

BCC scholar produces podcast about COVID-19 pandemic's impact on art and culture in New Bedford

Bristol student Kwang Arnzen, of Westport, recently graduated as a Commonwealth Honors program scholar this May with a degree in liberal arts: behavioral and social sciences and will transfer to Bridgewater State University to pursue a degree in sociology with a minor in audio production.

This past semester, Kwang put both interests to perfect use in his capstone Honors program project by interviewing representatives of six New Bedford cultural organizations via Zoom, including local artist Alison Wells, the Dream Out Loud Center, Buttonwood Park Zoo, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the New Bedford Art Museum and 3rd EyE Unlimited, to discern how the COVID-19 pandemic was impacting the city's cultural landscape. For the project's production, Kwang synthesized more than four hours of interviews into an hour-long podcast, complete with his own musings and original music to weave the content into a unified, engaging narrative. Kwang's podcast will also be added to the archival holdings in the special collections at the New Bedford Public Library.

To listen to Bristol student Kwang Arnzen's podcast "A Snapshot of New Bedford Culture in the Time of Covid-19," please click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-CsGahWfeM>

In addition to strengthening his professional skills in audio production, the project provided Kwang with a better knowledge of the culture of New Bedford as well as how the city's cultural organizations have adapted and thrived throughout the pandemic. Throughout producing the podcast, Kwang gained a

deeper respect for the great collaboration and cultural symbiosis that exists in New Bedford.

Kwang describes the project and his participating in Bristol's Commonwealth honors program as an opportunity to "love learning and love thinking critically, sociologically, philosophically and creatively." He also credits several Bristol faculty members with encouraging him to pursue the rewarding Honors program.

"It was a true pleasure to work with Kwang on this project," said Dr. Colleen Avedikian, Bristol Faculty Member and Kwang's Commonwealth Honors Program Mentor. "He chose this podcast as a way to really challenge himself to research a topic that he deeply cares about and I was continually impressed by his high level of commitment and creativity throughout its development."

The Commonwealth Honors program (CHP) at Bristol Community College offers tremendous opportunities now and in the future for highly motivated students looking to challenge themselves intellectually. CHP allows students, regardless of their discipline or program, to create customized academic experiences that meet their career interests and needs. By working one-on-one with faculty, participating students develop intellectually stimulating experiences and projects that point towards future goals.

For more information about Bristol Community College's Commonwealth Honors program, please visit <http://www.bristolcc.edu/honors> or email Honors Program Coordinator denise.dimarzio@bristolcc.edu.