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# WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

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## NYU Schools Update Pass/Fail Policies in Response to Coronavirus



*Several NYU schools are offering expanded pass/fail options for students in response to concerns surrounding the transition to remote instruction.*

By **EMILY MASON**  
News Editor

Some undergraduate students can now choose to pass/fail Spring 2020 courses and still count them towards degree requirements, as several school deans have announced in response to potential performance shortfalls brought by the transition to remote learning.

"We recognize the unfamiliar challenges that students may encounter in a remote learning environment and the ways in which this might amplify pressures we are all feeling," an email from Liberal Studies Dean Julie Mostov read.

Remote instruction has raised concerns spanning from wifi accessibility, to lack of a quiet place to participate in classes, to confusion regarding how to transition lab or project-based courses to Zoom. Additional worries include professors ill at ease with the video conferencing platform and students being distracted by the emotional tolls of the ever-evolving pandemic, all of which may negatively impact students' grades.

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The COVID-19 crisis has left students wondering about the rest of their spring academic semester. Most NYU schools are currently offering students the option to request to pass/fail their classes up until May 12th.

ALEXANDRA CHAN | WSN

## NYUAD Students Confident in Campus' Response to Coronavirus

By **ABBY HOFSTETTER**  
Managing Editor

An email sent on Monday, March 16, by NYU Global Programs notified the students of NYU Accra and NYU Sydney that both campuses would be closing. With this shutdown, every NYU campus has been closed due to the coronavirus outbreak — every campus except NYU Abu Dhabi. While NYUAD announced it was switching to remote instruction on March 4, it is the last of 14 campuses to physically remain open.

Regardless, NYUAD students are not worried about losing their housing anytime soon. Several students cited NYUAD's tight-knit community — including its administration — as the reason why they are not bracing for a campus closure.

The United Arab Emirates reported a confirmed case of coronavirus in late January, making it the first known case in the Middle East. Since then, the UAE has taken drastic measures to combat the spread of the virus — barring all international travel, closing all public en-

tertainment areas and disinfecting the entire city of Dubai — many of which have proven to be effective.

As of Monday, March 16, 125,000 Emiratis had been tested for the virus, equal to approximately 13% of its population. In comparison, there have been 71,695 people tested in the U.S. as of Sunday, March 22. This is equal to approximately 0.0002% of the population.

There are currently 153 cases of COVID-19 in the UAE, with 13 arising within the last day. There are also

38 reported recoveries from the virus in the country.

A CAS sophomore who has asked to remain anonymous is studying away at NYUAD. He noted that the UAE's quick response helped assure him of his safety in contrast with the United States' slow response to the outbreak and the resulting effect on NYU's New York campus.

"I do think that the UAE in general has been doing a lot better to mitigate the pandemic-crisis, where we are definitely in a different position than

in NYU New York," the student told WSN in an email.

NYUAD junior Xinyi Zou agreed, noting that it is not only the government's actions that make her feel safer, but those of the NYUAD community as well.

"Abu Dhabi right now is probably, in terms of health care and testing facilities, safer than most places," Zou said. "[It is] a combination of the campus and the government and the healthcare system itself."

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## NEWS

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Edited by LISA COCHRAN and EMILY MASON

## NYU Schools Update Pass/Fail Policies in Response to Coronavirus

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All schools have extended the deadline to petition for pass/fail to May 12. And while most have adopted policies allowing for all courses to be taken pass/fail and still count towards degree requirements, each school's updated policy is different.

Tandon School of Engineering noted that even if a student opts for pass/fail, they may still need to receive a letter grade to move onto a higher-level course. Steinhardt has extended the deadline to petition for pass/fail from the ninth week of the term to May 12, but has not updated its limit on how many courses students can take per semester using this grading system.

Gallatin School of Individualized Study decided that students' senior projects must still be given a letter grade. The College of Arts and Sci-

ence is limiting students to two pass/fail courses, which can count towards core requirements or degree electives, but not core degree courses.

The enhanced policies come after the Executive Committee of the Student Government Assembly met with the Office of the Provost and NYU administration on Wednesday, March 18 to address student concerns in the face of coronavirus, as reported by NYU Local.

Following the meeting, SGA issued a statement announcing that students should expect emails from their school's deans by this week at the latest. At the time of publication, the School of Professional Studies is the only undergraduate school that has not yet announced updates to its pass/fail policy.

Tandon sophomore Tripp Fuentes

guessed that he will end up pass/failing one or more courses this semester and that the option was necessary to allow students to finish out the semester.

"I feel I'm not going to get the full experience, and whatever grade that I get isn't accurate to the performance I could have had if we didn't have to go home, if we didn't have to do classes over Zoom," Fuentes said. "In terms of pass/failing, I feel it's just to get it over with, just move on to the next semester."

But not all students feel these revised policies have done enough, including GLS sophomore Parker Grove, who feels that NYU should have followed the example of universities like Columbia and Duke University, which made pass/fail mandatory for all students.

"I think it's good that [NYU is]

doing it, but I think other schools have a better approach to it making a blanket mandatory pass/fail for everything," Grove said. "Although it may not allow students to raise their GPA, it is setting one standard that people aren't going to be able to look better than others during this semester of confusion."

And Grove is not alone in her thinking, some students have rallied in support of a Universal Pass System to overcome stigmas surrounding pass/fail which may prevent students from opting in, including concerns that pass/failing a course will hurt students when applying for competitive graduate programs or jobs.

CAS sophomore Samuel Haecker isn't currently planning on pass/failing any courses, but is grateful to have the semester to decide given that no-

body knows how remote learning will evolve over time.

"It's good that we have most of the semester to decide because most of us haven't really experienced the complete breadth of online classes and the complete experience of them," Haecker said. "So in a way, it is more useful that we have until the end of the semester to decide."

GLS sophomore Erin Zubarik appreciated Liberal Studies offering the more generous pass/fail policy.

"I still plan on not passing and failing, but I did see that email as the Liberal Studies school trying to accommodate students for the changes that are happening right now," Zubarik said. "So I looked upon it in a good light."

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## NYUAD Students Confident in Campus' Response to Coronavirus

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NYUAD senior Alia ElKattan noted that after students at NYU's New York campus were evicted from their residence halls with little warning, NYUAD students grew worried, but their fears were soon alleviated.

"Some students were concerned when the news from New York first broke out," ElKattan told WSN in an email. "But then we had a university-wide Zoom forum with senior leadership and they assured us that we can remain on campus if we choose to, so people are now more confident in our situation."

She added that she believes the NYU-

AD administration will continue its practice of transparent communication with students regarding the virus.

"[NYUAD's administration] has been communicating with our student body and community at-large with so much thoughtfulness and compassion, so it makes it difficult to believe they'd leave us stranded at any point," ElKattan said.

NYUAD senior Motoi Oyane agreed, saying that his trust in the administration is one of the main reasons why he's not worried.

"I believe that the school is closely monitoring the situation around the world and will make sensible decisions,

hence, will not take sudden measures that will make us feel that we were off-guard," Oyane told WSN in an email.

NYU Abu Dhabi's administration is known amongst its students for its transparency and care. Vice Chancellor Mariët Westermann, who began her tenure in August 2019, has stated that she cares deeply about mental health and hosts "Walk with Mariët" sessions, where she and a group of students walk the streets of Abu Dhabi and talk informally.

The CAS sophomore has met with and spoken to Westermann, as well as a number of other high-ranking administrators. He says that at NYUAD, this

is not abnormal.

"They feel very accessible," the student said of NYUAD's administration. "Part of it, I think, has to be because they live in proximity to us. They live on campus, and not in a penthouse mansion like [NYU President Andrew] Hamilton. Therefore, they feel closer and in turn, have a bigger responsibility to serve the student body."

To them — and to many other students — the administration's transparency is the very reason they're not afraid of a sudden closure. If the campus was going to close, students believe that the administration would tell them first.

According to an email from Westermann sent to the NYUAD community Sunday, March 22, a page titled "Virtual Community Events" will soon be added to NYUAD's intranet, its equivalent of NYUHome. The page will be updated daily, Westermann added.

The administration and Student Government have planned a variety of virtual events, all of which can all take place while social distancing. Events include Zoom fitness classes, Rooftop Rhythms Virtual Poetry Open Mic Night and the NYUAD Social Distancing Film Festival.

One building on NYUAD's campus — which usually remains empty, as the campus is not at capacity — has been converted to host students who have flown in from abroad, and are therefore required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

The NYUAD community has ensured that these students don't get lonely while they are in quarantine.

"Our peer-support club REACH have arranged for students to write them words of support and delivered the cards to them," ElKattan told WSN. "Yesterday, they sent a group to sing to them from underneath their building, which was really cute."

As to why NYU Abu Dhabi has kept its doors open while all others shut, students have been left to speculate.

Some students think it is because the outbreak has yet to reach the UAE to the degree it has at the other degree-grant-

ing campuses, New York and Shanghai. Others think it's because of NYUAD's high percentage of international students and the risk of traveling abroad.

Because of the open communication from the administration, many students say they do not wonder if the administration is hiding crucial information — there is an underlying assumption of mutual trust.

"The administration has been as transparent and communicative as they could be in a time of such extreme uncertainty," ElKattan said. "It's made it so much easier to deal with everything going on and feel safer and well-taken care of."

Zou echoed ElKattan's statement and emphasized that the NYUAD administration was acting on behalf of students.

"Really, [the administration has] been acting in students' interests," Zou added. "They're not kicking anyone out. They're not having inconsistent messages. It's just been a very supportive, safe environment. Right now, it just feels super supportive here."

NYUAD's Acting Assistant Vice Chancellor for External Relations Kate Chandler said that it was through the collective strength of the NYUAD community that the administration sustained its efforts.

"Our leadership have been inspired by the enormous resilience and empathy shown by our students for each other, for our faculty and staff, and for the larger community," Chandler told WSN in an email.

Though the coronavirus outbreak has negatively affected NYUAD, students say the administration's response has promoted positivity during a period of global paranoia.

"Strengths and weaknesses reveal themselves at tough times," Oyane said. "I have been very satisfied by what the NYUAD community has shown us to be capable of."

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SAM KLEIN | WSN

A student walks through NYU Abu Dhabi's campus. NYUAD is the last of NYU's campuses to remain open amid the outbreak of COVID-19.

## NYU Senior Athletes React to Their Final Season's Early End



CHARLIE DODGE | WSN

By **ARVIND SRIRAM**  
Sports Editor

On Thursday, March 12, Evan Lindley, CAS senior and captain of the men's volleyball team, was in his apartment in Brooklyn discussing with his father and sister the necessary steps to take amidst NYU's transition from in-person to online classes. Though NYU was shifting to remote classes, Lindley assured his father that he would remain on campus for the entirety of spring break, practicing with the volleyball team.

"Given that school is going remote through spring break, my response to [my father] was that I'm still in season until they tell us we're not," Lindley said. "I'm going to be here and continue practicing until they tell me I can't."

Unfortunately for Lindley, that came in the middle of the conversation with his family.

"Midway through this conversation, I got a text from Coach [Pina], who had just gotten off the phone on a conference call with a lot of athletic directors and coaches," Lindley said. "He basically told our teammates that it wasn't looking good. I don't remember him fully confirming it, but I think he really just said that it doesn't look good for us."

Upon hearing the news that his senior season was canceled, Lindley and his teammates were devastated.

"That night, we immediately jumped to get together as a team, spending quality time together before everyone left," Lindley said. "Honestly [...] I felt a ton of emotion in the moment."

The following day, NYU Athletics released a statement canceling the remainder of the winter and spring athletic seasons, concluding the seniors' final season as NYU Violets. Like Lindley, many senior athletes were devastated about the circumstances.

"It feels like a piece of me died," CAS senior and captain of the baseball team Zach Cohen said. "The amount of work myself and the other seniors put in for four years was so substantial that it felt like we got robbed."

At the time of the announcement, the men's volleyball team was 13-3, which is good enough for a number two ranking in all of NCAA's Di-

vision III. Based on the strong start to the season, the team felt robbed of a possible playoff run.

"The different thing about this year for us was that we had three years under our belt with pretty much the same set of guys," Lindley said. "We felt a sense of confidence that came with experience and internally, within our team, the feeling was we could've won the NCAA tournament."

The women's tennis team was 4-0, coming off an 8-1 victory against Southern Virginia University on March 7. Although the season had just started, the team saw potential for greatness.

"Over my four years, I've seen our team recruit better and better players," Stern senior and captain of the women's tennis team Rupa Ganesh said. "We had an incredibly talented team from top to bottom, and I think we could have definitely made an NCAA run this year."

Aside from the missed opportunity for recognition or accolades in their final season, the senior athletes will miss the friendships that were developed through their career as NYU Violets.

"I definitely think about my teammates that were there for me and some of them are my friends to this day," CAS senior and member of the women's track and field team Evelyn Nkanga said. "I'm definitely going to miss the team aspect of being a college athlete. I've had some pretty great coaches too, and I'm going to miss working with them."

In response to the cancellation of the spring season, the NCAA decided to grant an extra year of eligibility for the athletes who compete in spring sports. For some, the opportunity to compete for another season is appealing.

"I think it's at least kind of cool to think about that," Lindley said. "Depending on how all of us deal with this loss, it could become more and more likely, as the months go by, that people just really want to get that back."

For Carter Beardsley, a CAS senior and member of the men's track team, his father is no stranger to an unprecedented abolition in sports.

"My father was a swimmer when he was younger," Beardsley said. "He was a national swimmer and he actually broke the world record in the 200-meter butterfly [in the 1980 U.S. Olympic Trials]. It's funny because he had the chance to go to the Olympics. He took first in trials and was actually heavily favored at the time to place [in the Olympics], but he boycotted because of the Cold War."

His father's experience has helped Beardsley cope with the loss of his final season. As a result, Beardsley has learned about himself — and the realities of life.

"[From this experience], I learned that life is unpredictable; you never know what's going to happen," Beardsley said. "You have to do your best to keep going forward and stay who you are despite the turbulent times."

As NYU — and the rest of the NCAA — moves into a world without sports, the NYU Athletics community is emphasizing the importance to remember the bigger picture.

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## Let Me Tell You About Your Favorite Pro Athletes

By **BELA KIRPALANI**  
Editor-at-Large

Like many others, I have been spending the past week at home socially distancing myself from the outside world. With no sports (and no anything) for the foreseeable future, many have been taking this time to read all the books that have been sitting around forever, create TikTok videos, perfect their cooking skills and go live on Instagram. I, however, have been conducting some important research.

Before this pandemic, I was a casual fan of GQ's 10 Essentials videos — a series where athletes and other celebrities sit down and talk about the 10 things they cannot live without. But, in the past 10 days sitting at home, I have upgraded to a superfan and I have successfully watched every single episode posted on the GQ and GQ Sports YouTube channels — 92 and 33 videos, respectively. That's 125 total.

Here are the biggest things I've learned about our favorite professional athletes:

Male athletes sure do love their hats. New Jersey Devils defenseman PK Subban says that hat-making is an art, Houston Rockets forward PJ Tucker travels with a hat box and Oklahoma City Thunder guard Chris Paul, a dad of two, wears a dad hat almost every day.

Washington Wizards guard Bradley Beal and Cleveland Browns wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. both have major sweet teeth! Beal even makes sure to eat some Skittles before each NBA game he plays. I ate a bag of Skittles before sitting down to write this. Coincidence? I think not.

Playing cards is a common way to spend time during road trips for many NBA players. Miami Heat forward Jimmy Butler, Paul, Beal and more all play with their teammates in their downtime. Meanwhile, Minnesota Timberwolves guard D'Angelo Russell has picked up a couple card tricks which he showed off on his episode of 10 Essentials.

Speaking of games, Butler loves dominating his friends and family in dominoes. He even has a personalized dominoes set with his nickname "Jimmy Buckets" on each of the pieces.

Like playing cards, many NBA players also enjoy drinking and talking about their favorite bottles of wine. One of Butler's essentials is a wine case that can store several bottles and a bottle opener. Cleveland Cavaliers forward Kevin Love believes he was a pioneer in the wine game, Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker has his own wine drop stoppers and New

Orleans Pelicans guard JJ Redick is a devotee of the Ah So wine opener (which former teammate Butler actually introduced him to).

Redick eats a lot of beets. He eats giant servings of beets at least twice a day and, 35 minutes before tipoff, he even chugs a bottle of water filled with concentrated beet crystals or beetroot. He doesn't even like the taste of beets! So why, you ask, does he eat so many of them? Science says that since beets contain inorganic nitrate, they can help keep your blood pressure in check and boost stamina. Can't beet that.

Dogs! Edmonton Oilers centerman Connor McDavid recently got an adorable mini bernedoodle named Lenny! I'm in love (with the dog)! Golden State Warriors guard Klay Thompson also brought his dog onto the show — he's had his bulldog, Rocco, since his rookie season.

Heavyweight boxer Tyson Fury likes to try going without his cellphone for a few days. Perhaps, after this social distancing is all over, I will also try that approach. In other news, Fury also brought along his personal lubricant which is very important to him because, as some may know, he masturbates seven times a day when in training camp to help keep his testosterone levels high.

Milwaukee Brewers outfielder Christian Yelich and I wear the same shoes — a pair of high-top Converse every day, all day. Keep it classic.

Minnesota Timberwolves big man Karl-Anthony Towns is very attached to his teddy bear named Mac the Bear. According to Towns, Mac the Bear was featured in Mac Miller's music video for "He Who Ate All the Caviar." Towns had then asked the rapper for the bear as a gift, however, Miller couldn't find the bear. Six years after the music video was released, Miller passed away, and the day after his death, Towns happened upon the bear in a vintage clothing store in LA. Towns believes it's the same exact bear, however I had some doubts when comparing Towns' teddy bear to the one in the music video.

That's some of the cool stuff I learned while spending an inordinate amount of time on YouTube. What will I do with all of this random knowledge? I don't know. Stay home and be well, everyone.

*The Sports Girl is a weekly column that features a girl's take on sports. Yes, a girl. Yes, on sports.*

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## Where Did You Go? Students on Being Kicked Out of Housing



Students pack up their belongings in preparation to move out of their dorms. Many students returned home, while others stayed with relatives and friends.

By **BELLA GIL**  
Culture Editor

Last Monday on the first day of Spring Break, all NYU students received an email from President Andrew Hamilton with updates on what procedures NYU had been taking regarding COVID-19. Most notably, Hamilton had informed all students living in residence halls for the school year that they had six days to move out of their dorm, and advised them to preferably move out within 48 hours.

The memo came with extreme backlash and the creation of multiple petitions to push back the deadline or stop the eviction altogether. Many cited that the notice came

abruptly, making it hard to return to NYC to move out, especially after the global travel restrictions and the dangers of traveling during an outbreak.

This sudden notice had students scrambling to figure out not only how to move out of their dorms in the midst of a pandemic, but where to go if they couldn't go back home due to varying circumstances.

While the university did give students the option to request to stay within housing, many found they were not approved to do so unless it dealt with Visa issues.

Kelly Lim, a Steinhardt first-year who had lived in University Hall, is staying on a friend's couch in Brooklyn and plans on doing so for a few weeks until moving

to another friend's couch in NYC before making her way to Boston instead of going home to the Bay Area, which has been hit very hard by the virus.

"I thought traveling home would be futile, expensive, and just generally unnecessary — especially because my relationship with my parents isn't the best," Lim told WSN over Facebook Messenger. "Additionally, while my parents are healthy, a lot of their coworkers and colleagues aren't, and if I were to potentially expose my parents to COVID-19, they could expose many more people that are at higher risk than the people I generally interact with in New York."

Many students who found themselves

displaced after Hamilton's email turned to friends or friends of friends who could host them for the time being. Throwing out non-essential items and living out of a suitcase was also what students had to turn to in order to hop from place to place.

A Coral Tower resident and Gallatin sophomore, who asked to remain anonymous, is also staying with a friend at their apartment.

"I'm from Chicago, and I didn't return because it's really difficult and disorienting for me to be back there," they said over an email interview with WSN. "I also couldn't imagine being trapped in a place where the only people I'd be interacting with face to face would be people who don't use my pronouns — I use they/them pronouns — and basically believe that who I am, in terms of gender identity, is fake/is part of a mental disorder — that thought was very dysphoria inducing if I was stuck there, it would make me feel very gaslit all the time."

This Gallatin sophomore also acknowledges the extreme risk NYU put students at in requiring them to move with more cases popping up in NYC everyday.

"I was quarantining in my dorm room before this," they said. "My suite was empty, and like 90% of my floor was empty because people who wanted to, and could go home, did. [...] But by forcing us to leave, they made everyone stop quarantining — I interacted with exponentially more people because of moving out than I would have if they had just let me stay."

For others who do not call the United States home, staying with family across the country was the only option. CAS sophomore, who also requested to redact their name, had lived in Alumni Hall and could

not go home to their family in Dubai, based on the fact that the city is only letting UAE passport holders into the country.

"I am currently staying at an uncle's house in Texas," they said. "I have a place here, but isolation and lack of car, in addition to the difficulty of being independent [sic] due to food scarcity, caused me to move in with family."

While Lim, the Gallatin sophomore, and about the whole NYU student body held generally negative views on how NYU has handled this situation, this CAS sophomore has a different perspective.

"From issuing refunds, to the COVID-19 emergency aid grant, they could never have predicted how bad things could get," the CAS sophomore said. "I do wish they could have told us to pack our stuff up before spring break, however things were already stressful as is. The departments are being as helpful as they could. I complained the first few days in regards to their reaction, however when analyzing what they are doing, in the time-frame and grandness of their actions, they are doing very well."

Visa issues, familial tensions and hometowns having severe outbreaks are some of the circumstances that contributed to students inability to travel home. Though we are truly living in unprecedented times, many agree NYU's handling of this whole situation could have been a bit better.

"I wish that they hadn't reassured us multiple times that the dorms would stay open for the rest of the semester and that they could've maybe made these conclusions sooner," Lim said.

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## How Students Are Spending Their Spring Break In Quarantine

By **DIVYA NELAKONDA**  
Beauty & Style Editor

With the announcement a week prior to spring break that NYU's Washington Square Park campus would begin remote classes due to the continuous rise of coronavirus cases in New York City, students were forced to adapt their plans.

Many international students opted to stay in NYU housing, as overseas travel was discouraged and whether the semester would eventually resume in-person at the NYU Washington Square Park campus initially remained unclear. With the burgeoning threat of the coronavirus, students who stayed in NYU housing began to prepare.

"I went grocery shopping and bought more than I usually do, a ridiculous amount of food," Steinhardt first-year Yvonne Zhang said. "It was an excessive amount of food that could last me for half a year, but I was forced to eat it in five days."

The sudden changes brought forth by the escalation of the coronavirus in New York City throughout the spring break week forced students who planned to stay in housing to react quickly.

"I bought a ticket after we were told we would be kicked out [of housing] on March 22, and later had to buy another ticket because they moved the date ahead to March 18," Zhang said. "I packed my stuff for days and also helped three friends who were not in town to pack ... I think I can speak for myself and also lots of international students regarding

all the losses in finances as we have to fly back home because the dorm is not available anymore and that news came in such a short period."

Some students had spring breaks revolving around an NYU-affiliated program. CAS first-year, Rachel Fadem, had signed up for a trip with the Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life to go to an urban farm in Berkeley, California and learn about sustainability, being good to the earth and mindfulness, all within the realms of Jewish practice. Though the trip's cancellation was disappointing, Fadem has been able to use her now-free time to channel some of her passions.

"I've been making a lot of jewelry," Fadem said. "It's something that I used to do when I got really anxious or depressed and now it's a fun hobby and business. It's nice to be able to put all of my energy into a creative outlet such as making jewelry. I'm also writing music and playing music."

Students who are able to be at home have even found little things to look forward to despite the unusual circumstances.

"I just bought this amazing vegan cake cookbook and I've been waiting for it to arrive for the past week," Gallatin sophomore Ella Rene said. "When it gets here I have a day planned to bake like 4 cakes and drop some off to all of my friends' houses — I'll leave them at the doorstep and wave from my car. That's honestly what I'm most excited about right now."

That being said, one activity students

often expect to come home to is spending time with their family and friends from their hometown. Because many cities are urging individuals to exercise social distancing to minimize potential exposure or spread of the coronavirus, these gatherings have been impeded.

"The only activities that have really been affected for me have just been being able to hang out with my friends from home," Rene said. "We usually spend days together over break. I'm from D.C. so we sometimes do picnics by the monuments, or bike rides downtown, going to the movies in Georgetown. It's weird because I haven't seen them at all this break. My family sometimes travels to see family over break, so obviously that's been affected, which is upsetting."

And as students are no longer living on campus or attending classes in person, keeping in touch with peers from NYU has become an added challenge.

"Being back home means that I won't be able to see many of my friends as I am away from my NYU friends," Fadem said. "I'm trying to utilize facetime to talk to them."

Still, students who were able to return to stable homes are grateful to have the support they do. But they recognize the universal stress of the pandemic on students, regardless of whether their spring break was or was not affected.

"I think that it's really hard to stay positive during a time like this. Obviously I'm in an extremely privileged position to be able to stay home and not worry about my housing situation, or whether



One student had to finish all the food in her refrigerator before leaving New York. While some had to abandon their de-stressing trips, others spent time dealing with stocked up groceries.

I'll be able to have enough food on my plate," Rene said. "But I do think it's important that everyone takes the time to take care of themselves and the people they care about if they have the ability to. Everyone is kind of grieving in their own

way, and I think that putting that energy into something, no matter what it is, is what will help us get through this."

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## ARTS

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Edited by KAYLEE DEFREITAS and ETHAN ZACK

## How to Support New York's Vibrant Independent Arts Scene

By **ARTS DESK**

One week ago, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio ordered New York City movie theaters to shut down as part of many initiatives to hopefully "flatten the curve." Earlier in March, Broadway also shut down as a way to prevent large gatherings. Museums,

bookstores and many other arts establishments followed suit as they did their part to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Many of the affected organizations and artists are facing uncharted territory when it comes to how they will survive without their normal income. Below are a few ways to help keep New York's unique art

scene alive while still social distancing.

**MOVIE THEATERS**

- Film Forum - Gift Certificates
- Village East Cinema - Gift Certificates
- Lincoln Center - Digital Distribution of Independent Titles (eg. Bacurau)

- Metrograph - Gift Card
- Spectacle Theater - Online Donations
- Anthology Film Archives - Online Donations and Advanced Tickets

**BOOKSTORES**

- Three Lives & Company - Accepting curbside pickup and delivery within the West Village
- McNally Jackson - Online orders, McNally Jackson Bookseller Paypal Support Fund, Tote Bags and Gift Card
- Housing Works Bookstore/Organization - Online Donations and Shop

**THEATER ORGANIZATIONS/ COMPANIES**

- Broadway Cares - Donations support artists to obtain health care and emergency financial assistance
- La Mama - Online live-streams and donations
- Theater for the New City - Donations

**GALLERIES**

- Artsy - Website that allows you to view and/or purchase gallery artworks online
- Uprise Art - Mission is to inspire a new generation of art collectors to introduce art into their homes. It has a page for affordable originals that all cost under \$800

**MUSIC VENUES**

- Elsewhere - Community Relief GoFundMe to support the 80 employees who now face an uncertain economic future as the venue closes indefinitely

**RESOURCES FOR FREELANCE ARTISTS**

- Springboard for the Arts - a resource list that includes webinars and community connections, as well as links to other resource lists to help both organizations and individual artists

**HOW TO SUPPORT FREELANCE ARTISTS AFFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS**

- Artist Support Pledge - Emerging artists are taking a massive hit due to the coronavirus. Thus, U.K. painter Matthew Burrows created the concept of an artist support pledge. It works by urging artists to price their works modestly, then posting their art on Instagram with the tag #artistsupportpledge. From there, other artists can purchase their work through e-commerce sites. If their total profit surpasses 1,000 euros, then they should spend 200 euros on another artist as well.

Email the Arts Desk at [arts@nyunews.com](mailto:arts@nyunews.com).



CHARLIE DODGE | WSN

Online gift cards, donations, live streams and more are still viable options during this time. The WSN Arts desk lists some ways you can still support independent artists from a safe social distance.

## The Weeknd Makes Social Distancing Easy With 'After Hours'

By **LAUREN GRUBER**  
Dining Editor

With the world all but falling apart around us, The Weeknd's gut-wrenching, evocative new album couldn't have come at a better time. The Weeknd — also known as Abel Tesfaye — dropped his fifth studio album "After Hours" last Friday at midnight, offering 14 tracks blessed with his signature angelic voice and harrowing lyricism to tune out the rest of the world.

"Baby, won't you remind me who I am, and break my little cold heart?" Tesfaye's falsetto croons in the first song "Alone Again," the atmospheric beats reminiscent of "Kiss Land's" soundscape. Thunderous drums kick in halfway through the track, courtesy of Tesfaye's frequent collaborator Illangelo, perhaps signifying Tesfaye's hardening emotional state. The searing bass bleeds into the subsequent "Too Late," where The Weeknd concedes to his lover that their relationship can't be salvaged.

"Hardest To Love" marks the album's sole low point, whose tear-jerking lyrics are overshadowed by dizzying synthetic drums that leave an otherwise beautiful song feeling disjointed. Fortunately, "Scared to Live" acts as a palate cleanser. "If I held you back, at least I held you close," Tesfaye sings on

the glittering ballad, which samples Elton John's "Your Song." He takes responsibility for his relationship's downfall and hopes his ex can find love again — words we all wish we could hear from our exes — and touches on similar sentiments in his 2015 song "Angel."

The autobiographical "Snowchild" — the title a likely reference to Tesfaye's cocaine use — takes the album into a darker, more melancholic tone. He muses about his path to stardom over minimalist production, referencing a line from his 2011 song "The Morning," where he once dreamt of making it to California but is now disillusioned. This appropriately leads into "Escape From LA," brimming with boastful lyrics and plenty of thinly veiled references to his ex, Bella Hadid, including an NSFW peek into the song's creation.

The album's tempo is kicked up a notch with "Heartless," which was dropped in November 2019, and the hedonistic "Faith" offers expertly-layered bass and equally hard-hitting lyrics. "Thought I'd be a better man but I lied to me and to you," he laments, and tells his lover that if he overdoses, he wants her beside him, eerily similar to his feature in Travis Scott's "WAKE UP."

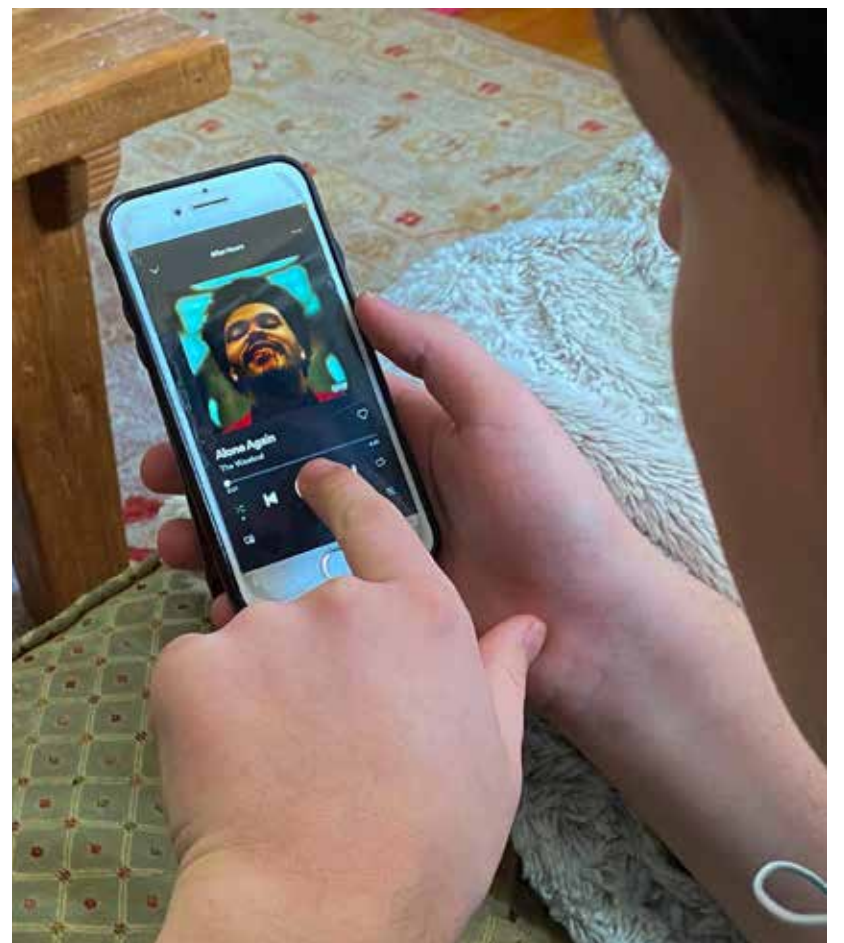
The Weeknd incorporates some radio-friendly jams without compromising his characteristic mood-

iness with "Save Your Tears" and "In Your Eyes," which features a delightfully unexpected saxophone riff. Both tracks explore themes of an introspective Tesfaye acknowledging the pain he's caused his partner, the tracks' themes contrasted by their 80s-inspired dance-friendly synth beats.

One particularly heart-rending song is the album's interlude, "Repeat After Me," where Tesfaye tries to convince his ex-lover that she still loves him and hasn't fallen for her new partner. His use of repetition is incredibly impactful; we can feel how desperate he is to persuade his ex-lover, and perhaps himself, that her intimacy with another man means nothing.

With "After Hours," The Weeknd has finally struck the balance between the mournful, drug-addled R&B of his earlier projects, "Trilogy" and "Kiss Land," and the funky, experimental pop of "Beauty Behind the Madness" and "Starboy." The titular track, "After Hours," embodies this perfectly, breathing life into his reflections on heartbreak with stunning sound production. Tesfaye has managed to channel his self-loathing and hedonistic tendencies into a comprehensive album, without sacrificing his artistic integrity.

Email Lauren Gruber at [lgruber@nyunews.com](mailto:lgruber@nyunews.com).



LEO SHEINGATE | WSN

"After Hours," The Weeknd's fifth studio album, was released on March 20th last week. Striking the balance between mournful and funky, the album is perfect for your social distancing period.

# OPINION

OPINION@NYUNEW.COM

Edited by JUN SUNG

TICKER

## Confronting Identity in Light of Coronavirus and Xenophobia



By **EMILY DAI**  
Deputy Opinion Editor

I was born in New York City. I grew up in Richmond. I reveled in my American history and government classes. I even voluntarily participated in a year-long civics competition where I obsessively memorized the Constitution. Being an American is all I've ever known.

In light of the surge of xenophobia and hatred directed toward East Asians, it's been difficult for me to grapple with the reality that despite how American I may feel, that identity can be easily revoked in times of crisis. I'm wrapped up in a monolith Asian stereotype where my ethnicity comes before anything else. I've heard countless racist jokes about me infecting others with the coronavirus. I've had wary shoppers shooting accusatory glances in my direction at the grocery store.

I know, though, that discriminatory jokes and distrustful glances are only the tip of the racist iceberg, and I'm extremely lucky to have only endured this much. I've heard other testimonies from Asian students being called "diseased b-tch" for wearing a mask and other Asian students being prompted "shouldn't you be wearing a mask?" by strangers on the street for not wearing one.

And influential figures have repeatedly failed to put out these xenophobic flames. Carriers of the coronavirus aren't confined to just Asian people. Yet, media outlets have repeatedly put the face of Asians at the front of their coronavirus articles. When New York confirmed its first case of coronavirus, the New York Times, Forbes and the New York Post reported this story using photos of unrelated Asian people wearing face masks. A reporter at the White House's pandemic task force press briefing cited an anonymous report that a White House official used the term "Kung Flu." Notably, President Donald Trump continually insists on calling the coronavirus the "Chinese Virus."

But this behavior isn't new. Novel diseases have often led to a rise of fear-mongering and xenophobic hysteria. In medieval Europe, people believed the bubonic plague originated from the Jewish community. Consequently, thousands of Jews were burned at the stake and their communities massacred as their inhabitants were accused of spreading contagion and poisoning wells. When the 1853 yellow fever ravaged the United States, European immigrants faced the brunt of stigmatization. In the 1980s, HIV became associated with Haitians, part-

ly because of a recent influx of "boat people" and the subsequent controversy of legal status in the United States. Naming diseases after foreign nations is the most common manifestation of a time period's increased racism. The bubonic plague was called the Jewish Death. Yellow fever was nicknamed the Stranger's Disease. HIV was dubbed the 4-H disease, a reference to the "high-risk groups" of Haitians, homosexuals, hemophiliacs and heroin users.

With this history in mind, it may be more clear why using the racist term "Chinese Virus" is inappropriate. Using the term may be a way for people to combat the perceived political correctness of avoiding naming diseases after the geographic origin of the virus. As Saagar Enjeti, the co-host of the Hill's Rising web series, put it, "Chinese virus is the new radical Islamic terrorism." The State Department defended Mike Pompeo's use of the term as a way to counter Chinese Communist Party propaganda. It's important to note, though, the World Health Organization urges people not to name diseases after geographic locations, other cultural references or terms that incite undue fear. The desire to change the label from coronavirus to yet another "foreign virus" is, just as it has been in the past, an aggressive and politically charged move that needlessly stigmatizes a group of people and heightens more fear against Chinese people.

As a result, Asians are facing a new wave of xenophobia and hate crimes. Coronavirus has proven to be economically devastating for Chinatowns and other Chinese-owned businesses as wary shoppers now avoid those areas. London student Jonathan Mok was brutally assaulted by four assailants, one of whom had said "I don't want your coronavirus in my country" while beating him. A woman wearing a face mask was assaulted and called "diseased b-tch" on a New York City subway. One young woman was punched in the face as the perpetrator screamed, "Where's your coronavirus mask, you Asian b-tch?" Just hours later, an Asian man was jumped as his assailants yelled, "Fuck you, Chinese coronavirus."

These are undoubtedly trying times. Amid colleges across the U.S. closing and people urged to practice social distancing with seemingly no end in sight, it's understandable that people are anxious about the coming days. But that is no excuse for people to hold the bigoted notion that Asian people are to be blamed, feared or hated for the coronavirus. As hate crimes against Asians surge and as my own government legitimizes this hatred by perpetuating the otherness of the "Chinese Virus," I've felt ostracized by my own country. No matter how much I may identify with my own nation, it seems that my Chinese ethnicity will always put me an arm's length away from being an American.

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STAFF EDITORIAL

## NYU's Evictions Show Its Disregard for Students' Needs

Last Monday, NYU President Andrew Hamilton sent out a letter to the student body about the closure of residence halls and the transition to online classes for the rest of the semester. Though residences would be officially closed on Sunday, March 22, it was recommended that students move out within 48 hours.

This happened days after a number of universities — including Stanford, Harvard and Columbia — had already decided to transition to online classes. It also happened after a few had already closed their residence halls. Considering the relatively quick decisions of other universities around the country, NYU's response was extremely slow. The university responded to the crisis after most students had already left campus — obviously not ideal for residents who needed to move out. In all, the decision's impact was substantial, but since it came much too late, it didn't give students enough time to properly transition.

After the decision, residents were forced to make last minute arrangements to either go home or find housing elsewhere — a luxury many students could not afford. Hamilton also wrote that "the bar will be high" for students who sought exemptions to the removal. In a follow-up letter sent by Marc Wais, Vice President of Student Affairs, the university outlined what constituted this bar more clearly, saying certain international students who stated their concerns would be given exemptions, and that students with "unanticipated financial challenges" would be able to apply for emergency aid. However, this support is capped at \$500 — not nearly enough for many students.

According to NYU, residence halls needed to be emptied in case they needed to hold hospital beds. In the aforementioned follow-up email, Wais said NYU had an "institutional responsibility to help" if needed. This falls in line with New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo's plan to convert buildings like college dormitories and for-

mer nursing homes into temporary medical facilities. In fact, SUNY Stonybrook and SUNY Old Westbury have already been recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers as possible sites.

But neither the state nor city government has asked NYU to use its facilities.

In a statement to the New York Post, a university spokesperson said that there "have been no specific requests of the University at this point, but we would want to be in a position to help if needed." However, it is unknown whether the university's dormitories are even able to be used as temporary medical sites in the first place — there has been no known inspection at the state or city level to confirm.

Why wasn't the university transparent about this before requesting students leave residence halls, and why didn't it ensure students had housing accommodations before making a decision that would seriously impact students? Why did NYU only institute these changes once so many students had already left campus if it didn't have to?

The residence halls may eventually be used to hold hospital beds, but that's only because NYU volunteered them. The university made the choice to clear out its dormitories on its own, which means that — if NYU wanted to — it could have waited until after spring break to evict its residents, or it could have given students more than a 48-hour preferred notice, or it could have hinted that it would make this decision in the email it sent to the student body just four days prior.

NYU did not want to put its students' interests before its own.

The fact of the matter is that NYU has left its students hanging high and dry, and failed to consider students' needs. It disregarded the varied financial situations of low-income individuals and exposed NYU's fundamental disconnect with the very group it's meant to protect.

Email the Editorial Board at [editboard@nyunews.com](mailto:editboard@nyunews.com).

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# UNDER THE ARCH

Edited by GURU RAMANATHAN

## "HI! WHERE ARE YOU FROM?"

WHEN YOU LIVE FAR AWAY, HOME LOOKS A LITTLE DIFFERENT EVERY TIME YOU RETURN.

By **VAISHNAVI NAIDU**  
Voices Contributing Writer

When I moved to India at the age of nine, it became easy and almost natural to associate everything good I had ever known with America: annual passes to Disneyland, self-checkout counters at Walmart and piling enormously unhealthy amounts of shredded cheese onto a steaming plate of calamari at Olive Garden. I could barely remember my early childhood, but these distinct flashes of memories made me romanticize the life I had back in the states. India was a foreign place that lacked the ice cream trucks I had grown to love and the picturesque maple trees and wide roads to which I was so accustomed.

I would visit India during my summer vacations for a month at most. These visits were a blur, because of my distorted memory and the utter chaos of dozens of relatives coddling me, stuffing me with spicy snacks and admiring my distinct American accent. It never crossed my mind that these were just preludes to what would become the biggest and most jarring shift in my life.

This doesn't mean that India, or in particular Hyderabad, didn't grow on me. My memories are deeply rooted in my Indian culture, with most conversations revolving around my "Indianness." My spice tolerance has dramatically increased; I can now brazenly jaywalk on the busiest and most chaotic Old City streets whilst maneuvering around auto rickshaws and motorists more than willing to run me over; and even my accent turned noticeably Indian, despite my numerous failed attempts to recreate the American accent I once had.

Growing up in both countries, I noticed major cultural differences between India and America: Indians favor social harmony over furthering one's own goals, and privacy is not just a given right like it is in America. However, it's not all that

bad in India: we have a sense of community and structure that Americans don't, to the point where I felt sheltered from the adversities of the real world. While you'd never truly be independent, it's still nice to always have people you can depend on.

After finally revisiting America after my nine-year stint in India, I was able to form a more developed comparison of my two homes. People are a lot more confrontational in America, to the point where you're afraid to slip up and accidentally anger someone. That's a unique trait of individualistic cultures, where people aren't afraid to speak their mind, even when it results in social tension. At the same time, exchanging over-the-top pleasantries is commonplace in the United States. This was something that proved to be a monumental task for me at first. It's hard to force yourself to make small talk and say "thank you" every five seconds when you come from a place where interactions between people who don't know each other are quite limited. It's an interesting and bizarre clash of attitudes, and I'm still trying to find the line separating them.

When my family landed in New York City, brimming with excitement after the arduous 18-hour flight, we did not receive the warm welcome we expected. Like a true tourist family, we had decided to take one of those large unmetered cabs from JFK to Manhattan. It did make sense at the time, considering how much luggage we had, but we should've realized the shadiness of the situation when the driver insisted that an app on his phone would determine the trip's fare.

Nevertheless, we made pathetic attempts at pretending we were real New Yorkers, with my dad shushing me every time I tried asking the driver where we were, in an effort to ensure he wouldn't inflate the fare. It didn't work. We definitely didn't know our way around the city and the driver did, which is why it didn't occur to us to question the multi-



JULIA HOPE RIGUERRA | WSN

ple, almost dizzying, turns he seemed to be taking every minute.

We eventually reached our Marriott Hotel and began the arduous process of unloading the luggage when I overheard my dad trying, and failing, to discreetly argue with the cabbie. Unsurprisingly, the fare was outrageous. However, what surprised me the most was the incredibly drastic change in his behavior.

The man we had spent over an hour making delightful small talk with became almost unrecognizable. He was red with anger and, ironically, yelling at my dad about how he felt cheated. A couple minutes of heated arguing turned into him openly cursing at all of us, for everyone to hear. A harsh "F-ck you" cut through the air but no one around us even bat an eye in response to what was happening.

This was New York in all of its normalcy.

In India, arguments always happened behind closed doors and in hushed whispers. Often, a side-eye is more than enough to put someone in their place; to actually utter "F-ck you" would be atro-

rious. My romanticized reconstruction of life in America was crashing before my very eyes, leaving me in a state of perplexity over the sudden realization that this was going to be my home for the next four years. I experienced major culture shock the moment I stepped out of the airport. This tainted my otherwise touristy and colorful Times Square view of New York City.

Coming from a major metropolitan city in India, I assumed it wouldn't be that hard to adjust to high-paced city life. But maybe there's just something about New York City that makes its residents unnervingly confrontational. It's not uncommon to be harassed by petitioners at every corner, or to watch a fight break out on the street in broad daylight, or have a dealer sneak up on you from behind whilst you're walking down West Fourth and whisper, "You kids want weed?"

What would be considered unthinkable in India, such as a waitress passive aggressively badgering you for a tip, is just part of the experience when you go out to eat at Union Square. Even the

squirrels and pigeons in Washington Square Park approach people with an unsettling lack of fear, almost as if they're challenging you.

Perhaps my difficulties adjusting arise from the fact that this isn't really my home, or the home I envisioned. I feel like I've been dropped into the most vibrant and dynamic city in the world with all this freedom I could only have dreamt of back in India. I'm not used to being allowed to walk alone in the streets (even during the day), and I certainly can't get over the fact that I can now talk to the opposite sex without fear of the inevitable ensuing gossip.

It's liberating yet strangely disconcerting; I'm now completely in control of my actions and the repercussions that follow them. I can't deny I've lived a sheltered life for the past nine years, one where I often felt immensely suffocated, and now I can't deny how the freedom can be overwhelming at times. It's difficult to strike a balance in the Land of Liberty and I often find myself engaging in rather contradictory behaviors. I'd stay up till 3 a.m. for no good reason while being incredibly pedantic about my daily schedule just because I can.

I don't think it's possible for me to dislike New York, despite the fact it will never feel like home. There are benefits, like revisiting Olive Garden and relishing my long lost childhood — despite the fact that as an adult, I now need to personally request the waiter to pile on the cheese. But there's a limit to how much I can marvel at the famed maple trees and the stereotypical wide roads that accompany them before I start to feel homesick for the chaos associated with India. Jaywalking just doesn't feel the same when there are legitimate zebra crossings, and neither does risking typhoid at a sketchy street food cart when you know the cook is forced to wear gloves. India has always carried a sense of excitement and recklessness that New York cannot possibly offer.

I come from two very distinct homes, and they both look a little different every time I move, with the romanticization of one beginning as soon as I leave it. My years in India consisted of me yearning for my life in America and, as a cruel twist of fate, revisiting America has only left me longing for the life I actually remember.



RACHEL LEE | WSN

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