

## Barnard STEM majors start career group

BY ABIGAIL GOLDEN  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

The Scientista Foundation, a national organization designed to provide career support for women planning to go into science, technology, engineering, or mathematics, is coming to Barnard.

Amanda Brodsky, BC '15 and a psychology major, decided to start the Barnard chapter to help women who are STEM majors meet one another and get career advice. Though the group already has a board of eight students, it is still in the process of adding members and gaining recognition from the Barnard Student Government Association.

"Having a group to support women in science is really important, especially at Barnard," Brodsky said. "In past years and past decades women did not get enough support, and still today men outnumber women in science, even with the progress we've made."

The group was founded in 2009 by sisters Julia and Christina Tartaglia, Harvard biology students, and has since spread to 12 campuses across the country. Its mission is to support women studying in STEM fields by providing networking, role models, and other resources.

At Barnard, board members plan to have résumé-writing workshops as well as events where students can meet one another and network.

There is already a Columbia chapter of Scientista, but it has been mostly inactive this past year,

SEE STEM, page 7



DOUGLAS KESSEL / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

HERITAGE | Kambi Gathesha, GS and co-chair of Black Heritage Month Committee, addresses the crowd at the opening ceremony.

## CU kicks off Black Heritage Month

### Opening event reflects on inequality

BY TRACEY WANG  
*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

Even though America elected its first black president four years ago, speakers at this year's Black Heritage Month opening ceremony stressed the importance of how far the country still needs to go in eliminating racial inequality.

On Tuesday night, about 130 students and faculty ushered in the launch of the month-long celebration of Black Heritage Month. The event featured a poetry reading, a performance by the dance group Venom Step Team, and speeches from Columbia students, professors, and administrators.

The theme for this year's Black Heritage Month is "A Dream Deferred Yet Still We Rise," with the first part of the slogan referring to the poem "A Dream Deferred" by Langston Hughes and the latter part to the poem "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou, as decided by the Black Heritage Month Committee.

Shamika October, BC '14 and co-chair of the BHMC, said that while there has been progress in eliminating racial

SEE HERITAGE, page 2

## First-years bond over meals at John Jay

BY RAKHI AGRAWAL  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

When Shaine Leibowitz, SEAS '16, and Jason Williams, SEAS '16, sat down for dinner at John Jay Wednesday night, they didn't know that they would walk away from their meal as newly added Facebook friends.

The two first-years got to know each other at the John Jay Community Table, a new initiative designed to encourage students to make new friends at dinner.

The table is run by Columbia Dining and first-year representatives from the Columbia College Student Council and the Engineering Student Council.

The idea was proposed by Jonah Belser, CC '16 and a member of the class council's policy committee.

"I noticed that during

NSOP, everybody got together and ate together, but a lot of times after that, people tend to eat with their close friends, and, in my opinion, limit their social experiences," Belser said. "The community table is intended to remedy that situation and encourage people to meet others who they otherwise may not get to interact with."

Belser and class representative Peter Bailinson, CC '16, approached Dining with the idea to reserve a round table in John Jay during evening meals Sunday through Thursday. The initiative started on the first day of classes.

Although the table is meant for students of all years and schools, Bailinson, who is also a Spectator development associate, acknowledged that "people eating in the dining hall are

SEE TABLE, page 2

## Student bands compete to play at Bacchanal

BY JENNY PAYNE  
*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

As most students proceed with start-of-the-semester business as usual, eight student bands are preparing for what may be their biggest musical opportunity at Columbia—the chance to open at Bacchanal. The bands will take the stage at Lerner Party Space this Saturday night to play for students and a panel of judges in the annual Battle of the Bands competition to determine who gets to open at Bacchanal. With a 50/50 vote between students and panelists, it's up to the bands to appeal to a wide variety of tastes and display their talent during the 20-minute performances.

After a demo submission and selection at the end of

last semester, Battle of the Bands serves as the final hurdle for hopeful student performers.

"We tried to choose a broad spectrum of talented artists," said Anais Ross, CC '15 and Bacchanal publicity chair.

Bacchanal chose a panel of judges that represents a variety of student organizations with representatives from groups such as CU Records and WKCR evaluating the performers. The votes from both the panel and the students will be tallied and released soon after the event Saturday night, satisfying both students and performers' anxiety.

Doors open at 8:30 p.m. at the Lerner Party Space on Saturday and music begins at 9 p.m.

SEE BATTLE, page 6

### NEWS BRIEF

#### USenate task force to propose designated smoking areas Friday

The University Senate's task force on smoking policy will put forth a proposal at Friday's plenary meeting to create designated smoking areas around campus, an idea pitched by some attendees at last week's smoking town hall.

In its preliminary proposal, the task force acknowledges the lengthy debate over the current smoking policy, stressing that the members wish to come to a consensus about specific matters. While some senators have tried to increase regulations since the 20-foot ban was passed in December 2010, no proposals have passed.

The proposal asks that "smoking be permitted only in carefully selected areas," citing the health of nonsmokers as the top priority. "We do not rule out charging for the use of these areas," it states.

At the town hall last week,

some students expressed their opposition to smoking fees. Some also commented that designated smoking areas, which would exist in both the Morningside campus and the Lamont-Doherty Earth Institute, could marginalize certain members of Columbia's community.

Still others believe that the appropriate way to address health concerns more thoroughly is to strengthen existing cessation programs in Health Services, which are not available to employees free of charge as they are to students. The task force's proposal takes this into account, arguing that these programs should be "available to all and easy to access."

A vote on smoking policy is not likely until later this semester.

—Cecilia Reyes



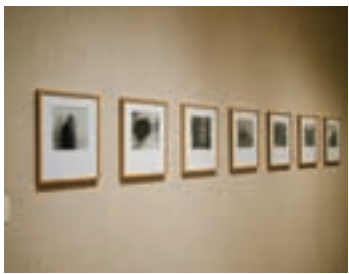
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MAKIN' FRIENDS | (l. to r.) Jasmine Santiago, SEAS '16, Jinyuan Liu, CC '16, Steven Castellano, CC '13, and Stephan Adamów, CC '15.

### A&E, PAGE 6

#### Abstract geography on display at Wallach

"Conceptual Geographies: Frames and Documents: Selections from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection," opened Jan. 23.



### OPINION, PAGE 4

#### Useless conversation

Sydney Small on the college interview process.

#### One last time

Rega Jha on nostalgia and figuring out a senior's place on campus.

### SPORTS, PAGE 3

#### CU cheerleading leads school spirit

The Light Blue cheerleading squad remains largely unheard despite its recent success in national competitions.

### EVENTS

#### South Korea's New President

A scholarly discussion on the recent election of South Korea's first female president, moderated by professor Charles Armstrong. 914 International Affairs Building, 4 p.m.

### WEATHER

#### Today



59°/48°

#### Tomorrow



50°/28°



# At Barnard panel, young activists discuss feminism, challenges to the movement

BY SAMANTHA COONEY  
*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

“I’m not sure I identify as a feminist,” Jessica Danforth told a crowd at Barnard’s Event Oval Wednesday night. “I’m not even sure if I know what that word means.”

Nevertheless, Danforth, who founded an organization that promotes sexual health for Native-American youth, discussed feminist activism with other “20-something” feminist activists at a panel sponsored by the Barnard Center for Research on Women.

“Our generation does grapple with feminism as a whole.”

—Julie Zeilinger, BC ’15  
*Feminist blogger*

The women in the panel, which also featured Julie Zeilinger, BC ’15, and Sydnie Mosley, BC ’07, among others, spoke about their own experiences with activism in reference to the challenges facing the current feminist movement.

Danforth, a self-proclaimed “multiracial indigenous hip-hop feminist reproductive justice freedom fighter,” spoke about how the feminist movement seemed to exclude people of different gender identities, educational backgrounds, and races. She suggested that a movement divided into factions could be just as effective as a united movement.

“I’m interested in hearing about different kinds of feminisms,” Danforth said. “I don’t understand why there just has to be one.”

“We’re singing different songs, but we’re singing them

in unison,” she added.

Zeilinger, the author of “A Little F’d Up: Why Feminism Is Not a Dirty Word,” and the feminist blog FBomb, agreed that some variations of feminism could be limiting, citing the academic jargon that often dominates activism.

“I really am a big believer of taking a feminist lens to our daily lives,” Zeilinger said, adding that she started her blog to reach out to high school students who felt isolated by a movement dominated by the academic elite.

Zeilinger also discussed how some young people are reluctant to call themselves feminists, citing a stigma about the word.

“Our generation does grapple with feminism as a whole,” she said. “It’s really about considering what feminism means to us.”

Mosley, a dancer and choreographer, admitted that her path to feminist activism was an unexpected one.

“I have to be honest. Up until two years ago, I wouldn’t have identified myself as a feminist,” Mosley said.

But after growing tired of being harassed for her looks on the streets, she established The Window Sex Project, a series of dance performances.

“Suddenly, I was doing activist work,” she said.

Mosley also acknowledged the difficulties of including a diversity of voices when discussing the challenges of the movement. She said that this could be resolved by having more conversations with a multitude of people—something she did after a production of her show.

“We had the best conversation—it was heated and productive,” she said.

The panel also touched on the use of social media in the feminist movement and the role of the family in promoting positive values—messages that resonated with some members of the audience.



WHO RUN THE WORLD | Top: Jessica Danforth, Julie Zeilinger, BC ’15. Bottom: Julie Zeilinger, BC ’15, Sydnie Mosley, BC ’07, Dior Vargas.

“I think they said a lot of powerful stuff,” Michelle Chan, BC ’15, said. “I liked how specific everyone was with their own experience in activism.”

Nicci Yin, BC ’14, said she found Mosley’s message particularly inspiring.

“As an art and gender studies student, I thought it was really pertinent how they

talked about using art as activism,” she said.

Danforth acknowledged that it was great to have the panel to communicate with like-minded individuals, but

that it may not be the best way to expand the movement.

“We’re preaching to the converted,” she said.

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# Community table not well-attended during first week

**TABLE from front page**

more likely to be first-years. The only rule regarding the table is that a student may not sit at the table with any more than two existing friends, in part to encourage students to branch out and dine with students who they may not already know.”

Belser said that “the round-table experience” encourages new interactions between students, although Bailinson said

they might experiment with different placements of the table and a variety of shapes and sizes.

In its first week, the table has not been very well-attended, students said. In three visits to the table this week during meal times, it was usually empty.

“It’s hard to get those first two people to come and sit down by themselves,” Bailinson said. “We’re trying to get our councils to really sit

at the table and bring one or two of their friends.”

The councils “have not really launched an advertising campaign,” Belser said. “Only CCSC friends are really aware of it right now.”

Leibowitz, who came to the table by herself, said “It just seemed interesting and I wanted to try it.” Williams, on the other hand, sat down because he noticed a few of his friends were sitting there.

Aaron Johnson, CC ’14,

recommended a few changes while he sat at the table.

“It’s too close to the cash register, so it makes you feel like you’re on the spot,” he said. “They should use a bigger table so it feels all communal and stuff.”

However, Johnson said he appreciated the initiative. “There need to be more things on campus where you don’t need to be a part of this club or this scene or that thing,” he said. “I really expect to leave this table with all sorts of new friends.”

Chiara Gilbert, CC ’16, who decided not to sit at the table, said that the initiative could benefit from advertising and “maybe a game to help break the ice.”

Matt Sheridan, SEAS ’16, said he noticed the promotional effort from the council representatives. “Both two times I sat at the table, there was a CCSC person sitting here just to promote it,” Sheridan said. He added that he likes the current location of the table, immediately next to the cashier. “If I have a friend sitting there, I can’t not see them, so it attracts spontaneous interaction,” he said.

But he noted that one of his friends got up and dashed away when Spectator photographers approached the group, in an attempt to not be associated with the table.

Dining, CCSC, and ESC plan to evaluate the initiative after four weeks, but will continue it for the semester should it prove successful.

“We’ll look to the first-year councils to evaluate and determine the course of the initiative, and we’ll continue to support their initiatives as best we can,” Victoria Dunn, director of Dining Services, said in an email. “If expanding the table to another location makes sense, we would recommend JJ’s Place, which offers more seating options over Ferris Booth Commons.”

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# Students, professors talk black identity, community

**HERITAGE from front page**

inequality in the country, there are still many hurdles to overcome.

“Even in the modern age where we’ve just re-elected a black president, there are still obstacles and people who oppress us,” she said. “But these struggles make us strong.”

“We shouldn’t be fooled into thinking that just because the president of the United States is named Barack Obama ... we now live in some post-racial society.”

—Terry Martinez,  
Dean of Community Development

Michell Tollinchi-Michel, dean for academic success and enrichment programs at Barnard, echoed many of October’s sentiments in her speech.

“We shouldn’t be fooled into thinking that just because the president of the United States is named Barack Obama, and yes we’ve discussed that he is black,” she said, “that we now live in some post-racial society where one’s heritage does not have impact on your lives.”

Terry Martinez, dean of community development and multicultural affairs, also talked about the president and invoked language from his inaugural speech.

“I hope that, in this month, we can examine the

work of those who were at Seneca Falls, and Selma, and Stonewall, and to understand we can no longer afford to ignore those commonalities within so many different communities,” Martinez said.

“We draw strength from the uniqueness of each of those communities and come together to learn and embrace and build a common experience here at Columbia.”

Theodore Shaw, a Columbia law professor and the keynote speaker for the event, said in his speech that “the status, the condition of people of African descent have been defined and regulated by law,” a point that he said is often overlooked.

“Most of the discourse or understanding in this country says that all of the inequality that we still see—measured by educational disparities, measured by segregation in housing, measured by the remaining gap in terms of wealth, employment—the discourse tells us that the that disparity is either accidental or serendipitous, that it is unrelated to that long history,” he said.

Kambi Gathesha, GS and co-chair of the BHMC, said that it is important for everyone to recognize that there is no universal black heritage, noting that he is a black international student with his own heritage.

Gathesha added that it is still crucial to consider the question. “What are the tensions, gaps that arise out of this difference?”

Deborah Owolabi, SEAS ’16 and a member of the Venom Step Team, said that she was happy to be a part of the event that launched the celebrations for the month.

“It means a lot to me, especially since a majority of us do come from the black community,” she said. “We just wanted to show our support.”

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LILY LIU-KRASON / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SOCIAL DINNER | The new Community Table is sponsored by first-year council representatives.



Searching for  
Light Blue  
success in lesser  
known sports

Last winter, as I braved the wind, snow, rain, and overall gloomy muck that the morning’s wide-grinning weather fore-caster labeled as “wintry mix,” I began to smile as only an early-decision admit can, coming to Columbia for the first time as an accepted student.



ALEX  
BERNSTEIN  
**Contrarian  
Review**

That day I came to watch the Lions, who for the first time were no longer just “the Lions,” but rather, “my Lions.” I was ready to cheer on what would be my team for the next four years.

However, as I entered Dodge and located Levien Gym, I quickly found that the surprisingly full arena was only at capacity because of the red- and blue-clad students and alumni from Penn, who had made the trip and come full force to cheer on their Quakers.

The reason Penn is able to fill the stands at away basketball games is the same reason Harvard fans show up to football games—their teams are good.

It doesn’t take an economics major (although I happen to be one) to realize that there is a limit to how effectively you can market an underperforming product to students. Why then does Columbia continue to place its attention on such sports that have been consistently subpar? (At best, by Ivy League standards.)

In recent years, the most-watched winter Olympic sport has not been hockey or skiing. It has been curling. Likewise, while the summer games cut out such a blockbuster sport as baseball from its repertoire, lesser-known sports such as fencing and crew seem to be augmenting their viewership each year.

As a school that prides itself on being different, it is thus only logical that Columbia embraces a new athletic identity.

The key difference between the International Olympic Committee and Columbia University is that while the former is willing to embrace less traditional programs in order to concentrate on its strengths, the latter seems to be preoccupied with a fervent devotion to the customary collegiate athletics.

The University’s athletic ambitions must adapt. We too must cater to our strengths.

Fortunately, there are good products to be sold. Contrary to popular belief, Columbia does have successful sports teams. One needs to look no further than a fencing team that features a back-to-back junior women’s foil champion, or perhaps a swimming team that saw its women go 6-1 last year in the Ivies.

If millions across the globe can be so thoroughly captivated by curling—a sport that consists of the extreme athletic exertion of sliding large granite stones (known as rocks) across a sheet of ice—then so too can Columbia find athletic glory in less typical spectator sports.

As a school that prides itself on being different, it is thus only logical that Columbia embraces a new athletic identity. The athletic department administrators would be wise to take a page from the book of the Olympic Committee and invest in the sports our teams are actually good at. Who says that a swim meet can’t be as fun as a basketball game? Swimming did, in fact, attract many more viewers than basketball in the 2012 London games.

Even if our football team may long remain on the lower rungs of the Ivy ladder, and even if Lions baseball may linger in conference mediocrity for a number of years, there is, nevertheless, a rich athletic tradition. It just needs to be discovered by its fans.

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DOUGLAS KESSEL / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

DREADFUL DROUGHT | Tyler Simpson and the Light Blue must improve at the line to stay competitive against other Ivy teams for the rest of the season.

Lions must improve free-throw shooting in Ivy play

IN FOCUS, from front page

throws later in the halves are on the front end of a one-and-one situation—when the first free throw is missed, there is no second shot.

“Any time you miss the front end of a one-and-one, it’s like a turnover,” Nixon said. “You have a possession in which you didn’t get any points.”

As Columbia sees the losses pile up and their free-throw percentage plummet, the team knows it must

do something in order to bolster its performance at the foul stripe. In an effort to try to raise its free throw percentage, Nixon has ramped up the emphasis on not only getting to the foul line, but also converting as well.

“We try to simulate pressure free-throw situations in practice,” Nixon said. “We may try to do a true in-game situation when we scrimmage, where if someone gets fouled they go right to the line and they have to make their two shots.”

One of the most notable problems with the Lions’ lack of consistency from the line is that the best free-throw shooters on the team are often not the players that get the ball in the post or look to drive and draw the foul.

“Free throws are something that we as a team have continued to focus on collectively, but it does become a bit of a challenge when your players who are better free-throw shooters are not necessarily the ones who are

good at drawing fouls,” Nixon said. “It would be great if every time a player drew a foul that I got to pick who went to the line.”

Whether it’s by improving the more aggressive players’ consistency at the line or by giving the better free-throw shooters more opportunities to draw fouls, the Lions must get better from the line, or free throws will continue to hang over them and cost them more games down the road.

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Despite success, CU cheerleading remains underappreciated

BY THERESA BABENDREIER  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

They train in the gym twice a week, not including time spent during games—or even the conditioning they do outside the structured practices. They compete at a national level and are in season for over seven months. But despite being a loud presence at many Columbia sporting events, the cheerleading team is one of Columbia’s hidden student-group gems.

For years, this group of dedicated students has been rallying school spirit around sometimes less-than-spectacular sports teams, keeping up a steady stream of cheering that might deceive a casual observer into believing there are more fans crowded into Levien.

“I think a lot of people don’t know we compete at nationals and we place every year.”

—Marielle Young

*Cheerleading co-captain*

The cheerleading squad is a diverse group, including members from Columbia College, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, Barnard College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and even graduate schools. Although the group expects dedication from its members, it welcomes those with all levels of experience.

“We have a good mix of anywhere from starters—beginning cheerleaders with no experience—to people who have cheered all their lives, and it balances out really well,” Marielle Young, CC ’16 and co-captain of the cheerleading team, said. “As long as you’re enthusiastic and have a great attitude and are willing to work hard, I think cheer would be a good fit.”

Despite the inclusive mentality associated with cheerleaders, it would be wrong to assume that they are not competitors. The program has immensely improved over the past few years, and the team has participated in the National Cheerleaders Association College Nationals.



FILE PHOTO

GIVE ME A ‘C’ | The success of the cheerleading squad has remained relatively unheralded despite its dedication.

“I think a lot of people don’t know that we compete at nationals and we place every year,” Young said.

The cheerleaders are equally dedicated to their sport on and off the court. Unlike many other Light Blue teams, the cheerleaders have to raise the money themselves to be able to go to nationals.

“It’s a project throughout the year,” Young said. “It’s a huge team effort to fundraise.”

This year, the team mailed letters to friends and alumni, and organized a youth camp, teaching kids the basics of cheerleading and preparing them to perform at halftime during a football game.

Young said many alumni contribute to the fundraising efforts and stop by

practices when they can to lend their expertise.

The fundraising efforts, the involvement of the alumni, and the long season all bring the cheerleading squad together into a community.

As director of sports marketing, Daniel Spiegel has been a first-hand witness to the growth of the program for the last eight years.

“Every year, they get better,” he said. “They understand the dedication it takes to be a good cheerleading team, and I also think that their coach deserves a lot of credit.”

Head coach Yavonia Wise has brought the team to new heights. A former Georgetown University cheerleader, she understands what it takes

for cheerleaders to be exceptional performers who genuinely contribute to the fan experience at games. With her at the helm, the cheerleading team looks to perform well at the United Spirit Association Nationals in March in Anaheim, Calif.

“Every year, we expect higher standards, and that’s just the natural projection of where we want to be,” Spiegel said. He predicts that the partnership between the coach and the cheerleaders will drive the program to continue to climb the ladder of improvement. “They’re always coming up with suggestions and ways to improve,” Spiegel said, “so they deserve a lot of credit for that as well.”

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# Say goodbye to the interview?

As potential fresh-faced students start to arrive on campus and admissions interviews wrap up, I begin to recall my younger years as a prospective student and Columbia neophyte, both apprehensive and relieved after my extensive college search.

The college application process is dauntingly huge, somewhat inefficient, and, mainly, shockingly random. As we now lie snugly under the blanket of an admittance rate somewhere around 6.4 percent, it is sometimes hard to remember the fortuitous nature of our position. It's funny that a number that once inspired fear in the hearts of many now results in congratulatory fist bumps when renewed at the end of each admissions cycle amid cries of “Yeah! F\*\*\* Yale!” Most people at Columbia likely believe that they belong here. Yet with the multitude of qualified top-achievers applying to the best schools in America, the lucky few that are chosen to attend the school by the “crack squad of qualified personnel” on the admissions committee, as local favorite Jerry Seinfeld would say, are not better than all the rest. I'm being facetious, but I have heard some frightening stories about some collegiate admissions committees.

I remember treating the college application process as The Second Coming—developing emergency disaster relief kits, applying to a total of 19 schools. In retrospect, I realize my actions were insane. But now with the sagacity of one who is thoroughly practiced in applying, I feel qualified to offer some advice.

Columbia is on a roll, continually improving its application process. It somewhat recently did away with its own lengthy application (which was graciously still in place for the class of 2014) in favor of joining what is fondly known as the Common App. By the time I blearily filled out Columbia's application, in a mixture of non-Common App resentment



SYDNEY SMALL  
Small Talk

## Uncovering a better pass/D/fail policy

BY ABIGAIL CONDE

I'm a Barnard student, and, like any normal, too-lazy-to-figure-it-out-on-my-own student, I rely on the infallible CULPA to make my course selections each semester. For a year and a half I have been trying to get into a course heralded by both Barnard and Columbia students as essential to take before graduation, almost unanimously chimed as the “Best. Class. Ever” with a professor declared to be a “god.” The only problem was that the class had extremely limited enrollment. I experienced nothing less than sheer delight when I learned that the section offered last fall would be open to as many students as could fit into the lecture hall.

I was a bit perplexed as I sat through the first hour and 15 minutes of the class and observed the professor wandering aimlessly on the podium, flapping his arms excitedly while mumbling incoherently. My palms began to sweat as I sat in my too-small seat and began to think I had made a horrible mistake in taking the class. I told myself that he must have first-day jitters—surely things would get better, or else he wouldn't have received that coveted silver nugget on my Internet Bible.

I was wrong. The class continued to be unbearable. When I received my first exam grade, I realized just how serious he was about memorization, and just how bad I was at it.

I went home and reluctantly filed a motion on eBear to pass/D/fail the course. As many Barnard students know, pass/D/failing a course is absolutely irreversible after the deadline, which usually falls right after midterms are handed back but before there is time to meet with professors about making up for poor first grades. The result is a punitive policy that causes panic, anxiety, and general rashness regarding pass/D/failing decisions

When I told a friend from Columbia in the class of my decision, I was surprised to hear that she had done the same, yet seemed cool as a cucumber about it. I soon learned that it was Columbia's pass/D/fail policy that afforded her the ability to stay so calm. Columbia's policy allows students to “uncover” grades—they can opt out of the pass/D/fail option if they perform well after making the decision.

This policy allows students to take courses they might not feel so comfortable with, without the worry that said course will be detrimental to their GPA. It also provides them with incentive to do well in a course they've already chosen to pass/D/fail, as there is the possibility of redeeming oneself after the fact.

Though I experienced a huge wave of relief upon seeing the “P” on my eBear transcript, I can't help but feel resentful about the entire ordeal. With the start of a new semester and the close of shopping period drawing near, now is the time to change Barnard's policy.

Spectator already ran an editorial about the punitive nature of Barnard's policy (“Revisiting Barnard's pass/fail policy,” Nov. 13), but I'll highlight its main point here. Barnard's policy is castigatory: It discourages students from taking courses they're not sure they will do well in because it lacks the opportunity for redemption after the irreversible pass/D/fail decision is made.

Students should be afforded the opportunity to take whichever classes they wish without the fear of damaged GPAs. Barnard's policy goes against the heart of the liberal arts education—the idea that a student should try courses in all fields in order to become a well-rounded individual, as well as to discover what course of study they wish to pursue to fruition. We go to a college that prides itself on being an institution that encourages young women to excel not only in the fields that they enjoy, but also in those they may not have even considered. This is the whole spirit of the Nine Ways of Knowing. Yet that same school implements a policy that punishes those who try something new and “uncomfortable.”

Barnard's pass/D/fail policy should be modified immediately to mirror Columbia's, and current students should even have the option of “uncovering” grades for courses taken in past years.

At this point, I don't think this is a job for the Student Government Association, an admittedly slow-moving and often ineffective (due to the barriers put up by the administration) organization. This is a matter that requires immediate and deliberate action—action that I think can only be sparked by a coalition of students and professors in agreement who will bring this issue to the attention of the administration with a sense of urgency.

A change in policy would probably cause students who filed a pass/D/fail form to perform better. In my case, it would have alleviated a lot of the stress I had associated with taking this course, which, I imagine, countless other students have experienced with their own classes.

The author is a Barnard College sophomore.

and despair, I possibly selected ethnomusicology as a desired major in a last-ditch effort to differentiate myself.

Something I do recall quite well, though, was my Columbia interview. Since not all students receive interviews (I wonder what the actual data on related admission rates looks like), I was slightly worried by the apparent lack of a middle-aged man jostling to meet me for coffee at an inopportune time I would readily agree to. But finally, such a man did contact me and suggest we meet after hours at my high school. After the interview commenced I would be unable to extricate myself for the next three and a half hours. Although he was a nice and enthusiastic person, I learned as much about the charms of “marrying a Barnard girl” as I did about the academics—although he did quiz me on Greek mythology for a good 45-50 minutes, which was a lovely surprise. While I ended up liking him, I can't say the same thing about all my interviewers, and perhaps a saner applicant would have walked away.

Although they may produce some amusing stories or useful contacts, college interviews today are costly, unreliable, and, frankly, useless. Interviewers are not wholly representative of colleges, and an unfortunate pairing can discourage prospective students. Also, in a process that is already somewhat random and unfair, the interview forms the most biased and incomparable component of the application. It is frequently said that people subconsciously judge others within seven seconds of meeting them. Although this is simplified, such a mechanism makes evolutionary sense, for sizing up possible dangers has survival benefits. Additionally, studies have shown that qualities that are not essentially related to future success, like physical attractiveness or even vocal attractiveness (apparently something we should be worrying about?), influence interviewer evaluations. If a person is deemed attractive, he or she is also quickly perceived as intelligent, trustworthy, kind, and mentally healthy. Strangely, they are even thought to have a happier marriage and be a better parent.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Tuesday's edition of the Spectator featured an op-ed by Steven Castellano entitled “Less is More.” The piece, which discusses student wellness at Columbia, generated a frenzy of online discussion. At the hour that I am writing this letter, there are already 28 comments on the online edition of this article. Steven's words have apparently hit a nerve—student wellness is, after all, a hot-button issue in campus discourse.

If only that were the whole story. The despicable truth is that Steven's “Less is More” trades on the popularity of my hilarious and much-beloved column “Liss is More.” For two semesters, I ruled these pages. In fact, I have it on good authority that my biweekly opinion pieces single-handedly doubled Spec's readership, adding 10 to 20 new readers



REGA JHA  
Rega-rding Columbia

## Let the countdown begin

When I first sat down to write this, I was suspended several thousand miles above the Atlantic Ocean, four hours away from touching down in New York City for my final semester at Columbia, compulsively listening to Taylor Swift's “22” on repeat. The weight of this journey hasn't sunk in yet, though I know that some time in the next four months, it will.

It will hit me, as it will hit every other member of the class of 2013, when I least expect it. It will hit us when we're scrambling to find our CUIDs to show to an East Campus security guard or when we're waiting in line for the elevators in Hamilton Hall (before ultimately deciding to suck it up and take the stairs), that when we said goodbye to our hometowns this January, it was the biggest goodbye we've said since the fall of 2009. It was a goodbye tinged with uncertainty and adulthood. It was a goodbye tinged with the knowledge that in the next four months we will make more decisions than we've made in the last four years.

We will think about our childhood homes, and we will try to decide whether to return to them as inhabitants or as visitors. We will slide into our pale blue graduation gowns, and we will decide what shoes to pair them with. We will look around our dorm rooms, and we will decide what belongings to carry with us when we leave. We will sit in 1020 booths with our best friends, and we will wonder which ones we will still know and love five, 10, 50 years from now. We will think back on the last four years, and we will rehearse the witty untruths we will tell people when they ask us, “So, did you like Columbia?” or, “What was your favorite thing about college?” or, “What's your biggest regret?” We will look at our boyfriends and girlfriends, and we will ask them what will happen in May when suddenly, instead of living a few floors or blocks apart, we might be on different coasts or continents. We will dig up our old Columbia application essays, and we will try to remember who we were when we came in. Sometime in the next four months, we will decide who we've become since.

Still, alongside our indecision, there exists another force: experience. While on the one hand we question everything, on the other hand we will spend the next four months walking this campus with boundless certainty. After all, we know better than anybody else here how to get from Ruggles to Schermerhorn in under four minutes. We know how to write 20-page papers in 24 hours. We are unparalleled experts

In fact, recent studies suggest that many institutions should do away with interviews completely. Medical schools in Canada, Australia, and Israel have eliminated the personal interview component in the last few years, and universities in Britain have long been discussing the possibility. Unstructured interviews have been shown to provide virtually no predictive power of future academic or vocational success. Structured interviews, in which the questions are all standardized and comparative, are slightly better. While Columbia interviewers, starting only this year, are given some basic training, some universities, like Harvard, have more systematized processes in which your interviewer is given information about your test scores and activities in a résumé-type format and must go through a shadowing process.

Although it can be argued that the interview is not a substantial component of the college application process anyway, it seems to offer little except for possible harms. Applicant pools selected without interviews are similar or better than those chosen with them. But some qualities like professionalism, ethical judgment, and interpersonal skills are difficult to evaluate on paper. Instead of a useless, unstructured interview with a chiefly unqualified interviewer, a more systematic ethical dilemma, problem-solving activity, or creativity task could take its place, such as those used recently with more frequency in graduate school applications and business interviews (although neither the applicant nor the admissions committee would likely appreciate setting up the lengthy case interviews some of us have been through while prepping for jobs). The college application process still leaves much to be desired, and Columbia should use its momentum over the last few years to continue to innovate and hone its student body.

Sydney Small is a Columbia College junior majoring in economics-philosophy and neuroscience. Small Talk runs alternate Thursdays.

per month. So, of course, when people see “Less is More” on the front page of columbiaspectator.com, they flock to the link in droves.

Out of indignation, I refuse to look at any of the comments on Steven's article. But I'm sure they all read something like this:

“OMGOMGOMG JLIZZLE IS WRITING FOR SPEC AGAIN!!!!!!”

“Where are the jokes?”

“Jeremy, this is your mother. Please call me back.”

If the Columbia Spectator persists in this heinous infringement of my brand I will have no choice but to pursue legal action.

Jeremy Liss, CC '13  
Proprietary Owner of “Liss is More”

on the perfect Westside salad, and we are uncontested monarchs of the Morton Williams checkout queue. We know which Halal cart is best, and which one will have you sitting on the toilet for the next two days. We know which International chardonnay is cheapest, and we know where to find it. We know that O'Connell's is actually called Cannon's and that Amigos is actually called Campo and that “109 Gourmet Deli” will never be anything but CrackDel. We know how to get the cheapest textbooks, and we know where to find hookah in Harlem. We know which dance group is best (hint: whichever one your best friends are in), and we know the best spot from which to watch the Varsity Show. We know how to walk down The Heights' stairs gracefully even after three margaritas. We know which boys to text and which ones to steer clear of. We know roofs, and we know tunnels. We know myths, and we know traditions. We have learned, from brutal trial and error, which mistakes are worth making.

So, for the next four months, confronted by our futures but armed with our past, we will remain precariously perched between being the most confused and most knowledgeable people on our stunning, Instagram-ready campus. We will be the taut rope in an ongoing game of tug-of-war between the lessons we're struggling to take away and the ones we feel obligated to leave behind. We will choose constantly between our two most basic instincts as Columbia students: to ask questions and to answer them. We might get scared sometimes, and we might want to fast-forward into an adult world with adult stability and adult foresight. We might look wistfully at the gaggle of freshmen stumbling out of Carman, and we might want to rewind to 2009, when we were drinking freshman drinks and making freshman decisions. We might love the next four months, or we might hate them. I don't know.

But I know that for every lost Homecoming game, there were four free beers. For every Butler all-nighter, there was post-deadline freedom. For every Netflix-and-Chinese-food hangover, there was a great night out. And for every identity crisis, there are hundreds of thousands of Columbia alums who did this crazy, weird, incredible “graduation” thing before us. Now they run the world, and someday we will too. They're doing okay, so we will too. But we'll only do this once, 2013ers, so let's vow to feel it in full, the good and the bad. As the revered and eloquent T-Swizzle puts it, “We're happy, free, confused, and lonely at the same time. It's miserable and magical.” Oh, yeah.

Rega Jha is a Columbia College senior majoring in creative writing. Rega-rding Columbia runs alternate Thursdays.



Senior Night at Havana Central.

DAVID BRANN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER







# Eight student bands prepare for battle to open Bacchanal

BATTLE from front page

## Lubeen

John Lubeen Hamilton, CC '13, known by his stage name, Lubeen, is a Battle of the Bands veteran after performing with his friends from the Columbia University Society of Hip-Hop and the Lucky Chops in 2011, winning the opportunity to open for Das Racist and Snoop Dogg in 2011.

Now, Lubeen returns to take on Battle of the Bands by himself. Though he's flying solo this year, he attributes a lot of his knowledge and skills to his experience in CUSH.

"I've made a lot of connections and the people I've met there have really started helping me develop my skills and my sound," Lubeen said. "I have so much more performing experience now," he added, noting that "this year I just want to put on the most amazing show that I can."

## Morningsiders

Made up of Vladimir Bernstein, Magnus Ferguson, Robert Frech, Spectator's chief development officer, Reid Jenkins, and Benjamin Kreitman, all CC '14, the Morningsiders describe themselves as an "indie-Americana" sound influenced by everything from bluegrass fiddle, to indie rock, to Bruce Springsteen. After the successful release of its music video for "Empress" at the end of last semester, Morningsiders is hoping to accomplish their long-held goal of playing at Bacchanal.

"It's been like a benchmark for us," Ferguson said. "We've been planning a lot of things pre-battle, post-battle."

"But to be completely real, I don't think we're worried," Kreitman said. "I think we're just going to try and play the best music we can."

## Vonzie, Vidda, and Flaxo

The trio of DJs Trey Johnson, Nick Perloff, and Sean Von Olen, all CC '14, known by their respective stage names Flaxo, Vonzie, and Vidda, is representing Columbia's electronic dance music scene at Battle of the Bands. Von Olen, Johnson, and Perloff regularly perform their own shows and are all involved in producing music.

"We kind of attribute ourselves to producers more than DJs because it takes so much time and effort," Johnson said.

As both producers and performers, Vonzie, Vidda, and Flaxo have experience playing shows and working with big crowds. They're playing at The Underground on Friday night from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. in preparation for and promotion of their Battle of the Bands show.

## Phonoscenes

The Radiohead-influenced Phonoscenes boast three guitars and a Strokes-esque vocalist in their five-man band, made up of Cameron Erdogan, SEAS '13, and Isaac Bunch, Spencer Cunningham, Dan Girma, and Jacob Sunshine, all CC '13. The band uses its many guitars to shape its unique style.

"The effect is just to have all three guitars instead of using an effects pedal. We have a lot of texturing and layering of the guitar parts," Bunch, the drummer, said.

The band will play three original songs and a cover of "Bodysnatchers" as a shout-out to its musical inspiration. If you're interested in checking out Phonoscenes before the show, it will be playing a gig on Friday at midnight at the Yippie Café in NoHo.



JAMS | Eight bands, including Bold Forbes, Morningsiders, Star and the Sea, The Foggy Details, and Vonzie, Vidda, and Flaxo (top to bottom), will compete to open at this spring's Bacchanal.

## The Foggy Details

Alex Tovar and Noah Whitehead, both SEAS '13, Alie Jimenez and Matt Lonski, both CC '14, and Lydia Ding, CC '13, comprise rock and roll band The Foggy Details. The band has been together for about three years, and as most of them are seniors, they are hoping to end their Columbia experience on a high note by playing at Bacchanal. The group feels confident and ready to compete.

"We're really competitive... We really want to win," said Jimenez the vocalist and primary songwriter. "I think we're going to set the bar really high."

The band plans to perform four original songs at Battle of the Bands, including two brand-new ones.

## Bold Forbes

Bold Forbes, composed of Rachel Miers, CC '14, and Josh Arky, Nick Bloom, and David Halpern, all CC '13, is a folk group whose members may not have the same musical backgrounds but don't lack talent and experience. Vocalist Arky has been trained as a classical singer and has performed in operas, and Bloom, the lead vocalist, guitarist, and songwriter, has more experience in the band's genre.

"I've been doing basically this music the entirety of college, writing and performing it," Bloom said. "But this is the first time I've gotten to do this with a

## Ace of Cake

Made up of Sam Cole, Julian Haimovich, Ilan Maras, Greg Somerville, all CC '13, Ace of Cake will be bringing its sound to the stage. The band's unique brand of "trippy funk, with a smorgasbord of other influences," as its members describe it, will likely be on display in new songs that the band plans to write for Saturday's performance.

And the band is no newcomer to performing.

It won a battle of the bands in Lerner Party Space last February and played Lowlapalooza in October, and it's also had experience at a larger venue.

"We played at Webster Hall last semester behind this guy Sam Lachow," Cole said. "He's a rapper so we played sort a funk/rap background. A lot of the songs were sort of similar to what we've been doing."

## Star and the Sea

Star and the Sea, a five-person band made up of Isaac Bunch, Dominique Star, and Natalie Weiner, all CC '13, Ethan Furst, NYU '15, and Rachel Bronstein, BC '13, defines itself as an "indie-pop-soul" group. But vocalist Star acknowledged that "we don't really want to narrow our sound down yet."

The band is planning on performing a variety of songs that reflects its wide range of genre influences, including some indie pop and rock. Star recognizes the importance of energy in addition to ability.

"I feel like Battle of the Bands is 50 percent performance and 50 percent method and talent," Star said. "I've been studying a lot of Florence and The Machine videos to see how she builds off the crowd's energy, so I'm going to experiment with that at the show."

Sarah Roth and David Salazar contributed reporting.  
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# New Wallach Art Gallery exhibit explores abstract landscapes

BY ASHLEY CULVER  
Columbia Daily Spectator

Feeling lost? Find yourself at the newest exhibit at the Wallach Art Gallery, "Conceptual Geographies: Frames and Documents: Selections from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection." The show, which opened Jan. 23, features provocative conceptualist artwork from 1967 to 2003. Originally featured at the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation in Miami, the exhibit questions the limits of the definitions of art and geography.

True to the conceptualist movement of challenging institutionalized methods of displaying art, the exhibit smartly incorporates a range of

media including photographs, prints, films, and slideshows.

The exhibit, which mostly features Latin American artists, is co-curated by Anne Bruder, a GSAS student in the modern art: critical and curatorial studies program, and alumnus Donald Johnson-Montenegro. While canonical Conceptualist art primarily consists of American pieces from the 1960s, Bruder and Johnson-Montenegro chose works that extend beyond this mold but beautifully fit the theme of conceptualist geography.

Within the context of the exhibit, geography is "a system in which power continually shifts," according to Johnson-Montenegro. Some pieces, such as Horacio Zabala's "Revisar/Censurar

(To Revise/To Censor)," interpret geography in a literal manner. The piece is a series of maps of South America stamped with the words "revisar" and "censurar," culminating in a map in which both words have been stamped so many times that the continent is engulfed in a black rectangle. The rectangle aptly silences the piece, which was constructed during a period of dictatorship across South America.

Although the exhibit's other pieces show no connection to geography as it relates to landmasses and topology, they embody a more abstract interpretation of the subject. A set of seemingly simplistic and ordinary etchings, Luis Camnitzer's "Envelope" is comprised of 10 copies of the same image, each with a different word identifying the figure, effectively conveying authoritarianism.

Brazilian artist Regina Silveira's short film "Campo" expresses the stifling limitation of censorship by demonstrating that she cannot display anything beyond the edges of her camera lens. The word "campo" means "field"—appropriate because the restrictive exposition is all the viewer is afforded as a field of vision.

Although art connoisseurs who shy away from modern art might find "Conceptual Geographies" too abstract for their taste, the exhibit will prove to be an illuminating and refreshing take on conceptualism and Latin-American art.

"Conceptual Geographies" runs through March 23 at the Wallach Art Gallery, located on the eighth floor of Schermerhorn Hall. Wednesday through Saturday, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., free.



ASHLEY CULVER FOR SPECTATOR

ARTE SIN FRONTERAS | Wallach Art Gallery's new exhibit features mostly Latin-American art.

arts@columbiaspectator.com

# Small subjects, broad themes for Paolo Ventura

BY CHRISTIN ZURBACH  
Spectator Staff Writer

An elderly Jewish watchmaker wanders an emptying Venetian ghetto as a Nazi invasion impends. A man prepares for flight. A limless doll lies in autumn leaves. What these moments all share is that small models, rather than life-size buildings, construct their setting—a miniature world captured on camera. Through his lens, Italian architect-photographer Paolo Ventura creates different narrative series.

To assemble "Selected Works," Ventura's latest exhibition at Columbia's Italian Academy, experienced Italian curator and critic Renato Miracco pulled pieces from three of Ventura's previous series: "Winter Stories," which includes the broken doll; "Behind the Walls," which imposes humans rather than dolls on the miniature sets; and "The Automaton of Venice," about the Jewish watchmaker.

A small, one-room exhibition with fewer than 10 pieces, Ventura's show benefits from silent and uncrowded reflection. The frequently dim lighting of his photos lends a melancholy air to much of his work. The nature of the figures, or lack thereof, also creates an atmosphere of solitude. When

SEE VENTURA, page 7





DAVID BRANN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SCIENTISTA | Amanda Brodsky, BC '15, started Barnard's chapter of the Scientista Foundation.

## National STEM group opens BC chapter

STEM from front page

as its director, Juliet Davidow, a psychology graduate student, has been studying off campus. Brodsky and Davidow said they have considered either combining the two groups or holding events together once the Barnard chapter is on its feet, but the chapters' future relationship is unclear.

Michelle Levine, an assistant professor of psychology at Barnard and the chapter's faculty advisor, stressed the importance of maintaining a group based on Barnard's campus.

"Yes, it's great to have the opportunity to join groups at Columbia, but being a women's college, I think it's critical that we also have a 'women in science' organization here specifically tailored to our students' needs," she said.

Levine said that Scientista could be particularly helpful in informing students about the range

of careers available to people with STEM degrees.

"I think it's critical that we also have a 'women in science' organization here specifically tailored to our students' needs."

—Michelle Levine,  
Assistant professor  
of psychology

Barnard students said they thought they could use help exploring science career options.

Yuxia Lin, BC '15 and a

prospective physics major, said that she felt clueless when faced with the challenge of finding a career path in science, since it is "vast and applicable to many, many fields." Lin said she is looking for a "creative way to work with science," and would like to see a career database with more non-traditional job listings.

As a whole, Barnard is "really focused on liberal arts," said Simone Vais BC '15, a neuroscience major, who said she would like to see more resources for science students. She called available career support "limited but helpful."

Jessica Northridge, BC '13 and a biology major, said she turned to her professors for help crafting a résumé to apply for work at a lab. But, she said, professors often have other commitments, and further support from a student organization "would be awesome."

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## Italian Academy features Paolo Ventura

VENTURA from page 6

his photos do contain more than one person, they never interact with each other, standing in different corners or facing different directions. This emptiness and lack of interaction draws attention not only to the figures, but also to the surrounding space. The buildings, the signs, the objects, and the sky seem to have their own souls.

In his exhibit introduction, Miracco recalls the ancient Greek and Roman idea of physical places having spirits, lauding Ventura for his ability to capture "the very soul of places" in his art. Ventura does not hesitate to choose loaded places, like the ghetto of "Automaton of Venice." The final work of that series, a courtyard littered with overturned personal affairs, has no people at all—only space—but is full of emotion. Family photos, books, coats, suitcases, and a typewriter are strewn on the ground, far from their customary condition and

organization. Even without the provided backstory of the Jewish watchmaker and the 1943 setting, the image expresses emotion with the arrangement of objects. The objects represent a history and past, their disarray a troubled present, and an uncertain future for their owners.

Ventura's art prompts contemplation without alienating the viewer.

This uncertainty applies to the setting as well. Venice, with the evacuation and flight of its citizens, also endures an overwhelming solitude, and within its architecture it holds its own

past, present, and future like human memories. In the more recent "Behind the Walls," Ventura decided to expand from models with doll inhabitants to human models, or one human model—himself. When multiple figures are in frame, he plays all of them, like an art-world Eddie Murphy. This combination of miniatures and men layers his art even further, as Ventura stares out of a box that he himself created.

Ventura's art succeeds because it prompts contemplation without alienating the viewer. His haunting compositions are naturalistic enough to resonate, yet different enough to inspire a dreamlike sensation. Though Ventura's models are small, their presence looms large.

The Italian Academy (1161 Amsterdam Ave., between 116th and 118th streets) is hosting this small selection of Paolo Ventura's works Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through March 8.

arts@columbiaspectator.com



KIMBERLY FLORES FOR SPECTATOR

MINIATURES | Paolo Ventura's "Selected Works" are currently on display at the Italian Academy.

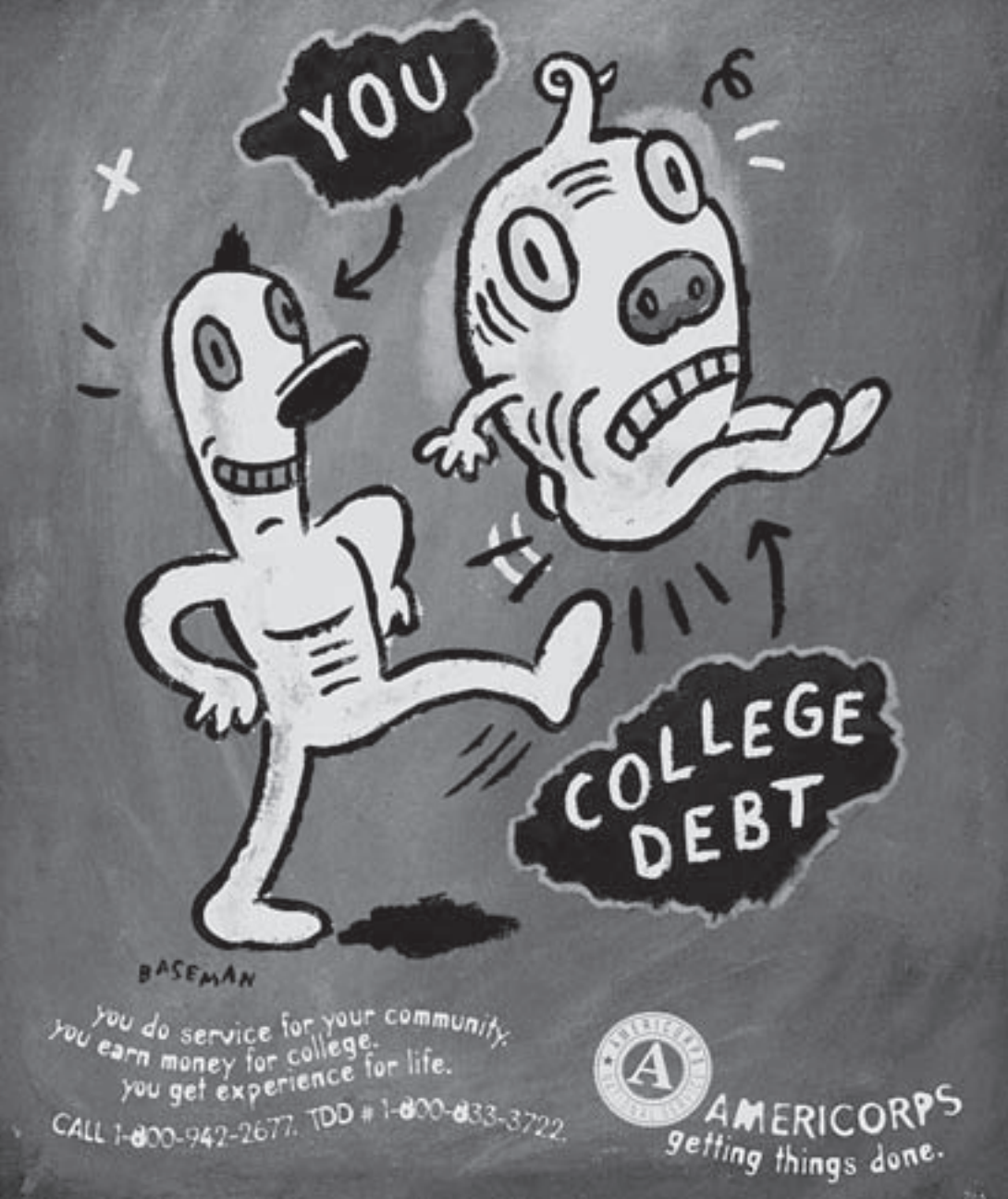


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