

# Scepter

The Students' Voice

Kingsborough Community College

May/June 2026

The City University of New York

## Kingsborough's 61st Commencement Ceremony



Photo by: Chavindu Samaraweera

More photos on pages 6

# Scepter

**Editor-In-Chief**  
Nadia Chin

**Managing Editor**  
Anastasiia Haraieva

**Treasurer**  
Annie He

**Secretary**  
Elena Ramirez

**Production**  
Nadia Chin

**Copy Editor**  
Gail Smollon

**Writers**  
Annie He  
Elena Ramirez  
Eunice Yeung  
Eva Berkeley  
Faruq Anjorin  
Fotima Makhmudova  
Inessa Royt  
Ryan Tan  
Sarahlee D. Bourdeau  
Victor Chamorro

**Photographers**  
Elena Ramirez  
Eva Berkeley  
Chavindu Samaraweera

**Director of Student Life & Student Publication**  
Melissa Merced

**Office Manager and Production Advisor**  
Robert Wong



Scepter is a publication of the students of Kingsborough Community College. This is not a college publication, therefore, the college is not responsible for its content. All articles in Scepter remain the sole property of Scepter. To obtain reprint permission, please contact the editors. Scepter welcomes letters to the editors and opinions from the entire Kingsborough Community.

2001 Oriental Boulevard  
Room M-230  
Brooklyn, NY 11235  
Telephone: (718) 368-5603  
Email: [scepter@kbcc.cuny.edu](mailto:scepter@kbcc.cuny.edu)

## Be on the lookout for the new issue of the 2026 Antheon!



Antheon is Kingsborough Community College's literary arts journal, published annually at the end of the spring semester. Each year, a team of students and faculty advisors carefully selects the finest visual art and literary works created during the academic year. The design team then takes on the exciting challenge of transforming these works into a beautifully crafted 66-page publication. Every layout is uniquely designed to complement each individual artwork or piece of writing, while maintaining the magazine's strong visual identity and artistic integrity. Over the years, Antheon has earned numerous graphic design awards — and the most recent issue is no exception. The publication competes against top design schools across the country and internationally, often standing out as the only community college represented in these competitions. We are incredibly proud of this new issue and of the talented student artists and designers whose creativity brought it to life. Copies of the magazine are available in M230 (Student Publications Office) as well as in the Art Department offices, S155 and T505.



The design team working on the Antheon. From left to right: Sofia Kukharuk, Prof. Derimanova, Iryna Chernyukh

# JOIN SCEPTER

Scepter is always recruiting new team members to contribute to monthly editions of the paper. If you are a Kingsborough student and are interested in writing, photography, layout design, or copy editing, talk to us in M230. You can email us at [scepter@kbcc.cuny.edu](mailto:scepter@kbcc.cuny.edu).

# Dr. Suri Duitch Inaugurated as Kingsborough's Eighth President



President Suri Duitch with Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Chancellor of The City University of New York Photo by: Chavindu Samaraweera

By: Annie He

On May 7th, KCC celebrated the Presidential Investiture of its eighth president Dr. Suri Duitch at Kingsborough Community College.

An investiture is a time-honored academic tradition that marks the formal installation of a new university president. It is a ceremony steeped in tradition, featuring an academic procession of delegates from other universities as well as the university's own faculty. Marchers would wear their academic regalia. This tradition is rooted in centuries-old customs, dating back to the Middle Ages.

Much of the ceremony was hosted by alumna Khalilah Webster (class of 2001), who offered greetings and addressed the crowds, giving her congratulations and encouragements.

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, chancellor of The City University of New York, who had known

Duitch for many years, praised Duitch as an incredible mentor and colleague, noting her ability to lead positive changes.

"Someone who's very special to everybody who is here at Kingsborough Community College... someone that I was fortunate when I had come into office to have her as a colleague," said Rodríguez. "Suri is not only exceptional at CUNY here, but one whose personal journey resonates with many of our students."

Dr. Suri Duitch is the eighth president of Kingsborough Community College. Under her leadership, Kingsborough had received its reaccreditation in spring of 2025 from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and continues to be ranked in the top 5% of community colleges nationally by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program.

In her inauguration address, Duitch outlined

how her goals for the future of Kingsborough were inspired by a blend of personal experiences and the history that the college holds.

"One of the great achievements of this country is the idea of higher education as a pathway to opportunities," said Duitch. "The United States pioneered mass higher education and had repeatedly developed innovations to meet new needs at critical moments in our history. The community activists who fought master builder Robert Moses in the early 1960s to claim the land that we are on right now, had ambitions for the children of their community and understood the critical role that community college would play in realizing those ambitions."

She promises to ensure that students who attend Kingsborough have the most fulfilling and productive experience possible.

# Taste Around the World Brings Cultures Together

## Kingsborough Students Explored International Flavors, Music, And Traditions In A Celebration Of Diversity And Unity

By: Sarahlee D. Bourdeau



On Wednesday, May 20, Student Government Association welcomed Kingsborough Community College students with a pleasant decoration of flags, passports, and balloons, accompanied by the scent of flavors from around the world.

Its title, "Taste Around the World," had been promoted throughout the campus for a few days, which increased the desire of students and staff members to travel from the streets of Brooklyn to Africa, Asia, Europe, and of course North and Latin America through different flavors that delight your palate. The campus was finally treated to the long-awaited event: "Taste Around the World".

Upon entering room U219, the usual transit through Kingsborough's Hall of Flags slowed to a celebratory

crawl. You were greeted by the smell of shrimp fried rice from Africa, sushi rolls from Asia, jerk chicken from North America, lasagna from Europe, and empanadas from Latin America, flavors that sparked the curiosity of students to try something new.

Passing through the buffet, you could appreciate the diversity of gastronomy that exists and how the people serving you were connected to the history of the dish and explained to you when you asked what it was made of.

Although the purpose of the event was to taste gastronomies between different continents, at the tables something even more exciting was observed, which was the diversity of culture through conversations between bites of Caesar salad, mac and cheese, and Fufu.

Along with the DJ who accompanied

us with Afrobeat, Asian music, and some reggaeton from Latin America that make our ears and souls vibrate, you could appreciate in the environment how significant it is to be part of a place where you can share your culture, your language, and your traditions; some wore traditional costumes from their countries, and others with all the excitement in the world looked for their flags to fly them with pride.

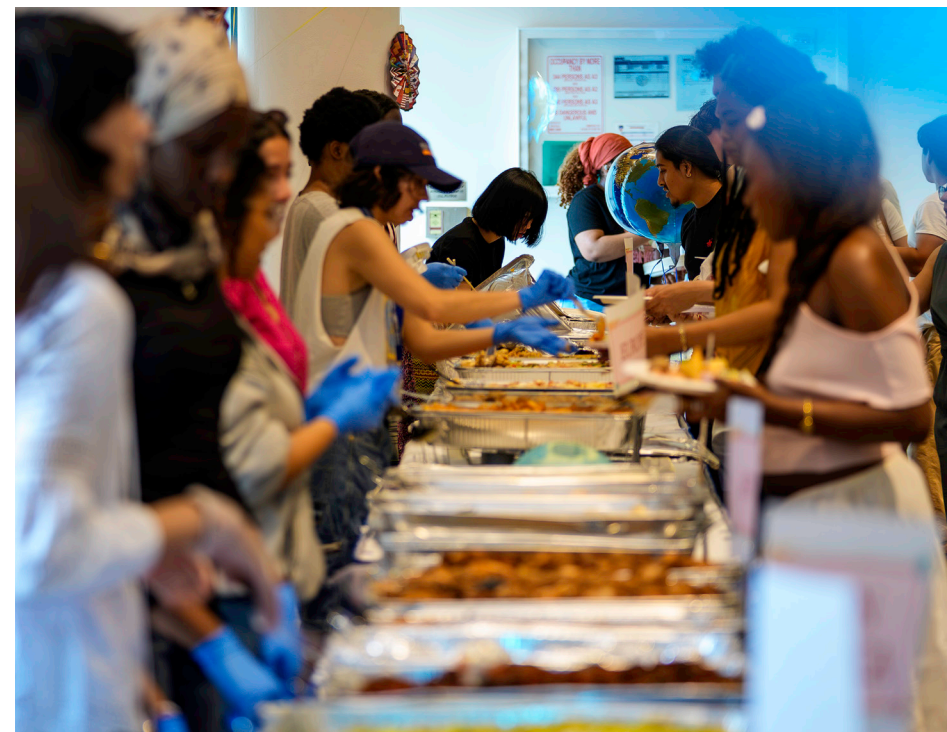
The event took place near the Hall of Flags, which makes it even more significant. Many students, when passing through there, have the first instinct to look for the flag that represents them; however, last Wednesday they had the opportunity to experience an even more meaningful experience: tasting the food of their homes. In a country like the United States, diversity is something you find

everywhere and it is always important to celebrate it.

To celebrate every tradition, every culture, and every language, thanks to this event, I am sure many were able to return to their country through a single bite.

To be able to reconnect with their heritage, and what they had to leave behind. Taste Around the World was a total success; celebrating other cultures will always be a unique human experience, as everyone will have a unique experience.

Kingsborough Community College is recognized for the diversity of culture and nationalities present; by holding these types of events, they not only embrace different cultures but also give meaning, a place, and a space to those who had to leave their homes to emigrate and seek a better place.



# Mixue: The Ice Cream and Boba Store That's Changing the Game

## Snow King Has Entered The Chat

By: Annie He

As a broke college student, finding boba in the city was something I considered a very difficult task. Luckily, the debut of the world's largest fast food chain (by store numbers), Mixue Ice Cream and Tea, changes that. Aside from operating under a lively atmosphere, with their rave style theme song, "I LOVE YOU, YOU LOVE ME, MIXUE Ice Cream and Tea" playing in the background and their mascot, the Snow King, bouncing up and down to the beat, most, if not all, the drinks and desserts served fall under the \$5 mark. Compared to the average cost of boba being more than \$7, it only makes sense why there's always a line forming. Another unique thing about Mixue is that they offer something no other boba

franchise does: a 200% sugar level option. Talk about a sweet deal. Mixue Ice Cream and Tea has opened three locations within Manhattan so far: Hell's Kitchen, Broadway, and Canal Street. I opted to visit the Canal Street location. At all three locations, customers can order using the self serve kiosks or at the front counter. Mixue has a fairly limited menu, and more often than not, their classic soft serve cone, arguably their most popular dessert, is sold out. With a cone priced at only \$1.19, it's no wonder people adore it. But beyond their sweet treats, they also offer a wide range of drinks, from milk teas to fruit teas. My go-to order is the peach oolong tea at 30% sugar. The drink tastes light and incredibly refreshing, offering a hint of

sweetness touched by the aroma of peaches and oolong. Chunks of peach swirl at the bottom: always sweet, never sour; always crunchy, never mushy. For only \$3.49, it surpasses many other boba franchises in both taste and price. Of course, I couldn't leave without trying their soft serve cone. Although I could taste the powder used to make the ice cream mixture, it was no different from any other vanilla ice cream cone. It did, however, melt much faster than cones from ice cream trucks. But at that price point, there really isn't much to complain about. Their fresh lemonade is also worth mentioning. Though it's a simple drink, the blend of lemon tanginess and syrup sweetness makes the flavor pop. I have yet to try their other drinks, but

from what the internet and my friends say, every drink is worth its price, and then some. Despite the constant influx of orders, I never waited more than 10 minutes for my order. Alongside low prices, the service is also incredibly fast. However, Mixue is not as accessible as other boba franchises. With locations only in Manhattan, it becomes a problem for those living in other boroughs. I had to travel 45 minutes from Bensonhurst to reach the Canal Street location. Could there be more unique and better tasting drinks elsewhere? Most definitely, with hundreds of competing boba chains in the city. However, if you're looking for something quick, affordable, and still delicious, Mixue is certainly a go to.



# Meal Deals Update

## How To Get The Most Food For Your Money

By: Victor Chamorro

In our April 2026 issue of Scepter, I wrote about the different value meals from various restaurants.

Since the publication of the last article, McDonalds has done a rework of their menu. Changing some prices, adding new deals, and new items for consumers to try.

The meal deals got an increase in price by a whole dollar, however, when you consider that it is a 25 cent increase per item that you

are buying, it does not sound that bad at all.

McDonalds has even introduced 6 new drinks, with the priciest being a \$4.69 refresher.

I personally tasted the strawberry watermelon refresher and I enjoyed it a whole lot. But lunch isn't always what we want. When I go to school, sometimes I want a cheap breakfast sandwich.

My prayers were answered because now

they offer a sausage McMuffin for \$1.99 and a sausage biscuit for \$1.79.

This has been a godsend to me, especially with how breakfast sandwiches have been priced these days.

McDonalds competitors have yet to do something like adding a bunch of new deals and new items to spice things up.

And with summer already here, I know that those drinks will be selling fast.

# Grad Fair

Photo by: Chavindu Samaraweera & Eva Berkeley



# Cap Decoration

Photo by: Chavindu Samaraweera & Eva Berkeley



# Graduation Day

Photo by: Chavindu Samaraweera



# Behind The Curtain

## The Unsung Crew That Brings Kingsborough Theatre To Life

By: Ryan Tan

With May coming to a close, so too does our theatre here at Kingsborough, with the closing of our most recent show: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time. Of course, such a production draws praise and applause for the actors on stage, who've done phenomenal jobs entertaining their wonderful audience. But have you ever been curious about those unsung? When it's time for appraisal and cheers, many focus on those in the spotlight, but few think about those behind the curtain, those in the booth, or even those who aren't even in the showroom itself. There should be some light shone onto those whose contributions, while unseen, can still be felt all throughout the show.

Obviously, when a show starts, everything is pitch black. After all, we want to draw attention to the actors, not the audience, and the lights are a very easy way to convey where to draw the audience's eyes. Whether by using the lighting to highlight specific moments on stage, or using the lack of it to hide away actions for suspense, lighting is a key part of any show that not many people think about. I mean, imagine doing an entire show in pitch black. Or perhaps, that's what's required for a show to shine. After all, the vision of the lighting director is what helps the show pop. By using the lights as a tool to highlight someone's figure with shadows and contrast, the management of those lights is what helps make every show, even if adapted from the same story, unique in its own way.

landscape, their culture, financial status, or even how they interact with others in the show. All of these, and more, must be taken into account when creating the outfits for the actors. Sometimes there are moments where the lights and costumes create a visual clash, causing one to overpower the other. In such a case, either element will be adjusted to create harmony on stage.



When I said to think about those behind the curtain, I wasn't kidding. Oftentimes there are people backstage helping actors with tasks that may be hard or impossible to do on their own. Actors may have to change costumes at the drop of a hat, grab props, or put away large set pieces and return to the stage quickly. Sometimes elements of the stage may also move, such as the jackknives from last semester's show that rolled on and off the stage. All of these tasks are handled by backstage crews. Staying hidden behind the show, their job is to offer assistance from the shadows, helping actors stay quick on their feet so the show runs smoothly.

The word theatre isn't something one thinks about all that often. It's been adapted and used so frequently that its origins are rarely considered. Derived from the Greek word theatron, the term refers to "the seeing place," where audiences gather to watch actors do their work. And that place can speak volumes about a play, even though it's an inanimate object. The type of stage, for example, can vastly determine how a play is performed, as seating arrangements decide how much of the stage the audience can see. Slopes and ramps can elevate actors to draw focus, and backstage entrances allow actors to appear from various angles for different effects.

The physical world of the stage here at Kingsborough is built by our Scene Shop, where students work on woodworking, painting, and assembling everything that goes onstage. These stage assemblies can take months to complete, and are generally built alongside the rehearsal process so that actors and directors can weigh in along the way.

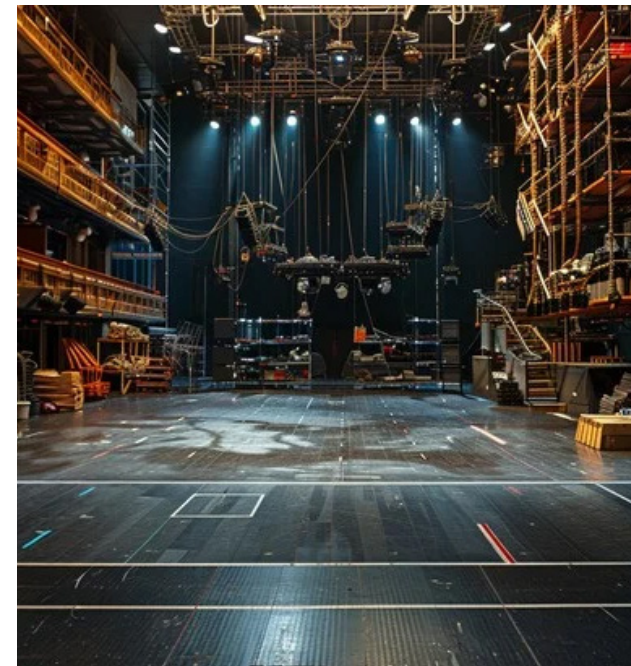
One director sometimes isn't enough to track every actor, especially in productions with a large cast. That's where the stage manager comes in, overseeing the process from before any actors are even cast all the way through closing night. I asked Eleni Efthimiou, the stage manager of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, how directly involved they were with the show, and they

responded: "Pretty directly with actors and directors, keeping track of blocking and props, viewing rehearsal schedules, and any communication between actors and directors goes through me. I make sure actors are on time for rehearsals, tech, and the show dates. I communicate with sound and light designers for how and when to call cues during the show. It's in the job title, managing what happens on stage and following what the director says, making sure there's good enough communication between the director and actors so the show runs as smoothly as possible." From start to finish, the stage manager watches over everything to ensure nothing goes off the rails. Sometimes they're not the only ones looking things over — assistant stage managers help with the process — but overall the stage manager is the direct link between the actors and the director.

Speaking of directors, they're the ones who are there from the very beginning. Before the show has even entered its first rehearsal, they're deciding what show should be adapted for the stage. The process takes several months of planning: meeting with designers to develop lighting, sound, and costume concepts, and determining the core themes and ideas the production should explore. The plays here at Kingsborough have been in production for longer than one might assume. Even though our semesters only last around three months, these processes often begin before the semester starts, bleeding over from the previous one. When I asked Thomas Rothacker Jr, the director of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, for a look at what the director does for the show, he said: "Selecting the show, we cast the show, we do external research, casting the play, casting the actors, research on the world of the play, time period, themes, issues, what the big question of the playwright is asking about the play, and then staging the play, which takes up the majority of the process." The life cycle of the play starts with the director, and as the show closes and moves onto the next cycle, it ends with them too.



So next time you see any of the behind-the-scenes crew, show them your appreciation, as not many people think about their contributions to the shows they make possible. And if any of these roles catch your eye, you can learn more about them right here at Kingsborough. Foundations in Theatre goes more in-depth about these roles, as well as how theatre comes together at every level.



But what's lights without sound? If a show isn't as pleasing to the ears as it is to the eyes, it loses a part of itself. Just as lights are woven into a play to make it more or less realistic, sound is equally prominent. Sound effects help sell the world of the play, from distant background noise that suggests life offstage, to the beauty of nature, to the disorienting hum of an otherworldly space, and every show will implement sound effects in some way. Even the music played during the pre-show has its own unique role, setting audiences into a mood before the curtain ever rises. Every piece of sound is designed to enhance the audience's experience, blending with the lights to cultivate an experience like no other.

When an actor comes on stage, what do you expect to see them in? Clothing can show a lot about the character an actor portrays, without them even speaking a word. When designing how a character is going to look for a play, that's where the costume designer comes in. Many things can influence how a character should look: the time period, the

# Give Blood, Save Lives

## KCC Partners With New York Blood Center Each Semester To Make Donation Simple And Accessible

By: Annie He

Saving lives is a lot easier than many would think. It doesn't always have to involve being a licensed medical professional. Sometimes it's as easy as simply donating blood.

A single blood donation can save up to three lives. This comes from the fact that one pint of blood can be separated into three components: red blood cells, platelets, and plasma, with each going to different patients with different needs.

Kingsborough Community College hosts a blood drive every semester in partnership with New York Blood Center (NYBC). There is no sign-up required to donate. All someone needs to do is show up at the drive with any form of ID.

The process of donating blood doesn't take long, though for those donating for the first time, it may take a few moments more.

The first step is answering a questionnaire of about 50 questions. It asks for basic health information and screens the donor to determine whether

they are eligible to donate.

Once cleared, the donor is directed to see a nurse, who reviews their information and performs a finger prick blood test to measure iron levels. For adult women, the typical range is 11 to 307 micrograms per liter (mcg/L); for adult men, it is 24 to 339 mcg/L.

After passing the iron screening, the donor is led to a chair designed specifically for blood donation. The arm is cleaned and sterilized before blood is drawn. A typical donation is up to 500 milliliters, or about 17 ounces.

Once the donation is complete, donors are advised to rest in a waiting area for at least 15 minutes to stabilize blood pressure and avoid dizziness or fainting. NYBC provides snacks such as pretzels and cookies, along with water and juice, to help replenish energy.

The whole process takes no more than 30 minutes, including wait time. So the next time you hear about a blood drive, don't hesitate to show up and save a life.

# The Japan Parade Brings Japanese Culture to the Heart of New York

## A Look At The History And Spirit Behind One Of Central Park's Most Vibrant Annual Events

By: Elena Ramirez

As residents of New York City, we know that this is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world. It is teeming with people from every corner of the globe, each bringing their own unique customs. One particularly prominent community that certainly cannot be overlooked is the Japanese community here in NYC, which has been an integral part of the city for over 50 years, centered across three distinct areas:

- Little Tokyo (Manhattan): Located primarily along 9th and 10th Streets (between 3rd and 4th Avenues) and on St. Mark's Place. It is renowned for its excellent ramen, sushi, and yakitori restaurants, as well as its shops selling Japanese goods.

- Japan Village (Brooklyn): Situated at 934 3rd Avenue within Industry City, this immense space features a Japanese marketplace and restaurants (serving ramen and sushi), the second floor houses shops dedicated to anime, beauty products, and various Japanese items.

- Midtown / East 40s Area: Located near the Japan Society, this zone is home to various shops and restaurants, such as Café Zaiya and Sunrise Mart.

As one of the largest communities in this state, they decided to choose a special day to commemorate their culture, they established what would become the Japan Parade, which in 2026 celebrated its 5th year in Central Park. But to better understand, let's learn a little about its history.

In 2007, Mr. Motoatsu Sakurai, who was then the Ambassador and Consul General of Japan in New York, called upon leading Japanese companies to create and sponsor a special event to celebrate the local communities, shared heritages, and cherished cultures of the Japanese American people of New York.

This event, named Japan Day at Central Park, was held every May until 2019, when Japan Day reached its thirteenth anniversary. After a two-year

postponement due to the coronavirus pandemic, Japan Day was reborn in 2022 as the Japan Parade and the Japan Street Fair.

At this year's 2026 edition, a magnificent parade took place, set against an atmosphere filled with smiles and people proud of their nation. We witnessed a vibrant representation of both traditional and modern Japanese culture, featuring contingents that showcased taiko drummers, Bon Odori dancers, participants clad in kimonos, and martial arts teams demonstrating disciplines such as karate, judo, and even a brief kendo exhibition match.

Despite the rainy weather, the participants continued to march with their heads held high and smiles on their faces, savoring every moment. As members of this community, let us support the diverse cultures that live among us, not just our own and continue working to make NYC a place where cultural barriers cease to exist.

Photo by: Elena Ramirez



# Safe Zone At Kingsborough Community College

From An Empty Field To A Tightly Knit Community, How KCC Continues To Carry The Legacy Of Queer Activism Within Its Walls

By: Eva Berkeley

In 1999, Steven Amarnick joined Kingsborough Community College as a professor. At the time, the campus lacked institutional support for LGBTQ representation. Drawing on his experience in queer activism at Rutgers University, Amarnick set out to change this by establishing a Safe Zone program, inspired by a successful model at New York City College of Technology.

The early years were uneventful; Few to no people showed up to events, take for example the very first one, named "Queersgiving", organized in 2005. It was largely due to the fact that they feared being labeled queer and subsequently scrutinized.

Nearly two decades later, things have changed. Today, more than 160 faculty members are allies who create a safe, non-judgmental environment, making it easier for queer-identifying students to thrive in their academic journeys.

Despite obstacles it has had in the past and present, the Safe Zone program is flourishing and continues to drive change. I spoke with Professor

Arturo H. Enamorado III, a faculty member of the Behavioral Science department at Kingsborough, who teaches sociology. He is also a member of the PSC CUNY and the current co-director of the Safe Zone.

As stated by Professor Enamorado, the program's latest achievements include improvements to the college's infrastructure, such as beaches, locker rooms, and other campus areas. These changes required tremendous effort on their part; they had to reach outwards, working their way across the political aisle to get things done, as the Safe Zone program is currently being cut in funding and receives little support from the administration.

For instance, with the implementation of the already pre-existing in the infrastructural sense single-occupancy bathrooms, which are required to be gender neutral by the New York State law (New York State Education Law § 409-m), "Safe Zone, in conjunction with other college council, has been working on this; we've notified them over the last 2 years. No actions have been made, bathrooms are still locked,

out of order, or barely usable," he says.

When asked why he thinks it is the case, he responded, "I want to say that it is mostly red tape, but also the lack of awareness and care... I don't imagine that I know how to run a community college, let alone Brooklyn's only community college.

That being said, you don't need to have a student population that dorms here or a population that is in plurality, to recognize that perhaps, some funding for services helps students stay here..."

This leads us to the question: What can we as students do?

Although students have historically led the way, their voices now have less impact. Wondering about the reasons for this, I asked Professor Enamorado for insight. He explained, "Though I strongly support the CUNY Rise Alliance and its efforts to empower students as stewards in their community, what tends to be a problem across most higher education administrations, including Kingsborough, is that they are waiting out students, in hopes that once they leave, the energy will go

with them." Though these issues won't be solved tomorrow, we must work to improve things for future generations.

Meanwhile, we can work with local representatives, by calling them and stating the needs of the NYC community, or peacefully protest, we have to be loud and keep going even when we feel demoralized, in the words of Professor Enamorado "You deserve everything you're asking for, when it comes to the future and truth it always seems dim... there's dusk before dawn: Just know there's people here, that are fighting, we see and honor you, and we will keep doing that. We're waiting for you to join our ranks when the time comes. Thank you."



# Leaving the System That Raised Me

## A Community College Student's Dilemma: Stay Within CUNY or Transfer Beyond It?

By Faruq Anjorin

The City University of New York (CUNY) was never meant to be temporary for me. It was the system that made college possible. Affordable tuition, professors who understood commuting students, and classrooms filled with people balancing jobs, family responsibilities, and financial pressure made higher education accessible. CUNY did not promise prestige, it promised access, and for thousands of students like me, it delivered.

Yet somewhere between presenting research and imagining my future beyond an associate degree, I began asking a question that felt almost disloyal: Is staying within CUNY the smartest move, or simply the safest one?

My time at Kingsborough Community College has been anything but passive. I conducted research, presented at academic symposiums, and held leadership roles that pushed me to grow beyond my comfort zone. Those experiences proved that I could compete academically. After my presentation, a colleague from a four-year college told me something I have not forgotten: "You don't lack ability, you lack exposure." His comment captured a reality many community

college students face. Access to national research networks, well-funded laboratories, and structured pre-health advising is not distributed evenly across institutions.

As I began researching transfer options, the differences between commuter campuses and residential universities became clearer. Schools like Stony Brook University, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Syracuse University operate within a different ecosystem. Students live together, study together, and build relationships that extend beyond scheduled class time. A SUNY transfer advisor once explained that the biggest shift students experience after transferring is not academic but environmental. Residential campuses create momentum.

That difference matters. At commuter campuses, many students leave immediately after class to return to work or family responsibilities, and campus activity often quiets early in the evening. On residential campuses, conversations continue in study spaces, laboratories, and dorm lounges. Informal interactions often turn into collaborations, mentorship, or research opportunities.

Private institutions such as New

York University, Columbia University, or liberal arts colleges like Vassar present another path. At first glance, the tuition numbers appear intimidating. But the financial picture is often more complex. Many private universities meet demonstrated financial need and actively recruit high performing community college transfers. They also invest heavily in research infrastructure and alumni networks.

My research mentor once reframed the idea of prestige for me. "Prestige doesn't make you brilliant," he said, "but it can amplify you." In competitive fields such as medicine and research, amplification can matter. Access to well-funded labs, nationally recognized faculty, and institutional networks can shape a student's trajectory.

Still, transferring brings a quieter concern that many students rarely discuss: belonging. Community college students often earn their grades while balancing work, family responsibilities, and financial stress. Entering institutions historically associated with wealth or legacy admissions can introduce a sense of doubt. As one friend put it, "I don't worry about whether I can do the

work. I worry about whether I'll feel like I belong."

Belonging does not appear on tuition spreadsheets, but it influences confidence and performance.

For me, the question of transferring is not about rejecting CUNY. CUNY provided the foundation that allowed me to discover my academic potential. Instead, the question is about scale. I am seeking environments with immersive labs, nationally visible faculty, stronger research funding, and networks that extend beyond city lines.

At the moment, I have not made a final decision. With eleven admissions and counting, I am applying broadly to SUNY campuses, private institutions, and possibly universities outside New York. Each acceptance letter represents more than admission; it represents an alternate version of my future.

CUNY raised me academically. It taught me how to compete, endure, and build from limited resources.

Now I am deciding where to grow next.

And perhaps the most transformative part of this process is simply choosing deliberately rather than defaulting.

# The Body of Resistance and Queer Joy: A Review of Postcolonial Love Poem by Natalie Diaz

By Eunice Yeung

Not until recently, I rarely paused to consider that I am the only person in my family tree who internally monologues in English, but avoids speaking it to anyone from home whenever possible. Yet, I am fluent. Having started learning the language from the beginning of my schooling years, my parents often ask me how to translate certain things into English. Shamefully, I answer, knowing that I am trying to put to words concepts that do not necessarily exist, or needed to exist in our language.

I am no stranger to this colonizer-distilled understanding of my upbringing. There are plenty of words in my native tongue that I cannot find English equivalents of, along with some that have, and continue to be defined by colonialism. Even so, some translatable ideas tend to require a lengthy disclaimer or an after-the-fact elaboration to make up for lost meaning. In *Postcolonial Love Poem* by Natalie Diaz, the idea of translating Indigenous languages to project the needs of a colonial culture is explored in a vivid way through the language of colonizers—English and Spanish, interspersed with an Indigenous (Mojave) one. Diaz's use of language challenges the Eurocentric idea of love poems, the form of which is generally based on patriarchal power dynamics and heteronormative gender roles. Diaz's Pulitzer Prize-winning book skillfully reinterprets this traditional structure to center the intersecting elements of her identity as a queer Aha Makhav woman influenced by American culture.

Diaz's cathartic expressions of resistance, desire, intimacy, and the celebration of her survival are deeply resonant to those who lie in the crossroads of intersecting identities—a request for us to reflect, pay attention to, and embrace the untranslated aspects of life. The book opens with the title poem that lays the groundwork for the intense and physical nature of her prose. From the beginning, we are reminded of the historical and ongoing systemic violence inflicted on Indigenous people: "The war ended / depending on which war you mean: those we started, / before those, millennia ago and onward, / those which started me, which I lost and won— / these ever-blooming wounds." The poem continues, introducing the themes of desire and erotic intimacy:

they remember what their god  
whispered  
into their ribs: Wake up and ache  
for your life.  
Where your hands have been  
are diamonds  
on my shoulders, down my  
back, thighs—  
I am your culebra.  
I am in the dirt for you.

POSTCOLONIAL

LOVE POEM

NATALIE DIAZ



The imagery of bodies is ever-present in Diaz's writing as it is in life—brim with the possibility of transfiguring into something tangible, or not—actualized through methods of worship and love. To be "postcolonial" is to witness bodies as many parts, instead of a sum, in perpetual motion. The Mojave understanding of body and land are the same, as written in "The First Water Is the Body." Diaz reflects on the untranslatability of wordless beliefs that become reduced into visual relationships between symbols and signifiers: the product of American magical realism. In other words, "harmless" images that appear less threatening to white people—binary and easily dismissible. As said by Diaz: "I have never been true in America. America is my myth."

The title poem concludes with this: "Until then, we touch our bodies like wounds— / the war never ended and somehow begins again," followed by a quote from Mahmud Darwish, "We admitted that we were human beings / and melted for love in this desert," as a separation between sections. Diaz expresses the need for human connection in the face of grief and turmoil. There is hope in this language. Invoking the Beloved as the narrator's devotion, as beautifully illustrated in "These Hands, If Not Gods":

It is hard not to have faith in this:  
from the blue-brown clay of night  
these two potters crushed  
and smoothed you  
into being—grind, then curve—  
built your form up—

atlas of bone, fields of muscle,  
one breast a fig tree, the other  
a nightingale,  
both morning and evening.

O, the beautiful making they do,  
of trigger and carve, suffering  
and stars.

Aren't they, too, the carpenters  
of your small church?

Diaz returns to imagery that connects us all beyond contemporary society: the night sky. This can be found throughout the book, such as in "Like Church," where "my lover comes to me like darkfall—long, / and through my open window." It is not a coincidence that humans have always asked the cosmos for answers in the same way—looking up.

The embodiment of queerness and erotic intimacy in Diaz's work is a transfigurative one, reflecting its purpose. Functionally similar to a path that winds endlessly, yet makes its way back to a singular destination of healing. Human-bound. This is illustrated in "Skin-Light," a lyrical exploration of physicality and form. Near the beginning, Diaz writes: "We touch the ball of light / to one another—: split bodies, desire-knocked / and stroked bright. / Light reshapes my lover's elbow, / a brass whistle," and "this is the war I was born toward, her skin, / its lake-glint." She recognizes the fact the American myth-making has shaped her existence, and she rejects the monocultural stereotypes cast on her heritage. This poem, one of my favorites in the book, ends as such:

I am light now, or on the side  
of light—:  
light-head, light-trophied.  
Light-wracked and light-gone.

The sweet maize in fluorescence—:  
an eruption  
of light, or its feast,  
from the stalk  
of my lover's throat.  
And I, light-eater, light-loving.

There is so much to feel in *Postcolonial Love Poem*. Against the backdrop of American myth-culture, "Manhattan Is a Lenape Word" stands out as a poignant expression of the narrator and her beloved's lovemaking as a means of renewal. A wound healer. As Diaz writes:

The things I know aren't easy:  
I'm the only Native American  
on the 8th floor of this hotel or any,  
looking out of any window  
of a turn-of-the-century building  
in Manhattan.

Manhattan is a Lenape word.  
Even a watch must be wound.  
How can a century or a heart turn  
if nobody asks, Where have all  
the Natives gone?

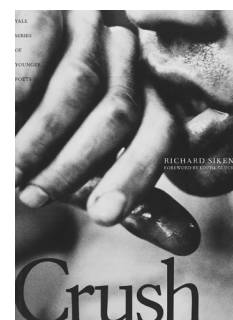
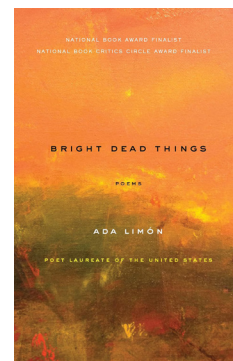
It is a profoundly lonely experience living in a translated reality—a constant search for "those who are not here." Diaz continues: "in this city I have / many lovers. All my loves / are reparations loves." The narrator is empowered by her connection with her Beloved, where "she says, You make me feel / like lightning. I say, I

don't ever / want to make you feel that white." Queer joy resists, and so do we.

Returning to "Like Church", Diaz says: "But it's hard, isn't it? Not to perform / what they say about our sadness, when we are / always so sad." Like Diaz, I cannot exist without accidentally affirming a white-majority-drawn image. I, too, am a creature of searching. I look for language to dispel the American-made myths about my identities—ironically, in the tongue of British oppressors. This is to say, I am also made of untranslatable stories that I have learnt to let transform into hope.

This book embodies a paradox that I find particularly moving: there is no such thing as post-colonial. In a country built on foundations of colonization—the present is a distillate of history. We find ways to transcend, to preserve. We can create sacred spaces of community that defy the myth of colonial, heteronormative dynamics. Sometimes, sharing joy and desire is already enough: the act of reaching out in a world where its majority perspectives tell you not to. And here we are now, alive.

If you enjoy *Postcolonial Love Poem* by Natalie Diaz, I strongly recommend the works of Mexican-American poet Ada Limón—the author of books such as *Bright Dead Things*, *Lucky Wreck*, and *The Carrying*; American poet Richard Siken—author of *Crush*, *War of the Foxes*, *I Do Know Some Things*; and Vietnamese-American poet Ocean Vuong—author of *Night Sky with Exit Wound*, and *Time is a Mother*.



# “Nanakorobi Yaoki” Fall Seven Times, Rise Eight

## Muay Thai Fighter Christopher Rómulo On Resilience, Reinvention, And Finding Purpose Beyond The Ring

By: Elena Ramirez

Christopher Romulo is a former Muay Thai fighter of Filipino descent whom we had the honor of hearing speak this past Thursday, May 14th, right here at Kingsborough. He shared his life story with us, recounting the journey he has taken over the years and how he arrived at the place he is today.

It all began with a normal boy who played in the streets of Queens, getting into mischief with his friends, playing in the street hydrants during the summer, and simply being happy. This continued until he was forced to move away, leaving behind the people he loved. Feeling isolated and facing bullying at school, he grew up in a new environment, striving to build a life for himself. Then, one day, he got involved in an underground street fight, and that was the moment his life changed forever.

Following this event, Romulo began actively practicing Muay Thai, and his career took off; he started competing at the age of 21 in 1996. In 2003, he began training under his mentor, Jason Strout, and went on to win numerous accolades—including the WKA North American Light Heavyweight title in boxing, a U.S. national championship, and a bronze medal at the World Cup in Bangkok.

He continued to compete professionally for 16 years, until his retirement at the age of 37. During his talk, Chris recounted how, in a single moment during his final fight—just 10 seconds of unconsciousness following a knockout, his entire life changed once again.

After reaching the pinnacle of success and feeling unstoppable, he realized that life wasn't solely about winning fights. Chris retired, but with a new vision and a fresh dream: to help others. Romulo built a Muay Thai training center in Rockaway Beach, Queens.

Sadly, however, it was destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. Yet, he did not give up; together with his wife, he rebuilt the facility, and now they teach classes to people looking to make a positive change in their lives.

During his talk, Romulo urges us never to give up—no matter how difficult things may seem—for he has gone through that very same struggle himself. He offers us words of encouragement and advice, reminding us that we are often too hard on ourselves, constantly questioning whether we are truly capable of achieving our goals.

“Accept your reality” and “challenge your beliefs” are phrases he shares to inspire us to create a better future for ourselves.

“Nanakorobi yaoki”, fall seven times, rise eight. This is a Japanese proverb. Romulo shares to remind us that, no matter how difficult it may be to accept change or take that first step, we must never give up—even if we stumble, and even if there are people trying to stop us from fulfilling our purpose.

He encourages us to always have faith in ourselves, to hold our heads high as we pursue our dreams, and, in the process, to help others along the way.



Christopher Romulo demonstrates a proper punch and kick

# Inside KCC's Content Creator Bootcamp Kingsborough's New Program Bridges Journalism And Social Media For The Next Generation Of Digital Storytellers

By: Inessa Royt

Continuing Education often holds a strong association with reskilling and opportunities for people who have already studied in their field of interest. Professor Patrick Hickey, Director of the Journalism program at Kingsborough Community College, saw that Continuing Ed was offering classes for the older students, such as a 50+ Wellness Program, and thought that “our younger students needed to be represented better.”

While his original idea was aimed at mainly 18-25 year old aspiring content creators, the class appealed to students from different walks of life; from a young creator with thousands of followers, to older students who don't use social media in their day-to-day, and everything in between.

Hickey hopes that the bootcamp students can learn how to navigate social media better and understand how important our voices can be. His goal is that students can also earn a living through it and reach people that can help with growth and brand positioning.

The Division of Workforce Development, Continuing Education and Strategic Partnerships proposed

this program to their partners at Small Business Services of NYC. Funding has been provided for 2 cohorts, the first launched during the spring semester on May 13th, 2026 (the cohort for which I am enrolled) and cohort 2, set to take place in Fall 2026, with the date to be determined.

The Content Creator Bootcamp is in-person and on-campus at Southern Brooklyn's Kingsborough Community College, a 70-acre waterfront campus.

According to Christine Zagari-LoPorto (Associate Dean, Division of Workforce Development and Continuing Education), “the bootcamp responds to employer demand for workers who can write clearly, think critically, produce digital content, and adapt journalistic skills to social media, branded content, and entertainment platforms.” KCC already offers journalism, digital art and editing, as well as film classes, but this bootcamp combines all of them.

Professor Hickey, who proposed the bootcamp, thought it would have more appeal, describing it as far more current. Says Hickey, “we must begin to address that our students have different needs, and this Bootcamp is part of that. They may want to write,

but do not want to be journalists. They may love audio but are not fans of radio. Courses like this help bridge the gap and I'm honored to be a part.”

The Content Creator Bootcamp is a training program designed to prepare participants for career pathways in journalism, media, and entertainment and will include a hands-on approach featuring portfolio creation.

The program combines foundational journalism skills, modern digital content creation, and the MediaMKRS Work Readiness Program. According to their website, “MediaMKRS is a Reel Works program that educates and empowers individuals from diverse backgrounds to succeed in the media industry.”

The MediaMKRS program will guide students through expanding networks, preparing to work on teams, and have effective communication strategies. Instructor Prisca Edwards, who also teaches at CUNY Hunter, is coming in with an array of resources about media and steps that all content creation goes through.

We are working through finding transferable skills that all of us may be coming in with from other industries, while program specialist Ashley Washington is helping look through

resumes and connecting bootcamp students to available campus resources.

Professor Hickey states that the most fun part of the experience of content creation for him is that he gets “to show as authentic version of [himself] as possible and can share it with the masses.”

Personally, I have been a part of campus radio at Stony Brook's WUSB and was training with Kingsborough's WKRB before COVID-19 campus closures. I am hoping to utilize this course to expand into other mediums, and supplement what I learned both as a Digital Arts Minor at Stony Brook and through various Marketing courses.

Others in the class have mentioned different goals, with one of my classmates even having journalism experience in his country of origin! The first day of the program sparked a conversation in class about ethics and journalism, versus content creation.

Professor Hickey claims that “Journalism is entirely a selfless endeavor.” While he says that “you get to be a little more selfish in the bootcamp,” I think that learning to create content while balancing integrity and ethics is increasingly important.

# How To Become a Social Media Influencer A Beginners Guide

By: Fotima Makhmudova

When you think about becoming a social media influencer, can you truly see yourself as one? If you hesitated at the thought, you're in the right place for that to change. Becoming an influencer is more than just taking photos for Instagram. It requires determination, consistency, and strong branding. How would I know that? I know this firsthand, having grown my Instagram to 80K+ followers in under two years and I would love nothing more than assisting you to do the same.

The first step to starting this journey is the hardest part for many; opening an account. Although the action seems simple in itself, the self doubt and anxiety attached to the act makes it hard to do so for many. Regardless if you're doing this for fun or for income, to get over that you must remind yourself of why you want to open one in the first place and how much it can change your life—how much it will.

Once that's completed, the immense pressure will lift up and you can focus on the components of building your account. Such as the simple acts of creating a bio, inserting a profile picture, and most important of all; posting your first piece of content; whether it be a reel or a carousel. When it comes to these actions, keep these in mind:

1. Your username is purely up to you. However, I would suggest not utilizing excessive numbers or special characters. When creating your username

ask yourself “If I accidentally refreshed my page whilst scrolling and the username was the last thing I saw, would I be able to find it again?”

2. Your bio should be brief. Tell people the kind of content you create in a couple words or tell them where you're located so people near you can reach out and collaborate, write your hobbies, other accounts, a cheeky comment that showcases you. Or do both of any, or more. Interchangeable. Adjust it to showcase you.

3. For your profile picture, choose something memorable—either a photo of yourself or, if you're a brand owner, the brand's logo. If the page focuses on you, use a waist-up or closer shot of yourself. Make sure the photo quality and lighting is good and that your portrait is indistinguishable.

4. First post, how exciting! I challenge you to put a picture up of how you look now. Without preparation. Wait an hour and if you can – a day. You'll realize that no one has liked that picture, no one has commented, in fact no one has even seen it. You might get worried, think you've failed but don't be. That's social media. No fame comes immediately nor at first try. That's what the challenge is meant to prove, to lower your expectations and to adjust your view of the social media world.

5. Know your audience or more so, the audience you'd like to attract.

Ex. Let's say you're a fashion influencer, you'd want your audience members to love and be

interested in fashion right? So you'd post a fifteen second video about 2-4 times a week depending on which outfit you find worthy to share.

You would also insert hashtags in the description of your videos to get more traction. Your hashtags would be something related to your video, if its a reel of you showing your outfit your hashtags wouldn't be “#cooking #animals #howtoswim” and instead be “#fashion, #Fitinspo #OOTD” so you can attract like minded individuals to your reels. So that there's a greater chance of them liking your videos, commenting and even following. The same idea goes for any other niche you'd like to project. Make sure it resonates with people who are in your craft.

6. Hashtags. What are they? They're a tool Instagram uses to put your video in front of the right people. When you search anything in Instagram's search bar, it finds tags and descriptions that would most assist in finding what you're looking for. Utilize them often.

7. You're settled! Now all you have to do is post good quality content consistently 3 times a week. Eventually everything will accumulate and you will reach your first 10K and more sooner than you can believe it!

Best of luck!

If you have any further questions regarding anything within this segment, please reach out to me personally at @Asiatimaa on Instagram.

# The Rebirth of Physical Media: Tangible Stories For A Digital Age

By Sarahlee Djynn-ley Bourdeau

Is there still a chance for humanity to recover physical media? Faced with the unstoppable advance of streaming services and the digitalization of many other media, we find ourselves as a society in the middle of a labyrinth full of questions and doubt: is there still an opportunity to return to an analog life, or should we stay with the versatility offered by the digital world?

Physical media holds a very important place in our hearts; they have allowed several generations the opportunity to create memories through them and also the chance to preserve those memories without the fear that one day they could lose them.

From family albums that allow us to relive important moments, to movie afternoons with our loved ones, or finding out about the lives of your favorite artists in fashion magazines—however, in recent years, what seemed to be a method of escape, an opportunity to archive life's moments and create closeness and community, has become a treasure that humanity tries to preserve as much as they can.

Although it is true that the digital era has arrived to “facilitate” our day-to-day, there is still that affection for physical media that we try to preserve and collect for fear of being forgotten and replaced definitively.



The transition between the analog and the digital has been somewhat chaotic. Although it is understandable, being able to carry all your books on a Kindle, being able to listen to music or watch movies wherever and whenever you want, having all your files on a laptop instead of a physical folder, having no need to buy cables thanks to streaming services, or even better for lovers of fashion, being able to subscribe to their favorite magazine and find out the latest news without having to travel to buy the latest issue.

However, that transition has created mixed feelings in many people, and also, with technological advancement,

we have changed the way we consume, see, and even create art. While some rejoice and embrace the digital era that makes life easier, on the other hand, we have another part that tries to embrace something that was there all their lives and that they are slowly seeing disappear.

Why does physical media matter?

When talking about physical media, the aforementioned, magazines, CDs, DVDs, etc., are always highlighted, and rightfully so. However, physical media has become more than entertainment; it is also about historical context and identity.

“I think it's important to preserve physical media because it is part of the history of not only this country but, the history of other countries. It informs everyone of how civilizations existed and thrived, as well as helped us get to where we currently are as a society.” said Barry Small, Professor of Mass Media.

Physical media has allowed us to explore what existed before us, to enjoy that which was there before some arrived in the world, and beyond that, it also allows us to navigate through news often found on the other side of the world. And although many might consider having everything in one place, that is to say, their cell phones, is a more manageable option,

more accessible, we still have to ask ourselves: why is physical media still important?

Because of high costs, the advance of AI, and streaming services, the era of physical media finds itself hanging by a thread that seems to be getting cut little by little. And although many in such an advanced digital era do not understand how important it is to have a physical medium, it is good to remember all the options they offer.

Although their decline grows stronger every day, there are still strong reasons to always consider obtaining physical media, privileges such as durability, ownership, and cultural and

historical connection.

Although the digital era has arrived to make our lives easier, unfortunately, it is still not at the level where we can 100% count on it. Users day-to-day complain about Apple storage, movies on streaming services that disappear from one day to the next, or common errors like not renewing your subscription on time and missing the latest issue of your favorite magazine.

Another privilege offered by physical media, and the main reason why many people still stay trapped in that nostalgic feeling, is the long life and durability that exists with them. Those old cameras of our grandparents in the garage, the collections of 90s



magazines that our mothers still keep, the DVDs installed in our living rooms, small treasures that we try to preserve for fear of losing that sensation that there is still something left of the life many knew before the advanced change in technology.

But digital will always be easier, right? This is one of the questions many people would ask themselves when deciding which medium they prefer: digital or physical.

However, through social media, the answer is totally different. We see trends like “analog bags” or “no scroll Sunday,” on TikTok where various people, tired of being chronically online, try to gradually break the habit themselves to their technological media and embrace more the privilege of being offline. Many people of different generations have realized how attached they have always been to their technological devices, and how far apart they were from the real world.

Recently in my Mass Media class, professor Barry Small showed us his vinyl collection, his iPod that he had bought years ago, his CDs, and in previous classes, his magazine collections. What for some might have seemed like a simple moment in class, for others was a revelatory experience because as those collections were

passed around, one could observe that feeling of nostalgia and curiosity among the students. And that is one of the incredible experiences offered by physical media: the human experience.

But how can we preserve that human experience? Can society cling to something that seemingly gets further away every time they try to catch it, or is there still a small hope of embracing the physical once again?

“I think it depends on the medium. I can remember when cell phones, flat screen televisions, and video recorders were luxury items, because when they were first introduced to the masses, they were very expensive and the average working person couldn't

afford to have one.

We had to wait until there was a huge price reduction, and even with the reduction it was still pretty expensive. I think there will be certain media that will be a luxury but as in the past, that medium will be reintroduced and repackaged to a new and younger generation. Remember, nothing is new, its all been done before.”, said Small.

It's all been done before? Does that mean there is hope to go back to physical, or either way to find a balance between the technology in our life and the memories that live through our physical media collections? Technology is not our enemy, if we know how to use it of course; it is something that will always be there and has always been there.

Although the fatigue from being chronically online grows stronger within society due to all the saturated content we find while scrolling, there is also the part of “ease” that technology offers. Perhaps the answer isn't a total return to the past, but a conscious balance, a balance where our mind is not saturated by doom scrolling, and where we can enjoy the convenience of the cloud while still holding onto the tangible pieces of our history and the human experience that technology simply cannot replicate.