle school children know that it is never too early to start thinking about college and that they can take action, even now, to turn their dreams into reality. As Mejia said, "programs like CUNY Explorers are necessary for a better transition between levels of education because of its supportive nature between generations."

The QC CUNY Explorers team is very much a family. The seven visit guides and program coordinators have built a network of strong relationships and a friendly work environment.

"Every child that comes for a tour is like our little brother or sister," said Nida Syed, recent graduate of QC who studied psychology and adolescent counseling. "We want what's best for them, and that's why we do what we do."

"Working with CUNY Explorers not only allows me to develop as a leader but also give back to the community by raising awareness and making higher education more accessible, and helping to prepare the next generation of young adults," said Stavros Anastasiou, current junior and Classics and Byzantine/Modern Greek Studies major.

With a strong team and a passionate mission, CUNY Explorers at Queens College continues to expand and offer more and more tours to more students.

CUNY Explorers is always looking for enthusiastic and passionate QC students to work as visit guides. Anyone looking for more information should contact the program coordinator, Jaclyn Eng, at Jaclyn.Eng@qc.cuny.edu.
Is Queens College green?

Elaria Turton

Young people across the country are rising up and speaking out about the need to take serious action when it comes to climate change. A recent report from the United Nations warns that in just 10 years, Earth’s global temperatures will rise by 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, even further exacerbating extreme weather, storms, and drought around the world. Humanity must make drastic changes to carbon emissions and work toward more resilient communities.

In April, the Queens College community, led by the Urban Studies Department, came together for a forum on the Green New Deal, a nationwide movement toward drastically reducing emissions and installing solar electrical systems on multiple buildings. The plan for QC from 2007, also posted on the college’s website, is a 32 page document filled with specific long-term goals, implementation plans and a list of students, staff and faculty participants of the committee. The committee included an impressive combination of student and faculty members represent-ed by the department of buildings and grounds, environmental health and safety, urban studies, and the Student Union Association. The plan included goals for reducing emissions and installing solar panels dedicated to coordinating a committee of stakeholders campus-wide.

However, the investigation was not limited to the alleged collusion. It also sought to reveal if President Trump had obstructed justice. In sum, Barr argued that there was insufficient evidence to charge Trump with obstruction of justice, saying that “the evidence developed by the Special Counsel is not sufficient to establish that the President committed an obstruction-of-justice offense.”

After the announcement, President Trump already touted that he had been exonerated, writing on Twitter “No Collusion, No Obstruction, Complete and Total EXONERATION” after Barr released the initial four-page summary report reports The New York Times.

Paul Gambke, a senior and political science major, commented that, “The Mueller report definitely yielded success- I think it would be foolish to say otherwise. [Yet,] though there was a lack of sufficient evidence to support criminal charges, the evidence collected in the report provided more than enough evidence to question the integrity of the 2016 Trump Campaign staff, and by extension the current White House staff.”

This was all compounded by a letter written by Robert Mueller himself to Barr arguing that the four-page summary from March 24 was not explained as the special counsel intended reports The New York Times. “The summary letter the Department sent to Congress and released to the public late in the afternoon of March 24 did not fully capture the context, nature, and substance of this Office’s work and conclusions,” Mueller wrote.

In the letter, dated March 27, Mueller also urged Barr to release the full report, contending that it would help “al-leviate the misunderstandings that have arisen and would an-swer congressional and public questions about the nature and outcome of our investigation.”

According to The New York Times, the full edition of the Mueller Report and accompa-nying evidence was/subpoenaed by the House in April and due on May 1, the same day as Barr testified before the Senate. On May 2, Barr was scheduled to testify before the House Judiciary Committee to further discuss the findings of the investigation, but failed to show because he disagreed over having staff attorneys ques-tion him in addition to House members. Still, the unredacted report was not released with Barr and the Justice Department holding their ground. The New York Times reports that the House Judiciary committee was preparing to hold Barr in contempt, ignoring the subpoena for the full report. Time Mag-azine reports that House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler (D-NY) wrote in a letter to Politico on Friday that he is giving Barr until Monday morning to cooperate by at least allowing all Con-gress members to have access to the unre-dacted version of the report and to release more evidence directly pertaining to it.
The results of the NASA twin study provide breakthroughs in the future of human space travel

Renuka Surujnarain

In early April 2019, findings from the NASA twin study, which was investigating the changes spaceflight brings onto the human body, were published in the peer-reviewed journal Science, paving the way for future long-term space travel. The study focused on a set of twins – Scott and Mark Kelly. Scott Kelly spent one year on the International Space Station (March 2015 – March 2016), while Mark stayed on Earth. By completing a longitudinal and multi-dimensional study of twins, researchers can observe two people with identical genetic backgrounds, and by only having one exposed to the extreme environment of space, it becomes easier to observe the effects of such environment by comparing them with a controlled subject not exposed to those conditions – a classic nature vs. nurture experiment. As QC biologist professor Sebastian Alvarado puts it, “To date, so much of our fundamental understanding of human health stems from our understanding of genes and heredity. Therefore, any variation seen between these twins cannot be genetic but the result of other molecular processes shaping biology to adapt to novel environments.”

Elements of the space environment, such as exposure to radiation, microgravity and other factors, are predicted to bring about some physiological, and molecular changes to Scott Kelly’s body. To address the numerous points of interest, from Scott’s microbiome to the expression of his genes, 10 different research groups collaborated on analyzing different data points recorded before, during and after Scott’s trip. Given the time since Scott’s return, researchers have also been able to conclude not only which changes were introduced upon his departure, but also which changes were reversed or minimized after he returned to Earth.

The key points of the analysis were gene expression, telomere elongation, DNA damage, immune system, biochemical changes and cognition. The study of epigenetics and DNA methylation throughout the study served as a baseline to understanding how space can alter which of our genes are active. Telomeres function as caps at the end of human chromosomes that protect them from any damage during DNA replication and cell division. They maintain the integrity of the genome, and they can shorten due to age or environmental stress. The length of the telomeres in Scott Kelly’s genome were longer during the journey, and this related to changes in his gene expression and damage to his DNA.

Likely, due to the long-term exposure to radiation which has known impacts on DNA structure, several inversion mutations were introduced into Scott’s genome. Much improving the assistance capabilities may think, so the results of this study are still focused on the impacts a space environment had on which genes were being expressed, rather than the alterations to the DNA itself.

Scott received three vaccines during the study – one before, during and after the journey. Normal effects of the vaccines were observed, allowing NASA to confidently rely on vaccines when it comes to longer expeditions. Because of a stricter diet and increased exercise, Scott faced a decrease in overall body mass, accompanied by bone breakdown during the first half of his travels. Lastly, Scott’s cognitive performance wasn’t profoundly disturbed during the expedition, but decreases in speed and accuracy were observed.

Though there were a lot more unfortunate changes within Scott’s body during the one-year mission and after, such as his microbiome and cardiovascular system, a lot of the alterations he faced were reversed upon his arrival back to Earth. Gene expression mechanisms, the telomeres at the end of his chromosomes, cognitive processes and more, returned to baseline levels within a year after coming back, and the study still supported the resilience of the human body in extreme conditions. The research is still limited to a small number of subjects studied, and it took place in a relatively protected location in space thanks to Earth’s magnetic field, but NASA’s Human Research Program and their work in both the one-year mission and the twin study have still contributed vast amounts of knowledge to what we know about humans in space travel. Not only did this study take place over a longer period of time than ever before, but a study done with twins also helps us to compare and study the impacts of the space environment more accurately. Analyses being done in this study can even aid in our approaches to human health on earth – from the risk factors associated with disease to preventative methods and treatment. Scott’s brother, Mark, and researchers everywhere commend Scott for his devotion to the advancement of human space travel.

Is giving up your privacy worth the latest technology?

Arwa Ali

There has been an air of controversy surrounding the logistics involved in the software manufacturing process ever since the inception of voice assistance technology. While many are thrilled by the impact smart speakers have had on their daily lives, others remain conflicted about whether or not owning them means sacrificing their privacy.

In 2014, Amazon made waves in the tech world when they released the first ever smart speaker called “Echo.” The product is activated by wake words like “Alexa,” “Echo,” or “Computer,” although in an effort to humanize the interaction, “Alexa” has become the most popularly used.

From setting alarms to streaming music, the voice interaction feature of the Echo has capitalized on its convenience. The ability to make hand free commands is what has drawn millions of people to purchase the Echo and inspired other companies like Google and Microsoft to release their own versions.

As globally successful as smart speakers are, many people are still fearful of the microphones installed in them. Skeptics of the devices worry about the voice software listening in on their daily conversations, leaving them to wonder what companies do with the private information they receive.

It has been recently revealed that Amazon has a team of people designated to further improving the assistance capabilities of Alexa. Theses employees listen to the voice recordings that the Echo has access to and train its software to have algorithms that can cater to the nuances of human speech.

Many people were shocked by the lack of privacy attained when buying a smart speaker. Fizza Abbas, a sophomore studying sociology claims that “privacy does not exist in this day and age. The collection of voice data is the only way for companies to give consumers the best service.”

Amazon has openly said that they use the recorded requests to Alexa to train their “speech recognition and natural language understanding systems,” but have never explicitly admitted that is humans who listen to the voice recordings. The company’s website also states that the Echo can only be triggered by a wake word, but it does not warn readers that the Echo can get set off by random noises and begin recording automatically. Amazon employees are required to review the audio, even if the activation was by mistake.

Juhura Akhi, a sophomore studying early childhood education thinks that “buying these kinds of high tech products means trading in your privacy and that’s a fact you have to accept.”

It is presumed that being very public about the manual labor involved in Alexa’s training process and the unfortunate faults of the system could instill anxiety in potential consumers of the device. Although the voice review process can be tedious and dull, workers will sometimes come across audio that is worrisome or embarrassing. From sexual assault to distressed children, the listeners hear it all and are left unable to take any action. An Amazon spokesperson has made it clear that the company takes “the security and privacy of their ‘customers’ personal information seriously.” They believe that it would not be their place to report problematic recordings.

After asking around the Queens College campus for students’ opinions on today’s technology invading people’s privacy, no one seemed to be surprised.

Shazna Olid, a sophomore studying psychology believes this “sparks a bigger conversation about ethics vs. money, and which is placed on a higher pedestal.” The revelations about Amazon’s Echo also reaffirmed all her “conspiracy theories about how we are never truly alone.”

Even with the controversial aspects of the Echo’s production process, Amazon believes that their choice to have a team of people listen to private recordings is the only way for them to advance Alexa’s human recognition abilities. If this is the case, then are consumers willing to sacrifice their privacy for the benefits of voice assistant services? As the world becomes more reliant on technology, and the expectation of its optimization only increases, it seems like they may no longer have a choice.
Dr. William Hersh: Professor spotlight

Dr. William Hersh, Professor for Organic Chemistry.

Anthony Vancol

When it comes to pursuing and engaging in higher education, there are inevitable stressors that impact the mental state of the typical, overall college undergrad. Of course this varies among a multitude of components; whether that be your year in school, the financial space the student is in, their race, gender and current discipline that they’re studying for. The experiences that undergraduates are going through are different, but somehow are essentially the same. While doing undergraduate studies and trying to juggle a magnitude of things to handle and worry about, one of the things that has to be added onto students’ fragile minds is the pending questions: where am I going to go for grad school after I finish college? How am I gonna pay for it? Most of all, is it worth it?

When discussing how crucial it is to acquire a bachelor’s degree in this current day in age, it’s become very much needed. Students are now coming to this revelation when applying to entry level jobs and finding out the BA degree is becoming the new diploma, meaning they’re getting lower-skill jobs and lower wages that come with it. Employment opportunities nowadays are increasing their qualifications and requirements. That comes with having a BA and an MA as well if you want a better, higher-paying job.

While interviewing peers from QC, mostly sophomores of various majors, on whether they saw themselves pursuing grad school after undergrad, most had very not-so-positive responses and expressed negative attitudes towards the idea. Sophomore accounting major Anna Virk adamantly said, “I don’t think I will pursue grad school after I graduate.” While conversing with a group of students on how their mental health has been affected since being in undergrad, the most recurring themes seemed to be societal pressures, financial woes and most of all, lack of conducive support from parents. “Finding time outside of class to hang out with one another and just have fun and bonding over a class that is an elective and brings them joy and not stress,” said psychology major, Deanna Young, commenting on how to de-stress.

Young, commenting on how to de-stress. Samantha Aversano, senior psychology major, spoke on experiencing applying to grad school and the struggles that came with it. She only applied to one graduate school program, Hunter MSW and said, “I tried my best to find an affordable masters program.” Associate Professor in psychology at Queensborough Community College, Dr. Anissa, recounts her experiences while being in grad school at Teachers College, Columbia University. She said during that particular time, she wished she would have listened more to her mentors and professors in her field of psychology. She said, “I was very stubborn and didn’t want to listen to what they had to say. I had to learn things the hard way.” She realized how beneficial they were to her academic and professional career to really help guide her.

Stephanie Li, current grad student at QC in the Mental Health Counseling Program, states how rigorous and hard the program is and what it demands of her. She attends full time, taking 15 credits. She stated what she was told during her interview process before she got in the program, “I was advised in the beginning that due to the rigorous course load, working would not be best. And if so, it had to be part-time with a maximum of 10 hrs a week.” For any student who has to pay for school and other obligations, that seems like a real strenuous thing to deal with while pursuing another degree. She said, “For anyone who wants to pursue graduate school, they have to think very long and hard before wanting to engage that much of a time commitment for their intended career and see if they are really up to it.”

A stressed out student looking through piles of books.

Over his many years at QC, Hersh has experienced many changes within the CUNY system that impact his research labs and the labs of many other faculty. The funding of CUNY has decreased significantly during his years here, which have affected the dynamics of programs at QC in multiple ways. The number of full-time staff in the chemistry department alone have decreased significantly over the years. Hersh’s involvement in research has shifted multiple times throughout all his years of study. During his undergraduate years, he was involved in making isomers of the IR and UV spectra for butadiene. Later on, his focus shifted to organometallic chemistry - the study of the carbon of an organic compound bonded to a metal. Currently, Hersh’s research revolves around phosphorus chemistry and developing nonviral ways to administer gene therapy.

“The only way you can learn how to do science is through a research lab,” Hersh said. His emphasis on research not only concerned science but also life skills. “Chemistry teaches you to pay attention to details. Not ignoring details is a life skill” he said.

The funding of CUNY has decreased significantly during his years here, which have affected the dynamics of programs at QC in multiple ways. The number of full-time staff in the chemistry department alone have decreased significantly over the years. Hersh’s involvement in research has shifted multiple times throughout all his years of study. During his undergraduate years, he was involved in making isomers of the IR and UV spectra for butadiene. Later on, his focus shifted to organometallic chemistry - the study of the carbon of an organic compound bonded to a metal. Currently, Hersh’s research revolves around phosphorus chemistry and developing nonviral ways to administer gene therapy.

“Any job you get, you have to be flexible,” Hersh said. “Nothing in the work world is static”. His travels, his experiences, and his passion have all impacted him and continue to impact the lives of his students through him.” People are saying this is an unprecedented move, but it isn’t in the sense that 43 years ago we tried to get rid of packaging and we failed and now it’s gotten much worse,” he said.

Dr. William Hersh: Professor spotlight

Dr. William Hersh, Professor for Organic Chemistry.

Zainab Akande

From an early age, William Hersh had always been aligned with the sciences, as one might expect from a renowned organic chemist. However, the sciences are not the only endeavors he has pursued in his past. As an undergraduate student, Hersh was a part of a band and played the saxophone while touring in Europe one summer in July. He still continues to play the saxophone to this day.

When speaking to Hersh about how where his interest in chemistry came from, he reflected on his time in high school. As a tenth grader, Hersh mentioned his interests in Chemistry came from his Chemistry teacher, a woman who studied geology in college. Additionally, his participation in a summer program sponsored by the National Science Foundation contributed to his interest in the subject. This further led him to obtain multiple degrees from multiple Ivy League schools as well as spend time abroad in Europe studying and touring.

Now, after 30 years at QC, Hersh reflected on differences among students at QC and how his experiences at other schools, like UCLA, have taught him more about the importance of mentorship and its impact on students. “Mentors are really key places in what you do.” Hersh said. He studied under influential chemists, including Thomas Katz from Columbia University, where Hersh also received his doctorate degree from. As a current mentor, Hersh most noticeably felt his impact on his students at QC. He said how working with students from diverse backgrounds is amongst the most enjoyable parts of his career. Through his research lab, he is able to develop relationships with his students that stem beyond the interaction during a lecture.

Hersh said that he is able to learn and experience the different obstacles students face, such as having parents that are unfamiliar with the college system or that do not speak English as a first language. Hersh described himself as a “sorrogate parent” to the students in his lab.

“Not ignoring details is a life skill” he said.
Hope Okoro

In the Student Union of Queens College, a college of diversity of different nationalities, lies the Association of Latino Professional for America, an organization that is dedicated to developing future professionals. ALPFA is more than a club that meets during the Free Hour; it is an association that strives to build up and prepare students of color for the business and corporate aspect of America. It may be named “Association of Latino Professional for America”, but the club welcomes students of different nationalities interested in studying in the business/accounting field. The mission of this club is met through the organization of such events as networking and social expos, business trips to different states, meeting other students of similar interest, seminars, workshops and more. These events even feature professionals from some of today’s biggest industries and companies such as JP Morgan, Bank of America, PWC, Morgan Stanley, Instagram, and more. Karla Veloz, current association president as well as a senior studying Economics, humbly credited her leadership of the club to her support system. “With the help and support of my mentors, professors, past leaders of the club, and of course, the ALPFA family, I have been able to successfully lead this club and others,” she says. “This experience has not only helped me grow as a student, but as a professional, as a leader and as a person.” “Since joining ALPFA, I’ve come to learn that this journey is not about what I can make out of myself, but what we can make out of each other,” said Richard Torrenegra, the current treasurer and future president. “All the workshops, events, travels, and conversations can ultimately be summed up into one statement for me: there are many people out there willing to help you, so you should be willing to help others.” ALPFA’s Vice President, Karina Catu, a sophomore studying accounting, says, “ALPFA motivated me to do better in school with the support of other students there. ALPFA has a welcoming environment that opened many opportunities for me. Now, this summer I have an internship opportunity. Through networking events and meeting other business students from across the country, this proved to me that ALPFA levels the playing fields and opens doors for people of color to enter the business world.” ALPFA has also partnered with a couple accounting and business firms such as EY and IBDO to expose their members to the real world of business as to what to expect and what is expected of them. To name a few, other events they have hosted this semester include, “The Ultimate Resume Writing Workshop” featuring Ernst & Young (EY) multinational professional services, “Breaking into the Business Industry”, featuring Bank of America, and “Accenture”, a meet and greet networking event for young professionals. Their most anticipated and successful event they held was in April. “Maximized Your Success” had over 50 professionals of color, all of whom came to and network and advise students that were also prospective clients.

These event-purposes are for leadership development, networking and just exploring different fields the business world has to offer. Many can attest that ALPFA is more than just a QC club; it is a professional development and opportunity-filled club for all business and accounting students!

TRIBECA Film Festival: Come to Daddy!

Elijah Wood stares into the distance

Ben Falbo

Where do I begin with Come to Daddy? I have no idea where to start with this film. This film wasn’t anything I thought it’d be when I first read the listing for it in my TriBeCa handbook. I then decided to go into producer Ant Timpson’s, producer of The Greasy Strangler, directorial debut about a man who goes and visits his estranged father only to be met with disturbing circumstances with a mix of excitement and trepidation. For one of the very few times in my life was I able to head into this film 100% free of any trailer reviews or free reviews on trusted horror cinema sites & podcasts. So when I sat down in a surprisingly packed critics screening, I had absolutely no idea about what I was going to see. I can safely say that even though it’s been close to a week since I saw the movie, Come to Daddy has still stuck with me and won’t let me forget any of the maddening, genre bending, sickening, laughter and confusion inducing content present in its 90 minute runtime. The film focuses on Norval, a hipster musician visiting his absentee father up at his secluded beach front property. From minute one, Norval’s dad does very little to convince his son (or us for that matter) that he is a trustworthy individual. Very quickly small awkward moments become overly sinister, and it quickly becomes clear that while Norval might have been hoping for some closure from his father what he ended up getting is far from anything he (or me as a viewer) could have suspected. That synopsis right there is pretty much all I can divulge because to go any further would spoil some of the major twists, turns and reveal that this film has up its sleeve.

This film was truly one of the most unpredictable experiences I have had in recent memory and my fellow audience members seemed to agree with me. From the nearly unbearable suspense of the early stages to the non-stop madness of the latter half of the film, my theater was full of reactions that ranged from nervous murmuring to pained groans to awkward/hysterical laughter. The critic behind me said it best when he stated quite audibly “What in the h*ll happened to this movie?” To me that really says it all.

The gore effects are also a treat as despite the ridiculous circumstances surrounding them, every violent act in this film boasts a hardy amount of blood, stabbing, shanking, mutilation and more cringe inducing imagery than I could ever do justice in a written review. Come to Daddy is a tonally conflicting, suspenseful, gory thrill ride that takes your brain for a long ride in a bender set on frappé, but I’d be remiss if I didn’t say I enjoyed it for all its sick, awkward and offbeat glory. Every so often you need to see a film that is going to test your fortitude for gore, violence and even dramatic tonal shifts. Come to Daddy certainly did that. Once available for general consumption I highly recommend everyone go see Come to Daddy.