

NEW YORK POST

**FINANCIAL AID
SPECIAL SECTION**



CASH COURSE!

**How to pay for college
without breaking the bank**

Your guide to ...

**CU
NY** The City
University
of
New York

THE DAILY BRIEF

NEWS REPORTS FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2014

OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

NEW YORK POST

**FINANCIAL AID
SPECIAL SECTION**

CASH COURSE!

**How to pay for college
without breaking the bank**

Your guide to ...

- **Government grants**
- **Valuable scholarships**
- **Keeping costs low**

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Getting a Debt-Free CUNY degree *SEE Page 5*
CUNY Students Dominate Science Awards *SEE Page 8*
CUNY Service Corps Students Hit the Streets *SEE Page 15*

CUNY The City
University
of
New York

The CUNY Value: Stellar Academics and Affordable Tuition



*Interim Chancellor William P. Kelly
The City University of New York*

With all the excitement that comes from college planning, students and families must soon face the reality of how to afford a college education.

The rising cost of tuition, the financial burdens that families incur, even the value of the degree itself, are topics of stressful household discussion and hot national debate – and solutions seem elusive.

Nationwide, student debt has surpassed \$1 trillion, with college graduates leaving school with tens of thousands of dollars in loans to repay, making indebtedness an urgent national concern and a source of anxiety for students and families.

Not so at The City University of New York.

With a flourishing reputation among students and educators alike, CUNY is providing the golden opportunity of a lifetime: a high-quality, competitive and remarkably affordable college education.

It's a 21st-century education, taught by top scholars on upgraded campuses, and it is transforming the student experience, nurturing achievement, bringing jobs to New York and stimulating economic development.

Its affordability is assured by the CUNY Safety Net – low tuition and federal and state aid that allow six out of 10 full-time undergraduates to attend tuition-free, and by federal tax credits that ease the burden on the middle class.

It's an education that delivers in the marketplace, producing job-ready graduates with respected academic credentials. That's what we call the CUNY Value.

Repayment of federal student loans can last decades, with no respite even in bankruptcy. Yet education borrowing, and delinquent payments, are rising. At CUNY, however, affordable, no-surprises tuition and availability of financial aid ease the burden, making the new American Dream of a debt-free college education a reality for nearly eight in 10 CUNY graduates in 2013.

Only 15% of our undergraduates carry student debt. This number, low compared with most colleges and universities, includes transfer students who arrived with loans but had no need to borrow more at CUNY. It's no surprise that when our students borrow, they owe less on average at graduation than their peers at other New York institutions.

As federal policymakers grapple with ways to make higher education more accessible, affordable and accountable, it's worth remembering the idea that launched The City University of New York, articulated by the founder of The Free Academy, Townsend Harris: "Open the doors to all – let the children of the rich and the poor take their seats together and know of no distinction save that of industry, good conduct, and intellect." Rightly imagined, education is indeed an opening of doors, a leading out, as the word's Latin root suggests.

CUNY has helped well over a million alumni – from every background, with every aspiration – to enrich their lives and those of countless others. That is a testament to the power of its fundamental mission. We look forward to continuing this extraordinary mission with the next generation of students.

BY ERIKA PRAFDER

When it comes to borrowing money to pay for college, Rachel Cruze's best advice is — don't.

In her new book, "Smart Money Smart Kids," (Thomas Nelson), which is co-authored by her dad and financial expert Dave Ramsey, Cruze promotes a debt-free message to the college-bound set.

"The book provides a much-needed message — things I wish I'd known when I was younger about the blessing of knowing how to handle money," Cruze says. "I think every parent in America wants their kids to have a better life than they did."

When it comes to financing college, parents may feel ashamed if they can't contribute to their kids' college education financially, but they shouldn't. "You're not required to help your children get an education. If you do, that's a blessing, but if you're barely getting by, do not feel ashamed," Cruze says.

Other parents feel that student loans are "good debt," according to Cruze.

But with the Top 10 colleges in US News & World Report's rankings all charging between \$40,000 and \$50,000 per year in tuition and fees, it doesn't matter whether the money went to education or not — it's a burden that's just too big to bear.

"Too many college students are broke," Cruze says. "Kids should learn early on to be intentional about handling other finances, so when they get to college, they have a solid financial foundation and don't make too many mistakes, like taking out credit cards."

As early as freshmen year of high school, students should have an idea about where they would like to go to college.

"Whether it's a state school or an Ivy League — they need to know how they plan to pay for their education. If scholarships will play a role, they need to know how and when to apply for them so that they don't miss qualifying deadlines," she says.

Tactics for winning such competitive money grabs include, "Applying for as many as humanly possible," Cruze says. "Some students won't apply to a scholarship that awards \$200, but in the scheme of a \$30,000 tuition, if it takes you an hour to fill out the form, write an essay and apply, you could earn \$200 in an hour toward that bill. It's

better than any part-time job you could take."

Just as important is deciding what school you'll attend, and understanding that just because it isn't an Ivy doesn't mean it's a bad school.

"Staying close to home and taking that in-state tuition, or going to a community college for a year or two to take your pre-requisites toward a higher degree — these options are so smart," Cruze says.

For those concerned about what future employers will say about your choice of an in-state or community college, "If you sit down in an interview and let hiring managers know that you strategically went through col-

lege as you worked a job — this shows that you're intelligent and have a work ethic. You'll stand out in the marketplace."

Once in college, "The average student works 20 hours a week. You can pay your way through an in-state school on a cash-payment plan — putting a bit each semester toward your tuition. Check with your school's financial aid office about setting this up."

The best formula for paying for school?

"Still cash," Cruze says. And, if you're cash-strapped, "Take a year off and work to get that cash. When you can graduate college debt-free and owe nothing to anyone, you have so much more opportunity to do what

you really want to do. I had a friend who wanted to apply for a lower-end position at her dream workplace, but because of her student loan debt payment and her car payment, she couldn't take the job. My generation is drowning in a student loan debt crisis — just don't do it."

Besides saving, your first consideration should be free federal student aid, says Rena Smith-Kiawu, director of financial aid services at Queens College of the City University of New York..

"We don't want to put our students into debt. We don't encourage students to borrow, but if they must, we advise keeping the loans low," she says.

For incoming freshmen, after

completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you may be eligible for up to \$3,500 in subsidized loans. Upper classmen can be eligible for up to \$5,500 per academic year in subsidized loans, Smith-Kiawu says of the CUNY system.

Applying for the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is also wise.

"It's the largest grant program that our state offers. It's free money," she says.

If you choose to go into debt, "Make sure you know what you're getting into," advises the administrator. "Understand the loan terms for receiving and repaying debt. Defaulting on a loan will ruin your life."

How to lower your costs, apply for aid — and save in the long run



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BY JOSEPH GALLIVAN

The federal government is the biggest source of grants and loans for prospective students, and if there's one acronym you need to remember, it's FAFSA.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, at fafsa.ed.gov, is the one form all hopeful college students should fill out, whether their families are rich, middle class or poor. It determines how much federal money (Pell Grants) you can receive. But it can also unlock other awards, such as grants, loans, work-study and scholarships.

Students must complete the FAFSA form for each year they are in college, beginning with your senior year of high school. The new FAFSA form comes online every Jan. 1.

It requires answering questions about your parents' income levels and assets, and yours if you work, have kids or are married. The information is based on tax returns for the year just passed, which means it's best if you and/or your parents do your taxes as soon as possible in January or February.

It also asks how big your household is, whether your parents are together, if you have step-parents, to find out who can comfortably pay what.

"Aid is supposed to go to people who need it, but it really goes to whoever's savvy with the forms, so do some homework," says Kal Chany, author of "Paying for College Without Going Broke" and president of Campus Consultants, a Manhattan-based financial aid firm that helps families maximize their eligibility for financial aid and minimize college costs.

"School guidance counselors are all about getting kids accepted at college; they're not financial people. They often only have 45 minutes of training about financing college — I know because I've taught it."

The FAFSA website sends your financial information to the colleges of your choice (you can list up to 10), and also a copy to you, called the Student Aid Report.

The colleges might ask for more information for verification. Don't ignore this, or you could end up with nothing.

PELL GRANTS

Colleges' student aid offices use the FAFSA form to figure out how much your parents should be paying for tuition and how much you need in aid.

This aid is known as a Pell Grant (named after U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island,

Fishing for aid from the federal government

GETTING UNCLE SAM TO FOOT THE BILL



who championed the program in 1973) and comes from the United States Department of Education. Requirements include:

- be a citizen or eligible non-citizen
- be an undergraduate student and have a high school diploma or GED
- sign a statement certifying you'll only use the aid for education-related purposes
- maintain satisfactory academic progress in a degree-oriented program as defined by the school you attend
- not have any kind of full-tuition scholarship

For 2014-5, the maximum Pell Grant is \$5,645. Most students receive around \$2,500. The college usually applies it once a semester directly to school costs: tuition, fees, and (if the student lives on

campus) room and board.

There is no magic income number that makes you ineligible for a Pell Grant, but note you can be "middle class" in NYC and still not qualify — because that's rich in another part of the country.

Typically, you'll find out May 1 how much you'll receive in Pell Grant assistance for the following year.

FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GRANTS (FSEOG)

For undergraduate students with exceptional financial need, there is extra help. FSEOGs do not need to be repaid and range

from \$100 to \$4,000 a year. The money comes from the US Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid. It is campus-based aid, meaning the colleges determine the amount, and not all colleges participate. Unlike Pell Grants, FSEOG is finite and is first-come, first-served — another reason to get your FAFSA done ASAP. Each school sets its own deadlines for campus-based funds.



A DEBT-FREE CUNY DEGREE

Quality. Affordability. Degrees of Value.

Nearly 80 percent of full-time college students are debt free when they graduate from The City University of New York, making CUNY a national leader in providing the golden combination in higher education value today: valued degrees, high-quality education, award-winning professors, affordable tuition, and the likelihood of debt-free graduation.

Even as student debt nationwide has surpassed \$1 trillion and U.S. college graduates owe about \$27,000 on average, eight of ten students graduate from CUNY colleges without federal student loans, according to

“The CUNY Value Plus,” a new report available at cuny.edu/value. Almost half of those who carry loans after graduation are transfer students who chose the CUNY value after attending a more costly private or public institution.

The University’s exceptionally affordable tuition, lower than most private and public institutions in the nation, is what makes it possible for the majority of CUNY undergraduates — including low-income and employed, veterans and CUNY scholarship recipients — to cover college costs without having to borrow. Nearly 60 percent of full time undergraduates attend tuition free, thanks in part to federal

Pell grants, New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards, and CUNY’s own financial aid programs.

For Army veteran Kasha Taylor, a state employee and mother of two, it was the low-cost tuition at CUNY’s Lehman College, plus work and careful budgeting, that made it possible for her to cover 70 percent of her tuition costs with her veterans’ benefits, and pay the rest before collecting her diploma.

“It’s a beautiful thing,” said Taylor, who graduated with a degree in business administration and plans to go to graduate school. “A lot of people feel the higher the tuition, the higher the education. I disagree. My professors were awesome.”

For Christina Terracino, the mix of “a little bit” of state Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) aid and her CUNY scholarships allowed her to graduate from The College of Staten Island owing nothing.

“It’s a great thing, it’s such a simple application, and it paid for my education,” Terracino said of her scholarships. Now looking ahead to graduate school, she said, “I would love to be an academic librarian, work on the Ph.D., become a professor. I know I can do that without worrying because I don’t have to worry about any undergrad debt.”

Michael Suarez, who attended LaGuardia Community College and recently graduated from Hunter College, qualified for Pell grants and TAP awards that made his tuition free. He graduated owing just \$1,500 left over from a loan to pay for a semester living at a student residence at Queens College.

“Graduating with very little debt with hopes of

THE
CUNY
VALUE PLUS



(continued on page 7)

BY JOSEPH GALLIVAN

Even if you don't qualify for a Pell Grant, it doesn't mean you won't get any other aid. Here are some ways New York state and CUNY schools can help out.

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

New York state's Tuition Assistance Program makes grants toward the cost of tuition at schools in the state, public and private, up to \$5,000 a year. The student's parents must have a New York State net taxable income of less than \$80,000. Because TAP is a grant, it does not have to be paid back. TAP is also available for part-time students at SUNY and CUNY who earn 12 credits a semester and maintain a C grade average.

The TAP program is not transportable out of state. "If a student gets a TAP award, it behooves them to stay in New York state," says Alice Murphey, director of financial aid management at CUNY.

Out of 480,000 CUNY students, 75,000 will get TAP this year. Visit www.tap.hesc.ny.gov/totw/ to apply.

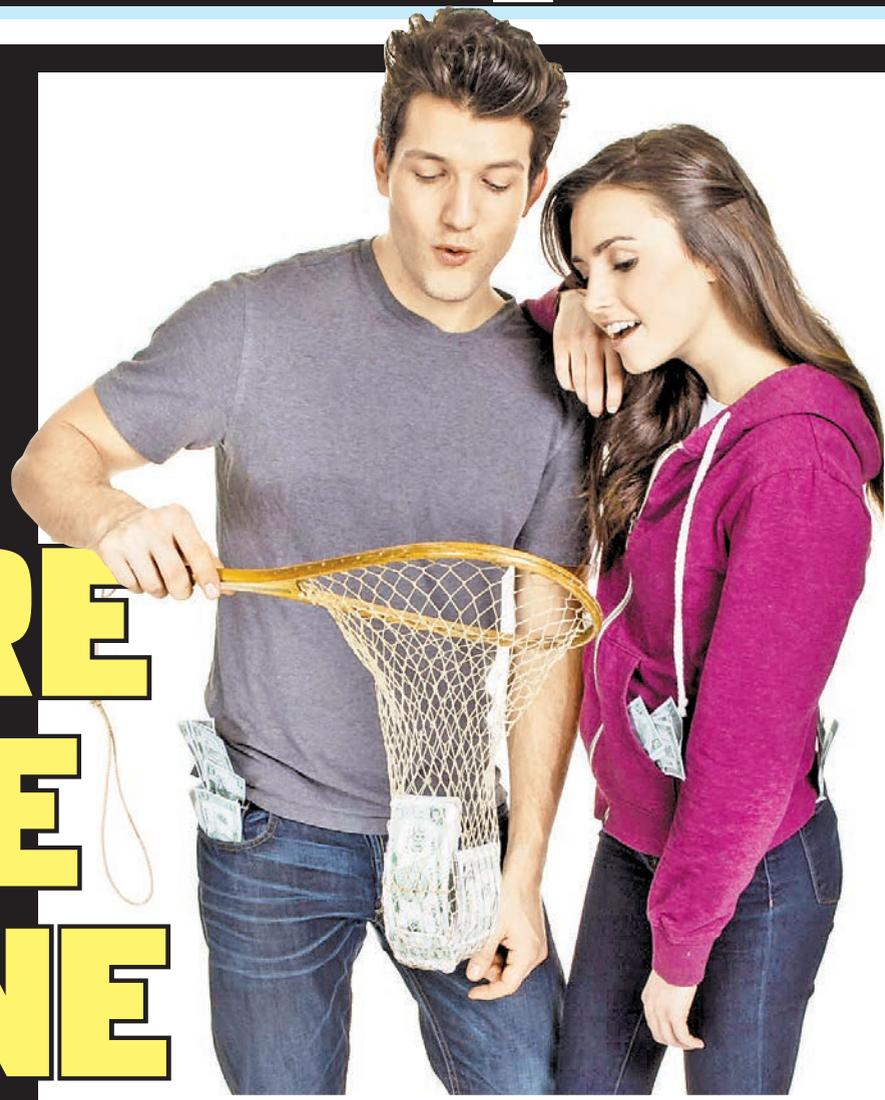
Savings for city residents

The City University of New York is expanding, now comprising 24 colleges, including seven community colleges. It offers education all the way up to PhD programs. Community college tuition costs \$4,200 a year for a full-time student, making it one of the deals of the city (compared to \$5,730 for the other schools).

Students who live outside of the city can still get the city rate if they do a "county charge back," that is, their county picks up the difference. (The local school district can arrange this.) CUNY is building more dorms, but most students live at home.

Netting aid from New York City and state

EMPIRE STATE OF MINE



CUNY's Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK)

If you meet certain low-income guidelines, New York City funds some financial support for tutoring at community college through this program. It also offers academic and student support services: financial assistance, counseling, tutoring, special courses and workshops. Plus a study hall and computer lab for the exclusive use

of SEEK students.

Application is through UAPC (University Application Processing Center) at the time students apply to CUNY.

Macaulay Honors College

For talented students, CUNY offers a full ride called the Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York.

In-state resident students (or

those qualifying as in-state) get a full tuition scholarship, a laptop computer and a \$7,500 Opportunities Fund to pursue global learning and service opportunities.

The Macaulay building at 35 West 67th Street is near Central Park and Lincoln Center and has a state-of-the-art classroom space, a lecture hall, student performance space, a fully equipped screening room, seminar and meeting rooms,

administrative offices, and other common gathering spaces for students.

Macaulay Honors students enroll in one of eight CUNY senior colleges: Baruch, Brooklyn, City, Hunter, John Jay, Lehman, Queens and Staten Island. They are encouraged to pursue internships, academic awards, professional or graduate school and jobs in their desired fields.

Apply at macaulay.cuny.edu by Dec. 1.

What if I don't live in New York?

Being in-city, in-state and out-of-state greatly affects tuition at private and public colleges. Some notes to bear in mind:

- In-state students at CUNY four-year colleges are charged \$5,730 a year, while out of state students are charged more: \$510 per credit with no flat fee, or almost twice as much.

- CUNY students who reside in New York state but not in city may be eligible for the city price if they can provide proof of residence and pay some other fees on top.

- There is no reciprocity between New York and New Jersey and Connecticut.

- However, a SUNY student from out of state (e.g. New Jersey or Connecticut) who

has gone to high school in New York City for at least two years and graduated can petition to pay in-state rates. This usually applies to private schools.

- New York University and Columbia (private colleges) do not offer reduced rate tuition for students from New York State. However, some private colleges have some "statutory" colleges where certain majors are partially subsidized by the state of New York, leading to lower tuition. These include the College of Ceramics in Alfred University and four more at Cornell. "So you could get an Ivy League education for \$20,000 less," says Kal Chany, author of "Paying for College Without Going Broke."

Ivy aid

The College Board has a form called "PROFILE" that will tell you what sort of financial aid is available to you from 400 different colleges, including most of the top institutions in the country. Some Ivys actually require you to fill out a PROFILE form in addition to a FAFSA. Be warned, however, that it costs a minimum of \$25 to fill out the form and deliver your financial information to the colleges.

Visit student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile

Dates to remember

October — High School seniors register to take the SAT/ACT

October — Submit a CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE to apply online for nonfederal financial aid from almost 400 colleges and scholarship programs. student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile

Dec. 1 — Applications due for Macaulay Honors College program

Jan. 1 - June 30 — Window to submit the FAFSA form to get federal aid; but do it sooner rather than later. Most colleges prefer your FAFSA to be filed by **March 14**. fafsa.ed.gov

June 30 — Deadline to apply to New York's Tuition Assistance Program

...and nearly 80% graduate debt free.

going to medical school is a big deal for me,” said Suarez, who graduated in psychology from Hunter College. “It puts me way ahead of the game.”

“CUNY’s unwavering commitment to excellence and opportunity — offering the best academics at an affordable price, making it possible to graduate debt free — is expanding opportunity for the many thousands of students who enroll in our colleges every year,”

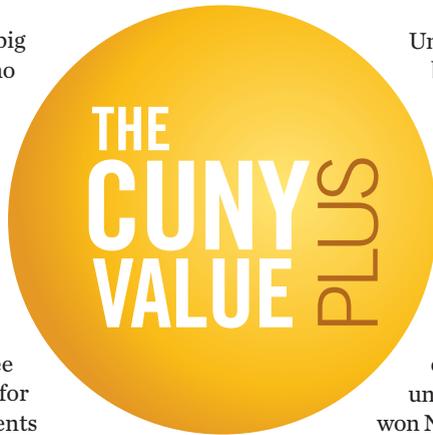
said Interim Chancellor William P. Kelly. “That’s ‘CUNY Value Plus,’ and as we emerge from tough economic times into a changing job market, it’s more critical than ever.

“We offer the best higher education value to New Yorkers, and are always innovating to best prepare our students for rewarding careers and further study.”

CUNY’s tuition is stabilized by a unique public-private funding mechanism called The CUNY Compact, which envisions modest, predictable tuition increases that enable students and families to plan ahead. In 2014, CUNY tuition and fees remain significantly lower than those of most higher education institutions, private and public, in the New York metropolitan area and nationwide.

Aside from affordable tuition, more than \$1 billion in financial aid including government grants, CUNY aid and scholarships, is benefiting CUNY students this academic year. The American Opportunity Tax Credit, a rebate of up to \$2,500 that eases education expenses for many middle-class families, may further reduce the cost of CUNY tuition.

Distinguished professors and CUNY’s increasing attractiveness to motivated, high-achieving students are also key factors in the CUNY Value Plus equation. CUNY students, mentored by award-winning professors and encouraged by the



University have consistently been winning prestigious national honors including National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships, Barry M. Goldwater and Harry S. Truman Scholarships and Fulbright grants.

In 2013, 23 CUNY students, more than any public university in the Northeast, won NSF Graduate Research

Fellowships for science, engineering and other graduate research. CUNY students also benefit from institutional scholarships funded by more than \$2.5 billion in private donations raised since 2000 by the Invest in CUNY campaign.

The University has also responded to record enrollments, reported at approximately 270,000 degree-credit students this fall, by increasing the ranks of full-time professors and investing \$3.8 billion in CUNY construction projects that have modernized facilities and transformed the CUNY experience in all five boroughs. Some \$3 billion in new construction, expansion, renovation and maintenance projects are in the pipeline.

CUNY Value Plus contains new data from The College Board, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the University’s Office of Institutional Research. The CUNY Value Plus website, featuring the new publication, videos and other information, is available at cuny.edu/value.

The new data underscores CUNY’s value in the higher-education marketplace. CUNY’s tuition and fees, averaging \$6,223 at its four-year colleges in 2014, contrasts sharply with the \$29,056 national average for private, non-profit four-year colleges and universities, the \$15,172 average at for-profit institutions, and the \$8,655 average tuition and fees at public, four-year institutions, according to The College Board.

COLLEGE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS — AND PARENTS, TOO

THE COLLEGE SEARCH PROCESS is now easier for students — and their parents — with the help of a new website. “We want this to be the online ’311 for college information in NYC because there is a real need for reliable information that is accessible to everyone,” said Lisa Castillo Richmond, the director of Graduate NYC!, a city program devoted to increasing college readiness and completion among NYC students.

The website called NYC College Line (<http://nyccollegeline.org>), launched in February 2013, is an online directory of NYC programs and other Web-based resources. NYC College Line directs students on everything from admissions and application procedures to financial aid and testing information. The site was created by Graduate NYC! in conjunction with the City University of New York, the NYC Department of Education, and the Options Center of Goddard Riverside.

“There is a focus on college readiness for students but it’s not enough to simply get them to the gates of college — we have to help them graduate as well,” said Castillo Richmond. So in addition to assistance with college applications, the College Line is also a resource that supports students once in college. Current college students can use the site’s “Ask an Adviser” function for academic advice and receive a reply within 48 hours. There is also a page dedicated to FAQs that answers frequently asked questions such as “How can I raise my GPA?” or “What happens if I just stop going to class?” and “Do I really need to read the syllabus my professor gave me?”

While there are other websites designed to help students navigate the higher education system, NYC College Line is the first of its kind that offers resources and academic counseling of this scope, Castillo Richmond said. “[NYC College Line] is interactive ... and it has some of the access features of Yelp and other online communities.”

This site is not intended to replace one-on-one sessions with high school guidance counselors but rather to “bridge the gap between the information available to students at their schools and the information available to parents,” she says.

The NYC College Line is a good resource for parents who are uninformed and may feel intimidated by the college process, said Castillo Richmond. “The idea is to democratize the information ... to make sure everyone has it. Some parents have never been [to college] or they’re immigrants and don’t speak the language.” He said the website is available in nine languages, including Spanish, Mandarin and Haitian Creole.



CUNY Tops in Northeast for NSF Awards

One ambitious City College graduate is experimenting with a substance found in shells of crabs. Another CUNY doctoral student is studying the assimilation trends of Haitian immigrants. A Hunter College graduate student is searching for therapies to help multiple sclerosis patients. Last year, 23 CUNY students won National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships, more than any other public university system in the Northeast. Here are six of their stories.

Julius Edson (City College, B.E. in chemical engineering, 2012), now a doctoral student at the University of California-Irvine, won a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship by suggesting a new way of attacking the rising number of lethal bacteria that are immune to antibiotics.

He wants to use a substance called chitosan that's found in the shells of crabs, shrimp and other marine animals. Chitosan can damage the bacterial cell membrane through an electrostatic interaction. "The chitosan sticks to and ruptures the cell membrane of microbes then serves as an antenna to direct the body's own immune system to attack," Edson says.

But chitosan dissolves only in an environment

that is more acidic than the human body can tolerate. Edson intends to chemically modify chitosan so it can readily function in the body without losing its innate properties.

He started at City as premed but became interested in this field while studying colloidal systems with associate professor Ilona Kretzschmar. This made him realize that a degree in chemical engineering was "a perfect fit." He adds: "I'll still be able to help in the medical field."

Edson was born in Nigeria. As a youngster, he contracted various illnesses and was not expected to survive. "But I am here and healthy," he says.

With survival came a sense of responsibility to help others. Edson immigrated to the United States at 7. As a City undergraduate, he won a scholarship from the Louis Stokes Alliances for

Minority Participation, an NSF-funded program to encourage underrepresented minority students to pursue a baccalaureate degree in the STEM fields. It enabled him to conduct water-treatment studies in Colombia. He has also conducted research in Sweden and Austria.

Dane Christie (City College 2013, B.E. in chemical engineering) — who will attend Princeton University — was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. The Jamaican-born Christie once pitched for the Toronto Bluejays' Dominican Republic farm team. He now aims to earn a doctorate.

"My mom told me I needed to think about college," he says. "But that was the farthest thing from my mind. I was a 6-foot, 7-inch left-hander." Ultimately, after two years with the team, he joined his mother in New York, worked in construction for four years and then entered the Hostos-City College dual-degree engineering program.

Hostos assistant professor Yoel Rodriguez, who teaches chemistry and physics, "gave me the push and the belief in myself I was lacking at the time," Christie says. At City, he found new mentors in professor John Lombardi and associate professor Ilona Kretzschmar — with whom Christie researched colloidal assembly. His NSF proposal evolved from his research into improving the efficiency of organic solar (photovoltaic) cells, which generate electricity from sunlight.

For that proposal, Christie suggested researching the purely organic bulk-heterojunction solar cell. "I proposed an experimental protocol, which would boost efficiency," Christie says. That could lead to better, cheaper and more



environmentally friendly solar panels. This approach could be applied to other technologies, including LED lights and batteries.

Christie is married to Ashley Christie, whom he met when she was a student at Baruch. She transferred to City College when he did and will enter New York University's master's in social work program.

Vadricka Etienne, a second-year doctoral student at the CUNY Graduate Center, has won a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship that will help her explore whether the approximately



776,000 U.S. residents of Haitian ancestry will cling to their roots into the third generation. Or, like so many other groups, will dissolve into the great American melting pot.

A second-generation Haitian-American who grew up in Orlando, Fla., Etienne (University of South Florida, B.A. in communication, minors in sociology and anthropology, 2011) says that previous research on the assimilation of children of immigrants has focused on their ethnic identity choices but not on how members of the second generation try to convey their culture to their children.

"While it was less complicated for the first generation to pass on their cultural heritage because they often raise their children in ways similar to their own upbringing, the second generation has refashioned the cultural heritage of their parents as they participate in the American culture, which begs the questions of not only what is the second generation passing on but how," she writes.

Her hypothesis is that most likely the third generation will not maintain its Haitian identity, particularly in cities without strong cultural support. (The 2010 census tallied about 268,000 New Yorkers who were born in Haiti or were of Haitian descent.)

She envisions taking an ethnographic approach involving interviews with families.

Etienne says she applied to CUNY because of three professors — Philip Kasnitz, Nancy Foner and Richard Alba — "who I kept coming across as I did research on assimilation and black identities" and who have written about immigration by



various groups, assimilation and ethnic politics.

Ru Chen (City College, B.E. in chemical engineering, 2013) — won a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Scholarship and will enter a doctoral program at the University of Delaware.

She will explore the possibility of detecting cancer by looking for abnormal variations of glycoproteins, which are proteins attached by carbohydrates through a process called glycosylation. Many mammalian diseases involve glycosylation, but its role is not clear.

Ru Chen was born in China, in a rural Fujian province. Her grandfather, the area's only physician, read to her each night from his herbal handbook. Chen was 4 when she first heard about cancer, after seeing a crying woman holding her son. Ultimately, cancer also claimed her grandfather, whom she calls "my greatest mentor."

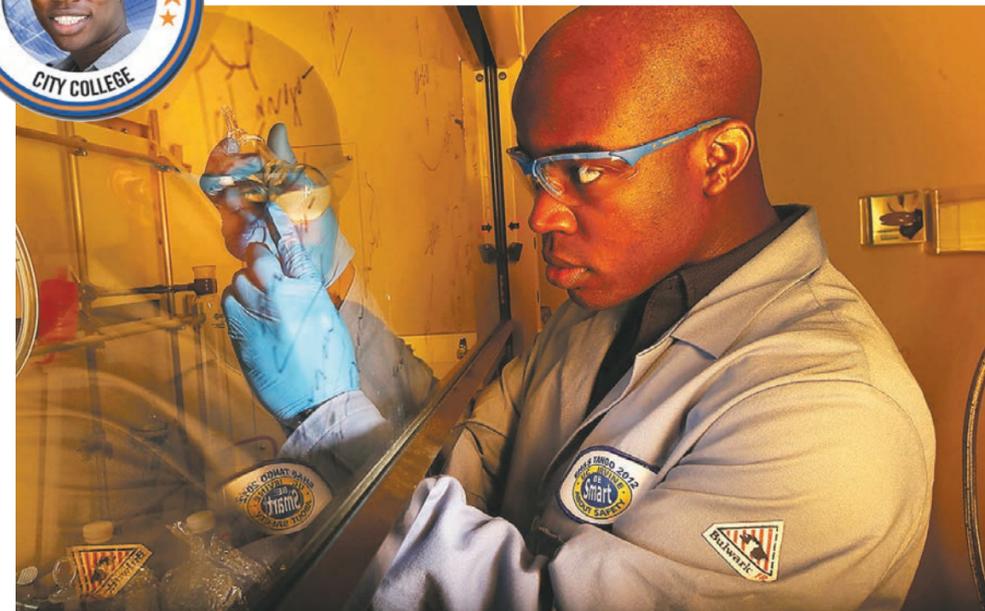
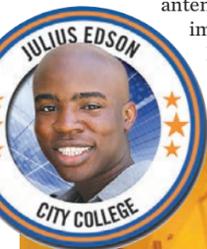
Chen spent a year in a Chinese law school and barely spoke English when she immigrated to the United States four years ago.

Reading the newspaper voraciously helped her to improve her oral English, although she adds that vocabulary was difficult for her. She emphasizes how grateful she is for the help provided by professors and students. "The one thing I feel lucky for is that math is universal," she adds.

With assistant professor of chemical engineering Raymond Tu, she investigated how tempera-



(continued on page 13)



How I landed \$500,000, in college scholarships

BY ERIKA PRAFDER

Kristina Ellis wrote the book on getting a free ride.

At age 26, the Indiana native penned "Confessions of a Scholarship Winner" (Worthy Publishing) after receiving half a million dollars in scholarship money.

"I wrote it the last semester of my master's degree at Belmont University," Ellis says, who attended undergraduate at Vanderbilt — at \$50,000 a year, all paid for.

"I realized how many of my friends were graduating with massive student loan debt and the effect that it will have on their lives," she says. "At age 17 and 18, I don't think students understand the long-term implications. I've had friends with \$90,000 in student loans and struggling because half of their paychecks were going toward paying off that debt."

While not the straight-A, perfect-SAT student, Ellis says she did take AP classes and worked hard in other areas to qualify for scholarships.

"My dad was diagnosed with cancer and died when I was 7 years old. My mom, who is from Venezuela, worked in and out of different mental health facilities and later opened up a hair salon in our living room so she could be with my brother and I," Ellis says. "My first day as a freshman in high school, she told me that she believed in me, but couldn't support me financially after I graduated high school."

It was a turning point for Ellis, who made it her mission to pay for college using scholarships. Some of the 20 scholarships she won not everyone can get

— think you have what it takes to be Miss Indiana Teen USA? — but some others are available to a much larger group:

■ The Horatio Alger Scholarship

(horatioalger.org/scholarships/index.cfm)

The program specifically assists high school seniors (with a minimum 2.0 GPA) who have faced hardships in their young lives and who can demonstrate critical financial need (\$55,000 or lower adjusted gross family income is required). Winners can receive up to \$21,000 in awards. Ellis earned \$2,500 the year she applied.

"The judges want to see how you fought through life's challenges, and how such experiences inspired you to do great things," Ellis says. "Community service and giving back are important, too. The essay portion is intensive. Be authentic and reflect on your life and situation."

Throughout her scholarship search, Ellis also learned that judges routinely look for volunteerism, purpose and initiative, so she worked at an animal shelter, hospital and church.

■ The Coca-Cola National Scholarship

(www.coca-colascholarship-foundation.org)

This highly competitive, achievement-based scholarship requires applicants to have a 3.0



Where to find scholarships

■ **Fastweb.com** — Fill out a profile, and your data is used to match you with scholarships in a database.

■ **Scholarships.com** — Can search more than 2.7 million college scholarships and grants worth more than \$1.9 billion.

■ **College Board's FINDER**, bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search — Lists scholarships, other financial aid and internship programs from over 2,200 national, state, public and private sources, totaling nearly \$6 billion. The database is updated annually.

■ **Artdeadlineslist.com** — Scholarships with an art focus

■ **Peterson's Award Database**, www.petersons.com/college-search/scholarship-search.aspx — Search site lists awards from roughly 2,000 sponsors.

GPA and to demonstrate their capacity to lead, serve and make a difference.

Ellis' efforts paid off — to the tune of \$20,000, after earning a top-50 spot out of 100,000 applicants who won the prestigious award that year.

"Community service is a huge priority for Coke," says Ellis. Along with a biographical ques-

tionnaire, transcript and recommendation letters, you're asked to detail the hours, weeks and specific dates of each act of your service on your application, which is lengthy and involves multiple rounds, she says. "This scholarship requires advance planning. Print out a copy at the start of freshman year of high school to fully understand what your competition will be like. You can't get to senior year and decide it's time to apply."

■ The Gates Millennium Scholar Program

(gmsp.org)

Established in 1999, this need and merit-based program was initially funded by a \$1 billion grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Eligibility requires applicants to have a cumulative high school GPA of 3.3 and be an ethnic minority.

With 60,000 applicants, and 1,000 student winners annually, the contest awards a full ride from undergraduate degree (no cap on tuition) and capped tuition amounts for graduate school for any major in six fields of study, according to Ellis. Ellis earned roughly \$200,000 toward her undergraduate and Master's degrees.

"This scholarship application was comprehensive and essay-heavy. I thought I had a shot, because my brother had won the same scholarship as well. He pushed me to apply," says Ellis.

For the essay question on overcoming obstacles, Ellis offers this winning advice.

"Students must tell their personal stories and dive deep," she says. "Don't be afraid to get personal. It can be tedious and overwhelming to draft and review essay after essay, but this is a full ride you're striving for so don't rush. I went through this cycle several times before I was satisfied that I'd done my best. Each essay should stand strong on its own."

And most importantly, make sure it's clean. "I stressed over the details — the typos and grammatical errors," says Ellis. "For every essay, I had at least six people read over it and provide feedback, including my mom, my English teacher, community people, other teachers and a college financial aid counselor."

Other advice Ellis gives for scholarship applications in general? "It's range vs. intensity," she says. "There should be variety, but focus on a few key activities you love. Don't do things just for applications. Find things you want to naturally spend more time on and you'll achieve and accomplish more."

Another tip is to strategically choose the folks who write your recommendation letters.

"When picking people, find those who know you well," says Ellis. "My math teacher was also my cross-country track coach. I'd struggled in math and went for extra help every morning with him. He had a chance to see me when things were hard and could attest to my work ethic on my essays."

And most importantly, don't get down if you're rejected.

"Sometimes, you could be the perfect candidate for someone, but a judge could be in a bad mood that day," Ellis said. "It could be nothing you did."



Kristina Ellis' undergraduate and graduate degrees were paid for with half-a-million in scholarships.

Marisa Mynarek

Scholarships for New York students

■ NYS Memorial Scholarships

www.hesc.ny.gov/content.nsf/SFC/NYS_Memorial_Scholarships

Available for financial dependents of firemen, police officers, and emergency medical service workers who've died in the line of duty while serving New York State. Awards (up to \$20,290) cover up to four years of tuition at an accredited state or city university, plus non-tuition costs including room and board, books, and transportation. Applicants must submit FAFSA and TAP applications before the June 30th deadline.

■ NYS Scholarship for Academic Excellence

www.hesc.com/content.nsf/SFC/NYS_Scholarships_for_Academic_Excellence

Awarded to 8,000 exceptional high school graduates annually, with a maximum value of \$1,500 (renewable for up to four years) depending on grades and Regents exams. Applicants must be NY residents who are enrolled full-time in an undergraduate program at an accredited college or university.

■ The NYS Math and Science Teaching Incentive Scholarship

www.hesc.ny.gov/content.nsf/SFC/NYS_Math_and_Science_Teaching_Incentive_Scholarships

Designed to inspire students to pursue careers as secondary math and science teachers. Awards are \$5,295 per academic year. Applicants must agree to serve a five-year term as a math or science teacher at a critical-need educational institution.

■ The NYS World Trade Center Memorial Scholarship

www.hesc.com/content.nsf/SFC/NYS_World_Trade_Center_Memorial_Scholarship

Created for financial dependents of victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, including those who perished in the search and rescue efforts. Tuition, room, board and allowances for books, supplies and transportation are covered by this award for any accredited college or university. Maximum total annual award for students living on campus for the 2013-14 academic year is \$21,250; the maximum total annual award for commuter students for the 2013-14 academic year is \$14,120.

■ Veterans Tuition Awards

www.hesc.ny.gov/content.nsf/SFC/Veterans_Tuition_Awards

Awarded for full- and part-time study to eligible veterans, discharged under honorable conditions who are matriculated in an approved program at an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting institution or in an approved vocational training program in New York State. Students must reapply for this award each academic year. For the 2013-14 academic year, awards will be set at \$5,895 or tuition, whichever is less. All applications must be completed by June 30. Restrictions apply.

■ JPMorgan Chase Thomas G. Labrecque Smart Start Scholarship Program

www.jpmorgan.com/pages/smartstart/ny
Awarded to 10 high school graduating seniors across New York City annually. Award covers a full-tuition scholarship (less financial aid) to area colleges including Barnard, Baruch, Columbia, Fordham and New York University. In addition, smart scholars are provided a paid internship at JPMorgan Chase.

■ Columbus Citizens Foundation College Scholarship Program

www.columbuscitizensfd.org/scholarships/scholarships.html

The Columbus Citizens Foundation administers scholarship programs that help students in programs in the arts. Recipients receive a four-year scholarship that helps underwrite the cost of their college tuition. Applicants must be seniors in high school, of Italian descent, with a GPA of 3.0 or higher who are from households where the total gross income does not exceed \$25,000 per capita are eligible.

■ New York Women in Communications Foundation

www.nywici.org/foundation/scholarships
Each year, this organization awards 15-20 scholarship to graduating high school seniors and undergraduate and graduate students who intend to pursue or further a career in communications. Awards of \$2500, \$5000 and \$10,000 are granted based on academic excellence, need and a demonstrated commitment.

■ TELACU Scholarship Program

telacu.com/site/en/home/education/programs/college.html

Founded in 1968, TELACU is the largest Community Development Corporation in the US. They provide awards ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 to college students in California, Illinois, Texas and New York. Low-income, first-generation college students with a minimum of a 2.5 GPA may be eligible to apply. Priority is given to applicants majoring in the STEM and business fields. The application deadline for new applicants is Feb. 28, 2014. TELACU provides other target scholarships, including:

Toyota/TELACU Scholarships (College juniors and seniors preferred) Funded in partnership with Toyota, scholarships of up to \$5,000 are awarded to students majoring in business or engineering disciplines.

Citi/TELACU Scholars Mentoring Program (College seniors only) Students pursuing business-related degrees can receive up to \$5,000 in financial resources. They're also matched with Citi executives who provide guidance within the financial services industry.

■ Health Careers Program

Along with the White Memorial Medical Center, TELACU provides community college nursing school students with support services and resources, including financial assistance of up to \$9,000.

BY ERIKA PRAFDER

To save money on the road to a college degree, launching your college career at a community-based institution is an option worth considering.

With lower tuition than most public four-year or private academic institutions, community colleges offer an economical starting point. While there, students can home in on their desired field of study, earn an associate degree and pursue a bachelor's or higher degree by transferring out elsewhere.

"I've been working in higher education for 16 years and at Brooklyn College for the past two. Our transfer student population (1,900) was larger than our freshmen population (1,000) this past fall. It was our largest transfer class so far," says Maria Campanella, manager of the Transfer Student Services Center for Brooklyn College.

The TSSC is responsible for processing all transfer credits for courses taken prior to attending Brooklyn College, including AP, IB, CLEP and college courses taken while still in high school. The center serves as a liaison to all transfer-related offices on campus, including admissions, credit transfer and financial aid. Peer mentoring is offered here as well.

Through the TSSC website, students from other CUNY colleges or non-CUNY institutions can access an online transfer credit tool, which is regularly updated, that lists courses that have already been evaluated from your school for Brooklyn College equivalencies.

For more information, visit: www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/

A SAVE SITUATION

Getting a lower-cost associate's degree first — then transferring to a larger school — is a great way to stay off the Ramen noodles

about/administration/enrollment/transferservices.php

If your college financing strategy entails transferring out of a community college to a 4-year institution, you'll want to investigate which institutions have articulation agreements in place. Such partnerships provide a smooth transition for community college graduates into four-year colleges.

Typically they either guarantee that the associate degree will satisfy all freshman and sophomore general education requirements at the four-year university or specify a list of courses that will be treated as equivalent.

"We have them with all com-

munity CUNY schools and with some non-CUNY schools. It varies based upon majors," Campanella says. "For example, we have articulation agreements in place for those pursuing associates degrees in education, accounting, television & radio, and speech communication."

Typically, those majors that have more core requirements and less electives benefit from articulation agreements the most, according to the administrator.



"Following an articulation agreement, you can decrease the amount of time at a four-year institution and maximize the number of transfer credits. It also facilitates good communication between the college's transfer and admission counselors, which is important," says Campanella. "You'll better ensure that you're not taking courses at the two-year college level that wouldn't be applicable to your degree."

At LaGuardia Community College, with tuition hovering at \$4,200 annually, "You'll save a lot here, in comparison to \$8,800 at a four-year public institution or \$30,000 at a private university," says Dr. Paul Arcario, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at the school.

"All of our transfer degrees are articulated with all the other CUNY schools. Every time we develop a program, we articulate it with another CUNY school," Arcario says, as well as places like Fordham and Syracuse.

"If you do your first two years here, it's an excellent deal, as all of our 60 credits transfer toward the associate or higher degree that you pursue elsewhere."

And you might decide two years is enough for a good career.

"I'd consider the field of nursing, for example," Arcario says. "With a two-year degree, you can attain a high-level professional job in the \$70,000 range. Radiation technology is another health-related, two-year degree program that can lead to jobs commanding upward of \$40,000."

How parents can help

Savings are the obvious way to pay for college, although many people feel they've done too little, too late. Not so, says Carolyn Berkowitz, president of the Capital One Foundation.

"Having just \$500 in a college savings account has been shown to result in a child being six times more likely to go to college than someone with nothing," Berkowitz says. "Having the account in their name gives a sense of ownership and creates a mindset that results in success. The behavior of saving makes a huge difference."

The tax breaks on "529 accounts" make choosing them first a no-brainer.

New York's 529 College Savings Program is called NY 529 Direct Plan — www.nysaves.org/content/investments.html

The plan lets you save for a child, grandchild, friend, or yourself. The money can be spent at an eligible two- or four-year college, vocational/technical school, or graduate school anywhere in the U.S. or abroad, for tuition and other obvious college expenses.

In a 529 savings plan:

- Earnings grow federally tax deferred.

- Qualified withdrawals are federally tax-free.

- You can contribute up to \$70,000 in a single year (\$140,000 for a married couple filing jointly) for each beneficiary without incurring the federal gift tax as long as you don't make any other gifts to that child for five years.

- New York taxpayers can deduct up to \$5,000 (\$10,000 for a married couple filing jointly) in contributions to the Direct Plan on their state income tax return each year. Open an account with just \$25.

- For every \$1,000 you invest, you'll pay \$1.70 in fees per year.

- Relatives and friends can open an account for the same child up to \$375,000.

- Investments are managed by Vanguard, from a choice of 16 investment options.

Grandparent Gifts

Be careful — generous grandparents can actually reduce a student's financial aid. A gift given before college to the student shows up as an asset. Given during college, it's untaxed income. Put in a 529, it's only assessed at 5%, which is better. But it might be better to give the money after graduation to pay off loans.

4 ways to cut costs

It may sound obvious, but one of the biggest mistakes students make is overspending. Even if grants and scholarships make tuition negligible, the other costs of college — room, board, textbooks — quickly add up. Here's are some tips to keep your budget balanced.

Get a job!

Studies show that students who work 10-20 hours a week actually have a higher GPA on average than students who don't hold jobs while in school. Twenty weeks of working 40 hours at \$10 an hour is \$8,000 before taxes. Remember, the average in-state tuition at a public university is only \$8,655 per year. You also learn other lessons in college — like priorities, goal-setting, and time-management.

Rent Textbooks

"Instead of spending \$1,000 a year buying new and used text books, a student could save half that by renting them — that's \$2,000 over four years," says Alan Martin from Campus Book Rentals. The company tracks millions of books, including \$200 engineering manuals and classics such as "The Art of Public Speaking" by Stephen Lucas. The hard copy costs \$75, but CBR rents it for \$35 for

the semester.

Tablets aren't the answer, either. "Electronic books cost twice what paper ones cost," he says.

Renting, however, is entrenched. "We have a whole generation that has graduated college by renting their textbooks."

Frugal Living

"You'd be amazed how many grad students think they should be living alone in a \$2,000 apartment," says Alice Murphy, director of financial aid management at CUNY. "Trim your costs! Get a roommate, and a subway pass or ride a bike. If CUNY gives you \$900 a month in aid for housing, and you borrow more to live alone, your debt goes up and that debt becomes a liability for the college. We get a default rate and no college wants to get thrown out of the federal program."

Get some extra credit

This starts in high school — many colleges accept "4" or "5" scores on AP exams as credit for university-level courses, which can cut into your requirements to graduate. And if you can squeeze in an extra class a semester, it's possible to get out in less than four years.

— Joseph Gallivan

Graduate Research Fellowships

(continued from page 9)

differences in the self-assembly of the Beta 9H peptide.

With chemistry professor Teresa Badosz, she explored the synthesis of copper-based metallic organic framework composites, which could improve environmental sustainability. She had a summer internship at Merck, related to vaccine research. As president of City's chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, she helped introduce minority middle-school students to potential opportunities in science and engineering.

Tayyaba Toseef, a master's student at Hunter College, has a National Science Foundation Fellowship to pursue research that could point the way toward therapies that may reverse the degenerative process in multiple sclerosis patients and regrow the myelin that their central nervous systems have lost.

MS is a disease in which the protective myelin sheath surrounding nerves is destroyed. This severely limits nerve function and causes cognitive and motor defects. Myelin is like the insulation surrounding electric wires: If it's destroyed, the wires can't function properly.

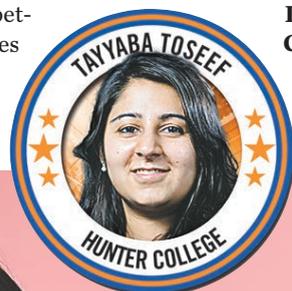
Toseef's research proposal aims for a better understanding of how oligodendrocytes cells that myelinate neurons (that is, put the insulation on nerves) in the central

nervous system — function over the course of brain development. Her goal is to knock out a key gene that governs formation of oligodendrocytes and then compare myelination in normal mice and those missing the gene.

Toseef is working under the mentorship of Hunter assistant professor of biological sciences Carmen Melendez-Vasquez. "If we can identify the molecular mechanisms involved in nerve myelination, we can manipulate them to occur in adulthood and induce remyelination in conditions where myelin is depleted," she says.

Toseef began elementary school in her native Pakistan and then in Saudi Arabia. Her family moved to Delaware when she was in fifth grade, and she lived there until earning her bachelor's degree in biology from Delaware State University in 2011.

Toseef has previously worked on two projects studying brain development. She hopes to enter a Ph.D. program to pursue a career in academic research. In addition to lab and coursework, she has conducted classroom demonstrations of neuroscience topics for fifth-graders in Harlem Central Middle School.

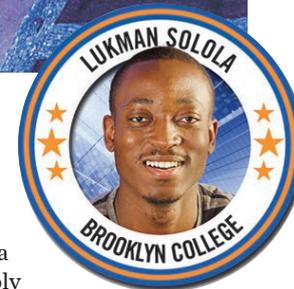


Lukman Solola, Brooklyn College, B.S. in chemistry, 2012, now in a chemistry doctoral program at the

University of Pennsylvania — won a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to help him search for an environmentally friendly way to extract rare-earth metals.

Rare-earth metals — including dysprosium, europium, neodymium, terbium and yttrium — are in critically short supply. They are needed, though, to produce cellphones, electronic equipment and clean-energy products such as wind turbines, electric vehicles, photovoltaic thin-film solar cells and fluorescent lights.

Despite the term "rare earth," these



and similar metallic elements are not actually rare. They are, though, difficult to extract from the ores that contain them. China has built a near-monopoly with an extraction process that begins with rocks, but then uses chemicals that are not environmentally friendly. Solola is looking for an alternative, cleaner way to do this. In the United States, he emphasizes, "we have a vibrant, environmentally friendly policy."

In his laboratory, he emphasizes, he deals with reagents and compounds rather than rocks. His mentor is Eric J. Schelter, an assistant professor of inorganic and materials chemistry.

Solola was born in Nigeria and moved to Brooklyn about six years ago, after finishing high school. In the summer of 2011, as an undergraduate, he interned at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. The summer before he worked on research on breast cancer vaccines at Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

It was a high school chemistry teacher who motivated Solola to pursue chemistry. Now he volunteers at a Philadelphia high school, helping to teach 11th- and 12th- grade chemistry.



BY JOSEPH GALLIVAN

Most experts agree you should take out private loans for college only as a last resort.

The borrowing limits are higher, as are the interest rates, which could lead to you putting your bank manager's kid through college by the time it's paid off. First try the student loan calculator at MappingYourFuture.org. Borrowing \$10,000 could cost you an extra \$3,800 over 120 months.

Other tips:

■ Use a credit union, or better, check to see if your college is affiliated with a credit union. The rates are better. Search cuStudentLoans.com

■ As well as an ID and a Social Security number, a typical student borrower will need three years of established credit and a job that pays at least \$15,000 annually. Without that you'll need a cosigner, usually a parent, who agrees to take on your loan if you default.

■ Don't settle for the first loan you're accepted for. You often don't know the rate until you're accepted, so hit up a few lenders and compare rates.

■ Read the fine print. Like a mortgage, a private college loan can have many variables and hidden fees.

There are search engines just for loans:

CertifiedPrivateLoans.com
Alltuition.com
Estudentloan.com

Is it all worth it? The banks lending money of course say yes. Says Carolyn Berkowitz, president of the Capital One Foundation, "We believe investing in higher education is important, and we know people with a bachelor's degree can earn up to \$1 million more over their lifetime than someone with just a high school diploma."

GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZED LOANS

After filling out your FAFSA, fafsa.ed.gov, the government will tell you if you're eligible for a direct subsidized loan.

There are also Perkins Loans, targeted at students with exceptional financial need. They have a fixed interest rate of 5 percent and are administered by colleges. During the admissions process, ask to speak to the financial aid office to see if you qualify.

Direct PLUS Loans are for those with a few extra years on them: graduate or professional degree students and parents of dependent undergraduate students. The US Department of Education is the lender through



**When all else fails —
GET A
LOAN
But don't
over
borrow,
really**

the schools that participate. You can't have an "adverse credit history." The maximum is the student's cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received. The interest rate for Direct PLUS Loans is a fixed rate of 6.41 percent.

WORK-STUDY

The federal government gives you some money for school — and you work off the debt. Work-study is awarded according to need, and is based on your FAFSA.

The program encourages community service work and

work related to the student's course of study.

The benefits:

■ Jobs are usually some sort of office job, as opposed to outdoor, trade or janitorial.

■ Jobs are often on campus — easier to reach than working fast food or retail and then commuting.

■ Hours are flexible — college staff are sympathetic to students who can only work in short bursts between classes, or who need time off for a big exam.

■ The work usually relates to your course of study — such as government positions or nonprofit organizations.

■ Wages are paid directly to the student at least once a month, and rates are usually above minimum wage.

This is another award that is funded on a first-come, first-served basis. So do the FAFSA ASAP.

MILITARY DISCOUNT

Under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, student loans taken out before enlisting are capped at 6 percent interest — both federal and private student loans — while you are serving on active duty or are on National Guard duty.

Helpful links

Bookmark these sites as you make your financial plans

FEDERAL AID

■ For the all-purpose federal loan and aid form, use only fafsa.ed.gov. Other lookalike sites might try to charge you a fee.

■ The government provides information about the FAFSA and other financial aid options on its Federal Student Aid website at: www.studentaid.ed.gov.

■ A user-friendly English and Spanish guide to the FAFSA form produced by the New School: www.newschool.edu/milano/nyc affairs/documents/FAFSA_HowToGuide.pdf

■ See if you are eligible for a federal Pell Grant by using the Federal Pell Grant Lifetime Eligibility calculator studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships/pell/calculate-eligibility

NEW YORK AID SITES

■ NY's 529 College Savings Program: www.nysaves.org/content/investments.html

■ New York State College Tuition Tax Credit/Deduction: www.hesc.ny.gov/content.nsf/SFC/NYS_College_Tuition_Tax_CreditDeduction

■ New York State Grants, Scholarships and Awards: www.hesc.ny.gov/content.nsf/SFC/Grants_Scholarships_and_Awards

■ NYC's CollegeLine, a new general help site by Goddard, GradNYC and DOE/CUNY: http://nyccollegeline.org/

MILITARY AID

■ TodaysMilitary lists educational benefits for service members. www.todaysmilitary.com/military-benefits/education-support

OTHER RESOURCES

■ Pace University made a series of videos to teach financial literacy around paying for college: pace.edu/financial-aid/content/video-tutorials

■ Let's Get Ready provides low-income high school students with free SAT preparation, admissions counseling and other support services needed to gain admission to and graduate from college. www.letsgetready.org/

■ The 2013 edition of Kal Chany's book "Paying for College Without Going Broke" (Princeton Review) is an excellent, in-depth guide written in plain English.

Stuck? Talk to a human being: Federal Student Aid Information Center Telephone: (800) 433-3243 or (800) 4FED-AID

HELP IS ON THE WAY

More Than 700 Students Join New CUNY Service Corps

Standing at the 9/11 Memorial in Lower Manhattan, John Jay College of Criminal Justice student Andrei Stump is ready to help when the victims' families need him. As a volunteer member of the new CUNY Service Corps initiative, Stump's duties include answering visitor questions, explaining the significance of the two pools at the memorial, and finding names on the wall of nearly 3,000 victims. Stump said many break down in tears upon tracing an imprint of their loved one's name. For them, he provides compassion.

"I cannot describe the feelings that I have," said Stump, 24. "Just to see the people's reaction, the emotion on people's faces and the joy when they leave the memorial. Even though they come sad, they reflect and you're able to make an impact."

In an unprecedented campaign of public service, Stump and more than 700 students from the City University of New York have been deployed to work with community groups, nonprofit organizations, museums and government agencies as part of an ambitious project known as CUNY Service Corps.

CUNY Service Corps students are guiding visitors at the 9/11 Memorial in Manhattan; caring for the homeless at a shelter in the Bronx; planting new gardens in Van Cortlandt Park; providing nutritional education to mothers in Bedford Stuyvesant; helping senior citizens in Chinatown; counseling young ex-offenders in Brooklyn courts; teaching children about animals at the Queens Zoo; and assisting families and businesses recovering from Hurricane

Sandy throughout the city.

While other universities offer service opportunities, the CUNY Service Corps project is unprecedented in both size and scope with goals of career advancement, promoting civic responsibility and improving the city.

Rachel Stephenson, director of CUNY Service Corps said: "It's a chance for CUNY to be visibly part of the city's health and well-being."

Lydia Amoa-Owusu, a junior at Borough of

Manhattan Community College, said she joined the CUNY Service Corps because of her concern over the rising number of homeless in the city. She and four other CUNY students were assigned to work at Susan's Place, a shelter in the Bronx managed by Care for the Homeless.

"We live in a society where we think everything is going well and that's not the case," she said.

As members of the CUNY Service Corps, students gain valuable real-life work experience in addressing some of the city's most pressing problems while earning \$12 an hour, and in some cases gaining college credit. Service Corps students work an average of 12 hours a week, with assignments lasting 24 weeks over two semesters.

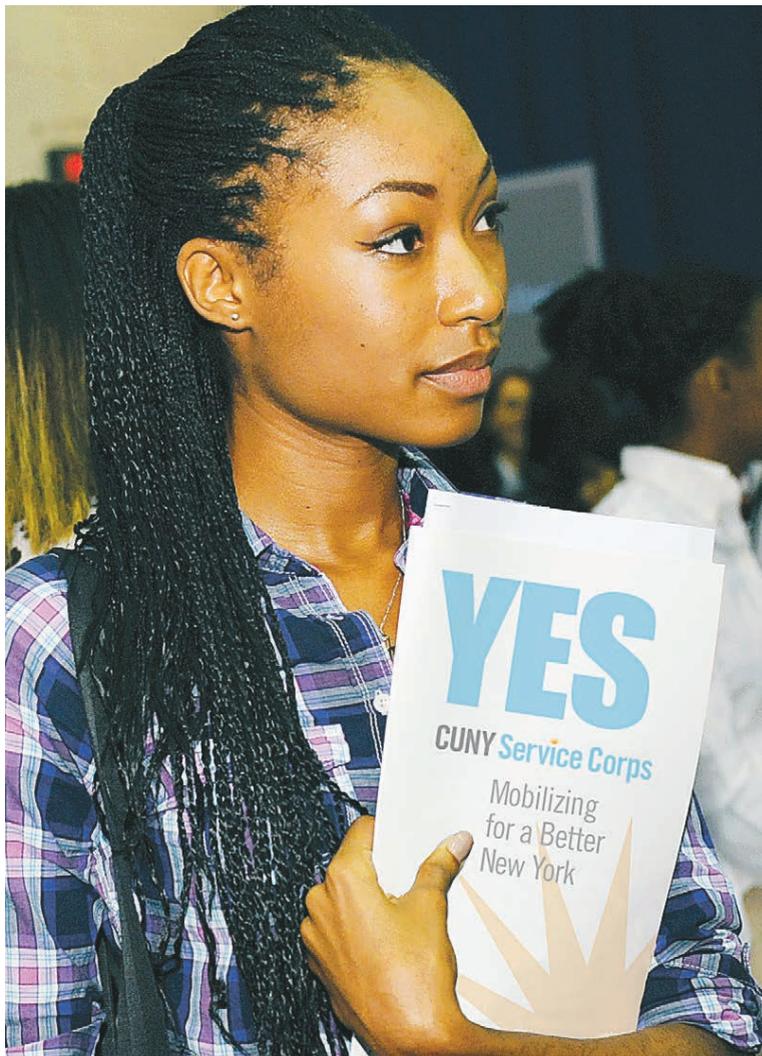
Over 1,900 CUNY students applied to participate in the Service Corps program. Students were required to be full time, with a GPA of at least 2.5 and at least 24 college credits earned.

Students in the CUNY Service Corps were selected from seven CUNY colleges including Borough of Manhattan Community College, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Queens College, New York City College of Technology, Kingsborough Community College, Lehman College and College of Staten Island.

Kenneth Holmes, dean of students at John Jay College, said being a part of Service Corps provided many working-class students with the opportunity to help while earning a paycheck.

"We have a lot of low-income, a lot of first-generation college students, who would love to be involved in the community but many times, they can't afford it because they have to work," Holmes said.

Of the 160 agencies that applied for the program, CUNY faculty and staff chose 95 organizations and nonprofit groups including the 9/11 Memorial, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Brooklyn Community Services, Care for the Homeless, Visiting Nurse Service of New York, Literacy Partners and Green City Force.



For her CUNY Service Corps assignment, John Jay College student Kelsha Sanchez will work at Franklin Furnace arts organization, assisting artists who focus on environmental issues.





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Lawmakers Question Cuomo Plan for Homeland Security School

By Mike Vilensky
February 17, 2014

State lawmakers are questioning a Cuomo administration proposal to create a new college for homeland security and emergency preparedness that will cost at least \$15 million.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has earmarked the funds in his state budget proposal for what he called "the nation's first college dedicated solely to emergency preparedness and homeland security."

But higher-education advocates say he hasn't provided enough information about it

We don't know what the \$15 million is there for," said Assemblyman Albert Stirpe, a central New York Democrat who is part of the higher-education committee. "Is it to build a building? To put a program together?" he said, adding: "I don't know that we have to create a university" for security and preparedness.

Mr. Cuomo first brought the plan up publicly during a presentation for Vice President Joe Biden in January, saying there would be "a need" for it. In his state of the state address, Mr. Cuomo said that Raymond Kelly, the former New York Police Department commissioner, would be a "special adviser" to the school.

Mr. Kelly didn't respond to requests for comment, and Mr. Cuomo's office didn't provide information about his role or pay.

While many lawmakers are generally supportive of amping up coursework in homeland security and emergency preparedness, they said they don't know whether Mr. Cuomo is proposing a brick-and-mortar campus, Internet courses—or both. And they aren't sure taxpayer money is well spent on a school they say is currently ambiguous and potentially unnecessary.

Matt Wing, a spokesman for Mr. Cuomo, said the state has had nine federally declared disasters in three years and is a potential target for man-made threats.

"New York must have a world-class emergency response network, and the new college will help train aspiring professionals, policy leaders, emergency managers and first responders," he said.

Mr. Wing said Mr. Cuomo's office briefed legislative staff about the college and said the administration is "in constant contact with legislative leaders on this issue."

Some lawmakers are skeptical. Assemblywoman Barbara Lipton, a member of the Assembly's higher-education committee, said she needs "to see some rationale for this—

the sooner the better. Fifteen million dollars is not chump change." Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, the chairwoman of the Assembly's higher-education committee, said that among her concerns is that there are already schools with related programs.

New York-based schools that offer programs in these areas include John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Long Island University, and Adelphi University.

Ms. Glick said she also has concerns about how existing higher-education institutions fared in Mr. Cuomo's budget proposal. Various school officials expressed "very legitimate concerns" with her, she said.

Lawmakers' concerns about the school could lead to a showdown in the Legislature, which must approve the state budget.

The proposed school also has its champions. Michael Chertoff, former U.S. secretary of homeland security, said demand for expertise in homeland security and emergency preparedness increased over the past decade.

"It isn't something where you want someone who just takes a course and thinks they're an emergency manager," he said.

Mr. Chertoff said training in these areas typically entails learning how to inform the public about emergencies, having biology expertise for public-health issues and understanding things like improvised explosive devices. Mr. Cuomo's office didn't elaborate on the coursework.

State Sen. Greg Ball, chairman of the Veterans, Homeland Security, HOMS -26.56% and Military Affairs Committee, said he "applauds" the proposal. He said details will be fleshed out over time and he is hoping to see "an initial campus, and satellite campuses across the state."

A spokesman for the state's university system, SUNY, said Chancellor Nancy Zimpher supports Mr. Cuomo's proposal.

Senator opposes Cuomo plan to expand college programs in prisons

By Michael Gormley
February 17, 2014

A Republican New York State senator said he's opposed to Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's plan to provide more college programs to prisoners paid for by taxpayers.

"I support rehabilitation and reduced recidivism, but not on the taxpayer's dime when so many individuals and families in New York are struggling to meet the ever-rising costs of higher education," said Sen. Mark Grisanti (R-Buffalo).

Grisanti said he opposes Cuomo's proposal released on Sunday in part because financial aid for traditional graduate students has been cut.

Cuomo's proposal to expand free college education in prisons is part of his 2014-15 executive budget, which is now being considered by the Legislature.

Cuomo said the state pays \$60,000 a year to keep a prisoner incarcerated and 40 percent of them return to prison. Current college programs in prison cost taxpayers just \$5,000 a year per prisoner and reduce recidivism, he said.

He didn't release the cost of the program or how many prisoners could seek associate's or bachelor's degrees through his expanded college program.

Cuomo made the announcement at the annual meeting of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus in Albany that represents a key constituency for the Democrat, who is running for re-election.

Tuition costs traditional students \$6,910 a year at the State University of New York and \$5,800 at the City University of New York. For state residents, the total cost of attending SUNY or CUNY away from home is typically more than \$21,000 a year, according to the CUNY website.

Traditional students and their families are also experiencing automatic annual tuition increases under the state's "rational tuition" program.

Baruch College Student's Death Is Ruled a Homicide

By The Associated Press

February 14, 2014

The death of a New York City college student in what the authorities have called a fraternity ritual has been ruled a homicide, a Pennsylvania coroner said on Friday.

The Luzerne County coroner's office referred all inquiries about the Dec. 8 death of the student, Chun Deng, 19, a Baruch College freshman, to the police.

The authorities say that Mr. Deng, known as Michael, sustained a fatal brain injury after participating in an initiation ritual in the snow with three other pledges at a home in Tunkhannock Township, Pa., about 100 miles west of New York City in the Pocono Mountains.

Blindfolded and wearing a backpack containing 20 pounds of sand, Mr. Deng's objective was to make it to a certain member without being tackled by other members of Pi Delta Psi, according to the authorities. But Mr. Deng was shoved, apparently fell and struck his head, the Pocono Mountain Regional Police wrote in an affidavit.

The affidavit said that instead of calling 911, fraternity members took Mr. Deng inside, changed his clothes and conducted Google searches about his symptoms before taking him to the closest hospital, where he died the next day. While they were at the hospital, one fraternity brother called back to the home to tell the members to dispose of "all fraternity memorabilia and items," the affidavit said.

David Christine, the Monroe County district attorney, has said he plans to file criminal charges.

Baruch representatives did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Death of Baruch College freshman in hazing ritual ruled a homicide

By Larry McShane and JoeMcDoanld
February 15, 2014

The December hazing death of a battered Baruch College fraternity pledge is now officially a homicide with plenty of suspects — but still not a single arrest.

Authorities warned that Friday's cause of death finding by a Pennsylvania coroner would not accelerate their probe into the killing of Chun (Michael) Deng during a Pi Delta Psi ritual.

“We’re not any closer or quicker to a charging decision,” said Monroe County District Attorney E. David Christine Jr. after the coroner’s ruling. “The decision is not imminent.”

About 30 fraternity members were at a Pocono Mountains rental home on Dec. 8 when Deng, 19, died of severe head trauma after he was repeatedly tackled in a frozen backyard.

The freshman was hit while blindfolded and lugging 20 pounds of sand in a knapsack and playing the so-called “glass ceiling” game with his brothers.

Pocono Mountain Regional Police were still interviewing fraternity members as the investigation stretched into its third month, said Christine.

Baruch College, in a statement, said its own probe was continuing — as was its cooperation with Pennsylvania authorities.

The coroner’s ruling means Deng died “by the hands of another” — and came as no surprise to authorities, according to Christine. Charges could include everything from evidence tampering to manslaughter. Pennsylvania also has a misdemeanor anti-hazing statute.

Court papers indicated the fraternity members mounted a botched coverup to keep investigators from learning the details of Deng’s death.

Fraternity National Executive Vice President Andy Meng was suspected of leading efforts to conceal what happened, a source told the Daily News.

But his attorney dismissed that allegation Friday and said the homicide finding would not affect Meng.

“He wasn’t even in Pennsylvania,” said lawyer Todd Greenberg. “He had nothing to do with this tragic incident. He’s done nothing that would give him any criminal responsibility in this matter.”

The members of Pi Delta Psi left Deng unconscious and unresponsive for more than an hour inside a rented home in rural Tunkhannock Township, Pa., before taking him for help.

They changed him into dry clothes and frantically Googled his symptoms — and then brought him to a hospital, according to a police affidavit seeking a search warrant.

Deng, of Queens, was one of four fraternity pledges brought to the home.

Baruch frat pledge who died after hazing declared homicide victim

By Sean Piccoli
February 14, 2014

A 19-year-old Baruch College freshman who died in a brutal fraternity hazing ritual on a winter retreat to the Poconos has been declared a homicide victim, authorities said on Friday.

The finding by the Luzerne County, Pa., Coroner's Office ramps up the potential severity of the charges against his classmates who took part in the lethal initiation rite, Pocono Mountain Regional Police Chief Harry Lewis told NBC News he will meet with the Monroe County District Attorney's office next week to determine how to proceed.

Pi Delta Psi pledge Chun "Michael" Deng, 19, was forced on Dec. 8 to sprint blindfolded with a weighted backpack across the yard of a house, in the cold, while other members of the Pi Delta Psi fraternity tackled him repeatedly.

Deng and three other pledges were being initiated at a house in Tunkhannock Township, Pa., about 100 miles west of New York City, used by the Baruch chapter of Pi Delta Psi.

As many as 30 students were at the house for the weekend.

When Deng collapsed, he was carried inside, but nobody with him called 911, and an hour or more lapsed before the stricken pledge was driven to a hospital 30 miles away, authorities said at the time.

Deng was placed on life support but died the next day of what authorities called "major brain trauma."

"He got tackled too many times," Monroe County District Attorney E. David Christine said at the time.

Afterward, Baruch College permanently banned the campus chapter, and the national Pi Delta Psi organization revoked the Baruch chapter's charter.

Efforts by the Post to reach Pi Delta Psi national officers on Friday were unsuccessful.

How much collateral damage the tragedy will wreak on elite students and families connected to the college and the fraternity is still a mystery. In January, the brother of U.S. Rep. Grace Meng was described as "a person of interest" in the investigation, a Pennsylvania law enforcement source told the Post.

Andy Meng, 28, the younger brother of the Flushing Democrat and, at the time, the president of the Pi Delta Psi national fraternity — could face charges if he helped delay

medical treatment for Deng, the source said in January.

Pocono Mountain Regional Police and the Monroe County district attorney were examining phone records that show Meng, who was not at the house at the time, in contact with the Baruch frat boys “immediately after” the hazing, the source said.

Meng, 28, of Bayside, is also being probed for whether or not he ordered the destruction of evidence after the incident.

It was Meng who announced in a Dec. 16 statement that “Baruch Colony has violated the values and rules of our organization, including our strict no-hazing policy,”; adding, “As such, they shall no longer be recognized as having any association with Pi Delta Psi.”

He is no longer listed anywhere on the fraternity’s Web site on the leadership pages that include the fraternity’s national executive board, national cabinet, regional director of chapter services, and board of directors.

The national fraternity describes itself on Facebook as a cultural group promoting “Asian Awareness” as well as “the continual growth and development of the individual through Academic Achievement, Cultural Awareness, Righteousness, Friendship and Loyalty while fostering ethical behavior, leadership, and philanthropy.”

A Column Lamenting the Disappearing Public Intellectual Touches a Nerve

by Nick DeSantis
February 17, 2014

Nicholas Kristof of *The New York Times* riled many scholars with a column in Sunday's newspaper that laments what he perceives as the disappearance of intellectuals from the national stage.

Mr. Kristof writes that there are some exceptions to his assertion but adds that, "over all, there are, I think, fewer public intellectuals on American university campuses today than a generation ago."

"A basic challenge is that Ph.D. programs have fostered a culture that glorifies arcane unintelligibility while disdaining impact and audience," he argues. "This culture of exclusivity is then transmitted to the next generation through the publish-or-perish tenure process. Rebels are too often crushed or driven away."

Many observers took to Twitter (see the hashtag #EngagedAcademics) and their blogs to fire back at Mr. Kristof. Here's a look at some of their reactions.

Kristof 'Doesn't Know What He's Talking About' — Corey Robin, an associate professor of political science at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York and CUNY's Graduate Center, responds on his blog. He writes: "Kristof need only open the pages of *The Nation*, the *New York Review of Books*, the *London Review of Books*, the *Boston Review*, *The American Conservative*, *Dissent*, *The American Prospect*—even the newspaper for which he writes: today's *Times* features three opinion columns and posts by academics—to see that our public outlets are well populated by professors." *Corey Robin*

'A Merciless Exercise in Stereotyping' — Erik Voeten, an associate professor of geopolitics and global justice at Georgetown University, responds to Mr. Kristof's column in a post for *The Monkey Cage*, a popular political-science blog hosted by *The Washington Post*. He calls Mr. Kristof's column well meaning but overly dramatic. "It's like saying that op-ed writers just get their stories from cab drivers and pay little or no attention to facts," he writes. "There are hundreds of academic political scientists whose research is far from irrelevant and who seek to communicate their insights to the general public via blogs, social media, op-eds, online lectures, and so on." *The Monkey Cage*

'A Somewhat Misguided View of Faculty Engagement' — Robert J. Kelchen, an assistant professor of higher education at Seton Hall University, writes that Mr. Kristof's column "overstates the problem" but is "a worthwhile wake-up call for us to step up for efforts for public engagement." He offers some suggestions for what academics could do to gain the attention of policy makers and elite news outlets. *Kelchen on Education*

A ‘Blanket Condemnation of Ph.D.-Program Culture’ — Chuck Pearson, an associate professor of chemistry and physics at Virginia Intermont College, says that Mr. Kristof’s column fixates on the stereotype of the “pipe-smoking, office-dwelling” full professor, and improperly assumes that many different types of colleges do not exist. “We should be saluting people who go that extra mile in outreach, and who do their part to take the caricature of the college professor and shatter it,” he writes. “That, at the end of the day, is what I wish Nick Kristof would have done.” *Another Fine Mess*

Mr. Kristof responded to the wave of criticism in a post on his Facebook page. “Some perceived me as denouncing professors,” his post says in part. “No, I’m saying bravo to those professors who try to engage—but all too often they get crushed or discouraged by the tenure publish-or-perish system.”

“I was struck that the head of *Foreign Policy*, responding my piece, noted that it’s dialing back contributions by academics,” he adds. “So I think there needs to be systemic restructuring to change the culture and consider impact in tenure decisions as well as obscure, unintelligible research.”

Correction (2/17/2014, 11:22 a.m.): Because of a coding error, this post originally omitted *The American Conservative* from a list of publications that Corey Robin cited as featuring articles by academics. The post has been updated to reflect this correction.

‘The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation’

by David Brion Davis

by James Oakes

February 14, 2014

Harriet Jacobs was 15 years old when her master began making sexual advances toward her. As his slave, Jacobs was supposed to submit. “He told me I was his property,” she recalled in her harrowing autobiography, “that I must be subject to his will in all things.”

David Brion Davis does not quote this particular passage in his own moving account of Jacobs’s life as a slave, but it confirms the central theme of his new book, indeed of nearly all his books. Ever since 1966, when Davis published his magisterial, Pulitzer Prize-winning survey of “The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture,” the “problem” that has preoccupied him is an appalling paradox — the impossible attempt to dehumanize a human being, to define a person as property.

With “The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation,” Davis completes the trilogy he embarked upon nearly half a century ago. Yet Davis’s goal is not to survey the process by which slavery was abolished throughout the hemisphere in the 100 years after the American Revolution. Other scholars have already done that, and his themes often overlap with theirs.

British historian Robin Blackburn, for example, sees the Haitian revolution as the pivot on which all subsequent emancipations turned, and Davis agrees. He endorses American historian Seymour Drescher’s important observation that, far from decaying, the plantation systems of the New World were highly profitable when slavery was abolished. But while Blackburn’s and Drescher’s books are chronological overviews, Davis’s reads more like a collection of essays organized around a series of engaging biographical miniatures and closely linked themes.

The most important of those themes is race. Distinct chapters examine the history of degrading racial stereotypes, the significance of free blacks in the process of slavery’s destruction, the psychological function and effect of racism, and especially the intellectual problems raised by the various proposals to colonize free and emancipated blacks outside the United States. In a sense, the problem Davis examines here is not slavery as such, but racial slavery. He believes that race — more than the wealth and power of slaveholders, more than a Constitution that protected slavery in the states — was the single greatest obstacle to emancipation in the United States.

The familiar hallmarks of Davis’s scholarship are on full display. There is the remarkable erudition that enables him to draw apt comparisons among slave societies that span centuries and continents. There is the particular emphasis on the ties between British and American abolitionists. There is his depiction of the troubled relationship between radicals who denounced chattel slavery and those who attacked “wage slavery.”

Above all there is the continuing engagement with Davis's most important insight — that the emergence of an abolitionist movement in the 18th century amounted to one of the most astonishing moral transformations in human history. Nobody had ever really liked slavery, but as Davis showed us decades ago, nearly everybody accepted it as a normal part of human society. Not until the Age of Revolution did significant numbers of Englishmen and Americans turn against slavery and begin calling for its complete destruction. Why they did so was the question Davis took up in the second volume of the trilogy, “The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution,” published in 1975.

The consistency of Davis's focus has steeled him against some of the less persuasive trends that have come and gone among historians of American slavery. In the 1970s, for example, some scholars argued that Southern slavery was fundamentally paternalistic and that masters thought of their slaves as members of a larger plantation family. But Davis understood too well the dehumanizing core of slavery and never lost sight of the fact that slaves were the master's property, not his relatives. Rather than drift with the scholarly tide, he swam against it.

In his later books, especially “Slavery and Human Progress” and “Inhuman Bondage,” he focused ever more sharply on the tendency to brutalize slaves by likening them to animals, in particular farm animals. He opens “The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation” with a devastating barrage of metaphors and similes — from travelers, abolitionists and slaveholders themselves — equating slaves with beasts. But above all, he quotes from former slaves and free blacks who consistently denounced the way the system reduced — or attempted to reduce — slaves to the level of mere brutes. Harriet Jacobs assailed this tendency among slave mistresses whose husbands had sired children with their slaves. The mistresses “regard such children as property,” Jacobs explained, “as marketable as the pigs on the plantation.”

Davis likewise resisted the tendency to underestimate the economic vitality of plantation slavery. It was central to the paternalist thesis that slavery, in the words of historian U.B. Phillips, “made fewer fortunes than it made men.” In fact, as Davis points out, slavery made plenty of fortunes. Gigantic fortunes. Not surprisingly, the economic failure of abolition in Haiti and Jamaica was one of the most potent arguments slaveholders made against emancipation. Say what you will about the limits of abolition, it cannot be explained as a rational response to economic interests.

Yet Davis never romanticizes the abolitionists. Penetrating in their exposure of the exploitation of slaves, they were often silent or even oblivious to the exploitation of wage laborers in the mines and factories of a rapidly industrializing England. Acutely sensitive to the brutalization of slaves, abolitionists could also be patronizing toward free blacks. But neither the shortcomings of abolitionism nor the calamitous economic consequences of slavery's destruction blind Davis to the genuine achievement that emancipation represented. Surveying the various abolitions of slavery throughout the hemisphere — in the United States, the Caribbean and Brazil — he notes that in “no case did emancipation lead to a prosperous, racially egalitarian society.” Yet he still thinks the great abolitionist

Frederick Douglass was right to celebrate abolition in the British colonies because the emancipated blacks “were immensely better off than under slavery.”

In all these ways Davis’s enduring sensitivity to the problem of slavery serves him well. But in other ways his concluding volume reflects the tenacious hold of the intellectual climate in which the trilogy originated. Beginning in the early 1960s, historians began to argue that racism was so deep and widespread in pre-Civil War America that they lost sight of the intense political conflict over racial equality raging through the 1850s. Without conflict as an explanation, Davis instead resorts to the tropes of Freudian psychoanalysis to account for racist backlashes. He sees racism as a pathology and seems reluctant to abandon the idea that many blacks were psychologically damaged by racist dehumanization — an argument popularized by historian Stanley Elkins in 1959. Davis is unfailingly subtle and insightful when dealing with the various aspects of racial thinking, but does colonization deserve five of 11 chapters? Or is this another holdover from the 1960s, when historians began ascribing far too much significance to William Lloyd Garrison’s ostentatious conversion from colonization to radical abolition?

But these are mere quibbles that cast no lasting shadow on the shimmering achievement of Davis’s great trilogy. For who can doubt that the problem of slavery resides in the terrible question Davis first asked us to consider half a century ago: What does it mean to dehumanize a human being?

James Oakes teaches at the Graduate Center at the City University of New York. His most recent book is “*Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865.*”

Gov. Cuomo Announces State Funding for College Education in Prison

by Anthony Papa
February 17, 2014

New York's Governor Andrew Cuomo recently announced that NYS will fund college for prisoners. He hopes that this will give those serving time in prison an opportunity to obtain a college degree which in turn will help end the cycle of recidivism. According to Cuomo since 2007, the NYS Department of Corrections has partnered with colleges including Cornell University and Bard to offer privately funded degree programs at 22 prisons. The newly proposed program will expand on that.

In 1995 Gov. George Pataki dismantled college programs in NYS prisons by taking away state aid for tuition. While serving time in prison I protested this by starting a campaign to reinstate state aid for college programs. I submitted a painting in the annual Albany Correction On Canvas Art Show which was run by the NYS Senate and the Department of Corrections with the hope it would generate media attention.

The piece I submitted was titled "God Bless You." The painting depicted a prisoner in a graduation robe in front of a cell. The tassel of his cap wrapped tightly around his eyes, mouth and throat, signifying the death of the educated prisoner. In the bottom corner, I painted a scroll with a Kairos document, which read:

We the imprisoned people of New York State, 85% of whom are black and Latino, 75% of whom come from 26 assembly districts in 7 neighborhoods in New York City, to which 98% will someday return, possibly no better off than when we left, uneducated and lacking employable skills, declare this Kairos in response to the elimination of the prison college programs, GED and vocational training programs and education beyond the eighth-grade level. The elimination of prison education programs is part of Governor Pataki's proposed budget cuts. It amounts to less than one third of one percent of the total state budget, but it will cost taxpayers billions of dollars in the years to come.

I went on to state that many studies, even one conducted by the New York State Department of Correctional Services, have demonstrated empirically what people know intuitively: that prisoners who earn college degrees are far less likely to return to a life of crime upon release. According to research conducted by the Department, of the inmates who earned a college degree in 1986, 26% had returned to state prison, whereas 45% of inmates who did not earn a degree were returned to custody. For many prisoners, gaining an education signals an end to personal failure and a ladder out of poverty and crime. Without it, the governor may as well change the name "Department of Correctional Services" to "Department of Correctional Warehousing." As the former Chief Justice Warren Burger stated: "To confine offenders without trying to rehabilitate them is expensive folly."

I ended the scroll by asking concerned citizens of New York State to contact their legislators and demand that the present range of prison education programs continue to operate for the benefit of the entire state. "God Bless You."

As someone who has received three college degrees while imprisoned I have to say that it's about time that college programs for prisoners are funded once again by NYS thus expanding the existing privately funded one.

Since my release from prison in 1997 I have fully utilized my education and have been a productive tax paying citizen. In 1985 I was sentenced to 15 years to life for a non-violent drug offense under NYS's Rockefeller Drug Laws. At that time I was lost when I entered the prison system but was lucky enough to participate in the existing two year college program hosted by Bronx Community College in Sing Sing prison.

Attending college in prison wasn't easy. Trying to study in my cell was virtually impossible. Radios played constantly. Prisoners would yell to each other from their cells, sometimes just for the hell of it. Conversations that started between two men soon included ten or more. It wasn't only the noise that made studying difficult; the prison's restrictions on basic academic materials added to the struggle. For example, before leaving the school, the guards would search our folders and books to make sure we weren't concealing contraband smuggled in by teachers. In the eyes of the administration, "contraband" could include anything from drugs to reading assignments that the officials considered inappropriate. One semester, the guards confiscated my spiral-bound notebooks that were filled with notes I'd taken and needed for an upcoming exam. The wire, they said, could be fashioned into a weapon. Fair enough, but so could a zillion other things in the prison. Despite the negative environment I went on to graduate the program and received my degree.

But this was only the start. My two year degree opened my eyes to the value of getting a college education. After that I received my B.S. in Behavioral Science from Mercy College, then went on to receive a graduate degree from New York Theological Seminary. I survived imprisonment because of my ability to transcend the negativity around me because of the rehabilitative qualities of a college education.

When I was released from prison after receiving executive clemency for Governor George Pataki in 1997 my reentry into society was eased because of my college education. But it was not an easy deal. When some people found out about where I got my college education they were not too happy. I remember going on a few television shows and talking about my college education. Instead of being happy for me they talked about how I got a free college education instead of being punished. My response was that I did not get a free education, I paid dearly for it serving 12 years in prison and I did everything I could to make a bad situation good.

Upon my reentry into society I was employed with a law firm and became litigation paralegal. When I got my first job it helped me maintain my humanity and kept me walking on a straight and narrow road. It has been 17 years now and I know from

personal experience that a college education offered to someone in prison is not only lifesaving it is life changing.

My hat goes off to Governor Andrew Cuomo for advocating for college education for prisoners. Hopefully prisoners will take advantage of this rehabilitative program to help them survive their imprisonment and become productive citizens upon their release.

Harrison Ensuring African-American Stories Find Their Way into Oregon's Textbooks

By Christina Sturdivant

February 18, 2014

In Harlem, N.Y., during his sophomore year of high school, Dr. James Harrison spent his study period in the library, engrossed in novels by Black authors.

He began with two books by Langston Hughes: one about the first Negro scientists and another, *The First Book of Negroes*, about the accomplishments of African-Americans. Harrison realized that these stories were not a part of his public school curriculum and took it upon himself to do his own research into African-American studies.

Harrison continued to study African-Americans and other minorities in the U.S. for more than 30 years. He attended Hunter College in New York, graduating with his bachelor's in 1967. He has read countless biographies and journal articles, and attended conferences across the country, exchanging knowledge with fellow historians.

Through his research, Harrison found that the lack of African-American stories in classrooms can be traced back to the 1870s through the 1890s.

"Blacks were written out of books as a reaction to the Civil War," says Harrison, a U.S. history professor at Portland Community College in Oregon. "The leading historians from Columbia University decided that Black people were really not important and so they were completely written out to the extent that, when I was in high school, I was told that slavery was not all that bad because there was only one rebellion, Nat Turner. Completely untrue."

Although Harrison believes that integration of colored faces into textbooks has improved over the past decade, much of the educating that happens today still lacks pertinent contributions to American culture.

Harrison entered the field of academia to counteract many of the discrepancies he found in the classroom as a youth. His professional resume spans teaching in secondary and post-secondary schools, being a principal of a Catholic elementary school and a college counselor.

His most rewarding experience in academia has been as a college professor.

"I taught high school for 18 years and I enjoyed it, but I was looking for a greater challenge and I found that at the community college level," Harrison says. "I've been here for 21 years and it's still a challenge. The students have real questions; it forced me to dig much deeper and do a tremendous amount of reading in anticipation of questions."

In the classroom, Harrison has been successful in incorporating images of Blacks, immigrants, American Indians and other groups “so students get the idea that many of us together created what is the U.S.”

Throughout the Portland metropolitan area, he is known for sharing stories of unknown historical figures, events or little-understood twists and turns in history.

For nine years, he has shared passages via email with the college during Black History Month. In addition, he visits local churches, organizations, hospitals and corporate industries throughout the year, educating individuals in the community.

One of Harrison’s personal African-American heroes is Frederick Douglass. While many are aware of the former slave and abolitionist, Harrison admires Douglass’ strength and his multifaceted character.

“He was a very humanitarian person, a strong advocate and had a thirst for knowledge,” notes Harrison. “This man lived in a time when he was deprived of so much, but accomplished quite a bit. If you would have told someone in 1820 that this Black guy who is now a slave will later become an adviser to presidents, they would have laughed at you.”

He also speaks of Black inventors who have impacted modern life. In 1883, Jan Ernst Matzeliger patented a machine that led to the automatic process for making shoes.

“Once he did that, New England became the leading manufacturer of shoes in the world,” says Harrison. “Half the shoes in the Western world were produced in New England because of this man.”

Currently, Harrison is working to put on paper a story that hits close to home. His first book will center on the city of Vanport, Ore.

Vanport was home to Oregon’s first Black law enforcement officers and teachers. On May 30, 1948, a flood collapsed the dike separating the city from the Columbia River and the town was destroyed.

Forced to move into Portland, thousands of Blacks began to agitate the Portland City government for equity rights. In the 1940s, Portland was one of the most conservative cities in the entire country, Harrison explains. By the 1980s, Portland became one of the most progressive and liberal cities in the country.

By revealing what actually happened in history, Harrison believes individuals will have the courage to fight injustice like the movers of Vanport and heroes like Douglass.

“My personal legacy would be for people to realize that they need to be involved in the struggle against ignorance and the struggle for social justice,” Harrison says. “People need to be treated as people and not give up in despair.”

Immigrants, including undocumented, must obey the same tax laws as U.S. citizens

by Allan Wernick
February 17, 2014

Immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, must comply with the same tax laws as U.S. citizens. They must report income and, where required, pay taxes. That's true even if they are working "off-the-books," and their employer pays in cash. Whether you must report your income and pay taxes depends on how much you earn. If you are working for any employer who deducts taxes from your pay, you may be due a refund even if you are undocumented. The tax filing deadline this year is midnight, April 15. If you are an undocumented worker without a social security number, you can nevertheless file a tax return using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) as a substitute. You get an ITIN by including IRS form W-7 the first time you file a tax return. An ITIN is useful for many financial and record-keeping matters. Getting an ITIN is itself a good reason to file a tax return. If you earned only a small amount of income you can file and get the ITIN without having to pay taxes.

Permanent residents have a particularly good reason for complying with our tax laws. If a permanent resident applies for U.S. citizenship, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will ask you for proof of tax filings. You can naturalize without showing proof of tax filings only if you earned so little that the law didn't require you to file a return. If you need help preparing your tax return, try the free services offered through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). VITA is a U.S. Internal Revenue Service program that organizes trained volunteers to help tax filers with income of \$52,000 or less, with children, \$18,000 or less without children. VITA services are available to all tax-filers, not just immigrants. You can find a list of VITA service providers at www.irs.gov or by calling 1-800-906-9887. In New York City, you can find a service near you by calling 311.

Q: My friend came here on somebody else's passport in May 2001. He was just 17 at the time. He is now 30 and he is about to marry an American citizen. Can he get his interview for his green card and get legal status here in the United States?

Name Withheld, New York

A: Your friend can get his green card without leaving the United States, but he will likely need an immigration law expert, and a willingness to fight for your rights, to get him through the process.

An immediate relative of a U.S. citizen who was "inspected and admitted" upon entry, qualifies to interview here, the process called adjustment of status. The immediate relative category includes the spouse and unmarried child under 21 of a U.S. citizen, and the parent of a U.S. citizen who is at least age 21. The USCIS agrees that entry with a phony passport, or another person's valid passport is an "inspection and admission." The problem is proving how you entered and, getting USCIS to forgive or "waive" your

fraud.

If your friend has the passport he used to enter, that is usually good proof of inspection and admission. If he can't produce the passport (often in these cases the person needs to give the passport back after entry), USCIS will often deny the adjustment of status application. However, your friend can then renew his application before an immigration judge where he will likely have better luck. Immigration judges tend to be more willing than USCIS to believe an applicant's testimony. Plus, the court proceedings are recorded and your friend can present witnesses.

Regarding the waiver, when a person makes a fraudulent entry, as when someone enters with another person's passport, the USCIS will allow the applicant to interview here, but sometimes requires a fraud waiver. To get the waiver, an applicant must prove that a U.S. citizen or permanent resident parent or spouse will suffer extreme hardship if the family is separated. Readers should note that if a person enters with a false U.S. passport as opposed to another person's foreign passport, that could be a separate bar to permanent residence.

A Conflict of Faith: Devoted to Jewish Observance, but at Odds With Israel

By Mark Oppenheimer
February 14, 2014

There is no question that Charles H. Manekin is a rarity. Not because he is an Orthodox Jew who keeps the Sabbath, refraining from driving, turning on lights, even riding in elevators on Saturdays. Rather, this philosophy professor at the University of Maryland is rare because he believes that his Orthodox faith calls him to take stands against Israel.

Professor Manekin, 61, became Orthodox in college and became an Israeli citizen in the 1980s. Yet in an interview this week, he denounced Israel's "excessive reliance" on military force, its treatment of Arab citizens and its occupation of the West Bank. Although not a member of the American Studies Association, he was pleased when the group voted in December not to collaborate with Israeli academic institutions — the "academic boycott." He is "sympathetic" to B.D.S., as the global movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel is known.

"As a religious Jew," he said, "I am especially disturbed by the daily injustices perpetrated against the Palestinians."

The vast majority of Jews consider themselves supportive of Israel. They may quarrel with various Israeli policies, but since the state's founding in 1948, and especially since the 1967 war, Zionism has been a common denominator of world Jewry.

And while there have always been anti- or non-Zionist Jews, today they cluster on the less observant end of Judaism, among secular or religiously liberal Jews. In such a world, Professor Manekin — a modern Orthodox Jew in a skullcap whose religion moves him to oppose Israel — is exceedingly rare.

Zionism was not always the norm among American Jews. Nevertheless, those committed to Jewish practice but openly at odds with Israel are now likely to find themselves at odds with their friends and family. In the past couple of months, events like the American Studies vote and the endorsement by the actress Scarlett Johansson of a seltzer-maker in the occupied West Bank have multiplied the opportunities for tense family dinners.

Professor Manekin spends about half the year in Israel, where his children and grandchildren live, so he is hardly boycotting the country with his own dollars (or shekels). But since 2007 he has regularly offered criticisms of Israel on his blog, *The Magnes Zionist*. It is named for Judah L. Magnes, an American rabbi who, until his death in 1948, argued that a Jewish return to the Middle East did not require a nation-state.

"People look at 'non-statist Zionism' as the type that lost," Professor Manekin said this week, referring to Rabbi Magnes's philosophy. "But I found a lot of what they were

saying resonated today, and a lot of their predictions about endless war had come to pass.”

Stefan Krieger, 67, teaches law at Hofstra University, on Long Island. He refrains from work on the Sabbath, keeps kosher, and studies a page of the Talmud every day. But his views on Israel have always been unusual.

“My parents were very sensitive to the issues of Palestinians,” Professor Krieger said. “My mom had a book called ‘They Are Human Too,’ and my memory is she would take it off the bookshelf, as if this was some sort of scandalous tract she was showing me, and show me pictures of Palestinians in refugee camps.”

Professor Krieger, who supports the B.D.S. movement, will not rise in synagogue for the traditional prayer for the state of Israel. “I think nationalism and religion together are toxic,” he said.

So far, he said, the fallout has been minimal. “I was worried it would destroy some relationships. I don’t think it has yet.” At a synagogue Professor Krieger used to attend, one woman would not enter the sanctuary when he was seated on the bimah, or stage. When he placed some literature from Rabbis for Human Rights, a liberal Israeli group, on a table, “she threw it out.”

Alissa Wise, 34, grew up in Cincinnati, in what she calls a “modern Orthodox or Conservative kind of background, a very right-wing Zionist background.” In 1999, she arrived at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. On her first day of classes, there was a pro-Palestinian rally on campus.

Rabbi Wise — she was later ordained in the Reconstructionist branch of Judaism — was shocked to learn of the West Bank occupation. “I had gone to Jewish summer camp and Jewish day school my whole life and had no idea,” she said.

Today, Rabbi Wise works for Jewish Voice for Peace, a group that endorses some boycotts against Israel. Her views make her a minority in her family.

“I still believe the way I believe,” said her father, Ron, who works for Osem, an Israeli food company. “I am open to how she believes, and I listen to her.”

But, he continued, “At the same time, Israel needs to be protected.”

Daniel Boyarin, who teaches Talmud at the University of California, Berkeley, attended Orthodox synagogues for 30 years. He believes that Zionism was always flawed.

“The very concept of a state defined as being for one people was deeply problematic and inevitably going to lead to a moral and political disaster,” said Professor Boyarin. “Which I think it has.”

Professor Boyarin, 67, is still observant, but he has dropped out of synagogue life. “I have been so disturbed by the political discourse,” he said, “that I felt that I couldn’t participate.”

Skepticism toward Zionism used to be common. Before World War II, Reform Jews tended to believe that they had found a home in the United States, and that Zionism could be seen as a form of dual loyalty. Orthodox Jews generally believed, theologically, that a state of Israel would have to wait for the Messiah’s arrival (a view some ultra-Orthodox Jews still hold). In the 1930s and ’40s, the persecution of European Jews turned many American Jews into Zionists. Major organizations, like the American Jewish Committee and Hillel, the Jewish campus group, turned toward political Zionism after the war.

“When Hillel was founded, it took a clear non-Zionist position,” said Noam Pianko, who teaches Jewish history at the University of Washington. “What you see is a shift in the American spectrum: from non-Zionism with a few Zionists, to a situation, by the 1960s, where the assumption is that any American Jewish organization is also going to be clearly Zionist.”

Corey Robin, 46, a regular at a Conservative synagogue in Brooklyn, writes a blog about his opposition to Israeli policy and his support for the B.D.S. movement. “There are lots of ways to be Jewish, but worshiping a heavily militarized state seems like a bit of a comedown from our past,” Professor Robin, who teaches political science at Brooklyn College, said in an email.

He said that he tries not to get into arguments with friends, but he has become very “vocal and visible” in his writings. In response to such views, Professor Robin is often accused of despising Judaism.

“As my mother, who is very pro-Israel, will tell you, I love being Jewish,” Professor Robin said. “I love when I’m walking down the street, and my 5-year-old daughter’s skipping next to me, singing to herself some tune in Hebrew that we sang in shul.

“I can’t listen to that tune and the words we sing when we close the ark without a shudder. I love being Jewish. I just don’t love the state of Israel.”

The Strange and Amazing World of Glow in the Dark Sea Life

By Richard Christian
February 17, 2014

We love our glow in the dark stuff don't we? Whether it be glow in the dark markers, clothing, ceiling stars, or – in college – the black light phenomenon, we can't get enough of things that go "glow" in the dark. Perhaps, then, we should revert back to our former selves and wade through the waters of the world, seeing that there are roughly 180 species of fish and sharks that glow red, green, and orange.

Biofluorescence vs. bioluminescence

There are two types of glowing fish – bioluminescence and biofluorescence. Bioluminescence is when organisms produce their own light through either a chemical reaction or by harboring bacteria that does the glowing on behalf of the fish.

Biofluorescence, however, is when animals absorb blue light (from the ocean) and re-emit it as different colors. Biofluorescent fish can't turn off the glow.

This phenomenon is far more widespread than scientists once believed, meaning that when it comes right down to it – we have no idea what, potentially, this light is used for. It tells us that "organisms are using light in ways we don't even see," said John Sparks, curator of fishes at the American Museum of Natural History in NYC.

Since the sun barely reaches a vast majority of the ocean, sealife have to rely on unique ways to communicate with one another. Biofluorescence is one of those ways.

But the interesting thing is that many fish in the sea don't even notice these glowing organisms. Why not? Because many fish are missing a yellow filter in their eyes (to block out the blue of the sea). Without this yellow filter, these colors go unnoticed. But to those that do have that filter, these glowing sealife stick out like a sore thumb.

Photobombed by a glowing eel

Sparks' interest in biofluorescence sea creatures began when he and colleague David Gruber (at City University of New York) were taking photos of a biofluorescent coral wall for a museum exhibit.

"We were photobombed by a green eel," Gruber said.

That photobomb led to an intense interest, not only in how many creatures glow, but why. Since many sea creatures can't see these glowing colors, then the different patterns and colors seem to be a pretty effective way to communicate among (and across) species.

So who glows

The world beneath the waters we see look a whole lot like a rainbow, thanks to the many colors that shine bright off the fish and other creatures who call the ocean home. This includes the multi-glowing seahorse that glows mostly red with green eyes, or the Bream, who at one angle looks like he has yellow racing stripes, but from a new angle (atop the fish) those stripes turn green.

Scorpionfish look like bright red blotches, and the chain catfish looks like tubes of green.

The next step for scientists including Sparks and Gruber is to pinpoint the functions behind the fluorescence patterns of the fish, in the hopes, perhaps, of recreating that function. Sure, glow in the dark markers are kind of cool. But what if you could recreate the glow wherever, and however, you wish?

WDF Announces Four Projects Valued at \$145 Million

February 17, 2014

Tutor Perini Corporation TPC +2.26% , a leading civil and building construction company, today announced four new projects in New York City for its subsidiary, WDF, Inc., collectively valued at more than \$145 million. WDF is a leading specialty contractor in the New York region, providing mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems design and construction services to government agencies and commercial clients.

CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice – Haaren Hall Renovation Project

Contract value: approx. \$17.5 million / Owner: DASNY Scope of work: Renovation of approximately 55,000 square feet of interior spaces and removal and replacement of 10 mechanical rooms. The project also includes the extension of two chilled water main lines from an adjacent building into Haaren Hall, and extensive mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, and architectural work. Construction started in the fourth quarter of 2013. The contract value will be included in the Company's reported fourth quarter 2013 backlog.

Carbon Addition Facilities at Various Wastewater Treatment Plants Contract value: approx. \$74.3 million / Owner: New York City Dept. of Environmental Protection Scope of work: Erection of new steel and concrete carbon facilities and major renovation/conversion of two existing buildings into new carbon facilities. Construction is expected to start in the second quarter of 2014. The Company expects to book the contract into backlog in the first quarter of 2014.

New York State Court Officers Training Academy Building Renovation Project

Contract value: approx. \$31.2 million / Owner: DASNY Scope of work: Renovation of three existing buildings in the Prospect Heights section of Brooklyn to create a training academy for the New York State Court Officers. Construction is expected to start in the first quarter of 2014. The contract is pending approval by the New York State Comptroller's Office, and the Company expects to book the contract into backlog in the first quarter of 2014.

NYU Langone Medical Center – Kimmel Pavilion HVAC Project Contract value: approx. \$22.6 million / Construction Manager: Turner Construction Co. Scope of work: Installation of new heating, cooling, and fuel oil systems. Construction is expected to start in the first quarter of 2014. The Company expects to book the contract into backlog in the first quarter of 2014.

About Tutor Perini Corporation

Tutor Perini Corporation is a leading civil and building construction company offering diversified general contracting and design-build services to private clients and public agencies throughout the world. We have provided construction services since 1894 and have established a strong reputation within our markets by executing large complex projects on time and within budget while adhering to strict quality control measures.

New York City teachers union president proclaims back pay is 'a big issue'

By Jennifer Fermino

February 17, 2014

The head of New York City's teachers union made it clear Monday for the first time that he was pushing the city for back pay for his nearly 100,000 members.

"We believe that we should have a raise, and we've been working a long time without a raise," United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew said in an interview on WNYC.

"It's a big issue for us. It's a very large issue with us."

He declined to specify how much he was asking for, saying he promised Mayor de Blasio not to negotiate in public.

Some estimates peg the cost of back pay for UFT members to be more than \$3.2 billion.

"We think we can figure this out at a negotiating table," he said.

Mulgrew's comment comes as de Blasio aides said the city's settlement last week with the Law Enforcement Employees Benevolent Association — which included retroactive raises providing officers with an average of \$50,000 in back pay — would have no bearing on negotiations with other unions working without a contract.

That deal, reported exclusively by the Daily News on Monday, addressed a unique situation.

The 200 Department of Environmental Protection officers — whose duties include protecting the upstate watershed — had been without a contract for nine years, and the settlement only goes through 2007.

Other city employees' contracts expired beginning in 2008.

While de Blasio isn't guaranteeing other city workers equally generous back-pay packages, labor experts say the quick settlement offers key clues to the new mayor's style.

"One thing is really clear: there is real collective bargaining going on," said Ed Ott, a CUNY labor studies lecturer.

That wasn't true under former Mayor Bloomberg, who had a contentious relationship with the city's unions, he said.

"The guiding principle of the de Blasio team moving forward is to respect workers and protect taxpayers," said the mayor's spokeswoman, Marti Adams.

New York City Proves Worse for Jazz Musicians Than Ever Before, Says Gary Giddins

By Ian Holubiak

February 17, 2014

New York City may be the emblem of the "American Dream," and yet so many have fallen victim to the underbelly of Gotham's music scene.

Plenty of folkies, rockers and especially jazz musicians haven't found their way, and some of them even fall victim to supplementing their failure by selling drugs--this in the case of Philip Seymour Hoffman's alleged drug dealer.

Jazzers have found it exceptionally hard over the years to make ends meet, existing outside the parameters of success here in the city.

But now, a consensus from a CUNY Graduate Center panel reveals that jazz musicians have it harder than ever before!

"In every decade, New York has welcomed, housed and encouraged jazz," says Gary Giddins, a former jazz critic for the Village Voice and director of CUNY's Leon Levy Center for Biography.

Alas, Giddins' conviction about jazz stardom in the Big Apple seems to no longer be tangible.

Giddins recently moderated a talk called "Jazz and New York: A Fragile Economy" in the Proshansky Auditorium. The discussion honed in on some key components to the failing jazz economy in Manhattan.

Venues catering to jazz audiences seem to be on the decline as rents rise, critics are being cut from newspapers and the recording industry switches to a singles market catering more to the mainstream.

Giddins also pointed out specific periods in the city's history and infrastructure that supported the live jazz scene. The bebop era of the 1940s and the loft scene of '70s proved to be a hard time economically for the city, but it remained positive growth for the city's artistic scene.

Mary Schmidt Campbell, dean of the Tisch School of the Arts, commented on the possibilities of a time past.

"It's a real paradox. New York was on the verge of bankruptcy then, so there was abandoned real estate and artists could squat and lay claim to that," she said during the panel.

"The poverty of the city, in an ironic way, worked to the advantage of artists," she continued.

So, there must be a remedy to this madness. Right?

Luckily, record sales don't contribute too much to the pockets of jazz musicians. Instead, their true yield comes from live performances. (A real paradox since the clubs are closing down, huh?)

While the city may not be welcoming for musicians, it's still, somehow, the jazz hub of the world, and possibly the center of the universe for everything else.

To wit, here's a short doc about a 10-day excursion into New York City's jazz scene.