



NO CONFIDENCE IN PRESIDENT HENDERSON: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

by Haresh Oudhnarine - Editor-in-Chief



Hepburn Hall, the administrative building at NJCU.

Photo by Haresh Oudhnarine.

NJCU's Board of Trustees says they support president Sue Henderson despite the recent vote of no confidence from the University Senate against her.

On September 28, Board of Trustees chair, Joseph F. Scott, said, "The NJCU Board of Trustees is aware the university senate passed a resolution this afternoon. The resolution itself was riddled with inaccuracies despite countless attempts to clarify these issues. The Board and I remain confident and supportive of the President and her administration, and the work we are doing in support of the institution's mission."

— Continue on page 2

RECAP: NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY'S 40TH ANNUAL CONVOCATION

by Monica Ortiz - Contributing Writer



Tamara Cunningham (vice president of Global Initiatives), Anthony Jack, Thyquel Halley (SGA president), and provost Tamara Jhashi. Photo by Robert Quinones.

New Jersey City University held its 40th Annual Convocation in the Margaret Williams Theatre. This Convocation was different compared to the others because this semester is the first time since the spring 2020 semester that a majority of in-person classes were held. The keynote speaker was Dr. Anthony Jack, assistant professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and author of *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*.

— Continue on page 5

Continued from page 1

Anne Mabry, a professor of English as a Second Language, said, “Rather than simply publicly denouncing the democratic vote of the Senators, it is time for the Board of Trustees to take the lead in offering steps toward reconciliation. It is only in that spirit can we all accomplish the mission of the Institution.”

The vote of no confidence passed at the September 27 Senate meeting against Henderson with 30 senators voting “yes,” and 23 voting “no.” During the meeting, faculty and students expressed concern about the university’s finances and other issues.

Crystal Genthe, a freshman student senator, said during the meeting, “It is very important to me that NJCU keeps up with their intentions of putting their students first. If this is the case, the biggest question that comes to mind is, why are tuition rates rising during a global pandemic?”

Genthe also said, “Financial struggles are still a very common issue for many of our students. This issue should not be overlooked. We need to be more honest in regards to our school’s intentions sooner rather than later.”

Next Steps

Now that the vote has passed, Fran Moran, the president of the University Senate and chair of the Political Science department, explained in an email interview what’s next. He said that the Senate Administration Coordinating Committee (SACC) will have to present the no-confidence motion to the NJCU administration. Moran also said, “The Senate is an advisory body, so we offer advice to the administration, but ultimately the decisions come from the Administration as to what will happen with that advice.”

Typically, the Senate works to implement new programs. Once those get approved at SACC meetings,



Photo from NJCU.

they move on to the Trustees for final approval, according to Moran.

Moran said, “In the case of this particular motion [the no-confidence], we’ll present it to SACC and make a case to see it fully implemented. My prediction is that President Henderson will continue to serve in her position. The motion also asked that we present the motion to the Board of Trustees and we will send that over to them just so that they’re aware of it.”

At the October Senate meeting, Moran reported on the SACC meeting. He said the meeting was “animated, emotional, intense, but always civil.” He said that the Senate executive members expressed the frustrations senators have with unclear communication from the university, and about the university’s debt. Moran said that the administration outlined the “inaccuracies” of the no-confidence motion and expressed support from the Board of Trustees while

the Senate executive members reiterated the faculty’s frustrations.

Moran said, “We did agree on smaller steps to get us moving in the right direction, specifically to improve communication. We agreed to foster closer working relationships between the Senate and administration, University Senate and SGA, and SGA with administration.” The consensus seemed to be that the administration said they will try to do better. Some faculty were not pleased with that answer and expressed that more should be done.

NJCU Counters Some Points from Senate Discussion

During the Senate meeting, some faculty members said they were concerned about finances, the hiring of the rpk consulting firm, and whether the university is carrying out its mission statement and effectively serving students.

Joel Katz, a professor of Media Arts, began the discussion. He said, “Most of the challenges we’ve been facing on campus have to do with the finances. So, tuition hikes during the pandemic, furloughs, the presence of rpk on our campus, the change in COVID policy from one that seemed safe and sensible to one that seemed much more risky; all of these things really are corollary or resulted from financial challenges.”

Continue on page 5

MEET ABIGAIL OSTROVA

by Rebecca Richardson - Contributing Writer



Photo Courtesy of Ostrova.

Abigail is a Graphic Design student at NJCU. Her work is described as fluid, conscientious, and budding. Abigail's story is an essential reminder to trust your gut. Read on to learn more about the day-to-day of a Graphic Design student and what motivates Abigail to keep going.

Why did you choose to study Graphic Design?

A.O: I've always had a love of art since I was young. It actually felt like one of the few things I chose to do consistently and for myself. While I was in community college, I changed my major so many times because nothing ever felt right. I was always so concerned about having a stable career that I could live through. After some time and long conversations with both loved ones and myself I realized that wasn't the kind of life I wanted, so I decided to study something creative that I actually could put my all into and picked Graphic Design.

What did you do before this?

A.O: Before starting my Graphic

Design study at NJCU I had actually taken a year-long break from school. I had graduated in 2018 with my Associates in English and was feeling pretty lost. During that year I decided to try to get back into my original plan, which was the medical field, specifically Nursing. I had taken a program and was working as a Certified Nursing Assistant for a couple months and during that time was when I realized that the right career for me was in art.

What do you hope to accomplish after college?

A.O: Once I graduate, I'd really like to land a couple internships in different design fields like advertisements, marketing, web design, UX/UI, etc. I feel like doing this first would help me grow as a designer and get real world experience. Afterwards I'd like to really focus on just one of these fields and put my all into it. However, my ultimate goal is to work my way into being a UI/UX Designer for a tech company.

What does a day in the life of a Graphic design student look like? Walk us through your day.

A.O: I started at NJCU the semester that Covid happened. So, for the first half of the semester I would go to work on some mornings, then get to campus by bus and decompress before class. I'd play some music, sketch for a bit, and make sure I had all of my projects in order. Sometimes if I had enough time I would meet up with some friends and grab coffee before class. Then I'd head to class, where the first 2 hours would consist of a lecture, and the last 3 hours

would be working studio time. The art classes at NJCU are long and scattered, so some days I'd get home at 4pm, other days at 10pm. After Covid, I was out of work and stayed home most days and would just log on for class. Most classes were still 5 hours, except for one or two that went completely asynchronous online. As a Graphic Design student, a lot of my work can be done through the computer using Adobe Creative Cloud, but concentrating at home isn't always easy, especially when my bed is a few steps away. Plus, my cat enjoys walking across the keyboard whenever I'm on Zoom, so that makes for a fun time during class.

Is there a specific style or artist that inspires you?

A.O: I'm really inspired by the horror manga artist Junji Ito. I'm always mesmerized by how clean his linework is and the level of detail he goes into his work, both visually and story wise. Otherwise, I just look on Pinterest for inspiration.

Do you listen or watch anything while you commute or work? if so what is it?

A.O: It usually depends on my mood, but I never like to work without something playing in the background. If I'm home I usually put on a podcast, like the TMG Podcast, or a random YouTube video. If I'm away from home, I usually put on a Spotify playlist that matches the mood of whatever I'm working on.

Continue on page 5

Continued from page 2

Katz said there have been drastic drops in NJCU's net financial position which the university has seen during Henderson's time as president. He also said, "What the president really owes to the university, the university community, the senate, everyone, is transparency and accountability."

However, a two and a half page statement sent on September 28 on behalf of NJCU by Ira Thor, the senior director of University Communications, outlined the "inaccuracies" of the no-confidence resolution. (It also included the statement from Scott.)

The NJCU statement said that the university's net financial position was "taken out of context." It said that the university's total net asset position is at \$83.8 million as of June 30, 2021.

The statement also said that the university has done "strategic refinancing and financial planning" which allowed them to increase liquidity. It explained why rpk was hired, how students have been assisted throughout the pandemic, and how NJCU has been praised by the governor and the Secretary of Higher Education for fulfilling its mission.

The statement also said that the west-campus expansion was "first put into motion in the 1990," honors the university's mission statement, and that the administration "has not violated the principles of shared governance."

To read the full statement, see this story

on our website, www.gothictimes.net.

Mabry said, "The statement, furthermore, claims that President Henderson, the Administration, and the Board of Trustees 'are completely attuned' to our student population, the surrounding community, and the University's mission. In fact, 'complete attunement' would imply that the Board of Trustees actually visit the campus to talk to faculty, staff, and students. It would imply that faculty, staff, and students understand why the Board of Trustees is building over 1000 luxury apartments at University Place, well out of the reach of our students' pocketbooks. It would imply that a tuition freeze is more important than a tuition hike during the pandemic."

Further Discussion at the Senate Meeting

Not all faculty who spoke were in support of the resolution. John Grew, a professor of Biology, said "personal issues" from a "certain group" of faculty members drive their motivation for the no-confidence motion. He said, "I doubt that the taxpayers who support our employment would consider these deliberations to be as important to our jobs as scholarships and grant-seeking, fundraising, enrollment building, program development."

During the Senate meeting, Thyquel Halley, president of the Student Government Association, said, "We want leadership, and we want people in

positions who uphold our motto which is 'enter to learn, exit to serve.'"

Halley asked, "Holistically when we look at the big picture, are the students getting what we need to get out of this institution?" He also said, "I believe that no one person is solely responsible for all of the problems at this institution. If there are problems or concerns, there's always a team, there's not one person making decisions."

Khadija Diop, a sophomore student senator, echoed Genthe's statement on the tuition increases during the pandemic and spoke about transparency from the administration. Speaking about the apartments at University Place (where the West Campus Village is located), Diop said, "I wanted to know why it is that these apartments are made so expensive, so out of reach of student income? Especially knowing that NJCU is a university that prides itself on providing education to low-income students. Why are such expensive apartments being made and what can be done to make them more accessible to students like myself, to students that don't have the money or can barely afford tuition?"

Laney Fox, a junior student senator and student athlete, asked if anything has been done about the lack of transparency and financial issues in the past. Fox said, "Whatever happens with president Sue, you still have a Board of Trustees that agrees with her actions. Who is there to hold our Board of Trustees accountable?"

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— Continued from page 3

Favorite stress snack?

A.O: I'm usually not a big snacker, since when I'm hyper-focused I get lost in my work. But if I am ever craving something while I work, I like munching on Sour Patch Kids. The original though, not the watermelon version.

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— Continued from page 1



Guest speaker at the 2021 Convocation, Dr. Anthony Jack. Photo by Robert Quinones.

The convocation started with Francis Moran, president of the University Senate and chairperson of Political Science, leading NJCU faculty and administration dressed in academic robes down the aisle of the theater. Olivia Ventura, junior at NJCU, opened the ceremony singing the country's national anthem, the Star-Spangled Banner, and closed the ceremony singing the university's alma mater, Green & Gold.

President Sue Henderson opened with a speech. "This ceremony is an invaluable reminder that we are a community of individuals. Convocation honors the professionalism, the depth

of knowledge, and the commitment that each of us demonstrates to enrich each other's lives," she said. She noted that this convocation is important because it is not only the 40th convocation but the first in-person convocation since 2019. She emphasized how important convocation is as an academic tradition because it signifies the beginning of the academic year while graduation signifies the end of the academic year.

Afterward, provost Tamara Jhashi explained her position at the university. She is the chief academic officer. Next, she gave her advice to the incoming freshman in the audience in the form of three Cs: curiosity, creativity, and courage. "Curiosity about the world fuels almost every human endeavor. Great inventors, scientists, scholars, and artists often make their mark upon history with the spark of curiosity," she explained. The next C is creativity, and she said, "While we might think that creativity is confined to the visual musical or literary arts it is just as relevant to math science and engineering a prime example is the marriage of creativity and technology in the revolutionary work of the late Steve Jobs." The last C is courage, she said, "Take a class on something that's outside your major that might seem baffling to you but that will push you beyond what comes easy, and you will learn a lot about yourself."

Thyquel M. Halley spoke next. Halley is a junior political science major and was elected to the Student Government

Association presidential position in May. He began his speech by mentioning that the COVID-19 pandemic made all our lives very difficult due to online learning being new for most of us. The keynote speaker, Dr. Anthony Jack, spoke right after Thyquel. He echoed the struggle that COVID-19 has caused us all but encourages us to not give up and to keep pushing forwards.

After his speech, Jack had a short Q&A to answer some questions. He ended up answering a few questions, thoroughly. The first question was asked by a female member of the orchestra. She asked why he initially wrote his book *The Privileged Poor*. Jack explained that "there is nothing worse than having an untold story inside you," so he felt he had to write the book. He was then asked by an incoming freshman from the back of the theater, and they asked what kept him going through his education. The next question was why he picked sociology as a major. Jack answers saying that he likes working with people and likes "qualitative instead of quantitative". The last question was asked by another incoming freshman from the front of the theater, and they asked how he responds to those who supported him when he was younger and how we responded to those who showed him hate. He responded by saying to not entertain other people's jealousy or lack of ambition. Dr. Anthony Jack received an academic achievement at the end of the ceremony, honored by Henderson.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DON'T SEE OURSELVES?

THE REALITY OF BLACK WOMEN ON SCREEN

by M. Blessing Akeju - Contributing Writer

John Singleton released his worldwide sensation *Boyz n the Hood* While roles for Black women in modern television and film have expanded, much could be improved.

Numerous shows now provide multiple Black main characters and dynamic supporting roles. A generation of young Black girls will look up to these characters, for example in *Grown-ish*, *Grey's Anatomy* and *Euphoria*.

Yet many of these leading characters are portrayed by biracial or racially ambiguous actresses with lighter skin tones, loose curls, smaller nose bridges, and other characteristics often praised by mainstream society.

These features also happen to be the same traits that are used to make young Black girls feel undeserving, as they are given the message from multiple outlets, particularly modern media, that they are the less wanted version of Black femininity and should strive to look more like the light-skinned females who are painted as the ideal.

In other words, the media seems to almost always select girls who appear to be racially mixed, as if the features of a mono-racial Black character are not desirable enough. They do this regardless of whether the character is mixed as seen by the portrayal of Star Carter by Amandla Stenberg in the popular 2018 movie *The Hate U Give*.

In the novel that the movie is based on, Star is described as a dark-skinned girl with a puffy afro. Why then did the directors cast a mixed girl with much



Yara Shahidi and Trevor Jackson play Zoey Johnson and Aaron Jackson in the show *Grown-ish*. Photo Courtesy of ABC Signature Studios [Fair Use]

lighter skin to play her, especially in a movie so important to the plight of Black teenagers in America?

Most Common Stigmas in the Media

In the past, there has been an insultingly low number of Black female leads, and they were almost always portrayed unfairly as unnecessarily loud, impolite, and unappealing as compared to girls of other races in the same show.

Black students are familiar with the depiction of the dark-skinned Black girl with an impossible attitude and crass behavior or the intentionally less attractive side character who is cast only to be the white main character's rock of support or comic relief.

These tropes may not always be noticed by other races and are especially overlooked by the white majority that is

most accustomed to accurate and multi-faceted representation in media. In the Disney shows *K.C. Undercover* and *Bunk'd*, we see Black characters like Judy and Zuri who display exaggerated sassiness, amid several other racial stereotypes.

Self-Esteem and the Modern Black Woman

Colorism is the assertion that people of lighter skin tones are more attractive or somehow more deserving than those of darker skin tones commonly involving nose shapes and hair texture. This bothers me as I am a dark-skinned, kinky-haired Black woman bombarded by a ceaseless stream of slander from multiple sources centered around my hair texture and skin tone.

Even among my friends, I felt as if I had no choice but to shrug off hate-



Yara Shahidi and Trevor Jackson play Zoey Johnson and Aaron Jackson, two college students of color, as they stand among friends. Photo Courtesy of ABC Signature Studios [Fair Use]

charged comments about darker Black girls being difficult in friendships and relationships, wearing extensions or chemically straightening because we must have secretly hated our natural hair or other myths that ranged from being random to outrageously untrue.

I would go to school and hear these awful statements about people who looked like me spoken by my peers, only to go home and see almost no examples of Black women with my features in music, television, or literature to prove these people wrong.

As a result, for multiple years, I resigned myself to assuming these stories were realistic, as there was so little to remind Black female youth of their versatility, good-heartedness, brainpower, and physical desirability.

This is the cause of a large portion of self-hate, confusion, and identity crises Black females face during childhood, which normally pours into the teenage years or adulthood. It's simultaneously unnecessary, painful, and unfair. It is a vicious mindset that can take a frighteningly long time to rectify.

Such accounts are the reason why it is dangerous that in mass media, traits that are centered around whiteness are endlessly praised.

So, what can we do about colorism in casting for television shows? We can make more of an effort to put Black females with other, less fetishized features in the media. Black creators should be uplifted to promote genuine representations of Black people. When Black characters are cast, we can

advocate for upcoming actresses with darker skin, larger lips, and kinkier hair, especially those who are mono-racial.

If their casting choices are harming the mindsets of generations of Black youth and planting seeds of doubt and deceitful stereotypes in their heads and hearts, then their faulty representation matters and must be addressed. These movies and films affect not only how the rest of the world perceives Black characters, but how Black people perceive themselves. As a diverse community of media-consumers, we have to refuse to let them continue to create this narrative by calling them out for their damaging actions.

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Student Activities Board Presents

OCTOBER



Paint and Sing
Wednesday 20th October 2021
GSUB LOBBY 5PM-8PM



Halloween Bash
Wednesday 27th October 2021
MPR B 6PM-9PM



Halloween Craft
Thursday 28th October
3PM - 5PM

For more information, check out our
instagram page@sabnjcu

NOVEMBER



Movie Trivia
Thursday 4th November, 2021
GSUB 129 3PM



Movie Night
Wednesday 10th November, 2021
7PM



Paint and Switch
Thursday, 18th November, 2021
3pm - 5pm

For any questions or concerns, please contact:
pjj.president@gmail.com

THE GOTHIC RACK PHOTOS

by David Wilson- Photographer



The Gothic Rack is a new service for NJCU students to get professional clothing to enter the workforce. It is located on the second floor of GSUB.



Assistant Dean of Social Services,
Barbara Colon-Ruggieri.



Vice President of Student Affairs, Jodi Bailey.



The grand opening of The Gothic Rack on October 5.



Colon-Ruggieri, NJCU President Sue
Henderson, and Jennifer Luciano (Assistant
Dean of Residence Life).



Mannequins on display in the newly opened
Gothic Rack.



LATINX WOMAN IN POWER

by Melina Quispe - Social Media Manager

Laura Bustamante is a Latinx woman who is the chief of staff for Jersey City Councilman James Solomon. Bustamante is not only a leader on the Solomon's team but also an NJCU alumni and a part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Bustamante is an inspiration to a lot of Latinx women. Especially, since there are not many Latinx women in politics who hold leadership positions. Bustamante is also an inspiration to the LGBTQ+ community because she has worked on the gender-neutral bathroom ordinance that passed in Downtown Jersey City recently.

James Solomon and Laura Bustamante have been helping residents living in Ward E for four years now. They have come up with policies that Laura will get into later in this interview. These are a few questions and answers that I hope will inspire other Latinx students at NJCU to become strong and passionate leaders. This is an interview I had with Laura Bustamante in August 2021.

Have you ever doubted yourself? Like for example have you ever thought you wouldn't do great?

Yeah absolutely. I think there have been a lot of meetings that I have been a part of where white men were the majority and they had very strong opinions about situations that I disagreed with. I found that initially in my career, it was difficult to speak up or say what I thought. Especially, when it differed from their opinions and that is a difficult thing that I still try to overcome. I think the fear is not being recognized or feeling like they won't take you seriously. The second



Bustamante with Councilman Solomon.
Photo Courtesy of Solomon.

fear is being right and not being able to back up that you're right because you are a minority woman and feeling like they won't respect what you're saying.

Can you have it all? Can you balance work, family, and a social life all at the same time?

Yeah absolutely. I think that is one thing Stu (her coworker) has alluded to. He always says I don't know how Laura does it. But time management is huge. Your number one tool for time management is Google calendars. I literally put everything on Google calendars, so I know what I am doing, and just staying really focused. Like when I am sitting down to do a press release, I am really sitting down to do this press release. Also, being purposeful in the things that we do. So, purposely planning dinners and doing drinks with

friends. And scheduling those things ahead of time so that your schedule doesn't just fill with work. But there are also times and dates where you know I am doing dinner with this friend at like 8 o'clock, so I am not going to be available for a meeting. Um and doing those types of things. And you know it is politics, there is always a low and a high. When we are busy, and we are not busy. So, you know after July, I will not have a life. But I know that is from July to November. And I know that after November I will have the opportunity to rebalance myself. When you are in a career like this one you have to also have that honest conversation with yourself like I won't have a life from this month to this month. Also, communicating that to the people that are in your life is really important.

Have you had any mentors or mentees?

Yeah, I would say I have. I have not had a female mentor which is interesting. I have had James Solomon as my mentor. I have had the opportunity to see him as an elected official, as a professor, as a dad, as a friend. He has taught me a lot. Not just about politics but what it is like to be a good person. He taught me what it is like to be a genuine hardworking individual and what it is like to make really difficult situations while staying true to yourself. While staying true to your ethics and your morals. I think he leads that every day and naturally I have learned from him to understand that sometimes we make really difficult decisions. But what really matters is we stay true to who we are and the work that we are doing which has been really powerful. I have had mentees which is really awesome. I feel really blessed to have had that. A lot of them have been

—Continued from page 10



Bustamante on NJCU's Women's Soccer team in 2014. Photo by Larry Levanti via NJCU Athletics.

my interns and a lot of them have been young Latina women. Even just before this interview, I had an intern who was with us a year ago who called me about career advice. I definitely feel like I have been very purposeful with the way I run our internship program to empower Latina women. I have been purposeful in that way because I have not had a woman who has been able to mentor me. I have been mentored by a white male which has its pros and its cons. So being able to be that for other Latina women who come through our office has been very important to me.

How do you collaborate and lead people?

I lead by empathy, by example, and by respect. So, I think those are the three things that are meaningful to me. We treat everyone the same whether you're an intern or a senior staffer. I value everyone's opinions. I think everyone has really good insight and our office has been able to run well because we do a good job at making sure all opinions are heard, validated, and taken

into consideration. I lead by example by the way I think I handle myself in a room full of white men because at the end of the day, our leadership team is two other white men and then me. And then with empathy which is life happens. You're not a robot and I am not a robot. Things fall apart. Finals happen. You're busy and so am I. Someone needs a vacation. This means being all hands-on deck to make sure that we are nourishing each other as individuals beyond the work that needs to get done. So, work has to get done but there are going to be moments in time when certain staff members are going through hard times in life, and we all have to be there to support each other. Part of that is connected to building a really strong organization so at any time one person can swoop in. That goes to say that is why there are two policy interns and two constituent service interns.

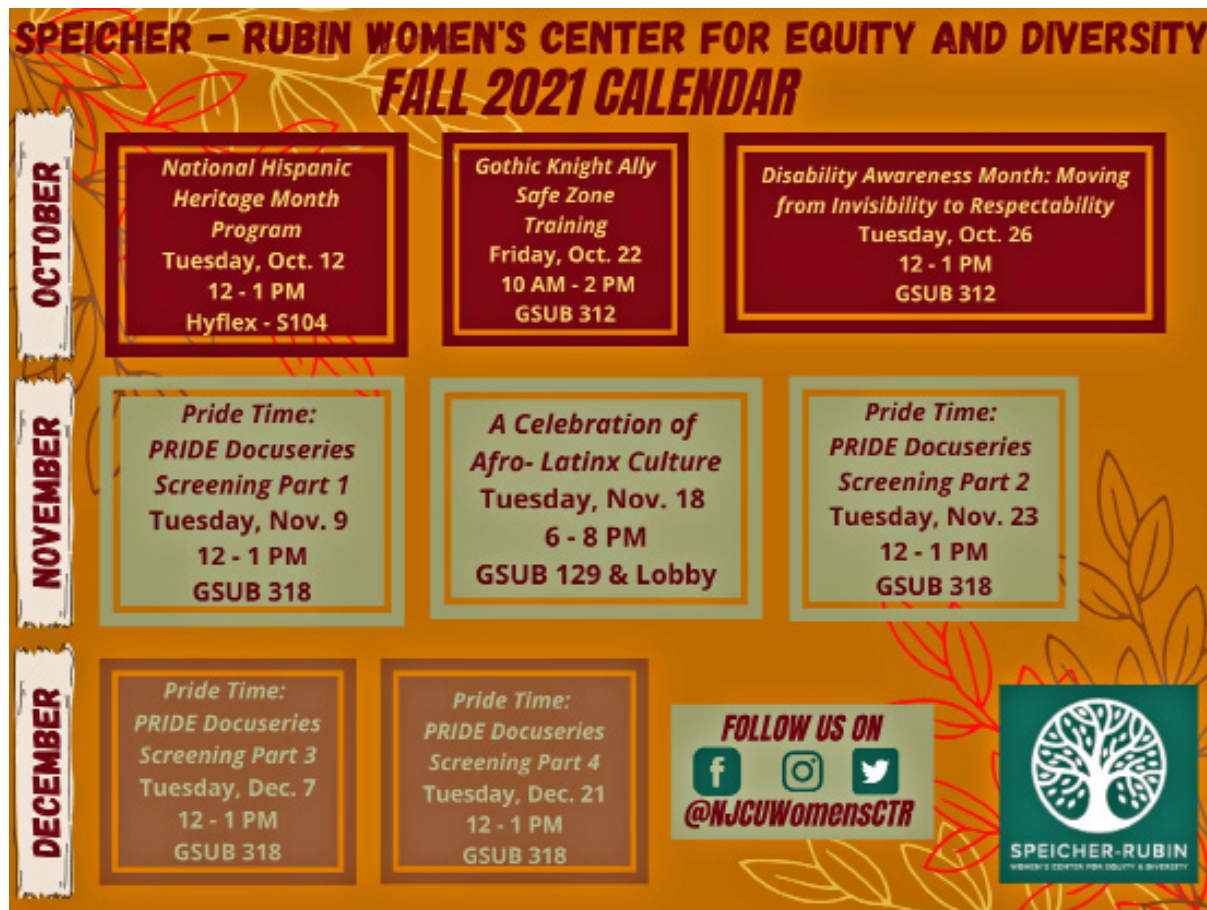
What are certain projects that you have been involved in that have helped your community?

One of the big projects has been rent

control. We had a unique opportunity to do an initiative where we went to rent control buildings. So, rent control is a policy term for affordable housing. It is one of the tools in it. It is buildings where they can't raise rent and a lot of people who live in them are minorities, or long-term Jersey City residents that have lived there forever.

The idea is that you protect tenants from being pushed out or priced out. We did our rent control ordinance. The way that the city has handled rent control has been very poorly which has caused a lot of people to be kicked out of those buildings and we lost affordable units over time. We did a grassroots initiative where we went door knocking at every single rent control building in Downtown Jersey City. We got to really listen to people's stories and learn about their living conditions. We were able to issue a report saying here are the shortcomings of city government and how we are not properly protecting tenants. Therefore, this has caused gentrification in Downtown Jersey City.

Through that experience I was able to really help a ton of tenants fix their heat and hot water, get a roofing change, improve their quality of life, and even get some of their rents to be reduced to the rent they were supposed to be paying. They were being overcharged and illegally so. That was a really tangible thing for me to feel. And something even smaller but more so for the LGBTQ community it was the gender-neutral bathrooms that we are working on right now. I am a gay Latina so as a gay Latina, that is very impactful for me. I feel like I have been able to provide a safe space for others in my community. Before they did not feel safe going out to a restaurant and using a bathroom that is concurrent to their gender identity.



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