

News Releases

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Office Information

Phyllis Cohen Stevens
Deputy Director of News Services
phyllis.cohen-stevens@qc.cuny.edu
(718) 997- 5597

Maria Matteo
Assistant Director of News Services
maria.matteo@qc.cuny.edu
(718) 997-5593

News Releases

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Profiles of Five Outstanding Queens College Students Graduating on May 31

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Howie Rose, Known as Radio Voice of the Mets and TV Announcer of the Islanders, To Speak at Queens College's 88th Commencement

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Queens College Choral Society and Orchestra to Present Brahms' Requiem in Concert May 19

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Cafeteria Conversation: "Lunchtime 2.0" Aims to Promote Understanding Among Queens College's Diverse students

April 24

Amulets, Nazars & Evil Eyes: Artists Looking Forward: Group Show Explores an Age-old Belief at Queens College Art Center, May 2 - June 29, 2012

April 24

Helping Under-Represented And Economically Challenged Students Succeed in Higher Education

April 20

The Poetry Society of America and Queens College Present Poets in the Playhouse: Thomas and Beulah by Rita Dove

April 20

Queens College Presents World Premiere of The Image Maker by Acclaimed Composer Bruce Saylor, May 4 - 6

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Queens College Famed Evening Reading Series Presents the Award-Winning Author E. L. Doctorow on April 24

April 11

Queens College Psychology Professor Susan Croll Named Among Princeton Review's Best 300 Professors

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Probing the Curse of Blue Eyes in the Islamic Middle Ages

April 09

Queens College Celebrates Immigration Heritage Week: April 17 - 24, 2012

April 03

National Science Foundation Recognizes Early Career Promise in the Research of Two Queens College Professors

PROFILES OF FIVE OUTSTANDING QUEENS COLLEGE STUDENTS GRADUATING ON MAY 31

FLUSHING, NY, May 24, 2012 –These are just a few of the outstanding students from over 2,500 degree candidates expected to attend the 88th Queens College Commencement ceremony on the campus Quad, 65-30 Kissena Blvd., Flushing, May 31, at 9 am:

YAKOV YABUKOV: *Published Neuroscience Researcher and 2012 Student Commencement Speaker Sets His Sights on Dentistry*

When Queens College's 2012 student commencement speaker Yakov Yakubov was asked what his education has given him, he stated, "A lot of instruction, a lot of meaningful connections and a lot of opportunity."

Yakubov's opportunities began early in life. He left Uzbekistan with several other Bukharin Jews and immigrated to the U.S. with his parents when he was only four years old.

The Rego Park resident was fortunate enough to be accepted into Hunter College High School, where in his junior year he was selected to work in QC Psychology Professor Richard J. Bodnar's neuroscience lab, which he continued as the professor's research assistant when he enrolled at QC. Together they investigated how brain pathways associated with pleasure and reward affect feeding behavior in mice, particularly the consumption of fats and sugars. They presented their work at conferences in New York, San Diego and Chicago and co-authored an article that was published in the peer-reviewed journal Brain Research.

Yakubov also competed for both domestic and international research internships. Last summer he served as a neurobiology research lab assistant at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovet, Israel, and spent the prior summer in a similar capacity at Hunter College.

But Yakubov's opportunities did not stop at the classroom. Last January as part of a Study Abroad program, he went to the Galapagos Archipelago off the coast of Ecuador, where he was involved in the "immersive" study of the region's conservation and ecology. The neuroscience major, who will graduate this May with a 4.0 GPA, plans to study dentistry at Columbia University in the fall. His parents are both dentists.

"I feel very lucky to be in this country," says Yakubov. "I think my future would have turned out quite differently if I still lived in Uzbekistan. . . . For one thing, I'd never be going to an Ivy League dental school," says Yakubov.

NELSON GIL: *Fleeing the Dominican Republic and Living on Food Stamps . . . Now Bound for Medical School*

Four years ago when he was 16, Nelson Gil fled his native Dominican Republic along with his parents and infant sister. The family had led a comfortable life there—both parents were physicians running a private clinic—but when criminals started extorting money from them and they had no confidence the police could protect them, they decided to flee. Language was not an issue for Gil, since he had graduated from a private English-language high school just before the family left. They settled (and still reside) in Corona, and Gil was accepted at QC. He entered an accelerated BA/MA program in chemistry, and will graduate this spring with a 4.0 GPA.

Life has not been easy for the family. His mother, unable to practice medicine, has had to take on childcare jobs while looking after the family, and his father has gone through the arduous process of getting his American medical license. At times the family had to use food stamps to get by. Through it all, Gil has been an outstanding student.

"The most important thing is the support from my family," he says. "Knowing (every evening) that you're going back to a stable and unified family makes me want to try harder for them."

Gil would like to pursue a research or academic career in medicine. He has been accepted at three medical schools—Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Stony Brook, and Penn State—and will probably choose the first because of his familiarity with the research environment and the opportunities at Einstein, which he learned about when taking part in a summer research program at that school.

"There is a shortage of people with an Hispanic background in medical fields," Gil says. "I'd like to be a role model."

ERICA LEONG: *From Playing Violin and Piano to Teaching English in South Korea as a Fulbright Student Scholar*

On July 4 Erica Leong, who lives in Massapequa Park, Long Island with her Chinese parents, will leave for South Korea, where she'll spend the next year teaching English through the prestigious Fulbright Student Program. After six weeks of training in Goesan, Chungcheongbuk-do, Leong, who to date has not traveled farther than Canada, will receive her assignment.

A career in international education was not part of Leong's future when she enrolled at QC as a music education major, a reasonable choice for someone who played piano and violin.

A dictation course made her rethink her path, and she decided to change her major to English. For a year she had no idea what to do – "perhaps go into publishing," she recalls. Then her business and liberal arts professor encouraged her to consider teaching English as a second language (ESL), an idea that held enormous appeal.

"At an info session for certification in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), I met another Chinese-American woman who told me about AmeriCorps," the national community service organization, Leong says. She got her TESOL certification in April 2011 and began teaching English to Chinese immigrants at a Chinatown YMCA through a program run by Pace University's AmeriCorps.

That program ended in December, but the YMCA picked it up, and Leong continued teaching. Interested in learning about other Asian cultures, she accepted an internship at South Asian Youth Action, a nonprofit group in Elmhurst. She also took a semester of Korean at QC. Presumably, her varied background and commitment to ESL helped her stand out amid the thousands of Fulbright applicants.

"I'm really excited, but a little scared about the language barrier," says Leong, who admits to a weakness in learning foreign languages. (She is less than fluent in Cantonese, her parents' tongue.) Her Korean skills are likely to improve, however. Under the terms of her Fulbright, she will stay with a host family wherever she is assigned, so she will be immersed in the Korean language and culture around the clock.

MIRELA CENGER: *Helping Children With Autism*

In recent years, the focus of Mirela Cengher's life has been working with children with autism. After completing an undergraduate degree in psychology in her native Romania, Cengher worked there for several years as a therapist for children with autism. She came to the United States in fall 2010 to start in QC's master's program in applied behavior analysis (ABA), a branch of psychology, and continues working with children with autism here at the same time.

"Nothing is as rewarding as seeing a child get better and better," says Cengher, who is also the principal investigator on two autism studies at QC, and a principal investigator/researcher in two others outside the college. Her master's thesis examines techniques caregivers can exploit to evoke greater responses from a child with autism.

Cengher turned down two other master's programs to study at QC because of the faculty's strong interests in ABA. "One of the best things is that people are really there for you," she says of the college. "There are so many opportunities to learn. All it takes is for one to ask for help or advice."

A resident of Middle Village, Cengher will graduate this spring with a 4.0 GPA and has been accepted into the CUNY Graduate Center's PhD program in ABA, which is based at Queens.

Even after she began working with ABA to treat children with autism, Cengher enrolled in a master's program in psychoanalysis in Romania. The two approaches could not be further apart, but completing the program only deepened her understanding of ABA and her conviction that it is the most effective treatment. Her career goal is to continue both working with children with autism, and carrying out research to test and refine treatment methods.

HADAS FRUCHTER: *Finding a Connection Between Judaism and Social Service*

Hadas ("Dasi") Fruchter is deeply involved in campus life, promoting Jewish social justice activities and dialogue between Jewish and Muslim students. She works with the college's Center for Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Understanding and started a QC chapter of the organization Challah for Hunger, whose members sell the traditional holiday bread they have baked and donate the proceeds to global disaster relief.

Fruchter is graduating with a double major of urban studies and media studies and a GPA of 3.98. She plans to do graduate work at NYU's Wagner School of Public Service, where she has been awarded a Wexner Graduate Fellowship. She will do a dual master's program in public policy and non-profit management, and Jewish studies.

Fruchter's Orthodox Jewish identity is a central part of her life. After high school, she spent a year studying biblical and Talmudic texts at a Jewish seminary in Jerusalem. Upon returning home to Prospect Park, Brooklyn where she still resides, Fruchter enrolled at QC.

April 02

Queens College's English Language Institute (ELI) Now Offers International Students Provisional Acceptance Into Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

March 27

Rapunzel in the Library, in Perpetuum/forever II: Anne Sherwood Pundyk Leads Subversive Collaboration at Queens College Art Center, April 4 - 25, 2012

March 23

Professor Gives Bach to School Children

March 20

Queens College Famed Evening Readings Series Presents Acclaimed Nigerian Author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on March 27

March 20

"Interwoven Worlds" Middle Eastern Conference on Writing and Translation: Award-Winning Lebanese Author Elias Khoury to Speak at Queens College Conference March 28 on Literature of Middle East

March 16

"Protest Contagion" -- Middle East Experts to Probe the Spread and Global Impact of Changing Politics in North Africa

March 15

"Women with Disabilities and Domestic Violence -- Services, Survival and a Story of Hope"

March 13

Queens College Among 11 U.S. Colleges Chosen for Year-Long Program to Foster Educational Partnerships with India

March 08

Hanging Loose Press and Queens College MFA Program in Creative Writing and Literary Translation Launch Annual Award

March 05

Emmy Award-Winning Television Journalist Jane Hanson and NEP Studios Senior VP and General Manager Barry Katz '75 to Appear at March 16 Queens College Business Forum

March 01

QC Offers World-Class, Yet Affordable Concert Series in the Acoustically Superb LeFrak Concert Hall Beginning March 2

Archives

She ultimately found the connection she was seeking between Judaism and social justice when she joined Uri L'Tzedek, a NYC-based group established by Orthodox rabbinical students, where she has been a compliance officer monitoring how kosher restaurants treat their workers.

"The scriptures are deeply concerned with teaching us how to construct a just society," says Fruchter. It is a concern she holds close to her heart.



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Queens College | The City University of New York | 65-30 Kissena Blvd. | Flushing, NY 11367 | Phone: (718) 997-5000



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