Millennials: What they want from the candidates

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- Elizabeth

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6 photos: Millennials election

Elizabeth Belsky

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Story highlights

CNN Opinion asked 10 millennials to weigh in on how well 2016 presidential candidates reflect the priorities of their generation.

They said the candidates had a long way to go to address concerns about jobs, education, immigration, inequality and more.

(CNN) — CNN asked millennial voters from a range of backgrounds to weigh in on whether, and how well, the 2016 presidential candidates are reflecting the priorities of their generation -- the largest and most diverse demographic cohort in American history -- as they make their case to voters. The opinions expressed are solely those of the authors.

Elizabeth Elizalde, 22, is a New York-based journalist and a former CNN en Español intern. Follow her on Twitter @EElizalde5.

I’m a 22-year-old Latina living in New York City, and as a recent college graduate, I know the struggle of making ends meet. My college expenses kept me up at night, especially the time I paid $120 for a book, $116 for my MetroCard and $840 for an extra class. I worked multiple jobs, but by the end of a semester, I would still be broke. It was worth it for my degree, but would I have had a better educational experience if money worries hadn’t been so overwhelming?

I want to see a change in college costs but have heard little on this so far. Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders proposes a tuition-free community college and raising the minimum wage to $15. But I’m unsure if his plan would create jobs with better salaries for young people. Jobs are a big concern.

Immigration reform is another issue that hits close to home. Born to an Ecuadorian mother and a Mexican father -- both American citizens -- I know how hard my parents fought to give me a better life. Some candidates like Donald Trump want to deport 11 million undocumented immigrants but don’t consider the damage to our economy and taxpayers’ pockets.

So far? Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, the youngest candidate and the son of Cuban immigrants, seems to identify with millennials like me because he knows what it means to live from "paycheck to paycheck." On this score, he gets it.

As the presidential race heats up, the candidates remain focused on petty infighting. I want to hear less bickering and more about their policies. My generation and our children’s future depend on their decisions.

Michael Tubbs, 25, is a Democratic council member for the city of Stockton, California. Follow him on Twitter @michaeldtubbs.
In 2012, then 22, I decided to move back to Stockton, a city that had suffered back-to-back years of record homicides, had an unemployment rate of 20%, was home to some 30,000 children living in poverty and had just declared municipal bankruptcy. We need presidential candidates to talk about strategies to help cities such as mine across the country, which are struggling to reinvent themselves, and to usher in a new era of civic innovation.

The presidential candidates have talked of urban violence, but not nearly enough about structural violence, defined by sociologist Johan Galtung as the "avoidable impairment of basic human needs." Every day in this country, children go to bed hungry and go to sleep listening to gunshots, and go to schools that don't provide them a quality education, and live in ZIP codes that often determine their destiny. This is what I want to hear about from the candidates. What will they do about this?

These problems are not isolated: They routinely intersect to produce great inequalities such as the education achievement gap. As a child of a teenage mother and an incarcerated father, as a friend of many who have fallen into the cradle-to-prison pipeline, I am intimately familiar with the urgent need for solutions.

If the recent unrest in cities throughout the nation has taught us anything, it is that we need to confront poverty and other "avoidable impairments of human needs" comprehensively. Our next president must have a plan: Only then will we expand opportunity and protect "liberty and justice for all."

Elizabeth Belsky, 23, is a writer from California with a degree in media studies. She currently sells wedding invitations in Brooklyn, New York, and tweets at @elizbelsky.

I'm a class-informed voter, first and foremost. There's scarcely an area of domestic policy where my stances aren't based on how the candidate's politics will affect poor and working-class people. When you grow up in a trailer park, as I did, you see the realities of poverty, social assistance and benefits programs in a way that dry, distanced discussions about minimum wages and fast-food jobs don't provide. Empathy for the working class and life experiences outside of the 1% are what really make or break a candidate for me.

I got into some pretty good universities, both public and private. The reason I eventually chose to attend Brooklyn College? It wasn't because it was one of my top choices -- I simply could not afford to enroll at any of the other schools I got into, even with scholarships, loans and financial aid -- and the City University of New York promised that more than 70% of its students graduated debt-free. Not me: I graduated with significant student loan debt, due to my status as an out-of-state student for most of my time at CUNY -- I wasn't eligible for in-state aid and had to take out loans to cover what I couldn't pay out of pocket, i.e., all of it.

The cost of a college education in this country is, to put it lightly, absolutely bonkers.
And finding a job in a field that you studied for in college is a huge challenge. I currently work at a job unrelated to my degree and have a hard time even getting interviews for jobs in my field.

Other issues I want to hear from the candidates about: The right to affordable contraception and family planning. I can't, in good conscience, support a candidate whose reproductive justice policy doesn't address the needs of poor and working-class women.

There's more, of course -- the fight for a livable minimum wage is another deciding issue for me -- but most importantly, what I care about is concern for the working class. Do any of the candidates actually care about voters who aren't millionaire potential campaign donors?

Wyly Gray, 33, is a writer, veterans advocate and founder of Soldier On Corps, a veteran service organization dedicated to preserving and sharing veterans stories. He lives in Bristow, Virginia.

One month after graduating high school, I was in boot camp in San Diego as a private in the Marines. It was June 2000.

I spent 8½ years in active duty. I deployed twice. My final deployment brought me to Helmand Valley, Afghanistan, serving in an artillery battery.

Like many millennials, I left home at a time when America had a bull market and a budget surplus and the economy was booming. Like many veterans, I came home to crushing recession. The transition was challenging.

Veterans are less than 1% of the American population. Considering the mounting aggression in Syria, worldwide civic unrest and the internal threat of mass shootings on American soil, veterans couldn't be more of an asset to our national security.

We have been trained to react coolly under pressure, and given the opportunity, display heroism and bravery. Returning veterans face a staggering suicide epidemic -- at a rate some 50% higher than other citizens.

Even so, we are determined to win what we've coined "the war at home." To do so, we'll need a commander in chief dedicated to veterans' affairs reform that also empowers veteran service organizations exhibiting a track record of successful transition assistance to continue making progress. Veterans need opportunities, not handouts.

Luckily, the veteran population today is resilient. Despite the trauma, we are determined that our legacy will be written by engaged citizen leaders actively serving our communities. Many of us are coming home, using our education benefits, starting families and looking to make a difference.

Along with many of my veteran peers, I'm registered to vote. We know the media are watching, and though veterans may tend to vote along conservative lines, the veteran community will need more than lip service if any candidate wants to earn our vote wholesale. We need to know you are committed to our return home.

In the current group of presidential candidates, earning the veteran vote in 2016 is anything but secure.
Nomiki Konst, 31, is founder and executive director of the Accountability Project, an investigative reporting organization. Follow her on Twitter @NomikiKonst.

Nomiki Konst

When I was a kid, my parents -- like most parents -- promised that if I worked hard and received an education, I'd do better than their generation. But here we are, two wars later, seven years after the Great Recession, at the height of "big money" in politics -- and the largest, most diverse and educated generation in history is crashing.

Listen up, presidential candidates: We're drowning. We're up to our ears in student loan debt, barely surviving off our entry-level pay (if we even have jobs) and we're unable to afford astronomical rent (in the cities we've been forced to move to for jobs).

"Discretionary income" sounds like pig Latin to our ears. While candidates are discussing Social Security, Medicare and the stock market, we're cutting up credit cards and renting out our couches to pay our bills.

The recession may be over, the economy may have recovered, but millennials can't grasp their future and have lost trust in political parties that promised them the world. While parties prioritize big money, most seem to have forgotten about the leadership needed to inspire voters.

One notable thing, though: Social media's rise, and shifting demographics may have made at least some in the crowd of candidates more aware of millennials' needs. Socialist Bernie Sanders is speaking directly to our generation about protecting labor, cutting defense and protecting teachers -- and all without big-money donors backing him. Donald Trump, who appears uncontrolled by special interests -- is talking about issues Republicans never discuss, such as criticizing hedge funders and closing out tax loopholes.

What might be drawn from this is that those politicians who aren't prioritizing the needs of minorities, millennials and low-wage workers are bought and paid for. But we may have reached a tipping point. The largest generation in history is stunted -- and that's bad for the future of America. Presidential candidates would do well to make this generation's priorities their own.

Bakari Sellers, 31, a CNN contributor, was a Democrat in South Carolina's House of Representatives from 2006 to 2014. He is an attorney at the Strom Law Firm in South Carolina. Follow him on Twitter @Bakari_Sellers.
Imagine trying to provide for your family with a $1,300-per-month student loan payment -- higher than the cost of most mortgages. Imagine trying to teach your 10-year-old stepdaughter that she can do and be anything -- at the same time a major candidate for president is making cracks on air about a reporter’s menstrual cycle.

Imagine burying one of your friends, the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, and eight others, who were shot dead during prayer at the “Mother Emanuel” African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, because of their race.

These aren’t rhetorical questions or hypothetical situations. This is my life. And what makes it even more frustrating -- more infuriating -- is that I’m one of the lucky ones.

I want candidates to recognize these things, because I’ve got too many friends who did what they were told, worked hard, spent a lot of money on good schools and earned advanced degrees -- and are still waiting tables. I’ve met too many women unable to work because their annual salary wouldn’t cover the cost of child care.

I’ve seen too much hopelessness in my state. I’ve felt too much anger. I’ve been to too many funerals and I know I’m not alone.

I’ve been waiting for the candidates for president to speak up on these issues that I have lived, but so far I haven’t heard much. The Democrats haven’t said enough, and the Republicans have missed the point entirely. But I’ll keep waiting, pushing and praying.

Robby Soave, 27, a Detroit native, lives in Washington and writes about higher education for the libertarian magazine Reason. Follow him on Twitter @robbyssoave.

My sophomore year at the University of Michigan coincided with the rise of Barack Obama as the preferred candidate of young people during the 2008 campaign. I saw firsthand how this fresh-faced senator from Illinois inspired my fellow students.

It’s easy to forget -- especially after years of continued U.S. military intervention in the Middle East -- that the single issue that drew so many young people to Obama was his promise to curtail the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It’s a promise he hasn’t entirely lived up to; one of my college buddies who campaigned ardently on Obama’s behalf actually burned his stash of pro-Obama campaign materials in protest of the President’s summer 2014 bombing campaign in Iraq.

But though young voters may be less enthusiastic about life under Democratic leadership than they were six years ago, it’s hard to imagine many of them falling in line with the Republican Party as long as its presidential candidates continue to emphasize national security paranoia as the paramount issue of the 2016 election.
Millennials today remain more skeptical of foreign policy interventionism than older Americans. According to a recent Cato Institute paper, millennials "perceive the world as significantly less threatening than their elders do" and are less supportive of war.

Though young Americans feel astutely safe about foreign threats, they are worried about their economic situation. Any candidate who wants to inspire Obama levels of dedication should stop girding millennials for yet more endless warfare (warfare they will be obligated to partake in) and instead focus on what they would do to expand the job prospects of the under-30 crowd.

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**Jamia Wilson**, 34, is a writer and feminist activist based in New York. She is the executive director of Women, Action, and the Media, an organization aimed at promoting gender justice in media, and a writer at Rookie magazine.

As one of the 40 million Americans with student debt, and one of the 45% of our population living with a chronic illness, I'm seeking a president who values social justice and equality. I'm particularly focused on candidates with a record of supporting women's health care and access to affordable and comprehensive health care in general.

Moreover, as an African-American woman who is considering planning my family, I'm concerned that black women in this country are disproportionately affected by pregnancy-related deaths. I want to hear candidates' plans for how to address this crisis with accessible services and policy solutions.

Like many older millennials, I'm laser-focused on candidates' positions on student loan relief, health care, reproductive rights and the racial and gender wage gap. I've heard too little on these issues, which is odd, given their huge impact. Yes, they should also focus on college access and student debt reform for incoming and current students, but I'm a part of a generation that is still paying a hefty price for pursuing that higher education. I hope candidates will lead by providing relief to new undergraduates as well as all Americans burdened with student debt.

That's why candidates seeking to engage young people should pay attention to "Beyonce voters." Though Fox News' Jesse Watters pejoratively coined the term to disparage "single ladies" he said were likely to cast their ballots in favor of equal pay, health care and contraception, some women (myself included) have reclaimed the term to represent the political power of one our country's most rapidly rising demographics.

Despite Watters' sexist assertion, President Barack Obama won one-fourth of the electorate by garnering nearly 70% of single women's votes. Candidates will pay a dear price if they discount black women voters since we consistently have the strongest turnout among women of color -- and represent one of the highest-growing populations of single women nationwide.

From the pay gap, to student loans, to health care, younger voters -- like Beyonce voters -- care about issues that affect them directly, and many of these are different from the subjects that have been raised in the presidential debates thus far.

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**Raiyan Syed**, 33, is a consultant working on advancement of civil rights of indigent and immigrant
As a child growing up in Bangladesh, I was surrounded by uncertainty and hopelessness. Perpetual political violence, corruption and a failed criminal "justice" system kept the country on the brink of disaster.

My parents immigrated to the United States when I was 7 in hopes for a better future, and we came despite not knowing many of the realities we'd face; we came because America was the land of opportunity. My parents sacrificed all they ever had to give me a chance to succeed -- and thanks to their hard work, I got a shot at a decent education I could use toward upward mobility.

As an immigrant growing up in the United States, I came to appreciate and love my country because our values held us up to a higher standard. Twenty-five years later, I find myself watching access to opportunity slip away, not only for indigent and immigrant communities -- whether in America's heartland, the Bible Belt or her inner cities -- but also for our middle class. As a dad to a 2-year-old son, I wonder if my son's generation will have an opportunity to live the American dream.

Failed economic policies that favor the wealthiest Americans and a broken justice system that incarcerates a disproportionate number of people of color are perpetuating poverty and racial injustices, bolstering a status quo that helps privileged elites.

This must change. We need a presidential candidate who is willing to tackle the status quo in ways we haven't seen before -- tossing aside the conventional playbook -- and boldly challenging the gatekeepers of a rigged system who serve the interests of elites at the cost of America's middle class. The Obama administration has championed the rights of the working poor, but even its best intentions have fallen short.

Is it possible to take the ideas and passion of an Elizabeth Warren and combine it with the character and skills of a Colin Powell to get a leader who can deliver on the types of policies we need to uplift our forgotten communities? Will a leader make it his or her priority to transform a broken educational system that is leaving behind far too many black and brown kids, reform a tax code to help ordinary Americans and fix the broken criminal justice system that is robbing far too many of our youth of their future -- while keeping faith with America's middle class?

I am still struggling to find that candidate, but I am holding out hope.

Saba Ahmed, 30, lives in Washington. Follow her on Twitter at @SabaAhmed1.
Presidential candidates should provide a unified, inclusive welcoming message to all Americans. Being a Muslim American, I am concerned about the national security situation. But I don't like being subjected to additional security screenings at airports just because I wear a headscarf.

I don't like surveillance of our mosques and homes. I don't like targeting of young Muslims by law enforcement. I'm a Republican, but I'd like to see presidential candidates listen to Muslims and address our needs.

For example, I recently had the opportunity to meet Ben Carson and Ted Cruz, and I was at first appalled by their anti-Islamic sentiments. But the more I talked to them, the more it became clear that I was one of the first Muslim women they had ever spoken to on the campaign trail. They need to learn about the basics of Islam to have an intelligent conversation with Muslim Americans, not to mention diplomats and leaders from Islamic countries.

Muslims, including Muslim Americans, can help win the war on terror by providing a counter-narrative to extremism. We should be treated with respect and dignity.

I would like to see presidential candidates visit mosques in key electoral states and reach out to swing voters there.

But it would be amazing to see them also travel to the Islamic world and give hope to people in Muslim-majority countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Turkey, etc. We need them to help regain America's beacon-of-hope status around the world. Inshallah (God willing)! 

Saba Ahmed
Reaching Vulnerable Students

October 9, 2015
By Jake New

In the days after his brother committed suicide, Evan Rose sat with his family around their living room and moved forward from the loss.

Described as a high-achieving student, Stephen Rose graduated from Harvard University in 2014 with a degree in psychology at the City College of the City University of New York. In 2014, he jumped out of Harvard's William James Hall. He was 29.

"We're sitting together as a family in that living room and we're all thinking, 'We don't want a child to die and to think about the mental health and emotional well-being of students or something like this.'"

While Stephen Rose graduated before his death, the family decided to focus on college student mental health and emotional well-being of students or college-aged people and "emerging adults" are especially at risk for depression and suicide. College counseling directors are aware of the problem, with more than half of respondents saying black and Latino students are the highest risk.

There's little research, Rose said, on how to actually better serve those students.

After more than a year of study and preparation, the organization is now rolling out a series designed to help students of color who are experiencing mental health issues. The goal, the knowledge" by hosting conventions, webinars and symposiums, and by facilitating "large-scale issues among students of color.

The Steve Fund is partnering with the Jed Foundation, an organization that works with colleges to create a joint program called the Steve Fund and Jed Foundation Partnership for Mental Health. Organizations will work together to create educational campaigns designed to "develop mental health issues, Rose said, as well as to develop a list of recommendations for colleges to use when well-being of those students.

Victor Schwartz, medical director at the Jed Foundation, said the two organizations will spend developing the recommendations.

"We're going to be looking at what kinds of interventions at schools have been successful," Schwartz said. "What have schools done so far that's working? Where are there gaps?"

Schwartz said there's a pronounced "lack of comfort" for many minority students when it comes to mental health issues. Part of the partnership will be focused on finding ways of encouraging more students to come forward and use the school's psychological services.

"There is hesitancy to getting help," Schwartz said. "This comes from a number of directions, outside and not feeling a part of a campus. There's also a lack of comfort in admitting that they might be a first-generation student, which many students of color are. You're looked at back it can be difficult. There's the concern that by admitting that you're struggling, your family will be upset."

Later this fall, the Steve Fund will also launch a text messaging service that will provide crisis through a partnership with a nonprofit called Crisis Text Line, a network of trained volunteer distressed people through text message conversations.
Lawyers Call NYPD Killing of Guinean Man ‘An Execution and a Cover-Up’

The family of a man killed by the New York Police Department in 2012 claim that they have uncovered new evidence proving that their loved one was executed and it was subsequently covered up by the department.

Mohamed Bah, 28, was an immigrant from Guinea working as a cab driver as he attended the Borough of Manhattan Community College.

On September 25, 2012, he was shot and killed inside his Manhattan apartment by NYPD officers after his mother, Hawa Bah called police from outside his apartment worried that he was depressed and acting erratically.

Contrary to NYPD guidelines, the officers would not let his mother enter his apartment to speak to him in an attempt to calm him down, instead she was ordered out of the building.

After his mother was kicked out of the building, a tactical team arrived to break down his door to insert a camera to monitor what Bah was doing.

The police claim that Bah then ripped open the door and lunged at the officers with a knife.

Debra Cohen, a lawyer for the Bah family, maintains that this never happened. She maintains that an officer who meant to tase Bah missed and hit another officer leading to a domino effect of mistakes.
Possibly mistaking the feeling of being tased with being stabbed, the officer yelled out, "I'm being stabbed! Shoot him!"

Three officers then unloaded 10 bullets at Bah, seven of which struck him.

The final and fatal shot hit Bah in the side of his head, yet oddly it was fired from close range in a downward trajectory. Seeing as Bah was over six feet tall, the family and their believe that this was an execution shot to finish him off.

"The only logical explanation is that a police officer straddled Mr. Bah while he was still alive and breathing on the ground, bent over and shot him in the head to finish the job — while he was a threat to no one, while he had committed no crime." Cohen said in a statement regarding her conclusion based on the autopsy and officer's testimonies.

Next came the cover up, Cohen asserts.

After the incident, the police told the media that the officer was being treated for stab wounds, however, no officer was treated for a stabbing. One officer was treated for a small pin-point prick, possibly from the taser or from his fall, but there was not an officer treated for stab wounds.

Cohen also maintains that a knife was taken from his kitchen and planted at the crime scene, as it was not visible in any videos of the aftermath. The department later claimed that the knife was lost during Hurricane Sandy, but changed their story in September to say that it was not lost, but contaminated during the storm.

"They never did any fingerprint or DNA testing or analysis [on the knife], all of which was ordered by crime scene unit investigators," Cohen said. "No results have ever been produced and there's been no confirmation if those tests were ever taken."

On Tuesday, his mother held a rally which was attended by other women who have lost their children to police violence, including the mothers of Eric Garner and Ramarley Graham.

"My son was Mohamed Bah. He never committed a crime in his life," Hauwa Bah told supporters at the rally. "He was sick. I tried to have an ambulance but the police responded, and I said, 'I didn't call the police.'"

Cohen delivered their findings to the Department of Justice on Wednesday.
G. Scott Anderson, born in Hawaii and raised in Brooklyn, has been at Borough of Manhattan Community College for 20 years, the last 15 as vice president of administration and planning. He has seen the college through 9/11, the Northeast blackout of 2003 and Superstorm Sandy, and is one of the leaders of B.M.C.C.'s sustainability efforts. He sat down recently with Downtown Express at its main campus at 199 Chambers St. and talked about how those events, especially 9/11, affected the college's green projects today.

Interview has been edited and condensed.

—Dusica Sue Malesevic

What did you study at college? How did you get into college administration?

My undergraduate work, half of it was in the UK. I studied political theory and British labor history [in the] 19th century. I got a chance to study the coal miners in northern Wales. I did a project on the wives, widows and mothers of World War I veterans.

I came back to America and was offered a job at the City University of New York, in higher education
administration and I stayed with it. I started at Queensborough Community College so I believe in
the community college. I also believe that working in administration, I could probably affect policy.
Here I am, still.

**How has your job changed?**

The job that I took is not the job that it became after 9/11 — the job changed so much. I became
much more focused on space management.

I started off being mostly involved in the finance side but less than 12 months later, when we lost
Peterman Hall when the Towers came down, we lost 40 percent of our instructional capacity — 70
classrooms disappeared that day. We had to find out how we could structure the teaching clock, the
workweek so that could absorb the same press of people. We had about 16,600 students on 9/11. On
January 15, 2002, we went up to 17,400. It was the opposite of what people thought.

We kept this building open and it serviced about eight different agencies [including the] U.S. Army,
N.Y.P.D., F.D.N.Y. and the search dogs.

There were men and women who refused to get off the pile. They would work 12, 16 hours, come to
the campus, catch two to three hours sleep and go right back. Some of them slept sitting down.

We were able to reopen our college on Oct. 1, three weeks after the event. We were pressed for space,
but we were able to open. The other schools that had their staff leave…were out of commission for
the entire semester. Many of them didn’t open until the following February.

**Did B.M.C.C.’s sustainability efforts have anything to do with 9/11?**

In a very strange way, it did. In November, December the university…did a request for proposals.
There were some funding or grant monies available and I put in a proposal for what I call the
non-terrestially based communications — basically…solar panels. A point-to-point laser
communications system — something like microwave beaming.

We have a four-block long roof, one of the longest roofs in New York. About two and half blocks of it
is totally unobstructed with a view toward New Jersey. For about one block, you can actually see the
Municipal Building. My idea, at the time, was if we could put up a microwave, or solar panel system,
we could act as a conduit or hub for any communication that might fall off the grid. From the
Municipal Building to B.M.C.C.’s roof to New Jersey and then slingshot Uptown. It is really easy to
do in terms of telecommunications. It happens in nanoseconds. That was the first push.

I first made the pitch in 2001 and that’s when the issue of falling off the grid — not having reliable
power — is what drove me to argue for a rooftop communication system that depended on free
energy, which is solar panels.

In a funny way 9/11 sort of drove us to think about it. Lo and behold, 2003, we fell off the grid, in fact
the whole Northeast fell off the grid.

So, I was looking for just enough alternative energy to run our facility where we would have enough
power to keep our web service going.

Borough President [Scott] Stringer actually gave us money to put a solar panel on the roof. We didn’t
realize how long it was going to take for the engineering side of this to be worked out. Some good
things happened even though there has been a hiatus. The panels are a little, little cheaper. They’re
far more efficient than they were six, seven years ago and they’re also lighter, which makes a

difference.

We want to start installing beginning April 1 of next year. [Once completed] it will be the largest one
in Manhattan.

**Will that be enough to power this building?**

No, but it’ll be enough to power emergency services. We’ve fallen off the grid several times since I’ve
been here. I’ve been here 20 years so that’s every five years almost. I’m saying, ‘oh, man, what’s
going to happen next.’
Part Exhibitionism, Part Surveillance

OCT. 8, 2015

Inside Art

By ROBIN POGREBIN and HILARIE M. SHEETS

This is an important moment for the International Center of Photography, as it prepares to open its new space at 250 Bowery in the spring. To help lead this chapter, the center has selected Charlotte Cotton, a British photography writer and curator, as its first curator in residence, a new position.

In a telephone interview, Ms. Cotton said she would emphasize a more thematic approach to shows, along the lines of biennials, “which allows us to explore things deeply.”

For the year starting in May 2016, when the space opens, for example, the center’s shows and events will focus on “privacy in our image world, including the right to be anonymous,” Ms. Cotton said, “and surveillance — these kinds of dual spectrums of photography: voyeurism and exhibitionism.”

“Exhibitionism is kind of a 21st-century modality out of social media,” she added, “moving from wanting to look to wanting to be looked at.” In 2017, the focus will be on social change.

Ms. Cotton, 45, has held positions as curator of photographs at the Victoria and
Albert Museum in London and curator and head of the Wallis Annenberg Department of Photography at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. She is the author of "Photography Is Magic," released last month.

The center has struggled at times to attract visitors and financial support. Last year, it decided to buy a building on Bowery near the New Museum and relocate, after its lease in Midtown ended. (The center's school remains in Midtown.)

Despite a new world, in which everyone with an iPhone is arguably a photographer, Ms. Cotton said she continued to believe in photography as an art form and in the importance of the center as a place to explore it. "We have to be fast, and we have to be definite and committed," she said. "That's why I like joining institutions that really know they have to change."

**Movement on Pier 26**

If Pier 26 on the Hudson River in TriBeCa has any claim to fame, it is in having been the location for the Village People's 1978 "Y.M.C.A." video.

The pier is also in being redeveloped by the Hudson River Park Trust, which on Friday will announce the selection of two prominent designers: the architect Rafael Viñoly, who has offered to donate his services to design the long-planned science education and research center (known as an estuarium), and the landscape firm OLIN to lead the design team for the pier's new park.

The trust will also announce a $10 million gift from Citigroup toward completion of the $30 million pier, between North Moore and Laight Streets. Another $10 million came from the city, and the trust has applied to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation for the rest.

The $20 million estuarium — toward which the state has contributed $10 million — will be operated by Clarkson University, in Potsdam, N.Y., along with the New York Hall of Science in Queens and the Hudson River sloop Clearwater. The park is to be completed by early 2019.

"The park as a whole has made a transformation of the West Side," Mr. Viñoly, a
TriBeCa resident, said in a telephone interview. “It’s a way of contributing,” he added, referring to his involvement. (Mr. Viñoly’s son, Román, is also on the board.)

The trust will meet on Oct. 19 to hear from neighborhood residents. “We want to make sure we put a program there that everybody wants,” said Madelyn Wils, the trust’s president and chief executive. “And then we’re going to start designing.”

One Couple’s Collection

When the Minnesota art dealer Gordon A. Locksley mounted Andy Warhol’s first exhibition in Minneapolis, he introduced Warhol to two local collectors, Miles and Shirley Fiterman, whom he went on to photograph for his celebrated Polaroids.

Now 12 items from the Fitermans’ extensive collection — valued at about $70 million and including works by Oldenburg, Miró, Lichtenstein and Picasso, as well as Warhol — are coming up for auction at Christie’s, to be sold in three evening sales, on Nov. 9, 10 and 12. “They have artists in great depth,” Laura Paulson, Christie’s chairwoman of postwar and contemporary art, said of the collection. “Miles and Shirley were incredibly passionate — it really can’t be overstated — they were actively involved as a couple in collecting. They had deep relationships with their dealers and with the artists they collected.”

Ms. Fiterman, 90, lives in Palm Beach; her husband died in 2004. Among the highlights of the sales are Roy Lichtenstein’s “Crying Girl” (1964) and Picasso’s “Homme Assis” (1972). Over several decades, the Fitermans donated or aided in the purchase of some 70 works for the Walker Art Center. In 1993, they donated a 15-story building to the City University of New York.

Polke Estate to Dealer

“Sigmar Polke was unpredictable as a person, and that proved true for his work,” the dealer David Zwirner said, referring to the German-born artist who experimented fluidly across media and techniques and resisted the confines of a signature style. Now Mr. Zwirner’s gallery has been selected to represent the estate of Polke, who died in 2010. The gallery’s first collaborative exhibition with the estate, opening next May in Chelsea, will focus on Polke as a “point of reference” to younger generations, Mr.
Zwirner said.

Polke achieved early success for his paintings and drawings of consumer goods, first exhibited in 1963 in Düsseldorf, Germany, with his fellow students Gerhard Richter and Konrad Lueg. Together they coined the term “capitalist realism” for their work, a West German foil to the style of Socialist Realism in the East.

By a decade later, Polke had achieved financial security, which meant he could be picky about what he sold. “Polke kept many of his important works,” said Mr. Zwirner, who is bringing “Auto (Jeep)” to Frieze Masters in London next week, the first time that large-scale 1992 painting has been for sale.

Polke painted the cartoonish outline of a jeep on polyester treated with resin to give it transparency (so the wood stretcher shows through). “Polke was a compulsive scientist in the studio,” Mr. Zwirner said. “His interdisciplinary approach — he worked in film, painting, photography, prints, drawings, sculpture, performance — is like an invitation for younger artists to experiment.” HILARIE M. SHEETS

A version of this article appears in print on October 9, 2015, on page C22 of the New York edition with the headline: Part Exhibitionism, Part Surveillance.
It's about the students: Joan Weill should still donate money to Paul Smith's College

PUBLISHED: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2015 AT 12:39 AM

There is no getting around the fact that philanthropy involving institutions of higher learning often has come with some strings attached.

It's no coincidence that the University of Chicago has a Rockefeller Memorial Chapel or that the University of Michigan has a Demison Building. In New York state, more than a few colleges and universities are named in honor of benefactors. Hamilton College, Colgate University, Hofstra University and Juilliard School, to name a few.

Paul Smith's College also falls into this category. Located within Adirondack Park, the school acquired its land through the will of J. Phelps Smith.

He stipulated that the institution name itself after his father, Apollos "Paul" Smith, the elder Smith founded Saint Regis House, Franklin County, which was commonly known as Paul Smith's Hotel.

Philanthropist Joan Weill, wife of financier and corporate executive Sanford Weill, presented a slightly different vision for Paul Smith's College. For a donation of $20 million, she wanted her name added to the school's name.

While some administrators and faculty members embraced the idea, many alumni opposed it. They pointed out that a stipulation in J. Phelps Smith's will calls for the school to remain Paul Smith's College forever.

On Tuesday, Franklin County state Supreme Court Judge John Ellis denied the school's petition to change its name. While conceding that such a donation would certainly help, he rejected the argument that the donation was critical to the continued existence of the school.

The Weills have been involved with Paul Smith's College for the past two decades since buying a summer home nearby. Two facilities on campus — the Joan Weill Student Center and the Joan Weill Adirondack Library — were built with money donated by the couple.

It's not known if Joan Weill intends to donate her $20 million to the school in light of the judge's ruling. It's her money, and she is entitled to do with it as she sees fit.

But we hope she will see through his self-marketing efforts and contribute at least some money to Paul Smith's College. She should heed some words of wisdom provided in an opinion piece written by two well-known donors when it comes to keeping cultural and educational facilities strong:

"Given the various hats we wear with different nonprofit organizations that span the entire United States, we see a new paradigm emerging. It is no secret that federal, state and local budgets are shrinking because of today's challenging economic environment. As a result, the public sector does not have the capital to support education, health care, music and the arts at the level it has been able to do for the last 100 years. The new paradigm we see is the importance of public/private partnerships. The public sector needs the money, and the private sector is going to demand results that will create new, higher standards to benefit everyone. This
translates to the need for more philanthropy, and our private sector must answer the call by getting its employees involved and contributing not just financially but with their time, enthusiasm and experience."

The authors of this piece, by the way, were Joan and Sandy Weill. It appeared two years ago on the website for CNBC.

The thrust of the article is that philanthropy is about more than just donating money, and they are correct in their assessment. But the financial resources of people like the Weills are crucial to the ongoing success of institutions like Paul Smith's College. Joan Weill won't have her name emblazoned on the school stationery, but her donation would offer a legacy that is just as permanent.
Representing Queens’ corners of the world

by Mark Lord, qboro contributor | Posted: Thursday, October 8, 2015 10:30 am

An anonymous ink painting in the ancient Chinese manner of someone’s perky pet schnauzer dog backed by the Manhattan skyline, one of 33 striking art works currently on exhibit at the Citi DeFord Gallery in Long Island City, represents how Queens residents hail from all corners of the world.

It is an image that Professor James Saslow of Queens College and his colleagues in the art world are still trying to fully characterize. Saslow calls the combination of American subject and Asian style “a perfect symbol of the hybrid culture of today’s Queens.”

It also exemplifies one of the main purposes of the exhibition that holds the painting: to include work from the many nations comprising the borough’s community.

“Five Continents, One Borough: Art Treasures from the Homelands of Queens,” presented at Citi in partnership with Queens College’s Godwin-Ternbach Museum, is an outgrowth of a museum studies class Saslow taught at the school this past spring.

With Saslow’s guidance, the 12 class members, a combination of graduate students and advanced undergrads, set out to raise questions of key importance to our globalizing world. They explored the relationship between a person’s past and present, the effects of increased travel and electronic communications on humans and art and the many possibilities of cross-cultural encounters, from appreciation to conflict or assimilation to hybridization.

The borough is “a microcosm of our increasingly global culture, so we decided to spotlight works representing the major countries from which Queens residents trace their heritage,” Saslow said.

The exhibit had its official opening reception on Oct. 1. Originally scheduled to run through Jan. 8, it has already been extended through the end of January.

The Citi DeFord Gallery is located in the lobby of One Court Square in Long Island City. The exhibition’s hours are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

The museum, from whose 6,000-object collection the exhibition was culled, is located at 405 Klapper Hall on the campus of Queens College, 65-30 Kissena Blvd. in Flushing.
Amy Winter, director and curator of the museum, said the exhibit starts in antiquity and continues through all the world’s major civilizations.

The exhibition contains five thematic sections, each corresponding to the history of migration from principal geographic regions: Europe: The First Arrivals; Iberia and Latin America: The Spanish Diaspora; Western Asia: Birthplace of Monotheism; South and East Asia and the Asian Diaspora; and Africa and the African Diaspora.

Saslow said his students did the main research for most of the show’s objects, and issues like globalization and cultural exchange that the show highlights.

“They understood the theme of the show, often from their own personal experiences of straddling two cultures,” he said. “I hope they came away with a greater understanding and appreciation of how art is a vital part of cultural identity.”

Among the highlights of the exhibition is an etching by Rembrandt of 17th-century Jews in a Dutch synagogue, which “is a nearly unique testament of that tolerant society,” Saslow said.

Viewers will also see what Saslow describes as a tropically colorful oil by the African-American painter Claude Clark, who he said “adapted European Old Master paintings to dignify Puerto Rican sugar-cane cutters.”

Among Winter’s favorites are “fantastic textiles woven by Congolese people” and “a beautifully illustrated illuminated manuscript” from the 19th century.

The museum and the gallery wanted to reach out to the communities beyond their own individual confines, Winter said, making the collaboration particularly appealing.

“We hope to do another show with them coming down the line,” she said.

‘Five Continents, One Borough’
When: now through end of Jan.
Where: Citi DeFord Gallery, One Court Square, LIC
Website: gtmuseum.org
Kalish is more than a job for Joe Bruno: It’s home

by Anthony O’Reilly, Associate Editor | Posted: Thursday, October 8, 2015 10:30 am

In 2009, Joe Bruno landed a job at Kalish Pharmacy, located at 93-20 Liberty Ave. in Ozone Park, for the second time.

But it was more than just a new chapter in his 40-plus years experience as a pharmacist: It was a homecoming.

“This is home,” he said about the surrounding community. “I was born here, I went to school here, I grew up here, I met my wife here.”

Back then, he knew Kalish Pharmacy as one of the more longstanding businesses in the community and later in life would become a worker there, stocking the shelves and manning the cash register.

When he came back in 2009 as a pharmacist, he was able to reconnect with the community he holds close to his heart.

That’s why he didn’t have to think twice when the opportunity came up two and a half years ago for him to become the owner of the store.

“This is like a family. They know me, I know them,” he said. “It’s a nice feeling. I love it.”

Bruno, a graduate of St. John’s University’s pharmacy program, started his career in Brooklyn and stayed there until 2009 when he came back to Ozone Park.

Due to Bruno’s dedication to customer service, many of his old clients brought their prescriptions there with him.

“I have customers from Brooklyn who came over with me,” he said. “Customers from Long Island and the Rockaways. We just had someone from the Rockaways leave with a whole shopping bag of prescriptions.”

Bruno’s original life plan didn’t have him behind the pharmacy desk.

He started Baruch College as an accounting major, but soon after had a realization.

“I said, ‘What am I doing? I know pharmacy, let’s do that,’” he said.
So, he switched majors and colleges and after the extensive education required of pharmacists, he never looked back.

Many of his customers are people who grew up with him in Ozone Park — and some of their children.

“They don’t recognize me until we start talking,” Bruno said.

When asked what his favorite part of being a pharmacist is, Bruno said it was taking care of those customers.

“They come to us before they come to a doctor,” he said. “It’s a wonderful feeling to know you can help somebody.”

Until this week, Bruno was at the store the six days a week it’s open (9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on weekdays and 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday). Now, he’s getting a little break after he hired a part-time pharmacist.

But even when he’s off, he’s still at the store in spirit.

“Even when I’m not here, I’m still thinking about the store,” he said.

And that’s the difference between his store and large chain pharmacies.

“They’re not going to get this kind of care,” he said when asked why people should come to this store. “They’re going to get a different pharmacist every time.”

And if you can’t get over there to experience the customer service, Kalish does deliver to the surrounding area.

For more information, call Kalish Pharmacy at (718) 641-5648.
WESTPORT, Conn. -- Rita Gabis made a startling discovery five years ago.

Her maternal grandfather, whom she adored, had served as the chief of security police from 1941 to 1943 under the Gestapo in a Lithuanian town where 8,000 Jews were murdered over three days in the fall of 1941.

Gabis' close relationship with her grandfather made the horror more real and the confusion more profound, she said.

"He was someone I knew well in childhood," Gabis said. "He wasn't an abstract figure to me."

Gabis began to look into her grandfather's role in the Holocaust. She compiled her research into a memoir, "A Guest at the Shooters' Banquet: My Grandfather's SS Past, My Jewish Family, a Search for the Truth," which she plans to discuss at the Westport Library on Tuesday, Oct. 13.

In the book, Gabis, the daughter of a Lithuanian Catholic mother and Russian Jewish father, shares her journey to unravel the truth about her beloved grandfather.

Her research took her to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., where she was surprised to find documents pertaining to her grandfather.

"I had no idea there would be a paper trail on him," Gabis said.

She also made several trips to Europe, interviewing Holocaust survivors.

"People shared with me the most heartbreaking experiences of their lives," she said. "Each of those interviews was very meaningful to me."

Aside from her book, her research will forever be a part of the museum, which will archive her extensive interviews over her five years of research, Gabis said.

Gabis, who teaches creative writing at Hunter College in New York City, has also authored two books of poetry and co-authored a book on the craft of writing.
Gabis has also received grants from the Connecticut State Arts Foundation and the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Gabis hopes that those who attend her talk will be inspired to dive into their own family histories.

There are questions in every family's past, Gabis said. The key, she said, is "to ask the questions before it's too late."
Kingsborough Community College Earns Distinguished Award

SECTION: OTHER NEWS

LENGTH: 542 words

The non-profit academic program Achieving the Dream recently announced that Kingsborough Community College (KCC), one of seven community colleges of the City University of New York system, has earned Leader College distinction—a national designation awarded to community colleges that commit to improving student success and closing achievement gaps. KCC has shown how data can inform policy and practice to help community college students achieve their goals, resulting in improved skills, better employability, and economic growth for families, communities, and the nation as a whole.

Kingsborough has successfully expanded Learning Communities and developmental Math workshops, and implemented STEM initiatives and equity programs. Achieving the Dream's philosophy of thoughtful assessment and evidence-based decision-making is congruent with Kingsborough's practices and priorities and has been instrumental in the successful implementation of these programs. Most recent longitudinal studies (2008-2013), based on institutional data reveal a steady increase in retention for the college’s Learning Community participants.

The 2013 fall-to-spring retention rate for freshmen was 89.4 percent for Learning Community participants and 77.9 percent among non-Learning Community students, while the fall-to-fall retention rate for 2013 Learning Community freshmen was 76.8 percent and 63.3 percent for non-Learning Community freshmen. The expansion of this and other programs ensures that the social and educational opportunities they offer are accessible to an increasing number of students.

"This is a wonderful achievement for Kingsborough, and we're grateful to Achieving the Dream for this important recognition," said KCC President Farley Herzek. "At Kingsborough, we're committed to helping students walk away with a sense of confidence and readiness for four-year study or four the workforce. By expanding our Learning Communities, we saw the cohorts' efforts to attempt and earn more credits increase, while they continue to be retained and graduate at a higher rate than their counterparts not in a Learning Community."

"Becoming a Leader College is very powerful and affirms the exceptional work and commitment of faculty and staff to their students' success," said Achieving the Dream Vice President for Community College Relations Cindy Lenhart. "Kingsborough Community College is using evidence to make informed decisions that lead to significant institutional change."

The 2015 Leader Colleges are making strides in the national movement to increase student completion and close achievement gaps, demonstrating the power of the Achieving the Dream approach. With the guidance of Achieving the Dream Coaches, colleges not only systemically change the way they operate, but also implement key student supports that align with their overall policies and institutional systems, such as college readiness programs, mandatory new student orientation, student-success courses, developmental course redesign, curriculum redesign, and intensive, individualized advising.
What’s On Television Friday

By KATHRYN SHATTUCK OCT. 9, 2015

8:45 A.M. (HBO Signature) POLLOCK (2000) Ed Harris summons the spirit of the Abstract Expressionist giant Jackson Pollock, standing over an enormous canvas and dripping paint in graceful swooping gestures as the camera dances around him. He also seethes like the surly, violent alcoholic that Pollock was — upending dinner tables; raging at his wife, the painter Lee Krasner (Marcia Gay Harden); and ultimately crashing his car with two female companions in what might have been a deliberate suicide run. Yes, the movie, which Mr. Harris also directed, “has flaws and inaccuracies,” Stephen Holden wrote in The New York Times. “But ‘Pollock’ is for the most part admirable. It reminds us that great art isn’t about creating beauty out of misty-eyed Hallmark moments but about discovering and communicating messy truths that spill all over the place, just like the lives of the artists driven to uncover them.” (Image: Mr. Harris)

8 A.M. (CUNY TIMESTALKS) Michael Caine discusses his six-decade career and a new film, “Youth,” in which he and Harvey Keitel play lifelong friends pondering retirement after finding success in classical music and film. The writer Logan Hill moderated this conversation, the first in a series with noted British actors.
BCC celebrates 'National Coming Out Day'

October 8, 2015

Bronx Community College held a parade and rally Thursday for National Coming Out Day. (Credit: News 12)

The parade and rally is the first public National Coming Out Day observance at Bronx Community College. The college is the only school in the CUNY system to publicly celebrate the day.

Around 50 people participated in the parade and rally, including Councilman Ritchie Torres, the first openly gay elected official from the Bronx.

"I want to give credit to BCC for being the first to celebrate coming out and LGBT pride and Bronx pride," says Torres. "It's important we take every opportunity to give a voice and visibility to the LGBT community."

National Coming Out Day, which is Sunday, Oct. 11, is a time to honor lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex Americans and their straight allies.

School officials are also using this time to let people know about the school's "Safe Space" program, which helps students who do not feel accepted belong to a network of fellow students, faculty and other staff members.

Bronx Community College officials are hoping this event will get other CUNY schools to get involved.

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The reel world Brooklyn: New film school opens at Steiner Studios

By Harry MacCormack
The Brooklyn Paper

And they're rolling!

Brooklyn College called "action!" on its new graduate film school at Steiner Studios in the Brooklyn Navy Yard on Tuesday.

The school is the first motion-picture-making academy in the country housed in a working film lot, which means students will get first-hand experience in showbiz and a foot in the door of the city's movie and television industry while they're studying, officials said.

"They get the opportunity to see the work being done and to do it themselves hands-on," said Mayor De Blasio, who helped cut the ribbon for the new school alongside local pols and college officials. "This is what's going to make them so able to go right into this extraordinary job market around film and TV."

The school also boasts a star-studded cast — "Repo Man" director Jonathan Wacks will be the institution's new director, while Boerum Hill actor Ethan Hawke, "Magic Mike" director Steven Soderbergh, "Black Swan" director and Manhattan Beach native Darren Aronofsky, and Dumbo actor Fisher Stevens will serve on its advisory panel.

The inaugural class of 69 students will start studying at the school in the fall, and at least one local pol is already making awards-season predictions.

"I look forward to seeing the Emmys, Oscars, and other awards that this school's future grads will amass," said Borough President Adams.

Cut!

Reach reporter Harry MacCormack at hmaccormack@cnnglocal.com or by calling (718) 260-2511. Follow him on Twitter @HMacBKPaper.

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CUNY students fear tuition hike on tap

by Ashley Oliver, Chronicle Contributor | Posted: Thursday, October 8, 2015 10:30 am

With the City University of New York’s five-year plan to raise tuition in its last year, irate CUNY students are demanding a freeze to further tuition hikes.

Five years ago New York’s State Legislature and the CUNY Board of Trustees approved annual tuition increases of approximately $300 at all senior colleges. At the time officials promised that any student who could not afford the increases would be eligible for state aid.

But now that the five years are up, students are fearful of another tuition hike.

"CUNY doesn’t give a damn about students," Axelle Mathurin, a 21-year-old psychology major, said. "There had better not be another raise in tuition. I had to work extra since freshman year just to pay tuition. If I have to take another class in the fall, I’m going on strike with CUNY."

York College President Marcia Keizs said she believes that 2016’s spring semester would be the last year in the latest round of tuition increases.

"This is our last academic year of COMPACT," Keizs said, referring to the program under which the recent tuition increases were established. "There’s not going to be another hike for a while."

Tuition at CUNY was free for most students since the system was established in 1847 as the Free Academy, and free for all students between 1970 and 1976, according to the University’s website.

In 1976 senior college tuition debuted at $925 per year for all students, and now stands at $6,330 per year for full-time state residents.

Some students are pushing for more transparency as to how the extra money they pay is spent.

"It’s absurd how students have to pay all this money, yet we don’t reap the benefits," according to Baruch College business major Diomarys Mendez, 20. "If CUNY actually physically put their claims into place, students won’t be mad."

"I can understand if we got more heat, a better looking building, something more advanced," said Brandon Bennett, 20, a Brooklyn College movement science major. "It’s New York for Christ’s sake and the schools look old and we students get lower quality electronics."

Despite the plan’s promise that the additional revenue will be reinvested in programs, some students believe that the services provided in schools are not commensurate with the tuition costs.

"I understand everyone wants a little more for a little less," Keizs said. "But we are doing the best we can to give students the value of what they’re paying for."

But York’s former Student Government Vice President and alumna Gesmen Begum is not as
optimistic. She believes that there will be another tuition hike within the next two years.

"College budgets are not linked to the tuition," Begum said. "A lot of the activities were from each college's private association."

Everald Williams, 24, a senior at Medgar Evers College, said if there is another tuition hike, the money should aid students who are financially unstable.

"For the past two years, I’ve received limited financial aid," Williams said. "I know the city is doing us a favor, but COMPACT claims they want to help students succeed, but [students] could hardly afford to go to school."

While some students’ demands for proof of the allocation of their money escalate, some CUNY staff and students attribute the communication gap to students’ unwillingness to read all the details in documents regarding financial changes.

"We don’t create tuition increases, we abide by them," said York’s Vice President of Administrative Affairs and Finance Ronald Thomas. "Any student can go to the CUNY website to read on what COMPACT is intended to do, It’s a good reference point for students to keep on their smartphone so they can inform themselves on the plan."

Kiarah Thomas, a 20-year-old junior at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, admits to not reading CUNY emails.

"Most students, including myself, don’t read the emails that the schools send," Thomas said. "So obviously, we are gonna get mad when changes actually impact us because we never prepared for it."

One common concern among students and faculty is the steady rise in the number of courses taught by adjunct versus full-time faculty.

"It’s ironic because many professors are adjuncts at my job and they got rid of a lot of full-time staff and college assistants who are the ones providing the services for the students," said Shaquille Martin, an information technologist for classroom support at Medgar Evers college and a former CUNY student.

Between 2004 and 2011, the percentage of adjunct faculty teaching courses rose from 36 to 44 percent CUNY-wide, according to data maintained by the faculty’s union. In York College, there are 198 full-time instructional staff compared to 348 part-time instructional staff, according to a November 2014 statistic from The Office of Institutional Advancement.
Scientists Recover First Genome of Ancient Human From Africa

By CARL ZIMMER OCT. 8, 2015

A team of scientists reported on Thursday that it had recovered the genome from a 4,500-year-old human skeleton in Ethiopia — the first time a complete assemblage of DNA has been retrieved from an ancient human in Africa.

The DNA of the Ethiopian fossil is strikingly different from that of living Africans. Writing in the journal Science, the researchers conclude that people from the Near East spread into Africa 3,000 years ago. In later generations, their DNA ended up scattered across the continent.

"It's a major milestone for the field," said Joseph Pickrell, an expert on ancient DNA at the New York Genome Center who was not involved in the study. For decades, scientists had doubted that ancient DNA could survive in the tropics. The study raises hopes that scientists can recover far older human genomes from Africa — perhaps dating back a million years or more.

"I would bet it's not that far in the future," said Lee Berger, a paleoanthropologist at the University of the Witwatersrand who recently announced the discovery of an ancient humanlike species called Homo naledi.

In the 1980s, few scientists would have believed it possible to reconstruct an
entire genome from the DNA in a fossil. Once a human or other animal dies, its DNA starts to fall apart. Bacteria swiftly colonize the corpse, overwhelming it with their own DNA.

But by the 1990s scientists were beginning to retrieve fragments of DNA and piece them together into longer segments. In 2010, researchers assembled the genome of a Neanderthal from 38,000-year-old fossils from Croatia. In many other cases, researchers failed to find ancient DNA in human fossils. Because it was widely suspected that the heat and humidity in the tropics would destroy genetic material, many scientists flocked to places like Siberia to seek ancient DNA.

That skepticism proved to be unwarranted. In recent years, Ron Pinhasi, an archaeologist at University College Dublin, and his colleagues have been surveying different bones to see if any are particularly good for preserving DNA. They found that the bone surrounding the inner ear can hold an abundance of genetic material even when other bones have lost theirs.

As they reported last year, the scientists were able to pull out genomes from the ear bones of hundreds of Europeans who lived thousands of years ago. Their success gave them hope that they might be able to rescue ancient DNA from African skeletons.

They got their chance when John W. Arthur and Kathryn Weedman Arthur, archaeologists at the University of South Florida, and their colleagues uncovered the skeleton of a man in the Mota cave, in the highlands of southern Ethiopia. Mota, as the scientists refer to the man, was laid out in a ceremonial burial. His head rested on a pillowlike stone, his hands were folded under his body, and he was surrounded by stone tools.

The researchers sent Dr. Pinhasi a sample of the inner ear bone, hoping that he and his colleagues could fish out some DNA. They succeeded spectacularly, extracting enough DNA to reconstruct Mota’s entire genome.

Dr. Pinhasi and his colleagues also got some clues about what Mota was like by looking at some of his genes. He was probably brown-skinned and had brown eyes, for example. He also had genetic adaptations for living at high altitudes — the same
adaptations found in Ethiopian highlanders today.

The scientists then sought to fit Mota into the history of humankind. Ethiopia is home to the oldest fossils of our species, dating back about 200,000 years. Humans later expanded across Africa. Later, sometime between 100,000 and 50,000 years ago, our species began to spread into Asia and Europe.

In recent years, scientists have found segments of DNA in Ethiopians and other Africans that bear a striking resemblance to those found in people from Europe and Asia. They proposed that there was a “backflow” of genes into Africa roughly 3,000 years ago.

Dr. Pinhasi and his colleagues found that Mota, who lived 1,500 years before that time, had no trace of Eurasian DNA in his genome. “It’s an African without this backflow,” he said.

Armed with this early genome, Dr. Pinhasi and his colleagues took a new look at the spread of Eurasian genes into Africa. They pinpointed the source of the DNA to ancient farmers in the Near East. Once those people spread into Africa, their DNA traveled across the continent over the generations.

“The most astonishing thing is there’s quite a lot of backflow in all modern African populations,” Dr. Pinhasi said. He and his colleagues estimate that 7 percent of the genomes of the Yoruba people of Nigeria are of Eurasian origin. In the genomes of Mbuti pygmies who live in the rain forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 6 percent of the DNA comes from Eurasians.

Ryan L. Raaum, an anthropological geneticist at Lehman College, part of the City University of New York, called the new study “fantastic” but questioned its conclusions. If people from the Near East moved into Africa, he argued, a drastic shift in the archaeology of the region would logically follow. But no such shift occurred. It is also possible that Eurasian DNA moved into Africa earlier than 3,000 years ago, Dr. Raaum argued. Mota might have simply lived in an isolated community that never encountered people with those genes.

The best way to test the conclusions of Dr. Pinhasi and his colleagues, Dr. Raaum said, would be to gather more DNA from African fossils of the same age. If the
researchers are right, they would also lack Eurasian DNA. “Then the argument starts to seem a lot more plausible,” Dr. Raaum said.

Dr. Pinhasi is ready to look for those skeletons. “We need more genomes across space and time,” he said.

A version of this article appears in print on October 9, 2016, on page A8 of the New York edition with the headline: Scientists Recover First Genome of Ancient Human From Africa.