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NYU COVID-19 Task Force Supplies Face Shields to Medical Workers



IMAGE COURTESY OF NYU COVID-19 TASK FORCE

Personal protective equipment is vital in the fight against the coronavirus, and many cities are facing a lack of supplies. The NYU COVID-19 task force has begun making their own PPE.

The NYU COVID-19 Task Force, composed of faculty and teams from across NYU and NYC, is working to supply NYC hospitals with personal protective equipment.

By **EMILY MASON**
News Editor

In the rush to prepare medical workers for the peak of the coronavirus curve, researchers on the NYU COVID-19 Task Force are working to design and supply face shields to medical workers.

The NYU COVID-19 Task Force is made up of faculty from across schools, including Tandon School of Engineering, the College of Global Public Health and NYU Langone Health to respond to COVID-19. The goal of the Task Force is to create a network of coronavirus-related projects across NYU to catalyze relief efforts, whether through connecting researchers or suggesting city organizations with which to coordinate. The Task Force's first mission has been providing medical workers with personal protection equipment.

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Patel Renews Push for Universal Testing After Testing Positive for COVID-19

By **LISA COCHRAN**
News Editor

One morning two weeks ago, Suraj Patel felt a tightness in his chest.

The 36-year-old New York 12th District congressional candidate and Stern School of Business professor said the sensation was accompanied by trouble breathing and later, a fever. He added that it was unlike anything he'd ever experienced.

"It was this really strange, alien feeling where you don't have congestion. I wasn't coughing or anything, but all the sudden I realized I'd be out of breath by going up the stairs, like one flight of stairs," Patel told WSN. "I'm pretty healthy, I work out and run and all that stuff so that never

happens to me."

He then took, in light of the circumstances, what he considered the most logical measure: a COVID-19 test. Patel's older brother and housemate Viral Patel — an emergency room doctor — was able to conduct at-home nasal swab coronavirus tests for the household, which consists of Patel and his two brothers.

The samples were sealed and sent to a lab in Brooklyn. They all came back positive.

After enduring waves of symptoms, Patel recovered. His experience, however, galvanized him in his push for universal testing — making COVID-19 tests easily available for everyone.

There are currently 335,524 reported COVID-19 cases in the United States, with 9,562 deaths. Amid the chaos and ever-changing

nature of the pandemic, the U.S. has become embroiled in a testing crisis. Many U.S. distributing companies and hospitals have reported testing backlogs and ineffective tests issued by the Centers for Disease Control.

Additionally, President Donald Trump's inconsistent rhetoric on testing has presented significant obstacles and led to mass confusion.

"This is no time to double down on the biggest mistake of this COVID-19 epidemic so far, which is a lack of information, data and testing," Patel said. "Most people can agree that there are few things right now probably scarier in your mind than having a positive COVID test. Perhaps, except not knowing whether you have it or had had it at all."

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JAKE CAPRIOTTI | WSN

NYU Professor and Congressional candidate Suraj Patel speaks at a town hall meeting discussing the city's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Patel was recently diagnosed with COVID-19.

NEWS

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Edited by LISA COCHRAN and EMILY MASON

NYU COVID-19 Task Force Supplies Face Shields to Medical Workers

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"The Task Force is part of addressing the problem of how you can bring in the university to try to identify problems that can be solved in the short term," managing director of Future Labs and Task Force leader Steven Kuyan said. "Our mantra is asking what the pathway of least resistance is to building really necessary solutions to problems that the healthcare industry is facing."

NYU Tandon Future Labs' mission is to hone tech entrepreneurs to create successful businesses. Kuyan and lab leaders are using this commercial mindset to connect researchers at NYU Tandon with local manufacturers, health experts at NYU Langone and city offices.

The shields are made to be manufactured quickly, shipped efficiently and used almost immediately upon arriving at hospitals. While considering which tools to use to create the shields, the Task Force kept these goals in mind.

"There's a couple of facial shields designed that require 3D printing," Kuyan said. "That is far too long of a process to manufacture face shields at the numbers that they're needed. New York City, for example, needs in the millions of face shields and on average 3D printing will take roughly two and a half hours to print the face shield."

Many design options were drafted and went through experts at NYU Langone and NYU School of Global Public Health for feedback and approval. Once finalized, the design was made publicly available through the Open Face PPE project and has received feedback from across the country and internationally. The design is being used as far away as Germany.

"Our communication around folks who are producing this, you know, whether it's in their ecosystem, whether they've made improvements or iterations of the design and they sent it to us and we updated our designs if neces-

sary," Kuyan said.

The Task Force is working with three New York City manufacturers to adapt their process to the production of face shields and start supplying the city.

"We help them think through whether or not it makes sense to assemble them, what alternative materials might be," Kuyan said. "In some cases, they send samples to validate them before working with the city and then we connect them to the city directly so they can get a procurement contract with the city."

The first round of shield production began the week of Monday, March 30. Close to 300,000 shields will be produced over the two weeks after materials are delivered to production sites. The production is funded by a \$2 million grant from the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

A key resource for the Task Force has been NYU MakerSpaces — areas equipped with 3D printers and laser

cutters for students and researchers alike — located at NYU Tandon's main campus and at the Future Lab. In these spaces, Task Force members move through various designs to create the finalized version.

In addition to providing a testing space for the COVID-19 Task Force shield design, NYU Tandon's MakerSpace team has created a shield of their own. The MakerSpace team's design is slightly more complex and requires laser cutters and 3D printers, which means it cannot be manufactured on a large scale in the same way the Task Force's design will be.

Twenty 3D printers and two laser cutters are being wielded to manufacture the MakerSpace shields. At least 500 have been assembled and distributed to New York City hospitals by volunteers, director of MakerSpace Victoria Bill said. The benefit of this second design is that volunteers are able to manufacture and distribute the

shields immediately.

"Before manufacturing and the defense production acts can really ramp up — those things take a little bit of time to kind of come up to full speed — there is a very large immediate need," Bill said. "So I think really the past two weeks and I think maybe the next two weeks is when we'll be able to have the largest impact and when our services will really be needed."

This sort of collaboration across teams and schools within NYU is a key goal of the Task Force, Kuyan said.

"We really wanted to identify everyone at the university who's working on anything COVID-19 related that we can either help support and they'll catalyze if it's a product, how can we help bring it to market?" he asked. "Just so we can try to support everything that's happening on campus."

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Under the Arch

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF WSN

We are telling big stories — the Bling Ring, Venmo fraud, drug donkeys — ones that expanded past our print-standard 500 words, ones that paint pictures with words. This magazine aims to be a platform where undergraduate and graduate students alike can mutter on about their love of the blue-seated MTA trains or put into words the flavor of their love of grandma's dumplings.

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Patel Renews Push for Universal Testing After Testing Positive for COVID-19

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Patel, an NYU School of Law alumnus, emphasized that the only solution he sees for assuaging the pandemic is testing as many people as possible.

"No solution that doesn't focus on testing is one that's really going to be long-term feasible or plausible," Patel said. "Everything else is going to always rely on social distancing, but the minute we get back together, I'm sure that infections will spike again, which is what Asia is finding out."

Patel's proposed universal testing program would entail separating people into three groups: those who have tested positive for the coronavirus, those who previously had it and are now immune and those who are still at risk.

He also advocates for means of testing that permit less hospital crowding, such as at-home or mobile testing. In his explanation of what this could look like, Patel cited Great Britain.

"Britain actually just ordered millions of at-home test kits for antibodies that you can read yourself like a pregnancy test, and it lets you know whether or not you carry the antibodies for COVID because a large number of people already had the disease and we're asymptomatic," Patel said.

These at-home tests would take around 15 minutes and would be distributed to the British public on Amazon and in pharmacist shops. The surge in testing efforts in the country — which has previously been condemned for its testing complacency — likely stems from nearly 8% of the country's National Health Service workforce being left unable to work due to COVID-19 complications.

"The kits that the United Kingdom is ordering right now are going to cost £10 which is about \$12 per kit," Patel said. "If you multiply that by every American, which you don't even need to do [...] that's around \$4 billion. We

just passed a \$2 trillion rescue package, it's plausible."

He added that these tests do not require sophisticated technological advances.

"We're not waiting for some sort of technological breakthrough or discovery or invention," Patel said. "Most university labs, NYU's university lab, have the reagents and equipment necessary to read many types of these tests."

Patel also pointed to cases of effective widespread testing in South Korea, Iceland and the small Italian town of Vò. He reiterated that universal testing is possible and that the onus for its implementation must be placed on politicians.

"It's just a matter of mobilizing in a coordinated way, a coordinated response, perhaps using the private sector, the military, universities — all hands on deck to ramp up testing capacity and make this a national directive," Patel said. "What we're lacking here is basically political will."

The pandemic has not only affected Patel's policies, but also how he communicates with constituents prior to the election. The campaign has now taken to social media livestreams and Zoom to host town halls with medical experts and workers affected by the pandemic.

"I'm proud of the fact that our team, which has a lot of NYU students on it, is digitally savvy," Patel said. "It wasn't a big transition for people to figure out, 'Okay well we'll do town halls on Facebook Live.'"

While Patel acknowledged the difficulty in gauging the effectiveness of online campaigning strategies against in-person campaigning, he remains optimistic about being able to communicate with voters.

A previous staffer on both Obama campaigns, Patel touts himself on his progressive agenda, centered on cli-

mate change, debt-free college and the Green New Deal. This is his second congressional campaign, following an earlier run in 2018. He is among two other democrats in the race against incumbent Carolyn Maloney in New York's 12th district.

New York has postponed its presidential primary election to June 23, falling on the same day as the congressional primary in which Patel is running. The November 2020 general election still has yet to be moved.

LS sophomore Divya Sasidhar is also an intern on the Patel campaign and echoed Urffer's sentiments on the dramatic shift of the staff's responsibilities.

"The nature of our work as interns has changed pretty much entirely," Sasidhar told WSN. "We've mostly been making calls to our neighbors in the 12th district to make sure they're okay."

Her views differed from Urffer's to the extent that she felt the campaign's remote work still bred a sense of community between constituents and the campaign.

"I've had a lot of people who have been really grateful to have a friendly voice on the other side of the line who wants to hear about what's been difficult for them recently," Sasidhar said. "I think it's been effective in that way."

Patel embraces the sense of community shrouding his campaign, and this ultimately ties to his push for universal testing.

"To my knowledge, this is the first time, in my lifetime, that a crisis is actually universally affecting every single one of us," Patel said. "It's also not good for the economy and for the country. The only way we are really going to beat this thing is to universally test people."

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On and off the Course, Golfer Arshia Mahant Excels

By **KEVIN RYU**
Staff Writer

Ever since she picked up the golf clubs at the age of seven, Stern sophomore golfer Arshia Mahant has competed at the top of her sport, representing India for National Tournaments and emerging as one of the best golfers for NYU's women's golf team.

At 14, Mahant had already been ranked number one by the Indian Golf Union in the under-14 division in India. Her ranking allowed her to represent India at the Evian Championship in France, an experience that inspires her to this day.

"It was one of the best experiences of my life," Mahant said. "Just playing for your country is like a whole another [sic] feeling and a whole another [sic] game. Once I experienced that, I knew that I wanted to do it again and again."

Since participating in the Evian Championship, Mahant started to compete in more well-known tournaments, such as the IMG Academy Junior World Championships and the Annika Invitational — even winning an international event in New Haven at the age of 16. Her performance at the New Haven tournament was the stepping stone of her recruitment to play golf at NYU.

"I went and watched her play in one tournament," Head Coach Brad Johnson said. "She played in Connecticut, and she ended up winning that tournament. So, I watched her play, just had a chance to meet her on campus."

For Mahant, her passion and devotion for golf keeps her motivated to train and serves as a reminder during the bad times.

"First of all, I feel like if you're not passionate, truly passionate, about something, you can't be good at it," Mahant said. "And golf is something I've always been very, very passionate about. So my love for the game is what keeps me going, what makes me work hard every day. I also feel like you have to have a lot of patience, focus, and discipline, which I do feel I have."

Sensing this similar passion in other golfers, Mahant was inspired to start the "Adopt a Golfer" initiative in India, helping promote golf to younger children and alleviate the financial burdens the game offers.

"So over here in India, I play a lot [of golf] at the Delhi golf club and the ITC Golf Club," Mahant said. "In India, we have caddies who pick up our bags on a regular basis. So one of my caddies has two daughters, and they were really interested in the game. They would borrow my clubs and hit a few balls."

For Mahant, seeing the two daughters have a passion for golf, yet couldn't invest the money and time, sparked an interest for her to make a change.

"I could see that they had that pas-



Stern sophomore women's golfer Arshia Mahant has represented India for international tournaments. She started the "Adopt a Golfer" initiative to promote golf in India.

sion and they had that drive," Mahant said. "But unfortunately, financially, they weren't fortunate enough because golf is an expensive sport to carry it forward. Even if they liked playing the game, they couldn't afford to invest that kind of time and money. That's something which was very disappointing to me, that even though they had that kind of passion, they couldn't really pursue it."

Although attending NYU means she is currently unable to carry "Adopt a Golfer" forward, her brother, who is two years younger and shares her passion for golf, was able to continue with the initiative.

"So after I went off to college, [my brother] went forward with that, and now the authorities at the clubs are managing it," Mahant said.

Though the club authorities manage the initiative, Mahant sees a future where she returns to the cause she started.

"At the basic level, many of the members contributed funds to the children of the caddies, and some of them even got health insurance, something which you would have never had access to otherwise," Mahant said. "But I wish I could have carried it forward long term, which is on a hold right now, but maybe I do carry it forward in the future."

For NYU, in her first season, Mahant played a pivotal role in helping the women's golf team win the NCAA Division III Championship during the spring season. On the golf course, Mah-

ant was impressive, recording five birdies, four over the first nine holes. She also ended the tournament as the runner-up individual national champion.

Off the course, her leadership inspired her teammates to bounce back from the rough teamwide performance on the back nine holes that had widened the gap between them and Williams College to eight strokes.

"And at dinner [following day one of the tournament], she was very vocal about how we couldn't do that again," Coach Johnson said. "She's usually pretty quiet and not so serious, so that was a shock to everybody. I think that's a huge part of the reason that we did so well."

Having missed the fall season studying abroad and seeing her spring season cut short due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, Mahant has waited a long time to once again step on the golf course for NYU.

"It was unfortunate that the season ended abruptly; I was looking forward to going to Florida for [sic] spring tournament," Mahant said. "I was excited for the championship again, to try and bring it home again for the second time."

When NYU returns to the course, Mahant's team goal is fairly succinct.

"Bring the NCAA trophy home again next year," Mahant said. "That's the goal."

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The Best Soccer Celebrations, Ranked

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

Soccer is full of amazing moments — the skillful dribbling, the insane goals and the celebrations that become iconic in the sport's history.

Sometimes, the goal celebration becomes more than a forgotten moment in a sequence of madness. Some celebrations go down in history, like when Mario Balotelli lifted up his jersey to reveal a shirt underneath, asking "Why always me?"

Then there are the celebrations that become synonymous with the player — think Lionel Messi and his two fingers pointed toward the heavens, Kylian Mbappe's folded arms stance or Cristiano Ronaldo's spinning jump and bellowing "Si!"

Given the cancelation of sports for this season, I've had a lot of time to thoroughly analyze many different soccer celebrations. Without further ado, here are my favorite celebrations in soccer, ranked.

1. The Airplane

Players have been doing "the airplane" — one of the most classic celebratory gestures in soccer — since the beginning of time. From Roma's Vincenzo Montella in the early 2000s to Thierry Henry with the New York Red Bulls, the airplane still remains one of the most fun and common celebrations.

The airplane is my go-to celebration (for when I score in my dreams) — I stretch out my arms and run around, and then just before reaching the corner flag, I'll jump up while pumping my arm in the air.

After all, who doesn't want to fly?

2. The "Tear Your Jersey Off in Jubilation"

Imagine this: you've just scored the winning goal in the World Cup Final and the crowd goes absolutely nuts. You start running in any direction, rip off your jersey and proceed to get mobbed by your teammates as the stadium — and the entire world — erupts.

Two of the most classic examples of this celebration came in two separate World Cup Finals. First, we had Brandi Chastain in the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup Final after she coolly scored the winning penalty in a shootout against China. Chastain proceeded to pull off her jersey and fall to her knees in disbelief, a move which would later garner opinions from seemingly everyone on the planet. The pure emotion on her face was evident for all to see, and that moment is one of my favorites in all of sports.

Then, in 2010, Andres Iniesta became the hero for Spain when he broke the deadlock in extra time against the Netherlands by volleying the ball into the back of the net. He took off sprinting toward the touchline and ripped off his jersey with an unmatched intensity, revealing a shirt underneath which honored his late friend, Dani Jarque.

An ultimate act of passion, the jersey celebration remains unmatched in its intensity of pure emotion.

3. The Synchronized Group Celebration

Planned group celebrations — when performed properly — can be oh so fun to watch. Players love to show off their dance moves after goals, and we've seen the

South African team in 2010, France just having fun against Korea last summer and even Neymar and Dani Alves breaking it down for Barcelona. Never forget when the U.S. pretended to make snow angels on a sunny day in 2012 against Canada.

And one of the coolest synchronized celebrations ever, Iceland's Viking thunder clap at the 2016 UEFA Euros, still gives me chills every time I go back and rewatch it.

Meanwhile, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has proven himself to be quite the celebration planner in recent years, pulling out Batman and Robin masks with Marco Reus at Dortmund. And starting last season, he has teamed up with his Arsenal striking partner Alexandre Lacazette to do a bowing handshake after each goal.

4. The "Alex Morgan Sips Tea" Celebration

To say the United States Women's National Team brought it during the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup would be the understatement of the century. The team took the world along for an incredible journey, demolished the competition and produced some iconic moments on its way to a fourth World Cup trophy.

While we were of course blessed with Megan Rapinoe's epic pose celebration, team captain Alex Morgan broke the internet with her bold celebration in the semifinal. After scoring a header against England, Morgan cheekily pretended to sip some tea — a brilliant, hilarious and amazing move by the star striker.

I don't care what anyone else says, this celebration is the perfect amount of clever, petty and entertaining.

5. The Classic Knee Slide

The knee slide celebration can either go really wrong or really right, as we've seen over the years. But when it goes right, it just looks like a seamless work of art. Players just glide on the wet grass with their arms outstretched — it's beautiful, really.

From Fernando Torres to Eden Hazard, the knee slide is a popular choice among soccer players. Even managers get in on the knee slide celebration sometimes.

Honorable Mention: The Backflip

To this day, I still don't know how soccer players have the energy to produce a backflip right after they've sprinted the length of the field and scored a goal. But Sam Kerr, Nani, Obafemi Martins and many more have consistently wowed us over the years making this move their signature celebration. In this case, though, sometimes the celebration is better than the goal. But regardless, don't try this trick at home, kids.

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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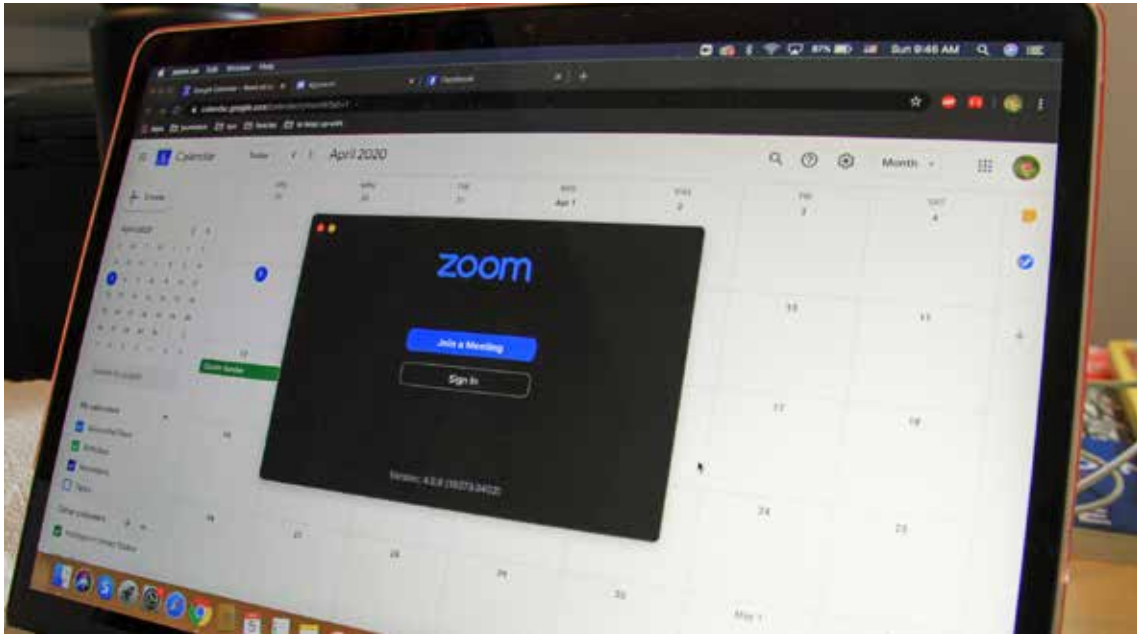


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Edited by BELLA GIL

How NYU Students Are Social Distancing



ALEXANDRA CHAN | WSN

Zoom isn't just for academic classes; many students have used the platform to hang out virtually with friends. Through Zoom's screen-sharing feature, friends are able to play online games such as Jackbox or Kahoot.

By **YUSUF HUSAIN**
Contributing Writer

It's hard being back home after an abrupt end to the spring semester. It's hard not being able to get Joe's pizza after midnight. It's hard not being able to spend time outside, and most of all, it's hard not being able to catch up with your friends in-person. Even though FaceTim-

ing your friends is fun, some students have gotten bored of it, quickly finding new and creative ways to keep in touch with loved ones.

One of the ways for students to virtually spend time with one another has been online multiplayer gaming. Both Steinhardt sophomore Joey Kinnan and Liberal Studies first-year Rizwan Amir have been playing multiplayer games such

as Call of Duty, Counter Strike Global Offensive and League of Legends. The two students use various platforms to communicate with other gamers: from Discord app for Kinnan to Amir's preferred Xbox Live.

"The first few rounds of a [Call of Duty game] are pretty basic, so we don't talk much then," Amir said. "But once you get to the later rounds, we start to sort out

who's going to get which gun, and who's got the most money to open each door."

Like the rest of NYU students, Tandon senior Claire Velau has been using Zoom to attend her classes. But, for her, it's also been a way to connect with her friends.

"Typically, we plan [the call] and someone makes a Zoom link," Velau said. "And then we invite each other on Google Calendar and send out the link. Either we just talk or play virtual games like Jackbox or Kahoot."

Velau was also invited to a Zoom party to celebrate her friend's 22 birthday. With each guest attending from a different location, they were able to put together a surprise party for her.

"Someone organized it over Facebook," Velau said. "We all logged on five minutes before and got her sister involved. It really was like a surprise birthday party."

Though most fitness facilities and gyms have been closed for quarantine, social distancing doesn't prevent many from staying active. Kinnan found a creative loophole that still lets him play tennis with his friends.

"We just stay on opposite sides of the court," Kinnan said. "I don't really touch anybody."

Kinnan also makes sure to arrive and leave separately from his friends to minimize the risk of potentially contracting or spreading the virus.

Tandon sophomore Chris Fazekas attended a family member's funeral over Zoom.

"It was cool to attend an event like that and have that sort of connection," Fazekas said. "It's difficult to hold events over video chat but it's important that people are still trying to make things happen. The connection is what stops you from feeling so isolated."

Though many of Fazekas' family members were able to attend the funeral via Zoom, the service didn't go as planned.

"[Our family] forgot to buy the full version of Zoom, so the service shut off after about 45 minutes," Fazekas said. "That was kind of a downside."

Yet not everyone is actively trying to find new ways to keep in touch. Tisch junior Pema Dolkar, while talking to her friends from time to time, uses her quarantine at home to focus on her hobbies.

"I'm getting back to video editing and producing content," Dolkar said. "I've set up a makeshift studio where I'm taking pictures, using art supplies and just trying to be as creative as possible with the equipment I have."

Dolkar has also been trying to use her phone and social media as little as possible. Instead, she's been keeping herself busy with a whole stack of books.

"Pick up a book and walk around the house with it," Dolkar suggests for everyone trying to find something to do during social distancing. "Just hold it in your hand until you read the first page."

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'Sidetalk' Brings The Sidewalk to Life

By **CHAD EVANS**
Staff Writer

The familiar chime of the closing subway doors sounds and you know you're in for a ride, albeit a more figurative one. This isn't the MTA, of course, but the start of each episode of "Sidetalk," a rising new man-on-the-street internet show. Made by first-year Trent Simonian, who hosts the show, and Gallatin first-year Jack Byrne, who doubles as producer and cameraman, Sidetalk is rapidly building a dedicated following of their one minute clips that comedically highlight New York's most colorful characters.

Its format is simple yet effective; the show was created specifically for Instagram. Byrne follows Simonian on the streets of New York as he approaches unsuspecting pedestrians and prompts them with questions pertaining to that episode's theme. Themes are usually timely and range from the conventional, such as Valentine's Day, to more obscure but arguably more significant events, like Jonah Hill's birthday. Regardless of theme, surreal interactions between quick-witted Simonian and the quotable cast of interviewees are guaranteed.

Simonian is no stranger to the man-on-the-street format, having hosted a similarly formatted show for the broadcasting program at Malibu High School called Shark TV in his home state of California. He would demonstrate his instinct not only for content but its promotion, as he posted the videos on Youtube, as well.

By this point in his senior year, Simonian knew he was bound for New York and wanted to translate his experience from Shark TV to another level: the streets of

New York. He connected with Byrne, a Long Island native whose own creative content he admired, once he realized they both were Early Decision admits to NYU. Reminiscent of "Billy on the Street with Billy Eichner," the two meticulously planned their concept for a man-on-the-street internet show that would feature polished production and a necessary refreshment to the platform.

"No one in particular inspired it and the idea was just there," Byrne explained. "The inspiration really was bad content."

Their solution was a made-for-Instagram show that would derive its humor from the host's unforced, dry humor and first-rate editing. Their premiere episode, themed around New York Fashion Week, immediately resonated with NYU's student community and soon gained traction outside of it.

As part of his producer duties, Byrne worked tirelessly to build an audience base and reached out to New York creatives and social media figures whom they could collaborate and share their content with. Later episodes would feature New York-based rappers Leeky Bandz and Evlo as guest co-hosts.

While the COVID-19 crisis has understandably derailed production for the time being, its creators remain optimistic. They are using the period of social isolation to plan future episodes and share the show with as many fellow content creators as possible.

The two were also grateful to have been able to produce their episode themed around the Jewish holiday of Purim, which landed on the Tuesday before online classes were due to begin. Notable internet personality, New York Nico,

unexpectedly invited the pair to Williamsburg where many of the celebrations were taking place. The episode ends with them crashing a Purim party, much to the delight of attendees.

"We were thinking of maybe not going to Purim and happened to get the episode in at that last possible minute. That episode took only thirty minutes to film," explained Byrne of the episode's spur-of-the-moment nature.

After the Purim episode, New York Nico gave Sidetalk a shoutout on his Instagram, which proved a pivotal moment

for their show's promotion. Sidetalk saw their follower count grow by thousands in mere days, and the Purim episode has since become their most-viewed, accumulating over thirty thousand views.

As of this article's publication, they are nearing thirteen thousand followers on Instagram. They have now amassed a following from a slew of celebrities, including Princess Nokia, Heron Preston and Cody Ko. Even Jonah Hill's birthday episode resulted in a message of admiration sent to Byrne and Simonian by the actor himself.

Sidetalk continues to grow rapidly and recently released a line of branded hoodies that sold out immediately. Simonian and Byrne are encouraged by the positive response from the NYU and Instagram community and continue to look forward.

"This is like a building block for us. It's something we started and are doing for fun. It has a positive response so we're excited to see where we can go from here," Simonian said.

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JUSTIN AHARONI

Trent Simonian, a first-year Film major at Tisch (left) and Jack Byrne, a first-year concentrating in Business and Entertainment at Gallatin (right) created Sidetalk NYC. Simonian and Byrne explore the streets of NYC and ask random pedestrians various questions for a new man-on-the-street series on Instagram.

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ARTS

Edited by KAYLEE DEFREITAS and ETHAN ZACK

The Public Theater Talks Show Business and Social Issues

By **DANI HERRERA**
Staff Writer

Remember the days when you could go out and enjoy live theatrical performances? From classic Broadway shows and funny off-Broadway shows in Midtown to experimental acts on local stag-

es, New York's theater scene has always had a lot to offer. But while the stages are temporarily closed, we can still access rich theater and allow the art form to intellectually stimulate us through another, more socially distant form of media: podcasts.

Live stage events are unfortunately

postponed for the time being, but The Public Theater's podcast called "Public Square" offers audiences a means to stay connected to the theater community through interviews with staff and other collaborators — all from the comfort and safety of their homes. Known for being an artist-driven, inclusive and social-

ly-engaged space for everyone who wants to be a part of it, The Public is a nonprofit theater that hosts many performances in its location on Astor Place in addition to its productions all around the city, including the fan-favorite Shakespeare in the Park event held in Central Park.

Although people are unable to continue to hone their craft and create theater in public group settings, "Public Square" can be especially beneficial to those who are working toward careers in entertainment. The episodes offer an opportunity for professionals and amateurs to learn about the trials and tribulations of the theater world, in addition to the significance of its role in the greater community. Even if theater doesn't particularly spark certain individuals' interests, the series is still a good way to support local artists and stay up to date on important topics unrelated to the ongoing global crisis.

Hosted by Reynaldi Lindner Lolong and Fernando Masterson, the podcast's episodes range from 24 to 45 minutes, always revolve around a different topic and feature different individuals who work in the theater. The episodes typically start out with the hosts introducing their guest speakers and then proceeding with an interview.

Discussions sometimes revolve around the guest's work and their experi-

ence, but the conversation tends to move towards broader, more relevant topics. As part of the theater's emphasis on community engagement and social issues, the speakers try to have a dialogue about theater, where they bring in larger themes, which they then apply to the theater community. Guests usually comment on the difficulties associated with their job and detail the ways in which they are able to overcome them. While this experience is not quite the same as watching a play, the podcast allows listeners to learn about all the work and stories that happen behind the scenes which they would never receive as an audience member.

Eight episodes have been released as of now, all of which are free and available on the theater's Spotify, Apple and Twitter accounts. Though this isn't the same as going out to see a show, it's a pretty good alternative given the circumstances. While times do not permit this now, maybe the podcast will inspire listeners to visit The Public once it reopens and support the theater's engagement programs. In the meantime, this podcast offers a great opportunity for people to develop an appreciation for all of the hard work that we don't usually notice when we only see live performances.

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TAYLOR WILLIAMS

While their main stage on Astor Place is closed, the Public Theater is making sure their audiences have access to thespian art through monthly podcasts. Each episode ranges from 24-45 minutes and features different individuals working with the theater and revolves around a different topic.

Dear Roman Polanski, Woody Allen and Harvey Weinstein: You Are Not The Victim

By **SAMAA KHULLAR**
Contributing Writer

Content warning: this article addresses rape and sexual abuse against children.

"Well done, pedophilia" echoed in the halls of the Salle Pleyel, the words chanted by French actress Adèle Haenel as she stormed out of the 2020 Césars after Roman Polanski won best director for "An Officer and a Spy." Haenel, a nominee for her role in "Portrait of a Lady on Fire" who shared that she was sexually abused by French directors in her childhood, had previously expressed her disgust with Polanski's nominations in an interview with The New York Times.

"Distinguishing Polanski is spitting in the face of all victims ... It means raping women isn't that bad," Haenel said.

She was not alone in her walkout that evening, as Céline Sciamma, a best director nominee for "Portrait of a Lady on Fire," followed as Haenel shouted "shame!" Actress, comedian and host of this year's Césars, Florence Foresti, also began the show by welcoming "predators" in the audience and did not return to the stage after Polanski's directing win to finish her hosting duties, claiming that she was "disgusted" on Instagram.

Polanski's 12 nominations for the Césars come at the same time as his sixth sexual abuse allegation. In 1997, at the age of 43, Polanski plead guilty to drugging and raping 13-year-old Samantha Jane Gailey and promptly fled the United States after his conviction,

beginning his life as a fugitive in his native France. If the name Roman Polanski sounds familiar for a different reason, it's likely because of his connection to his deceased spouse Sharon Tate, who was murdered in their home by followers of Charles Manson. While Tate's murder has nothing to do with his confirmed record of sexual abuse and the public outrage that followed it, Polanski claimed in his film notes for "An Officer and a Spy" that the public backlash against him stemmed from this event.

"The way people see me, my 'image,' did indeed start to form with Sharon Tate's death," Polanski said. "It is like a snowball, each season adds another layer. Absurd stories by women I have never seen before in my life who accuse me of things which supposedly happened more than half a century ago."

Polanski wasn't the only subject of public outcry this week over an industry that protects and celebrates known abusers. Harvey Weinstein was recently sentenced to 23 years in Rikers Island Prison for first-degree criminal sexual act and third-degree rape. Furthermore, publishing house Hachette Book Group dropped Woody Allen's memoir after Allen's son, Ronan Farrow, ignited walkout protests earlier this week. Renowned horror writer Stephen King took to Twitter to respond to the publisher's choice to drop Allen's book.

"The Hachette decision to drop the Woody Allen book makes me very uneasy. It's not him; I don't give a damn about Mr. Allen. It's who gets muzzled next that worries me," King wrote.

American journalist Ed Bott re-

sponded to the tweet and King maintained his position.

"First they came for the pedophiles' is NOT A THING, sir," Bott tweeted.

"If you think he's a pedophile, don't buy the book. Don't go to his movies. Don't go listen to him play jazz at the Carlyle. Vote with your wallet ... by withholding it. In America, that's how we do," King wrote in response.

Polanski held a similar stance in his statement for why he would not be attending the Césars to accept his awards, announcing that he feared a "public lynching" and that he and his team "know how this evening will unfold already."

The problem that King and Polanski fail to see is that it doesn't matter how many people boycott an abuser's work, because if Polanski's wins (the most of any recipient that evening) are any indication: this industry thrives on contention and on the guarantee that there will always be people willing to separate art from the artist, no matter how heinous the crime. I'm sorry, convicted abusers, but you are most certainly not the victim here, nor are you at risk of being one.

The most fascinating part of all of this is that Allen and Polanski have both come out to criticize Weinstein's actions and have blamed him for the backlash they have received in recent years. Allen called Weinstein a "sad, sick man" in 2017, despite the fact that he was accused of molesting his daughter Dylan Farrow, and later marrying his adopted daughter Soon-Yi Previn. Polanski followed in 2019, claiming that



ALEXANDRA CHAN | WSN

The #MeToo movement has brought the actions of many prominent figures in the film industry to light since 2017, but the problems they created are far from solved. Some of Hollywood's big names like Polanski, Allen, and Weinstein, who have been exposed for their acts of sexual assault, are still praised for their work.

the media was "making [him] a monster," and it was Weinstein's fault.

"It was him who dug up my case with Samantha Geimer from 26 years before which no one was interested in any more," Polanski said.

"Interested in" is a telling word choice, because it is clear that the #MeToo movement is simply a media setback to these proven abusers. But, it's clear that if you wait it out for a couple of years, you too could have your film featured at international festivals and win a few Academy Awards while you're at it.

So, Stephen King, the only reason

you should be afraid is if you have actually done something wrong. And even so, you may be able to experience a perfectly successful career, as the aforementioned men are the living proof of. I, for one, will not be satisfied until I stop seeing their names on nomination lists entirely. Until then, we should extend our compassion to the true victims of these heinous acts of violence: the young people who were groomed, assaulted and raped by Hollywood's biggest names.

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OPINION

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Edited by JUN SUNG

UNIVERSITY LIFE

NYU Will Never be Prestigious Without Better Financial Aid



By **EMILY DAI**
Deputy Opinion Editor

Just days ago, NYU announced its annual admittance of the “most selective class” in its history. The acceptance rate for the Class of 2024 fell to 15%, more than halving its 31% acceptance rate for the Class of 2019. The median SAT score for the incoming class is 1500, up from its 1440 median for the Class of 2022.

Though NYU extended admission offers to 13,000 prospective students, a large portion of these students will not be coming to Washington Square Park this fall — not due to a lack of interest in NYU, but because NYU will not give them the resources they need to attend.

It's no secret that NYU is expensive. Though NYU's cost of attendance is on-par with other private universities, its infamously poor financial aid has caused NYU to gain the reputation of one of the most expensive universities in the United States. On average, one year at NYU costs \$76,612, but according to a study conducted by the College Board, the university only meets 71% of financial need on average. From concerned parents and students on College Confidential warning other applicants about NYU's lack of financial aid to memes about NYU's unsupportive Office of the Bursar, this reputation has become as much of a pillar of NYU's culture as Washington Square Park.

NYU's lackluster financial aid is unique considering its global standing. Most top colleges in the U.S. at least try to make their university affordable to all students. Similarly ranked universities offer much better financial aid plans. Notably, some universities, such as Brown and Amherst College, promise to meet 100% of demonstrated financial need without having students take out loans. Other universities, such as Georgetown, UCLA and Caltech, promise to meet 100% of demonstrated need with loans. Most importantly, these universities all have smaller endowments compared to NYU's \$4.3 billion. These universities have promised to help more students while having less resources.

Furthermore, international students at NYU are not eligible for federal financial aid, federal student loans or most forms of institutional aid, meaning many of these students are paying the full cost

to attend the school. The fact that NYU refuses to support any of these students is shocking, especially considering both its prideful boast of having the largest international student body in the U.S. and how other universities, such as the University of Pennsylvania, have promised to meet 100% of demonstrated financial aid entirely with institutional grants for international students.

Both NYU's lack of sufficient financial aid and its increasing selectivity can be contextualized through its unique history. Unlike other prestigious universities, NYU is a relatively new school that did not have the added benefit of serving the old-money elites and captains of industry throughout its tenure. For most of NYU's history, the university was a modest regional commuter school with a fairly limited research profile. It was only through an ambitious, reputation-building campaign beginning in the 1970s that NYU transformed from a commuter school to a well-known safety school. Beginning in 1984, under President John Brademas, NYU sought to transform from a safety school into a well-acclaimed institution. In the words of Joel Conarroe, president of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, which evaluates faculty at colleges nationwide, NYU sought to “gain admittance early in the next century to that small, charmed circle of exceptionally distinguished institutions.”

Now in the “early next century,” NYU continues to climb in ranking and increase its selectivity, as evidenced by its dwindling acceptance rate, increasing median SAT score and continued expansion into the world through its 14 other campuses. Despite this transformation, NYU's financial aid office remains stagnant. If the university and the student body keeps rapidly changing, why aren't the systems serving us changing at all?

It's simple: NYU has instead opted, time and time again, to extend its considerable wealth to other ventures, such as awarding its president with one of the highest salaries in the nation and subsidizing luxury vacation homes for its administrators and professors.

NYU is no longer in the financial distress it faced in the 1970s. It is no longer a commuter school. With its rising prestige, NYU has a greater responsibility to make it possible for all students, regardless of their income, to become a part of it. Perhaps, instead of doling out faculty kickbacks and egregious administrative salaries, NYU should improve its financial aid packages so that the university will be able to become the top institution that it so desperately wants to be.

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STAFF EDITORIAL

Holding Leaders More Accountable in Crisis, Not Less

During this time of crisis, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo has become a figure of admiration for many Americans looking for a dependable political authority to feel protected. After Cuomo's daily press conferences, the hashtag #PresidentCuomo can be seen on Twitter, and numerous articles have been published praising Cuomo for his responses against COVID-19. But Cuomo's actions both during and before the pandemic show this dependence is falsely placed in a leader with certain policies that have become part of the problem, rather than the solution.

Recently, the governor made extensive Medicaid cuts to the state's budget in order to close the \$6 billion gap from before the start of the pandemic. According to Cuomo, these cuts were necessary in order to halt the rapid growth of Medicaid spending as well as to pass a balanced budget; he also stated that the cuts would be delayed in order for the state to use federal aid during the pandemic.

However, this deficit could have been reduced without these drastic cuts. Empire State Indivisible, a progressive grassroots organization, called for increased taxes on billionaires and millionaires, a transfer tax on stock buybacks and other policies to make up for the cost of Medicaid. New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams also called for taxes on the ultrarich to cover both the spending issues that come with the pandemic as well as to provide for Medicaid. The fact that these types of policies were cast aside shows a clear contradiction between Gov. Cuomo's appearance as an advocate for his constituents and his actual policies.

While Cuomo slashed Medicaid, he also cut \$400 million of hospital funding. Like the Medicaid cuts, these will also be delayed. Cuomo claims that these cuts for hospitals are fine, since they'll receive additional money from federal stimulus packages. But hospitals across the nation are unsure of when this funding will come or how it will be implemented. Since the peak of the virus hasn't hit yet, it is premature for Cuomo to assume hospitals won't need state funding in addition to federal funding.

Cuomo's past record has also been a significant part of the state's problem today. From 2000 to 2020, New York lost over 20,000 hospital beds. According to Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City alone current-

ly needs 40,000 more beds in order to accommodate coronavirus patients. As of March 24, Cuomo said the state as a whole needed a total of 140,000. Cuomo's governorship, which started in 2011, has only contributed to the problem. By reducing the number of hospital beds in budget cuts and failing to replace those lost beds with new ones, it has left the state especially vulnerable during health emergencies.

This isn't to say that Cuomo isn't the only executive responsible for the problems at hand. President Trump took nearly six weeks after the first diagnosed case of COVID-19 in the United States to allow hospitals and laboratories to conduct their own tests for the virus. By failing to enact decisions quickly and efficiently, the virus continued to spread rapidly — unlike in South Korea, where the government has largely been able to contain the virus through swift action. Trump's administration hasn't implemented nearly enough testing either, with South Korea conducting five times more tests per capita. He has also continued to call the virus the “Chinese Virus,” which promotes the already-growing xenophobia against Asians in the country. Clearly, the president has failed on numerous occasions to deal with the pandemic.

It is important to note that Cuomo has taken decisive action during this situation. When the federal government could only send 4,000 ventilators and the state needed 37,000, the governor was able to acquire a total of 3,500 ventilators from the Chinese government and 140 from the state of Oregon. He also mobilized the National Guard to redistribute unused ventilators to areas in the state that have been hit hardest by the spread. These types of decisions shouldn't go unnoticed when discussing New York State's management of the crisis.

The clear absence of leadership at the federal level is evident. Trump's shortfalls in this regard has forced the public to turn to Gov. Cuomo, whose press conferences and media presence have captivated the yearning audience. Despite this enthrallment, it is important to keep our leaders accountable — even more so during this coronavirus crisis. This includes Gov. Cuomo, whose current policies and past record show his serious mismanagement has failed New Yorkers and will inevitably cost lives that could have been preserved.

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UNDER THE ARCH

Edited by GURU RAMANATHAN

More Than Just Train Delays: What Being a Commuter Really Means

NYU commuters share how commuting affected their college experience socially, professionally and mentally, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.

By **RACHEL LEE**
Staff Writer

Troy Kelley, a Tisch dance junior who also majors in computer science, spent strenuous hours on campus for his classes and rehearsals before campus shut down due to the COVID-19 outbreak on March 11th. As a dance major, Kelley is required to be physically and mentally present each day, having class as early as 9 a.m. and finishing rehearsals as late as 10 p.m. Like most students, he had to manage his time wisely. But without the privilege of going back to his dorm or apartment in the vicinity of campus, Kelley had to face an 80-minute commute home to Stamford, Connecticut.

"Commuting is my choice, but for me, it's also the only rational option," Kelley said.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 87 percent of students in the United States are defined as commuter students. But because "commuter students" is defined as not living in university housing, the term does not differentiate between students who live close to and far from campus.

Kelley chose to commute to school following a conversation with NYU where he couldn't be guaranteed a spot in budget-friendly housing. Though the housing application is open to all NYU students, Kelley said that paying a non-refundable deposit for the housing raffle wouldn't have been worth it for him. While Kelley desired to live on or near campus, financially, it wasn't a possibility.

While NYU does offer resources for their commuters such as Commuter Lounges and the Commuter Student Council (CSC), Kelley believes more actions could be implemented to aid a commuter's college experience and their personal health.

"I would like to see the proper recognition of students who commute, and better resources to get in touch with others who might be in similar circumstances as you," Kelley said. "Honestly just putting us in touch with each other in a more social way would be enough of a stepping stone for us to plan events ourselves."

Andrea Serrano, a CAS junior majoring in psychology, lives with her family in Queens. Not only does she have the responsibility of a student to keep up

with her rigorous academics — Serrano is on the pre-med track — but she also has responsibilities as a family member that include helping around the house and picking up her little brother from school.

According to Scientific American, studies have shown that people can experience both physical and mental symptoms from the stress of commuting. Physical problems include pain, dizziness, exhaustion and severe sleep deprivation, while social consequences are not having time to pursue personal interests and to spend with family.

Due to her busy schedule, Serrano has no time to work on her physical health and do things like go to the gym. While living at home has its benefits, commuting detracts from her mental health greatly.

"I'll come home, and they [my family] are here to reassure me. But, I feel like I don't have a sense of privacy," Serrano said. "I have a lack of independence that most people have at this age because I'm not accountable for just myself, I'm accountable for my family."

Despite having family and friends to rely on both on and off campus, Serrano battles with the feeling of being excluded from a typical college experience. Her friends' close physical proximity to each other on campus allowed them to make plans last minute or late at night, but because she was under an unspoken curfew placed by her parents due to trains being unreliable at night and the possible risk of her safety, she was left feeling lonely, a sentiment many students are experiencing now while practicing self-quarantine and social distancing.

Of course undergraduate students weren't the only ones that commuted. Graduate students also faced similar realities. Because graduate housing on-campus is limited, many graduate students rely on off-campus housing and commuting for their education.

Nirja Patel is a current Steinhardt graduate student from New Jersey who also completed her undergraduate at the same school. Patel has commuted every year besides her first-year as an undergraduate student where she lived in the dorms. As a commuter, Patel shared that she also felt lonely in the city because she wasn't making as many friends or developing the friendships she already had.

"I wasn't on campus as much and

didn't get to hang out with them [my friends] often and make stronger bonds," she said.

Because of this, she emphasized the importance for commuter students to look at all of their resources, even if it means they have to put in extra effort.

For first-year students, commuter resources are even more important. Upperclassmen tend to move out of dorms, but for commuter students where college is new and frightening, community can be difficult to find.

Ellie Reid is a first-year dance student who spent her first semester commuting from Harlem. On top of already having social anxiety, Reid shared that by not living in the dorms and not having the capability to hang out with her class more often, she found herself questioning whether or not she's making real friends.

In addition to managing her social life and feeling lonely, the commute itself was mentally demanding. And for someone like Reid who studies dance, her physical and mental health is imperative.

"If a train has major delays, or just isn't running at all, and I have to figure out an alternate route, this adds so much extra stress to my mornings or evenings which affects my performance in class or ability to sleep properly at night," Reid said.

Aside from impacting their health, commuting had an influence on these students' professional careers, too. By being perceived as inaccessible by his fellow students, Kelley believes it hindered his ability to make connections for future jobs and kept him from being chosen by his classmates to perform in dance shows, which is an essential part of his education.

"People get opportunities because of the people they know, but nobody really knows me because I'm not around as much," Kelley stated.

The commuter students explained they didn't learn about community-building resources such as the Commuter Student Council until late into their commuting experience, but even after seeing the few events available to them, finding additional time to attend these events was inconvenient.

"I didn't know about the student council so [NYU] should make it more accessible and talk about it more often," Patel said, when describing her undergraduate experience as a commuter.



ANDREA SERRANO & RACHEL LEE | WSN
Andrea Serrano lives with her family in Queens. The struggle to balance both the responsibility of being a student as well as caring for one's family can extract a toll on the mental health of a commuter.



ELLIE REID & RACHEL LEE | WSN
Ellie Reid is a freshman dance student who commuted from Harlem before NYU transitioned to remote classes. But by not living in the dorms prior, she found difficulty to hang out with her class often.

After moving off-campus her sophomore year and learning about the council through the emails she received, Patel attended a couple of events and found them enjoyable.

Michelle Garcia, Vice President of CSC Programming states that CSC's intention is to introduce commuter students to each other and create a support network for them. According to her, CSC has recently opened up committee forums, including an Advocacy Committee where "students can bring commuter issues to light."

"I believe that commuters, as a community, should advocate, so we can be heard and our needs addressed," Garcia said. "If we do not speak, NYU will not be aware, and we want our university to be aware."

One issue is that the term commuter itself may be too broad.

"As long as you live off-campus, according to NYU, you are a commuter," Kelley said. "But of course as we all know, if you have an apartment in the East Village with a few friends and school is only a 10-min-

ute walk away, that's not a commute at all. I don't think anything about the word 'commuter' is accurately represented in NYU's definition."

Just like Kelley, Serrano gets upset when her friends who live close to campus call themselves commuters, especially when she knows commuters who have dropped out of NYU after their first-year due to how taxing the commute was but weren't able to afford on-campus housing.

"For those commuters it's pretty tough and when people use the term incorrectly or use it as a sympathy vote, it takes away the struggle that people go through," Serrano said.

These students seem to fall into a rising category of "super-commuters." CBS News describes them as those who must travel a long distance to get to work. Reid, Kelley and Serrano feel that NYU can consider their longer distances more by implementing more commuter lounges in NYU buildings that are outside of the main campus such as Third-North, being extra cautious of early or late exam times and creating more commuter programs that connect people based on their interests.

"I just think it could be interesting to have groups that were sensitive to commuters' needs based on interest because it's not like I don't want to be a part of extra groups outside of Tisch," Reid said.

Although these students no longer have to commute for the rest of the semester with the classes hosted over Zoom now, their previous commuting struggles have shaped their college experience.

"Being a commuter means you deal with something extra that other people on campus don't have to deal with," Serrano said. "Everyone has their problems, but travelling is a huge contributor to stress."

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TROY KELLEY & RACHEL LEE | WSN
Troy Kelley would sometimes spend over 12 hours on campus for his classes and still face an 80 minute one-way commute to his home in Stamford, Connecticut. For Kelley, commuting was not just a choice, but the only financially feasible option after he wasn't guaranteed a spot in budget-friendly housing.



NIRJA PATEL & RACHEL LEE | WSN
Nirja Patel used to commute from Secaucus, New Jersey before the COVID-19 outbreak. She started to become active in events put on by the Commuter Student Council after starting graduate school at Steinhardt.

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