

Rate My Professor LIVE!

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An up-close and personal event of "Rate My professor Live" was held at the Student Center on March 13; students Clubs organized the event to initiate a dialogue between students and professors.

Christopher Brown, business management and finance major and communication studies and biology minor, is the President of The Business Leadership Society (BSL). He worked in collaboration with the National Association of Black Accountants and the BC Accounting Society to bring a discussion about rating professors. He explained that the idea of this event stemmed from issues that have been present for a while. "Students had concerns on how to approach a professor; they wonder: 'what do they want from me?' It's actually an event to meet their needs, so this had to be done," said Brown.

This is the first event hosted at BC that revolves around the idea of giving feedback to professors about how students feel about them, and allows professor to respond.

A panel of five professors, Professor Wormsby, Kass, Bassell, Manlow and Fox, from the Economics Department came to participate in this debate.

Before it started, Professor Manlow, assistant professor for the Department of Economics said, "I expect dialog about some of the benefits, problem and issues. A lot of the professors are suspicious of 'rate my professors' because anybody can say what they want. I think it's empowering for students, but it always depends on how it's used."

The event started with each professor giving their opinion about the website ratemprofessor.com. Wormsby expressed the importance to view the website as a tool to evaluate the teacher for what students will get out of the class, to learn, as oppose to

finding professors who give good grades and less homework. Professor Kass, who also shared his opinion said, "don't rely on it". On the other hand, Fox pointed out the importance of remembering that the rates and comments on the website exclude the random sample. Bassell also brought up the fact that there are thousands of students but only 30 to 50 ratings. "It is not even statically relevant" as he said. Fox thinks "Ratemyprofessors.com is a terrible thing."

The rest of the event consisted of the interaction between students and professors. Students were allowed to bring comments, questions, and observations.

What made the event so significant was that it was a live debate of what students usually write in secret on the website, www.ratemyprofessor.com.

Though professors can be skilled with handling students, they don't always know how to recognize how a student really views them and their teaching.

During the event Fox quoted Thomas Edison who said, "Genius is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." He made the point that doing well in class is "far more depend on what you do not what we [professors] do."

Wormsby, in agreeing with Fox, explained that when he introduces himself to a class he says "what you give, you get." He believes that professors can only "explain the concepts, draw connections, and make it interesting." Student share of personal work should be 90% of the overall work.

Alastair J. Klaithe, member of the Business Leadership Society, talked about unpleasant experiences she has had with Core classes. Students have to take Core classes as a curriculum requirement, though they might not want to take the class. Klaithe feels that in these classes, students get stuck with teachers who do not want to teach the class at all, and students pay the consequences of this.

Wormsby's replied "it gets back to you; you have to make it relevant for yourself."

She also brought up the question of what students are supposed to do when professors tell the class everybody is going to fail from the very beginning. "That's playing bad teaching. Go talk to the Chair Department." said Kass. Kass stated it is up to the students who want to make the best out of the worst situation.

Fox took the opportunity to address complaints that teachers have about students. One being how students pack their belongings before class is finished. Fox also stated he does not like it when students come in late, and walk in and out of class. Even though he acknowledged these facts on the difference of generation, he believes that it is "rude."

Though at times capricious, the discussion allowed students to openly express what their concerns were on how to come around the flaws of certain professors, how to understand courses, and achieve good grades.

"Overall it was a good event, it got student to look at teacher in different perspective, overall it came to an agreement and understanding of how education should effect us here at Brooklyn College" said, Maritza Parker- Ortiz, education major and senior.

The attendance of five professors is an indicator of commitment for Bassell. He also said, "We plan to do it again, we want to have an open dialogue with students, and we're hoping to have more students and attendance"