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THE STUDENT VOICE OF LEHMAN COLLEGE

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## NYC's Proposed Financial Plans Put More Costs on CUNY Students



Students on the Lehman campus. Article by Felicha C. Stevens. Photo courtesy of Lehman College. [Page 6]



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# As Demand Grows, Lehman's Supply of Parking Spaces Gets Scarcer

By Deanna Garcia



**An overlook of the Lehman parking lot from the Science Building. Photo by Deanna Garcia.**

Over the last five years, Lehman's enrollment has increased from 12,398 to the current total of 14,787 students, according to its Department of Institutional Advancement, and yet the college's parking lot remains the same inadequate size.

Divided into north and south sections, the lot has 866 total spots, including 17 handicap and 14 reserved. Andrea Pinnock, director of Auxiliary Services, reported that 1,708 parking

permits were distributed to students this semester. "Both the student and regular faculty/staff parking lots are oversold since there are no assigned spaces and parking is available on a first-come, first-served basis," Pinnock said. "This methodology has been used for many years and allows the college to offer parking to more students."

According to Dawn Burgos, director of Campus Activities, there are currently 200 students on the waitlist for the next

available parking permit. To obtain a spot for the whole semester, students must have either paid their tuition in full or have a payment plan. Burgos explained that students have to pay the full rate of \$75 for daytime parking or \$55 for evening parking, which can be done upfront or online.

"The day permit covers a full day every week, while the evening permit only covers 5:15 p.m.," Burgos added. "We're trying to accommodate more

people by adding a day and evening feature. If people come in late, we're able to provide more spaces for those students." She explained that after 5:15 p.m., when most staff and faculty members leave, students are allowed to park in the faculty parking lot.

Some Lehmanites, however, feel that there should be more spots available for everyone.

"There are times, like after 10 o'clock or after certain hours, when it's harder to find a spot," said Jen Begeal, new media manager at BronxNet. "Sometimes I just have to wait for somebody to leave."

Latrica Burton, a junior producer at BronxNet, is relieved to know that

there is parking near her job. Before she started parking in the south lot, Burton used to park her car on the street, which was difficult at times. "It used to be tedious to run out during a show to put more money in the meter," she said. "After I got a ticket, I made it my mission to get a parking pass."

"It's such a lifesaver," said Wayne Townsend, a Lehman senior and journalism major. "There's always a spot." He also observed of Campus Activities, "The permit people are the most efficient at Lehman."

On the other hand, senior Jasmine Ayala feels that there is a lack of information on how to obtain a permit. "This sometimes causes

people to go back and forth without clear information of what has to be done."

Townsend and Ayala both agreed that the parking lot is worth the cost compared to using the meters around campus. "After a while, the meter prices add up," said Townsend.

Some students, however, prefer to find spots around campus, as opposed to in Lehman's parking lot. "It's easier to find spots if you know what days and times you can park in certain areas," said senior Shanese Mullins, a 28-year-old journalism major. "I don't think that I should have to pay for parking when I already pay for tuition."

# For Lehman Students, Higher Minimum Wage Means Cuts in Hours

By Juan A. Santos

"Superiors decided to cut personnel by keeping 3 out of 4 employees who will now have to work more," said Lehman sophomore Ahsanul Hague, when asked how the recent rise in New York State's minimum wage impacted his workplace. Hague, a business and computer information systems double major who works at Dunkin Donuts, explained "I don't have an issue with a decrease in hours since I'm working part-time. I have already seen an increase in my salary since the minimum wage increase, which helps me save...but my ex-coworker [is] not so good after he was laid off. The store was struggling to function 100 percent."

In New York, the minimum wage increased from \$13.50 to \$15 an hour

on Dec. 31, 2018. This marks the twenty-second increase since President Franklin Delano Roosevelt introduced the federal minimum wage in 1938, which started at 25 cents per hour, according to [minimum-wage.procon.org](http://minimum-wage.procon.org).

Many activists hailed the increase as a victory for workers. "The 'fight for \$15' an hour has gone from a rallying cry to facts on the ground in just a few short years," said Paul Sonn, the state policy program director of the National Employment Law Project, which advocates for low-wage workers. "This demand was from the fast-food workers who explained that was the minimum they needed for a decent life."

However, for Lehman students who

work, the effects of this increase have been mixed in the first three months of the year. The disparate outcomes have been seen as a blessing for some and misfortune for other employees and employers this fiscal quarter.

"As a student assistant worker at the Counseling Center on campus, I have experienced a noticeable increase on my weekly income statement thus far," said Lehman senior Daisy Flores, a diet and nutrition major. However, Flores observed that many of her coworkers were laid off. "Two-thirds of our staff at the center consists of unpaid interns. I gained more hours and more work while fellow co-workers got phased out as more unpaid interns came in. They worked 9 to 5 p.m. replacing phased out co-workers' hours."





Street art in Singapore reads “Minimum Wage?!” Photo courtesy of Flickr.

With this raise, New York City joins several cities on the West Coast where the minimum wage has already hit \$15, including San Francisco and Seattle. California’s minimum wage, which rises to \$12 an hour for larger employers on Jan. 1, is expected to rise to \$15 over the next few years.

Sonn cited recent decisions by national retailers like Target and Amazon to raise their wages to \$15 an hour. The country is now a patchwork quilt of wages, with some states still operating under the federal minimum of \$7.25 an hour. Connecticut’s minimum wage is \$10.10. In New Jersey, it is \$8.85, though the state’s Democratic governor and Legislature, which is also controlled by Democrats, want to raise it to \$15.

Economists linked higher wages to better physical and mental health and reduced decision fatigue, which

**“I gained more hours and more work while fellow co-workers got phased out as more unpaid interns came in.”**

**- Daisy Flores, Lehman senior and diet and nutrition major**

results in increased productivity, as reported by The Education & Labor Committee. Higher wages reduce

turnover, recruiting and training cost for employers. For hourly workers in New York City who are not laid off, the increase can make a big difference.

Rosa Rivera earned just \$5.15 an hour and relied on government assistance to pay her rent when she started working at a McDonald’s in Manhattan 18 years ago. Now, 53 and a veteran of several rallies for better wages, Rivera’s eyes teared up as she spoke about attaining one of the main goals the workers had set.

“When I get my first check with \$15, I’m going to be so happy,” said Rivera, an immigrant from El Salvador with three children. She said she was proud to pay her rent and help support her grandchildren without federal benefits.

# NYC's Proposed Financial Plans Put More Costs on CUNY Students

By Felicha C. Stevens



Mayor Bill de Blasio pictured in 2013. Photo courtesy of Flickr.

While New York Mayor Bill de Blasio's ten-year plan for the city, FY20, makes big promises about greater affordability, his 2020 budget proposal calls for large funding cuts to city

agencies including CUNY, Citywide Administrative Services Department, New York City Health and Hospitals, and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

Announced on March 7, the \$92.2 billion plan incorporates a loss of \$600 million dollars in federal money, which will result in cuts to the funding of agriculture, education and health



care organizations. Budget shortfalls will include \$125 million in financial assistance for families in need, \$59 million in vital health services for New Yorkers and \$300 million in education funding.

According to NYC OpenData statistics, these cuts will burden 1,620,356 New Yorkers who rely on government assistance to help with their monthly expenses, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Human Resources Association (HRA). CUNY students and their families will be affected in major ways, some by multiple cutbacks at the same time.

"I suffer from a lot of illness. I'm HIV positive and I struggle to make it," said James Foster, a 60-year-old student at Lehman's Adult Learning Center, "If they cut my food stamps that means I would have to spend more money, I'm only getting \$192.00, and food is very expensive." Foster will be affected by the cuts to both financial assistance for families in need and health services.

The cuts were ostensibly made in response to the state's \$2.3 billion shortfall in the 2019 Income Tax Revenue and a \$1.6 billion projected shortfall in 2020, according to nyc.gov. City agencies were able to find \$1 billion in savings from the 2019 and 2020 preliminary budgets, but this leaves another \$750 million in agency savings needed. Many Lehman students and staff fear the outcome will make their lives harder.

"I find it outrageous [and] I'm extremely upset about it! I know it's going to hurt my students. I know it will affect me. I'm hoping the numbers are just negotiating points rather than real numbers," said Mindy Levokove, a reading, writing and math instructor at the Adult Learning Center for GED preparation at Lehman.

Lehman junior Genesis Ramos, a 22-year-old English and journalism

double major, concurred. "As a student, it affects me. The money that is being cut is the money that I need for my books. It's the money that I could be using for Metro Cards or to get food on campus."

"The food in the grocery store is expensive, we get a little bit of food stamps, and we have to use that to budget for 30 days. You have to budget how you eat because we need those food stamps," said Michelle Solomon, 53, a Castle Hill resident and student at Lehman's Adult Learning Center.

De Blasio's FY20 plan promises a more affordable city, with guaranteed healthcare access for 600,000 uninsured New Yorkers, improved access to care including mental health services and more financial contributions to "3-K for All." However, many students remain skeptical of these promises.

**"The government operations are laughable, except nobody's laughing."**

**- Mindy Levokove,  
a reading, writing  
and math instructor  
at Lehman's Adult  
Learning Center**

"I feel like it's insane because I don't think we are going to see the money being used for this stuff," said Ramos. "If we actually see this it will be good for us, but it's hard for many people, especially, when you come to the Bronx to see the things they say they are doing. They say they will have better public health care and we don't. Many people complain that their health care, especially when it's public, is really expensive and they have to pay out of pocket."

Felicia Turner, a 28-year-old student at Lehman's Adult Learning Center and mother of two small boys, disagrees. "I have a 6-year-old, and school is a big deal. Kids need their education," said Turner, who has benefited from "3-K for All." "It has helped my son a lot with his ABC's; his reading level has improved a whole lot. The pre-K he was in had four teachers. It was hands-on, and they knew how to deal with kids."

The FY20 will launch in the summer of 2019 in the Bronx and city-wide in 2021. The ten-year plan will cost \$104.1 billion dollars with the majority of its revenue going towards infrastructure. The financial plan summary anticipates that 37 percent of the budget will focus on infrastructure and 29 percent on government operations, leaving only 22 percent for school, and 12 percent for housing.

"I feel like there might be a little bit of neglect when it comes to [school costs]," said Gregory Morelo, a 23-year-old Lehman senior and music major. "It does sound like a real low number in comparison to everything else, especially since there are thousands of students across the city that would also need financial assistance because they're attending school." However, Morelo supported the focus on infrastructure "because some of the neighborhoods here in the Bronx are a little bit outdated and run down. They deserve to be updated."

"They can take all the money away from government operations as far as I'm concerned," Levokove said. "The government operations are laughable, except nobody's laughing. I want the mayor to stop running all over the place and make good on all of the promises he made before he became mayor." Before he was elected, she recalled, "I believed what he said, and other than the universal pre-K, I don't see what he's done. He needs to focus on helping people in the city and forget what else he's got in his mind."

# Lehman's Chemistry Department Recognized for Successful Pre-Med Program

By Beauty Kolade



**Ezekiel Olumuyide working with a High Performance Liquid Chromatography machine. Photo by Beauty Kolade.**

Lehman's pre-med program was recently ranked 16th out of the 20 best pre-med college programs, according to [onlinecollegeplan.com](http://onlinecollegeplan.com). Lehman was the only CUNY school featured in these rankings, as published on Jan. 9, and its Bachelor of Science in chemistry was named the best of all its pre-med programs.

"51 percent of all of [Lehman's] pre-med students were accepted into medical schools like New York Medical

College, Touro, George Washington and SUNY Downstate," said Dr. Scott Calvin, the senior advisor at Lehman's pre-health program. "This percentage is higher than the national average of students applying to U.S. medical schools, which is around 40 percent. I have seen the program growing ever since I've been working."

According to Calvin, pre-med students comprise nearly half of the 975 students active in Lehman's pre-

health program, which also includes tracks, such as pre-dentistry and pre-pharmacy. Of the 443 pre-med students, 43 are chemistry majors.

Pamela Mills, Interim Dean of the School of Natural and Social Sciences and former chair of the chemistry department, credits innovative pedagogy as one source of the program's acknowledged excellence. "Lehman received this recognition as a result of collaborative effort between



both the instructors and students who performed their respective duties,” Mills said.

One innovation that she and chemistry professor Donna McGregor brought up is the flipped classroom teaching style to the program. “The flipped classroom system was my main contribution; it involves students watching relevant topic videos posted online, participating in answering class questions using iClicker, and getting help from assistants during class and at office hours when necessary,” said Mills. “Our goal was to make the class an active learning site for students. Active learning is like playing an instrument, you’ve got to practice to progress and be ready for the concert which is the exam.”

McGregor recalled, “Five years before my arrival in 2015, the average GPA for the traditional teaching style in general chemistry I and II was 1.65 and 1.81 respectively. After the introduction of the flipped classroom method of teaching, the average GPA from 2015 to 2017 increased to 2.74 and 2.67 for both classes respectively [and] the pass rate increased by 40 percent and 35.5 percent in both classes.”

Several chemistry majors told The Meridian that they agree wholeheartedly with the department’s recent accolades. “I was not surprised with this news because in my opinion, compared to other departments, the Chemistry department has taken a forefront at representing Lehman,” said Andre Ferguson, who graduated in 2017 with a Bachelor’s degree in chemistry.

**“The chemistry department has provided me with the opportunity to obtain the research I crave and intend to utilize when I get into medical school.”**

**– Lamount Evanson, 20, Lehman sophomore chemistry major**

“The department is growing. For instance, there are now more teacher assistants for chemistry courses, compared to when I was an undergraduate at Lehman,” he added. “I was able to become a scientist while I was a student at Lehman by gaining wet lab experience, participating in presentations and also attending

research lectures. Now I’m an adjunct professor at Lehman and this experience will help me learn and improve skills that will help me in medical school.”

Sophomore chemistry major Lamount Evanson, 20, also praised the department for giving students the chance to work as teaching assistants. Evanson, a chemistry TA, explained: “This experience will contribute to my preparation for the MCAT, a standardized test needed for admissions to medical school. As an international student, there not many research opportunities outside of campus that I am eligible for. However, the chemistry department has provided me with the opportunity to obtain the research I crave and intend to utilize when I get into medical school.”

“The chemistry department is very supportive regardless of a student’s performance in class,” said sophomore Ezekiel Olumuyide, 18, a chemistry major and aspiring physician. “The professors there...are always involved in helping students, making chemistry easy for us to understand... and give students the opportunity to gain a high yield of undergraduate experience.”



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# Can't Say It Ain't Good: Florida Georgia Line's Latest Album Hits All Marks

By Jonathan Rivera



Florida Georgia Line duo, Tyler Hubbard and Brian Kelley. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

“Can’t Say I Ain’t Country” hits the ground running and maintains its momentum. Released on Feb. 15, Florida Georgia Line’s fourth album topped country music charts and sold 50,000 album units in its first week, including digital downloads, according to Nielsen Music.

Tyler Hubbard and Brian Kelley showcase their versatility in this album with great tracks, such as “People are Different,” “Women” and “Simple,” the first single dropped prior to the album’s release. It debuted at No. 24 on the country charts when it released on the June 1, 2018 Airplay chart and peaked at No. 1 in October. This marks the 14th No. 1 hit for the dynamic country duo.

Their latest album reflects the

adaptability of this country music group. While maintaining the groups’ roots, it also features collaborations with R&B/Hip Hop singer Jason Derulo and country superstar Jason Aldean. Derulo, best known for his platinum singles “Talk Dirty,” “Wiggle,” and “In my Head,” adds flavor to the duo’s album.

“Women” reflects the group’s ability to infuse R&B into a truly new age country ballad. The trio harmonizes to create a powerful message, “Women, ya keep the world spinning with love in our eyes.” Tracks like “Sitting Pretty” also give listeners glimpses of the group’s musical range, offering some bluegrass twang to this country album.

“Can’t Hide Red” is a masterful collaboration between Hubbard,

Kelley, and Jason Aldean. The song reminds listeners to appreciate their roots because no matter where they go or how far they get in life, they can’t hide their bloodlines. Lyrics like “don’t you know you were born this way” and “you can see it in everything” remind listeners that no matter where they go or what they do, they “can’t hide red.” “Colorado” also brings out the duo’s roots and reflects the magic that made it possible for the group to stay relevant in the very competitive country music industry.

An excellent balance of this group’s talent and soothing collaborations, “Can’t Say I Ain’t Country” is filled with music that will easily fuel Florida Georgia Line’s tour, set to begin this May.



# Cancellation of ‘One Day at a Time’ Cuts Scarce Airtime for Taboo Topics

By Teresa Fanzo



Netflix announced the cancellation of “One Day at a Time” on March 12th. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

“One Day at a Time,” a Netflix original series that began its run in Jan. 2017, highlights the struggles of an underrepresented community. In advocating for equality by addressing serious concerns in today’s political climate, it broaches controversial topics like mental health, LGBTQ+ rights, Veterans’ rights, environmental concerns, racism, sexism, addiction and more. After airing for three seasons, these subjects combined with the show’s low ratings have resulted in its cancellation.

The show’s namesake, Norman Lear’s 1975 “One Day at a Time,” served as the inspiration for its plot. It follows the lives of Penelope Alvarez, portrayed by Justina Machado; her two children Alex (Marcel Ruiz) and Elena (Isabella Gomez); and their grandmother Lydia, played by Rita Moreno. The landlord of

their apartment complex is a supporting character and often provides comedic relief. Further humorous charm comes from many jokes and the goofy character, Schneider.

By documenting the hardships that the Cuban-American family faces and how they overcome them together, “One Day at a Time” caters to an

**“I like that the show brings up taboo topics, but makes them relatable and sometimes funny.”**

**- Samantha DiDonato, a Macaulay Honors freshman**

underrepresented audience. There are few other shows that convey concerns about these serious issues, which means it will be especially missed by its fans.

“I like that the show brings up taboo topics, but makes them relatable and sometimes funny because it makes it easier to talk about them,” said freshman and Macaulay Honors biology major, Samantha DiDonato.

In one episode, Alex goes on a date with a girl and posts inappropriate photos to his fake Instagram, also known as Finsta. Penelope, who is constantly working to provide her children with good life lessons, is outraged by the content of the photos. Subsequently, the family confronts Alex when he returns home. At first, he does not see that what he has done is wrong. Lydia, whom they refer to as Abuelita, plays devil’s advocate by maintaining that Alex has done no wrong and that “boys will be boys.”

In an emotionally charged scene, his older sister Elena shares the story of when she had to run home with her significant or “sydnificant” other because they were being stalked. The mother then admits that she too had been in an uncomfortable situation in a work environment. It is then that Alex understands his wrongdoings and apologizes.

Netflix tweeted on Mar. 12, 2019, “We’ve made the very difficult decision not to renew ‘One Day at a Time’ for a fourth season ... In the end simply not enough people watched to justify another season.”

# Student Playwriting Festival Welcomes Compelling New Voices

By Brittany Aufiero



Giselley Munoz as Mabel and Steven Prescod as Bobby in James Egbuta-Bailey's "Miracle in the Garden." Photos by James Egbuta-Bailey.

"Miracle in the Garden" by James Egbuta-Bailey and "Numinous" by Faith D'Erasmus and Luke Iovenitti stunned audiences with their attention to detail, compelling dialogue and powerful acting. Directed by Adjunct Lecturer Stephanie Stowe, these two new student productions were showcased by Lehman's Department of Music, Multimedia, Theatre & Dance in its fifth annual Student Playwriting Festival, which premiered from Feb. 27 to March 2.

"As a playwright with 20 years of experience producing work, it's exciting to see young playwrights understand and learn the process of bringing a play to an audience," said Stowe, who has been involved with the festival for three consecutive years. Stowe

credits Associate Professor and theatre director Rick DesRochers and Dean of Arts and Humanities James Mahon for "their incredible support." She said of her directing, "It was a lot of fun! Always a challenge because they're very different pieces."

The festival opened with "Miracle in the Garden," a moving one-act play that is centered on an African-American family living in 1978 Harlem, NY. Unable to afford the rising prices of city-living, Rose has decided to move her and her children Bobby, Shelley and Miracle back to Montgomery County, TN. However, the children are less than thrilled about the impending move. While Bobby considers his college options in NY, his sister Shelley is hiding a life-changing

secret. As she packs, Rose must come to terms with her children's growing independence and confront secrets of her own past that threaten to change all of their lives.

In the musical "Numinous," a class revolution has fractured communities and led many to take refuge in the northern wilderness. The portion of the play featured in the festival is only Act I of a full-length production that will premiere in Lehman's Multimedia Performing Arts Showcase in May. The story follows Flick, Mae, Nox, Cato, Jove and Ada, a group of travelers who meet in the woods and agree to form a "tribe" to better their chances of survival away from the rest of society. Members of the group begin to form closer ties as they bond through song,





Steven Prescod as Bobby and Essence Walker as Shelley in James Egbuta-Bailey's "Miracle in the Garden."

but tensions rise when Nox's leadership comes into question following an unexpected storm.

Just as it allows new playwrights to get a feel for show business, the festival is also a fantastic opportunity for Lehman actors to gain onstage experience. "Miracle" cast member Essence Walker, a 21-year-old junior theater major and dance minor, said "Rehearsals were always fun and, because it was an original play, we really got the chance to dig into the characters and tell their stories."

While the two plays are dramatically different in plot and production, both Rose and Nox deal with similar internal conflicts, as they try to balance their

own wants with those of the people for whom they are responsible. Lehman's student actors really fulfill their roles and perform admirably. In particular, Alaynia "Fox" La Porte shines as Rose, and one can't help but sympathize with her character's desire to keep her family together, even as she pushes everyone further apart.

A junior pursuing a Media Performing Arts degree with a major in theatre, Alaynia has also held roles at Castillo Theatre, Dempsey Theater, the Baryshnikov Art Center and Lovinger Theatre. In preparing for her latest role, she said, "Research was my best friend! As 'Miracle in the Garden' is a '70s play, I wanted to be honest to the world my character was in."

Kat Fornier, a 22-year-old junior art major and psychology minor, said "I really enjoyed the use of space in each of the plays." In "Miracle," moving boxes litter the stage and the actors are constantly interacting with them, which is enjoyable to watch. Various platforms both onstage and within the audience during "Numinous" serve as stands for the cast to speak from during various moments throughout the play.

The Student Playwriting Festival was a huge success for everyone involved in translating the plays from page-to-stage. "Opening day, my heart was beating so fast because I was so nervous," Walker recalled. "The adrenaline was high and we had a full house. It was the best thing ever."

# ‘Captain Marvel’s’ Thematic Feminism Feels Forced

By Zoe Fanzo



**“Captain Marvel” made \$455 million globally in its opening weekend. Photo courtesy of Flickr.**

When the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) launched over a decade ago with 2008’s “Iron Man,” the trajectory of the film industry was forever changed. Eleven years and twenty-one films later, the MCU is a cultural phenomenon and the highest-grossing movie franchise of all time. Many fans consider the franchise to be at its peak, with 2018’s “Black Panther” winning an unprecedented three Academy Awards, and “Avengers: Infinity War” shattering expectations with its standout antagonist, Thanos (Josh Brolin), and devastating cliffhanger. In this charged atmosphere, Marvel fans had been eagerly anticipating “Captain Marvel,” the latest installment of this

ever-growing world. But since the film was released on March 8, International Women’s Day, it has become the subject of heated conversation and criticism amongst fans of the franchise.

“Captain Marvel” tells the origin story of U.S. Air Force pilot turned cosmic Kree warrior, Carol Danvers, played by Academy Award winner Brie Larson, as she uncovers the mysteries of her past and ultimately unleashes the full extent of her Infinity Stone-inherited abilities. Set in 1995, the film seeks to impress audiences as it introduces the most powerful hero of the franchise to date. Instead, the film falls victim to frequent and obvious cinematic traps.

Presented in a non-linear format, the plot is jumpy and disconnected. The tension felt by Carol as she uncovers the truth about her past is lost on audiences because as she connects the fragments of her origin, the viewers have already been shown these events in flashbacks.

One of the film’s greatest pitfalls is its tendency to be too “on the nose.” “Captain Marvel” is saturated with the theme of female power, and while that is in no way an unwanted motif, the politics of the film overshadow its ability to tell a fully realized story. The Marvel Cinematic Universe has been such a hit with fans because of its robust storytelling, characterization, and world-building. “Captain Marvel,” however, suffers from cliché and lacks necessary subtext.

In one scene, a biker demeans and cat-calls Carol, who in turn steals his motorcycle. In another, Carol battles with antagonists to the sound of No Doubt’s “Just A Girl,” a painfully obvious choice. She is constantly undermined by male antagonists, but by the end of the film, she discovers that her powers have been stifled by her male mentor and she becomes virtually invincible. Moments like this ultimately feel inauthentic and blatant and her abilities, unfortunately, feel unearned. Carol Danvers feels less like a fleshed-out character, and more like a prop for easily-marketable, watered-



down feminism. Fans of the MCU have waited a decade for a female hero to star as the protagonist of her own film, but “Captain Marvel” misses the mark in a huge way.

“Black Panther,” the 18th installment of the MCU, was similarly revolutionary because it featured the MCU’s first black protagonist to star in his own film in the franchise. However, “Black Panther” avoided the pitfalls

that “Captain Marvel” fell victim to. “Black Panther” focused on emotional storytelling and deeply developed characters; it was a political statement in itself without having to sacrifice the plot’s integrity. Each character has their own political agenda, and those agendas clash, ultimately making for a durable conflict and intense cinematic climax. “Captain Marvel” lacks this intensity because its thematic feminism

feels more obligatory than genuine.

“Captain Marvel” is not an unwatchable film. It has many redemptive aspects, like Samuel L. Jackson’s “de-aged” Nick Fury, Brie Larson’s charming demeanor, and a fascinating post-credit scene which hints at what is to come for the MCU. Self-awareness ultimately weakens the plot and leaves fans yearning for what could have been a solid hero’s journey.

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# Lehman Women are Innovating Tech

By Lysa Vanible



Computer Science Professor Eva Sofianos between classes. Photo by Lysa Vanible.

Lehman women are embarking on new technology projects and engaging in courses that challenge the status quo in the computer and data science fields.

“There’s not a lot of women in technology right now, but it is gradually increasing,” said Lehman sophomore Daniella Encarnacion, a 22-year-old computer science major and founding member of the Women in Computer Science club (WICS). “Women have become empowered through networking, hackathons, mentorship and extracurricular activities.”

Some Lehman experts think that the need to compete in a globalized job market translates to opportunity in student clubs like WICS. The student-led clubs are gaining momentum and creating technological innovations on campus.

**“I believe seeing a female in the classroom helps other women see themselves.”**

**- Computer Science Lecturer  
Eva Sofianos**

“I had the opportunity to create a Google Developer group that currently boasts 2,534 members,” said Eva Sofianos, a computer science lecturer.



“We want to add introduction to computer science courses to pathways that introduce programming in a gentler way, so more people will learn to love computer science as much as I do. As the only full-time female professor in the computer science department, the innovation I project is by being in the classroom. I believe seeing a female in the classroom helps other women see themselves.”

According to the Office of Institutional Research and Development, only six out of 18 professors in computer science are women, and one in five students in the major is female. However, a wide range of interdisciplinary courses combine traditional majors with technology, and the integrated courses at Lehman

are right in step with the expansion in job opportunities created by global markets. That can create doors for women and minorities in a profession that is predominantly male and white.

“The revolution in big data has spawned a second look by students, as it integrates other majors that include courses that allow students to learn coding,” said Lehman Dean Elin Waring.

This incorporation of data science “can be seen in majors across the spectrum. Coding is being used to correlate mapping, graphs and plots, qualitative and quantitative data visualization, while also calculating statistical inference.”

Waring cited chemistry, sociology, economics, biology, psychology and geography as courses that have “brought data to those professions,” along with the nursing program’s use of lab instruments “while gathering and documenting essential data.”

The tech revolution has gained momentum at all CUNY institutions. Upcoming workshops on campus include Open Data NYC on April 6, sponsored by the Leonard Lief Library and the Bronx-based non-profit The Knowledge House, which will present a forum on Data Privacy in an Open Data World on April 7. The tech and data expansion for women has a long road ahead, and Lehman students are gearing up for the long haul.

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# Lehman Freshmen Take Second Semester in Stride

By Alexandra Cardenas

“College didn’t really end up being what I thought it would be. I guess I expected it to be like the movies,” said freshman Richard Castillo of his first semester at Lehman.

As he and other first-year students reflected on early lessons learned, they told The Meridian that their second semester seems harder than their first, but they have learned the lessons necessary to keep ascending the learning curve.

“I liked my last semester better because it was easier to get by, and the classes weren’t as challenging,” said 18-year-old freshman nursing student,

Marianny Soto, who transferred from John Jay. Soto expressed pride in her 4.0 GPA but added that she did not feel prepared for a second semester at

**“Everything seemed so chill, but I’m not sure how that vibe changed from chill to a frantic mindset.”**

**– Lehman freshman  
Tiana Bailey, 18**

Lehman. Nonetheless, Soto stated that she is “looking forward to the next three years to see how I will grow as a person and get into my career.”

Castillo is also optimistic about his next three years in college. He concurred with Soto that during the first semester “everything was so simple. This semester feels like so much work has just been thrown on me.”

In contrast, freshman Khoudia Synian said, “I feel more prepared than ever. In all honesty, I felt like I learned so much from the mistakes I made my first semester.” Unsatisfied with her first semester performance in her pre-





Lehman campus in the spring. Photo courtesy of CUNY.

med courses, Synian is determined to achieve a 4.0 GPA this semester now that she knows what is expected of her. “Although the work gets harder, I love this semester way more because I’m more organized. Also, I know what is coming my way and I know how to handle it academically,” she explained.

Freshman Tiana Bailey, 18, also suffered some initial turbulence. “My

first semester was actually really stressful for me towards the end,” she said. “In the beginning, it was basically smooth sailing, and I always thought, why do people have breakdowns? Because everything seemed so chill, but I’m not sure how that vibe changed from chill to a frantic mindset.”

A fashion aficionado who hopes to transfer from Lehman to pursue her passion, Bailey is still coming to terms

with the fact that she has not yet decided on a major. “I thought I knew what I wanted to do, but everything just blew up in my face. I know that it’s normal to not have everything figured out freshman year, but I didn’t and still haven’t accepted that.”

Synian seconded her determination. “I have a goal, so I’m definitely looking forward to the next three years in school without a doubt.”



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## Open Mic Night

Where: SLB Rm. 111A + B

When: Thurs. April 4th

4:00pm - 7:00pm

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reserve your performance slot  
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# ACTIVISM IN ACADEMIA III

#ActivismInAcademia

#CUNYactivism

#LehmanEnglish



An interdisciplinary, day-long symposium discussing the value of political and apolitical work—in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in our scholarship—as it relates to activism within underrepresented communities.

**COORDINATORS:** Dhipinder Walia & Olivia Loksing Moy (CUNY-Lehman)

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2019**

**10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Martin E. Segal Theatre, CUNY Graduate Center  
365 5th Avenue, First Floor, New York City

## FEATURING

**“Black Men and the Fleeting Pursuit of Relaxation”**

**“Sexual Assault by Federal Actors, #MeToo and Civil Rights”**

**“The Ecology of Memes”**

## PANELS

- 10:00 a.m. **Social Justice through Image, Movement, and Melody**
- 12:30 p.m. **Diversifying and Decolonizing the Professoriate**
- 2:00 p.m. **Perspectives from the Pipeline: Student Roundtable**
- 3:30 p.m. **#MeToo Evolving**

## SPEAKERS

Eugenia Zuroski (McMaster University) ■ Jennifer Rhodes (Columbia University) ■ Marco Ramírez Rojas (CUNY-Lehman)  
Mario Moore (Princeton Lewis Center for the Arts) ■ Afrodiesia McCannon (New York University) ■ Makeba Lavan (CUNY Graduate Center)  
Manu Samriti Chander (Rutgers-Newark) ■ Wendell Cooper (CUNY-Lehman) ■ Julie Goldscheid (CUNY Law School)  
Devin Griffiths (University of Southern California) ■ Vani Kannan (CUNY-Lehman) ■ Johanna Folk (University of California-San Francisco)  
Hardik Yadav ■ Javiera Morales-Reyes ■ Jennifer Chang ■ Sharon Lee ■ Alexis Martinez ■ Shyrlene Hernandez ■ Ashley Davis (Lehman)

Please find our full program and more information about our panelists at:

<http://cuny.is/activism>

Sponsored by the Center for the Humanities at the Graduate Center, CUNY; CUNY School of Law; Publics Lab; the Lehman College Department of English; and the Lehman College City and Humanities Program.



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