



SUNY OLD WESTBURY

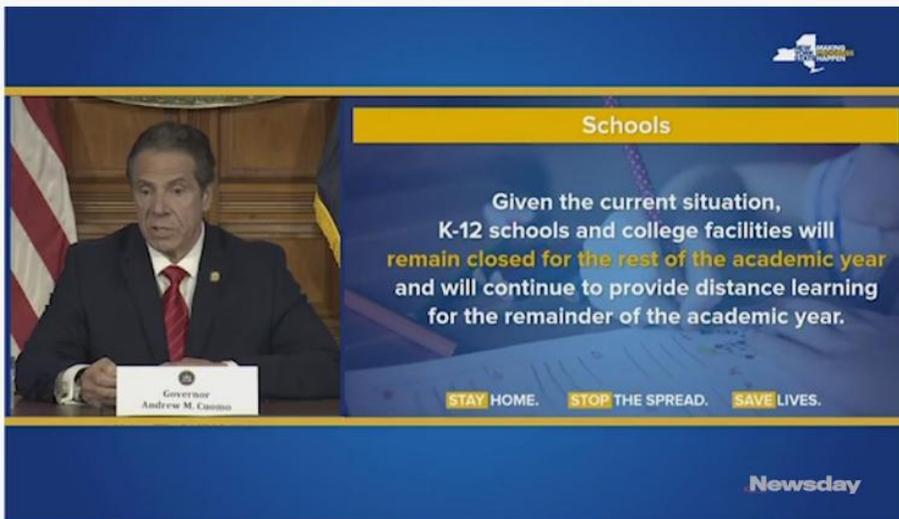
“IN THE NEWS”

MAY TO JUNE 2020

Prepared by
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SUNY Old Westbury



Cuomo: 1,000 new COVID-19 hospitalizations a day is too many



Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said Friday that New York schools and colleges will remain closed for the rest of the academic year. Credit: NY Governor's Office

By Newsday Staff

Updated May 1, 2020 8:21 PM

LI colleges adjust, plan

With Cuomo's announcement that schools will remain shuttered in the state for the rest of the academic year, local colleges said they were adjusting — or already had.

Stony Brook University said most of its summer undergraduate classes will be offered online.

Hofstra and Adelphi universities, and Farmingdale State College, said they will offer summer sessions online, with the hope that in-person summer classes could be held later.

Nassau Community College said all summer courses will be remote or online, but it had not yet made a decision on the fall semester.

SUNY Old Westbury said all its summer courses will be via remote learning.

Many of the colleges said they are working on plans for how to reopen in the fall, noting they would be following health and governmental protocols.



Panel members: It could be weeks until Long Island businesses reopen

By Newsday Staff

Updated May 13, 2020 9:16 PM

Colleges' September return in question

Meanwhile, Cuomo said he is not sure whether public colleges and universities will be open for regular in-person classes in September.

The California State University System, the nation's largest four-year public university system, announced Tuesday it is canceling nearly all in-person classes for the fall semester. Cuomo said he has not decided yet what he will do with the State University of New York, which includes Stony Brook University and [SUNY Old Westbury](#) on Long Island.

"The situation changes so fast and the facts change and assumptions change and everything changes," Cuomo said Wednesday at his daily coronavirus news briefing. "Where are we going to be in September? I don't know. I don't know where we are going to be in August. I'm trying to figure out June."

He added: "I understand schools need a lead time and they need to plan ... We've told our schools [to] plan on how you will reopen for the new normal."

Cuomo said the complexities of opening colleges include issues such as a lecture hall class scheduled to have 300 students that may now only be allowed to have 75, for social distancing.

"How do you run courses now with not having a gathering of students?" he said. "How do you have a cafeteria without a gathering of students?"

[Calvin O. Butts, III, president of SUNY Old Westbury](#), praised Cuomo for "taking a measured approach" while acknowledging the difficulties educational institutions face.

"The health and safety of our students as they pursue their studies is a vital concern," Butts said in a statement. "Our hope is to have face-to-face instruction for our students, even if that means we do so less frequently than we might ordinarily through blended learning practices and other alternatives. Education is so important, and it's hard to think that traditional instruction might not be possible."

Cuomo did not mention private colleges and universities on Wednesday, though their officials were also waiting to hear from the state. The head of one private college on Long Island said they are preparing for either a normal opening or a partial shutdown.

"If we have to teach our classes remotely or on-ground, we will be ready," said Don Boomgaarden, president of St. Joseph's College, which has campuses in Patchogue and Brooklyn.

The college started a committee a few weeks ago to develop different plans for the fall semester — in case Cuomo permits only remote classes, he said.

"We have to wait to be sure we're following state regulations, but once we know what they are, we'll be ready to implement one of those plans," Boomgaarden said. "Of course, we would much prefer to be able to offer our on-ground courses, but if not, we'll do them remotely."

Cuomo also has not announced what he will decide for high schools, middle schools and elementary schools for September. He has canceled the rest of the current academic year running through June. Students have not been able to attend school since NY Pause went into effect, meaning students will lose three months of in-class instruction — something many parents and educators consider devastating.



Colleges prep for facial recognition, temperature checks in reopening plans

Updated May 31, 2020 4:04 PM

Long Island higher education officials are considering new approaches to campus life as institutions await state guidelines on conducting courses in the fall, when experts say a [second wave](#) of the coronavirus could possibly hit.

Come late August and September, college students could see kiosks with facial recognition technology that take their temperatures, courses with the flexibility of attending in-person or remotely, and dorm rooms without roommates to comply with social distancing rules.

Reopening colleges in New York falls under Phase 4, the final part of the state's reopening plans. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said he plans to [announce in June](#) a decision on the fall semester for K-12 schools and higher education.

"As much as people want to get together and start their lives again, we all know that here in Suffolk County this has been a very deadly disease, so we have to approach reopening the campuses with caution," said Donald R. Boomgaarden, president of St. Joseph's College, which has a campus in Patchogue.

Some SUNY campuses, including Old Westbury, have tentative reopening plans in the works that will be sent to the SUNY system next week.

Several other Long Island campuses — including Adelphi University, Hofstra University, Long Island University, Molloy College and St. Joseph's College — are part of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, which issued a reopening report May 18.

That report, conducted in collaboration with SUNY officials, recommends a close relationship with local health departments, as well as the capacity for immediate testing of students, faculty and staff with symptoms.

"Facilities should be identified and a staffing plan in place to quickly isolate suspected or confirmed virus carriers," read the report, which also included recommendations on how schools can handle residential life, athletic events and research.

"We plan to have active testing and contact tracing as part of routine campus operations in order to minimize transmission," Adelphi University President Christine Riordan said. Riordan is co-chair of the 20-person Restart Plan for Higher Education task force that wrote the report.

Adelphi is planning a phased return to campus across all operations.

Like many other institutions, Adelphi will offer three class options for students - in-person, online only and hybrid, which is a mix of online and in-person classes. Classrooms will be modified to allow for social distancing and reducing density, university officials said.

"When cases occur on campus in the fall, we need to be able to move forward with classes without a hitch," said Drew Bogner, retiring president of Molloy College who will be succeeded this summer by James Lentini, provost at Oakland University in Michigan.

"We have students that are in a high-risk group, and they shouldn't feel they have to come to class, so we want to give them that option," Bogner said. "We call it hybrid-flex. Courses have the ability to be flexible with the amount of face-to-face or online time."

Molloy College will be purchasing kiosks with facial recognition, where students can get their temperature checked, Bogner said. The kiosks, which will be placed throughout campus and at the entrance of residence halls, will automatically send a report to student health services if a student has a fever, so that the student can receive immediate attention, Bogner said.

Student life activities also will be held virtually, Bogner said. As for dorms rooms, Bogner said he anticipates they will have to permit only one student per room, "unless a roommate can be considered a family member."

SUNY Old Westbury's plan also prepares the campus for different scenarios.

"It points us in a direction that no matter what the governor may announce, we will be ready," college President Rev. Calvin Butts said. "If he announced face-to-face instruction, we will be ready. If he says no congregating, we will be ready and will follow his guidance."

The Old Westbury campus, like Stony Brook University, has a field hospital, constructed at its athletic field and gym in the spring by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to deal with a potential shortage of hospital beds on Long Island. There are no plans to dismantle the setup, SUNY Old Westbury officials said.

"We will have to wait and see what happens with the infection rate," Butts said, adding that residence halls might be used to house health care staff if there's a second wave.

Mark Jarrett, chief quality officer for New Hyde Park-based Northwell Health, said because COVID-19 is so highly infectious, a second wave could come in early fall.

Jarrett said a second wave could come in hot spots across the country where people ignore recommendations to wear masks and practice social distancing, and restrictions are loosened too much.

Meanwhile, SUNY Stony Brook is "still planning for a timely start to the fall semester [on-campus] while continuing to evaluate conditions" for the safety of students, according to a post on the university's website. The school plans to provide an update by June 30, the post read.

Long Island University is "planning for on-campus education this fall, with the health and safety of our students top of mind," the university said in a statement.

Hofstra University is waiting on the state's guidelines and "looking at many options" for instruction.

"We also are working with Northwell Health, our partner in our medical and nursing schools, to develop a plan that will keep the entire campus community safe and healthy while providing a robust educational experience," the university said in a statement.

Farmingdale State College is holding its first summer session online and will decide by June 8 how it will proceed with subsequent summer sessions, said Patrick Calabria, vice president for institutional advancement at the college.

The college is working with SUNY state officials to develop plans for the fall, Calabria said. A decision on on-campus housing had not yet been reached, he said, but officials were considering scenarios to allow for social distancing. Officials also were considering having staff return in phases, Calabria said.

Fred Kowal, president of the United University Professions union, agreed that the highest priority has to favor health and safety.

The nation's largest higher education union, which represents the faculty and professional staff of the SUNY system, "totally understands the financial advantage to having students on campus in large numbers. The reality is, in this pandemic, it is imperative that safety be the first priority even if there is a financial cost to the universities," said Kowal.



Experts fear protests could worsen virus spread

By Newsday Staff

Updated June 1, 2020 3:57 PM

Colleges consider what campuses might look like in the fall



SUNY Old Westbury is preparing its campus for different scenarios starting this fall, including the possibility of returning to face-to-face instruction, school president Calvin Butts said. Credit: Kendall Rodriguez

Long Island higher education officials are considering new approaches to campus life as institutions await state guidelines on conducting courses in the fall, when experts say a [second wave](#) of the coronavirus could possibly hit.

Come late August and September, [college students could see](#) kiosks with facial recognition technology that take their temperatures, courses with the flexibility of attending in-person or remotely and dorm rooms without roommates to comply with social distancing rules.

Reopening colleges in New York falls under Phase 4, the final part of the state's reopening plans. Cuomo said he plans to announce in June a decision on the fall semester for K-12 schools and higher education.

"As much as people want to get together and start their lives again, we all know that here in Suffolk County this has been a very deadly disease, so we have to approach reopening the campuses with caution," said Donald R. Boomgaarden, president of St. Joseph's College, which has a campus in Patchogue.

Marian Conway

June 9, 2020

Colleges across the US are trying to come up with solid plans for a coming semester that's still packed with unknowns. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* is [keeping a list of colleges](#) as they issue their deadlines for making decisions or make them. Among the 910 colleges they've tracked, 67 percent report they're optimistically planning for in-person classes.

Harvard University [held a town hall last week](#), fitting two thousand affiliates into a virtual Zoom room to discuss priorities and foci in planning for fall. Dean of Students Katherine G. O'Dair acknowledged at the outset that the structured planning procedure that was wrapped around the pandemic had been overshadowed by the heartbreak of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade, and the subsequent nationwide protests against policy brutality and racism.

"I want to note that we're doing this work of preparing to return to campus while our society is literally burning," O'Dair said.

Harvard hopes they'll be able to inform students about coming back to campus in July. Many people are trying to make this happen. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences alone has 11 working groups, each assigned to separate areas like "five-year horizon," "financial planning," "restarting scholarship," "houses and facilities," "enrollment," "scheduling," "testing and tracing," and "remote experience." Their decision-making is being informed by four values: "ensuring health and safety, protecting the College's academic enterprise, leveraging the 'breadth and diversity' of the Harvard community, and preserving access and affordability."

New York's Long Island contains over a dozen institutions of higher learning in its two counties, including private universities, the US Merchant Marine Academy, two community colleges, and three four-year state public colleges. The [institutions are collaborating](#), looking to state guidelines and a possible pandemic second wave, as they make plans. Some of those plans include implementing rapid-result testing through kiosks that use facial recognition technology and take students' temperatures. Dormitories may be open, but lodging only one student in each room, which will lower the number of students who get housing. Many of the public and private colleges will offer students a choice of attending only online, only in-person, or a hybrid of the two.

"As much as people want to get together and start their lives again, we all know that here in Suffolk County this has been a very deadly disease, so we have to approach reopening the campuses with caution," said Donald R. Boomgaarden, president of [St. Joseph's College](#), which has campuses in Brooklyn and Patchogue.

Co-chair of the Restart Plan for Higher Education task force, [Adelphi University's](#) president, Christine Riordan, indicated that monitoring students, staff, and faculty will be ongoing. "We plan to have active testing and contact tracing as part of routine campus operations in order to minimize transmission," she says. The use of masks and social distancing will be brought to campus, and protocols will be in place for isolation of students testing positive.

[SUNY Old Westbury and SUNY Stony Brook University](#) have field hospitals built by the US Army Corps of Engineers that will remain in place for the time being, in case the hospitals become overwhelmed in a second wave. SUNY Stony Brook is planning to issue an update to students by June 30, 2020.

"It points us in a direction that no matter what the governor may announce, we will be ready," SUNY Old Westbury's president, the Rev. Calvin Butts says. "If he announced face-to-face instruction, we will be ready. If he says no congregating, we will be ready and will follow his guidance."

New York has had [383,591 confirmed COVID-19 cases to date](#), but the state's numbers have fallen enough, with daily death tolls now regularly well below 100 statewide, to consider offering in-person classes. California has had 131,029 cases, but there were over [2,000 new cases over the weekend](#). In response, the California State University (CSU) system decided to [cancel in-person classes on its 23 campuses for the fall semester](#). With so many others still weighing options, CSU is the first large public university system to make a definitive conclusion for the coming semester.

Enrollments were already in a downward slide for many schools. The pandemic is devastating budgets, and some fear [students will just take the fall semester off](#). In particular, first-year students may decide that having dealt with an abrupt switch to online learning in their final months of high school, they would rather wait for a more personal experience.

Even given those financial challenges, CSU chancellor [Timothy White](#) says the risks are too great for the network's more than 480,000 undergrads to return to campuses.

"Our university, when open without restrictions and fully in person, as is the traditional norm of the past, is a place where over 500,000 people come together in close and vibrant proximity with each other on a daily basis," White says. "That approach, sadly, just isn't in the cards now."

[Terry Hartle](#), the senior vice president of the [American Council on Education](#), a trade association of college presidents, says, "Cal State is an extraordinarily large and important university system and an awful lot of other institutions will watch this development carefully."

The University of California, California's other four-year public university system, [reportedly](#) has three models on the table—in-person, online, and hybrid—for their 10 campuses with almost 300,000 students enrolled, but decided last week to go for the online model. All California community colleges will have almost all classes online.

White says public health experts and academic researchers predict a "second, smaller wave" of COVID-19 this summer, "followed by a very significant wave" in the fall. That means that they see this state as their "new and expensive reality." Better, he says, to plan for the worst and hope for the best in September.—Marian Conway

Innovation In The Age Of Coronavirus

Old Westbury faculty unite for virtual sendoff

(May 17) In some parallel universe, the **SUNY College at Old Westbury** ushered more than 1,200 students – the school’s second-largest graduating class to date – to their post-graduate destinies in a traditional commencement ceremony, flying mortarboards and all.

In this one, SUNY Old Westbury did what quarantined campuses do – a virtual graduation event, which beamed well wishes and more to the Class of 2020 from President Calvin Butts III and dozens of remote faculty members. A conventional commencement may convene at a later date, but at precisely 9 a.m. Sunday, when the regularly scheduled ceremony would have begun, graduates got their dues from Butts and some 60 participating professors.

In the nearly 30-minute **prerecorded presentation**, the professors chime in from disparate locations throughout an extended music-video montage, offering congratulations, advice and good luck (Assistant Biology Professor Jillian Nissen notes the Class of 2020 “will have a great story to tell”). Butts – resplendent in academic robes, at a podium in his office, with “Pomp and Circumstance” playing quietly – also commends the “amazing achievement” of both students and staff, telling graduates that “all associated with our college are proud of what you have accomplished.” – GZ



College graduates parade through East Meadow

District still mulling in-person high school graduations

Posted June 11, 2020



Korinne Hernandez recently graduated from **SUNY Old Westbury**, where she studied education.
BRIAN STIEGLITZ/HERALD

By [Brian Stieglitz](#)

While many college graduates missed the chance to don their caps and gowns on their campuses because of the coronavirus pandemic, college seniors from the East Meadow and Salisbury communities didn't let that stop them from celebrating together.

Roughly a dozen cars driven by local college graduates lined up in front of Bowling Green Elementary School in East Meadow last Sunday. Gathered on the lawn of the school was a crowd of about 20 supportive friends and family members who cheered for the graduates as "Pomp and Circumstance" played from a Bluetooth speaker held by one attendee. The sound of sirens followed, as trucks from the East Meadow and Westbury fire departments escorted the graduates west in a circle around the neighborhood before they returned to the school parking lot.

Lulette Infante, of Salisbury, hosted the parade and drove with her daughter, Kaitlyn, who is graduating from St. John's University, where she studied marketing, international business and international marketing.

"I've been seeing so many high school parades, but I didn't see anyone doing anything for the college grads," Infante said.

Leading the procession as grand marshal was Jasan Stewart, 23, who recently graduated from Nassau Community College, riding with his brother, Karl Bouyer.

Bouyer is graduating from W.T. Clarke High School, where he was on the football and wrestling teams. Stewart, who has cerebral palsy, is known throughout the community for the support he has shown at his brother's games.

"At every football game and every wrestling match, Jasan is there to cheer on Clarke," Infante said. "Now it's our turn to celebrate him."

Bouyer will join the LIU Post men's wrestling team in the fall.



Senior Jai-la' Bush Chooses SUNY Old Westbury

Huntington senior Jai-la' Bush is headed to SUNY Old Westbury

June 23, 2020



Jai-la' Bush is fun to be around. The Huntington High School senior has a bubbly personality and a quick wit. There's always something happening with her and it's that energy that's contagious. The teenager plans to study at SUNY Old Westbury for an undergraduate degree in preparation for an eventual career as an attorney.

"I chose SUNY Old Westbury because I knew I could get a great education going to a SUNY school," Ms. Bush said. "I will be taking politics, economics and law to prepare for a career as a lawyer."

The teenager has been active in the high school's club program as a member of AWOD (A World of Difference) and the Yearbook Club. She volunteers with Young Leaders, a community based youth development organization.

"Huntington has helped me prepare for college with multiple teachers and friends and family supporting me throughout the college process," Ms. Bush said. "I think I'm ready for anything in life. Having challenges thrown at you will show that you can accomplish anything in life, whether it's a hard task or easy task."

Ms. Bush is a determined young woman who can be tough when she needs to be or very caring and compassionate when one of her friends seeks her out for comforting.

"African American Politics and Holocaust Literature were two classes that I enjoyed taking," Ms. Bush said. "Taking African American Politics taught me more about what's going on with the world and aspects of people's lives."

The teenager loves to perform and thrives in the limelight. She is a longtime member of the high school's Ready Step team and she has been spectacular on vocals at many public events.

Ms. Bush's favorite activity has been the Key Club's K-Factor talent show. "I've performed at K-Factor since I was a Huntington freshman," the teenager said. "I enjoyed singing to people with a different type of genre of music."

The senior's advice to incoming ninth graders? "Don't wait so long to make a decision for college and make sure you choose the college that fits you the best," Ms. Bush said.

Huntington's Class of 2020 named her the senior with the Best Smile. She is an approachable teenager and is always looking for a new adventure. While Ms. Bush welcomes a challenge she has never been known to be reckless.

"I would say my mentors have been Mrs. Rhonda [Nixon] and Mrs. [Patricia] Avelli and other teachers that I talked to on a daily basis," Ms. Bush said. "I picked these two ladies because they have helped me with numerous things. Going into Mrs. Avelli's Financial Algebra class was a great change for me because she helped me realize things that will help me in the real world. Mrs. Rhonda showed me that I shouldn't trust a lot of people and that I could succeed at anything in life."

When Ms. Bush sets her sights on a goal she is virtually unstoppable. She loves her family and her loyalty cannot be surpassed. She will be missed as she heads off to college in the fall.

"I think what makes Huntington High School special are the teachers who are there to support you until it's time to graduate," Ms. Bush said. "My experience at Huntington High School is something that I will always remember along with the friends that I have made here."



Exclusive: NY Woman Raises Close To \$10K For Her #NikesForNurses Campaign To Help Frontline Workers Fight The Coronavirus In Comfort

Ajón is on a mission to help frontline workers stay comfortable while caring for COVID-19 patients.

Written by Tweety Elitou

Every time we practice social distancing, wear our face masks, and keep our hands sanitized, we are doing our part to help those working on the frontlines during the coronavirus pandemic.

Most importantly, we are helping those in the medical profession from being overwhelmed, as they spend countless hours caring for those who are sick.

Eager to play her part, one New Yorker is taking her actions a step further.

"In February, I had the pleasure of watching Naomi Campbell accept an award for her activism for the LGBTQ+ community," Ajón told BET Digital exclusively. "I was inspired by her ability to use her platform as a fashion industry leader to support communities beyond her own, despite the challenges she has overcome."

Ajón, a Long Island native, and soon-to-be graduate of **SUNY Old Westbury**, saw a need that needed to be fulfilled in order to help nurses who are on their feet for long hours every day.

It all started with the birthday celebration of her cousin, Danielle, who works on the frontline as a nurse. When her cousin requested a pair of Nike sneakers as a gift, Ajón had a lightbulb moment. "This was the first time I considered the importance of comfortable sneakers as a part of nurses' uniforms," she told us. "I sent my cousin a gift card as a 'Thank you for your hard work!' and then I realized I could thank a few more nurses."

The communications and media student went on to order four pairs of sneakers before posting on her social media platforms that she would be sending them to nurses who are on the frontlines of COVID-19. "It didn't take long for me to distribute these four pairs to well-deserving nurses, Ajón said. "Four out of the five nurses were people who I didn't previously know."

Ajón is the force behind the #NikeforNurses, a movement that has now raised close to \$10,000 via GoFundMe. "I am proud of the progress made from its launch less than two weeks ago," she said with pride.

Nurses are such an important part of society and the positive response reflects the outpouring of respect and love that people have for them. "So many nurses have reached out to me thanking me for even thinking about them," Ajón said, expressing her gratitude. "I constantly remind them that many more people are appreciative of the work they do every day."

The #NikeforNurses campaign has even caught the attention of the popular sportswear brand. "I am currently in communication with people who work at Nike, but there is no corporate participation, yet," she shared, "I am hoping to change that."

According to Ajón, 27 nurses have received the Nike Winflo 5 sneakers. There are 23 pairs of sneakers en route to nurses, and 20 pairs of sneakers are set to arrive soon for her to personally add a "Thank You!" card.

Ajón says that she's grateful for the feedback she's received from the nurses she has helped thus far. "One nurse mentioned that she put the 'Thank You!' card near her keys to read for motivation when she heads out for the day," she said. "Many nurses have expressed that they are happy to receive the appreciation with an item that they call an essential part of their uniforms."

Ajón plans to continue her efforts to make nurses more comfortable while they continue to aid people who are ill due to COVID-19. "I will send sneakers for as long as the donations allow," she said, enthusiastically. "One nurse explained to me that she will have to discard her old sneakers after she no longer works in the COVID-19 unit so that she is not contaminating her home and to eliminate health risk to others. That is a concern that I did not consider, but that gives us a reason to keep going."

It is people like Ajón that make us proud! Keep going, sis!

To learn how you can help or nominate a nurse to receive a pair of comfortable sneakers, visit gofundme.com/f/nikesfornurses and on Instagram. Be sure to tag Nike and hashtag #NikeforNurses to spread the word!



(Photo: Alicia Crump-Bush via Ajón)



WINSAM: On-Demand



LIVE INTERVIEW: Ajon Crump, Founder of Nikes for Nurses

00:00 / 04:49



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LIVE INTERVIEW: Ajon Crump, Founder of Nikes for Nurses



WINSAM: ON-DEMAND 
TUESDAY, MAY 5TH

Live interview with Larry Mullins speaks with Ajon Crump, the Founder of Nurses for Nikes which gives shoes to frontline workers.



 00:04:49 |  **DOWNLOAD**

Student Activist Is Honored

By Christine Sampson
May 21, 2020

Priscila Ortega of Amagansett, who graduated in December from the **State University at Old Westbury**, has received the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence from SUNY. It is an honor given to 213 students across the entire state university system of more than 415,000 students.

The award was created “to recognize students who have best demonstrated . . . the integration of academic excellence with accomplishments in the areas of leadership, athletics, community service, creative and performing arts, or career achievement.” Ms. Ortega was an honors college student majoring in politics, economics, and law. As an activist who speaks out on behalf of the immigrant community, she was a founder of the Undocumented Student Alliance at Old Westbury and a member of the student government, Alianza Latina, and Omicron Delta Kappa Student Leadership Honor Society.

“I’m very honored and I’m very humbled, and thankful that everything I did is being recognized,” she said. “I didn’t do it for that reason, so it’s really nice to see that it is being seen for more than what I thought it was going to be. I was doing it because it is my passion.”



Priscila Ortega

The first in her family to graduate from college, Ms. Ortega is now working as an administrative assistant for the East End nonprofit group i-Tri, of which she herself is an alumna.

School News

Posted on [May 19, 2020](#)

East End

Chancellor's Award

Ten Suffolk County Community College students have been awarded the State University of New York's highest honor — The Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence.

Students are recognized for their integration of academic excellence with other aspects of their lives, including leadership, campus involvement, community service, creative or performing arts, athletics, and/or career achievement.

"Of the more than 415,000 students in the SUNY system, only 213 received the award statewide," said Suffolk County Community College Interim President Louis Petrizzo. "We are extremely proud to have 10 of these exceptional students at Suffolk, and we celebrate their extraordinary achievements."

Reynaldo Dallas, a hotel and resort management major who lives in Hampton Bays, has a 3.8 grade point average and earned Dean's List recognition every semester the past two years. Dallas serves as president of the Hotel, Tourism and Event Management Club, is an intern for Hyatt Place in Riverhead, and a volunteer for the Hampton Bays Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

Katarzyna Fialek-Yevtushenko, an accounting major and also a Hampton Bays resident, has a 4.0 GPA and earned Dean's List recognition every semester the last two years. She serves as president of the STEM Club, treasurer of both Alpha Beta Gamma and Alpha Sigma Lambda, and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa.

Sayra Alonzo Moreno, a liberal arts psychology major and Riverhead resident, has a 3.7 GPA and earned Dean's List recognition every semester the last two years. Alonzo Moreno serves as president of Phi Theta Kappa and a peer mentor, and is a Get There From Here Scholar.

SUNY Old Westbury senior Priscila Ortega also received the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence.

Ortega, a resident of Amagansett, is a self-described activist. Her campus and community advocacy includes representing the undocumented community, co-founding the Undocumented Student Alliance, and raising awareness of the plight of the immigrant community. As a politics, economics, and law major, and public policy minor, Ortega has maintained academic excellence over her four years and is looking to further her education in the field of immigration law. She is a member of the Honors College, Student Government Association, and Omicron Delta Kappa Student Leadership Honor Society.

"These student nominees are some of the most exceptional individuals across the State University of New York system," SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson said in a letter to students. "They excel academically and go to great lengths to give back to their campus and its community through their service . . . their success is a source of great pride for us all."

LI Dreamer calls high court decision 'amazing victory' for immigrants

By Antonio Planas

Updated June 18, 2020 9:18 PM

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision Thursday to preserve the rights of young undocumented immigrants to live and work in the United States is welcome news for more than 675,000 immigrants nationwide, including 122,000 New Yorkers.

Among them is Eliana Fernández, 32, of Patchogue, one of six plaintiffs in a case filed in New York's Eastern District arguing that President Donald Trump's effort in September 2017 to rescind DACA — the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program — was reached unlawfully.

Fernández, a native of Ecuador, waited years for Thursday's high court decision, like many so-called Dreamers — immigrants brought illegally into this country as children. Late last year, she and dozens of other immigrants walked for two weeks from New York City to Washington, D.C., a more than 200-mile trek, to call attention to the case.

"We marched through the rain, sleet and snow to make sure the Supreme Court knew our home is here," Fernández said Thursday during a Zoom conference with the advocacy group Make the Road New York, where she is an organizer on Long Island.

DACA recipient Josselin Paz graduated in 2019 from SUNY Old Westbury with a bachelor's degree in industrial and labor relations. She says she is mulling offers from law schools. Credit: Danielle Finkelstein

Fernández has two children, a daughter, 13, and a son, who turns 8 Friday, both born in this country. She said in Spanish during the Zoom conference she was terrified of losing them.

"Before DACA, my major fear was being separated from my children and not being able to work in the country in the way I wanted or realizing many of my dreams. With DACA, I've felt protected, it gave me the opportunity to work for Make the Road, help the immigrant community, and achieve one of my biggest dreams, homeownership."

However, critics of the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision said it sidestepped matters of constitutionality.

Chief Justice John G. Roberts wrote in his majority opinion that the merits of the program were not part of the court's decision. Instead, he said the Trump administration failed to provide sound reasons for ending DACA. "We address only whether the agency complied with the procedural requirement that it provide a reasoned explanation for its action."

Ira Mehlman, spokesman for the Washington, D.C.-based Federation for American Immigration Reform, which favors strict immigration policies, said the Supreme Court's decision was a "copout" and a "punt." Mehlman said the court had the opportunity to tackle the constitutionality of President Barack Obama's program, and whether a sitting president can rescind a program begun by a predecessor.

"This seems to be a copout on the part of the Supreme Court," Mehlman said. "Those are important constitutional issues you would expect the Supreme Court to rule on."

Long Island's top county executives, both Democrats, supported the ruling.

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone said in a statement the decision sent a "powerful message that we are a welcoming nation to immigrants around the world."

Nassau County Executive Laura Curran said in a statement that DACA recipients are hardworking, pay taxes and serve in the military. "I'm glad these young people can now continue to live, work and contribute to the only country they've called home for most of their lives."



Josselin Paz, 23, a DACA recipient who grew up on Long Island, said: "This is an amazing victory. It takes a huge weight off the shoulders of many undocumented immigrants. It's something that has been weighing over us for a few years now, since the Trump administration came into play. It's a relief — that's what it is."

Paz, an immigrant from El Salvador, entered the country in 2000, she said. Last year, she graduated from **SUNY Old Westbury** with a bachelor's degree in industrial and labor relations, and is mulling offers from law schools, she said.

"I don't know any other country at all. This has always been my home," Paz said.

DACA recipient Josselin Paz graduated in 2019 from SUNY Old Westbury with a bachelor's degree in industrial and labor relations. She says she is mulling offers from law schools. Credit: Danielle Finkelstein

Protesters on LI celebrate Juneteenth, condemn racism

By Newsday Staff

Updated June 19, 2020 9:24 PM

Demonstrations on Long Island Friday took on a dual purpose: condemning police brutality and racism while celebrating Juneteenth, the observance commemorating the end of slavery, when black people in Texas learned of emancipation on June 19, 1865.

Protests in Freeport, East Meadow, Shirley, Amityville, Mineola and Hicksville continued to cast a spotlight on the treatment of black people in the country almost four weeks after the May 25 killing of George Floyd, the black Minneapolis man who died after a police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

The protests occurred as municipalities, companies and institutions declared Juneteenth a holiday.

"We are at a pivotal moment in time, working with all organizations of this civil rights movement," said Hempstead Public Schools Board of Trustees Vice President Carmen Ayala at a news conference. "This is not a federal holiday where we shut down and observe this day and the liberation and the emancipation. We want to make sure this is done federally to commemorate this moment of African American history."

Hempstead Village officials joined Ayala and State Sen. Kevin Thomas (D-Levittown) on Friday to call on Congress to make Juneteenth a federally recognized national holiday.

Their pleas came as New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said Juneteenth will be an official holiday for the city next year. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo on Wednesday issued an executive order recognizing Juneteenth as a holiday for state employees and vowed to back legislation making it an official state holiday.

New momentum

Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when black residents of Galveston, Texas, were freed by Union troops who had just won the Civil War enforcing President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which had been in effect since Jan. 1, 1863.

The Memorial Day death of Floyd in Minneapolis police custody — which activists call a display of raw state-sponsored violence against black people dating back to the days of slavery — has sparked weeks of protests and spurred calls for June 19 to be designated a national holiday.

There were demonstrations around the nation Friday. Protesters marched over the Brooklyn Bridge, prayed in Atlanta and paused for a moment of silence at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington.

On Long Island, about 50 protesters marched from Eisenhower Park in East Meadow to downtown Hempstead, carrying signs like "Black Lives are Precious" and "Make Juneteenth a National Holiday."

They chanted "No justice, no peace, no racist police," while Nassau police diverted traffic as they marched on the sidewalk.

Organizer Pedro Cabrera, 21, of Queens said: "These protests are not a black and white issue. It's a humanitarian issue. People are dying. Some people do not regard human life the same because of color, religion, sex, or whatever it is; it doesn't matter. We are all human and we all deserve to live and to be safe, loved and protected."

Rev. Arthur L. Mackey Jr., 54, senior pastor of Mt. Sinai Baptist Church Cathedral in Roosevelt, attended the Freeport event.

"This country is moving backwards and these protests are necessary, mandatory," Mackey said.

"We have to deal with the racism that's in our own backyard," he said.

Bradley Zacarias, 40, of Freeport, brought his 5-year-old daughter, Alexa, to march in Freeport because he wanted her "to understand that what they're doing today is positive for everyone, not just one group" and to learn about "standing up for justice, for the rights which we all have."

Seeking 'a better world'

In Shirley, amid peaceful chanting of "Black Lives Matter" and "Juneteenth" and music, demonstrators and celebrants said weeks of protests have awoken the community and the nation to grievances and injustices suffered in the black community, and that it's time to put that activism into action.

The day "holds a lot of symbolism," said Ezekiel Torres of Shirley, who has organized and attended more than a dozen rallies at the corner of William Floyd Parkway and Montauk Highway. "I want to create a better world for these kids."

Mastic and Shirley are racially and ethnically integrated, attendees said, but racism exists here.

"It's here just like it's everywhere," said Adrienne Jerry of Mastic, who attended with her young grandsons. "I want my race to stand up against all this systemic racism. It's ignorant."

Brandy Pendelton called the event as much a celebration as a protest. "It's a celebration of freedom for black lives," she said.

Sunshine Deboard of Coram, a member of the nonprofit Just Us Making Progress, or JUMP, said the black community has "been through a lot. We've lost a lot of lives."

But it has also made strides, and "today is a celebration of all we've accomplished," she said.

Nakia Sparkmon, 27, of Mastic, who co-founded a group called The Empowered Black Society, said it's also about educating and motivating the African American community locally. "I want change for the community," she said. "I want to see changes at the Suffolk County Police Department. I want to see black people wake up."

About 200 protesters gathered near the Hicksville LIRR Station in a demonstration organized by the Student Government Association of [SUNY Old Westbury](#).

Student government president Kalief Metellus, 24, told a crowd gathered in a parking lot across from the LIRR station that the demonstration also served to register voters, fight against systemic racism and unite all humans, regardless of cultural background.

Metellus said the protesters planned on marching to the [SUNY Old Westbury](#) campus, about a 4-mile trek.

Black Lives Matters T-shirts were given out to participants.

Dorian Drummond, 26, of Brentwood, a 2015 graduate of [SUNY Old Westbury](#), said he was protesting Friday because "people are saying racism is getting worse. It's not getting worse — it's just filmed now."

On Friday, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone announced that Implicit Bias Training would be mandated for all county employees, and Nassau County Executive Laura Curran said she was requiring anti-bias training for non-sworn county employees.

"So when we celebrate Juneteenth next year we will do so knowing that every employee who serves the people of this county will have received this training," Bellone said.



SMITHTOWN MATTERS

WHERE ALL NEWS IS LOCAL

Suffolk Closeup - Protests Have Swept The Nation

By Karl Grossman

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2020 AT 1:13AM

The protests that have swept the nation in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis—one of so many killings of black people by police through the years—included demonstrations in many communities in Suffolk County among them Commack, Port Jefferson Station, Central Islip, Bay Shore, Sag Harbor, Shirley, Mastic, West Babylon, Huntington, East Hampton, Bridgehampton, Lake Grove, Greenport, Peconic, Brentwood, West Islip, Lindenhurst, the county seat of Riverhead and Smithtown where there was a counter-demonstration.

The protests here have been peaceful, heartfelt and intense.

Racism remains deep-set on Long Island and nation. Newsday last year published a series of articles entitled “Long Island Divided,” the result of a three-year investigation. The newspaper sent out testers carrying hidden cameras and microphones to meet with real estate agents. The findings, as Newsday stated, provided “evidence” that “potential homebuyers were steered to neighborhoods based on race.”

Because of the series, New York State has instituted changes to try to combat the institutional racism which, in fact, has long shaped residential patterns on Long Island. It’s why there are “ghettoes”—Wyandanch, North Amityville, among others, a result of “racial steering,” still happening, although illegal. Long Island has been rated among the “most segregated” areas in the U.S.

And it’s not just bias in real estate. For 42 years I’ve taught Investigative Reporting at [SUNY/College at Old Westbury](#), a remarkably diverse institution. Experiencing diversity is a major element of the college’s educational program. Part of the course involves students doing investigations. Every semester, some of them investigate prejudice with white and black students teaming up and looking for jobs, apartments and used cars at dealerships—and being treated differently. Last year, one pair added to their investigation by the white student repeatedly screwing up in a job test involving folding and hanging garments, the black student doing excellent work. The white student was offered a job, the black student rejected.

Suffolk County Community College-based Center for Social Justice and Human Understanding featuring the Holocaust Collection issued a call last week that “we must take action to stop the intentional or unintentional killing of unarmed black Americans.”

“All Americans must take ownership of the pervasive racial discrimination that exists in our nation and move forward collectively to ensure that justice prevails,” said a statement signed by the center’s chairperson, Rabbi Steven Moss, and Jill Santiago, executive director. “No one can be silent. Rather, every one of us needs to be courageous, confront bigotry where it exists, and work to build a world where healing can begin.”

Other entities on Long Island committed to challenging the racism here include the aptly named organization Erase Racism. And there have been and are un-biased government leaders such as State Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr. of Sag Harbor.

Mr. Thiele said last week: “In the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the unrest that has erupted across the nation, no one can afford to be silent if you care about our country. Justice for all is the foundation of our democracy. The words of Martin Luther King, Jr. can help illuminate the path forward for our nation as we seek to get closer to that ideal of justice. King stated, ‘Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.’ In the spirit of those words, I condemn the murder of George Floyd as an egregious criminal act. All of those who participated in that act must be brought to justice.”

“I also support the constitutional right of American citizens to protest,” said Mr. Thiele. “To protest against injustice is the foundation of our American democracy. Change never comes easy. Protest has been at the core of needed change throughout our history. It is clear that this is not an isolated incident. It has been repeated too many times across our land. Yet, nothing has changed. I support those who petition their government to change the circumstances that continue to lead to these injustices.”

[SUNY/Old Westbury](#) has for 50 years purposely mixed groups of people—white, African-American, Latino, Asian-American, Native-American and foreign. I marvel watching the students coming together, communicating, developing understandings and friendships. The college’s president, Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III, says “Old Westbury is rightfully celebrated as a college community that brings people of all races, creeds, and socio-economic backgrounds together. Being designated among the top diverse campuses in the country...reinforces that Old Westbury is at the forefront of cultivating intercultural understanding and global citizenship in its students.”

[Teaching at SUNY/Old Westbury](#) has shown me that, yes, integration can work well



Karl Grossman is a veteran investigative reporter and columnist, the winner of numerous awards for his work and a member of the L.I. Journalism Hall of Fame. He is a professor of journalism at [SUNY/College at Old Westbury](#) and the author of six books.

Informal lateros / recyclers are essential to a fair and green New York City

By: Chris Hartmann, Christine Hegel, Chicago Crosby and Josefa Marín

June 16, 2020

In New York City there are an estimated [8,000 informal lateros](#), or people who collect, sort, and trade dumpsters for a living. Earning a nickel per can or bottle, lateros find themselves straddling a liminal space in society: although they are often visible pushing carts with bulging bags through town, they work in the shadows for fear of harassment, shame, and lack of public support.

Lateros are indispensable to New York State's environmental sustainability efforts and to the local economy. More than [5 billion containers](#) are traded in New York State each year, generating more than \$ 400 million for the economy and funding of environmental campaigns. The lateros / as play an important role in achieving these results. For example, the more than 800 lateros who frequent [Sure We Can](#), the only non-profit trading center in the five districts, traded 12 million warehouse containers and returned more than \$ 700,000 to the local community, last year alone. Additionally, Sure We Can supports 8 green jobs and educates hundreds of kindergarten through 12th grade and college students on urban environmental issues and social issues.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has been disastrous for [informal workers](#) like the lateros. The current crisis exacerbates long-standing systemic economic, social, and environmental injustices, and poses numerous risks to the public health of the lateros. Today, supporting the lateros is more important than ever. In economic crises, when unemployment increases, [the number of people who resort to collecting cans and bottles to survive increases](#).

Here are several short-term and long-term actions one can take to help lateros and grow a fair and green economy during this rebuilding period, triggered by the COVID-19 crisis:

1. Recognize and thank the lateros of your community for the services they provide. The lateros are our neighbors: they often collect containers near their own homes, cleaning up the neighborhood in the process.
2. Separate swappable containers from other plastic, glass, and aluminum containers, and store them in a transparent bag or marked for lateros / as. If you live in a large apartment building, ask the maintenance staff to add the exchangeable containers for the lateros.
3. Offer clean, unused, and sealed personal protective equipment (PPE) to lateros, including gloves, face masks, and alcohol gel. The lateros / as work independently and may not have access to PPE.
4. Propose economic relief measures for all informal workers, regardless of their fiscal situation. Support local organizations that dispense aid funds to those most affected by the crisis.
5. Support the ["Community Organics and Recycling Empowerment \(CORE\)" Act](#) introduced by Councilors Keith Powers and Antonio Reynoso. The CORE Law proposes the creation of community dump sites for the collection of organic and electronic waste, which nowadays contaminates the recycling chain and is dangerous for the lateros / as. In addition, the CORE Act will create hundreds of green jobs.
6. Propose that lateros and informal workers be included in decision-making processes at all levels of government. In [cities around the world](#), the integration of lateros / as into municipal solid waste management systems produces abundant social, economic, and environmental benefits.
7. Support legislation to increase the trade-in value from 5 cents to 10 cents per container and expand the type of containers that can be exchanged. Similar changes in Oregon have brought recycling rates to [over 90%](#). In addition, the updating of the "Law of the Bottle", which has remained largely unchanged since 1982, will provide the lateros with a fair wage that reflects the value of their services.

The lateros / as should not continue to be relegated to the shadows. We must recognize, defend, and promote the positive economic and environmental contributions of lateros to make New York City a fair and green that we all want.

-Chris Hartmann, PhD, is Professor of Public Health at [SUNY Old Westbury](#) and a member of the Sure We Can board. Christine Hegel, PhD, is Professor of Anthropology at Western Connecticut State University and a member of the Sure We Can board. Chicago Crosby is a latera and board member of Sure We Can. Josefa Marín is a latera and member of the Sure We Can board.

Professor At WCSU In Danbury Studies Coronavirus Impact

WCSU's Associate Professor of Anthropology Christine Hegel is measuring the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on informal workers.

Rich Kirby, [Patch Staff](#)

|Updated Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 7:07 pm ET

Western Connecticut State University Associate Professor of Anthropology Dr. Christine Hegel has partnered with the international non-governmental organization Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) on a study that aims to measure the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on informal workers. The study focuses on informal workers in 12 cities around the world, and Hegel is collaborating with Dr. Chris Hartmann (Public Health, [SUNY Old Westbury](#)) and Dr. Sari Kisilevsky (Philosophy, Queens College, CUNY) to implement the New York City node of the research. WIEGO has allocated nearly \$12,000 for this portion of the study.

Three work sectors are being studied (domestic workers, street vendors and waste pickers), and Hegel and Hartmann are overseeing data collection on waste pickers, also known as "canners," in New York City. Canners collect, sort and redeem deposit-marked containers to earn or supplement a living, and there are an estimated 8,000-10,000 canners in New York City. Hegel has been doing anthropological research in the canning community of Brooklyn since 2018, and works closely with the nonprofit redemption center Sure We Can . Her research contributes to ongoing advocacy efforts aimed at recognizing canning as a low-barrier livelihood for economically vulnerable residents that also makes a positive impact on diversion rates of renewable materials in New York City. Most recently, Hegel's research was used to design a census mobilization plan in the canning community, funded by a \$50,000 2020 Census Complete Count Outreach Grant received by Sure We Can.

For the waste picker node of the WIEGO Covid-19 Crisis Study, Hegel and Hartmann put together a team of 10 researchers that includes WCSU and [SUNY Old Westbury](#) students and canners in New York City; they are currently in the process of surveying 70 canners via phone or in-person interview in English, Spanish or Mandarin Chinese. WCSU Anthropology/Sociology students Charla Beauvais and Clay Martin are employed as research assistants on the project, conducting portions of the interview and recording data. This project builds on their research methods coursework in the Department of Social Sciences and provides real-world experience on a rapid-response study. They also are learning about this low-income, marginalized community through the survey, which collects data on economic activities, housing conditions, household composition and survival strategies during the early and later stages of the state- mandated lockdown.

Across the globe, waste pickers contribute significantly to reducing landfill and recovering renewable materials. In countries like India and Brazil, more than 1% of all workers in the country are waste pickers, providing income for millions of families. Hegel's research on waste pickers in New York City contributes to a better understanding of both informal labor working conditions in the urban U.S. and the impact of informal workers on the waste management infrastructure in New York City. An upcoming phase of this study (2021-22) will include research with WCSU students on canners in Danbury.

Recent articles by Hegel and Hartmann on canners include:

<https://nacla.org/news/2020/04...> and www.gothamgazette.com/opinion/9520-informal-recyclers-canners-essential-just-green-nyc-survival .

Trump Touts Space Force As Tens Of Thousands Die Of Covid



Sonali Kolhatkar speaks with Karl Grossman.

The newly inaugurated US Space Force launched a mysterious mission on Sunday launching an unmanned test space plane called the X-37B which was built by Boeing. According to Reuters the launch is part of, "mission 'America Strong' to conduct power beaming tests, study radiation on crops and launch a satellite."

President Trump on Friday triumphantly unveiled the new Space Force flag in the White House Oval Office in front of cameras – a flag that looks suspiciously like that of the Star Fleet flag in the popular sci-fi show Star Trek.

In fact in just days, a fictitious Netflix television program called Space Force will debut starring actor Steve Carrell, perhaps blurring the line between reality and fiction even more. Meanwhile nearly 90,000 Americans have died in just 7 weeks from the coronavirus pandemic.

Read his article in Counterpunch 'The Coming Nuclear Menace: Hypersonic Missiles,' [HERE](#). For more information visit www.space4peace.org.

Karl Grossman, professor of journalism at [State University of New York/College at Old Westbury](#), and is the author of the book, The Wrong Stuff: The Space's Program's Nuclear Threat to Our Planet. Grossman is an associate of the media watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR).

Rising Up with Sonali is a radio and television show that brings progressive news coverage rooted in gender and racial justice to a wide audience.

Rising Up With Sonali was built on the foundation of Sonali Kolhatkar's earlier show, Uprising, which became the longest-running drive-time radio show on KPFK in Los Angeles hosted by a woman.

RUS airs on Free Speech TV every weekday.

Missed an episode? Check out Rising Up on FSTV VOD anytime or visit the show page for the latest clips.

#FreeSpeechTV is one of the last standing national, independent news networks committed to advancing progressive social change.

#FSTV is available on Dish, DirectTV, AppleTV, Roku, Sling and online at freespeech.org.



67 minutes | Jun 22nd 2020

The Black Freedom Movement 2.0

The Black Panthers set the blueprint. Now we're elevating the movement. The fight for black liberation continues. On this episode of "Be Heard Talk," Selena Hill, Stanley Fritz, Tiffany Brown, and special guest Nicholas Powers, an author and [SUNY Old Westbury](#) professor, discussed the history of the Black Power Movement of the 60's and 70's and how it relates to Black Lives Matter. They also talked about the next steps in the fight for liberation.

 > National & World Headlines > Sports News > ...

Friday's Transactions



By The Associated Press

May 15, 2020 3:00 pm  < a min read

COLLEGE

FLAGLER — Named Grant Kelam as head women's lacrosse coach.

SUNY OLD WESTBURY — Named Andrew Sanchez head women's volleyball coach.

Class Notes

1990s

Jerrell Robinson '94 of Rockville Center, N.Y., is the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) director for SUNY Old Westbury. In 2019, he completed his doctorate in education degree in executive leadership at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, N.Y.

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe Names New Board Chair, Trustees

Doris Johnson ascends to chair, Mona Rankin and Dona Scott newest board additions

Sharon Kunkel, [Local Nonprofit](#)

Updated Wed, Jun 17, 2020 at 4:58 pm ET

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe is proud to announce its 2020-2021 Board of Trustees, with a new board chair and two new trustees to guide the well-loved arts organization into the future. Longtime supporter and leader Doris Johnson is the new chair, succeeding Marian Moss; new trustees are Mona Rankin and Dona Scott.

Johnson, Rankin and Scott will serve with trustees Marvin Albert, Cheryl Anderson (treasurer), Ali Bahaj, Chris Caswell, Esq., Kitty Cranor, Michael Gardiner, Sy Goldblatt, Dr. Jaih Jackson, Penelope Kingman, Margie Nellum Lee, Dr. John Maupin, Howard Millman, Dr. Randall Morgan, Marian Moss (vice chair), Mike Rosario (secretary), Eva Slane and Lois Watson.

Doris Johnson enjoyed a successful career in medical office administration management in Texas before retiring to Sarasota with her husband. She had myriad professional and volunteer board involvements, including serving as president of the State of Texas Medical Association Alliance, president of the Tarrant County AIDS Outreach Center as well as a member of the Harris Methodist Hospital Foundation Board, to name a few. She first became involved with WBTT when she attended a summer show in 2012 and then became a season subscriber; she has been a devoted supporter of WBTT ever since. Johnson served as the chair of WBTT's recent and very successful Heart & Soul capital campaign, which raised \$8.7 million to renovate the organization's campus and buildings.

"WBTT provides young artists with a platform through which they can sharpen their skills in order to gain wider exposure," said Johnson. "I have seen how this community embraces the young performers and feel that this relationship is immensely important to their success and to the success of WBTT. I am thrilled to be a part of the energy and excitement, and look forward to continuing to support this unique and crucial arts organization."



Mona Rankin, who moved to Sarasota in 2014, spent 20 years in executive leadership roles with the [State University of New York, College at Old Westbury](#), with her ultimate role as Chief of Staff. Her work history also includes higher education leadership positions at City University of New York and Florida International University. She is among the founders of the Harlem Renaissance Education Pipeline, a Cradle to Career Collective Impact Initiative in Harlem, NY. She is a past participant and presenter in Florida International University's Executive Leadership Enhancement Program. Until recently, she served on the Advisory Board of Literacy Suffolk, Long Island, NY.

Dona Scott moved to Longboat Key from Chicago, Illinois, where she was actively engaged with multiple community causes. She was a board member of Providence St. Mel School, Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (now known as The Shirley Ryan AbilityLab), and currently serves as a board member of After School Matters, one of the nation's largest providers of after school programming for teenagers. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Business Management at Dominican College in Orangeburg, NY.

"We are so excited to welcome Mona and Dona to the board, and proud to welcome Doris as our new Chair," said Julie Leach, WBTT's executive director. "These are three strong, accomplished, brilliant women whose insights and hard work will be essential in helping to guide our organization through the uncertain waters of the coronavirus pandemic."

For more about WBTT, go to westcoastblacktheatre.org or call 941-366-1505.

About Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe

The Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe of Florida, Inc. is the only professional black theater company on Florida's West Coast. Its mission is to produce professional theater that promotes and celebrates the African American experience, to attract diverse audiences, to support and develop African American artists, and to build the self-esteem of African American youth. For more information, visit the website at westcoastblacktheatre.org or call 941-366-1505.

It wasn't until I attended "Twitter University" and went to college when I realized: I'm not satisfied with the Black history I've been taught.

I've learned a lot more on social media (through verification, of course) than I did in over two decades of school. I was born and raised in Washington Heights, NY. The Heights has a large population of Dominicans and it was all I knew.

I remember coming across a few dark-skinned Black students throughout elementary, middle, and high school, but their presence wasn't very common. I was so engulfed in my Dominican experience that I never considered the rest of the Black history I wasn't learning.

One thing I blame it on is textbooks. <https://twitter.com/inatemyself/status/1269436285757816838?s=20>

Grade-school textbooks suck

I spent so much time reading them, but I still found myself not really getting what I wanted. This would eventually result in a culture shock by the time I got to college.

I noticed textbooks portrayed Black people as primitive, with the exception of civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center gave the book *The American Pageant*, a text widely used for AP history classes, a score of 60% for how it denotes Black slavery. The book uses the term "mulatto" to describe Blacks, which is actually a racial slur.

CBS conducted a two-month investigation on how Black history is taught in the United States and had an interesting finding: enslaved Africans referred to as "immigrants" in 1775.

Saying that enslaved Black people immigrated implies they traveled by choice. The reality is, they were forced and came to the U.S. in chains.

Before college

My encounters with Black history didn't really begin until my U.S. History class in 11th grade. Prior to, I learned a lot about ancient global history—you know, Rome and Greece. It wasn't until my woke ass U.S. History teacher, Mr. Espin, put us on to the real Black history.

As an afro-Dominican himself, the information I was learning felt authentic. Sure, anyone can teach a history class, but those who experience it have a stronger connection to it. Black teachers teach Black students on purpose.

For instance, I remember everything he taught us about segregation in the Jim Crow south which sparked a thought recently: we are still segregated. I went on a bike ride from 59th Street and second avenue in Manhattan to the Willis Avenue Bridge in The Bronx and I journaled some findings.

I saw corporate buildings, updated apartment complexes, and only white people before I got to about 100th Street. Then, I started seeing more Black and people of color, project buildings, and corner bodegas. The vernacular even changed. I went from hearing wine bottles clink in Trader Joe's bags to "YERRRR"s.

While this may seem simple and known to others, it took me back to my 11th-grade classroom with Mr. Espin. That goes to show the impact of learning history I didn't know I was yearning for and now apply to reality. Mr. Espin has been an educator for over a decade in the NYC Department of Education.

What I learned about Black history in his class for a year taught me more than any other institution ever did.

The culture shock

I call my undergraduate years "The Culture Shock". When I stepped foot into **SUNY Old Westbury** in August 2013, I was finally in the minority, as far as nationality. Most of my peers were dark-skinned Black people. I remember thinking to myself that this will finally be the time I learn about my history from others who have been affected by it.

The conversations about unity and police brutality were frequent to avoid racist attacks. I instantly started making connections to what I learned in U.S. History to what my peers undergo in their everyday lives. I also thought about how systems oppression affects all groups of color and I was combatting that by being in college.

I remember being exposed to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in college; my campus had an active chapter. Just the existence of the organization in my school showed me how the Black community upholds its history.

My perspective on the world changed forever after I graduated college—I learned we are not a monolith but we all part of a system that wasn't designed for us. Unity and knowledge of our history are very important.

As a journalist

Verifying information and sources is paramount to being a fair journalist. In the age of information, we have access to a lot of resources. Sure, I can google "Black history" or "transatlantic slave trade", but I need to ensure I'm getting true information. One way I verify this is by speaking to experts and utilizing credible sources like books written by Black authors.

One recent method I started employing is speaking to my older family members. Some of them, like my grandmother, experienced Trujillo's regime as an adult. Therefore, she has first-hand accounts of what that time period was like in the Dominican Republic.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement have incentivized me to verify everything I read online. As a journalist, I want to make sure I'm spreading accurate information. Most importantly, I want to tell the stories that will be added to my history.

I have a major duty: to continue educating myself on Black history and to contribute to its truth for future generations..

Lynbrook Board of Education Trustee Alicemarie Bresnihan dies at 85

Served on Lynbrook school board for 45 years

Posted May 11, 2020

By Mike Smollins

Whenever there was an important school event or a chance to advocate for students, Alicemarie Bresnihan was there.

Bresnihan died on Monday of cancer at age 85. Many of her fellow Board of Education trustees and school officials said they would remember her for her dedication to education and her passion for all things Lynbrook.

"There has been no greater supporter of the students and staff of the Lynbrook Public Schools than Alice," Superintendent Dr. Melissa Burak said in a statement. "For 45 years, she has been a trusted school board member who exemplified how a board member champions the efforts of all in the district. Her attendance at every single district event was astonishing."

Board President William Belmont said he knew Bresnihan for most of his life, dating back to when he was a student in Lynbrook. He got to know her on a professional level on the board.

"She is a shining example of what public service is all about," Belmont said. "Her calm demeanor and diligent efforts were always appreciated by the board. On a personal note, Alice exemplifies what's great about Lynbrook. Someone who lived here, raised her kids here and has always worked hard to make Lynbrook a better place."

Belmont added that Bresnihan maintained strong relationships with school board organizations, which helped the members gain insightful perspectives on what was being done on other school boards throughout the state. He noted that he appreciated her guidance and friendship, and that she would be missed.

Bresnihan moved to Lynbrook with her husband, John, in 1959, and was first elected to the school board in 1975. John predeceased her in 2017. All nine of Alicemarie and John's children graduated from Lynbrook High School, and the couple had at least one child enrolled in the district every year from 1960 to 1987. They had 21 grandchildren, and Bresnihan never lost her passion for education or her school spirit.

She earned a degree in biological science from **SUNY Old Westbury** and worked as a probation officer for Nassau County for 20 years until her retirement in 2003.

During her time on the board, Bresnihan served as board president, and lobbied in Albany and Washington, D.C. on behalf of the Lynbrook district as a member of the school board's Audit and Policy committees. She also pressed state lawmakers to reduce the use of standardized tests.

Board Secretary Robert Paskoff recalled traveling statewide and nationally to board conferences with Bresnihan, and called her a "trooper."

"She would always keep up with everybody," he recounted, "especially in the bigger convention centers. She would tire me out frequently. Her energy was totally devoted to the children of the district. Alice gave more to the community of Lynbrook than anybody else in the history of the Lynbrook schools and the Lynbrook community in general. She was tireless."

Honors that Bresnihan received included an award from the Lynbrook Council of PTAs; an award for Academic Excellence and College Service from SUNY Old Westbury; the Silver Bullet Award from the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association; Woman and Citizen of the Year from Lynbrook village officials and many others.

"Her board work was preceded by her championing at the PTA level, where she began her support as a parent of nine children who all attended the Lynbrook Public Schools," Burak said. "She was truly an advocate of public education and role model for all educators and will be missed.

We extend our sincere sympathies to Alice's family and friends. Her legacy and impact on Lynbrook will continue for years to come."

Melissa Koenig contributed to this story.



Joanne "Joy" J. Jerviss, Artist From Northport, Dies At 79

Joy Jerviss was an accomplished artist, educator, business owner, dog trainer and creator, says her son, Jeff.

Posted Thu, Jun 25, 2020 at 12:28 pm ET

NORTHPORT, NY — Joanne "Joy" J. Jerviss, an artist from Northport, died on May 21. She was 79. She passed peacefully just days after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, her son, Jeff, said.

Joy is survived by her two sons, Jeff and Charlie, along with her sister, Laurie. Joy's education included associate of arts at [State University of New York, Old Westbury](#), 1989; bachelor of science, [State University of New York, Old Westbury](#), 1990.



She went on to become an accomplished artist, educator, business owner, dog trainer and creator. Listed in many art publications including "Who's Who in American Art" along with receiving many accolades from art museums, art experts, art schools and other organizations for her work as an artist. Her work was very unique and can be found in many galleries, online art auctions, museums and re-sellers around the world.

Joy also had a passion for dogs and horses, which led her to her latest passion of showing her beloved AKC Papillon dogs where she won many awards within the dog obedience world. In memory and appreciation of Joy, Jeff asks that you please consider a donation to the "[Papillon Rescue of the North East \(PRONE\)](#)" or "[Hope4Horses Equine Rescue Network](#)."

Perkiomen School baseball players near, far adjust to quarantine life

 by **Jeff Stover** May 11, 2020

It can't be said Ken Baker doesn't know how to attach a silver lining to a dark cloud.

Like so many other sports programs this spring, Baker and his Perkiomen School baseball team have seen their 2020 season plans derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. But he's been consoled, to a certain degree, by not having to deal with the ramifications of another of the spring's by-products.

April's rainy weather, and the disruption of game schedules that would have resulted from it.

"It would have been one hell of a month to get games in," Baker noted one weekend during the month. "I was over at the field cutting the grass. You couldn't get on the infield, it rained so much.

"At least we're not dealing with the stupid weather."

Instead of pummeling the opposition during the regular season, and making one of their trademark extended runs through the Pa. Independent Schools Athletic Association (PAISAA) tournament, Baker and his Panthers are focusing part of the present on the future. That's particularly true for the team's 2020 seniors and post-graduates, who are working toward the next level of their academic and athletic careers while finishing up their time at Perk.

While the players occupy their days taking virtual classes — they've done so since March — they also interface with each other and their coaches through Zoom meetings Tuesdays and Thursdays. The dissemination of information, and discussions designed to bolster team identity, are the principal purposes behind these meetings.

"What we're trying to do is keep in touch with the players," Baker said. "There are nine for whom I am their advisor anyway. Doing workouts ... our fitness guy has been setting up a program they can do at home.

"We talk about different things we can do as a team. Something reasonably short, to do as group to maintain the integrity of the program."

The task is a bit more daunting at Perk School, whose student body encompasses youths not only from other states, but other nations as well.

"It's a little different for the kids who live far away," Baker noted. "We have six seniors who finished at Perkiomen. Two post-graduates are in good collegiate situations.

"The kids outside the United States, we're pushing them to get more videos. That's basically the only way to go."

Bryce Porter, a post-grad, is enrolling at Siena College in New York. Baker related a recent conversation with Porter that spoke to the sense of humor the Lincoln University (Pa.) resident is maintaining through the pandemic.

"I talked to him one day, asked him what he's doing tomorrow," Baker said. "He said it's 'Groundhog Day' (1993 movie starring Bill Murray), the same thing over and over again."

Four of the team's seniors have their future plans booked. Manny Ariza, from Brooklyn, is heading to [State University of New York-Old Westbury](#); Jayden Kemp (Bahamas) will be attending Northampton County Community College; Etrick Padilla (Salinas, Puerto Rico) will be at Ohio Wesleyan; and Elias Meredith (Philadelphia) is heading to Harford (Md.) Community College.

"I told them to find out what their coaches want them to do," Baker said. "I told the kids the coaches are in the same boat as them, to get their profiles out there. There's no other way."

For the underclassmen, "We told them there will be season coming up. Stay together and keep to a schedule."

Perkiomen came into the season having Baker and his staff confident they could again make noise in the Tri-County League and among the state's private schools. That was in spite of losing two high-end pitchers, David Smith and Carlos Torres.

"In the fall season all the kids play doubleheaders Sundays," Baker recalled. "I was happy in the fall. We felt if we have kids who can throw strikes, we can play defense behind them.

"I felt we would be solid. We had a good mix of kids adding to what we have, spread out from freshmen to seniors. We were losing six kids, but we have enough left behind them. I think we would have held our own."

With the possibility of summer ball in the Upper Perkiomen community being investigated, Baker sees considerable interest among Perk School players to participate if the idea turns into reality.

"Pretty much all our players would jump at the opportunity," he said. "We talk about it all the time."

At the 13- to 15-year-old age range, Baker noted more than 60 players have registered. That would open consideration of forming multiple teams.

The status of such a move, of course, will depend on if and when the current stay-at-home and social-distancing regulations from the state are lifted and it is considered safe to play.

Extraordinary Senior: Dhanush Sivasankaran works to give back to society

By Michael R. Ebert

Updated June 3, 2020 3:19 PM

Dhanush Sivasankaran has come a long way since his birth in India.

The Hicksville High School senior, who was born in the metropolitan city of Chennai, and his family immigrated shortly thereafter with dreams of a better life in America.

Today, Sivasankaran is making those dreams a reality through his achievements and activities, ranging from becoming an AP Scholar with Distinction to volunteering nearly 230 hours since his freshman year at NYU Winthrop Hospital in Mineola. He also became a U.S. citizen last year.

"If my parents could do all this with what they had, coming here with almost nothing, given what I've been given, I should be able to do so much more," said Sivasankaran, 18.

From last July to this January, Sivasankaran helped develop a cracker through India-based Granova Naturals that is fortified with nutrients and antioxidants to address the "often overlooked problem of malnutrition" in India, he said. Last fall, he volunteered up to five days a week at St. Francis Hospital in Flower Hill.

The diligent teen has also participated in prestigious summer programs through the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, Camp Cardiac at NYU Langone Health, and the Institute of Cancer Research and Education at SUNY Old Westbury.

"Dhanush expects to understand how and why the world works," Hicksville math teacher Jason Cetron said. "He makes those around him better students by allowing them to feel comfortable and motivating them to think independently, and he makes them better people by making them feel accepted and confident in their own abilities."

In addition, Sivasankaran won a gold medal in the Long Island Math Fair, was named a commended student by the National Merit Scholarship Corp., and attended the Institute of MERIT at [SUNY Old Westbury](#). His leadership positions have included being director general of his school's Model UN, president of the Science Honor Society, and captain of the varsity swim team.

"Dhanush has left an impression on almost everyone he has had an interaction with," said his guidance counselor Russell Garcia. "He is a once-in-a-lifetime student with a drive that will always push himself to become better."



GREATER LONG ISLAND



Connetquot names its valedictorian and salutatorian for the Class of 2020

June 30, 2020

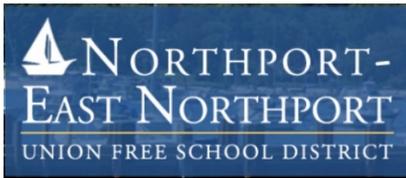
Connetquot High School graduating seniors Amanda Perrone and Atif Khan have been named valedictorian and salutatorian for the Class of 2020, respectively.

Perrone is an advanced placement scholar with honor who competed as a discus thrower for the high school's girls track and field team. She served as the vice president of membership for Rho Kappa Honor Society; received bronze, silver and gold awards from Girl Scouts of America; and was a member of the National Honor Society.

The Hofstra-bound scholar also was a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society and Connetquot Public Library's Teen Advisory Board, the school district reported. At Hofstra, she plans to study secondary science education.

During his time at Connetquot High School, salutatorian Atif Khan engaged in many opportunities for co-curricular enrichment, especially those related to science. An advanced placement scholar with distinction, Khan took on cancer research at [SUNY Old Westbury](#), competed in the International SeaPerch Challenge and received the Emperor Science Award.

Khan served as secretary of the National Honor Society, treasurer of Model United Nations and vice president of both Science Olympiad and Debate Club. Khan will attend Brown University this fall, and plans to study computer science.



NHS Senior Danielle Levanti Recognized for Mathematical Achievements

Congratulations to Northport High School senior Danielle Levanti whose project, “Sine Waves, Harmonic Series, Music to My Ears” recently received an honorable mention in the video category of the Steven H. Strogatz Prize for Math Communication.

The inaugural award, offered by MoMath, the National Museum of Mathematics, is named after mathematician, writer and Cornell professor Steven Strogatz and is awarded to students with compelling projects in video, audio, social media, art, writing and performance. Submissions are judged based on content, creativity and communication.

Danielle’s video submission was based on sound waves and music. She graphed chords as either consonant or dissonant based on their intersections.

In the coming days, Levanti will attend a virtual recognition ceremony and her name will be listed on the National Museum of Mathematics website.

Additionally, Danielle was selected as one of four New York State students to receive a \$500 scholarship from the New York State Mathematics Honor Society.

Danielle’s personal achievements as well as her involvement and contributions to the mathematics community certainly played a role in her being selected for the scholarship, according to K-12 District Chairperson of Mathematics Robin Rann.

This year, Danielle added the Northport High School Mathematics Student of Distinction to a long list of achievements. Over the years she has participated in the Long Island Mathematics Fair, the Institute of Creative Problem Solving for Gifted and Talented Students at [SUNY Old Westbury](#), as well as the university’s Math Research and Technology Program. Danielle also serves as chair of the events committee for the Northport chapter of NYSMHS.

After graduation, Danielle intends to study biological engineering at Cornell University, where she plans to expand her passion for pharmaceutical and vaccine development.

“Danielle is truly a pleasure to work with. She is a natural leader, and she is well-respected by both her peers and teachers,” Honor Society adviser Kristen Rozell said. “Danielle is an outstanding student and extremely well-deserving of this award.”