

While You Were Here

I would miss...

ALL THOSE
LATE NIGHTS,

THE FLOURESCENT
BASEMENT DUNGEONS
OF BOBST,

WEEKENDS OUT TO
SOCCER GAMES

GROWTH & MISTAKES,

2020

Letters from the Editors

To my Michael Scott, Guru, thank you for supporting me through every crazy turn my life has taken. You are the only person I would ever go to the ER with on a Sunday evening. To Ale and Sammy, you have taught me that I can be creative in anything as long as put my mind to it. To Fin, my baby bean. I am forever changed because of you. You are the best friend I have always been looking for. And to Cole and Abby, what can I say? You're stuck with me for another semester. I am inspired by your dedication to our paper and work ethic.

Now to the class of 2020, I am all out of words, but if I may, I will write this:

I am extremely proud to have you as an example of resilience and dedication. Not only have you worked diligently throughout your time at NYU, but you have adapted to this unprecedented situation in the most creative ways possible, and for that, I thank you. You taught me that nothing can stand in the way of hardwork and achievements. I wrote this alongside my cat, Pepita. She is high-pawing you all the way from Pasadena, California.

You may not get the celebration you envisioned, but we will celebrate you in a way you never expected. It will be a congratulations for the ages, one that will be remembered in history forever.

You are all my superheroes.

— *Mandie*

Mandie Montes
Under the Arch Editor

Firstly, thank you to every contributor to this issue! It wouldn't have happened without you. Thank you, Guru, for trusting Mandie, Sammy, Ale and me with putting this together and for guiding us through the process. Thank you Cole, Abby, Paul and Ronni for being the best management buddies. I miss you all.

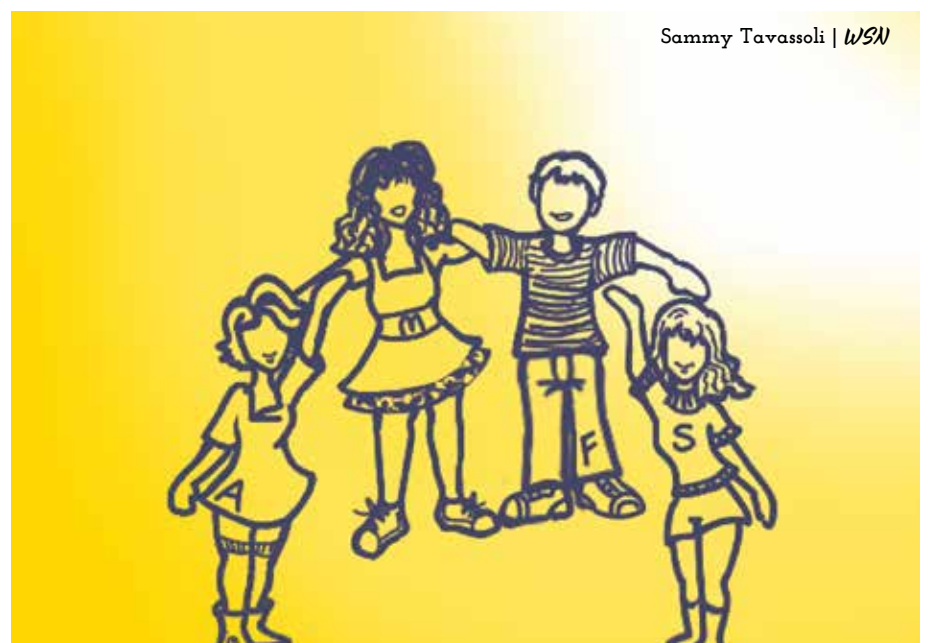
Thank you, Under the Arch team, for making this issue possible during the realities of quarantine. And a bigger-than-big thank you and distanced hugs to Mandie, Ale and Sammy for being the most supportive co-editors! Friends, we actually did it!

To my senior friends – from WSN and otherwise – I love you and find it hard to imagine NYU without you. Thank you for taking care of my little sophomore self. With many of you, I had a chance to work in the basement of Third North, and you taught me more than an Investigating Journalism class ever could. Guru, Sara and Maxine: thank you for making this year's Under the Arch team special. Yasmin, Katie, Natalie and Bela: thank you for making our beloved basement my second home. You're such shining stars. Pam, thank you for the most profound impact I can't describe under a word limit and for Under the Arch itself. I can't wait to see the brilliant things all of you go on to create!

Yours truly,

Fin

Anna-Dmitry Muratova
Deputy Managing Editor



Sammy Tavassoli | WSN

We knew that the end of the semester was coming, but we didn't expect it so soon. Our goodbyes were crammed into a couple of days after the rushed transition to online classes. Some of us couldn't even say goodbye. From different parts of New York, different states and different countries, you, the class of 2020, adapted to the new shift to complete your degrees as planned. There were so many moments when you felt you had no energy or motivation to keep going. But amid the crisis, you came out stronger. You made it, you graduated. As a junior who will finish her journey at NYU in the fall, I learned a lot from you, class of 2020. You're hopeful, you're full of dreams, you're resilient. The horizon is still uncertain, but one thing is clear: you have set an unforgettable precedent for future graduates to fight for their dreams no matter what.

Best wishes,

Alejandra

Alejandra Arevalo
Deputy Under the Arch Editor

With the after effects of quarantine and Zoom graduation still barraging meme pages, it's safe to say this graduating class send off has been anything but conventional. Class of 2020, your graduation might be delayed, yet this pandemic has been anything but a stain on your goodbye. You've shown that while thousands of miles away, you still hold onto your friendships, the inanimate objects that mark your first college adventures, your thesis projects and even the buildings that have evolved with you from the beginning of your first year at NYU. Even while out of reach, your class and its imprint on everyone who will return to campus will not be forgotten. Walk under the arch with pride when you can – we promise to not forget to warn every first year about the dangers of doing it. Thank you for all the superstitions, the advice and the lowdown on everything in between, when all I had was a welcome packet and a vague idea of what my major was going to be. No one can quite take your place.

You're stuck in my memories,

Sammy

Sammy Tavassoli
Deputy Under the Arch Editor

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Masters in Extracurriculars

Graduate students discuss being a part of all-university extracurricular activities and clubs in between their first and second graduations.

By **Sammy Tavassoli**
Deputy Under the Arch Editor

In graduate school, everything but academics seems to drift away. The student body in each department shrinks, social circles narrow, interests specialize and opportunities to create new meaningful bonds get pushed away by research deadlines and the need to stay fully committed to one's chosen field. It may even feel like the chance to explore new interests was all but lost in the transition from undergraduate to graduate programs. With most peers no longer close to

campus, graduate students may sense they're entering the professional world without any community to look back on.

For some graduate students who seek to reduce this sense of isolation, all-university clubs and organizations may provide a breath of fresh air away from research expectations, heightened academic rigor, monthly bills and other demands of adult life.

Seeking out fellow francophones, Harsimran Bhandal, a French Studies master's student, decided to participate in

the All-University French Club as a means of building more relationships beyond the small cluster of students in his program, whom he rarely met outside of class. Bhandal lived in graduate student housing and didn't have any classmates in his building as many graduate students choose to rent more affordable housing outside of Manhattan.

"I thought, you know, if I'm trying to make friends, I might as well try the undergraduate organizations," Bhandal said. "I just felt sort of lonely because there were so many undergrads on campus, and I hardly

saw my own classmates."

But even prior to social distancing, Bhandal encountered roadblocks in his plan to bond with the French club community. He felt his ability to make friendships with undergraduates was impeded by his status as a graduate student, and he often wished things could've been different regarding his friendships across the university.

"Before everything got canceled, it still felt kinda weird because a lot of people were so surprised that I was a grad student," he said. "I wish I could've been able to spend more time with other graduate students. There were department events, but they weren't with French undergraduate students, so that didn't feel inclusionary either."

For Bhandal, it seemed there was no middle ground for being able to interact with the NYU community. He felt disconnected from both his peers and the undergraduate students. As a first-year graduate student, Bhandal related better to the same-aged undergrads than his peers, some of whom were nearing 30. Fitting in became a challenge, and relocating to remote learning only worsened it.

"The 'NYU community,' that expression doesn't really mean anything to me," he said. "To me, it was like I went to my classes and then I went home, and I didn't really belong to a specific NYU community at all."

Bhandal found little support with integration on campus, compared to his undergraduate school, University of California, Berkeley. He attributed much of the difference to the lack of a closed-off campus and his perception of the colder, busier mentality of East Coasters, compared to the West Coasters he was used to.

Unlike Bhandal, industrial engineering master's student, Sridhar Krishna Saravana Prabhu had a largely positive experience

Sammy Tavassoli | WSN



in connecting with undergraduate students when he joined the All-University Taekwondo team. He initially joined to compare taekwondo techniques with those he'd picked up in karate classes and sought out the team to find his niche within the large student community.

"I took away what I wanted," Prabhu said. "My NYU patriotism has grown several folds and representing the college gives me new pride to boast."

Given the team-focused nature of his sport, Prabhu felt he had a chance to connect deeply with the undergraduate students, as well as a small number of other graduate students. Having an atmosphere that already felt inclusionary towards graduate students made fitting in easier, as did the fact that Prabhu was only a few years older than the majority of the undergraduate members himself.

Moreover, joining a team as opposed to a club focused on learning a skill or language likely made any age difference unimportant because of how much team bonding was encouraged through frequent practices and trips together for tournaments.

Prabhu's experience showcased how inclusivity in clubs could make a world of difference, as he, like Bhandal, initially had trouble creating meaningful relationships with those in his graduate program.

"In grad school, you don't make too many friends who want to hang out with you or do something fun," Prabhu said. "It has been a great experience so far with my taekwondo team. It was quality time with friends and a whole lot of new friends."

Vivek Patel, a first-year master's student at the NYU Center for Urban Science and Progress, experienced the middleground of age-gap isolation and undergraduate bonding through his avid involvement in Japanese cultural and language-learning clubs. Patel sought to immerse himself in Japanese to better interact with his sister's Japanese colleagues, who often visited their home in India.

He originally participated in Japanese Language Table, a program designed for conversational speaking in Japanese, but found the chats inorganic because of the pre-selected topics and the majority of members already being friends enrolled in the same undergraduate Japanese language courses. Eventually, he carved out a place for himself in the Japanese Cultural Association, where he could regularly converse with Japanese natives in a more relaxed environment. JCA caught his eye after he discovered the organization hosted Sakura Matsuri, the Japanese cherry blossom festival, annually in the spring.

"There were clubs at my old university, but there was never anything like a Japanese

club," Patel said. "I really wanted to organize Sakura Matsuri and practice speaking and listening to conversations of real Japanese people in a consistent way."

Patel looks back on his time at JCA with fond memories, even outside of club events and weekly meetings. While he sometimes felt at a distance from the undergraduate members, he was able to bond with them through Sunday Palladium Residence Hall brunches scheduled by the association.

"We were talking, eating, and we didn't have an agenda," Patel said. "Most of the time, it feels like people all have their own friends, but during the lunches, you had to talk to the person in front of you, so it was much easier for me."

Although Patel was amongst primarily undergraduate students, he didn't mind feeling out of touch with their pop cultural references as much as the fact that others sometimes considered his club activities strange.

"The long-lasting impact of these clubs is that I feel like I'm getting old," Patel joked. "Sometimes it's difficult to find common topics, especially with new pop culture and TV because I'm focused on other things. But, I do hope more graduate students do join clubs so it's not weird or seen as a stigmatized thing that you shouldn't be doing."

When opportunities for bonding with other students were encouraged, both Patel and Prabhu gained a sense of acceptance in the community. Their clubs and sports teams made an effort to push for interaction, and the barrier between them and the undergraduate members started to disappear. With a few other graduate students among them, their participation in student life activities began to feel more normalized, which Patel especially appreciated.

Unfortunately, since club and team sport events were cancelled amidst the pandemic, graduate students have not only lost time to spend with their new friends, but likely the once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to participate in certain club events or competitions specific to NYU.

Still, as their extracurriculars resume online, Patel and Prabhu both expect to continue their participation. Patel was disheartened by Sakura Matsuri's cancellation, but he currently enjoys regular chatting events with JCA members on the LINE app. Likewise, Prabhu has stayed connected with his team on Instagram. The team itself hosts weekly highlight posts to celebrate its members' accomplishments this past semester.

Bhandal, whose proposed master's thesis on Sikhs living in Paris has been put into jeopardy by travel restrictions, will focus on his studies for the time being. But, he did note that this kind of club-wide integration was exactly what he had been looking for but

Prabhu is all smiles after finishing a successful tournament at MIT with the taekwondo team last fall. (Photo by Alexandra Chan)



Industrial engineering master's student Sridharr Krishna Saravana Prabhu enjoyed connecting with undergraduate students on the All-University Taekwondo team, which offered him a place to both study taekwondo techniques and find a new niche on campus. (Photo courtesy of Sridharr Krishna Saravana Prabhu)



Vivek Patel is a one-year master's student at the NYU Center for Urban Science and Progress who joined the Japanese Cultural Association to regularly converse with Japanese natives. He wanted to improve his Japanese to better interact with his sister's Japanese colleagues, who often visited their home in India. (Photo courtesy of Vivek Patel)



unable to find.

"It would have been nice if they [club executive boards] advertised to say anyone can join, even grad students, but I think everything is so separated that I don't blame the undergrads," he said.

It was clear for Bhandal that while he received the language practice he'd hoped for, his clubs would not have a long-term impact on him, and he didn't believe he would have any impact on their members either. Upsetting as it was, he found it particularly sad given his lack of strong connections among his graduate student peers.

With short program durations and modest class sizes, being a graduate student can be an awkward place when the remainder

of the student community feels so much younger and further away. While the age gap will never disappear, it doesn't have to be a dealbreaker in forging friendships within student life communities, especially if the vast selection of NYU's student clubs and team sports continue making an effort to welcome more than just undergrads.

In graduate school especially, having an escape from academics becomes almost invaluable. For graduate students who have difficulty bonding within their programs, having a few friends in the undergraduate community can help them feel as though their time to experience student life isn't quite over.

Email Sammy Tavassoli at stavassoli@nyunews.com.

Coming to University and Into Their Own

A lot can happen in four years of college. These three students have been on the journey of coming out as transgender, and socially or medically transitioning in order to become their most authentic selves.

By *Anna-Dmitry Muratova*
Deputy Managing Editor

Intro

Dear reader, here you will find three stories of transgender and genderqueer students from NYU. All of them embarked on separate journeys of self-discovery and self-acceptance once they found themselves in college. They faced various challenges along the way and preserved in their goal of living at their most authentic selves.

A Hard Promise to Keep

For August, attending NYU was a dream come true.

They had come out as transgender at the beginning of their high school career. NYU's location in Greenwich Village, a hub for the LGBTQ+ movement and home to the Stonewall Inn, presented an exciting experience suited for August.

New York, and NYU by proxy, associates with a queer-friendly climate. At the university, such an environment was created by the clubs and alliances run by and for LGBTQ+ students and staff members from all across the spectrum. There's also a

graduation ceremony that celebrates queer students and The Gender and Sexuality Team at the Student Health Center, helping transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals transition, explore their identities in a safer environment and live as their authentic selves.

August, now a Steinhardt graduate, turned their tassel at Yankee Stadium last May. They had spent their last four years at NYU coming into themselves as an active member of NYU's LOBTQ+ community and the president of T-Party, a safe space on campus for TGNC individuals.

August saw NYU as their excuse to get as far as physically possible from LA, where they were stuck in an inhibiting home environment with their father, an avid conservative, and their mother, misinformed on LGBTQ+ issues. But, in preparation for the cross-country move, August had a difficult promise to keep.

"[My parents] said I was going to NYU if I don't medically transition," August said. "My tuition was on the line. I agreed. It was either go to my dream school or not go to my dream school."

With this, August left for New York. Regardless, they were excited for a change in the environment. But they never really intended on keeping their promise to their parents. They spent their first two years getting acclimated to college life, but the promise they made weighed heavy on their mind.

"My dysphoria was getting worse, and I was going into such deep depression watching all of my friends transition," August said. "Just knowing that there was this thing I could be doing for myself, but there was this arbitrary reason that I couldn't."

Junior year came and August pushed their fear of backlash from their family aside, concerned more with their own happiness and decided to start medically transitioning.

In preparation to medically transition, many transgender individuals decide to take either testosterone or estrogen to develop masculine or feminine traits, respectively, a procedure known as Hormone Replacement Therapy. After completing a blood test at the Student Health Center, it was determined that they were healthy enough to get on testosterone. Hormones can be taken in a variety of ways, including applying a hormone-induced gel on your shoulder or forearm and receiving intramuscular injections. August started taking hormones at the beginning of their junior year in the form of AndroGel gel pumps.

After August's parents found out through an insurance company notification, they took August off their insurance plan and presented an ultimatum: If August wanted to stay at NYU, they had to stop taking hormones. August refused and, eventually, their parents agreed to keep paying their tuition if they saw a therapist in the city.

After being on testosterone for nearly two years, August decided to get top surgery, a common type of gender-confirmation surgery which involves breast removal in order to create a masculine chest. With no medical insurance from their parents, August needed alternative payment methods to cover the

surgery. Luckily for them, NYU's Consolidated Health Plan partially covered it. The rest came from August's GoFundMe, August's Transition Fund. Many things changed for August since their surgery, even their relationship with their parents improved.

"Things are good between me and my parents right now, I think," August said with a smile. "A lot of their transphobia is seeded in fear that me being trans will hinder me in some way. It's up to them to do the work on other people instead of working on me. Working on other people being comfortable with me."

Taking Your Time

With a coffee cup in her hand, Remy Elliott looks serene. Her saturated pink lipstick seems to be exactly the right shade to match her pale purple blouse. Her mouth forms a slight smile. When she talks, her voice is soft.

Steinhardt Master's in Childhood Education student Elliott publicly came out as transgender during her senior year in college. Elliott began by coming out to her close friends only. Feeling their acceptance of her authentic identity, she made an announcement on Facebook for International Women's Day in March of 2019, hoping to reach her hometown friends, acquaintances and distant family alike.

"After years and years of careful thought and reflection, I'm so happy to finally announce that I am transgender!" Elliott's post reads. "From here on out, I'll be living my life as the woman that I've always been! I'd like to be called by my real name, Remy, and not my deadname ..."

Coming out later in her college career bore a lot of challenges for Elliott, externally and internally. While she began mentioning her struggle with her then-cis gender identity to friends around her sophomore year, coming out more publicly took time and seeking for validation from within. Elliott was worried she wasn't "transgender enough."

"For a long time, I was under the impression that I was trans but will never do





Happy International Woman's Day to me!! I'm trans!! Wow!!

After years and years of careful thought and reflection, I'm so happy to finally announce that I am transgender! Every day I am thankful for all the wonderful friends, family, and coworkers I have that have supported me through and into finally becoming who I really am. Words can't begin to describe how much all of your love and affection means to me. From here on out, I'll be living my life as the woman that I've always been! I'd like to be called by my real name, Remy, and not my dead name. Please address me using she/her/herself pronouns. If anyone ever needs anyone to talk to, whether to understand me or to ask for some help, I'm always just one message away!

And finally, since I wasn't sure how to end this, I'll just let Kasha do it for me!

<https://youtu.be/IXyAAMKKIKo>

3.

anything about it," Elliott said. "My dysphoria wasn't so bad that I felt like I was living a lie constantly. I could kind of make it through as a man."

But the pressure grew as the end of college approached. As a senior majoring in education, she had to have a teaching placement and was assigned to teach in a New York primary school last January.

Wishing to enter her new workplace as her real self, Elliott pushed herself to make a switch from masculine to feminine pronouns.

Contributing to the difficulties was the mismatch in the way Elliott felt and the way she was perceived from the outside. For many transgender individuals, there's a distinction between coming out and socially transitioning. For some, the two go hand-in-hand. For others, the choice to do one or the other can be more nuanced, involving difficult financial decisions, possible medical roadblocks including health conditions and considerations, lack of appropriate insurance coverage or potential judgement of those closest to the person. While social transitioning usually involves a name change, after which one's birth name becomes their "deadname," and a pronouns switch, medical transitioning involves a multitude of procedures, including hormone replacement therapy and top or bottom surgeries.

Even with her determination to finally come out as a trans-woman, she found it difficult to navigate the resistance in her immediate community. The closest of her friends made the switch with no issues but the majority of the community around her struggled with misgendering and deadnaming Elliott.

"Once I started going full-time [as a female] it got easier for people to come to terms with," Elliott said. "When I was fluid, people had a harder time wrapping their heads around it."

"After coming out, I didn't start transitioning immediately," Elliott said. "I kept wearing masculine clothes and went by my deadname for a while."

Later in her senior year, Elliott began experimenting with her appearance, practicing different makeup techniques she enjoyed and building a more feminine wardrobe, discovering what clothes she felt most comfortable in. Towards the end of her senior year, Elliott chose to begin HRT and started taking estrogen with the intention of feminizing her appearance further. As an NYU student, she had Comprehensive Healthcare Plan insurance through Wellfleet, which covered the cost of her HRT.

Fitting In With The People You Love

For the Transgender Day of Visibility celebrated on March 31, Somaya Gupta posted a picture of themselves ready to shave, with the shaving cream on their face and a razor in their hand.

"I have a distinct memory of being a kid and watching my dad shave his face and thinking 'that looks so fun, I wish I could do that,'" Gupta wrote in the caption. "But growing up as a brown 'girl', I quickly learned that shaving my face was not acceptable ... One incredible lesson I've learned through accepting my transness is that the instincts you had as a child ... were usually right ..."

Gupta, who is graduating from Steinhardt this year, identifies as genderqueer and uses any pronouns. Despite being a senior, Gupta finds themselves in the process of still figuring out the labels they feel most comfortable with and where they fall on the gender spectrum.

At some point during their first year, Gupta and their then-roommate went to a friend's dorm. The friend identifies as non-binary. On their way back, Gupta's roommate asked what non-binary meant and Gupta explained, ultimately wondering how people ever realized their genderqueerness.

"Does anyone ever feel like their gender?" Gupta asked. "You just say you're a girl because you were told that, right? But she was like 'no, you feel like a girl' and so panic ensued."

In their sophomore year, Gupta, still silently questioning themselves but leaving the thoughts about their gender identity on the backburner, joined "Shades," seeking a community of LGBTQ+ people of color who could relate to and understand their intersectional experience.

Throughout their time at NYU, they've been involved with LGBTQ+ advocacy as the president of "Shades" – LGBTQ+ Center's club for Black queer people and queer people of color – and serves as a campus ambassador for GLAAD. While advocating for others,

Gupta found themselves on their own journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance.

By their junior year, they had a lot of transgender and genderqueer friends, to whom they related a lot. This allowed them to begin self-discovery without the fear of losing their loved ones.

"Junior year, when I came back from winter break, we had our first 'Shades' meeting," Gupta said. "We all go around and say our names and pronouns. And I said to everyone, when I usually said 'she and her,' I'm not sure so I'll just go with any pronouns." After I said that, a couple of people were like 'woo, that's cool!'"

All of Gupta's friends were very supportive when they came out to them. So was Gupta's older sister, who helped Gupta educate their parents about genderqueer people to avoid possible misunderstandings for whenever Gupta might choose to share their identity with the rest of their family. When they did, their parents accepted their child.

"We were on vacation, I knew they would be more relaxed," Gupta laughed. "I was saying how in queer spaces it was very common for people to say their pronouns and my mom said 'well, what pronouns do you say?' I [said] 'yeah, I'm genderqueer,' and my mom was like, wow, shocker! She knew it was coming."

As a process of their coming out, Gupta began more openly expressing their queerness on social media. They started experimenting with their appearance, cutting their hair because having long hair no longer felt as though it was them. As of late, they have begun posting pictures of the way they changed thanks to the workouts

they have taken on to make their body suit their mind better. But medically transitioning by going on testosterone, even though desired, feels like a risk too high to take right now. Gupta's a musician and their voice might change in unpredictable ways if they were to start HRT.

"So I'm taking more time to think about it, what dosage I would need and finding the right doctor for my situation and stuff," Gupta said. "I would look forward to being more muscular, my hips being less prominent ... wider face and neck! I would look forward to mostly just people looking at me and not automatically assuming I'm a girl."

Outro

For each of these students, their path to becoming and presenting as themselves has been a complex one, and each of them finds themselves at a different place in their journeys.

Right now Gupta is getting ready to graduate, eagerly looking at their future and preparing new music for release. Their single "Do You Ever" will be available for streaming on May 15. August is currently living in New York as an openly trans person with their dog, Frank. They have fully recovered from their top surgery and model for We Speak Models. Elliott is continuing her journey with NYU as a graduate student, preparing to become an educator and feeling happy to have CHP insurance covering estrogen, which she started last spring as a part of her medical transitioning path.

Just like their transitions, the lives of August, Elliott and Gupta go on.

Email Anna-Dmitry Muratova at amuratova@nyunews.com.



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1. August came to NYU from a relatively conservative Californian household seeking a community of queer student they would fit into. (Photo by Katie Peurrung)

2. Remy Elliott began her social and medical transitioning during her senior year as an undergraduate student at Steinhardt. (Photo by Katie Peurrung)

3. A screenshot of Elliott's coming-out post on her Facebook page. Elliott's deadname was edited out. (Photo via Facebook)

4. Somaya Gupta uses any pronouns and currently identifies as genderqueer, although they're still exploring their belonging on the gender spectrum. (Photo courtesy of Somaya Gupta)

A Far-Flung Goodbye for NYU Shanghai Class of 2020

NYU Shanghai was the first NYU campus to delay classes and eventually shut down as part of the effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus. For a graduating class that was never allowed on campus for their final semester, this meant an unsatisfying and uncertain conclusion to university life.

By *Ali Zimmerman*
Staff Writer

Clarisse Pinel was in Shanghai for just 48 hours when she got the news that NYU Shanghai was to delay its opening, and immediately packed her bags to head to New York. Kennedy Cambra-Cho made it as far as Japan when she chose to turn around and fly back home to Hawaii. Abby Feehan extended her winter break vacation in Hanoi as she weighed the pros and cons of leaving behind a full apartment in Shanghai and returning home to the states.

"There's a lot of people that I'm not going to be able to see again or graduate with because we're all so spread out globally," Feehan said, an NYU Shanghai senior studying computer science. "There was no goodbye and now everyone is wherever they're going to be for life because we're graduating."

As coronavirus began to spread throughout China in early January, the idea of beginning school on time at the Shanghai campus grew less likely by the day. The start date was pushed back a week, then another week and suspended all together on Jan. 28. Students were given the option to travel to a different NYU abroad site to complete the semester or shift to remote classes. Dorms have remained open, though largely empty. Shanghai was the first of all NYU global sites to go remote while the rest followed suit in February and March.

After a scrambled series of flights, both Feehan and Pinel both landed at NYU's main campus, two weeks after the start of classes. By the time spring break rolled around, they had just begun to settle into routines, living in NYU dorms, completing their final courses partially online and partially in New York classrooms.

But on March 16, NYU made the decision to close dorms in New York. For Pinel, this meant packing her bags once more and returning back home to Chicago – and to an unsettling change of pace after a chaotic two months.

"The first few days home were pretty rough but now it's kind of fine," Pinel said. "I'm definitely sad that we did not get a last semester but now that everyone is in the same boat I've come to terms with it a little more."

For Feehan, the shutting down of dorms in New York brought with it housing déjà vu, rooms of lost things she could not fly back to retrieve.



home without even knowing it.

"I think my friends and I had been hoping that commencement would be a reason for us to be allowed to come back," Chon said. "But I don't think we'll be able to go back any time soon."

Now a common fate of classes of 2020 all over the world, a lack of a real graduation ceremony and any certainty surrounding job prospects are undeniable sources of anxiety and sentimentality of NYU Shanghai seniors.

For others, such as Abdaal who is a Pakistani citizen, the dream of staying in Shanghai beyond graduation has grown less viable.

"I'm pretty settled now in Shanghai and I thought this would be a good place for my first job," Abdaal said. "I had a part time job that I was hoping would translate into a full time thing, but now I've realized how hard it's going to be to find a job anywhere."

Abdaal stayed in his dorm over winter break working for an engineering company and chose to stay in Shanghai to work remotely from his dorm. He has since lost his job.

"I still don't know why but I think they realized they won't have the resources to hire any foreigners right now," he said.

As the semester draws to close, seniors straddle an uncomfortable space – looking toward the next chapter when universally, the future holds far more question marks than job offerings.

"I'm trying my best to find a job that I like," Chon said. "If things don't work out I've definitely considered going to grad school sooner than I had planned. But hey, things change. For now I've just conceded to take it day by day."

But while the coronavirus pandemic replaced all anticipated memories of a last spring semester with something far more surreal, it could not replace the community who made the end of college worth celebrating.

"It sounds really cheesy," Chon said, "but this has really made me appreciate my friends even more."

NYU Shanghai partially re-opened on April 27. Seniors were invited back to campus, but visa restrictions and dicy logistics of last-minute travel have meant that only a handful of students and faculty were able to return. A virtual graduation ceremony will still stand in place of an in-person event as the final chapter for the class of 2020.

Email Ali Zimmerman at underthearch@nyunews.com.



"My roommates and I decided we couldn't afford to keep paying rent in Shanghai but there was no way to ship all of that stuff back so now it's just gone," Feehan said. "That basically happened again in New York."

Interactive media arts major Jessica Chon was still at home on Long Island when she first learned in January that in-person classes were cancelled in Shanghai. She decided to stay put, completing her classes online on the other side of the world. The difference in time zone has proven an awkward adjustment.

"My earliest class is 9:45 p.m.," Chon said. "I've definitely become more of a night owl during this."

Several degree options at NYU Shanghai require seniors to complete a capstone project or thesis paper to graduate. From home, Chon has been able to adapt to online advising to help her complete her website and research paper, but for others, the process has been rockier.

For example, between her two moves, Pinel fell behind on her project and struggled to coordinate with her advisor back in

China and find a class on the New York campus that would complement her thesis requirement. She has finally settled on a topic, an analysis of crime data in Chicago, but completing the paper on time may still be a race against the clock.

But while the flurry of changes has certainly created logistical headaches, many lament that the most difficult aspect of this semester has been missing out final months together as the class of 2020.

NYU Shanghai class sizes tend to be small, around 300 per grade level and the campus itself is secluded from the city, unlike the Manhattan campus which is embedded within Greenwich Village. These factors lend themselves to create a tight-knit community within each class.

"At the Manhattan campus you can walk to class without seeing anyone you know but at Shanghai you always see 10 people you know every time you walk into a building," electrical engineering major Mustafa Abdaal said.

NYU Shanghai students are required to study abroad for at least one semester, so it is not uncommon to go a year or so without

seeing a friend on a different four-year path. Spring semester of senior year stands as the time to reconnect with friends and compare fresh passport stamps after long months apart.

While the Manhattan campus has its own 100 Nights Before Commencement countdown, seniors at the NYU Shanghai campus celebrate with the 88 Days to Commencement countdown. The number eight, pronounced 'bā' in Mandarin, represents wealth, good fortune and prosperity in Chinese culture.

The 88 day graduation countdown is a tradition many students look forward to throughout their college career. Throughout the three months, several events such as brunch on the Bund Waterfront, a glass of champagne with Chancellor Yu Lizhong and the much awaited day of free admission to Disneyland Shanghai draw graduating seniors together.

But this year, with all signs of campus-life frozen in Shanghai, students from the 2020 Commencement committee decided to host a livestream event over Zoom as an alternative to the traditional 88 day countdown events. There were student performers, live polling for Senior Superlatives elections and even a virtual toast with the Chancellor.

"It wasn't perfect but they put a lot of effort into creating a good moment for all of us," Abdaal said. "We were able to see everyone on the screen and we even took an awkward screenshot as a group picture. It was the closest thing we all have felt to that reunion we were hoping for."

Aside from improvised events to fill the gap of the usual 88 days, Shanghai 2020 students have found other ways to stay in touch and offer one another support through unusual times, via video call and text message. But there are individual milestones, like graduation photos in cap and gown or shaking hands on stage with school administrators, that may be impossible to reclaim.

In light of new visa restrictions, international students are not allowed into China, and many are wondering if they have said their final goodbye to a city they called

Transfers' Journal

A collection of short narratives that give an insight into the lives of transfer students, discussing the concepts of transferring from another university or another school within NYU, where it is often difficult to situate in.

Journal Entry #1

By Ashley Wu

Admitting that I was lonely felt like defeat. When I transferred to NYU in the fall of my sophomore year, I ignored all the warnings from my friends and relatives. "New York is the loneliest city," they said, their eyes narrowed in preemptive worry. I reassured myself while lugging all of my belongings from the suburbs of Georgia to my new apartment in the Lower East Side.

The week before school started, I spent my days trekking all the way from Avenue A to Midtown, stopping at bookstores along the way. My social anxiety rendered me too shy to go into other stores alone. I shuffled past store windows drawn out like theater sets, looked into windows displaying cardigans with walnut buttons and sequined evening dresses. Clothing stores and restaurants were intimidating. They were filled with chattering people who clustered around one another.

Bookstores, on the other hand, were quiet, except for the shifting of pages. I sought refuge in them whenever I could. I found comfort in the painted blue skies on the walls of Rizzoli. I found nirvana in the big Taschen books stacked on tables in The Strand. When the heat smogged up the pavement, I'd spend the whole day reading blurbs on the back of novels. Since all of my books were still back at my parent's house in Georgia, I restarted my collection. Then, before I knew it, school had started.

Everyone seemed to be stuck in their own bubble of ambition. As I grew more attuned to my own desires, I yearned for more friends to go into bookstores with, to share my ideas and stories. Acquainting myself with the city and its inhabitants was bloodletting. But eventually, I found myself standing in bookstore aisles across from other smiling faces.

Email Ashley Wu at awu@nyunews.com.

Journal Entry #2

By Brooke LaMantia

When I write a list of the things that make me Brooke, being a transfer student always ends up on it. That title, a transfer, doesn't feel like a huge part of my identity, but sometimes it is my whole one.

I transferred after my first semester of college, from a school an hour away from my home in Texas, to NYU. I was so lonely in Texas, despite being surrounded by people I knew really well, and I wanted to go somewhere and start over completely. I really wanted to build a new identity, and I didn't realize that decision would affect how I would look at myself in the future.

I think I'm braver now because I transferred. I am less afraid of taking risks. I cared a lot in high school about what everyone thought, which was part of the reason I decided to go to the University of Texas and not take a risk initially, but I realized people were giving me advice based off of the person I presented, not the one I wanted to be. I'm the person I want to be now, and I'm really thankful for that.

It was hard at first, but less so now. I have made great friends through the transfer community and studying abroad, but for a while I felt inferior to everyone who had been here from the beginning. But I met so many people who took so many different paths to get to NYU, who had their first semesters abroad, who traveled or modeled before, and it makes me feel less alone.

To me, NYU is the perfect place to transfer to because there is no mold for what makes an NYU student an NYU student. It's a part of all of our identities, no matter when we get here.

Email Brooke LaMantia at underthearch@nyunews.com.

Journal Entry #3

By Jake Capriotti

Students at my high school were all about comparing each other, mainly on our academic achievements. The main factor that determined our success was the college we would be attending. While we had our shining stars such as the Cornell National Merit Scholar, the MIT perfect ACT and the Stanford homecoming queen, a majority of us were bound to the Honors College at Arizona State, which was by no means an easy feat. However, the lowest rung on the ladder were the community college-bound: Chandler-Gilbert Community College to be more precise.

I was the one at the bottom of the ladder. To be honest, I went there because I had wanted to come to NYU since my first year but didn't have the credentials to even hope for admission, much less the finances. Transferring from community college was a gamble, but I tried nonetheless.

I dedicated the first two years of my college life to nothing but my academics, earning straight As almost every semester (with one loathsome B in math) and polishing my resume and portfolio to perfection. After two years of hard work and dedication, I was accepted to Tisch to study Film and TV.

Upon arriving in New York, I would come to understand that there is a certain level of anxiety that comes from moving 2,000 miles away from home. In spite of this anxiety, I became rather well adjusted to my new circumstances. I found my favorite pizza place, figured out the subway line, developed a loathing of tourists and more or less felt like I was finally at home. I was surrounded by people who shared common interests and aspirations to me. I was excited to go home for my first winter break to share my experiences with my hometown friends.

Upon my arrival, however, most of the relationships I had at home seemed to have disappeared and the crushing loneliness I expected to feel in New York was waiting for me in Phoenix. It was heartbreaking, but when I came to New York, I knew I had found my niche in Washington Square.

Email Jake Capriotti at jcapriotti@nyunews.com.

Journal Entry #4

By Kylie Smith

My first year of college was spent at a large Southern state school. In high school, I wanted the big name, winning football team and a traditional, campus-centric college experience. Spoiler alert: I ended up wanting the exact opposite. I truly don't think we know what type of environment we have the ability to flourish in if we aren't wholly thrown into it. By December of my first year, I knew that I wanted to transfer schools. This was not a well-timed decision – I made the conscious decision to transfer two weeks after spring semester transfer applications had closed. So I waited it out.

Upon transferring to NYU, I was unpreparedly thrown into many situations: dorming with three other girls who already knew each other, navigating the subway system and, decidedly worst of all, learning how the dining plan worked (I truly don't know why the dining plan system startled me as much as it did). The nature of New York City tends to consume you. I don't think anything can prepare you for this city. It takes time, but once you're on the same page with the city, everything becomes second nature.

To be a transfer student is to recognize discontent with your life and be strong enough to change it. When I meet another transfer student, I might not know anything about them, but on some level I can relate to them over this shared experience which can feel eerily similar for many of us. I once considered being a transfer student as one of the many hats that I wore. Daughter, sister, friend, girlfriend, transfer student. Now, after almost two years at NYU, I have assimilated to the cultures of New York City and NYU a bit more, but being a transfer student is something that will always be important to my story. If I wasn't a transfer student and hadn't known anything other than NYU, I would have never known exactly how inexplicably right NYU was for me.

Email Kylie Smith at underthearch@nyunews.com.

Journal Entry #5

By Rebekah Nelson

New York began as a pipe dream in Florida, where I grew up. Before NYU, I went to a small community college in Tampa, which lacked both journalism classes and a newspaper. As an aspiring reporter, it started to feel like transferring was my only option. I turned in several applications after my second year, and eventually settled on NYU, convinced I would live out the plot of a quirky Olsen twins movie. Plus, with two years of college experience, I figured it would be an easy transition.

But, no, I didn't live like Mary-Kate and Ashley, and of course the transition wasn't easy. The first week of classes introduced a few problems: never in my life had I lived away from my family or navigated a school without a campus. I realized I didn't know where or how to meet people. No one warned me that, as a transfer, I would feel like I was perpetually catching up. Everyone was already involved in their established friend groups from their first year, and transfer student events proved fruitless when there was a severe lack of attendance.

Suddenly, I felt the weight of everything I was missing. Unable to deal with the overwhelming loneliness, I laid in bed at night and sobbed silently, afraid to wake my roommate. I called my boyfriend back home every hour, terrified of the mess I made of my life. Even so, out of sheer determination (or stubbornness, maybe), I refused to go back on my decision. It was through a series of acts that I grew more comfortable with the city. I became a regular at my neighborhood coffee shop, and from there, learned my subway stops by heart. When my anxiety got bad, I figured out that Hudson River Park was the best place to go. Through it all, it was as simple as putting one foot in front of the other, until the fear eventually disappeared. Now I can't imagine living anywhere else.

See you never, Florida.

Email Rebekah Nelson at underthearch@nyunews.com.

Journal Entry #6

By Tricia Phillips

Transferring to NYU was chaotic, to say the least. I transferred from NYU Shanghai and was dropped into the center of another big city with little to guide me. As a transfer, I wasn't new enough for someone to hold my hand through the process, but I was still new enough to get lost four times on my way to class. People on the streets moved too fast for me to stop and catch my breath and talked too quickly for me to understand them. Every single time I began to get my footing, I felt like the rug was ripped out from under me.

I was overwhelmed. It reached a point where I spent all of my time in the safety of my room where nothing unfamiliar could touch me. I was too scared to venture out farther than a block or two from the dorm in fear of getting turned around or swept up into the ever-moving crowd. Instead, I watched everyone else from inside and told myself I was satisfied seeing the Empire State Building from my dorm window.

It took a few months for me to finally crack and admit that I wanted more than just the safety of my dorm. I decided to step out of the safe boundaries I set for myself to see New York up close. It took time – lots and lots of time – but slowly, I found my way around the streets of Manhattan. Transferring to NYU was a slow, confusing process, but soon I was no longer struggling to keep up with the pace on the sidewalk. I was the one setting it.

Email Tricia Phillips at underthearch@nyunews.com.

Glimpses of NYU's Construction Projects from 2016 to 2020

A look back on NYU's expansion and renovation efforts over the past four years.

By **Sara Miranda**
Features Multimedia Editor

If you're a member of the Class of 2020, you must have witnessed construction both on and off NYU's Washington Square campus. Here, in this photo series, we have compiled documentation of the university's efforts to move beyond our beloved square.

370 Jay St., NYU Tandon

The Class of 2020's journey at NYU commenced in the midst of renovations to 370 Jay Street on NYU's Brooklyn campus, which began in winter of 2014. Due to an increased need for instruction facilities for Tisch and Tandon courses held in Brooklyn, the renovated rendition of this building primarily consists of music studios, an auditorium and classrooms. In fact, the building occupies the former headquarters of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and was vacant for over a decade before NYU purchased it. The New York Transit Museum on the Lower East Side shed light on this lot's extensive history in 2015 through an exhibit, called, "The Secret Life of Jay Street."

The addition of studios for music projects as well as a performance wing seemed to attest to the growing desire of other New York schools to add technologically advanced facilities to their campuses. 370 Jay St.'s first floor opened its doors to the Center for Urban Science and Progress in December 2017. This building has also welcomed some programs from Tandon, Tisch and Steinhardt, including the Tandon Future Lab Incubators throughout the summer and fall of 2019. These renovations are scheduled to be completed by the end of summer 2020, and have been needed for some time.

In 2017, Tandon student Joe Kracz expressed to WSN how an expansion of Tandon's campus was needed, especially since the classrooms of Rogers Hall – Tandon's home base – are outdated and serve multiple purposes beyond classroom instruction, such as for storage room. Simultaneously, it seems that New York has now lost a historical site that was critical in the development of New York's public transportation system.

404 Lafayette St. and 708 Broadway, NYU Washington Square

The start of the 2018 spring semester was also the start of renovations to 708 Broadway and 404 Lafayette Street, home to one of Washington

Square's campus gyms. According to a recent report by WSN, this construction project is creating additional instruction facilities for the College of Global Public Health, such as an athletic center, co-working spaces, areas for research, kitchens and storage quarters. These renovations are scheduled to be completed by January 2021.

Although these facilities will be modified to serve the academic purposes of the growing Global Public Health community, GPH Dean Dr. Cheryl G. Heaton said that GPH's expansion plans are committed to maintaining the historic nature of this building.

181 Mercer St., NYU Washington Square

The controversial construction of 181 Mercer St. began in 2017 on the grounds of the demolished Jerome S. Coles Sports and Recreation Center. This building kickstarted NYU's construction initiative – the 2031 expansion plan – which aims to acquire copious amounts of real estate to build facilities for additional student housing, academic instruction and other institutional needs. At the cost of \$1.29 billion, 181 Mercer promises to include housing for both students and faculty, another athletic unit, classrooms and theaters.

While this building is designed to serve the many needs of the growing NYU community, not all members of the wider Greenwich Village neighborhood are welcoming this project with open arms. When the President of the Cooperative Board for 200 Mercer St. Andy Amer spoke to WSN in 2017, he expressed that neighborhood residents were worried that the project would affect the air quality and the ability for natural light to pass through the windows of buildings near the construction site.

The 181 Mercer St. building project also entails renovating the Mercer Street playground across the street. Renovation of the park began in January 2019 and was followed by a community meeting in March 2019. Some members of the neighborhood offered input for the park's redevelopment while others complained of an increased presence of mice in the neighborhood and disruptive noise levels.

The construction, put to a halt because of the COVID-19 outbreak in New York, recently resumed since it was recognized as an essential building project. 181 Mercer is intended to be completed by fall 2022.

Email Sara Miranda at smiranda@nyunews.com.



1. 370 Jay St. served as the former headquarters of the Metropolitan Transport Authority (MTA) and now houses instruction facilities for Tisch, Tandon and Steinhardt programs. (Photo by Htoo Min)

2. The construction plans for the School of Global Public Health's expansion entail additional spaces for instruction and research while preserving the building's historic charm. (Staff Illustration by Chelsea Li)

3. 181 Mercer St. promises to serve multiple purposes for the NYU community but has also been a point of controversy amongst Greenwich Village residents. (Photo by Corey Rome)

Found Goodbyes

- to the Class of 2020

A cento-technique poem compiling quotes from senior interviewees for this year's last Special Issue.

By *Maxine Flasher-Duzgunes*

Voices Editor

I would miss

4 a.m. on a Sunday,
how precious –
all those late nights
you need to stay up
for your life,
resilient,
surfing
the lack of sleep,
circling Oxford commas.

I wouldn't change it for the world.

Something familiar –
weekends out to soccer games
the fluorescent basement dungeons of Bobst
the hamstring-debilitating steps of Kimmel –
probably lost
writing in a time like this,
a few years of my life,
three years
editing the last thing
you become,
that's pretty scary.

And here's to a chance
to come out –
growth and mistakes –
lingering
from the office,
seeing professors,
hearing lectures,
gaining advice.

Saying goodbye
isn't a daunting feeling

even if it means
we walked home
as a student,
stepped out into the real world
when the sun was rising.

You're still young
class of 2020
the strongest
yet.

Email Maxine Flasher-Duzgunes
at mduzgunes@nyunews.com.

Charlie Dodge | WSN



Objects We Hold Through Time

A look at the objects that tell the stories of our histories, growth and relationships.

By **Celia Tewey**
Exposures Editor

Objects tell our histories. Whether they have been with us for weeks, years or months, they have the ability to define us in subtle ways that show our personalities, strengths, weaknesses, hopes and dreams. For many of us, objects stick with us no matter what we go through as we hold them close to us through time. They remind us of stages in our life of maturity, dreams, aspirations and certain friendships. The following seniors look back on certain objects that defined their time at NYU.

Palak Agarwal, a graduating NYU senior in the School of Professional Studies, recounts her most prized possession. While it's not an object one might expect, it symbolized a new stage in her life: her first paycheck.

"It may sound crazy, but I still have my first paycheck from my on-campus job at NYU Athletics pinned to my wall," Agarwal said. Her first job was as a marketing assistant, dealing with social media platforms alongside the varsity team coaches. Agarwal says that the job taught her accountability and teamwork, seeing the many processes that went into a single game.

Agarwal recounted when she received this check, realizing it was a critical transition into adulthood. The job made her financially responsible for major things in her life such as paying rent by herself.

"Having a job for the first time in my life truly empowered me," Agarwal said.

Agarwal also notes how this job was an extremely memorable part of her NYU experience, something that was unfortunately cut short due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Working at NYU Athletics has definitely been one of the most special parts of my NYU journey & has played a big role in making me the person I am, as I walk out of NYU today," Agarwal said.

For Giuliana Mancini, a Tisch drama senior, her time at NYU has helped shape her into the person she wants to be. She

cherishes her acting notebook that she has had since the fall of her junior year. The book is covered in stickers of her aunt's state senate campaign, her trip to London, when she got to vote for the first time and one she found on the street reading "mean people suck." The notebook opens up to a message from a favorite acting professor on a day she was feeling discouraged: "you're wild. I've seen it. Don't let anyone forget it." For Mancini, the book is a powerful piece of self-history and motivation.

"It's one of those things I really cherish because it was from such a time of growth and change for me," Mancini said. "That has been the whole college journey for me, trying to grow into the person that I want to be rather than the person I thought I was supposed to be."

Similarly, Lani Kording, a dramatic writing major at Tisch holds close to her a copy of "Angels in America," a play that has inspired her from the beginning of her journey as an artist.

"It inspires me each and every time I revisit it," Kording said. "The play that first made me want to become a playwright."

Kording reminisces on how the play has set her own personal goals in motion.

"Seeing it, and rereading it for the millionth time, really reminded me why I love theatre so much and how much NYU has helped me grow as an artist."

While the objects we cherish can serve as relics of our personal past, they can also remind us of the times we share with others. Often it's the most frivolous objects that remind us of the most special moments we had.

Victoria Provost has a special memory of a pineapple. The CAS English senior recalls the time she teamed up with her friends in her first year to plan a surprise party for their friend, whose birthday is on April Fool's Day.

"Our plan involved a staged kidnapping, silly string, aluminum foil and about fifty-three pineapples," Provost recalled. "Every day leading up to the big day, we placed numbers around for him



to find, counting down to April 1st, and we would leave our calling card – the pineapple – along with them, creating a huge build-up of anticipation."

She described the day where half of her friend group staged a kidnapping and took her friend to dinner, while the rest of them stayed behind, covering his room and belongings in aluminum foil and Saran Wrap.

"We awaited his return with several cans of silly string and our piece de resistance – a pineapple birthday cake," Provost said. "The prank cemented our friend group, which has stayed close ever since, and gave us a great college story that I'll never forget."

With the year coming to an early close, seniors find their last goodbyes to their friends, roommates, teachers and collaborators cut short. At this time, we choose to hold certain things close to us, and bring certain things home as we say goodbye to the campus, inviting us to ask ourselves: What did you bring home with you now, and what does it say about you?

Email Celia Tewey
at ctewey@nyunews.com.



1. Victoria Provost smiles as she holds a pineapple, reminded of a birthday prank she played on her friend in freshman year. (Photo courtesy of Victoria Provost)

2. Giuliana Mancini, a Drama student in Tisch, holds her worn acting notebook covered in stickers. (Photo courtesy of Giuliana Mancini)

3. Lani Kording, a Dramatic Writing major in Tisch, holds a hardcover copy of the play "Angels in America." (Photo courtesy of Lani Kording)

4. Palak Agarwal holds a blank check, emblematic of her first paycheck from NYU Athletics. (Photo courtesy of Palak Agarwal)

Illustrations by Celia Tewey

NYU Class of 2020's

Commencement

That Never Was

Seniors share their thoughts about celebrating commencement in their own ways and their words to their fellow graduates.



Tatianna Sims
Tisch

By *Alejandra Arevalo*
Under the Arch Deputy Editor

After seeing that many colleges were canceling their commencement ceremonies, NYU seniors were getting ready for the worst. When an email was sent saying that commencement was postponed indefinitely, their disappointment sank deep. But that hasn't stopped them from commemorating their achievements from home.

WSN talked to a handful of seniors about what they were looking forward to the most about commencement before it was postponed, the ways they will be celebrating graduation from home and their advice to their fellow classmates.

Watch the video to hear their thoughts.

Email *Alejandra Arevalo*
at aarevalo@nyunews.com.

Watch
Video
Here:





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