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Interview with Professor James Davis (Pt. 1)

James Davis is a professor in the American Studies Program, as well as the Graduate Deputy of the English Department at Brooklyn College. Davis is also author of two books: *Commerce in Color: Race, Consumer Culture, and American Literature, 1893-1933* and *Eric Waldron: A Life in the Harlem Renaissance and the Transatlantic Caribbean*.

Why did you decide to become a professor? What or who influenced you to become a professor?

I think that the reason I decided to do it was because the professors that I had were really inspiring. When I started college, I was a Chemistry major, because I really liked sciences, but when I hit Organic Chemistry, my grades suffered. At the same time as that, I was really enjoying my English classes and I had professors in these classes who were encouraging and kind of just took notice of, I guess potential. I wouldn't say talents yet, because I needed to be really developed, but potential. They didn't say, "You should be a professor," but more of "Have you thought about being an English major? This paper that you wrote was interesting for these reasons." So, through those conversations, I moved in that direction.



Also, when I was in college, I volunteered as a tutor at a middle school, and even though I didn't feel like I was very effective working with seventh and eighth graders, I sort of did like the interactions and being able to support young people's intellectual development. I thought "Okay, if I enjoy tutoring maybe I would like teaching as well." Being a professor is an amazing thing because it gives you the opportunity to teach about and explore a lot of your own interests, so I like that about it as well.

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Spring Break Tour 2017: Student Responses

I want to attend the 2017 Spring Break Tour in order to get a firsthand view of a college and to learn more about it through firsthand sources. At times, college catalogs, brochures, and websites do not provide a realistic view of the college atmosphere. To receive the opportunity to sit in a classroom, visit the dorms, and walk around a campus, would enrich me with more of an understanding of the type of college I will feel comfortable living in. Also, I will like to attend the tour so I can learn about the colleges: Dutchess Community College and Schenectady County Community College, from firsthand sources. I'm very excited to ask the tour guides specific questions about these schools because it is difficult to find answers online. Also, if the tour guides are students, this experience would be even more exciting because I would be able to hear raw personal experiences to determine if these schools are right for me. Furthermore, I hope to learn more about a college's classroom setting by sitting in on a lecture. Also, I hope I can obtain information about the student newspapers, Mock Trial team, sororities, and honor societies because I am interested in joining these clubs when I attend college. Overall, this experience would be unforgettable as it prepares me for my journey to college. - Monica Janvier

My future is going to be bright but in order for it to be I need to get involved now. I want to attend 2017 Spring Break Tour because I want to continue searching for a college that suits me. Who knows? Dutchess Community College or Schenectady County Community College might be just for me. Me attending this 2017 Spring Break Tour will add on to my experience of visiting colleges and getting involved. Most importantly, I want to expand my knowledge and ask questions. I'm yearning to find out the majors they have for both colleges and what degrees they offer and even more. What I'm interested in being is a physical therapist. I hope I learn if they have majors or programs to help me pursue my career. This is free and I want to take advantage and use what's available to me and that right now is TRiO and the trips they provide. Mrs. Fleury always says "If it's free, go for it," and that's what I'm doing. I hope I get selected for this Spring Break Tour. - Tyrese Francois

I would love to attend the 2017 Spring Break Tour because I believe it will benefit me when I have to look for colleges. I believe this trip will give me a better insight as to how a college campus works and the general expectations for me as a student. I also believe it will be a great experience for me and give me a small taste of college life. Lastly, I believe it will clear up my misunderstanding of college life and college in general. - Makenna Prince

Interview with Professor James Davis (cont'd)

Why did you choose to enter your field?

Part of it is that you're always a student in my field. I liked being a student, and even though now I'm on the other side of the room/desk, you never stop learning in a job like this. You have to make sure you're on top of your game when you're preparing for your classes. One of my obligations as a professor is to try to contribute to the field that I'm working in. I'm always a student of American literature as well, so I'm always trying to hit the books and read the next article that's come out on the topics that I'm interested in, so

Interview with Professor James Davis (cont'd)

I like that about it.

What do you think are the challenges that are facing high school students entering college today?

Different high school students have different challenges. The challenge that I think facing any high school student entering college, is that you're growing and there's so many things outside of school in your life that are changing quickly. It can be an exciting time, but it can also be confusing and challenging. There's family issues, romance issues, there's things that go on in your socioeconomic core that can be challenging, so all that stuff, I think, affects high school students transitioning to college no matter from where. I think, for young people who come to Brooklyn College, a lot of them who came from public schools around the city, realize that it is a very diverse place.



You have to kind of figure out how to hold your own among such as diverse group of people. You also have to figure out how to navigate relationships, and classroom environments where it's not the same people who you have known forever, and it can be very different people from one class to the next. That personal/social aspect, seems to me, like a challenge but it also what makes it very exciting. It can be an intriguing and energizing thing to be around so many different kinds of people, who you wouldn't have otherwise get to spend time with. The last thing, in terms of challenges, is that you really have to be much more self disciplined as a college student, because you're only in class, in fact, for a small percentage of the week. Time management becomes a big challenge. You have to manage your time, stay self disciplined and stay on top of your deadlines.

What advice do you have for college bound students?

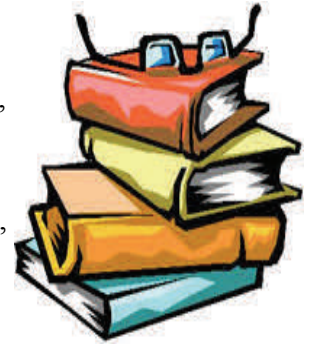
If you can afford to keep an open mind about what your major is going be, try to hold off on making that decision, until the college makes you make it. I say if you can afford it in the financial sense, because people have different pressures on them for when they need to make a decision about their major and how they need to make it. If your family is like, "You're the first one in our family who went to college, and you better not major in poetry, because when you come out, we want to make sure you have a job," that is an important consideration. I don't want to underestimate those practical concerns for why people are in school. But on the flip side, you don't know what you're passionate about or talented in until you try things out. All too often, especially because of financial pressures, students treat a 4-year liberal arts experience as if it is vocational training and send them out into the world. I don't mean to sound glib about it, but if you can, perceive it as something other than job training, and more as an experience of broadening your mind in as many

different directions as possible and as exploration. You're not going to get those 4 or 5 years back. There's lots of people out in the work place, who if they could, would probably go back to school and take all different types of classes, so that would be my suggestion.

Interview with Professor James Davis (cont'd)

In what ways can a student benefit from enrolling in an undergrad/graduate English program at Brooklyn College?

I think the main thing you'll be doing in an English class at Brooklyn College, is that you will be reading the text really closely, talking to other people about those text and then writing about it. One of the ways that taking an English class will help you, is that you develop ways of using writing to figure out your ideas. A lot of times, the way we think about writing, is that there's where we have to go and record our ideas to hand them in for somebody else to grade. What you realize when you spend time in English classes, is that writing is just an instrument. It's just a way to get clarity, depth and complexity to understand your ideas, limitations, and other possible points of view. So, too often, people come into college thinking "Well, I have to write a three page or four page essay", and it's just a box that you have to check off, in order to fulfill an assignment. It is that, but the more you do writing, the more you come to understand how its' really about kind of dramatizing and clarifying your own thought process.



Also, some of my colleagues in the English Department are some of the best teachers, hands down, so you get to encounter these great minds who care a lot about their students development too.

(Part Two of this interview will be published in the Summer 2017 Edition)

TRIO Leaders: Introduction

On February 24, 2017, a group of TRIO students came together to begin their quest to learn more about self improvement, leadership, and building community. These budding leaders continued to meet on Fridays during March and April to share and debate ideas and opinions contributing to each other's growth.

Each time we meet something special happens. Using the *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, by Sean Covey as a vehicle for discussion, students also participate in icebreaker activities led by college volunteer Janai. Sometimes our discussions even lead to heated debates over different characters in Japanese style animation shows. Right now we are working towards creating a community service project that even more TRIO students can join and participate.

The TRIO Leader experience is a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, explore new ideas, and give back to your community. We hope you will join our efforts in the near future.

Spring 2017 Calendar

After-School Tutorials

Take advantage of free tutoring services. Subjects will include Algebra I Common Core, Living Environment, English, and Social Studies.

March 3- May 19

Fridays, 4:00PM - 6:00PM

Regents Prep Workshop

Improve your Global History and U.S. History in this mini workshop.

Global History Dates: May 15, 16, 22, 23, 30; June 5, 6

4:00PM - 6:00PM

U.S. History Dates: May 17, 18, 24, 25, 31; June 7, 8

4:00PM - 6:00PM

Register by May 8

SUNY Downstate Nurse Anesthesia Program

The Nurse Anesthesia Program offers students an in-depth look at the various career paths available in this field. In addition to information on nurse related careers, the program will provide a panel discussion and activities for students to participate in.

Monday, May 15, 9:30am - 12:00pm

Sign up with your TRIO Pre-College Counselor.

The events listed are exclusive to enrolled Talent Search members. You can sign up in one of the following ways:

- Send us an email. Include your name, school name, grade, and the name of the event(s).
- Speak to your pre-college counselor.
- If a registration form is required, complete and return it via e-mail or fax, or by giving it to your pre-college counselor.