

The Viking News

Fall 2020 Issue 1 September 16

Valhalla, NY

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U.S. Colleges Reverse Course on School Re-openings Due to COVID Spikes



by Emily Moriarty & Mikali-Elon Wallace

(source // medium.com)

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A number of American colleges and universities have been forced to walk back their decision to re-open campuses to in-person learning this fall. The reason: COVID outbreaks following the re-openings. Responses have ranged from postponement of openings to total reversal in favor of remote learning.

Notre Dame University began the Fall semester early and was already holding in-person classes when it abruptly changed course in mid-August, sending students packing for two weeks. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill sent students home around the same time.

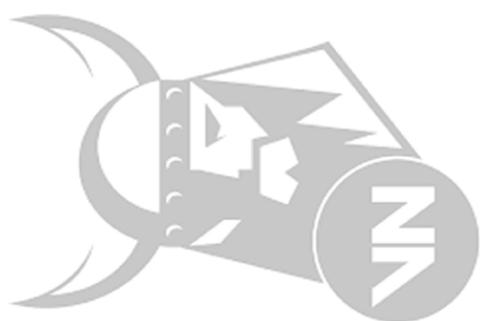
The university announced on its website on August 17 that “all undergraduate in-person instruction will shift to remote learning.”

Failure of students to obey school orders not to congregate for parties has been blamed for a number of COVID outbreaks. Dozens of students have been the target of disciplinary actions by the schools. Michigan State University responded to these reports with a decision to switch to full remote learning. A number of these reports came from universities such as Georgia Tech, the University of Alabama, University of Dayton, University of Miami, Radford University, North

Carolina State, and others.

The Trump administration has been pressuring schools to re-open since July. However, the universities that decided to re-open their campuses have come under attack. Criticism has ranged from poor judgment to a deliberate attempt to mislead students in order to save tuition losses from under-enrollment. According to an article in the New York Times on August 24, 2020, “The professors Julia Marcus and Jessica Gold predicted this more than a month ago in *The Atlantic* [magazine]: ‘Students will get infected, and universities will rebuke them for it; campuses will close, and students will be blamed for it.’” <https://nytimes.com/32gEhtQ>

WCC decided early to follow the route of remote learning. On June 19, 2020, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Vanessa Morest announced this to the faculty. “Even as the ‘curve flattens’ in Westchester County,” wrote provost Morest, “we find ourselves confronted with a nearly impossible logistical challenge to conduct our classes in person, on campus, while maintaining social distancing and cleaning protocols. It is therefore in the best interest of our students and our faculty to enter into the fall semester prepared and confident in our ability to teach and learn from a distance.”



NEWS

Tuition Hike for Spring 2021

by Emily Moriarty, Vanessa Gonçalves,
Mikali-Elon Wallace

On September 3 the college's Board of Trustees announced that there would be an increase in tuition for next semester. Starting in January of 2021, tuition will increase by 3.3% for both full-time students and part-time students. This amounts to an increase of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) for a full schedule of 12 credits, or seven dollars (\$7.00) per credit for a part-time schedule.

At the same time, the equipment utilization fee that each student pays, which is currently set at fifty dollars (\$50.00),

will change to a sliding fee of twelve dollars per credit, up to a limit of twelve (12) credits. All increases will apply only to resident students. The tuition for non-resident students will remain the same.

Aside from any other changes in lab and other fees, this means that a full 12-credit load for a WCC resident student will change from \$2340.00 in the current Fall semester to \$2509.00 next Spring, an increase of 6.7%.

Smart Arts Issues Fall Cultural Events Schedule

September

September 1

POETS & WRITERS: BEAT POETRY & JAZZ (1st edition)

(Access: Currently Available & On Demand)

POETS & WRITERS: BEAT POETRY & JAZZ (2nd edition)

(Access: Currently Available & On Demand)

SALZBURG MARIONETTE THEATRE: The Sound of Music

(Access: September 1 at 12:01 am — September 30 at 11:59 pm)

September 15

BALLET FOLKLÓRICO DE SINALOA

(Access: September 15 at 12:01 am — September 30 at 11:59 pm)

October

October 1

SALZBURG MARIONETTE THEATRE: Hansel and Gretel

(Access: October 1 at 12:01 am — October 31 at 11:59 pm)

October 15

CIRQUETACULAR ENTERTAINMENT: Art of Cirque

(Access: October 15 at 12:01 am — October 31 at 11:59 pm)

Contact the WCC Smart Arts department for further information.

Poet to Visit Campus Via Zoom Presentation

by Vanessa Gonçalves

Poet, editor, and podcast co-host Franny Choi will visit the campus via Zoom next month in a live presentation called "A Reading and Conversation with Poet Franny Choi." Choi will read selections from her two poetry collections, *Soft Science* and *Floating, Brilliant, Gone*. The event is sponsored by the WCC Humanities Institute and will take place Tuesday, October 13 11:30am-12:30pm. Classes are invited. For Zoom invitation info, contact Prof. Heather Ostman at heather.ostman@sunywcc.edu.

Deadline Looming For Online Voter Registration

by Mikali-Elon Wallace

The deadline to register online to vote in New York State is Friday, October 9. In order to use the state's online voter registration system, you will need a NY state driver's license, permit, or non-driver ID issued by the DMV, AND a Social Security number. Also, the address on the license or ID must match the district where you are registering to vote. If you don't have a state-issued ID, or if you would rather register at a different address, you can still register to vote by mail. The registration form is available online to print out and mail in.

Call for Proposals For Social Justice Day

by Mikali-Elon Wallace

Social Justice Day is a regularly scheduled fall event at WCC, in which students, faculty, and staff meet for presentations and discussions about social imbalances and injustices. The Faculty Senate Diversity Committee has issued a call for proposals for presentations and discussion topics for this semester's event, scheduled for Tuesday, October 27. All segments of the campus— faculty, administrators, staff, and students (faculty mentor required), clubs and organizations— are all welcome to submit proposals. Suggested topics might include: Black Lives Matter, voting rights, healthcare, immigration, gun violence, or economic/racial/ethnic/gender inequality.

Proposals should include the topic, length of presentation, and the desired schedule time, and may be sent to Prof. Ekta Bhatia at ekta.bhatia@sunywcc.edu.

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(source // Pamela Morales)

Student Spotlight: Pamela Morales

by Vanessa Gonçalves

Returning WCC student Pamela Morales has dreams of success, but she is no dreamer. She is a go-getter, a problem solver, a helper, and a leader. She's had to be these things to overcome the obstacles that life always seems to throw in the path to success.

Born to a Dominican immigrant family, she became the family pioneer, being the first generation to go to college. It wasn't easy. Her first attempt at a degree at Borough of Manhattan Community College didn't go as planned and she failed out. She didn't give up, however, and decided to take a chance at Westchester Community College. "I was unsure," she says, but ultimately found the environment here friendly and welcoming.

"They guided me through the process of going back to school," she says, "while also inspiring me to be my best, authentic self in order to succeed." This inspiration led her to get involved on campus right away, during her first semester. She volunteered at a local food bank and at an animal shelter. She credits the organizer of these opportunities, Dana Hirsch of the Department of Student Involvement, with getting her involved in ever more responsible activities. "She inspired me to apply to be an Alternative Spring Break Leader." In that role, she organized a school trip to Rhode Island to raise awareness about the trash negatively affecting our ecosystems.

"A group of twelve students and

I cleaned up shores and rivers, coming together with the same objective of making a difference in the world."

Then came the COVID crisis. But that didn't stop Morales from further involvement, becoming one of this year's Orientation Leaders (OLs). "Despite the challenges and obstacles, my fellow OLs and I worked hard to provide new and transfer students the warm welcome they deserved, despite its being virtual." Asked to describe herself, Morales tries to cover all the bases of a person with obviously wide-ranging interests. "I'm a skater, artist, environmentalist, and human rights activist," she says.

What's next for this high achiever? "After WCC," she says, "I'm hoping to transfer to Baruch College to earn my Bachelor's in Marketing. In five years, I'd hope to see myself eating seafood on a beach somewhere. But professionally, I'd hope to be happily employed as a Marketing Director at a cool company or school." She has messages for both her mother and her fellow students: "I just want to make my mom proud and show her that all her hard work to give me this easy life is appreciated beyond words," she says. "Something I want my WCC community to know," she continues, "is that I'm so proud of everyone for staying strong and focused throughout these difficult times! Each one of you inspires me in your own way! I'm glad to be a part of this wonderful, beautiful community!"



(source // WCC Office of Student Involvement)

Not Your Ordinary Orientation

"Becoming an Orientation Leader really helped break down that wall I usually put up when I'm around others. I can't even express my gratitude for the friendships I've formed through the program."

- Raphael Curaming, Orientation Leader

"DON'T IGNORE YOUR OWN POTENTIAL" - Junay Burnett, Orientation Leader

"In such unprecedented times like these - in the midst of a crisis - the people I could truly rely on were my fellow orientation leaders. No obstacle too high, or challenge too provoking, we climbed them together and lived up to any challenges that were presented to us. Being an orientation leader made me realize that we are all "Viking strong!"

- Bianca Braun, Orientation Leader



Continued on page 6...

SATIRE

The Scallion

The Real Fake News

That's Not Remotely Funny!

by Kid Glover



(source // freepik.com)

Remote learning is no day at the beach, but if you think you have it bad, listen to this.

It's about my boy Fargo. Fargo's a great kid, but he gets in trouble a lot, or at least he used to until this month. In high school he spent so many days outside the principal's office that the secretary started adoption proceedings. No, that's just a joke. (Practicing my routines--I wanna be a stand-up.)

Anyway, Fargo just managed to squeak by high school, but that wasn't the end of the trouble. He knocked around a couple of years. He'd go to a bar, "just to have some fun," as he'd say, but somehow end up in a fight. He'd fight over a girl, or over a game, or over who has the harder job: a prisoner on a chain gang or Melania Trump. (No, that's another joke.) He got into more fights than my parents. (Sorry, Mom, but I need to practice.)

Fargo's last fight landed him in jail. It was only overnight, but I guess that was enough. Fargo decided to join the rest of us in pursuing the American Dream: college education, career, marriage, kids, house, mortgage, divorce. (OK, I'll stop.) He decided to enroll in a community college. This one, in fact.

So Fargo is starting his college education this semester. Dope idea but the timing sucks. I called him last night to see how things were going.

"They're going terrible, man."

"Problems with Zoom? Cause sometimes—"

"No, Zoom's fine."

"Teachers?"

"No, the profs are fine, too."

"Too much work? I heard—"

"I'm keepin' up."

"Then what's the trouble?"

"My mom."

I forgot to tell you Fargo lives with his mom. I've never actually seen her because she never leaves the house. I've never heard him even mention her till last night. That's when he told me the following bizarre story. I'll let him tell it in his own words:

It all started the first day of class. I was in my room with my laptop. I was in the waiting room waiting to be let in by the professor when I heard a knock on my door. It was my mom.

"Fargo, what are you doing home! Why aren't you in school?"

"Ma, I am in school!"

"Don't treat me like a simpleton, Fargo. You're obvious-

ly right here."

"Ma, it's because of COVID."

"Who's he? One of your hoodlum friends, I suppose! Fargo, you promised me you would stay away from that crowd." Then she started to cry. "You promised me you would start school. I thought you were going to change your life around! Now the first day, you're cutting classes!" See, my mom is kind of hazy. She doesn't go out and she never reads the papers. The only TV she watches are soap operas and telenovelas. She has no idea what's going on in the world.

"Bizzy left for school hours ago, and you're still here!" Bizzy is my older brother Bismarck. (Mom's from North Dakota. She named her kids for the two biggest cities there.) Bismarck hasn't been to school in five years. He tells mom he's going to school, then hangs out with his girlfriend every day.

"Mom we're in the middle of a pandemic!" She burst in the door. I was at my laptop.

"Don't lie to me! So this is how you change your life around? Video games! Just like always! What's this one? The one about that little slut Zelda?" Her voice was getting louder. "Or is it the one where they teach you how to steal cars?"

"Ma, I haven't played those since I was twelve. And stop yelling! I'm in class."

"Class, my ass!" (My mom only talks like that when she's really upset. When my dad left us, Bismarck and I learned a lot of new words.) She came around to see the laptop screen.

"Oh my God, you're watching porn! While I'm in the room!"

"Ma, I don't watch porn!" (That was a lie, of course, but it wasn't the right time for confessions.) "This is school! This is my course!"

"A course in what? How to lie to your mother? Look at that nasty woman. If that skirt were any shorter you could see her—"

"Ma, quiet! She's the teacher." Now all this time, the audio was on. I quick turned it off, but it was too late. The professor shut me off. And that was just the first class. See, that's the problem with remote learning. It's not just YOU going to school. It's your family. It's your house. It's your socks on the floor. It's your noises. It's your whole messy life you bring with you to class. It's hard to keep all of that stuff remote in the age of remote learning!! I hear you, Fargo. We all do.

The Viking News

WESTCHESTER
COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S
PREMIER NEWS SOURCE

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Meetings are held at 4:00 PM Monday's
virtually

Short End of the Stick, Long End of the Rope

by Mikali-Elon Wallace

On June 18, I attended my first ever protest in my very own figurative backyard. I live in Co-op City, located in The Bronx. It is the largest co-operative housing development in the United States.

The protest was in The Bronx. I am extremely invested and immensely proud of my roots here in Co-op City; and that love and pride only doubled when I found out a 19 year old girl, a native to NYC, organized a Black Lives Matter march throughout all five sections of the Bronx. Her name is Akira Williams and she was as vibrant and passionate as her name might suggest. In speaking with her I had a realization: the composition of the crowd was (from my observation) 70% women and 30% men. At first, I was proud of my fellow women (because being born to a Jamaican single mother I was used to women rising to the highest occasion.) Then a wave of gloom rushed over me, as I saw signs that spoke to and on George Floyd, Philando Castille, Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Mike Brown, Freddie Gray, Alton Sterling, Walter Scott, Tamir Rice, and countless more. These are lives we have lost, names that are etched in our memories, the names that we are reminded of every time a conversation about the Black Lives Matter movement occurs. Did you notice that I did not name one Black woman?

Though we are the ones marching and organizing, protesting and raising hell, no one is taking us seriously. I, for one, am running out of patience. As a Black woman, I feel as if I have identified a pattern: the erasure of Black women within this movement.

Breonna Taylor, an E.M.T. (emergency medical technician) from Louisville, Ky., was fatally shot while lying in her bed at home by plain-clothes police officers executing a no-knock search warrant. The warrant was for her ex-boyfriend, who incorrectly listed Breonna's address as his own. No body-camera footage of this search warrant was recorded. As of September 15 2020, only one of the officers involved in Breonna's murder, Brett Hankison, has been fired. It has also been 186 days -- six months -- since Taylor was murdered, and Jonathan Mattingly and Myles Cosgrove still serve in the Louisville PD. The officer, sergeant and detective who requested the warrant to Taylor's address have been placed on administrative leave.

Yet her name, and the names of other Black women who have died at the hands of the police, do not sprawl over protest boards as George Floyd's and Trayvon Martin's do. Breonna, from one Black girl trying to make it to one that was making it and taken too soon: we won't stop marching for you. We will demand more than settlements, more than broken promises to hold police accountable for their actions, we will demand deep systemic change. We will demand that Americans recognize that your life, like the lives of all Black women, matters.

Editor's Note: this Op/Ed reflects the personal views of Mikali-Elon Wallace, and not those of the Viking News or the campus as a whole.

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THE VIKING NEWS IS
LOOKING FOR EDITORS,
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The Viking News
Westchester Community College

FEATURES

Not Your Ordinary Orientation

by Vanessa Gonçalves

“I wanted to showcase my leadership skills and it seemed like a great opportunity to get involved on campus with other like-minded individuals. I went from not wanting to show up on camera to taking lead in a lot of what was happening throughout orientation week. I really feel like I blossomed a lot over the summer and the Orientation Leader program allowed me to do that. I think orientation went as well as it could’ve. This was a new normal for all of us and I think it went well considering the circumstances. I would do this experience again as an OC.”

- Gianna Jimenez, Orientation Leader



“I was really nervous simply because I’ve never had to be a part of something so large scale and impactful on the student body before, especially in a virtual setting. But, I put my trust in our team for support and in zoom to not crash my computer at any second, and was so proud we could bring orientation successfully to students as so many colleges didn’t think it was important to do so. I’m really glad we got to facilitate that for our new students and give them an experience that would have equaled their in person orientation to the best of our abilities.”

- Olivia Quinones, Orientation Coordinator

“I became an orientation leader to help get new students accustomed to WCC. My personal development journey was, and still is, rocky, but life is rocky too so it all makes sense! My favorite part of orientation was being able to bond with everyone during orientation. Orientation went smoothly. It was a rough transition to do it online at first, but we got the hang of it in time for the main event. I would love to go through this experience again. I’ve made many new friends and seen so many people change for the better during the program.”

- Christopher Love, Orientation Leader



“I most definitely grew throughout this orientation leader experience. My eyes were opened to different ways of thinking and seeing life. The retreat and connection days were very influential. I cried every single one of those days because I felt a connection to myself and to all of my fellow peers. The actual week of orientation was very rough for me but I would 100% do this OL program again. It provided me an outlet of new friends during the tough times of the pandemic.”

- Yaismin Dominguez, Orientation Leader



Westchester Community College

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Get involved today!

Follow @getinvolvedwcc on IG for how you can start

Workshops with Poet

Roya Marsh by Vanessa Gonçalves

Attention poets and aspiring poets!

A series of poetry workshops conducted by the nationally recognized poet Roya Marsh will be offered by the WCC Humanities Institute in October. Marsh is currently the Poet in Residence at Urban Word NYC. All students, faculty, and staff are invited to take advantage of professional guidance from a practicing poet. Four sessions are scheduled:

Tuesday, October 20
11am-12:15pm

Tuesday, October 27
11am-12:15pm

Friday, October 23,
12:30pm-1:45pm

Friday, October 30,
12:30pm-1:45pm

Roya Marsh is a rising poet whose first book of poems, *dayliGht*, was published earlier this year. In addition, she is a performer and an activist. Her readings of her own works have won awards at poetry slam contests. She is also an activist who self-describes her activities: "...she works feverishly

toward LGBTQIA justice and dismantling white supremacy." Her work has been seen in a number of venues, including NBC, BET, Button Poetry, Write About Now Poetry, Def Jam's All Def Digital, and in Poetry Magazine, Flypaper Magazine, Frontier Poetry, The Village Voice, Nylon, Huff Post, Lexus Verses and Flow, and The BreakBeat Poets Volume 2: Black Girl Magic (Haymarket 2018).

In these Zoom sessions, Marsh will perform her own works and discuss her poems with students. She will also discuss the students' own works. She welcomes inexperienced writers into her workshop sessions.

A sampling of Roya Marsh's work can be found on the Visionary page in this issue of The Viking News (page 8). A profile article will appear in the next issue of The Viking News, scheduled for October 14.

If you are interested in signing up for Roya Marsh's workshop sessions, please contact Professor Heather Ostman at heather.ostman@sunywcc.edu for Zoom invitations.



THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT CELEBRATES

LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 15



Latin American Heritage Month



Westchester Community College

FOR A FULL CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND UPDATES CHECK OUT @GETINVOLVEDWCC ON INSTAGRAM.

Visionary Viking



Roya Marsh is the Poet in Residence at Urban Word NYC. In October she will be in residence at WCC, under the sponsorship of the WCC Humanities Institute, conducting poetry workshop sessions to which all members of the WCC community are invited. (See the news article in this issue with information about these workshops.) This poem is the opening work in her new collection of poems, called *dayliGht*. It is a copyrighted work reprinted here with the permission of the author. For those who wish to read further, *dayliGht* is available for \$11.99 on Amazon.

in broad dayliGht black girls look ghost by Roya Marsh

Carefully, I arrange my disguise. It has been designed not

To stand out...I decide to look like a poor Black woman.

--ASSATA SHAKUR

i'm good with my tongue.
it makes me most visible.
with a shut mouth I'm a good dresser.
a flapping tongue makes me
 sexy
 well learned
 a conquest

my voice is more pronounced than my skin tone
and I need to know why
i track down my ancestry through DNA
i track down someone with my last name
she tell me it's hers
she white
says it's funny how I'm black
i say "ha-ha"

results say I'm here
in history
in old law
in old English

say her great greats
owned my greatest
on this soil.
"wow," she say
and i hold my tongue. tight. between molars.
'til it bloody and useless
'til i can't speak
'til she don't see me
and swallow back the blood i ain't ask for in the first
place



SCAN ME

If you'd like to purchase *Daylight* by Roya Marsh, you can scan the QR code with your device and it will take you to the Amazon Store.