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The Diking News

Will Westchester Community College Expand Its Accessibility Resources? MICHELLE GRISALES

Westchester Community College students with disabilities have noted certain facilities are lacking or unsafe in helping them tend to day-to-day necessities on campus. Locations such as the Nurses office and the Academic Arts Building raise concerns for students' accessibility.

Rene Garcia, a student attending Westchester Community College, shares about being unable to access the nurse's office. Garcia is diagnosed as quadriplegic and experiences paralyzed hands with limited dexterity.

On January 19th, 2024, Garcia was having a headache during his first day of classes. Arriving at the office, Garcia struggled to open the door since there was not a no-contact option at the time.

"I can't casually pull it, it took all my muscle strength," Garcia said. "This is too heavy, there might be some people that might not even be able to do this."

This situation reveals a serious problem, an important service needed on campus is not easily accessible to every student.

Garcia did not report the issue to

the Health Office directly, he felt he was "the last consideration" when it came to accessing the Health Office.

The Health Services building has two doors, one on the side and one in the front facing the student center. Both of these entrances lacked a no-contact door when this article was written. A no-contact mechanism has been installed on the inside door to the Health Office since.

Janice Gilroy, the Health Services Coordinator, shares she's been working at the Health Office since it first opened. According to Gilroy, they have never received complaints about the door. The doors in the front and inside are glass. Health Office staff say that whenever they see anyone struggling they help as much as possible.

Alexandra Talbot, is part of a WCC program, Pleasantville Lab School. Talbot is legally blind and walks with a cane to assist her mobility. Talbot's aide, Kirsten Weiss, adds Talbot attends this program to help transition to college.

Talbot shared that there are multiple places at WCC where she struggles. Weiss describes

the walkway to the Academic Arts Building with the ramp as "extremely dangerous." According to Weiss, she and Talbot take a route around the Classroom Building when going to parking lot 4, since going down the hill is not a safe option.

with me, students just keep running out and in the door," Talbot said.

Weiss said that people fail to recognize or be conscientious of Talbot. Talbot experiences being cut off by students when coming in and out of the Student Center. When this happens it

In multiple attempts to contact the accessibility office, we have received no comment at this time.

As stated above, a no-contact wave door has since been installed at the Health Office inside doors, but not at the outside doors that one has



Students Garcia and Talbot note particular doors on campus are heavier than others.

Photo by Michelle Grisales

Talbot struggles with the Student Center through the door with the wave-contact.

"Even though I have my cane

causes Talbot to pause to take a moment and the door closes automatically and slams into her, according to Weiss.

to pass through to access the office. No plans have been shared about providing a safer way to the Academic Arts Building.

Wake-Up Calls: Students Frustrated with Campus Starbucks Hours

JONATHAN CERINI

Recently, there has been an increase in complaints from tired students regarding the inconsistent hours of business at the Starbucks in the Swope Student Center. Also known as the Crema Café, students believed that the hours of operation range from 9a.m.-5p.m.. The Westchester Community College website states that the school runs from 8a.m. to 7p.m., depending on the day of the week.

Many students feel the Café should stay open longer as a lot of students need an extra kick throughout the day.

"It feels like sometimes they'll be open at 2:30, and then the next day they're closing their gates at 1," said Andrew Epstein,

an employee and former film student of WCC who utilizes the campus food services.

Considering the college's general hours across campus, students may feel it would make sense that all services close at the same time. This unclear system may be the cause for all this confusion.

From an employee's perspective, this issue seemed surprising to hear about. Supervisor of Crema Café, Paula Jaimes, seemed to have a clue as to what could be causing the misunderstanding.

"Last semester our hours were from 8 a.m. to around 2:45 p.m.," Jaimes said.

According to workers, they feel sorry for students who want to order after hours when they're starting to close shop.

"I'm sure the hours on the website need to be updated. Maybe students are confusing our hours with the hours at the Gateway Building's café," Jaimes said.

Otherwise known as the Siegel Café in the Gateway Center, Jaimes may be on to something. The hours of operation for the Siegel Café range from 10a.m.-4p.m. in comparison to Crema Café.

However, most students will go to the Student Center to relax or eat in between classes which in turn, brings more foot traffic near Crema Café.

"There have been times where I've gone to get coffee after class, and they've been closed. I wouldn't say it's inconsistent because they are usually open when the student center is most

busy. I think they prioritize the time where they can make the most business," said Ava Moncada, an avid coffee drinker and customer at

Jaimes said.

Siegel Café is an option after Crema Café closes for students on campus who

"I'm sure the hours on the website need to be updated. Maybe students are confusing our hours with the hours at the Gateway Building's café."

Paula Jaimes, Supervisor and Employee of the Crema Café

the Crema Café.

To put two and two together, the Crema Café may have "inconsistent" hours due to its lack of business after a specific timeframe.

"It got really slow last semester, so after a certain time our closing hours became earlier,"

may be unaware.

The Siegel Café can be an alternative for students seeking a pep in their step when Starbucks has closed down shop. Check the WCC website to stay updated on the hours from your favorite Cafés.

Queuing System Divides Students From Academic Counselors

SORELLE MARSH

In the aftermath of the pandemic, the Department of Academic Counseling has shifted to a digital queuing system to manage the rising demand

advisors available during the day in the queue, which would give students a better idea of how long they have to wait.

Conversely, Benavidez thinks

the drawback of prolonged wait times, which have hindered her ability to consult with a counselor during her available times.

“I connected with some people better than others,” Benavidez said. “Having the same counselor is good because they know my plan.”

According to Dr. Michele Campagna, AVP/Dean of Student Success, before the pandemic hit, WCC had a structured approach where counselors were specifically assigned to first-time, full-time, first-year students. This system allowed students to schedule sessions with their Academic Counselors

from the start of their academic journey. However, the landscape of academic counseling at WCC has significantly shifted since returning from the pandemic-induced hiatus. The influx of students returning to campus has led to a notable increase in caseloads, making it increasingly challenging for counselors to manage their assigned caseloads effectively. This surge has complicated the ability of counselors to meet

improve its resources, according to Campagna. The department is currently in the process of conducting searches to hire additional Academic Counselors and an Executive Director.

“We are looking toward a model that will serve our students more effectively and efficiently, and facilitate the development of relationships between students and Academic Counselors,” said Campagna. “These changes are

“We are looking toward a model that will serve our students more effectively and efficiently, and facilitate the development of relationships between students and Academic Counselors.”

Dr. Michele Campagna, AVP/Dean of Student Success

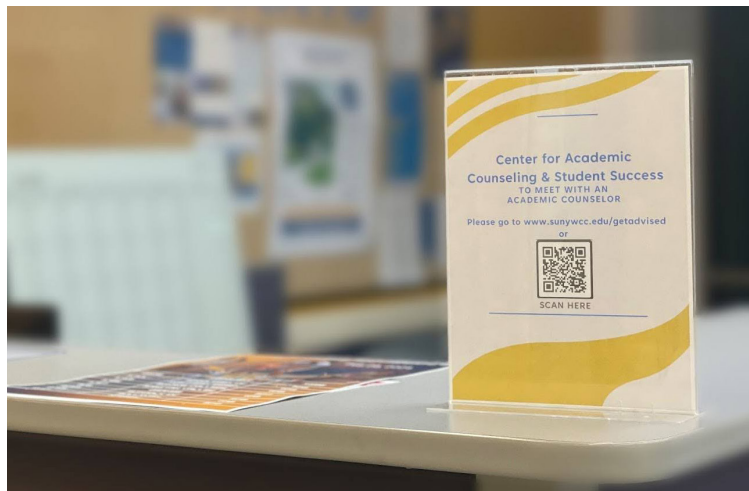
for services, sparking mixed reactions from the student body. WCC Students Natalie Rodriguez and Arianna Benavidez offer different perspectives on the system’s impact.

Rodriguez voices concerns over the inefficiency and unpredictability of the queuing process, recounting an occasion when she experienced longer wait times due to others being prioritized ahead of her.

“I remember one time I signed in and other people that signed in after I got chosen first. I had to wait an extra hour, and at that point, I had to leave”, Rodriguez says.

Rodriguez discusses the value of continuity in counseling relationships, pointing out that familiar counselors have a better understanding of a student’s academic journey. Rodriguez suggests putting the number of

the queue has made her experience easier to contact the counselors through the QR



A sign stands at the forefront of WCC’s Academic Counseling Center, symbolizing the shift to a digital queue system for managing academic counseling appointments.

Photo by Sorelle Marsh

code on the front desk of the Academic Counseling Center. However, she too acknowledges

through Viking Success, ensuring a tailored and personalized counseling experience right



Students often experience long wait times to see an Academic Counselor.

Photo by Sorelle Marsh

with their designated students by appointment while also accommodating the needs of other students on a walk-in basis.

In response to these issues, the Department of Academic Counseling is taking steps to

a priority for the College.”

WCC is adapting its counseling services to meet the diverse needs of students in a rapidly changing academic environment, aiming for improved accessibility and support.

High Hopes for Housing? The Issue with Campus Life and Student Athlete Retention

JONATHAN CERINI

Rumors have resurfaced at Westchester Community College about dorms being brought to campus. Many students have fallen victim to the romanticization of having this true college experience. Unfortunately, those wishful thinkers will have to face reality.

The Dean of Student Life, Adam Frank addressed the rumors.

“Anything you may have heard is just that... a rumor. As far as I know, there are no plans or even discussions about developing housing on campus,” said Frank.

Hearing this news can be disappointing for students. It is not an unpopular opinion that the process of commuting via public transportation is frustrating and exhausting. Many students are not residents of Westchester County. However, creating this sense of community at a community college is more complicated than students think.

This missing piece of the option to live on campus causes Westchester Community to lose many students to other schools that do provide housing.

Other community colleges like Sullivan Community College and Dutchess Community College have on campus housing, which leads to higher admission rates. There have been several attempts and suggestions as to how the school could offer some form of housing.



In the past, there have been rumors that WCC would use a Community Center down the road from campus as a way of housing students.

Photo by Jonathan Cerini

According to Athletic Director Mike Belfiore, there were talks of WCC collaborating with certain schools in the Westchester area like Manhattanville College, SUNY Purchase, and Pace University. This goes without saying that these hypotheticals

are easier said than done as certain dynamics would play a role in the execution and success of specific plans.

Living on campus affects the morale, grades, and well-being of students as everyone seeks connectivity. According to a recent survey from the University of Connecticut, “students who lived on campus were 14 percent more likely to return for their next year than those who lived off campus.” This has been a major issue for WCC as enrollment and retention rates have continued to decline over the

“We can dream of these things, but if it’s not a reality then we need to focus on what we can provide to offer the most engaging experience for students who come here.”

Mike Belfiore, Athletic Director



Housing on campus would be ideal for students who commute in poor weather conditions and deal with inconsistent waiting times for public transit.

Photo by Jonathan Cerini

past few years.

This not only affects the student body but also the Athletic Department. Belfiore described how difficult it may be to add dorms on campus.

“If you think about having them on campus, the college essentially never closes,” said Belfiore.

Belfiore listed all the requirements it would take to have a functioning system for a proper housing experience. From building dorms, to staffing facilities, and having 24/7 student support services.

“It’s a significantly higher investment,” said Belfiore.

“[Community colleges with

housing] have a wider radius geographically that attracts more students,” said Belfiore.

Because of this, it has been requested that coaches recruit locally, so student athletes are able to enjoy the experience to the fullest.

“We can dream of these things, but if it’s not a reality then we need to focus on what we can provide to offer the most engaging experience for students who come here,” Belfiore said.

Whether one is a student athlete or not, it is ultimately up to the individual to make the most of their experience as a college student.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

THE POLITICAL COLUMN

LOCAL PRIMARY ELECTION

LUKE O'CONNELL



DONALD TRUMP

Graphic By Jada Miceli



JOE BIDEN

Graphic By Jada Miceli



GEORGE LATIMER

Photo Courtesy of the George Latimer Team



JAMAAL BOWMAN

Photo Courtesy of the Jamaal Bowman Team

Former President Donald Trump is the presumptive Republican nominee for the 2024 presidential election. Ever since Florida Governor Ron DeSantis dropped out of the primary on January 21st following his second-place finish in the Iowa Caucus, Trump's only opponent in the primary has been former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley.

Trump received more than half of the vote in the Iowa Caucus on January 15th, and he beat Haley by around 11 points in the New Hampshire primary on January 23rd. He is projected to easily win the nomination.

As of right now, Trump has not stated who his running mate will be. When he ran for president in 2016 and again in 2020, Mike Pence was his running mate, but he and Trump have not been on good terms since 2021.

In addition, it is noteworthy that Trump has so far been removed from the ballot in two states, Colorado and Maine. Other states may also remove him from the ballot for "violating Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment," which is why he was removed from the ballot in Colorado and Maine. Trump's approval rating is currently 43.1 percent. When he left office in 2021, it was 38.0 percent.

President Joe Biden is the presumptive Democratic nominee for the 2024 presidential election. Biden has been president since 2021 after beating Trump in the highly contentious 2020 presidential election. His main opponents in this year's Democratic primary are Congressman Dean Phillips and author Marianne Williamson.

In the New Hampshire primary on January 23rd, Biden won 63.9 percent of the vote, while Phillips received 19.6 percent of the vote and Williamson 4.0 percent of the vote. Biden was a write-in candidate in the New Hampshire primary because of a dispute between the Democratic Party and the State of New Hampshire. In the South Carolina primary on February 3rd, Biden won 96.2 percent of the vote. He is projected to easily win the nomination.

As president, Biden's approval rating is 39.0 percent. His approval rating has not exceeded 50 percent since September 2021. The biggest issues that currently confront Biden and his administration include the southern border and America's involvement in foreign wars, primarily the Israel-Hamas War and the Russia-Ukraine War.

George Latimer has been the Westchester County Executive since 2018, after beating Incumbent Republican Rob Astorino in the 2017 election. In December, Latimer told the New York Times that he would challenge Bowman in the Democratic primary for the 16th Congressional District, which Bowman has led since 2021.

Latimer has described Bowman's ideology as "extreme," and he believes that Bowman has put it ahead of "getting things done." Likewise, the motto for Latimer's campaign is "Real progressive results, not rhetoric." He has criticized Bowman for being one of only six Democrats in the House to vote against the 2021 Infrastructure and Jobs Act, which authorized \$1.2T for infrastructure-related spending.

In addition, Latimer has been very critical of Bowman's stance on Israel. For example, he has criticized Bowman's call for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war. Unsurprisingly, Latimer is supported by AIPAC, a large pro-Israel lobbying group. Nearly half of his campaign contributions so far have come from AIPAC.

Congressman Jamaal Bowman has been the representative for New York's 16th congressional district since 2021, which includes all of Southern Westchester and a small portion of the Bronx. It also includes WCC, which Bowman has visited multiple times.

Bowman became the district's representative after he upset long-time incumbent Eliot Engel in the 2020 Democratic primary, and he went on to easily win that year's general election.

Bowman is one of the most progressive members of Congress. Some of the policies that he supports include the Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and national rent control. In addition, he is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

Bowman has been criticized by some for his critical view of Israel, with J Street, a progressive Israel advocacy group, recently rescinding its endorsement of him. In fact, County Executive George Latimer, who is an ardent supporter of Israel, is challenging him in the Democratic primary for the seat.

The Israel-Hamas war is perhaps the most significant issue of the primary. The primary is scheduled to take place on June 25th. Because New York is a closed primary state, only Democrats are allowed to vote in this primary.

Financial Aid Puts Students on Hold, Prevents Class Registration

RAY KATZ

MICHELLE GRISALES

JADA MICELI

During the fall 2023 semester, students were left distraught by holds and withdrawals from the Financial Aid and Registrar caused by errors unknown to them.

The function of the Financial Aid Department is to help students receive financial aid from the government or other sources. Despite that, several students have voiced concerns of the department's lack of support.

"Dealing with financial aid has definitely been a struggle," said student Steven Estrada. "I've had to go into the office multiple times to fix an issue, only for them to tell me there's actually more issues than I knew about and that they can't solve them now."

The current system can feel misleading to students, and it may impact their ability to continue their education. Many students seek a more clear and cohesive system to aid in seeking funding.

"I honestly didn't know if I'd

be able to stay here due to the issues with financial aid which really made me feel lost," said Estrada.

Due to these issues, which may cause students unnecessary stress, many students struggle to be able to pay tuition.

"The information that was provided was not enough every single time," said Justin Basdeo, another WCC student. "I would have to keep coming back to finally be able to get my classes."

Basdeo felt frustrated and lost when trying to navigate information within these offices.

According to Basdeo, when starting at WCC, he would seek aid at the Registrar's Office to ensure he was enrolled in all of his classes. Basdeo had to go to the office many times to make sure he had everything in order to attend his courses, due to the lack of communication on the office's end.

"I paid with my card and they

took the money out of my account," said Basdeo. "But it said [the Financial Aid Office] didn't receive any money and had to go in person three or four times."

In Basdeo's student profile, it showed he had an outstanding balance, despite his bank statement showing the successful withdrawal of the money.

According to Basdeo, what discourages him to seek help is the frustration of having to go to the office and waiting in their extremely long lines.

"They would rather defer me and make it somebody else's problem," Basdeo said.

This accumulation of issues leads students like Basdeo to feel like they aren't a priority of WCC.

In an interview with Dante Cantú, the Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs, Cantú explained how WCC plans to fix these problems.

"There's layers in this plan, it's too important not to give it 100%. There's a commitment to get to a better place."

According to Cantú, these errors and students are a priority to the administration and they are working towards a better place.

Cantú also attended an SGA meeting to hear stories of students that he called "unsettling, disappointing, and

heartbreaking." Cantú shared he and his team are working diligently and are committed to addressing the issues impacting students' financial aid and registration.

If you or someone you know is struggling with financial aid or registration issues, contact finaid@sunywcc.edu or registrar@sunywcc.edu.



Many offices such as the Financial Aid, Registrar, and Bursar's Office set up queue systems to allow students to wait for their allocated slot to resolve the issues they have. Photo by Steven Estrada

More Than Just a Month: Reimagining Black Futures from Black History JONAS BARR

February is the designated month for people across the country to commemorate, make space for, reflect upon, and expand upon the continuous study of Black history. Sheedly Marcelin, president of the Black Student Union at WCC, believes that change requires more than a month's effort. Rather, it is a daily and yearly exercise to continuously reaffirm and center the contributions and

this reason that people have started referring to this holiday as Black Futures Month. "How can we take what's happened in the past and what's going on in the present and then look forward to having that inform our vision of the future, as well?" WCC student Abiona Melancon said. "I've had my own struggles that were partially fuelled by me being a Black woman—being a Black girl. I would like to hopefully be in a profession

"Community is everyone. You go about building it by simply reaching out and connecting to people but also showing up for them, as well—even if it's in the smallest ways."

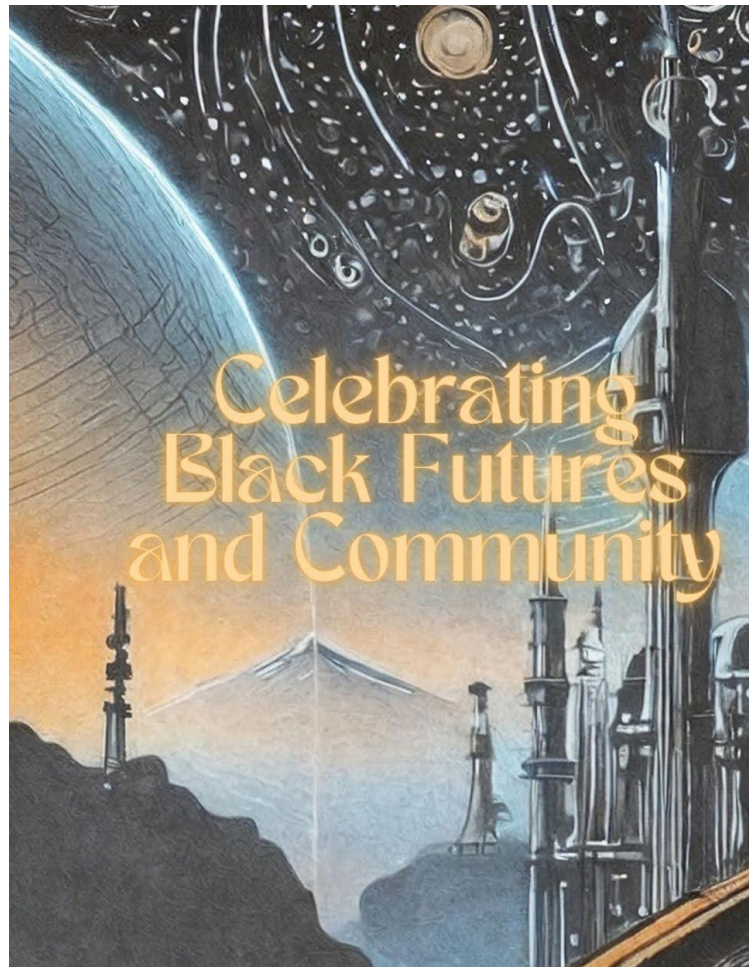
Abiona Melancon, WCC Student

progressive agendas of African Americans in every realm of society, especially with regards to mental health and family dynamics. "I aim to go to middle schools and high schools and say [to students] 'I'm listening to you, I hear you. You're not alone here. You don't have to be what the world says you have to be. Be who you are.'" says Marcelin.

Often it is through a thorough examination and consideration of the past that progress might be made for the future. It is for

where I get to help other Black children who are like me and study the connections between ADHD and chronic illnesses with certain environmental stressors."

For Melancon, the concept of Black Futures can refocus on building up communities instead. "I view community as a group of interconnected people who are simply there to show up for one another," Melancon said. "Community is everyone. You go about building it by simply reaching out and



According to ASALH.org, Dr. Carter G. Woodson established Black History Month in February 1926. Graphic made using generative A.I. (Adobe Firefly) by Jonas Barr

connecting to people but also showing up for them, as well—even if it's in the smallest ways." Marcelin goes about this by doing mental health check ups. "I was forced to grow up quicker than I wanted to. A lot of Black

people are. With that mentality, it's hard to get help if you or someone doesn't reach out to you first."

The Black Student Union fosters a safe space where students can be open with each other and

build community on campus with weekly meetings during Wednesday's common hour in CLA 105. Marcelin wants to assuage the worries and social anxiety of students if they are interested in attending the BSU's meetings: "Please, come on your own time—we'll be here. I want to see you!"

In addition to weekly events happening in February for BHM, this spring the BSU is planning on hosting a Black Table Talk for students to gather and discuss topics on mental health and give advice about life, relationships, and school.

These acts of reflection, study, and building community are not confined to a single week or month, nor are they confined to the efforts of individuals. It is a constant process that requires all efforts—large and small—if there is any hope of bringing about a more just and equitable society. The past is gone but never forgotten and the present is ever fleeting, but the future is filled with endless possibilities.

Shoshanna Weinberger: Crafting Identity and History Through Art PAUL SACCO

Shoshanna Weinberger is a distinguished Afro-Caribbean artist known for her thought provoking and intricate works depicting marginalized bodies and human archetypes. In her latest exhibition "Black, White, & Gold," currently on view at the WCC Art Gallery

Weinberger connects history with music, literature, and anthropology. History is a major influence in her art. She references Columbus and the arrival of early explorers to the New World. What is interesting, she says, is "How they came to the new world and they dissected and recorded plant life, and also how they recorded people. Also, how they kind of created this idea and undertone of mythos and otherness."

grid of paintings with subtle differences and includes one starkly different inverted piece. "All the works you see here are basically deformed and dissected figures," she says. The inverted painting symbolizes the difficulty of embodying dual identities and could be symbolic of the artist herself. "When I'm in Jamaica, I'm not Jamaican enough and when I'm American, I'm sort of exoticized or questioned," she says.

Weinberger also has public commissions for the world to see. Her art was exhibited at New York's Penn Station, and is now in the new Terminal A at the Newark airport, which is going to be up for many years to come. For these commissions, Weinberger recreated her art in digital form. "It's just really

In 2014, Weinberger received the Joan Mitchell Fellowship award, which allowed her to have a residency for three months at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans. It was there the idea for her "Invisible Visibility" series was created, which can now be seen in the campus gallery. That award changed the course of her career, allowing her to think and become more free as an artist.

When she's not in her studio,

Weinberger works as an adjunct professor teaching the next generation of artists at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. Weinberger's advice to emerging artists is to "allow yourself to fail and allow yourself to learn from yourself. What I say to students is don't think of the end product, just make." Weinberger is certain that making mistakes can create fantastic art.

The exhibition continues through April 6th in the gallery

of the Hankin Academic Arts Building. If you'd like to learn more about the artist, Weinberger will be hosting an artist talk at 4 P.M. on April 21st in the Academic Arts Building in room 406. The talk promises an insightful exploration of her creative process and the stories behind her striking pieces. Meanwhile, if you would like to learn more about the artist, visit her website at www.Shoshanna.info.

"The interdisciplinary approach helped highlight the fact that happiness is a sum total of many different factors. We often forget that."

Dr. Mira Sakrajda, WCC Honors Professor

Identity is another prominent theme in Weinberger's works. One artwork on display, titled "Out of Many One," is a

wonderful to be engaged in the community and allow the community to see my visual voice," Weinberger said.



Shoshanna Weinberger poses with her "Fragments of Perception" which was created through floral influences from her grandmother's backyard. Photo by Paul Sacco

Unleashing Creativity: *Ink* Calls for Student Voices

SORELLE MARSH

Ink Magazine is a literary and arts journal at WCC that published its latest edition in the Fall 2023 semester. It is a student-led publication that is produced by the Creative Writing Club with advisor guidance. This magazine offers a display of the different talents of the student body as well as its sense of community.

Professor of English Christine Timm, who previously helmed the role of senior editor and club advisor, laid the groundwork for *Ink* by working alongside a faculty editorial board to sift through submissions and bring the magazine to life. The unforeseen challenges of the COVID pandemic and subsequent lockdowns had put a temporary halt to its production. However, the return to in-person instruction breathed new life into the Creative Writing Club and, as a result, *Ink Magazine* was re-born.

The Creative Writing Club members stepped into the roles of editors and have taken on the responsibility of managing submissions and selections. "This experience gives them a valuable insight into the world of publishing," said Shinelle Espailat, Instructor of English and coordinator of the *Ink Journal*. Espailat was quick to point out that the hands-on experience that students have

with such a project is key. One of the most positive things about *Ink* has been that it has allowed for the writing and artistic prowess of the entire student body to be eligible for acceptance. "Seeing their work in print is tangible proof of publication that they can share with family and friends. I think it builds confidence and reminds us all of the power of art," said Espailat.

This semester will culminate

in a joint publication/reading event, in which the contributors will have the opportunity to read from their work that has been published and speak to the artistic process in preparing the work. "Knowing that this work will continue to exist, long after the students have graduated, provides a sense of legacy; the contributors have left their mark on the campus community," said Espailat.

Producing *Ink* is not without

its challenges—primarily time demands. To release an edition each semester, the process from

the call for submissions to final printing requires swift action and meticulous planning.

"Seeing their work in print is tangible proof of publication that they can share with family and friends. I think it builds confidence and reminds us all of the power of Art."

Shinelle Espailat, Coordinator of Ink



Students can submit their work to be considered for publication until March 1st.

Photo by Dani Colon

Espailat explains that it's a pretty tight turnaround, and it can be difficult to work around everyone's schedules to get it done. It cannot all be done during club meetings as it requires a fair amount of coordination of time.

Ink is currently open to submissions from students across all WCC campuses. There's no theme for the upcoming edition, which opens up endless possibilities for creativity, thereby inviting students to share their unique perspectives and stories. "Write what you know, write what you love, write the truths that only you can tell, the way that only you can tell them," Espailat said. Students interested in seeing their work featured in the next edition of *Ink* are encouraged to seize this moment and submit their work by March 1st to abisa55883@my.sunywcc.edu.

Feeling Overwhelmed? Try Art Therapy

ANYA DUTOVA

As students we face an enormous amount of stress due to school work, jobs, and other responsibilities.. Art therapy can help you to feel better. Art therapy is a type of psychotherapy that involves expressing your emotions and channeling your energy into something creative like painting, drawing, or modeling. Multiple techniques can be used in art therapy, such as collage coloring, doodling and scribbling, drawing, finger painting, photography, and sculpting.

There are multiple benefits of trying art therapy. Free self-expression, mental health improvement, and an increase in the quality of interpersonal relationships will be some of the beneficial results. The purpose of art therapy is to recover and feel better due to artistic expression. It is a stop from work on a computer, or phone. As the speed of everything in the virtual world can be anxiety-inducing, by practicing art therapy we are creative in real life. All we need is ourselves and the tools for painting, modeling, or any other technique.

Moreover, some research says that art therapy has the power to increase one's

self-esteem and self-expression. Hada Zorrilla, a WCC Student who did research about art

any craft for it to be therapeutic. Art therapy is not a place to be formal or competitive. It's personal. You just enjoy it and utilize it to the best of your capability in order to work

physical body and mental state. It can be a secondary language, many people do not know how to say how they feel or they just don't want to. Art therapy may make it easier to create or engage with one's emotions... It can help with loneliness and depression."

The mental health department hosts art therapy events where you can release your feelings through art and its different mediums. Alyssa Sousa, who is a therapist on campus, talks about the purpose of art therapy sessions: "Being creative in any form can be therapeutic

and healing. Art making specifically is therapeutic because sometimes it can be difficult to put our thoughts and feelings into words. Art therapy can provide another outlet of self-expression when words are difficult to find. There is also no experience in art-making necessary to engage in art therapy and no right or wrong. Art therapy is more about the process than the final product." Art therapy has a lot of benefits and everyone can find something soothing in it. It is never too late to try art therapy to ease your stress.

"Being creative in any form can be therapeutic and healing."

Alyssa Sousa, Art Therapist

therapy, says "According to the American Art Therapy Association (AATA), art therapy reduces anxiety and mood disorders common to military personnel with PTSD. Reducing behaviors that interfere with emotional and cognitive functioning; Externalizing, verbalizing, and resolving memories of traumatic events; Reactivating positive emotions, self-worth, and self-esteem."

Zorrilla emphasizes how therapeutic art is: "It's healing. And it is different for everyone, it allows you to use any form of medium or craft to conceptualize your emotions on a canvas, paper, or other media. You don't have to be good in

through your own mental obstacles. It can reduce stress and has a positive effect on the



Art therapy can help you deal with stress and anxiety.

Photo by Jackson Byrnes

Collegium's 20th Anniversary: Celebrating Two Decades of Lifelong Learning

MICHELLE GRISALES

In April 2024, the Collegium for Lifelong Learning program at Westchester Community College will celebrate two decades of expanding educational opportunities for retired seniors who seek intellectual and social stimulation. Collegium is a member organization open to all, but the majority of its participants are drawn from the retirement community of Westchester County. Courses are offered in three sessions: Spring (six weeks starting in April), Fall (six weeks starting in October), and Winter (four weeks starting in January).

The Collegium program offers a unique experience different from the dynamic of a usual college class, according to Patricia Roth, Collegium's

Vice Chair of Curriculum. She says classes represent a "collaborative effort" between the members and teachers. Collegium instructors are not restricted to their professional background, but can focus on "exploring different ideas... what they love, what their passion is."

Collegium's Board Chair, Clare Ahern, is fond of telling how it all started back in 2000 with one senior, Edith Landau Litt, who "wanted to keep her mind active as she got older." Ahern tells of their memorable first open house when twenty people were expected to be in attendance. To their astonishment, eighty came! This turnout made it clear there was a community that needed this program, says Ahern.

Ahern, Roth and Marcia Gellert, Vice Chair of Administration,



Meg Bussert, formerly a Broadway actress, teaches her course *Bringing the Written Word to Life: Off the Page, Into the Room* to Collegium students. Photo by Michelle Grisales

organize Collegium's courses, schedules, and teachers, amongst many other duties. Utopian Literature, Women's Role in Islamic Culture, and Native American Literature are only a few of the educational opportunities Collegium provides. The Spring Program will offer six classes on each of two days, Wednesday and Friday. Members select one of these days and sign up for three of the courses. Doors open at 9am and the last classes end between 2pm and 3pm. According to Roth, what makes the Collegium program unique is what happens during their time in between classes when members have the opportunity to build relationships with their peers. Collegium has been "a savior of my retirement," she says. "The socialization, the

people that I've met, the very interest people have, [because] sharing that at this age is very important."

Collegium members form a family from different backgrounds who are seeking interaction with fellow retirees, according to Ahern. "The members are so excited to be here. Some of them may not talk to anybody the whole day [until] they come here and they find friends," she says.

Members attending the courses during the Winter 2024 session told The Viking News what Collegium means to them. Sue Brownie, who both attends Collegium and facilitates a buffet-style course called *A La Carte*, in which a different topic is offered each week, expressed deep love for Collegium because "it keeps you learning something new." Another member, Amber Cheng, comments, "You have faculty members who are really committed to education and sharing because all of them are volunteers and love what they do." Cheng highlights that Collegium is completely volunteer-based when it comes to the participation of the

teachers. Those who volunteer at the program find happiness in educating members about subjects they are passionate about, she says.

Collegium faced significant challenges when the pandemic struck in 2020. Luckily, they adapted to the circumstances and held their courses online. Their 20th anniversary symbolizes a new year of potential re-growth. Collegium's goal is to get back to where they once were prior to the pandemic. "We have got to get the word out that we are still here. We are still working," Ahern says. Ahern encourages anyone interested to join their program. If you know of a loved one, a friend, or a family member who could benefit, share this opportunity with them to enhance their mind at Collegium. The Spring session begins the first week of April, with registration starting on Monday March 4 at 9am. Further information about Collegium can be found on their website www.sunyccc.edu/collegium or by calling 914-606-6748.



Professor Casey Ellis discusses *Aldous Huxley* in his *Utopian Literature* course. Photo by Michelle Grisales

Students Compete in Stock Market Contest

LAMYAA HAMID OF PHILOSOPHIA

On October 25, 2023, the Philosophia Honors Society launched the stock market contest, collaborating with the Finance Investment and Accounting clubs. Students joined a stock market simulation and competed to see who would be able to gain the largest profit in

a period of three months. In the first meeting, Professor Rick Hyland, who teaches business classes, discussed different aspects of the stock market with the students. He gave students different tips and left everyone with a great introduction to the world of investing.

On February 7th, the group finally met to conclude the contest and determine the top winners. The top three investors were Cesar Plascencia, Kevin Torres, and Abigail Guzman, who each won a gift card. During the event, a raffle was held and students Carlos Ortiz and Isha Singh each won a book on the stock market.

Professor Steven Han, the advisor of the Investment and Accounting clubs, attended the event and gave insights into the world of investing. This contest taught a lot of students the importance of investing and the importance of being wise in our financial decisions. "You don't have to be aggressive with your investing," Professor Han said. He explained that you don't have to go and do something spectacular. Even the simplest actions, as long as they are smart and they are well placed, can help you in the long run.



The winners of this year's Stock Market Contest learned the value of investing and making wise financial decisions. Photo by Julianna Soares De Almeida

Join The Debate

Contact: LOCON01371@mv.sunyccc.edu

WED 11-1

Classroom Building Room 203

POLITICS CLUB

THE VIKING NEWS

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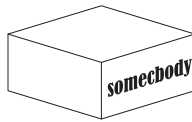

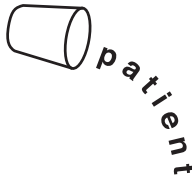
FEBRUARY WORD SEARCH



- BOUQUET
- LOVERS
- COUPLES
- VALENTINE
- ROMANCE
- BOX OF CHOCOLATES
- HEARTBEAT
- LOVE POEM
- FRIENDSHIP
- ROSES
- SWANS
- CUPID
- EROS

Word Plexers

Some common words and phrases are encoded in these plexers.
Can you tell what they are?

	MbYehWiOnRdK	FRIEND standing FRIEND MIS
	INJURY + INSULT	Sympho...
	Taste BAD	DRESSED KILL KILL

Sudoku

			8	1	4			
		4	7	3	5			
	1	8	9	2	6	5	7	4
	8		1				6	
	3	1	4		9			8
	6							9
		7			2			
		6	5	9			4	
				4		9		2

Answers on VikingNews.org

A Defense of Donald Trump

LUKE O'CONNELL

Like him or not, Donald Trump has shaped the political discourse in the United States over the past eight years. Some people want you to believe that he was a terrible president, but the record suggests otherwise.

For example, in 2018, he signed the First Step Act into law, one of the most significant criminal justice reform laws in the history of the United States. This law has made sentencing practices fairer, reunited families, increased funding for rehabilitation programs in federal prisons, lowered recidivism rates, and more. Two years later, he launched Operation Warp Speed, which made COVID vaccines available in record time. In the same year, he signed the Great American Outdoors Act into law, the largest investment in public lands in the history of the United States.

His foreign policy achievements are also noteworthy. U.S. relations with Taiwan improved considerably during his presidency. The Trump administration sent a little over \$18B worth of weapons to Taiwan over the span of four years, \$4B more than the Obama administration sent to Taiwan over the span of eight years. Taiwan is now safer because of Trump. In addition, the Trump administration helped normalize relations between Israel and the UAE, Sudan, Morocco, and Bahrain. ISIS lost almost all of its territory on his

watch, and, as a result of the Soleimani assassination in 2020, Iran lost its hold on Syria and Iraq. His tough talk on NATO helped strengthen the alliance, as the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg acknowledged in 2019.

Does this convince you that his presidency was not terrible? I hope so.

A Critique of Donald Trump

PAUL SACCO

The spotlight on American politics has always been bright, but nothing like we have seen in the past prior to the 2016 election. Donald Trump has been at the center of it all, making the United States more like a reality show than a democracy. Trump's policies and actions have created a divided society and have pitted the political parties against each other, making it very difficult for them to come to any sort of agreement.

In April of 2020, he weakened Obama-era limits on planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions from power plants,

cars, and trucks. He issued his new vehicle emissions standards, which are projected to result in an additional billion tons of carbon dioxide. President Trump also removed protections for more than half of the nation's wetlands. The Trump administration's actions were estimated to significantly increase greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade, which in turn could lead to thousands of extra deaths from poor air quality.

In May 2018, President Trump withdrew from the 2015 Nuclear Deal with Iran without any evidence that Iran was violating the deal. In a speech to the United Nations, Trump said the deal was an "embarrassment" and "one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into." This decision pushed the tensions with Iran to a point never seen before.

Other than these instances Trump is the first modern president to leave the presidency with fewer jobs in the U.S. than when he started. He's also had thousands of documented false statements and disproven or questionable claims. Lastly, Trump is the only U.S. President to be impeached twice. The Trump presidency has left an indelible mark on American politics, and not for the better. As the nation moves forward, the legacy of the Trump era will be to serve as a sober reminder of the importance of upholding democratic principles, striving for bipartisan cooperation, and critically evaluating the impacts of executive decisions on both domestic and global affairs.



As opinions oscillate between acclaim and criticism, the legacy of Donald Trump's presidency continues to stir robust debate and redefine party lines. Graphic by Sorelle Marsh

5 Must-See Black History Movies

MARYGRACE ORFANELLA

Filled with adversity, triumph, history, and heroes.

The Woman King (2022)

The Hate U Give (2018)

Respect (2021)

A Raisin in the Sun (1961)

Black Panther (2018)

Make yourselves comfortable...but not at WCC!

PAUL SACCO

How many of you have ever left class with a sore back? I have, many times, and I'm guessing that this is not unique to myself but shared by many students. Many classrooms here at WCC are stuck in the past. We have become accustomed to those 1970s-era wrap-around desks that are possibly some of the most uncomfortable chairs ever made. An hour and fifteen minute class is hard enough, but for the students that have the two-hour and fifty-minute classes, sitting down becomes a grueling task. Students are not "one size fits all." We are a diverse group of individuals and each has different needs.

In the library, it doesn't get much better. The wooden chairs, which are more like planks of wood, make it difficult to sit for an extended period to get any work done. There are many days when students—myself

included— just give up because they can't take the discomfort anymore. Is it too much to ask for cushioned chairs or a little back support? Considering the long hours students spend in these environments, investing in more ergonomic seating options could greatly enhance their comfort and—more important—productivity. Providing adjustable chairs or even standing desks could cater to the diverse needs and preferences of the student body, ultimately promoting a more conducive learning environment. Better seating solutions in the library would not only alleviate physical discomfort but also encourage students to utilize the space for longer periods, promoting a culture of learning and study.

Next time you're in class, look up. You'll see a projector which costs probably as much as tuition. Take a look at the

brand-new desktops provided for the teachers. Then, look down and inspect your outdated and uncomfortable desk. It's time for the school to prioritize student comfort and well-being by updating the classroom furniture to align with modern learning standards. Additionally, modernizing classroom furniture demonstrates a commitment to staying current with educational best practices and ensures that students have access to the resources they need to succeed in their academic pursuits.

Addressing the issue of uncomfortable seating extends beyond physical comfort to impact student morale and overall satisfaction with the learning environment. Discomfort and distraction caused by outdated furniture can detract from students' ability to focus and engage. The

National Library of Medicine reported that 'acute bouts of uninterrupted sitting have been associated with discomfort and fatigue in adult populations.'

The report concluded with strong evidence long-term exposure to high amounts of sedentary behavior significantly increases the risk of all-cause mortality. New

physical comfort but also an investment in enhancing the overall educational experience for students. Students at WCC should have more options of seating to choose from. Whether it be a standing desk, adjustable seating, or a little more cushion. Making these changes will result in a better learning environment, a boost

"We have become accustomed to these 1970s era wrap-around desks that are possibly some of the most uncomfortable chairs ever made."

Paul Sacco

seating options will promote proper posture alleviating future pains and problems. Proper posture can promote confidence and focus as well. Investing in ergonomic seating options is not only a matter of

in student morale, and an overall excitement to come to class.

Facing Difficult Challenges in College? Here's How Your Peers Are Handling Them

MICHELLE GRISALES

Despite the popular and glamorized aspect of college experiences portrayed in films and television, there are many challenges students face trying to juggle their responsibilities. The biggest obstacle students

can't manage it all. Imperati personally utilizes a "to-do list" to keep track of what she needs to get done.

Sofia Cedeno, a freshman at WCC says there are "distractions in college and it is really up to one to stay focused." Similarly, Justin Basdeo, a sophomore

obstacles by learning what works best for them and by using the resources offered at the college. For example, both Cedeno and Imperati take advantage of their professors' office hours to seek help. Imperati says, "I use a lot of the teachers' office hours. You get a lot more one-on-

"Set your priorities straight," she says. Alvarez explains that prioritizing school work above other things is reflected in her grades as well. Additionally, Alvarez participates in WCC Student Involvement activities alongside her friends, which helps her "relax and de-stress."

and schedule appointments if needed. Additionally, WCC offers online and in-person scheduling with tutors through the Academic Support Center. Students can also contact Academic Counseling for help. Check out their page on the following website for more information www.sunywcc.edu/student-services/counseling/.

Personally, I use my professors' office hours and communicate through email regarding my assignments. Currently I take five courses, work part-time, and write for The Viking News. I can be forgetful, so to manage it all, I try to keep track of what I need to get done through my calendar and journal.

Life is difficult and students struggle to balance their responsibilities alongside school work. It is essential to find strategies best suited for each individual to make their school life easier. The results will match the effort you put into it.

Professors at WCC post their office hours and contact information on their syllabus to help students easily reach out



Students at WCC share their struggles with time management.

Photo by Michelle Grisales

face is managing their time effectively. Sam Imperati, a current freshman at WCC, explains time management is a difficulty she faces. "You always see people hanging out and want to hang out but you always have to get stuff done," she says. Imperati faces the temptation we all do of wanting to choose leisurely activities over our laborious and tedious schoolwork but knows she

at WCC, shares the same problem as Imperati and has to sacrifice his own personal time to complete his schoolwork. "I recently missed a haircut because I didn't have time management," he says. Basdeo feels he has grown in his two years at WCC by having to adapt to make his life work.

Students rise above their

one time with the teacher and get to understand better." Cedeno prefers speaking to her professors and feels more comfortable because she knows them.

Every student sets different boundaries for themselves. "It is a lot smarter to plan things out, to know when you are going to do what," according to student Genesis Alvarez.



Student struggling with challenges unrelated to academics can contact Student Support Services for help.

Photo by Evens Fleurinord

5 Tips for Looking Queer **RAY KATZ**

Whether you have just come out or have been out for years, or even if you're in the closet, you may want to signal to other queer people that you're queer. Or maybe you don't, and that's okay too. But when I first came out and I looked online for how to dress more queer, almost all of the articles said, "Wear rainbows!" "Get a lavender tattoo!" "Get your septum pierced!" "Dye your hair!" And while as an adult I have dyed

rainbows. Depending on how you style your fashion choices,

you can signal to other people at a glance that you're queer. So here are my top five accessories to signal to other queer people that you are queer:

1. Funky earrings

Many AFABs (assigned female at birth) people and AMABs (assigned male at birth) people have had their ears pierced. Even if you haven't, there are

options and in every color and shape under the sun.

2. Multiple rings

If you're wearing more than three rings, I automatically assume you're queer. Bonus points if one or more of your rings has a crystal. Rings are subtle and come in many styles, and quite frankly are a really good discrete option. There are even different ring placements to signal different sexualities: For example, wearing a black ring on the middle finger of the right hand signals asexuality.

3. Pins, stickers, and patches

Pins, stickers, and patches are all great ways to show that you're queer in a more subtle way. Or in a not-so-subtle way. It's really up to you. There are many pieces of queer culture that, to people outside of the community, look unassuming. Lavender sprigs, Judy Garland, pink triangles, scissors, and even covert pride flags are all good options to adorn your clothes or other items.

4. Necklaces

Honestly, this might be my

personal favorite. I love doing necklace stacks, and there are so many fun and funky combinations. I usually do silver chains with different charms on them, but you can also do beaded necklaces. The more the better, really. A majority of my queer friends wear at least three necklaces every day, usually one of them being a crystal.

5. Shoes

There are many stereotypes surrounding queer people and

shoes. For example, I've heard that bisexuals wear Vans or Chuck Taylors and lesbians wear Doc Martens, but what truly makes the difference is how you style them. Wear silly socks with them. Cuff your jeans. Attach chains to your Docs. Change out the shoe laces. Get creative!

All in all, you don't have to wear rainbow suspenders to look queer. In fact, you don't have to "look" queer at all. You are queer enough just by being yourself.

"Lavender sprigs, Judy Garland, pink triangles, scissors, and even covert pride flags are all good options to adorn your clothes or other items."

Ray Katz

hair and tattoos and a septum piercing, it's unfair to expect queer people to get body modifications simply to be able to be recognized by their community. Not to mention that not every queer person has the privilege of being able to wear

lots of great clip-on options. But I have never once seen a person who's wearing weird earrings they've matched to their outfit who weren't queer in some way. Earrings are also versatile - they come in masculine, feminine, and androgynous



There are multiple options for signaling that you're queer.

Photo by Ray Katz

Destigmatizing Community College

RAY KATZ

When I first came to Westchester Community College, I was ashamed to tell people where I went to school. I was scared of their reaction. I had been told my whole life that community college was only for failures, and therefore, by association, I was a failure.

Now I come from a family of high achievers. They all went to four-year schools, and three of my grandmother's children went to Ivy League schools. So the bar was set very high for me from a young age. And to me, at the time, it seemed as

Griffith, a fitness educator at a midwestern college in an interview published in the *Delta Collegiate*.

As someone who is in their second year here at WCC, I can testify that that's wrong. It's all wrong. Every misconception I've ever had about community college, every opinion I've heard about it is just plain wrong. I am eternally grateful that my path of life landed me here. I've had so many amazing opportunities I would have never had otherwise because community college gave me the space to grow as a person

Initiative. The average yearly cost at a community college is, according to the American Association of Community Colleges, 35% of the cost of a four-year school, or about \$9000.

In an interview with the *Delta Collegiate*, Katrina Behm, a student who also transferred from a 4-year school to a community college, said "I think that there is a bad stigma towards community college... rooted in classism." I'm inclined to agree. Despite all the good things community colleges do for their surrounding communities, elitism still prevails. And it is this elitism that causes shame to those who attend community colleges. In an article in *Higher Education Today* Jonathan Turk writes, "Those in the community college sector are no strangers to the myths and misconceptions that lead many students and their families to view community colleges as second-class institutions."

According to Forbes, community college students are 75% more likely to graduate once they transfer to a four-year school. According to the National Census Bureau, those who graduate from community college have better



WCC alum Radames Ocasio wears his WCC hoodie with pride.

Photo by Ray Katz

"I think that there is a bad stigma towards community college rooted in classism."

Katrina Behm, student who transferred to community college from a 4-year institution

though I would never amount to anything. In my high school, they called WCC "thirteenth grade". Essentially, if you came here, you were still in high school. "A lot of students believe they are too good for community college, or they could never attend there because their parents expect better or their peers will make fun of them," said Bradley

and as a student. Before I came here, I was at a different college. But I wasn't ready for it then. WCC has given me the tools I need to feel ready.

Besides all that, community college is a better route to higher education in terms of cost. The average yearly cost at a four-year school is roughly \$26,000, according to the Education Data

employment outcomes and typically earn more than their non-graduate counterparts. Besides providing an affordable education to its students, 2-year schools benefit the town, city or county in which they are located by strengthening

the workforce, providing opportunities to residents for lifelong learning, and in many other ways. It's time to erase the stigma associated with attending community college.

Is Barbie Really a Game Changer?

CAROLINA MARTINS

The year is 2023 and the world has its eyes on Greta Gerwig's new film *Barbie*. Even before its release, opinions were formed and sides had been taken: One side subscribed to the aesthetic and pro-feminist narrative; while the other side was skeptical of how much the self-awareness would break the stereotypes of femininity that Hollywood knows and is comfortable with.

Within the first few minutes of the movie, we are presented with a line of Barbies checking almost every diversity box: there are black, brown, and Asian Barbies; there is a Barbie in a wheelchair, and we even see a Barbie wearing a hijab. *Barbie* curated a world where women could be both girly and girl bosses, and audiences and critics alike found this to be revolutionary. But did

Amidst bubbly introductions, we are introduced to Midge, a doll who was discontinued for being pregnant. Midge isn't as conventionally attractive as the other Barbies, and throughout the film, her appearances on screen consist of her acting awkward. While never directly ostracized, there is a distinct difference between Midge and the other dolls, which perpetuates the viewpoint that pregnancy makes women unattractive.

Another character that showcases stereotypes is *Weird Barbie*. The Barbies are judgmental of her to the point she is pushed to live on the outskirts of town, where her "Weirdhouse" is found atop a hill with literal dark clouds thundering over it. *Weird Barbie* is the embodiment of the tomboy trope: She has an alternative hairstyle, an equally

of *Weird Barbie* reinforce the narrative that tomboys are too masculine to be accepted by the girls, but not masculine enough to be accepted by the boys, leaving them in a limbo of ostracization.

never be accepted by either social group.

The Kens and the men from the *Real World* are also victims of harmful stereotypes. It is still a well-known argument that feminists see men as beneath

and critics alike found *Barbie* to be an uplifting feminist film that is self-aware enough to bypass criticism, a deeper inspection of its characters and how they are represented shines a light on the barely concealed stereotypes that are disguised



A representation of the themes in Gerwig's "*Barbie*" include all things pink and girly.

Graphic by Carolina Martins

"While *Barbie* is a step in the right direction for better feminist representation in media, there is still a long road ahead before feminism is truly well represented onscreen."

Barbie truly crash through glass ceilings and contest the way women and feminism are portrayed on screen?

alternative fashion sense, dark make-up, and a sense of humor packed with sexual innuendos. The depiction and treatment

Allan is in a similar limbo: too effeminate to hang out with the Kens, too masculine to hang out with the Barbies, and his predicament reinforces a similar stereotype – men who do not subscribe to society's notions of masculinity will

women, and *Barbie* does very little to fight this: all of the male characters appear to be half-witted, which pushes the stereotype of radical feminism that women are intellectually superior to men.

Although the crew, audiences,

as punchlines. While *Barbie* is a step in the right direction for better feminist representation in media, there is still a long road ahead before feminism is truly well represented on screen.

WCC Hoops Continue to Struggle: How Academics Affect a Season's Success

JONATHAN CERINI

The men's and women's basketball teams have gone through a shaky 2023-24 regular season. The Vikings have done their best to maintain a below .500 record all year long. These numbers would seem to reflect poorly on the teams causing many students to look down on Vikings basketball.

"On the outside looking in, it looks bad but academics come first," said Westchester Community College's Athletic Director, Mike Belfiore. "I would rather lose every single game and have the ones who have earned the right to be out there than have students who are uninterested in being students."

Belfiore believes the core issue is keeping the athletes engaged in their schoolwork.

"A good portion of our students didn't meet the requirements for academic eligibility to play this semester," Belfiore said.

The NJCAA recently changed these standards to be more friendly to the incoming freshmen who are adapting to college life. Still, the teams remain frustrated as they lose games due to a low roster count, resulting in little support off the bench. Belfiore has made suggestions and attempts to better this situation by scaling

back on practice and games to give students more hours and energy to focus on their classes.



Some schools have canceled games with the Lady Vikings because of their short-handed lineup.

Photo by Dani Colon

"Our hope is that they'll learn from these challenges and that they can make adjustments so

they can get back in the fall. We have a big emphasis about recruiting for next semester,"

wanted to make, or one we ever thought we would have to make," Belfiore said.

Belfiore said.

Nonetheless, Belfiore is very impressed with both team's ability to persevere against certain schools of higher ranks. The men's and women's basketball teams look to the future in hopes that all teammates can participate and win for their teams while doing their best in class at the same time. Belfiore believes the only way to fix this issue is the willingness to change habits with time management and attendance to help the team and the students move forward.

"A lot of it is up to the student, but I'd rather they learn that lesson now," Belfiore said.

"If we would've had a full team at the beginning of the spring semester we would have a winning record, no question. The talent is better than any group we've had."

Mike Belfiore, Director of Athletics

Belfiore said.

The lack of success has nothing to do with the coaching, chemistry, or external skill and effort. The current performance by the teams is not up to par in comparison to when they would have a full rotation. Belfiore is confident that had the basketball teams been academically eligible, their seasons would be completely different.

"If we would've had a full team at the beginning of the spring semester, we would have a winning record, no question. The talent is better than any group we've had," Belfiore said.

Currently, the women's team has reached a point of relegation as they have been demoted to a club team.

"It wasn't a decision that we

This must be a learning lesson for the school's team, but not a white flag.

"We felt like if we just canceled the season, we would lose their motivation and engagement,"



The Men's Basketball team defeated the number two seed while only playing with seven players.

Photo by Dani Colon

From a Small Studio to Hosting Muhammad Ali Ali History of WCC's Boxing Club

DANI COLON

Before he became WCC's boxing teacher, Nick Delury decided to turn his life around whilst battling homelessness and substance abuse when he turned to boxing. Maurice Sopotato, also known as "kid Sharkey," took Delury under his wing and helped him. He had a studio funded by the state called The Cage. Delury started boxing and was now dedicated to the game.

They went around all over New York as Delury became a competitive boxer. Delury was also very determined to start up his own boxing club but was struggling, so he decided to use his own funds to start up the Westchester Boxing club. Delury then gained popularity and started expanding the Westchester Boxing club in 1996, went back to where it all started in White Plains, and now takes the first floor where the Cage originally was.

Delury has been a gym owner for 30 years now and is recognized in three different countries, is a ref,

and is recognized in the World Boxing Association.

Steve Acunto, who worked

started up boxing classes at WCC as credit courses. Acunto was so famous within the

Community College and help me with some training techniques," said Delury.

week and is open to everyone no matter what their age is and accommodates students if needed.



Nick Delury makes sure each student is prepared for every session.

Photo by Dani Colon

along with Delury, was a professional boxer and even participated in ring demonstrations with Mohamd Ali and Rocky Marciano. Acunto

boxing community, that in 1988, he was inducted in the World Boxing Hall of Fame and then in 1998 into the New Jersey Hall of Fame. Acunto always wanted to give back to the community and made a video of demonstration in the basement of WCC's Physical Education Building.

"Steve called Mohamad Ali up and said, 'Champ, I want you to come up here to Westchester

In 2018, Acunto passed away and the WCC boxing club stopped. For years, the boxing room was left alone and the equipment got moldy. Since the boxing club was over, plans were made to tear it down and make a dance studio for students.

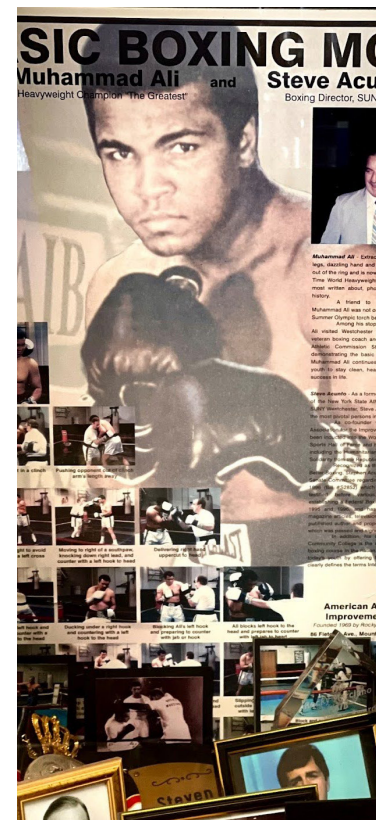
"I was driving past the college one day and something told me to call up the Athletic Department and start the boxing club back up," said Delury.

Delury then took over the boxing club and taught students with a beginners level and an intermediate class. Delury also offers job opportunities to advanced students at his personal gym.

"Boxing isn't only about hurting each other, it's just like playing chess," said Delury.

Delury hopes to keep WCC's boxing club alive as he one day hopes to start up a team and have different schools within the Hudson region to box against. He also hopes to have an exhibition where students can face each other fairly. In addition, Delury teaches private one on one lessons during any day of the

"My future vision for the club is to keep the memory of Steve Acunto alive," said Delury.



Photos of Mohamad Ali at WCC are displayed within the Physical Education Building

Photo by Dani Colon

"Boxing isn't only about hurting each other, it's just like playing chess."

Nick Delury, WCC Boxing Teacher

EDITOR'S PREDICTIONS

Men's baseball
lineup predictions

- 1: #14 Tommy Poggi 2B
- 2: #25 Marc Stockhausen 3B
- 3: #4 Gavin Carlucci RF
- 4: #34 AJ Falciglia 1B
- 5: #2 Nick Vendola SS

Predictions for
highest batting
average

- 1: Tommy Poggi +.420
- 2: Marc Stockhausen .417
- 3: Gavin Carlucci .380

Baseball season record
Predictions

44-7 Top 10 NJCAA
D2

Predictions
Regional 15
players of the
year/MVP
Tommy Poggi
Or
Marc
Stockhausen

Graphic by Dani
Colon

