

Bridging the Campus

Jack Ucciardino,
Editor

Your life at Brooklyn College

Volume X, Issue I

Town Halls Make B.C.'s Voice Heard

by Lenina Morfimer

Town Hall Meetings have been an important part of the lives of Brooklyn College community members since 2003. Town Halls have helped to spread information and are a great way to build a sense of community. The Division of Student Affairs organizes these community meetings around a topic of interest in collaboration with other administrators, faculty members and student organizations.

BC community members have much to gain from Town Hall meetings. Students are able to voice their opinion and be heard by administrators with decision-making power and have the opportunity to interact with faculty outside of the classroom setting. Staff and faculty also participate and help to explore the topic from all perspectives. The regularly held Town Halls each feature a panel of experts on a chosen topic. Discussion topics are generated from student interests, policy issues, and in some cases, current events. We saw a broad range of topics in the 2008 -2009 academic year, including politics and healthcare as well as the Middle States accreditation process and the search for a new President.

All participants were asked to complete an evaluation after each

session and provide suggestions on what topics we should focus on next. These evaluations help determine how much the Town Halls have helped increase knowledge of the topics discussed, as well as what could be added to make

This year many of the 13 Town Hall meetings were moderated by the Speech & Debate Team (BC Forensics) which helped greatly to increase attendance and success. The next few pages provide a summary of what you may have missed and what you can look forward to.

POLITICS

Make Your Voice Heard:
A Campus Forum on Politics
and the Election Process
October 16, 2008

Planned and moderated in collaboration with BC Forensics, the first Town Hall of the academic year kicked-off with a lively panel discussion surrounding the historical nature of the U.S. presidential election and the importance of student involvement. The Brooklyn College community convened to discuss the election process on a national and local level. Special emphasis was placed on the importance of voting and the role of BC students in the election process on campus and in the presidential race. The panel featured speakers who have previously run for office and faculty knowledgeable on the topic. Advice was given to students who would like to do the same.

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PHOTO: Speech & Debate Team member
Jasmine Patel moderates a Town Hall session



the events even better. For instance, according to the evaluations, the top three reasons students cited for attending the Town Halls were: a) interest in the topic, b) as part of a requirement for their club or organization, and c) the free food! However, 79% of all respondents also said that when the events were over, their understanding of the subject matter had been increased.

A Message from the Dean



Milga Morales, Ph.D.
Dean of Student
Affairs

Welcome to another new issue of Bridging the Campus, the newsletter of Brooklyn College's Division of Student Affairs. Those familiar with the Newsletter will notice its new look. Brooklyn College rejuvenates itself every semester with a new batch of enterprising students and additions such as the new West Quad, and so too does the Division of Student Affairs look to improve itself with every coming year. The new "Bridging the Campus" is just one example of that. We hope you like it and would appreciate your feedback.

The theme the Division will concentrate on in 2009-2010 is "Building Community through Leadership and Service". We will explore that theme through various Town Hall meetings on campus, in addition to ongoing leadership and civic engagement programs. This year the culminating event will take place on April 2, 2010 in the Student Center. We hope you will join the conversations begun at the Town Halls and help develop new ones in the future.

TOWN HALLS MAKE B.C.'S VOICE HEARD (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Town Hall attendees overwhelmingly agreed that the panelists were knowledgeable on the topic discussed and were able to adequately answer their questions from multiple perspectives. The attendees surveyed on program strengths said the "responses the panelists gave were well thought out and informative". They also liked that the panelists were diverse.

HEALTHCARE

BC Town Hall: Our Healthcare
December 11, 2008

Health care is an essential part of the growth and development of any nation. However, it is often on the backburner of national urgencies that need to be taken care of. The BC Town Hall on healthcare looked at the global health crisis and the U.S. health care system as a whole. The panelists of health care experts discussed the future of health care in the country and its effect on CUNY students. Town Hall attendees appreciated learning more about becoming active participants in the community all while making a change through education and awareness. A referendum to increase the student activity fee was part of the discussion at this Town Hall.

THE CUNY BUDGET

March 12, 2009

In the midst of the economic crisis, CUNY

recently raised tuition. Many CUNY students are struggling to make ends meet due to job losses and the rising cost of living. A Town Hall was held to address some of these issues.

Recently, 50.6 million dollars was taken out of the CUNY budget and over 1.5 million dollars taken out of the Brooklyn College budget, which has affected the community in many ways such as cutbacks on student activities, classes, and jobs for faculty and staff members.

Town Hall participants found this program to be informative, interactive and timely. They also indicated that they became more aware of the issues pertaining to the economy and its effect on the CUNY system. In addition, they enjoyed their ability to express concerns.

SUSTAINABILITY

April 21, 2009

The Earth's sustainability has become a major concern regarding our future. In recent years, there has been a strong movement to promote a worldwide effort to protect the planet and conserve its natural resources. This year, BC students, faculty and staff ended Earth Day festivities with a panel discussion on sustainability at Brooklyn College and in the CUNY community at large.

CUNY's efforts to conserve were discussed at the Town Hall. "Brooklyn College and CUNY have committed to a reduction of 30% to our carbon footprint by year 2017", said panelist and administrative superintendent of facilities, Joseph Nigro.

The CUNY-wide effort to conserve can be seen at Brooklyn College with the creation of the Brooklyn College Sustainability Council and the implementation of the Ten Year Sustainability Plan. The plan focuses on maintaining energy by using energy efficient equipment and light bulbs; by becoming more efficient in waste management with recycling programs; and implementing the concept of sustainable foods, according to Nigro, who is also chairperson of the BC Sustainability Council.

Town Hall attendees indicated that the panelists were very knowledgeable and able to adequately answer their questions from multiple points of view.



Middle States Town Hall Meetings Chart Our Course

The Middle States Reaccreditation Series of five Town Hall Meetings took place in the fall and spring semesters (Nov. 6, 20, Dec 2, March 30, 31).

Students were given the opportunity to participate in the reaccreditation of the college by serving on committees to give input to the Brooklyn College self-study. In addition, two of the the Town Halls were held just for students. Once a draft a copy of the self-study was completed, it was made available to students on the BC web site.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is the unit of the Middle States Association of

colleges and schools that accredits degree granting colleges and universities in the Middle States region. The Commission is a voluntary,

must renew its accreditation status with the MSCHE every 10 years.

The importance of these Town Halls was to make the people of the Brooklyn College community aware of the reaccreditation process and give them an opportunity to give feedback on the self-study report. In addition, community members were able to meet with the Middle States visiting team representatives and share their views and concerns about the college.

non-governmental membership association that defines, maintains, and promotes educational excellence across institutions with diverse missions, student populations, and resources. It examines each institution as a whole rather than specific programs within institutions. In order to certify the quality of its academic programs, Brooklyn College



**MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION
ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

Searching for a New President: Four Town Hall Meetings Held



Christoph M. Kimmich
President of Brooklyn
College, 2000-2009

Earlier this year, after 10 years at the helm of Brooklyn College, Christoph M. Kimmich announced his intention to retire from his role as President of Brooklyn College.

The job of B.C.'s President is a busy and complicated one. In addition to being the public face of the college, the President works with academic departments to recruit high class faculty and has an important role in meeting with alumni, local businesses and government representatives. He helps ensure that B.C. can maintain its commitment to be the best affordable liberal arts college in the country, while at the same time advancing capital improvements on campus in

challenging economic times.

In looking for our new President, a search committee consisting of CUNY trustees, college faculty, and students was convened in May. A series of Town Halls were held where members of the college community could meet with the final group of presidential candidates.

The final four candidates were:

- Dr. Karen L. Gould, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Cal State, Long Beach
- Dr. Hilary Horn Ratner, Vice President for Research at Wayne State University

- Dr. Lisa Staiano-Coico, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Surgery at Temple University

- Dr. Elizabeth Langland, University Vice President at the West Campus of Arizona State University & Dean of ASU's New College of Interdisciplinary Arts

Whichever of these candidates is ultimately chosen, one thing is assured - the next President of Brooklyn College will be the first woman to ever hold the post.

Events

SOMETHING'S ALWAYS
HAPPENING AT BC!

THE FOLLOWING EVENTS
TOOK PLACE DURING THE
SPRING 2009 SEMESTER

Health Fair

Plenty of student "bodies" turned out for the CUNY Health and Wellness Fair on April 7, 2009.



Earth Day on the Quad

Environmental Sustainability was the theme as Earth Day was commemorated on the BC Quad on April 21, 2009.



Volunteer Day

There were plenty of helping hands to be found on Volunteer Day, held on May 5, 2009.



Civility Forum

Class was in session as Professor P.M. Forni of John Hopkins University led a forum on the issue of civility on April 2, 2009.



Multicultural Day at Brooklyn College

April 3, 2009

by David G. Wells



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BREAKFAST

Brooklyn College's first annual Multicultural Day had a touch of familiarity to it. The day began with the Civic Engagement Breakfast which has been an integral part of the Division's calendar for several years. At the breakfast the participants, in accord with the day's theme, were engaged in a discussion on the importance of diversity and multiculturalism with a panel of students and faculty. The symbiotic relationship between the Division and students started off on wonderful footing; the students did not disappoint us with their attendance and we did not disappoint them with the breakfast.

COUNCILWOMAN MEALY

Councilwoman Darleen Mealy was also present amongst the 70+ participants, taking time out of her busy schedule to come and share her experience and push for civic engagement from the students.

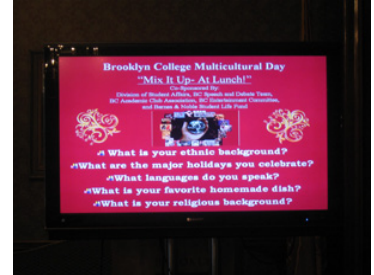
WALKING IN OTHER'S SHOES

The breakfast was followed by a "Walking in Other's Shoes Workshop" where students learned and lived diversity through service and volunteerism. In this workshop, led by Sally Robles and Christina Horner, there was more of an intimate setting with about 10 students. These students were then broken up into three smaller groups, in which they shared their own cultural, religious, and national customs. Each group was asked to complete a simple questionnaire and when they were finished they all went back into the larger group and shared their findings.

MIX-IT-UP AT LUNCH

The day ended with the Division's own version of speed dating - the "Mix it up-at Lunch". The students enjoyed meeting and greeting their peers, and learning about each other's culture all in five minute intervals. Talk about information overload! The students were into it nonetheless, and in what can be seen as testament to the event's success, we had several students inquiring about joining the committee to help set up the event for next year. There wasn't much time for the students to sit and eat and there weren't any chairs so it was interesting to see the feet moving as fast as the mouths were.

The Multicultural Day was successful thanks to the participation of students, the work of the staff, the effort made by the faculty and the sacrifice made by Councilwoman Mealy to show up and engage the students. The second annual Multicultural Day will build on this year's success.



Alastair Waithe

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

Coming from South America at 16, Alastair Waithe discovered Brooklyn College by just looking across the street. Living near to Brooklyn College, he knew it to be a good school and when it came time for college, it was the only place he wanted to go. Since his arrival, Alastair has been engaged as a member of the Speech and Debate Club, 2-time President of the Business Leadership Society, a member of Student Government, Vice-President of the World AID's Day Committee (which raises funds for AIDS efforts in Caribbean countries), the only BC representative on the CUNY Leadership Committee, a Board Member of the BC Auxiliary Enterprise Committee, a Peer Mentor, and part of the CUNY Pipeline Honors Scholars Program. That's quite a lot after only 3 years at Brooklyn College!

Being active in so many activities has its own struggles and rewards. Trying to balance a healthy co-curricular life with academics can sometimes be overwhelming. Alastair's solution has been to pace himself, take things slowly and to manage his time. In addition to the trophies and plaques he has received for all his efforts, the intangible benefits cannot be measured. Alastair feels he has developed communication and management skills and has learned to lead.

A junior with a double major in finance and economics, Alastair hopes to use his skills not to earn six figures working in a Fortune 500 company but to give back to the community by obtaining his Ph.D. in public policy, working with the World Bank and the UN, and

becoming an economic advisor to the Caribbean Community.

When asked what he would tell students to get them more involved, Alastair responds simply: "Getting involved helps you to develop leadership and communication skills that are transferable to the workforce. In addition, being involved is a way to make a difference by giving service to the collegiate community."



Student Profiles

Jessica Huang

STOP COMPLAINING AND START CAMPAIGNING



Now entering her junior year, Jessica Huang is one student who knows where she's

going and how to get there. With two sisters attending college at the same time, Jessica wanted to go to a school that was highly rated academically, as well as affordable. After visiting Brooklyn College she came away impressed and decided this was where she wanted to be. She is now a double major in Physics and Spanish and on a pre-Med track.

Always active in high school, Jessica wanted to take part in co-curricular life at BC as well. She got involved with NYPIRG, the state-wide, student-run advocacy organization and learned that if you have problems on campus and you think changes should be made, then you have to step up and make your voice heard. You have to "stop complaining and start campaigning". For instance, this past semester Jessica helped to lead the campaign against the proposed CUNY tuition hike. In the end the battle was not a victory, but it was not a loss either. While CUNY tuition will go up, thanks to the work of Jessica and others, it will be offset by increases in financial aid.

In addition to her work with NYPIRG, Jessica is a part of the Golden Key Honor Society, volunteers off-campus, and will be part of the Peer Mentoring Program this coming semester. It is a program that pairs

incoming freshmen with BC juniors and seniors, helping the new student navigate college life with the help of a "peer" who's been through it before.

Jessica believes all her efforts have made her a more focused person and taught her a lot of skills, including the ability to manage her time, to speak in public and to lead others. To those who are hesitant or too shy to be part of student life, Jessica would say to take the risk and just go to an event. You might be interested and want to do more. You might even want to organize an event yourself. Love it or hate it – you won't know unless you try. Jessica Huang decided early on to jumpstart her life, take the risk and become more pro-active and it has, in her own words, made her a "better student and a better person."

On Campus ...

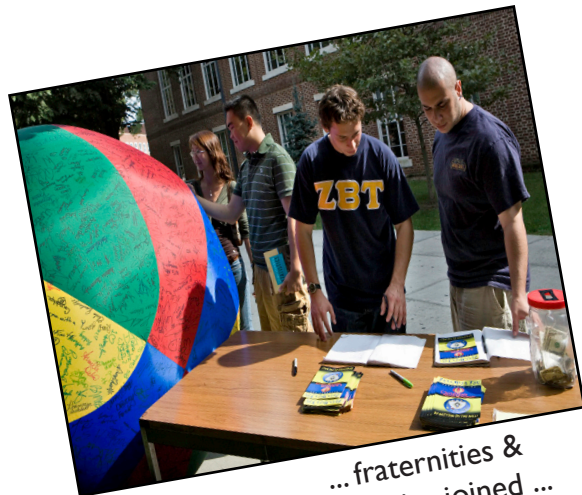
SUSTAINABILITY ON OUR MINDS

President Kimmich volunteers his time alongside students.

Dean Morales and students help plant a tree at Volunteer Day.



Despite the cold weather ...



... fraternities & sororities joined ...



... with other students to enjoy Earth Day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Theme for 2009-2010:

Building Community Through Leadership and Service

Tuesday, August 25, 2009 - Undergraduate Orientation
Wednesday, August 26, 2009 – Graduate Orientation
Tuesday, September 8, 2009 – Greek Rush
Tuesday, September 22, 2009 – Club Fair
Tuesday, September 29, 2009 – Welcome Back
Friday, April 2, 2010 Student Affairs at the Table Conference

For more information or to volunteer contact:

The Center for Student Development and
Leadership at StudentDev@brooklyn.cuny.edu



Have a Comment on the College? Got an Idea to Improve Campus?
Send it To the Presidential Suggestion Box!



The Presidential Suggestion Box is available for students, staff and faculty to recommend the continuation or suggest a change to different aspects of campus life.

These suggestions help to make the college more efficient and responsive to the needs of the community. Suggestions are read by those who have the ability to put them into action!

The Presidential Suggestion Box is located on the 1st Floor of Boylan Hall and the suggestions are collected every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Whether your idea is to improve the campus, or just improve your experience here, slip us a note, and make your voice heard!

Brooklyn College Division of Student Affairs

Comments may be sent to :
Studentaffairs@brooklyn.cuny.edu

