

# THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISER



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## News from OISSS

*by Marc W. Polite*

Greetings, and welcome back to The City College of New York. Despite the ongoing reality of the pandemic, many of you have persisted in continuing your education. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information to CCNY's International Students with vital information relevant to their college experience.

SAVE THE DATE:

#### **Life After Graduation Workshop-**

Tuesday, November 10th, 2020- 12:30-1:45pm

#### **The Fall 2020 OISSS Virtual Meet And Greet-**

Thursday, November 12th, 2020- 12:30-1:30pm. New students only. More info will be sent via e-mail.

# Student Interview:

## Isabela Vieira

Also as part of our Fall 2020 issue, we hear from continuing student Isabela Vieira. Isabela is studying to complete a Bachelor's Degree in Economics.

**OISSS:** When did you start your studies at CCNY?

**IV:** I started my studies at CCNY in August 2018 as a transfer student.

**OISSS:** How has your remote learning experience been? How do you feel that an online course load has impacted your study?

**IV:** The Spring 2020 semester was tough, we had to switch to online classes in the middle of the semester and professors had to re-organize their entire schedule to accommodate the "new normal". It was a bit confusing at first, some professors were not at all familiar with the ins and outs of the technology we were supposed to use for online classes. On the other hand, I've had a very positive experience with my Fall classes so far. Both professors and students are more comfortable with online courses, and things are running smoothly this semester. Although I miss in-person interactions with my classmates, not having to commute to campus has saved me both time and money, which is great. I also have more time for myself and for studying on my own.

**OISSS:** Describe your experience transitioning from an in person mode of instruction to being fully online within days.

**IV:** It was quite a shock when we had our Spring break earlier than scheduled to allow professors to get acquainted with the technology we were going to use for the rest of the semester. I remember it was that time of the semester that we were preparing for our midterms. It was very confusing at first, professors had to reschedule examinations, homework due dates, and so forth. Some professors were able to adapt better than others; I remember having a very positive experience with my Philosophy class, not so much with Physics.



**OISSS:** There was a lot of uncertainty over the summer with rapidly changing policies from SEVP regarding the fall semester. How were you able to navigate these changes and what were your concerns or feelings during this time?

**IV:** It was quite stressful. I remember when ICE announced that international students taking all classes remotely would have to leave the country - it was nerve-racking. I started to worry about my apartment lease, my belongings, and all the plans I had for my life after graduation. I experienced a lot of anxiety during that time, but I tried not to panic. I was so relieved when they rescinded that policy!



**OISSS:** Have you visited campus since moving to the online model? If so, how did you stay safe during your time on campus?

**IV:** Yes, I have visited campus a couple of times during the Summer, but not for anything related to school. I live about 20 blocks away from campus, it's a pretty pleasant walk when the weather is nice. I mostly went there on my own to relax and read in the grass at Shepard's lawn, always practicing social distancing and keeping my mask on at all times. It was interesting to see how the community was using the campus for recreation since there were no students; I remember seeing a lot of kids playing outside and people bringing their dogs to play in the grass. You didn't see much of that when the campus was functioning normally.

**OISSS:** What have you learned to appreciate differently after this experience?

**IV:** I learned to appreciate little things, such as taking random walks around the neighborhood and enjoying the few times I got to see any people. It's crazy to think that for my whole life I have taken these things for granted and all of sudden I could not do these things anymore. I live by myself, so when classes moved online and everyone was in strict quarantine it became very lonely. I got to spend more time getting to know my neighbors and the people who worked at my local grocery store, that's a habit that I want to keep for life.

**OISSS:** Have you picked up any new hobbies during this time?

**IV:** I have always liked to cook and read and those were the things that I did the most during quarantine, but I also tried to learn how to paint (not very successful at that I must say) and have got into reading tarot cards. I also started to write again. I loved to write short stories when I was a teenager, but after I moved to the US for college I sort of abandoned that hobby. It was nice and refreshing to give it another try and find out that writing was as pleasant as I remembered it being.

**OISSS:** What would your ideal Spring 2021 at CCNY look like?

**IV:** I'll have graduated by the Spring of 2021, but I really hope that this whole COVID-19 crisis come to an end in the next couple months.



## Student Interview: Maialen Ugarteburu

In this issue, we also hear from Maialen Ugarteburu, a Ph.D student in Biomechanical Engineering.

**OISSS:** When did you start your studies at CCNY?

**MU:** August 26th, 2020

**OISSS:** How has your remote learning experience been?

**MU:** My remote learning experience has been much better than I expected. The online format is working very well, and the university offers many facilities to follow the classes online, such as recordings, extra material etc. I have seen that online classes are also a great opportunity to invite international lecturers to join the class and give us a talk. I really feel like the online format is great and that it is working that well because professors and students are interested in the materials.



**OISSS:** Describe your experience obtaining a visa during the pandemic.

**MU:** Obtaining a visa during the pandemic has been a stressful process. The appointments for the visa were postponed due to Covid-19, however, I was able to get an emergency appointment to get my visa prior to the start of the classes. At all times I was lucky to have the support of other international students of the university and I had the assistance from the Office of International Students of CCNY.

**OISSS:** How do you feel that an online course load has impacted your study?

**MU:** The online format is giving us a lot of facilities to combine our work with classes, and I feel like we all have gained autonomy, organization and adaptation skills during these times.

**OISSS:** You are currently registered in a hybrid course in accordance with the F-1 regulations for initial students. How do you stay safe during your time on campus?

**MU:** Working on campus during these times is very safe. The university offers a daily symptom checker that must be completed to access campus, and we all keep distances and wear masks. I think that we all are making a big effort to keep it this way.

**OISSS:** What have you learned to appreciate differently after this experience?

**MU:** This experience has made me learn from new experiences, and appreciate the good things in such unfortunate events. I feel lucky to have friends here that are also international students because we all support each other and make us feel at home.

**OISSS:** Have you picked up any new hobbies during this time?

**MU:** During Covid-19 I picked up a hobby that I used to enjoy. I started painting a lot and it feels so good to go back to the things that you used to love.

**OISSS:** What would your ideal Spring 2021 at CCNY look like?

**MU:** Unfortunately, the Covid-19 seems to take longer than expected, so I would love to continue with this format and ensure the safety of all professors and students. I really think that this format can work if we all make an effort.

# Socially Distant Activities to Do Around NYC

Looking for safe activities to do during this time is a challenge. Despite the ongoing reality, there are still activities that you can take part in around New York City in the Fall. For those who want to venture out safely, the following are some suggestions:

Jet Skiing on the Hudson River-  
<https://www.seathecity.com/>

Camping under the stars on Governor's Island

Biking- Central Park, (Citibike bikeshare program-  
<https://www.citibikenyc.com/>

Drive in Movie Theaters-  
<https://skylinedriveinnyc.com/>

Kayaking in New York Harbor



## Student Highlight: Malesa Sammy

The Department of International Student and Scholar Services extends its congratulations to Malesa Sammy.

Malesa is a Chemical Engineering Major at the Grove School of Engineering. She is the recipient of the AX Schmidt Scholarship, a highly competitive scholarship for undergraduate Chemical Engineering majors. This scholarship is named after Alois X Schmidt and funded by the Grove Foundation. Andy Grove, a student of Prof. Schmidt, endowed the AX Schmidt Scholarship in memory of the professor. The application process involved a biographical essay, an unofficial transcript, and a statement of financial need.

Congratulations to Malesa for being the recipient of this scholarship.





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OR THROUGH OUR

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YOU CAN CALL 1-646-558-8656 AND ENTER  
MEETING ID 2126508106

MONDAY - FRIDAY  
10 AM - 4 PM



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