

the EXCELSIOR

Questions & Rebuttals Take Over Student Government Presidential Debate



Candidates debated for the first time last week. PHOTO/ Emily Beregovich

BY ZAINAB IQBAL

Elections are approaching and there are three very qualified candidates on the line. In a debate last week hosted by our rival paper, The Kingman, all three of the candidates were in the same room at the same time, answering the moderators, the audience, and at times, one another. Though all candidates are equally qualified, the way they aim to run student government varies. The old-fashioned pick a straw determined the order in which the candidates would go. Carlos Jesus Calzadilla-Palacio, an activist, began his opening statement. It focused on the downsides of Brooklyn College, namely, the poor infrastructure, the bathrooms, underfunding, and adjunct salaries. “We need bold leadership

and we need real change,” he said. He emphasized that his government would be an ‘activist government’ and would hold the administration accountable because “there’s too much at stake,” he said. Alyssa Taylor, the current chair at the CLAS Student Government, went next and briefly spoke about how her experience with the school government can help make change. “I’ve seen firsthand how things can go and I’ve seen firsthand how communication with the administration makes change,” she said. “I believe that empowering the right people to do the job... and be activists... is the right way to do it.” Hamza Khilji, a member of the B.A.M.D program and the Speech and Debate Team, looked to the future.

“Our campaign is dialing back and focusing on what the responsibilities of student government are,” he said. “Our campaign is not only going to bring back school spirit, but actually address and solve the issues that students have been consistently voicing concerns about for the past three years.” If USG gets enough petitions, it will be the new student government. There will be no more CLAS (day students) and SGS (night students). In that case, candidates were asked how they will make sure the old SGS students feel represented. Calzadilla-Palacio said he will make sure there’s a specific committee that will “help address the evening and night students on our campus... we will fight for you and make sure that

your concerns are heard.” Taylor said it’s important for those students to physically see themselves being represented, which is why she has an SGS student on her ticker. “We want their voices to be heard,” she said. Khilji says the solution to making SGS students feel represented is creating events that include all students. “There are a lot of facilities these other students and governments are not getting access to,” Khilji said. “Our platform is working very heavily on initiatives that affect all students in terms of not only school spirit, but the classes they take and their experiences.” How will they each remain accountable to the student body? Calzadilla-Palacio pledged to take only half of his stipend. Taylor

said better communication was necessary and acknowledged that this year’s communication was the best. She also emphasized the student empowerment was key. Khilji pledged to give up his entire stipend because he “will work for the students and not the money.” Disagreements started coming in after it was asked how they would plan on communicating the ongoing of USG on campus more effectively. Taylor said she’d publish a calendar of events and meetings on campus, as well as directly speak to students. Calzadilla-Palacio said personal communication, social media, and bulle-

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tin boards are going to work best. Khilji said the best way is to reach out to professors and speak in classrooms. Then came the first rebuttal.

"I think class time is very limited already and professors need to actually educate our students," Calzadilla-Palacio said.

The next rebuttals came when candidate were asked how they will represent

all students on campus regardless of race, religion, political views, or gender. According to Taylor, representation comes when all students are given a voice. She said her slate is filled with students with different identities. "The best way to represent somebody is to physically represent them."

Calzadilla-Palacio said taking a strong stance against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia is important in student government. Khilji rebutted the statement and said, "If we're going to be

an activist government, you have to understand that activism means taking a stance. As student government, our job is to be neutral. If we take an activism stance, that will ostracize other students."

Calzadilla-Palacio rebutted that statement and said, "Neutrality in times of oppression is siding with the oppressor, so we will take stances on injustices on campus."

When it came time for individual questions, Khilji was asked if his campaign can stand up for women, Palestinian, and Muslim students

after the student in his student advocate ticket wrote an op-ed essentially defending Professor Mitchell Langbert (who defended sexual assault). He said of course his campaign will, but, "I actually read that article and it's about defending freedom of speech, not the actions of Professor Langbert," he said. "We have more than accurate female representation on our board. Zain and I are the only guys on this entire ticket. So as far as representing females go on this campaign, I got your back."

To that, people in

the audience shouted, "Females? Women!"

"It was a slip-up," Khilji apologized.

Calzadilla-Palacio dominated the audience questions as many were addressed to him. The Excelsior asked all three candidates who they would like to be president if they themselves are not president. Khilji and Calzadilla-Palacio both said Taylor, and Taylor decided to opt out of answering.

Students can vote on BCWebCentral from April 29th to May 2nd.

USG Presidential Candidate Hamza Khilji Is Not Going Down Without a Fight

BY ZAINAB IQBAL

Hamza Khilji is a mama's boy. He's the middle child and he's a feminist. He's sensitive at times and opens up to women more than he does to men. He's a hopeless romantic. He's watched all of the Real Housewives. He has a serious face and tries to smile purposefully at times, but can't help it. He's obsessed with Bollywood. His brother tells him he's a real-life meme. Oh, and he's running for USG president.

Khilji is 20 years old and was born in Pakistan. Like many Pakistanis, his father came to the U.S first. Then, Khilji, his older brother, and his mother followed suit. They arrived in Brooklyn a year after 9/11. When he was in the fifth grade, his family decided to go to Canada to visit his father's cousin. Unfortunately for them, immigration did not let them back into the country. So, he spent two years in Canada and is now a Canadian citizen. When they got back to America, his family moved to Long Island, his little sister was born, and he was now the middle child.

"I suffer heavily from the middle child effect," Khilji said. "I'm here [in Brooklyn] four days a week. Even in the times I am gone from home, I get blamed for things. Like I wasn't even there for anything, yet I still get blamed. My brother gets away with so much."

Khilji is a junior majoring in Business Administration. He is a Macaulay Honors and B.A.M.D student. He wants to something with business in the future. Per-



After being friends for over seven years, Zain Qureshi (left) and Hamza Khilji (right) are running as USG vice president and president. PHOTO/ Samüel Honore

haps, open his own business. He might want to also do hospital administration. He might want to get his MBA. Oh, and obtain a real estate license. And of course, he wants to become a doctor. At the end of his list, he realized he said too many things. He smiled, shrugged, and said, "But, I can't control it."

When Khilji was in high school, he had gone through several surgeries. He then realized it was a pretty cool field and thought of pursuing that in the future. But now, he said he's still thinking about it. He's a hopeless romantic.

"I really like surgery... but I also really want a family and I don't think those two can go hand in hand," he said. "I think maybe down the line, I will be willing to compromise and shift into a less intensive field in medicine so that I can raise babies."

In fact, when asked where he sees himself in five years, he said he sees himself being engaged. Though, he smiled and said his father "does not know I'm like this."

"I care about my career and stuff, but at the end of the day family is more important to me," he said. "I want to be engaged to someone in medical school because medical school is already hard enough as it is, and I want emotional stability."

Khilji has ran for student government four times. He ran every single year in high school with his "brother from another mother" Zain Qureshi, who is on his ticket as vice president. He also lost every single one of those years. Each year, their recorded speeches would get crazier, to the point where they were using sock puppets—something that still haunts Khil-

ji to this day. But, if he lost all those times, what makes him think he'd win now?

"Nothing. I do remember when I was elected for Senate Assembly, I was so happy I called my dad and I was like 'Dad, I finally won something,'" he said. "I'm nervous because there's no telling where everything will go. But, my rule is even if I go down, I'm not going to go down without a fight."

He decided to run for president last year. When he was in Assembly, he quit because he didn't feel good about the company he was around. So, he promised himself he'd run his senior year.

"I think change has to be from the top down and not the bottom up," he said. "That's been the issue. We were at the bottom and we tried challenging the top, but there's

too much bureaucracy."

For those that say he's only running to spice up his résumé for medical school, Khilji says that makes no sense.

"I tremendously care. The blessing of being in B.A.M.D is I don't have to do anything a traditional pre-med has to do for their résumé," he said. "Only contingent upon GPA and MCAT, I already have a seat at SUNY Downstate."

When Khilji is not on campus, he's most likely working out. It started freshman year when he went to the gym with Qureshi and ended up losing 30 pounds. Fast forward three years and he has a fitness page on Instagram. When he's not working out, he's watching reality TV. He's obsessed with the Real Housewives, though he said the Kardashians are his reality TV limit—he doesn't watch them. He also watches the news. And he's exhausted all of the Bollywood movies on Netflix.

Khilji thinks his best quality is genuinely caring about everything he goes after. His weakness? Finding it hard to see the bad in people, giving them the benefit of the doubt, and hurting himself in the process. He wants to work on the latter because he thinks doing so would make him a better president.

"I really want to become president. After the debate, it became clear to me what the visions are," he said. "And as much as it is about me running, something needs to happen for the students."

USG Presidential Candidate Alyssa Taylor is a Boss

BY ZAINAB IQBAL

Alyssa Taylor loves the color purple. She's loved it ever since she found out her birthstone was amethyst. On this particular day, she had on purple socks and purple leggings. Her nail polish? That was purple, too. Her mom is Trinidadian and her father is Panamanian. "I consider myself a 100 percent American," she laughed. She's a three-sport athlete at Brooklyn College. And she's running for USG president.

Taylor laughed when asked for her age. "You want to know my age," she gasped. "You're not supposed to ask a woman her age."

She's 24 years old and lives in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The commute from Bed-Stuy to Brooklyn College is terrible, but she finds it to be worth it. She's a Physical Education major and a Health and Nutrition Sciences minor. She runs on the cross country team, swims, and is on the softball team. She's also a current member of student government. How does she manage it all? Time management and communication.

"I'm really big on time management," she said. "I live by my calendar. Everything goes into my calendar. Everything is scheduled. At some point I had to schedule sleep. And it's also about communication. Communicating with your professors, communicating with coaches, and communicating with whoever I'm working with."

Taylor is the youngest in her family. She has an older sister and brother. By the time she came along, her parents said, "She'll be alright," and alright she is.

When she was 11 years old, her parents put her on a softball team. It was the first sport she ever played. After a year, she was upset because her family couldn't afford to let her continue on. When she was in the sixth grade, she entered the step team in her school. And every year since, she's joined a new sports team.

When she was at the City College of New York, she spent two years trying to figure out what exactly it was she had a passion for. She realized that the only thing she seemed to be passionate about was being on every single sports team she could possibly be on. Then



Alyssa Taylor (left) with her VP ticket Ethan Milich (right). PHOTO/ Nigora Jurabaeva

one day, she tore her ACL. It required three surgeries and she wasn't able to walk for a year. It was an extremely difficult time for her as she thought she had lost who she was. But, it was then that she realized she wanted to educate future athletes on how to protect themselves from these injuries. She also wanted to promote healthy living. And that's what she thinks she might want to do in the future.

"My heart is set in being a physical education educator and working in an NYC Public Middle School," she said. "Middle school aged students because they're not too young so you can teach them things, but they're not too old that they are already set in their ways and they don't want to learn. That's the perfect age range."

She also wants to be a coach. And perhaps get into politics.

"I'm not super crazy about politics because I feel as though many politicians are not the most truthful people; they're not the most relatable. But these are the reasons

why I want to be a politician. I want to relate to people. I want to tell the truth. I want people to feel represented. That's why I do it now."

When Taylor transferred to Brooklyn College in the fall of 2016, she spent the entire semester not being involved in anything. It was very much out of character for her. Then one day, CLAS Student Government had a women's leadership lunch. Taylor decided to attend and became really inspired. She wanted to take part in the student government. Unfortunately for her, when she transferred, she had 11 credits. At that time, students needed to be full-time students with at least 12 credits to be a part of CLAS.

The following year, Taylor joined as a student government trainee and was voted into Assembly. She was then voted as the chair of media outreach and engagement. Joining student government was the best decision of her life.

"I'm totally stressed out all the time," she laughed. "But it's a good stressed out. At

the end of the day, I know I'm making a difference and am doing something that matters. I wouldn't trade in what I do now for anything."

Taylor, along with her vice president ticket Ethan Milich, are said by students to be the "establishment candidates" notably because they are already a part of student government.

"Me and Ethan took the time to do the work and put in the effort that it took to build ourselves," Taylor said. "We both volunteered our time, joined the Assembly, and moved up because of something people saw in us."

"The seed was sewn last year," Taylor said of her deciding to run for president. It was around the time she was supporting Zunera Ahmed's run for president.

"I didn't like the feeling of being told that I could and couldn't do certain things," she said. "But what really sealed the deal was the distribution of power within student government. The way our student government is set up this year, there's a leader of the student govern-

ment, but then there's a leader of the working body [the Assembly]. A lot of things get done through the Assembly, but a lot of people are going to the president. There's a big miscommunication between what needs to be done and what's getting done."

Taylor just wants to continue the work she's been doing and move the student government in the right direction. If she happens to lose the election, she hopes her opponents see the knowledge in her. And if she does win, she hopes her opponents can work with her because she believes they are both very intelligent people.

In the meantime, she is going to continue working hard with her role in student government and working hard campaigning. And when she's not doing either, she'll be cozying up to watch her favorite show of all time, *Grey's Anatomy* on Hulu.

"It's my sister's account," she whispered.

USG Presidential Candidate Carlos J. Calzadilla-Palacio Wants to be the Students' Voice

BY ZAINAB IQBAL

Carlos Jesus Calzadilla-Palacio's name is a mouthful. And so are his achievements. He is a 21-year-old activist and organizer. He was born in Spain to Cuban parents and then moved to Miami when he was just six months old. He wanted to become a professional soccer player and was well on his way to fulfilling that dream. But then, he heard of Bernie Sanders and turned his work to making a change instead. When he's not speaking his heart, he's playing video games. If he could have one meal for the rest of his life, it would be rice and beans. And he's running for USG president.

Calzadilla-Palacio is a Political Science major and a Puerto Rican and Latinx Study minor. As an activist, he realized that as important as it is to learn how to make change on the ground, it is also very important to be educated on how change really happens. One of the biggest changes in his family came when his parents took him and moved to a whole new country.

"When I was born, my mom told me she cried. She cried because I was born in a free and democratic country," he said. "For me, democracy, equality, and the freedom to express one's self is something that is very important to me."

Like many immigrants, Calzadilla-Palacio's family came to America for a better life. It was very difficult to be in Cuba because of economic reasons, but also because there were limits to freedom of speech and political freedom. Though Spain was better, the country also had its own share of problems. Calzadilla-Palacio understands that if he didn't grow up in America, he wouldn't be the person he is today.

"I have a lot more opportunity to achieve things and dream more than I ever could," he said. "That wouldn't happen if I were living in Cuba or Spain."

Like many Cubans who come to the US, Calzadilla-Palacio's family moved to Miami, Florida. He lived there until he was nine. He then moved to Jacksonville.



Carlos Jesus Calzadilla-Palacio (left) and Nailah Pressley (right, his ticket for VP). PHOTO/ Karina Aguilar

His parents are teachers, and were teachers at the time. But then, the market crashed in 2009. Both his mom and dad lost their jobs and they moved to Central Florida.

"That is a part of what shapes how I view the world," he said. "The fact that the wealthy and powerful were able to destroy the lives of millions of people. That's when I realized we live in an unjust and unfair world, where there are a few people that have so much and so many people that have so little. We need to change that."

After finishing high school, he moved to Spain for a bit to pursue his lifelong dream of playing soccer professionally. He played with a professional team and trained with professional players. When he came back home in 2016, he tried out for a small team in Maryland. He got accepted. But, then there was Bernie Sanders.

"I had been following Bernie's campaign since

I was in Spain. I was inspired by his message," he said. "I was inspired by so many young people really wanting real change."

So, he attended a Bernie rally and fell in love. He realized that he wanted to do more than just play soccer. He wanted to use his platform to fight for social change, against poverty, against war. He turned down the Maryland offer and joined Sanders' campaign.

When it was time for college, he decided to come to New York and attend Long Island University-Brooklyn. On his first day of school, he was met with hundreds of professors locked out of the campus because of failed negotiations for their union contracts.

"I realized the moment we were in," Calzadilla-Palacio said. "We had to fight back. I didn't go to class. I went outside. I marched on the picket line with professors."

Soon enough, he trans-

ferred to Brooklyn College. He fell in love with its physical campus, its diversity, and its history of students organizing. It was also pretty affordable. And just a few months ago, he decided to run for USG president.

"I realized that were in a critical moment in CUNY and Brooklyn College. This is much larger than just a student government election," he said. "I think the student government election will set the tone to what will happen in our campus to fighting back against tuition increases and crumbling infrastructure."

He said running for student government is the best way he can currently help that struggle, and he realizes that it is much larger than just one person.

"Everyone is flawed. One thing I want to work on is to make sure that everyone who is a part of the movement has their names mentioned," he said. "When I do the

work, I do it because of the change I want to make, and having my name on it is not my objective. But I do understand that it's important for others to be given credit."

He believes his best quality is being able to communicate. He thinks that is especially an important quality to have in a president; someone that "can speak truth to power and also speak truth to the powerless," he said.

In five years, Calzadilla-Palacio sees himself continuing to fight for the liberation of oppressed people. And maybe running for office one day.

"I will continue fighting against injustice," he said. "I will continue because we have a very dangerous force that's gained a lot of power, which is white supremacy. It's not an option for me and my community to stay silent. Ever."

The opinions expressed in the Opinions Section do not necessarily reflect the views of The Excelsior.

This Is Why I Advocate for Etiquette Laws

BY EDMUND ZHEN

When thinking of the United States, it is not hard to be reminded of the different things it is known for. Most likely, we have heard it been called the land of the free, land of opportunities, the melting pot, etc., and in my eyes, there is no place freer and diverse than in New York City.

The MTA is the perfect showcase of this. People from all walks of life, backgrounds, and culture are all clustered together in rectangular carts, whisked away from the crumbling stations into the unknown. It is truly an experience like no other. Some things we are all familiar with are the delays, inconvenient maintenances, and the worst of them all, the public indecencies. For me, growing up in a strict family instilled proper mannerism, consideration of others, and public awareness's (I'd like to think so), so anything that is contrary to that, I become uncomfortable. That means when I see people peeing at the corner, spitting on the platform, acting like lunatics, etc., I get pissed as hell.

To change that, I believe it is crucial for the government to create etiquette laws similar to Singapore's. There,



Enforcing etiquette laws would be beneficial for society as a whole. PHOTO/ Fotolia

things like spitting, littering, public urinating, smoking in non-designated spots, etc., can land you with hefty fines and even jail time. For example, if you are caught spitting in places such as coffee shops, markets, theaters, public buildings, or public roads, you will be punished with slaps across the face as well as a \$1000 fine. In one aspect, it would be a good way to

generate revenue for the city, as well as creating a cleaner and safer space for everyone. Using that money, we can develop programs and initiatives to help those who are in need of support the most. In recent years, the number of homeless people has reached the highest in NYC since the Great Depression. The Coalition For The Homeless did a study on the

number of homeless people and found that "In February 2019, there were 63,615 homeless people, including 15,344 homeless families with 22,717 homeless children, sleeping each night in the New York City municipal shelter system. Families make up three-quarters of the homeless shelter population and the number of homeless New Yorkers sleeping each

night in municipal shelters is now 74 percent higher than it was ten years ago. The number of homeless single adults is 150 percent higher than it was ten years ago."

But even if we don't do this on a large scale, we could create a punitive system in schools or private areas (in alignment to the law of course) that follows this idea to teach people the things they failed to learn when they were kids. In other words, it is beneficial for society as a whole, as it builds character in people and teaches them respect, self-control, social awareness, etc. It would also be helpful to implement other things that would help catalyze a snowball effect on this growth. Rewinding back to the MTA, how would your life be when you take the train/bus and the people were more respectful of each other and their environment? The seat and floor you use are clean. There are no loud music or people screaming "IT'S SHOW-TIME" on your train. There will be no more smell or sight of urine or feces all over. Just think, how would your life be changed if these rules were implemented?

Did We Need Another "Pet Sematary?"

BY CARMEN SAFFIOTI

Stephen King's horror classic *Pet Sematary* was adapted, yet again, to the big screen. But just like *IT* (2017), another remake of an adaption, *Pet Sematary* is a mediocre pass at King's literature, and is ultimately is a movie that is both non-scary and two-dimensional.

Pet Sematary follows a family who recently moved to rural Maine, where they discover a mystical burial ground that resurrects the dead. The first adaptation of this movie came in 1989, and honestly it is just as bad, if not worse, than this recent remake. However, the movie became iconic and a point of comparison for the new film, which there are several notable differences. What this new film does better in, however, is addressing the topic of death in a way that is not meant to frighten view-



Despite being a Stephen King film, "Pet Sanctuary" was not memorable. PHOTO/ Paramount Pictures

ers but rather intrigue them while they watch. Unfortunately, it seems that the writers got carried away with this idea and it is layered on too thick through out the film.

The 1989 adaptation's screenplay was written by King and closely resembled the novel. This new adap-

tation, however, seemed to have more of a life of its own. In this new adaptation it is the daughter, Ellie (Jeté Laurence), who is brought back from the dead. I had a problem with this change for several reasons. Ellie, whose cat Church died and was resurrected, is one of the main

characters who has to interact and come to understand death. This is impossible for her to do if she is killed and comes back as a zombie. This is one of the reasons the messaging of this film is off, because instead of seeing how a young character interacts with death in her fam-

ily— audiences are subjected to corny dialogue especially by the main protagonist Dr. Louis Creed (Jason Clarke).

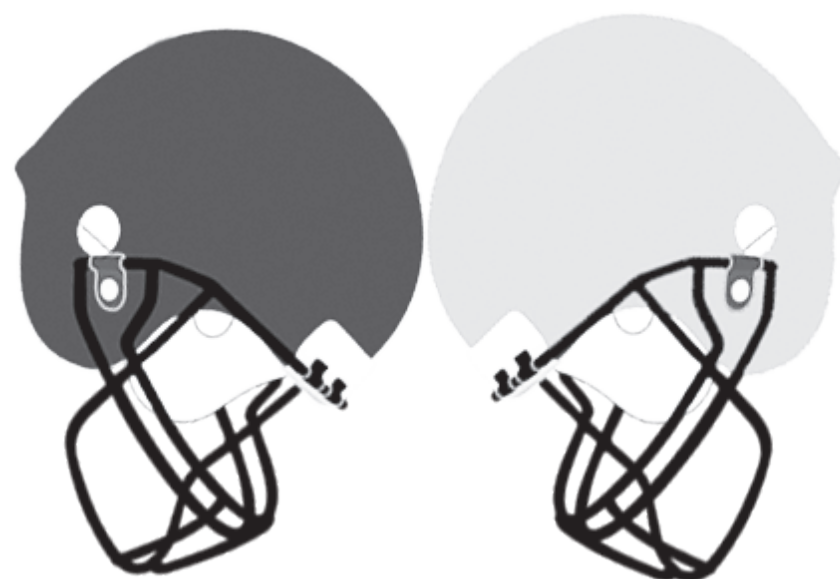
Another problem of the film is its length at 135 minutes, which is over two hours. This is an incredibly long length especially for a horror movie. Audiences who see this movie in theaters will keep looking at their watch wondering "How much longer?" Finally, what really done this movie in was the acting, which frankly was unconvincing at best. Jason Clarke delivers a flat performance while Amy Seimetz plays a one dimensional horrified wife almost the entire time.

For a Stephen King film, this is definitely not one of the memorable ones. Rather it is simply a passable movie that will be almost completely forgotten by summer.

Head To Head

Where two writers produce two different opinions about one topic. Who do you think is right?

The issue: Who is the 2018-2019 NBA Most Valuable Player?



Conrad Hoyt: Giannis Antetokounmpo deserves to be the MVP of the 2018-19 NBA season. James Harden has been incredible, with records and unbelievable scoring that we have not seen in years, but the most influential and valuable player has been Antetokounmpo.

The Milwaukee Bucks are the best team in the league this season, with an overall record of 60-22. They exceeded expectations, and are the only team in the league this year with a top-five offense and top-five defense.

This is all due to Antetokounmpo. His offensive skill set in the Bucks offense, where his coach surrounds him with four shooters so he can play bully-ball in the paint, makes the Bucks a juggernaut team. Teams have tried putting smaller players on Antetokounmpo, or bigger Defensive Player of the Year candidates on him, such as Joel Embiid and Rudy Gobert. None of it has worked, and that is a big part of why the Bucks have been successful. They go as far as Antetokounmpo goes.

On defense, Brook Lopez holds down the middle, Eric Bledsoe, Malcolm Brogdon, and Khris Middleton play suffocating defense on the perimeter, and they all are free to be aggressive and gamble for steals because of Antetokounmpo. Many times he guards the opposing team's best player, while other times he sags off his assignment, and operates as a sort of free safety. Antetokounmpo is surely in the DPOY conversation and some would argue he is even the favorite.

Harden is not in this conversation.

Antetokounmpo has averaged 27.7 points, 12.5 rebounds, and 5.9 assists per game this season, with 1.3 steals, 1.5 blocks and a shooting percentage of 57.8. His points, assists, rebounds, and shooting percentage are all career-highs. Antetokounmpo is the best and most important player on the best team in the league. Everything the Bucks are able to

do is because of his dominance and versatility. Shaquille O'Neal gave up his title of "Superman" to Antetokounmpo as Antetokounmpo scored the most paint points in a season since O'Neal in 2005.

This has been one of the most closely-contested MVP races in recent memory. The NBA media has a tendency for voter-fatigue, in that they vote for the new candidate if one of the other candidates has won it in recent years, which would work in Antetokounmpo's favor. Harden won the award last year, and he had a case in winning it the year before that, along with three years ago, when the players in the league voted him as MVP.

This is all to say, fans should not be up in arms if their preferred contestant does not win the MVP award. This race has been a storyline all season, and it has contributed to an overall epic journey. Though it is surely a close-race, Giannis deserves to win it. He is the best player on the best team in the league, and we surely won't be forgetting his name anytime soon.

Nicholas Williams: The Greek Freak, Giannis Antetokounmpo played phenomenal this season, all credit to him. Fantastic young player with a bright future. He averaged 27.7 points, 12.5 rebounds, and 5.9 assists for the season. Impressive stats from him even though it should be expected that he puts up these stats. He is no doubt the best player in the Eastern Conference.

Antetokounmpo is not my MVP this season, the MVP of the 2018-2019 NBA season is Houston Rockets guard James Harden.

The MVP award is based on having the best storyline in the league as well as being a dominant player on your team. Harden had the best storyline and has dominated the Western Conference. He dropped 30 on them without batting an eye.

Antetokounmpo has had a cake

walk to success. I'm sorry but not sorry, but when your conference has subpar competition such as the Knicks, Wizards, Cavs, Hawks, Bulls, a team like the Bucks even without Antetokounmpo should have no problem making it to the playoffs.

The narrative with the Rockets is that they started off the season poorly, they were not in sync and questions rose if they would even make the playoffs. Harden carried this team on his back and the Rockets currently have the fourth seed finishing the season 53-29. Only seven games apart from the Bucks. Think about that. This team wasn't even supposed to make the playoffs, Chris Paul and Clint Capela went down with injuries, the Rockets next best player was Eric Gordon.

Antetokounmpo has all the talent around him to succeed. He has a terrific coach in Mike Budenholzer and a way better supporting cast than the Rockets. Eric Bledsoe, Khris Middleton, Brook Lopez, these guys can you get into the playoffs without Antetokounmpo. Yes, you read that right. The Bucks can make the playoffs as at least a fifth or sixth seed without Antetokounmpo. With a coach like Budenholzer and the talent on the team, the Bucks will remain competitive in that weak conference.

Remember, that Budenholzer was able to coach a Hawks team with no real superstar to a 60-22 record in 2015. The best player on that team was Paul Millsap, a low-tier all star level player. So is the Bucks success really about Antetokounmpo dominating or just a brilliant system designed to win?

Coaching is the reason to the Bucks success. The argument that the Bucks have a better record than last year's team is large in part due to the great coaching this year. Coach Bud has transformed this team completely and implementing a stretch offense has really opened up a lot of doors for this team.

The Western Conference is a battlefield with a lot of competitive talent, it is such a battlefield that even arguably the greatest player of all time, LeBron James, couldn't even make the playoffs in the West. Harden has stormed over that battlefield, dropping 30 points on every single team this season. What Harden is doing, has little to do with coaching, but more due to the fact that he is the best player and most valuable on his team.

Some will say that Harden isn't the best defensive player and I'll say you are right, but the name of the game is to put the ball in the basket. Harden, with his lack of defense and all, still led his team to wins and stayed competitive in the face of uncertainty. I will take great offense over great defense any day.

Take Harden off the Rockets and restart the season. The Rockets would be a lottery team. You can not convince me that a 33-year-old injury prone Paul can lead this team to the playoffs in the West. Paul is great, but father time is slowly coming for him as it does with every aging player. Capela's defense is great, but his offense is limited. Capela's offense would not be what it is without Harden. Harden commands so much attention on the pick and roll that it opens up wide open baskets for Capela and other guys.

Relying on an aging Paul, who statistically has had one of the worst seasons of his career, and a poor offensive player in Capela, you are going to be a lottery team. Harden lifted this team over the hump with amazing scoring performances. He turned this team around when Capela and Paul were out, he stepped up and led this team. Harden worked with less talent while Antetokounmpo has worked with better talent.

BC Men’s Tennis Bounces Back Against St. Joseph’s College Long Island

BY ANTHONY DYCE

The Brooklyn College Men’s Tennis team captured a much needed non-conference victory against the St. Joseph’s College Long Island Golden Eagles, defeating them 7-2 on the road last Saturday afternoon. Brooklyn College improved its record to 6-6 on the season. The Golden Eagles dropped to 3-6 on the season. Leading the way for the Bulldogs in the single matchup was sophomore Rohan Mathur, who defeated Ryan Freely (8-2) at the number one slot. Freshman Jonathan Lum defeated Kyle Conway (8-0) at the number two slot. Freshman Remi Laurence continues to play at a consistent level since being inserted into the singles lineup. Laurence is a first-year member of the Tennis team and has not disappointed with his play this year. He was able to pull out an 8-4 win against Will Vita



Sophomore Rohan Mathur led the way in the Bulldogs' loss. PHOTO/ **Damion Reid**

at the number three slot. At the number four slot in singles competition, BC Freshman Christian Pena defeated Dylan Trude (8-3). Junior Samuel Mey-erovich defeated Kenny Petersen (8-3) at the number five slot. BC Junior Amadou Andre fell to Vinny

Spano in a close matchup (8-6) at the number six slot. The double matchup was a dominated win by the teamwork of Rohan Mathur and Remi Laurence at the number one slot. Resulting in shutting down the competition to (8-0). Freshman Christian Pena and Jona-

than Lum defeated Will Vita and Kenny Petersen (8-2) at the number two slot. This much-needed win was needed by the Bulldogs as they will be on the road again against the CUNYAC Champs Baruch College Bearcats on Tuesday, April 16th at the USTA

Billie Jean King National Tennis Center at 3:30 pm. The Bearcats are 6-4 on the season, winning their last three games vs York College, Lehman College, and Hunter College. The Bulldogs have never defeated the Bearcats, dating back to 2007, holding a 15 game losing streak against the Bearcats. The Bearcats dominated the Bulldogs in every single game played. They left the Bulldogs scoreless the last three times that they played. The last time the Bulldogs faced the Bearcats was on April 29th, 2018, were the Bearcats defeated the Bulldogs 0-5. The Bulldogs will be looking forward to taking on the Bearcats as they will look to make history and potentially upset the defending champs Baruch College Bearcats.

Nightmare Season Continues as BC Women’s Softball Team Falls to Hunter College

BY IVAN MORROBEL

The Brooklyn College women’s softball team losing woes continue after dropping both games of a doubleheader (3-14, 0-12) against their second CUNYAC opponent of the season Hunter College Hawks last Thursday afternoon at home. The Bulldogs, who only managed to get three hits combined in the two games, did most of their damage in the first game. As the Hunter College Hawks got off to a quick 5-0 lead to start the game, Brooklyn College responded in the bottom of the first inning after Junior Leslie Lima reached base on an error to leadoff, which allowed cleanup hitter Chanel Jemmott to put the Bulldogs on the board with a two-out RBI double. Brooklyn’s bats went silent for the following three innings as the Hawks pounded them for nine more runs to help widen their lead to a blowout victory, but the Bulldogs scored an additional two runs in the bottom



Leslie Lima helped the Bulldogs stem the tide of the Hunter College Hawks' momentum, but it was not enough to lead BC to victory. PHOTO/ **Damion Reid**

of the fifth, evidently showing their last sign of life. Starting pitcher Megan Ortiz-Mengedocht didn’t have her A game against Hunter as she allowed ten earned runs on

12 hits through five innings. Game 2 of the doubleheader was unlike the first for the Bulldogs. In fact, it was dreadful. The Hawks didn’t hesitate to pick up where they left off

as they thrashed the Bulldogs for 12 unanswered runs. Carolina Bibula, Brittney Salvador and Dilailah Gomez all had two hits each for Hunter. The Bulldogs appeared to be missing in action ver-

sus the Hawks’ starting pitcher Francesca Cipollina. The freshman gave up one hit, which came off of the bat of Brooklyn’s shortstop Anna Curran. But not only did the Bulldogs’ offense disappear for the second game of the doubleheader, but their defense was also shaky as well. Brooklyn committed three errors in the five innings that were played. The two losses dropped the Bulldogs to 2-14 overall and 0-4 in the CUNYAC this season, whereas Hunter continued to dominate conference opponents by bolstering their record to 7-1. With just a few games left before the regular season comes to an end, the Bulldogs' lineup has hit .194, while the pitchers have combined for a 13.28 earned run average through 16 games. The Bulldogs are having a nightmare season and will look to try and get some victories in as they will take on Baruch College on April 18th on Brooklyn College’s field.