

is it really December already?

The Rittenhouse Precedent

Written By: Brian Cunningham

The Summer of 2020 will be known and spoken about in our generation for the rest of our lives. Never in our lives have we seen such civil unrest, sadness, organization and protest. The Death of Geroge Floyd has sparked up the Black Lives Matter movement like no other. It opened some of America's eyes to the disparities in the Criminal Justice system, and people became activists overnight. However, one police shooting that took place that same year would impact the people of Kenosha, Wisconsin, and begin an event that has helped further polarize the people on both sides of the political aisle.

On a summer afternoon on August 23rd, a 29-year-old black man by the name of Jacob Blake was shot several times in the back by a police officer named Rusten Sheshky. This event caused Blake to become paralyzed. Blake had a warrant out for his arrest on assault charges, but the police officer involved was not aware of this warrant at the time of the shooting. Shortly after this event, protestors took to the streets in Kenosha, protesting the police reaction that they felt

was unwarranted and excessive. 2 days after this incident, a teenager would arrive in Kenosha with an assault rifle and shoot 3 people, killing 2. This teenagre was a 17-year-old Kylie Rittenhouse, who recently was held on trial for murder, where the jury found him "Not Guilty". The morning before the Rittenhouse shooting, a facebook page called the "Kenosha Guard" published a call-to-arms for "patriots" who were willing to be armed guards in preparation for the inevitable 2nd night of protest. They were planning to defend business from looters, however the man responsible for the post admitted to The New York Times in an interview that he was not asked by any businesses to help defend them. Throughout the day leading up to the shooting, a considerable amount of white militiamen gathered around the protest, all armed. One of these people was Rittenhouse, who had traveled from his home state of Illinois, carrying a rifle. At the time, it was unclear of Rittenhouses true intentions at the protest, but after the event it was found on his social media that he supported the Blue Lives Matter movement, and there are pictures online of the teenager flashing "White Power" hand gestures. Later in the evening,

protests would escalate, and Kyle Rittenhouse would shoot and kill both Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber, while injuring Gaige Grosskreutz. These events would later be the bases on which Rittenhouse would face trial for murder, and found not guilty. As the night progressed, the police had pushed the protestors down Sheridan Rd. in Kenosha. At the end of the street. Kyle Rittenhouse and other armed militia men were stationed. The first man to be shot was Rosenbaum, who had recently been released from the hospital after a mental health episode. After an interaction between the two, Kyle killed Rosenbaum and fled the scene. After this interaction, Huber attempted to disarm Rittenhouse with a skateboard, at which time Huber was shot in the chest. Grosskreutz was then shot in the arm after trying to pull his gun on Rittenhouse after he witnessed him shoot Huber. He would then go towards the police, where they would welcome him with open arms. This is a condensed timeline of these events, however the order of events holds true.

So, why did Kyle Rittenhouse show up to Kenosha ? What were his intentions ? This was not a community that he had

roots in, and it wasn't even a part of his home state. Where at 17, did he get in possession of a large firearm ? Kyle Rittenhouse was never supposed to be here on this night. He should have been at home, doing things that normal 17-year-olds do. But instead he showed up to an already hostile environment, and created more unrest within the community that was already upset with the Blake shooting. Rittenhouse should have noticed this, and seen that his presence was simply unnecessary, and ended with people killed by his hands. The verdict of this trial sets a precedent for people who have a longing to be in the heat of the moment, and who long to be some figurehead for opposing the Black Lives Matter movement. It empowers them to do the exact same thing that Rittenhouse did. To show up to places where they don't belong and walk away with a legal kill. It is my prediction that this is not the last time we will see something like this, and as a matter of fact, I believe that it has now become inevitable. The justice system has favored Rittenhouse and his tactics, opening the floodgates. Time will tell if these predictions will hold true, and I hope I am wrong.

Those Damn Gas Prices...

Written by: Brian Cunningham

We are currently living in a world still grappling with the pandemic. At this point, most of the inconveniences that come with the disease are normal to us, masks, social distancing, testing, quarantining, we all at some point have felt the pandemic on a personal level. But recently, we are seeing the effects that the pandemic has on supply and demand chains, which is causing huge price increases in a few aspects of our lives. One thing that I have heard people the most upset about is the abysmal gas prices. According to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, a New York resident is paying an average of \$3.314 per gallon of gasoline, with CBS reporting that we have experienced an inflation hike of 49.6% over the last year alone. Gas prices can affect people in many ways, such as childcare, work transportation, going and buying groceries. They add more money to the total of other tasks that some people simply dont have. So why are we

seeing such a dramatic spike in these prices? The answer is somewhat simple: the pandemic.

Some people in the area would have you believe that the gas price steep incline has something to do with the new president, Joe Biden, and falsely claim that Donald Trump was the reason for the gas prices we experienced in Spring 2020, a high point for the pandemic. What really is

happening is something that is a tad more complicated, but not by much. At the start of the pandemic into Spring, the stay at home order was in full swing. People were not able to go to the grocery store, or drop off their kids to daycare because nobody was working. People were doing the same thing that the rest of the world was doing, staying put in lockdown. And as the demand for gasoline and oil plummeted, as did the prices,

as well as the oil companies production. So, with people getting back on their feet and resuming their normal lives, the demand instantly shot up again.

On top of this, the oil companies are still not producing as fast as they were from before the pandemic. And while a simple solution to the shortage would be to buy from other countries, those same countries are still trying to recuperate after their post-pandemic losses. Because of this, Americans are paying almost \$16 more than people in comparable countries. While this is happening, the Biden Administration is scrambling for solutions, with their hands almost tied, and with the poll numbers dropping for Biden, he needs to figure out a solution, and quickly. If this does not happen, Biden and the Democrats will find themselves in an uphill battle come midterm election season, and could even remain as a dark spot come time for his own reelection bid.



photo by: Nam Y. Huh, Associated Press

Fall 2021: A Post-Mortem Analysis

Written by Brian Cunningham

This semester has been stereotypically long and stressful for many students. For some, this was the first semester back after Covid seemingly stopped some people's education in its tracks. But as we resume our college education, the world is still grappling with the pandemic and its adverse, long-term effects. That is why I set out to get the opinions of a select few NCCC Freshman, who agreed to tell me about their experiences this semester, as well as any concerns they might have going into the Spring 2022 Semester.

One such individual is Bridget Hersee, a first year Criminal Justice Major here on campus.

She picked NCCC because she wished to get her prerequisites for a lower price, and was told that this is a good place to start. When asked what her take-away from her first semester was she responded with, "Time management, I learned that the balance between work and school was important". The next question I asked Bridget had to do with concerns over the pandemic, as the new Omicron variant of Covid-19 has recently been found in a covid patient in California. She says that "I'm concerned that over the winter months that covid cases will rise nationwide, and that we will be forced to go more towards online learning". To this she adds, "I do not do well with online learning".

Another freshman who I had the honor of speaking with is Kayleigh Felton, a Psychology Major who chose NCCC for its proximity to her home as well as the cheaper tuition. Her main take-away from this semester was "Unlike high school, you can't just skate by with sub-par effort. You need to take the time to learn the material on your own. Also, not being able to have personal relationships with instructors has been something that I've learned about college". In terms of her concerns over next semester, she is concerned about going to meet more teachers, as she has become accustomed to the professors for her current classes. She mentioned that she believes that we will be

able to go forward with regular classes, and isn't concerned about the pandemic at this time

Finally, I spoke with Meagan Froelich, a Liberal Arts student who plans on transferring to the nursing program. Her main take-away from this semester was how she scheduled her classes, "I am currently doing six classes, three in person, three online due to my old job being only open on the weekend,". This caused her schedule to be packed, as she also is working part time at a Tim Hortons. Her concerns going into next semester also pertain to her schedule, and shares Kayleigh's positive outlook about the covid situation. She believes that we will still be able to continue as normal.



Simulation Credit: Virtual Reality Laboratory, Center for Data-Driven Discovery, Caltech

HEY YOU!

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(please)

The Spirit is the Student Voice of NCCC

Tuesday
December 6th,
2021

Your paper...

The Spirit

NIAGARA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Issue 1
Fall 2021

...your voice!

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Email spirit@niagaracc.suny.edu for more information!

The Student Assembly of the State University of New York's Executive Committee and Student Government Leaders Call on Chancellor Jim Malatras to Resign

December 3, 2021 - Earlier this week the Office of the Attorney General of New York State released documents, transcripts, and other materials relevant to the sexual harassment investigation of former New York State Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. Some of these documents revealed conversations involving Chancellor Jim Malatras. His comments about a female co-worker, including the use of language such as, "go f*ck yourself", show a level of hostility and lack of professionalism that is unbecoming and should be disqualifying for the position of Chancellor. These comments and the behavior they demonstrate are reprehensible at best, and we find it necessary to call for the resignation and removal of Chancellor Malatras.

As the person charged with overseeing the largest public higher education institution in the country, the Chancellor should be held to the highest standards of integrity. In response to claims of a toxic work environment the Chancellor exacerbated and contributed to it by making other vulgar comments. It is imperative, now more than ever, that we support women and mothers

(demographics that make up a significant portion of our system-wide student body) when they have concerns, and the Chancellor has demonstrated an inability to do so.

Legislators at the State and Federal level have condemned the behavior of the Chancellor and publicly called for his resignation. The Chancellor of the SUNY System should have the confidence of, and the credibility with, all levels of government. This is especially true for Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, who are responsible for allocating SUNY its budget each year. SUNY students themselves should have the complete confidence that whomever is serving as Chancellor holds the ability to successfully obtain the resources necessary to support the programs and services of our 64 campuses. As tuition paying students we have every right to expect that the highest standard of excellence will be adhered to by the University leadership.

The purpose of the Student Assembly is to represent the interests of students at the highest level, and across the state we are seeing the same sentiment

emerge: critical action must be taken. In addition to all the specific reasons iterated thus far, many students are also worried about the impact this will have on them personally. Allowing the Chancellor to remain in place damages the reputation of the system, detracting from our education and devaluing the degrees we are all working towards. Former Governor Andrew Cuomo resigned, in his own words, "because I work for you, and doing the right thing is doing the right thing for you." We urge the Chancellor, a self-proclaimed pro-student Chancellor, to embody this mindset and do what is best not necessarily for him, but for the students he serves.

As we have seen consistently throughout the released documents, Chancellor Malatras is not opposed to personal retaliation, and it is highly likely that this will be made evident to us as elected student leaders because of this statement. Even before this, the agenda of system administration has always been to limit us financially, restricting our ability to operate independently in order to keep our advocacy priorities in line with the administration's interests.

This financial chokehold is likely to only worsen in the wake of this statement, but we understand that this advocacy is more important.

Should the Chancellor choose not to do the right thing and resign, we call on the Board of Trustees to remove him with a vote of no confidence at their next meeting, based on the concerns raised in our statement as well as those from the statements released by so many other organizations, policy-makers, and influential figures across public higher education.

Chancellor Malatras was approved by the Board of Trustees based on the influence of former Governor Cuomo and in spite of the objection of both the students and the faculty, and we have seen the negative outcome that this "process" created. Immediately following his resignation or removal, it is imperative that the SUNY Board of Trustees open a nationwide search process for the next Chancellor - a process that must incorporate student and faculty representation, involvement, and feedback and consider candidates of all backgrounds and all demographics.

Statement from the SUNY Board of Trustees Regarding Chancellor Jim Malatras

"Dr. Jim Malatras has been an outstanding leader of SUNY through one of the most trying times in our history and has the support of the SUNY Board of Trustees. He's acknowledged he made a mistake, taken full responsibility for it, and apologized appropriately. He is fully focused on the critical work of keeping our facilities open and our students and faculty safe through the ongoing pandemic.

Under Jim's leadership, the SUNY system stayed open throughout the pandemic while other major state university systems across the country and colleges across New York

closed and went fully remote. Working hand in hand with our faculty, staff, and students he implemented groundbreaking COVID protocols that led to the administration of 2.9 million COVID tests on campuses and nearly universal vaccination among faculty, students, and staff. As a result, SUNY has consistently had one of the lowest positivity rates in the country—far below the New York statewide rate. That work set the stage for SUNY classes to be 70 percent in person this semester—a number that will grow significantly in the new year.

Under Jim's leadership, SUNY has eliminated barriers to higher education by waiving college application fees for low-income students, launched the SUNY on-line training center offering free certifications and classes as an entryway to college degrees, tackled food insecurity by auto-enrolling students in the SNAP program, invested in child care for students and staff, expanded mental health services across our campuses, created SUNY's first-ever Pre-Medical Opportunity Program—a program that opens the door to medical school to students from underrepresented communities, and

helped foster a comprehensive diversity and inclusion plan.

As we head into another surge in COVID cases Jim and the Board of Trustees are focused on keeping our campuses open, securing additional investment for SUNY to meet New York State's workforce demand, and expanding innovation to continue to drive economic development across New York State. We have challenging days ahead and believe Jim Malatras, as Chancellor of the State University of New York, remains the right leader to help us meet that challenge."

Letter From SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras

Dear Colleagues:

I have spent the past 20 years of my life working in public service. I am extremely proud of the work all of us in government do and I could not be prouder of the work we have done together over these past two incredibly difficult years here at SUNY.

Leadership in public service is a privilege and with it comes immense responsibility for upholding the values of professionalism, decency, and respect. I take that responsibility very seriously and in recent days it has been clear I have

fallen short.

Earlier this week private text messages of mine from 2019 were made public in which I made disparaging and disrespectful remarks about a former colleague I served with in government prior to my time at SUNY. While my remarks were made more than a year before this colleague spoke out about the harassment she had been subjected to by the former Governor and were unrelated to those issues — that is not an excuse — my words were inappropriate, disrespectful and wrong.

I not only owe Ms. Boylan an apology for my conduct, I owe an apology to the broader SUNY community for failing to live up to the standard that leadership of this institution entails and demands. My greatest hope is to foster an inclusive community at SUNY where every faculty and staff member and student can feel safe and heard. I hope that my record here has made that commitment clear.

I know in this instance I fell short, but I am committed to doing the work to regain your trust and continuing on the path of ensuring a brighter future for SUNY.

I appreciate those who have reached out to me to share their feelings and feedback about this issue. I am listening, I value it, and I am taking it to heart. In the days and weeks ahead I will continue to reflect on how we can develop a best-in-class workplace culture at SUNY and ensure that as your Chancellor I always live up to our highest values and ideals.

Best wishes,
Jim Malatras

I am Planning to Graduate in December. What Should I Do?

Please submit a Graduation Application. The deadline to file for December graduation is December 10. If you plan to earn more than one degree and/or certificate in the Fall semester, please submit a graduation application for both.

- Apply through Banner Web:
 - Click on "Student Records".
 - Click on "Apply for Graduation".
 - Select the major you are applying for. If you do not see your major listed, please contact the Enrollment Center at 716-614-6250.
 - Indicate if you plan to attend Commencement and select how you would like your name to appear on your diploma.
 - Verify the information you entered is correct and click "Submit Request".
 - You can view your submitted application under the Student Records tab of Banner Web at any time.

When are Final Grades Posted and How Do I Get Them?

- Final grades will be available after 4 pm on Monday, December 20. Grades are not mailed. To obtain your final grades, you must log into Banner Web, click Student Records, click Final Grades, and click Submit.

When Will my Transcript with Final Grades be Sent?

- If you submitted an online request for an official transcript that includes Fall final grades, the transcript will be sent after final grades have posted on December 20. All forms are located on the Registration & Records Office Forms page (from the NCCC homepage click Academics, Registration & Records, Forms).

- Withdraw from a Class - To drop a course and receive a W (withdrawal) grade as a final grade, complete the electronic Drop or Withdraw from a Course form.

- Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) Grades - To elect to receive an S/U final grade in a course, students must submit the electronic S/U grade request form which will also require approvals from the course instructor and the student's advisor. Selecting the S/U option may be beneficial to students in certain circumstances; however, students should be aware of the impact on course loads in future semesters, financial aid (including Excelsior)/academic standing implications, and the transferability of S/U grades.

- Withdraw from College (All Classes) - To withdraw online from the college and receive "X" grades for ALL of your current courses, complete the electronic Withdrawal from College form. If you completed any modular courses, you will receive the grade earned and "W" grades will be applied to all other college coursework.

Mod courses differ in deadlines – refer to the online Student Calendar for more information. If you have any questions, please email records@niagaracc.suny.edu or stop in A-105.

NCCC Board Approves

Recognition of Native American Heritage Day

Sanborn, N.Y. – A resolution was approved by the Niagara County Community College (NCCC) Board of Trustees on Tuesday, November 16 recognizing the Friday prior to Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day. This recognition was made possible through efforts of NCCC's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. Created in 2016, this group serves to actively engage the whole college community in

recognizing the importance of belonging among stakeholders for assuring the success of all members of the college community, including students, staff, faculty and administration, in an ever-increasingly global environment.

Native American Heritage Day is traditionally celebrated on the Friday after Thanksgiving, but NCCC is typically closed that day. Of-

officials at NCCC wanted to ensure this important day received appropriate attention from the campus community, maximizing engagement from students and staff, so the recommendation was made to move this special designation to the Friday before Thanksgiving.

This year, the Native American Club is leading efforts during Native American Heritage Month this November

to honor Indigenous People through educational events where attendees can learn about Native American history, the Haudenosaunee people and other tribes around the United States. On Friday, November 19, representatives from EDI and the Native American Club encouraged the campus community to wear orange or purple in recognition of Native American culture lost to assimilation.

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Spring 2021

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You!

