
Subject: Welcome Back – What Did You Miss?

Date: Monday, August 24, 2020 at 9:59:53 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: President Lugo

To: AllStudents

CC: All-faculty-staff

Dear Queens Community,

A warm and excited welcome to the academic year for all our new students and a hearty welcome back to our returning students.

These are certainly among the most challenging times any of us has ever experienced, and I can only imagine the mix of emotions that you as global citizens and students are experiencing as we start the next academic year in the 163-year history of our great university. Armed with hope, excitement, nervousness, and ample amounts of concern, we approach the fall semester virtually for the first time. While we would all prefer to be on campus, rest assured that our faculty have worked diligently this summer to prepare robust course offerings in a virtual format and our dedicated student engagement and support staff stand ready to work with each of you in a seamless way to support your academic, professional, and wellness experience. Our entire faculty and staff are here to ensure that you have a successful fall semester that is full of engaging intellectual experiences and we are all working hard to prepare to welcome you back to campus in early 2021.

From the time we moved to remote learning in the spring until now, I continue to see regular examples of how our Royal family demonstrates resilience, agility, and excellence in the face of adversity. I am so impressed. While we managed through a global pandemic this summer, many of our students, with the support of our dedicated faculty and staff, secured meaningful and exciting experiences that set them on their chosen life path. Here are a few stories that caught my attention:

- Ariana Perez '21 spent her summer serving as an education access and equity intern with Greater Charlotte Area Mutual Aid, a pandemic-response organization founded by college students.
- Business major Luke Erwee '22 returned home to South Africa and virtually interned for The Georgia Games, opening up new opportunities in marketing and design.
- Biology major Natalie Galluzzo '22 interned at Possumwood Acres Wildlife Sanctuary, getting hands-on experience in the zoo industry.
- Ariana Garcia-Franquiz '21 landed a coveted Google internship where she learned valuable lessons by contributing to group projects.
- Finance major Justin Malone '21 interned with Bank of America as a global risk analyst, that resulted in a full-time job offer.
- Cristina Cabrera Barrientos, Jordan Grantz, Elvis Menayese, Itzel Garcia Ruiz, Naomi Tellez-Duran, Margaret Thacker, Mona Dougani, Jeannette Muhammad, and Ariana Barnes covered the Democratic National Convention last week and landed a lead political story on WFAE.org.

- While their seasons were cut short, our men's and women's swim teams still managed to rack up major honors. The College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America (CSCAA) selected 30 Queens swimmers to receive All-American honors. Additionally, Polina Lapshina was named the Division II Honda Athlete of the Year and Jan Delkscamp and Rachel Massaro earned CoSIDA All-American honors.
- Queens professor Mike Wirth and Queens alumni helped plan and paint the Black Lives Matter mural in the middle of Uptown Charlotte, just three miles from the heart of campus.
- A team of Queens students produced a six-minute [documentary](#) in support of an artist collaboration led by the Japan-US Friendship Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the International House of Tokyo.
- The McColl School of Business re-launched Food for Thought as a virtual series to provide timely, inspiring, and practical tools and messages to help people and organizations handle their response to the spread and impact of COVID-19.

I know there are so many more examples. Your stories and successes inspire me and show me how truly unstoppable the Queens spirit is. Royals always find a way and I am confident that more amazing things are about to happen at Queens this semester.

Despite the surrounding chaos and disruption, I hope you, like me, will rely on our Queens community for centering and strength. Now, more than ever, we need to invest in and support each other. Together, the Queens Community will overcome the challenges presented this year and as a result we will arrive on the other side of the pandemic an even stronger community.

Best of luck this semester. I know you will rise to the challenge and I cannot wait to see you back on campus in the not-so-distant future.

Sincerely,
Dan Lugo