Volunteer spirit following Superstorm Sandy has inspired a far-reaching University service corps.

Before Hurricane Sandy had blown out of the city last fall, CUNY students were already springing into action to help fellow New Yorkers deal with devastation. They soon spread through hard-hit areas offering food, labor and compassion.

Now the University is taking steps to channel such student enthusiasm via a new wide-ranging service corps called CUNY HELPS, an acronym for CUNY Higher Education Links to Programs and Services.

CUNY HELPS will “mobilize students and faculty to work on projects that improve the short- and long-term civic, economic and environmental sustainability of New York City, its residents and communities,” Chancellor Matthew Goldstein said. He noted that although the concept paper presented to the Board of Trustees remains to be fleshed out, the idea “draws inspiration from the children of the whole people, whether the children of the people, of the highest grade, can be successfully controlled by the popular will, not by the privileged few, but by the privileged many.” — Horace Webster, Founding Principal, The Free Academy

CUNY HELPS also will reinforce participating students’ altruistic impulses, infuse education with real-world experience and, perhaps, earn academic credit. In addition, there would be an hourly wage. The leap from the pure volunteerism seen post-Sandy to a salaried program acknowledges economic reality.

For faculty members who engage students in projects, CUNY HELPS offers avenues to apply their expertise to critical challenges facing the city. And for those New York residents who receive direct assistance or who benefit indirectly from improvements to their neighborhoods or the entire city, the service program aims to revive dreams, livelihoods and qualities of life.

The concept paper calls for CUNY HELPS to begin in Fall 2013 and grow to 1,000 student participants by the end of the 2013-2014 academic year. Colleges wishing to have their students participate will be asked to submit proposals which, among other things, would be asked to submit proposals which, among other things.
Growing the STEM of the Future

Far too few students who may be interested in the STEM fields at a young age ultimately earn a degree in these disciplines. America must take action to reinvigorate our commitment to STEM education, research and commercialization while investing in the necessary infrastructure and human capital.

In every field, workers who are STEM-holders, associate degree graduates and part of the equation, we need technically proficient workers and our ability to prepare a diverse workforce with the requisite skills. According to the National Science Foundation, over the past quarter century, the science and engineering workforce has more than doubled in size and STEM-related employment is only expected to grow. But the U.S. pipeline to advanced study is a leaky one. Far too few students who may be interested in the STEM fields at a young age ultimately earn a degree in these disciplines.

America must take action to reinvigorate our commitment to STEM education, research and commercialization while investing in the necessary infrastructure and human capital.

Five areas are truly critical:

- Ensure that more students are prepared for college-level STEM study. Too many lack the necessary academic skills. As the National Science Foundation reports, relatively few K-12 students reach grade-specific proficiency in science; meanwhile, the Business-Higher Education Forum finds that almost half of STEM-interested 12th-grade students do not have the requisite skills in mathematics or science. We need to utilize summer and after-school programs more fully to supplement coursework.

- Encourage interest and aptitude at all levels of post-secondary study, particularly by students underrepresented in the sciences. While graduate degrees, whether Ph.D.s or science master’s degrees, are a big part of the equation, we need technically proficient workers at all levels: certificate holders, associate degree graduates and bachelor’s degree earners. Increasingly, every field needs workers who are STEM-literate and can operate computers, read blueprints, analyze data and run sophisticated equipment. Across our universities, we need to provide targeted undergraduate research opportunities, summer internships, faculty mentoring and modern facilities.

- Ensure that students at every level are taught by creative, effective teachers educated in the STEM disciplines. President Obama announced a plan this summer to create a national STEM Master Teacher Corps, with highly effective educators mentoring other teachers and advocating for strong STEM education and well-prepared students. Good teachers are critical to student success and we should consider how to incentivize their work, whether through merit pay or differential salaries.

- Establish stronger links with business and industry to ensure that students are prepared not only to participate in today’s workforce but to lead the innovation and discoveries of the next generation. No one doubts that curriculum must be developed by faculty. But particularly in the STEM fields, where new advances and approaches are always being developed, we need to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge in the business community.

There is no greater investment in the future than an investment in education — and that starts with a commitment to developing the skills necessary for a knowledge-based economy. After all, tomorrow’s workforce is always being developed, we need to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge in the business community. There is no greater investment in the future than an investment in education — and that starts with a commitment to developing the skills necessary for a knowledge-based economy. After all, tomorrow’s workforce is always being developed, we need to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge in the business community.
Retention and Support

“The determination finds that, in all regards, the CUNY BMI program is legally compliant,” Chancellor Goldstein reported to the Board of Trustees at its Nov. 26 meeting. Characterizing the federal action “a big deal,” he said: “Although long overdue, this is a great result for the CUNY BMI and the many students it has served and continues to serve.”

OCR’s decision, he noted, makes it possible for BMI programs to seek grants from the Department of Education and other funders. He thanked the Trustees for their long support of BMI, saying that while the initiative may have been “somewhat controversial,” it was “the right thing to do.” He also thanked CUNY attorneys and BMI Director Elliot Dawes for their “outstanding work” on the protracted matter.

The Chancellor established a University Task Force on the Black Male Initiative in 2004, chartering it with developing recommendations leading to projects to help black males overcome inequalities that lead to poor academic performance, school retention and graduation rates.

Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson said the BMI “was not created to promote race-exclusive programs but instead to help black males and others compete more effectively in higher education through mentoring, internships, and other support services.”

Meyers, who has contended that BMI programs segregate and stigmatize black males, said he would challenge OCR’s action.

The complaints filed in 2006 alleged violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars institutions receiving federal funds from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin, and of Title IX, which bars sexual discrimination by educational institutions. In response, OCR opened 18 investigations – two to probe the discrimination charges, and 16 for each CUNY campus that had a BMI program as of January 2008.

The BMI cases spanned two presidential administrations. The initial New York Civil Rights Coalition complaint, filed May 23, 2006 during the Bush administration, sought elimination of the BMI programs as alleged violations of Title VI’s ban on the use of race to exclude or segregate; it charged that the programs stereotyped black males and treated them differently when they are their race, a Title VI violation, and gender, violating Title IX. An amended complaint filed July 26, 2006 added an allegation that CUNY colleges improperly used “race, color, ethnicity and/or sex” in selecting and assigning teachers and staff to run BMI programs.

“The complainant contended in his May 23, 2006 letter that ‘Title VI and Title IX do not sanction `Black Male Initiatives’...’” OCR’s Gimbel wrote in the Nov. 28 letter dismissing the cases. “It is not, however, a per se violation of Title VI or Title IX for a postsecondary institution to operate a race-themed and/or gender-themed mentoring and support program.”

OCR’s determination relied heavily upon guidance issued in 2011 by the U.S. Department of Justice and OCR that clarified the kinds of actions higher-education institutions could legally take to promote diversity, including race-themed mentoring and support programs.

“Many institutions operate mentoring, tutoring, retention, and support programs for enrolled students who may need additional assistance in academic or other areas to succeed at the institution,” DOJ and OCR said, explaining that such programs could include content “of particular interest to a group targeted for retention... A race-themed or gender-themed mentoring and support program would fall within this category of approaches if it does not exclude students on the basis of their race or sex and does not use race-or sex-exclusive recruiting.”

“Based on the information already provided by CUNY, and an additional assessment of the current status of the BMI programs, OCR has determined that the allegations are not appropriate for further investigation and resolution. OCR is thus administratively closing these 18 cases as moot, consistent with OCR’s case processing procedures,” its letter said, noting, “We regret the substantial delay in resolving these complaints.”

At the November Trustees meeting CUNY Deputy General Counsel Jane Sovern described the OCR cases as “lengthy, exhaustive,” and said “the BMI directors at the campuses were tireless” in providing documentation and interviews requested by OCR. She also recognized the outstanding work of BMI Director Elliott Dawes, Deborah Douglass, executive director of education and training opportunity programs at the University’s Office of Academic Affairs, and Associate General Counsel Heather Parlier.

During the Bush years, she said, CUNY “worked with OCR to negotiate a resolution agreement,” which was not finalized. But after Barack Obama’s election in 2008, “there was silence [from OCR] for many years,” Sovern said.

Then came the joint guidance issued by DOJ and OCR, clarifying permissible uses of race. It “read as if they were describing our BMI program,” said Sovern. CUNY counsel then contacted OCR and “provided them with additional information,” and OCR closed the cases, she said, “essentially vindicating the approach of the BMI.”

CUNY’s Black Male Initiative has been supported by the CUNY Board of Trustees, the New York State Board of Regents and the New York City Council.

Continued from page 1
will spell out if and how they will award academic credit. By this April, the BMI cases spanned two presidential administrations. The initial New York Civil Rights Coalition complaint, filed May 23, 2006 during the Bush administration, sought elimination of the BMI programs as alleged violations of Title VI’s ban on the use of race to exclude or segregate; it charged that the programs stereotyped black males and treated them differently when they are their race, a Title VI violation, and gender, violating Title IX. An amended complaint filed July 26, 2006 added an allegation that CUNY colleges improperly used “race, color, ethnicity and/or sex” in selecting and assigning teachers and staff to run BMI programs.

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Continued from page 1
will spell out if and how they will award academic credit. By this April, the University expects to be recruiting students and seeking project sponsors among local organizations and government agencies.

Two types of projects are foreseen. In one, a city agency, union, business, non-profit or other organization would be expected to host several CUNY HELPS participants at a time, provide them with significant supervision and bring them together for meetings where they could discuss their experiences. Alternatively, faculty members could sponsor projects and provide supervision and, if relevant, coordination with client organizations.

According to the concept paper, students would need to meet a minimum grade point average, be at least midway through a program of study and demonstrate financial need.

The concept paper was drafted by Suri Dutsch, University Dean of Continuing Education and deputy to the Senior University Dean for Academic Affairs, and by Kara Heffernan, Director of Internship Programs, and Elizabeth Cardoso, Senior University Dean for Academic Affairs and Dean of the School of Professional Studies.

Superstorm Sandy
Continued from page 1
York College has been awarded a $2 million grant from the Port Authority for the “REDTAILS, Tuskegee Airmen Exhibit at York College.” The “Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program” at Kingsborough Community College, directed by Gary Sarinsky, has been awarded a $105,226 grant from the New York State Education Department.

Congressman José E. Serrano announced that Hostos Community College had been awarded nearly $1 million from the National Science Foundation: $610,115 from the Advanced Technological Education program to Rees Shad and Catherine Lewis for “Designing Future for Games: Games for Multi-Media”; also $295,079 for “Project SEED (STEM Educators Expansion Directive)” for Candidates in Chemistry and Environmental Science,” from the Robert Noyce Capacity Building Project, directed by Sarah Church. Hostos President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez said the grants validate “the quality and depth of our faculty, particularly for STEM, and the commitment Hostos has in helping to improve educational outcomes in Bronx K-12 schools.” In addition, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education have named Rees Shad 2012 New York State Professor of the Year from a group of nearly 300 top educators in the U.S. He was the driving force behind the creation of Hostos’ Media Design Program, which introduces students to professional media design via five AAS specialized degrees.

Bronx Community College has received $1,346,990 from the New York State Department of Education for “Institutional Improvement,” directed by Carin Savage. In addition, BCC’s Childcare Center has been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world’s largest organization working on behalf of young children. President Berette Joseph noted that the Childcare Center is the oldest in CUNY and said: “This is a real testament to the excellence of our work under Jin Fan’s leadership.” The National Science Foundation has extended $511,205 in grant support to Elizabeth Cardoso of Hunter College for the “MINORITY 3+1 Scholarship for Minority Students with Disabilities in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics.”

Delaram Khorasani of New York City College of Technology has received $488,562 from the Office of Naval Research for “New Approaches to Information Security Based on Group Theory,” a $348,750 grant to Jin Fan of Queens College from the National Institutes of Health will support research on “Uncertainty, Cognitive Control, and the Brain.”

Loretta Brancaccio-Taras, professor and chairperson of the department of biological sciences at Kingsborough Community College, has been named a Visine Scientific Leadership Fellow by The Partnership for Undergraduate Life Sciences Education, a joint initiative of the National Science Foundation, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the National Institutes of Health. Fellows will consider how to eliminate barriers to systemic changes needed to improve undergraduate life...
Mr. Citizenship Now!

FROM ITS BEGINNING 165 years ago, the City University of New York has always had a dual mission: Deliver high-quality education — and serve the citizens of the city. Today, CUNY’s 6,700 full-time faculty carry on this legacy, contributing in ways that truly transform our city, benefiting the lives of millions of New Yorkers every day. Many provide critical training for the city’s diverse workforce. They teach young scientists to explore new fields like photonics, biology and nanotechnology; they train municipal employees in emergency preparedness for large-scale disasters; they create programs that teach health industry professionals how to detect early incidence of oral cancer and better care for people with developmental disabilities.

In the following months, you’ll find the compelling stories of such CUNY faculty — just a few of the remarkable men and women whose service reflects the unique, historic bond between the University and its city.

AFTER LAW SCHOOL and an internship helping protect undocumented Mexican immigrants, San Diego native Allan Wernick headed for New York — eventually arriving at Hostos Community College, where he helped organize Women’s and Immigrants’ Rights Center in 1990.

Over 15 years, Citizenship Now! has steadily grown into the city’s largest immigration-aid organization.

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When Mr. Citizenship Now! realized that his California internship decades earlier would eventually lead to an iconic CUNY program combining free legal services, education and volunteering that has become the most comprehensive university-based immigration service in the country.

Now a professor of law at Baruch College, Wernick is director of Citizenship Now! which includes nine centers in New York City where immigrants can get forms, educational activities and confidential consultations with paralegals and attorneys. Over the past 10 years, the annual Citizenship Now! Call-in — co-sponsored by the New York Daily News — has answered almost 110,000 calls from New Yorkers seeking help with immigration questions. Thousands more have been helped by the NYC/CUNY Citizenship Now! Volunteer Corps, which provides free, in-person counseling on weekends. Several years ago, Wernick started the University’s unique Immigration Law Certificate Program, which offers courses for those working with immigrants or their employers and families.

Such efforts are especially significant in New York City, where 47 percent of the residents are foreign-born and 34 percent live in a household with a foreign-born member. Some 800,000 of an estimated 11.5 million undocumented immigrants nationwide live in the area.

Citizenship Now! was conceived by Jay Hershenson, Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations and Secretary of the Board of Trustees, and was launched by Wernick in 1997 to address the need for citizenship and immigration services among the University’s foreign-born students, faculty and staff. (More than 60 percent of CUNY students are immigrants or the children of immigrants.) The University soon expanded its mission to cover New Yorkers beyond CUNY campuses.

Over 15 years, Citizenship Now! has steadily grown into the city’s largest immigration-aid organization. The 1,800-plus members of its Volunteer Corps have assisted more than 95,000 people at its seven full-time immigration centers and two part-time centers — in Spanish, Mandarin, Creole and many other languages. Citizenship Now! also collaborates with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, making University campuses available for naturalization ceremonies.

In the last five years, the organization has held more than 200 community events in partnership with local officials and organizations. In the aftermath of the 2010 Haitian earthquake, Citizenship Now! — in collaboration with the American Immigration Lawyers Association — helped more than 900 undocumented Haitians in the U.S. obtain Temporary Protected Status. The city’s Haitian community is America’s largest, with some 6,000 students of Haitian descent studying at CUNY.

The weekly CUNY/Daily News Call-In is a high-profile campaign each spring when some 350 volunteer counselors answer thousands of phone calls from city residents with immigration-related issues. The event is frequented by a string of notable public figures that last year included Sens. Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand. The University’s first community college to be designated a National Historic Landmark. The status was awarded to five Beaux-Arts buildings designed by architect Stanford White: The Gould Memorial Library, The Hall of Fame for Great Americans, the Language Hall, the Philosophy Hall and Havemeyer Lab.

A MATTER OF DEGREE: More than 600 people turned out recently at Hunter College to see the Dalai Lama receive an honorary doctorate in Liberal Humanities. The degree was awarded in recognition of his work for world peace. Afterward, he joined a panel with Hunter professor Ming Xia and associate professor Ho-Pang Hung that was moderated by professor Peter Kwong.

RED FOR GREEN: In the quest to build a “green” lithium-ion battery, City College professor George John and postdoctoral researcher Subbiah Nagarajan have turned to the ruby-red dye extracted from rose madder, which since ancient times has been used to color textiles. The two say that the dye, whose molecules are similar to electrodes and are a good match for lithium, can be substituted for the ores in the batteries, which run practically every electronic device in everyday use. They believe that a commercially viable alternative will be available within a decade.

BREAST CANCER GRANT: Debra Auguste, associate professor of biomedical engineering at City College, has received a $1.5-million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study personalized therapies to inhibit breast cancer. Her work will focus on four populations: black women, white women, women younger than 40 and women older than 40. Her goal is to use biological information to deliver drugs that can target an individual patient’s tumor.

OFF TO ENGLAND: Nicolas Montano, a senior in the CUNY Baccalaureate program at John Jay, is the college’s first recipient of the British Marshall Scholarship to study in the United Kingdom. After he graduates this spring, he will begin graduate programs in Liverpool and London. Montano, whose studies have focused on youth and community justice, plans to earn a doctorate in research and academia.
FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Bronx Community College and Lehman students are getting a taste of healthy eating through a community-supported agriculture program that brings fresh produce to BCC’s school cafeteria. The program is designed to be affordable for cash-strapped students. Shares are bought weekly instead of monthly and participants can suspend membership when budgets are tight. The site is run by Corbin Hill Farm, a Harlem-based organization that gets fruits and vegetables from a network of 14 upstate farms. Things also got greener at LaGuardia when it hosted a greenmarket during Food Celebration Day in November. The event, which was attended by hundreds, also included student visits to classrooms, cooking demonstrations and a table that charted the sugars and fats in popular snack foods and soft drinks.

LOSE MORE: If you want to lose weight, find a partner for your crunches and calorie-crushing crusade. So says Baruch assistant professor Angela Pinto. According to her latest study, which followed 141 overweight and obese adults in three randomly assigned groups, commercial weight-loss programs and clinical programs carry equal weight—as long as the participants buddy up. She found that the support people got carried over as long as the participants buddy up. She found that the support people got carried over even before they emerge—essential because the opportunity to cuckoo often lays eggs in another bird’s nest hoping it will hatch them, too.

3-D VISION: NYDesigns, an economic development program at LaGuardia, is taking a leading role in New York’s Next Top Makers, a city contest to develop products using the 3-D printing technology of Shapeways, the Dutch company that recently moved to Long Island City. The contest, which runs through September 2013, is set up to choose six products—five by the city and one by the public—that will be further developed. NYDesigns is providing equipment and mentorship as well as studio space for the contest.

POWERING THE CITY’S FUTURE. Chancellors Dennis Waltz of New York City Public Schools, left, and CUNY’s Matthew Goldstein spoke at a December summit on STEM education, produced by U.S. News & World Report in association with CUNY and the Daily News and held at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Stem—science, technology, engineering and math—also is at the heart of the University’s 2013 calendar, “Inventing the Future,” produced in cooperation with LaGuardia Community College, the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives and the New York Times (see www.cuny.edu/inventingthefuture).

WINGING IT: Mothers do all sorts of clever things to keep their children under their wings, but the Australian fairywren starts the protection process while its chicks are still in the egg. According to a new study by Hunter College professor Mark Hauber, the mother bird begins teaching its unhatched chicks a secret password to chirp so she can identify them as hers even before they emerge—essential because the opportunistic cuckoo often lays eggs in another bird’s nest hoping it will hatch them, too.

GET IN THE PICTURE: Brooklyn College is using family photos to tell its rich history through a new campus project called the Digital Diaspora Family Reunion. The pictures, from students, faculty, administrators and alumni, are online at http://ddfr.tv/?s=brooklyn-college.

A' FOR ACTIVITIES: Many CUNY students have outside jobs and interests, but Amar Chugg certainly has to be one of the most visible on any campus. The Baruch College student, who is pursuing a degree in finance, is also an entrepreneur, CEO, disc jockey, model, music producer, web developer, tech blogger and social media guru. His startups—so far—include Chugg Search, the technology blog Spruse, Srt.im and the online shopping site Shopalin.com. He also finds time to swim, dance, play billiards and network. And presumably do his homework.

REMEMBERING VIETNAM: Queens College celebrated its 75th anniversary with “Posters as History: Teaching History, Politics and Art with Primary Sources,” an exhibition of more than 30 Vietnam War posters donated and created by alumni. The exhibit, which also included photos and archival materials, was inspired by professors Jack Zevin and Michael Krasner, who received a grant from the Library of Congress for the project. Their idea was to show how objects depict history and stimulate conversation.

A MEMORIAL: When CUNY alum and East Harlem activist Carmen Villegas died on Dec. 5, more than 100 friends, family and fans held a memorial outside the locked doors of Our Lady Queen of Angels, the Roman Catholic church she tried unsuccessfully to save from closing during a 37-hour protest in 2007. Villegas, an adjunct professor at Touro College, was a longtime member of Community Board 11.

BY THE BOOK: The CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, in partnership with independent publisher OR Books, has launched an academic press that will release three to five journalism-related books a year. Fighting for the Press: The Inside Story of the Pentagon Papers by former New York Times chief counsel James Goodale is one title slated for 2013.

CUNY MATTERS — Winter 2013
Day of the Deluge

Fine-tuned readiness and response plans prepare the University for virtually any emergency even an unprecedented superstorm and its aftermath.

T 3 A.M. ON OCT. 30, G. Scott Anderson looked out a window of Borough of Manhattan Community College and saw the Hudson River churning and swelling just 100 feet away. It was only minutes later, in the first dark hour of the assault of Superstorm Sandy, that the suddenly ferocious river came surging across the West Side Highway, heading straight for BMCC’s four-block-long building on West Street.

“We saw the water cross the highway and come at us in one motion,” recalls Anderson, BMCC’s vice president. “The first onslaught took out all our cars, and it just kept rising and getting closer until it was just us and the river.”

The building’s staff had worked round-the-clock for five days, girding for the floodwaters with sandbags, plastic sheeting and miles of duct tape — “as if we put the entire western face of the building in a giant fishbowl,” Anderson says. But it wasn’t enough — the water slamming the building, seeping through the seams of windows and doors until the college was three feet under water. Anderson used his cellphone to call CUNY Executive Vice Chancellor Allan Dobrin. “I just lost BMCC,” he told Dobrin. “We’re in the river.” And in the dark. As he recalls, “It was pitch-black, eerie, almost like a post-apocalyptic movie.”

Grim as it was in the moment, Anderson’s call marked the beginning of a remarkably agile response by the University and many of its campuses to a storm of unprecedented destruction and disaster. In BMCC’s case, painstaking preparation prior to the storm — destruction and disarray. In BMCC’s case, its campuses to a storm of unprecedented destruction and disarray. In BMCC’s case, its campuses to a storm of unprecedented destruction and disarray. Dobrin and Apsan preside over meetings each month where health, safety and operations managers from every campus gather to share information, experiences and lessons learned. One of the meetings is devoted to a post-mortem of a recent event — “the crisis of the month,” as Dobrin puts it. “If there was a fire or an explosion or someone with a gun, we bring in the key people and say, ‘Okay, tell us what happened, take us through it step-by-step from the moment you heard about it.’ No matter how well they handled it, there’s always something you can do better and lessons to be shared with the CUNY community.”

Sometimes experts from police agencies or counterparts from other universities are invited to discuss their own experiences and best practices. It’s part of an overall approach that preaches the importance of sharing information and experiences among campuses and people — from the local police precinct commander to contractors and suppliers — who can become instantly vital in an emergency.

Once or twice a year, CUNY brings people together for an exercise in What If: day-long “table-top exercises,” in which a specific crisis is simulated and managers practice their responses to layers of possible scenarios, with experts evaluating their actions. Most recently, the scenario was a complete and mysterious loss of Internet and phone connection at Lehman College that lasts three days, extends to York College and includes a scene of angry students at the registrar’s office.

Apsan’s job is as close to 24/7 as it gets. He is in the loop on every sort of incident or mishap on every campus, and spends much of his time on the go, visiting campuses and meeting with their safety and emergency managers. When something major happens — such as last year’s shooting outside the Empire State Building, across the street from the Graduate Center — Apsan is there.

Executive Vice Chancellor Allan Dobrin inspects damage from Hurricane Sandy at Kingsborough Community College. At right, Sandy uprooted dozens of trees on the campus.

INMEMORIAM

MOURNING OUR HURRICANE LOSSES

CUNY Matters, a recent graduate who died during the superstorm.

Lauren (Lola) Abraham, 23, who had transferred to LaGuardia Community College from Lehman College, was electrocuted by a snapped power line as she went out to take photographs. John Filipowicz Jr., 20, a baccalaureate candidate at College of Staten Island, died embracing his father as the tide surged into his time on the go, visiting campuses and meeting with their safety and emergency managers. When something major happens — such as last year’s shooting outside the Empire State Building, across the street from the Graduate Center — Apsan is there.

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MOURNING OUR HURRICANE LOSSES

CUNY Matters, a recent graduate who died during the superstorm.

Lauren (Lola) Abraham, 23, who had transferred to LaGuardia Community College from Lehman College, was electrocuted by a snapped power line as she went out to take photographs. John Filipowicz Jr., 20, a baccalaureate candidate at College of Staten Island, died embracing his father as the tide surged into his time on the go, visiting campuses and meeting with their safety and emergency managers. When something major happens — such as last year’s shooting outside the Empire State Building, across the street from the Graduate Center — Apsan is there.

Executive Vice Chancellor Allan Dobrin inspects damage from Hurricane Sandy at Kingsborough Community College. At right, Sandy uprooted dozens of trees on the campus.
"We have half a million people we have to be concerned about," he says, "and there’s no end to what can possibly happen on any campus on any given day. What’s the line from ‘The Hunger Games’? ‘May the odds be ever in your favor.’ We try to improve our odds by getting people to think about these hazards in an organized way to avoid them, and, if they do happen, to minimize the effects.’

“The breadth of issues is incredible,” says Robert Santos, City College’s vice president for campus planning and facilities management. “Whether it’s health, safety, environmental or business continuity, every challenge has a set of reactions that are distinct but overlapping. Howard is uncanny in the way he blends them and in the people he brings in. He always seems to be ahead of the curve.”

It plays out in many unseen ways. The safety and integrity of oil tanks, for instance, is a prime concern, especially on campuses with older buildings. Apsan’s office instituted a peer-review approach to ensure that every college is meeting government regulations. “We used to go through the checklist on our own and we were good,” says Peter Jayasekara, environmental, health and safety officer at LaGuardia Community College. “Now we do internal audits on a regular basis where a team from one campus will go with Howard’s office to another campus.”

Some might think the University’s size would make it unwieldy when it comes to emergency management, a challenge to the kind of "integrated university" that has become part of the fabric under Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. But Dobrin sees it differently. “Compare us to SUNY. All our campuses are close together so we have the opportunity to work together, moving assets and marshaling resources. We have a communications system that no other university system in the United States has: A number anyone can call from any campus in any situation and the right person will be alerted.”

The response to Superstorm Sandy in late October was considered by many a triumph of just that sort of unity and collaboration across the boroughs. “What we were facing the morning after the storm was three campuses underwater and 10 that were turned into city shelters,” said Dobrin, who is both executive vice chancellor and chief operating officer. “I told everyone, ‘This is going to be a marathon.’”

Indeed, dealing with the aftermath of a storm that canceled the actual marathon meant weeks of grinding 16- and 20-hour days for hundreds of administrators, facilities managers, electricians, plumbers and maintenance workers on the campuses hardest hit. Many put CUNY first, volunteering to stay as the storm approached the waterfront campuses — BMCC and Hunter College’s Brookdale campus in Lower Manhattan and Kingsborough Community College on Coney Island — and working in the dark when the floodwaters came.

Uptown and inland, meanwhile, staffs at 10 colleges quickly transformed gymnasiums and dining halls into emergency shelters, rolling hundreds of cots into place and setting up makeshift kitchens and infirmaries with supplies from the city’s Office of Emergency Management. The University provided refuge to nearly a third of the 9,000 people who used the city’s emergency shelters after the storm.

“What we learned from [2011 Tropical Storm] Irene was that we needed to be in charge of the shelters, instead of the city sending people in to run them as they did last time. We said, ‘These are our campuses, we know them, there has to be a CUNY person with ultimate authority.’ They agreed to that, and it worked very well for us. Everything at the shelters was pre-positioned—food, medical supplies, all the cots were waiting when people came in,” Dobrin said.

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constantly nagged them to go to the non-denominational Christian church for sermons that resounded with gospel songs and poetry readings by her friends and relatives.

John Filipowicz Jr.

ON STATEN ISLAND, John Filipowicz Jr., a junior at the College of Staten Island, died in the arms of his father, a retired corrections officer as water reached 10 feet high in the basement of their home.

“When I found them they were in an embrace,” John Sr.’s brother, Neil Filipowicz, said in a narrative here compiled from DNAinfo.com and dailymail.co.uk. “I crawled through a hole in the wall that the water had made. I shone my flashlight from right to left and then I saw a hand, to my left. I was praying it was a doll’s hand ... My nephew was holding my brother and my brother was clutching him into his chest as if they knew they were dying.”

The elder Filipowicz had stayed in the evacuation zone to watch over his house, as he had done after weathering Hurricane Irene last year and previous storms, the Daily Mail reported.

Neil Filipowicz related that John Sr.’s twin brother, Joseph, had spoken with his twin that day and “told he get to him to leave. He told him, ‘I’m not leaving Daddy.’”

“It was a bond how it’s supposed to be with your kids, between a son and a father,” Neil Filipowicz said. “They loved each other so much.”

Filipowicz, whom DNAinfo called a star athlete, and his father were big sports fans. They were buried wearing their Jets jerseys. John Sr. wore Joe Kock’s #73, John Jr. Dustin Keller’s #81.

Jacob Vogelman

Jessie Streich-Kest

JACOB Vogelman and a friend from middle school, Jessie Streich-Kest, both 24, tragically were in the wrong place at the wrong time with her 7-year-old mutt, Max, which she had rescued from a shelter. As they walked through the Ditmas Park section of Brooklyn, hurricane-force winds toppled a tree, crushing them and sending the dog to a veterinary hospital with minor injuries.

The friends, not romantically involved, were buried in separate ceremonies.

Just five weeks later, her grieving family suffered the death from cancer of her father, Jon Kest, executive director of New York Committee for Change, which advocates on behalf of poor and low-wage workers.

Continued on page 8 ➤
In the coming decades, our coastal city will most likely face more rapidly rising sea levels and warmer temperatures, as well as potentially more droughts and floods, which will all have impacts on New York City's critical infrastructure.

So said Hunter College’s William Solecki — four years ago. Solecki, director of the CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities, was commenting after the release of a seminal report by the prestigious advisory group that he cochaired. The New York City Panel on Climate Change, convened by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, warned that the consequences of rising temperatures would be dire and costly without strong action to adapt. Bloomberg described the report as the most detailed climate-risk assessment for any major city in the world and said it would be the basis for the city’s plans to protect itself. But the response to the report was something less than urgent, perhaps because its most ominous projections — rising sea levels of up to five feet — were nearly a century away. Now the question is whether Solecki and others will convince policy makers and the public that catastrophic events are closer at hand — the wakeup call that Bloomberg and others say the city and region need.

In the months since the storm, Solecki and other CUNY climate experts have been among the most prominent voices in what Nicholas Coen, a coastal geologist at Queens College’s School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, is another prominent expert who has been studying and talking about the city’s vulnerability for years. He spent the weeks after the storm in full-alarm mode. The government, he says, needs to take “remedial action now to flood-proof ourselves and retreat from the shoreline.”

Solecki

IN MEMORIAM

Jessie Streich-Kest, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, had earned an M.A. in special education last summer with a 3.9 GPA at Hunter College’s Urban Teacher Residency Program, a partnership with New Visions for Public Schools. She was in her first year of teaching at Bushwick High School for Social Justice.

Previously, The New York Times reported, she had done activist work with New Yorkers for Clean, Livable & Safe Streets and had protested the city’s horse-drawn carriages.

“Jesse was very friendly and laid back, but she was also driven,” Tom Salgo, who was Max’s usual dog-walker and had gone to high school with her, told the Times. “She went to school in Bushwick every day with students who were difficult. She had some sort of drive to help them, despite the obstacles in the way. She got along with anybody.”

In a blog post at my.hsj.org, John Faciano, her communication arts teacher at Murrow High School, from which she graduated in 2006, recalled her working on the yearbook and participating in the Senior Advanced Placement Seminar he ran. “Jesse spoke freely, argued logically, had strength and conviction in her opinions, yet never dominated a discussion. She viewed the class as a team working together towards a goal of understanding.”

Jacob Vogelman, known to friends and family as Jake, had earned a bachelor’s degree in theater design at SUNY/Buffalo in 2010. He had not let dyslexia stop him from graduating cum laude and was studying lighting design in Brooklyn College’s MFA program.

“Jake was a positive and upbeat student,” said Theater Department chair Kip Marsh. “He always had a smile on his face and enjoyed his studies and Brooklyn College.”

“He brought people together,” said Mary Beth Easley, one of Vogelman’s professors. “He was willing to show and teach others. He reached out. Everybody knew him.”

Vogelman was lighting designer for the play “The Altruists,” by Nicky Silver, and was scheduled to fill the same role for Rajiv Joseph’s “Guscombe Playground Injuries.”

“He was an amazing individual,” recalled fellow MFA student Brian Kofel. “He was very talented and had big dreams.” In an article about his death on the University at Buffalo’s website, a college friend, Erin Kafel, said, “He was very talented and had big dreams.” In an article about his death on the University at Buffalo’s website, a college friend, Erin Kafel, recalled how he continued working on shows even when an injury temporarily caused him to walk with a cane. The injury “never impeded his agility or spirit — you would still find him in the depths of the jungle of a backstage props/scene closet or working on the grids high above the stages, puffy as always,” Benoit said.
PRESIDENTS AT WAR: Hands On Vs. Hands Off

By Gary Schmidgall

NDREW J. POLSKY says in the Afterword for Elusive Victories: The American Presidency at War that his study was born just after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. But it took “a very different turn” as he wrote it. Instead of being just another liberal lament “about excesses of executive power,” it came to express a view more conservative than he had intended: “a profound sense of the limits of power.”

The George Bush-Dick Cheney debacle in Iraq spurred Polsky, a professor of political science at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, to broaden his historical horizon, and he has chosen seven wartime presidencies from Abraham Lincoln’s to Barack Obama’s for his analysis. The trend he reveals is discouraging: Presidential management of “wartime leadership” — and the chief of the belligerent command-in-chief, and even the two he admires most — Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt — “made their fair share of miscalculations and missteps.”

Elusive Victories offers a rubric of six “challenges” facing presidents who make war: deciding whether and when to do so; planning militarily, diplomatically and politically for and fighting the war’s ultimate objectives; assuring that the generals and their strategy serve these objectives; nurturing support for the war diplomatically abroad; and finally, sustaining homeland support through the duration of the conflict. Polsky adds a new final non-military responsibility that is seldom addressed: “presidents have done worst in preparing for peace, the most vexing of all wartime tasks,” he says in his final pages.

Polsky is obliged to set his analysis of war making in the context of some huge conflicts (the Civil War, World Wars I and II) and two local but protracted wars (Vietnam and Iraq/Afghanistan). He has produced remarkably succinct summaries.

The opening chapter about Lincoln behind the military scene will nicely complement the Steven Spielberg-Tony Kushner “Lincoln” film. Polsky finds the same rhetorical and political skills that saved the Emancipation Proclamation made him an effective salesman for the war. His “unparalleled rhetorical talents” were displayed in his public letters (he made few speeches during the war and never addressed Congress). In his first chapter Polsky sets up the binary of “active direction” versus “objective control” (Oval Officers — “hands-on” and “hands-off” in layman’s terms). He concludes that Lincoln began as the former but became the latter when he settled in with Ulysses S. Grant. His challenge began at the start of the war: the Union had no “professional military organization” (16,000 in uniform grew to 647,000 in a year). Polsky says it took Lincoln just a year to become “an insightful military planner,” though he faults him for “doing too little and waiting too long to lay the foundations for Reconstruction.” Luckily, his errors as a military leader “pale in comparison to those of Jefferson Davis,” his rival president. Woodrow Wilson is cast as “the anti-Lincoln,” differing for three years before deciding on Germany in April 1917, then happy to leave military leadership to Gen. John Pershing. In his speech to Congress he also sprang on the world a new rationale for war — “the absolute peace of the world.”

With this promise, Polsky says, Wilson “vastly over-reached,” almost ensuring an isolationist presidency. The promise also put him at odds with his allies in Britain and France, who were fighting to preserve their war-fung empires.

Polsky believes the war had a disastrous effect at home, thanks to Wilson, who supported the prosecution of those who opposed it. The erosion of his political capital after peace led to the congressional torpor of the League of Nations. This emphasizes, for Polsky, “how problematic presidents find peace-building.”

After equivocating for a few years, Roosevelt RSVP’d to the invitation of Pearl Harbor, and entered WW II. He became a highly effective wartime chief executive. Like Lincoln, FDR was a hands-on leader in the early stages and later became more laissez-faire. He too was vastly out-manned at first, with 15,000 troops to 2 million Germans. And as with Wilson, his domestic programs suffered in war. Also like Lincoln and Wilson, FDR lacked into the choice of a very able general staff, most notably George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower.

Polsky also praises how Roosevelt learned from the League of Nations demise and shrewdly encouraged bipartisanship for the United Nations, and he admires Roosevelt’s foresight in beginning to plan for peace as soon as he declared war. He also surpassed Winston Churchill because he was “the kind of hands-on leader who often preferred not to leave his fingerprints on a decision” (he insisted on no minutes at top-level deliberations to allow “leeway for later mind-changes”).

The chapter on Vietnam begins on two grim notes: It is the only war Polsky covers that was lost, and it brought down two presidents: Lyndon Baines Johnson and Richard Nixon. It did not help that LBJ refused to explain his decision to escalate, or that he placed so much faith in an old-school general (William Westmoreland) unsuited for a guerrilla war. Polsky accounts his leadership as erratically changing from hands-on to hands-off, and — this is a main theme of Elusive Victories — his decisions often constraining his future freedom of action. From 1965 to 1968 Johnson “was a commander-in-chief in name only.”

Nixon remained some breathing space with his “Peace with Honor” mantra, but he was finally done in by underestimating (like Johnson) “the enemy’s determination.” And his peace-building efforts were “a mixture of secrecy... and cynicism.” Vietnam proved a “disastrous chapter in wartime presidential leadership.”

The Iraq War, Polsky notes, is his book’s only war of choice. His “final reckoning”: “The outcome in Iraq is qualitatively and quantitatively so different that it demands a separate book.”

Polsky’s conclusion offers four final kernels of wisdom drawn from his research: “exhaust every alternative to military intervention,” “aim low,” “be patient,” and “do not lead from behind.”

Oh, and one other scary thing. At the end Polsky, who thinks the War Powers Resolution of 1973 has proved a failure, reminds us: “No effective check on presidential power to engage the nation in military conflict seems in the offing.”

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NEW TITLES / CUNY AUTHORS

Anarchists’ Odyssey: Longtime Queens College professor of Russian History and Anarchism Paul Avrich, known as a preeminent historian of American anarchism, was working at the time of his death in 2006 on a biography of Alexander “Sasha” Berkman. Avrich’s daughter Karen completed this book. The Anarchist Odyssey of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, which carries a co-byline with her father, is the third book on a critically acclaimed series by Michael Harriett Hyman Alonso, includes his lyrics for becoming “Over the Rainbow” from “The Wizard of Oz,” one of more than 600 songs for which Harburg provided lyrics over a half century. Alonso relates Andrews’ struggles with inner demons while enjoying accolades of contemporaries, a tenure as president of the Screen Actors Guild, and the love of family and friends who never deserted this poor boy from Texas who made his Hollywood dream come true. University of Minnesota Press.

Lyricist With A Conscience: Legendary Lyricist and Human Rights Activist, by CCNY history professor Yip Harburg, includes his lyrics for becoming “Over the Rainbow” from “The Wizard of Oz,” one of more than 600 songs for which Harburg provided lyrics. University of Minnesota Press.

The Saints Among Us: Saints as They Really Are: Voices of Holiness in Our Time is the third book in a critically acclaimed series by Michael Harriett Hyman Alonso, an ordained priest in the Orthodox Church in America, traces spiritual journeys of several Saints as They Really Are: Voices of Holiness in Our Time. Oxford University Press.

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A RECENT Monday morning at York College, inside the Academic Core Building, Human Resources Executive Director Barbara Manuel reviewed her day’s schedule.

11 a.m. - Meet with a human resources staff member and a budget officer to plan a review of nearly 1,200 employee records.

2 p.m. - Meet with one of the York College deans to discuss revising job descriptions for employees in her school.

3 p.m. - Meet with the provost and another dean to discuss the evaluation process for tenured faculty.

4 p.m. - Meet with IT staff member on improving the College’s ePAP (electronic Personnel Action Form) system.

It was a light day, Manuel said with a deadpan look. While Manuel focused on big-picture meetings, York’s human resources managers – like their counterparts on every CUNY campus – handled the recruitment and intake of new employees and tended to the essential details of benefits, compensation, training, faculty appointments and adjunct contracts that are essential to those already on the payroll.

Need information on your medical and other benefits? See HR. Want to add a health care or dependent care flexible spending account? See HR. Curious about a tax-deferred annuity? See HR. Want to cut the cost or commuting? See HR. Need a tuition waiver to further your education? See HR. Want to expand your professional training? See HR. Have questions about your time and leave? See HR.

On hectic days at York College, HR often serves 30-plus walk-in appointments that include York College employees and also local Queens residents seeking jobs. Inside the cramped but sunny HR office, Manuel and her 16-member staff oversee employment matters for the college’s diverse 1,200-member workforce — handling issues ranging from recruitment and hiring; benefits and professional training; processing faculty appointments and adjunct contracts; and more recently helping employees who needed counseling after Hurricane Sandy.

A day with Manuel and her dedicated staff provided a glimpse of the recent transformation of the York College human resources office. Under Manuel’s leadership, in a few years it has doubled its staff, reorganized office responsibilities, launched a website and expanded its mission from processing paperwork to putting more priority on employee satisfaction.

“Our staff is one of our most important assets,” Manuel said. “That includes the faculty and staff, the people who support the college’s mission — which is to educate students. If their needs are not being met as employees, and if we’re not doing everything that we can do to make their work experience one of the best, then we’re not doing what we need to do.”

The human resources office at York College is one of 21 satellite offices serving the faculty and staff of CUNY. Across the city’s five boroughs, each campus community has its own human resources office to better serve the specific needs of each school.

The Graduate Center office, located in midtown Manhattan, handles human resources for all CUNY’s professional schools.

In 2009, York College President Marcia V. Keizs conducted a search for an executive director of human resources and Manuel was the successful candidate. Keizs had already made dramatic changes by strengthening academic programs and increasing full-time faculty. With human resources, the president signaled a move to enhance the college’s administrative side.

Manuel, a graduate of Baruch College, had been working at CUNY’s central office for the Human Capital Management team. She was intrigued by the possibility of working at York, which sits in Jamaica, close to Hollis, where she grew up.

They met at a coffee shop in midtown Manhattan, where Keizs gave Manuel her charge: turn that office around.

When Manuel first arrived at York’s human resources office, she was surprised to find a staff of six: two supervisors and four office assistants. “There was an HR director — and an assistant director who basically functioned as the assistant director, the benefits officer, the payroll officer and the disciplinary officer,” Manuel said.

Manuel immediately hired more staff, including an experienced benefits specialist and a labor relations manager. Eventually, the staff almost tripled from six people to 17.

“The office has changed drastically,” said Jeannie Simmons, York’s Human Resource Information Systems Unit Specialist. “And I think it’s changed for the better.”

In speaking with human resources staff, Manuel also learned that most managers and assistants were unaware of basic employee policies like limitations on hours.
Improved information.

assigned as liaisons to specific academic managers on the policies, not only at York, but at CUNY. Manuel developed a new system about the various rules and regulations and guidelines and contracts to some of the managers, they would say, ‘Oh we never knew that.’ So, it was a change in direction.

It was about training. We had to train managers, they would say, ‘Oh we never knew that.’” So, it was a change in direction.

Professor Linda M. Grasso, chair of the English Department, praised Manuel’s efforts. “As a department chair, I appreciate Barbara’s attempt to standardize procedures, convey information … and most especially, to solve difficult problems,” Grasso said. “She has been very helpful in conflict situations, explaining to all parties involved, contractual, university, and college policies and mandates.”

Once the human resources staff had become more knowledgeable on policies, Manuel asked the manager of recruitment and employee development, Stephanie Cooper, to start organizing more training workshops and professional development for all York College employees.

In researching the needs of York support staff, Cooper found many employees lacked skills in widely used programs such as Microsoft Word and Excel. In response, she held several workshops in computer training. “We found that there were a lot of longstanding employees who said they took computer training more than 25 years ago,” Cooper said. “Seriously.”

Last fall, Cooper worked with benefits specialist Janelle Mille-Lawrence to launch the York College human resources website — where employees now can find information on benefits, professional development and training, job postings and the human resources staff directory.

More recently, the human resources staff played a significant role in communicating with other York College employees during Hurricane Sandy. In the storm’s aftermath, York College took in nearly 1,000 evacuees, including 250 with medical or mental health needs. Cots were placed throughout the Academic Core Building and in the gymnasium.

But for many York employees, the sight of evacuees living in their workplace was traumatic. As employees walked by the evacuees to get to their offices, some staff members got to their desks and simply burst into tears. In response, employees were referred to CUNY’s Work-Life Program, administered by Corporate Counseling Associates. Others asked if they could stay home until the evacuees had left the campus. Manuel said, “So we advised them that they could take a couple of days off, if that’s what they needed.”

As the new year approached, Manuel contemplated the next phase of the transformation, an ambitious plan to re-design the physical layout of the snug office so that it is more open and welcoming.

“Tinkering was moving in the right direction,” she said. “What makes you happy as an employee keeps you here… We want employees to want to work here.”

EINSTEIN’S THEORY — NO, NOT THAT ONE

Alex Harvey recently found that the two famous physicists had an inkling of dark energy before its discovery. The letters, written between 1938 and 1931, focused on Einstein’s “cosmological constant.” The mathematical factor that counteracts gravity to restore equilibrium to the universe. Their discussion, Harvey concluded, hinted at the force known as dark energy, which is now known to make the universe expand at an accelerated rate.

2 BRIDGES REVIEW — LITERARY JOURNAL DEBUTS AT CITY TECH

WHO KNEW WHAT WHEN While studying correspondence between Albert Einstein and Erwin Schrödinger, Queens College physics professor emeritus Alex Harvey recently found that the two famous physicists had an inkling of dark energy before its discovery. The letters, written between 1938 and 1931, focused on Einstein’s “cosmological constant.” The mathematical factor that counteracts gravity to restore equilibrium to the universe. Their discussion, Harvey concluded, hinted at the force known as dark energy, which is now known to make the universe expand at an accelerated rate.

THE HEFTY NEW “2 Bridges Review” (191 pages in print, 98 online) distinguishes itself by its high-profile contributors, including former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins and poets Lorna Goodison, Collete Iree, Sandra M. Gilbert, Awna Dawes, Mervyn Taylor and Willie Perdomo. “Our journal aims to be international in scope,” explains editor-in-chief Kate Fahey, assistant professor of English, who co-founded the journal with colleague Marique Ferrell, an associate professor and poet.

CUNY MATTERS — Winter 2013
Feb. 8

Of Ebony Embers
York College
8 p.m. Free

Feb. 9

NY Piano Society
Baruch College
7:30-9 p.m. Free
(suggested donation $15)

Feb. 16

Alex Blake
York College
7 p.m. Free

Feb. 16

China National Symphony Orchestra
Lehman College
8-10:30 p.m. $25-$45; 12 and under, $10

March 2

Forever Freestyle 7
Lehman College
8-10:30 p.m. $45-$60

March 8

Step Afrika!
College of Staten Island
8-8:15 p.m. $10

March 10

Russian National Ballet’s “Giselle”
Lehman College
4-6 p.m. $25-$40; 12 and under, $10

March 12

Live@365 — Ancient Persia: Songs & Stories
Graduate Center
7-8:30 p.m. $25; $20 members

March 16

CFA’s Boogie Fever
College of Staten Island
8-10 p.m. $25-$35

Through April 5

“A Line Around an Area”
City College
9 a.m.-5 p.m. Free

Through Jan. 25

“The End of Poverty”
John Jay College
9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free

Through June 27

Year of India Exhibit
Queens College
9 a.m.-8 p.m. Free

Jan. 27

Afternoon of Staten Island Artists
College of Staten Island
3-5 p.m. $15

Feb. 13

South Asia on Film, Part II
Queens College
4:30-6:30 p.m. Free

Feb. 14

Feminism, Science, Materialism
Graduate Center
Noon Free

Feb. 14

Religions of India
Queens College
12:15-1:30 p.m. Free

Feb. 10

Junior Science, Humanities Symposium
York College
Time Varies Free

Feb. 14

“Alberta Hunter”
Musical based on the life of iconic 20th century American jazz/blues singer and songwriter.
York College
3 and 7 p.m. Free

Feb. 23

The Peking Acrobats
College of Staten Island
3-4 p.m. $18

Feb. 6

Religions of India
Queens College
12:15-1:30 p.m. Free

Feb. 10

Junior Science, Humanities Symposium
York College
Time Varies Free

Feb. 14

Feminism, Science, Materialism
Graduate Center
Noon Free