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International Fest controversy: Students petition to stop festival merger

By SIERRA DUNNE

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Some of the most celebrated and well known traditions of Science and Math are the cultural fests that happen each trimester. Every year much work and preparation goes into making Africa fest, Latin America fest, and Asia fest happen.

These fests are run and supported by a variety students and organizations on campus, including cultural clubs such as Asian Cultures Club, Hispanic Cultures Club, HOPE, and NIA.

These traditional events became threatened earlier in September, when students began hearing rumors that there would be no fests this year.

When these rumors were proven to be true, it came as a total surprise to the entire student body, including Student Government members and cultural club officers.

This caused backlash against the Student Life and administration members who were involved with the decision-making, because no students were asked for input on affairs that are almost completely student run.

International fest has been a discussion point in the administration for a couple of years, and there were a variety of reasons they decided to implement this new event in place of the three main traditional fests.

Kevin Cromwell, who has been an Asian Cultures Club sponsor for 5 years and Student Government sponsor for 12 years, explained "student workload, the stress involved with the fests, and the limited availability of the auditorium were all factors that influenced us to make a change."

Last year the lack of representation of other cultures also became a point of conversation as students from

other cultural backgrounds wanted more festivals to celebrate their heritage.

On top of more festivals being requested, this year there were only two available weekends open for the three festivals that typically happen.

Administration believed that the creation of International fest, which would only be one weekend long and represent all world cultures, would solve this problem.

They also believed it would help create a better audience turnout for all acts, since some fests are typically more popular than others, and the fest would not run the risk of getting cancelled.

The fact that students were not informed or consulted about this major change led to outrage among current and past students alike, so they decided to turn their anger into action.

An online petition was drafted by various SG members and club officers

which detailed the reasons that International Fest should not take place and even included a number of quotes from former students who led or participated in fests.

It stated that "International festival will take away opportunities from students to organize and collaborate with each other," among a variety of other reasons why students thought the new fest was a bad idea.

Over 20 different campus clubs and organizations were listed on the petition as supporters of its agenda.

The petition, which spread quickly through the NCSSM social media realm, proved to be successful with over 700 signatures.

Due to the size of the support against international fest and the work of student leadership, the petition was taken into serious consideration by administration.

They eventually agreed to

keep the three fests this year since students had already put a lot of work into them before the school year had even started.

Next year, however, students can expect to see a change in the way that the fests are organized, and it's more likely that something similar to International fest will take place rather than the three traditional fests that students have known and loved for so long.

However, after discussion students are more optimistic for this change.

"I'm excited to work with the coalition of festivals in preparing all the festivals this year and for planning for a possible International festival next year," said senior ACC officer Pranev Kemburu.

"It's a great opportunity for us to come together and represent our cultures in the way that we choose and make happen."

Unis attend People's Climate March, largest climate rally

By SIERRA DUNNE & CHI CHI ZHU

Editor-in-Chief and Staff Writer

The city of New York was strangely calm in the early hours of Sunday, Sept. 21. The sky was dreary and overcast, the streets were roamed by more pigeons than people.

This strange peace was ephemeral, however, with chaos being foreshadowed by the 6:30 a.m. arrival of a huge coach bus labelled in big block letters, "NC-8."

This bus, filled with bleary eyed high schoolers and senior citizens, held 13 NCSSM students and a teacher eager to travel through nights to the biggest climate march in history, the People's Climate March.

That first bus was soon followed by almost 500 other buses coming from all over the country, traveling with school groups and religious groups and activist delegations of all kinds.

People also came in a va-

riety of other ways, and one group even walked from Los Angeles to New York to get to the march. The march itself was organized by multiple environmental activist groups including 350.org, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, and many more.

The march commenced along the blocks beside Central Park West between 65th street and 86th street.

Protesters began gathering hours ahead of the start time of 11:30 a.m. to meet and talk with others, plan their course of action, and secure their place in this historic event.

Hopeful organizers aimed to make this event the largest

climate march in history, and set a goal of 100,000 participants.

The aim was to make this event the largest climate march

against climate change and for better climate policy.

The march was specifically chosen to take place on Sept. 21 because just two days



Protesters flood Central Park West, promoting sustainability, scientific awareness, and corporate responsibility. Student groups and those affected by climate change were among the largest members of the crowd.

in history, and the goal was to have 100,000 people participate.

There were also coinciding events planned all over the world, a stance in solidarity

later, heads of state met at the UN for a summit on climate change.

This march was a message to those leaders: Climate

change is real, it's happening fast, and the people want action against it.

The march was a huge success in terms of turnout, with the final count of participants being over 400,000. On top of that, the final count for global solidarity events was 2,808 events in 166 countries, where people of all ages and all walks of life showed their support to the movement.

Because of the unexpected NYC turnout, the latter half of the march had to disband eight blocks before the planned end. NCSSM students marched only a fraction of the marching distance because of this, but the heat of the march still had it's impact.

Junior Anya Quenon, among student group from NCSSM, said of the march, "Attaining sustainability is one of my passions, and has led me to pursue a career in sustainable engineering. Being among over 400,000 who feel the same had a certain exhilarating intensity I doubt I'll ever be able to describe."

