

BMCC Commons

Fall 2021

THE NEWSLETTER OF BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Team Projects Earn BMCC President's Fund Awards

The BMCC community has been eagerly waiting to find out which projects are receiving funding through the President's Fund for Excellence and Innovation. The fund was established in December 2020 through the generous and ground-breaking donation from philanthropist and author MacKenzie Scott in recognition and support of the exceptional mission and success of BMCC.

The President's Fund was established to support BMCC's efforts to improve student learning and success, enhance research and knowledge creation, and advance socioeconomic mobility through the transformative power of education. In early 2021, the entire college community was invited to submit project proposals that adhere to the guiding principles of the fund and support the mission and vision of BMCC and meet one or more of the thematic areas of need, which include addressing food and housing insecurity, improving student learning and engagement, incorporating career development opportunities, and reducing social and economic equity gaps for students.

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BMCC Alumni Lead by Example

From public health to teaching to economics, graduates influence society's direction.



Dr. Sandra Lindsay (Nursing, '94), the first person outside clinical trials in the U.S. to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, helps raise vaccination rates nationwide.

Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC/CUNY) alumni make a significant impact in their communities and fields. **Sandra Lindsay** (Nursing, '94), immigrated to New York from Jamaica at age 18 and became a naturalized citizen the same year she was named valedictorian of the BMCC Nursing class.

Fast forward to December 14, 2020, and Dr. Lindsay—she went on to earn a Doctor of Health Sciences from A. T. Still University—is seated front and center in a livestreamed press conference, the first person in the United States, outside of clinical trials, to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

"My message is still that of hope," said Dr. Lindsay when she received her second shot on January 4, 2021 and reinforced her commitment to raise vaccination rates in communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Dr. Lindsay knows first-hand the grave danger the coronavirus presents. Having led a team of nurses and support staff through the first wave of coronavirus hospitalizations in Spring 2020 as director of nursing at Northwell Health's Long Island Jewish Medical Center, she is reported in *Business Insider* as saying, "It was dark. It was painful to see the suffering." In an article in *The New York Times* she says, "I hope to inspire people who look like me, and who are skeptical in general about taking vaccines."

Vaccination rates have been rising ever since Dr. Lindsay received the first

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BMCC Alumni Lead by Example

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Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. As of September 9, 2021, more than three quarters of people in the United States age 18 and older had received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In July of this year at the White House, President Joe Biden presented Dr. Lindsay with the Outstanding Americans by Choice Recognition from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Around the same time, her medical scrubs were earmarked for display in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and she served as Grand Marshall of the New York City Hometown Heroes ticker-tape parade.

At the June 2021 Nurses' Pinning ceremony at BMCC, an in-person event where BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe** presented Dr. Lindsay with the President's Medal, she encouraged the Class of 2021 to join her as advocates for public health.

"All BMCC graduates are role models," she said. "Nurses going out into the field are role models for patients who will look up to you, as you model the behavior you want to see in the world."

"I hope to inspire people who look like me, and who are skeptical in general about taking vaccines."

SANDRA LINDSAY
(NURSING, '94)

Jamel Holmes (Early Childhood Education, '12) is known for his commitment to the community he serves, sixth graders with disabilities at East Bronx Academy for the Future, where he himself graduated in 2008. When the New York state stay-at-home order made remote learning the new norm, Mr. Holmes used the platform DonorsChoose to raise funds for over 360 care packages of snacks, art supplies, hand sanitizer and more—then he personally delivered them to his homebound students.



Jamel Holmes (left) teaches sixth grade at East Bronx Academy for the Future.

His teaching style builds connections with students beyond the classroom and in that spirit, he launched a mentoring group, *The Holmes Experience*, that "focuses on the whole child," he says.

"Through mentorship, educational support, community engagement and partnership we are able to break barriers and build transformative students." He was also one of six educators nationwide to receive a 2021 Changemaker Challenge Middle and High School Award from Students Rebuild, a program of the Bezos Family Foundation.

In April of 2021, he was featured in the podcast series *You and Me Both*, hosted by **Hillary Clinton**, who interviewed him for the episode "Raising Kids in a Pandemic." "My students live in one of the poorest congressional districts in the country," says Mr. Holmes, "but they are so motivated and eager to learn. When they know they have people in their lives that genuinely care for them, they will go that extra mile."

A CUNY graduate several times over, Mr. Holmes went from an associate degree at BMCC to a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies at The City College of New York. He earned two degrees at Lehman College; a Master of Science in Special Education and in May 2021, a Master of Education Administration as School Building Leader—all moving toward his goal of becoming a principal in the NYC public school system.

Mr. Holmes is a member of NYC Men Teach, a partnership between CUNY, the Office of the Mayor and the New York City Department of Education. His first mentors in the field included BMCC Early Childhood Center Director **Cecilia Scott-Croff**, who guided his engagement in curriculum-building for children, and BMCC Professor **Jean-Yves Plaisir**, "who made me realize how important it was that children see more men of color leading their classes," he says.

Team Projects Earn BMCC President's Fund Awards

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"I am proud of all the teams who submitted proposals for the President's Fund for Excellence and Innovation," said Anthony E. Munroe, BMCC President. "Creative approaches and transformative ideas were evident in every proposal. The projects selected for funding went through a rigorous review process by committees and represent a broad spectrum of areas where our institution can continue to advance the intentions of Ms. Scott, who recognizes our ongoing efforts to bring equity and inclusion across our academics, support programs, and the learning experience of our students."

The three review committees: Teaching and Curriculum Initiatives, Innovative Programs, and Transformational Student Support, comprised of BMCC students, faculty and staff, reviewed and scored each of the submissions. The committees selected the following SEVEN teams and projects to receive funding from the President's Fund for Excellence and Innovation.

The BMCC Public Health Academy

Amount awarded: \$125,000

Timeline: 2 years

Project Team: **Lesley Rennis**, Health Education; **Sara Crosby**, Learning Academy; **Gloria McNamara**, Health Education; and **Lisa Grace**, Health Education

Description: The Health Education Department and the BMCC Learning Academy plan to create the Public Health Academy (PHA), designed to establish a public health education and workforce pipeline that meets the needs of BMCC Community Health Education and Public Health students as well as the growing need for public health professionals in NYC's underserved communities.

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Team Projects Earn BMCC President's Fund Awards

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Restoring Good Academic Standing through the Gaining Academic Insight & New Strategies (G.A.I.N.S.) Program

Amount awarded: \$114,000

Timeline: 2 years

Project Team: **Neda Hajizadeh**, Student Life/Counseling; **Robert E. Cortes**, Student Life/Counseling; **Carei Thomas**, Academic Advisement and Transfer Center; and **Gregory Farrell**, Learning Resource Center

Description: The project focuses on the exploration of a new cohort program for first-time academic probation students: Gaining Academic Insight and New Strategies (G.A.I.N.S.). G.A.I.N.S. will begin with an assessment using the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) to create an individualized plan for each student on probation.

Drilling Down to Scale Up: B-UMLA Pilot Project

Amount awarded: \$130,000

Timeline: 2 years

Project Team: **Shawn Grant**, Business Management; **Ashtian Holmes**, Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA); and **Peter Hoontis**, Business Management

Description: The Business Management Department, in collaboration with the Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA), proposes to establish an UMLA program in the Business Management Department (B-UMLA) to address the equity gaps in the retention and graduation rates of Black and Latino male business majors.

The Virtual Campus: Using the BMCC OpenLab to Create Community, Foster Sense of Belonging, and Increase Student Engagement

Amount awarded: \$63,612

Timeline: 1 year

Project Lead: **Christopher Stein**, Media Arts and Technology

Description: Since its launch in 2019, the OpenLab has garnered interest among faculty and staff, particularly those who are involved in open educational resources (OER). This project seeks to directly engage students and student-facing offices through the OpenLab by providing them with the same kind of support system that faculty now enjoy.

Social Justice & Equity Centers

Amount awarded: \$168,128

Timeline: 2 years

Project Lead: **Tammie Velasquez**, Women's Resource Center

Description: The Women's Resource Center (WRC) seeks to continue the journey towards social change, elevate diversity, equity and inclusion through social justice initiatives with the creation of The Social Justice & Equity Centers (SJEC/The Centers; working title).

Anti-Racist Pedagogy Summer Workshops and Faculty/Student Fellowships

Amount awarded: \$80,000

Timeline: 1 year

Project Team: **Gina Cherry**, Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship (CETLS); **Kirsten Cole**, Teacher Education; **Mariama Faye**, BMCC Student Government; **Shawn Grant**, Business Management; and **Angela Polite**, Speech, Communications, and Theatre Arts

Description: The Anti-Racist Pedagogy Working Group in collaboration with CETLS seeks to implement projects beginning Summer 2021 with ongoing faculty and student development throughout the 2021–22 academic year. This project builds on the highly successful Anti-Racist Pedagogy workshop series offered through CETLS in the Spring 2021 and attended by over 60 faculty members. The team plans to expand this work throughout Summer 2021 into Spring 2022.

Black Studies Across the Americas

Amount awarded: \$125,000

Timeline: 1 year

Project Team: **Judith Anderson**, Ethnic and Race Studies; **Jessica Levin**, Internships and Experiential Learning; and **Lissette Acosta**, Ethnic and Race Studies

Description: The Department of Ethnic and Race Studies (DERS) is partnering with the Office of Internships and Experiential Learning to create a collaborative international research program, "Black Studies Across the Americas."

NOTE: Each of the teams receiving a President's Fund award will be featured in articles and videos following their progress and outcomes. Please visit the President's Fund for Excellence and Innovation website to learn more about each of the teams and their projects.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fall 2021 Brings Optimism to Campus,

This fall semester is one of hope and optimism. I'm proud of each and every student, new and returning, as they move closer to attaining their degrees. I'm inspired to learn from them, as our faculty and staff are, so we can continue to make their learning experiences richer through our culture of care, innovative problem-solving, and attention to facility and technical needs.

BMCC's commitment to providing a comfortable, efficient learning and working environment remained strong as we followed CDC and CUNY guidelines and carefully planned each phase of our return to in-person classes this semester.

Input and feedback from students, faculty and staff have been essential to this process. We hosted virtual town halls for community members to share concerns and learn about safety efforts such as

classroom redesign and the implementation of state-of-the-art air ventilation systems and UVC technology. The College also co-hosted campus vaccination clinics in partnership with CVS at Chambers Street, and at CUNY in The Heights to provide opportunities for our campus community and New Yorkers to get vaccinated. We continue to encourage everyone at BMCC to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and to wear a mask on campus in order to keep our college community healthy and engaging.

The fall semester began with our college-wide commemoration of the 20th anniversary of 9/11, which welcomed the participation of CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, who joined me and other members of our college, in placing a wreath at the BMCC plaque commemorating members of our community who lost their lives that day.

This semester, I am also proud to announce the seven teams who will receive financial support for their proposed projects through the President's Fund for Excellence and Innovation, which was established in December 2020, through the \$30-million gift from philanthropist and author MacKenzie Scott. The fund was created to support and allow for strategic investment in innovative projects, initiatives, and programming that advance the College's mission and honors Ms. Scott's desire to focus on basic needs, equity and inclusion, economic mobility, and support for the demographic population served by BMCC/minoritized communities. Details about the rigorous selection process and each team project are featured in this issue of *The Commons* and on the BMCC website.

As we move forward this fall semester, I urge you to be mindful of self-care and to stay connected with the college to learn about events and activities to keep you engaged. I applaud your dedication to our institution's mission and I am proud to work alongside you.

With Warm Regards,

Anthony E. Munroe, President
Borough of Manhattan Community College
The City University of New York

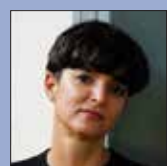
Milestones



Criminal Justice Professor **Shenique S. Davis** won the 2021 Eastern Sociological Society Barbara R. Walters Community College Faculty Award.



Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice Professor **Henry Bulley** received a Transdisciplinary Research for Pathways to Sustainability award for his work with the projects Developing REsilient African cities and their urban environMent (DREAMS) and Flood Mapping Activity in Uganda.



The Insubordination of Photography: Documentary Practices Under Chile's Dictatorship by Modern Languages Spanish Professor **Ángeles Donoso Macaya** won the 2021 Best Book in Latin American Visual Culture Studies Award at the Latin American Studies Association Virtual Congress.



Modern Language Professors **Sophie Mariñez** and **Ángeles Donoso Macaya**, and Social Sciences Professor **Marci Littlefield** (above) are 2021 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) faculty fellows.

CIS Professor **Hao Tang** is principle investigator on a \$500,000, three-year National Science Foundation grant to develop a virtual navigational tool for visually impaired people.

A research paper, *Differences in Academic Resiliency When the Pandemic Forced Courses Online: Was Prior Online Coursetaking Protective?* by Mathematics Professor **Claire Wladis**, Business Management Professor **Katherine Conway** and former Professor **Alyse Hachey** received the best research paper award at the European Distance Learning Network annual conference.

Fiterman Art Center Features Work by Mildred Howard, Ned Smyth and Faculty Artists



Ned Smyth, Moments of Matter and Life and Matter (installation view, 2021, Shirley Fiterman Art Center). ©Ned Smyth. Photo Jason Mandella.

A dual exhibition, “Interventions, **Mildred Howard**: In the Line of Fire and **Ned Smyth**: Moments of Matter and Life,” was made possible through a partnership between the Shirley Fiterman Art Center (SFAC) at BMCC and the Battery Park City Authority opened June 3 and were on display through September 25. The exhibition was viewed from the sidewalk outside Fiterman Hall through street-front windows; also, works by Howard and Smyth were displayed outdoors at nearby Battery Park City.

In Spring 2021, the Shirley Fiterman Arts Center presented “Notes from the Underground,” a digital exhibition that featured the recent work of faculty members **Aisha Tandiwe Bell**, **Bernardo Justin Campoy**, **Simon Carr**, **Elisa Decker**, **Cathy Diamond**, **Louis Esposito**, **Pat Genova**, **Xico Greenwald**, **Sarah Haviland**, **Jayne Holsinger**, **Siobhan McBride**, **Gustavo Murillo Fernández-Valdés**, **Lisa Nicchi**, **Carol Pereira-Olson**, **Andrew Prayzner**, **Jessica Ramirez**, **Kimberly**

Reinhardt, **Erik Saxon**, **Adele Shtern**, **AC Towery**, **Evelyn Twitchel** and **Emily Zuch**.



Mildred Howard, The House That Will Not Pass For Any Color Than Its Own, 2011 (installation view, 2021, Battery Park City). ©Mildred Howard.

BMCC Expands Offerings with Ethnic and Race Studies Degree Program

The Center for Ethnic Studies has led the creation of the Department of Ethnic and Race Studies, offering an Associate in

Arts degree in Ethnic Studies. Students will research the histories of racial and ethnic groups, and graduates will have the

option to transfer into Lehman's Bachelor of Arts degree programs in Latino Studies or Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

Innovative Faculty Earn 2021 Distinguished Teaching Awards



The intellectual and creative energy of BMCC's faculty fuels innovative developments in teaching, curriculum development and artistic and scholarly achievement. BMCC presented the 2021 Distinguished Teaching Awards to **Elizabeth Albrecht** (top left), Professor in English; **Mohammad Azhar** (second from left), Associate Professor in Computer Information Systems; **Sophie Mariñez** (third from left), Professor in Modern

Languages; and **Nettie (Chris) Vinsonhaller** (right), Assistant Professor in English.

The awards recognize faculty whose sustained excellence in teaching incites intellectual curiosity in students, inspires colleagues both within and outside their department, and demonstrates effective and innovative pedagogy. BMCC presented the faculty with awards to honor their commitment to exceptional teaching and research.

College Presents 2020–2021 Employee Appreciation Awards

The BMCC Employee Appreciation Awards (EAA) are presented to full- and part-time administrative and support and service staff members who were nominated by students, faculty and staff, in appreciation of their overall quality of work and dedication to the College. The winners of the 2020–2021 EAAs included: **Neda Hajizadeh** (Counseling Center) and **Tammie Velasquez** (Women's Resource Center) earned Rookie of the Year; **Joseph Picataggio** (Student Affairs) earned the Innovation Award; **Joseph Ginese** (Student Affairs) and **Mark Goodloe** (Tribeca Performing Arts Center) earned the Inspiration Award; **Tiffany James** (Student Affairs) earned the Leadership Award; and the **Office of Public Affairs** earned the Team Award.

Renovated CUNY in The Heights Welcomes Renderos as Director



Director Ingrid Renderos (center) welcomes students outside of CUNY in The Heights.

More than 100 community members attended a virtual town hall hosted by CUNY in The Heights (CITH) and BMCC on May 4. Plans for the renovated facility were outlined by BMCC Associate Vice President of Campus Planning and Facilities **Jorge E. Yafar**, and the event was held in collaboration with Congressman **Adriano Espaillat**, Assemblymember **Carmen De La Rosa**, Senator **Robert Jackson**, City Councilmember **Ydanis Rodríguez** and Manhattan Borough President **Gale Brewer**. BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe** welcomed participants and a discussion was led by BMCC Director of Government and

Community Relations **Doug Israel** and Media High School Assistant Principal **Sofia Russo**.

Administered by BMCC, CITH creates pathways to degrees and careers with family-sustaining wages. The expanded and more accessible CITH also welcomes a new director, **Ingrid Renderos**. “I hope to bring to CUNY in The Heights my commitment to the communities that CITH serves, especially since I grew up The Heights, and my family continues to live here,” says Renderos. “As an immigrant and as the first person in my family to graduate from college, I feel I am an example of BMCC's motto: ‘Start Here. Go Anywhere.’”

U.S. Dept. of Labor Grant Supports Pathway Program to Paramedic Careers



The CUNY Community Colleges Consortium—including the BMCC Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development—has received a nearly \$5 million, four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Labor that will fund accelerated training for jobs in

technology, healthcare and education. BMCC will use the funds to expand a pilot program in the Allied Health Department which prepared high school students to become Emergency Medical Service workers while earning college credits toward an associate degree.

BMCC Community Commemorates 20th Anniversary of 9/11



(L-R) CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez and BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe in front of plaque honoring BMCC community members lost on 9/11.

The 20th anniversary of the devastating events of 9/11 had special significance for the BMCC community. On the morning of September 11, 2001, students, faculty and staff at BMCC's 199 Chambers Street and Fiterman Hall campuses, just a few blocks from the World Trade Center, witnessed the fall of the Twin Towers. Then at 5:20 p.m., BMCC's Fiterman Hall, donated in 1993 by Miles and Shirley Fiterman, was destroyed when 7 World Trade Center collapsed and fell against it, making BMCC the only U.S. college to have lost a building to a terrorist attack. Fiterman Hall was razed and rebuilt, and the current building, an architecturally stunning symbol of the college's resiliency and growth, opened in 2012.

On September 9, the BMCC community gathered at 199 Chambers Street for a wreath ceremony honoring the eight BMCC community members who lost their lives in the attacks: **Annette Dataram**, **Keithroy Maynard**, **Shevone Mentis**, **Jorge Moran**, **Curtis Noel**, **Angela Rosario**, **Khamaladai Singh** and **Hector Tirado**. Speakers included CUNY Chancellor **Félix V. Matos Rodríguez** and BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe**. Other speakers from BMCC included Vice President **Marva Craig**, Provost and Senior Vice President **Erwin Wong** and Student Government Association President **Nana Wiafe Addae Owusu**. This event was part of BMCC's 9/11 programming that included video screenings, panels, poetry and a padlet for community reflection.

BMCC Receives Funds from NYS Workforce Development Initiative

BMCC will receive \$648,000 and is among six CUNY colleges to receive funding through the \$48 million, second round of the \$175 million New York State Workforce Development Initiative announced by former Governor **Andrew Cuomo**.

The funds will support strategic regional efforts that help New Yorkers find quality, well-paid jobs and further New York's goal to reimagine, rebuild, and renew from the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

NEH Awards \$150K for Interdisciplinary Course Modules Focused on Poverty

BMCC and the CUNY Research Foundation have been awarded \$150,000 by the National Endowment for the Humanities for a three-year project, Voices and Experiences of Poverty: A New Interdisciplinary Humanities Curriculum. The project's co-directors are Social Sciences,

Human Services and Criminal Justice Professors **Christine Farias**, **Cara O'Connor** and **Jamie Warren**, as well as Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice Chairperson **Sangeeta Bishop** and Business Management Chairperson **Mahatapa Paliit**.

Milestones

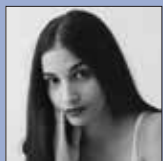
Criminal Justice major **Mario Altamirano** received the Critical Language Scholarship from the U.S. Department of State.

Computer Information Science major **Nickolas Torres** received a \$500 “Wiley Stay the Course Grant” from John Wiley and Sons Inc.



Women's soccer player **Fatou Gibba** was named a scholar-athlete of the year by the CUNY Athletic Conference (CUNYAC).

Criminal Justice major **Natassia Walker** was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship from the Phi Beta Kappa Society.



Psychology major **Amanda Amezquita**, (top left) Nursing major **Dominique Talley** (bottom left) and Criminal Justice major **Kimberly Vega** received 2021–2022 Fund for Education Abroad scholarships.

Science major and Phi Theta Kappa member **Nana Wiafe Addae Owusu** is a 2021 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise winner.

New specializations within existing majors include **Spanish Translation and Interpretation** (Modern Languages); **Jazz and Popular Music** (Music and Art) and **Risk Management and Insurance** (Business Management).



Cristina Diaz (Criminal Justice, '21) was accepted into the Colin Powell Fellowship in Leadership and Public Service at City College, CUNY.



BMCC and MEOC Host Multiple Graduation Ceremonies

BMCC celebrated its 56th graduating class of more than 4,600 students on June 4, a livestreamed event that honored the classes of Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Winter 2021 and Spring 2021. Other speakers included BMCC Vice President for Student Affairs **Marva Craig**, CUNY Chancellor **Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**, Valedictorian **Fernanda Carvalho Santos**, Student Government President **Josiah Ramesar**, U.S. Senator **Chuck Schumer** and U.S. Representative **Hakeem Jeffries**.

The June 4 celebration also featured President's Medal Honoree Sandra

Lindsay (Nursing, '94), the first person in the United States to receive the coronavirus vaccine, and who also spoke to the 78 Nursing graduates on June 2 at a traditional pinning ceremony in Theatre I.

On December 9, the Allied Health Services department celebrated the Paramedic Program Class of 2020 (photo above). On June 16, the department celebrated the Respiratory Therapy Class of 2021, and on June 17 the Health Information Technology Class of 2021—both with in-person, livestreamed commencement

celebrations in Theatre II on BMCC's main campus.

More than 400 graduates from the SUNY Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) were celebrated during a livestreamed 2021 Commencement Ceremony on June 17. Speakers included Valedictorian **Noreen Jackson**, MEOC Executive Director **Anthony Watson**, BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe**, SUNY Associate Provost **Lisa McKay**, NYS Senator **Brian Benjamin** and CEO of Executive Bound, **Ginny Baro**.

Two BMCC Students Earn 2021 Jack Kent Cooke Scholarships



Computer Science major **Abdoul-hanane Gbadamassi** (left) and Biotechnology major **Altrim Mamuti** (right) are among three CUNY students and 72 community college students

nationwide to be awarded the Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

Each student winner will receive up to \$40,000 a year for up to three years, to complete his bachelor's degree. Gbadamassi, from Togo, and Mamuti, from Albania, gained important lessons from their home countries that inform their research and career goals.

Faculty Mentored Research Projects Yield Big Wins

On July 26, July 28 and August 2, 24 BMCC students and alumni delivered research presentations at the 2021 CUNY Research Scholars Program (CRSP) virtual symposium—and two of these, **Oneil Mahoney** (Biotechnology, '21) and Computer Science major **Zhenchao Xia** were among the three Top Presentation Award winners. Mentored by Science Professor **José A. Fernandez Romero**, Mahoney presented his research exploring antiviral activity and its impact on severe respiratory syndrome coronaviruses. Mentored by Computer Science Professor **Hao Tang**,

Xia presented on assistive technology used to help the blind.

Four other BMCC students were named Top Presentation Winners at that conference: Science major **Christopher Clouse**, mentored by Science Professor **Miguel C. N. Fiolhais**; Computer Science major **Ahmad Soliman**, mentored by Computer Information Systems Professor **Mohammad Azhar**; Psychology major **Janee Jones**, mentored by Sociology Professor **Sheldon Applewhite** and Science major **Shannon Brown**, mentored by Science Professor **Joanna Giza**.

Oneil Mahoney also presented his paper alongside BMCC students and alumni researchers on June 24 at the 10th annual and first virtual American Council For Medicinally Active Plants conference. Mentored by Professor Romero through an internship at the Population Council Center for Biomedical Research at Rockefeller University, he joined BMCC alumni and his research co-authors **Sahar Alsaidi**, **Nadjet Cornejal**, **Claudia Melo**, **Ebube Michael** and **Anna Miller**, whose mentors were Professor Romero as well as Science Professors **Adolfina Koroch** and **Christine Priano**.



BMCC Foundation Hosts Fundraisers in Support of Students

In May 2021, the BMCC Foundation hosted the “Movements in Transformation” virtual fundraiser to raise funds in support of students enrolled in the college's arts programs. The event featured performances by the BMCC Choir (top left) and the BMCC Theatre Program.

On September 30, 2021, the foundation hosted the “Invest in



a Future” virtual fundraiser to raise funds in support of student scholarships. The event honorees were **Deirdre Featherstone** (top center), Founder and CEO of Featherstone Design Fine Jewelry, award-winning gemologist and proud BMCC parent; and **John Dunleavy** (top right), Global Chief Client Ogilvy Group/WPP



Global Client Leader, IBM. In addition to performances by the BMCC Choir and the BMCC Theatre Program, the event also featured student success stories from BMCC graduates **Djemilatou Yankeine** ('21) and **Karla Karrington** ('21), who each shared their personal experiences as BMCC students.

BMCC/CUNY Joins Blackstone LaunchPad Program

In August 2021, Blackstone LaunchPad expanded access to its student venture and entrepreneurial skill-building program to students at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) along with eight other City University of New York (CUNY) colleges across all five New York City boroughs.

Blackstone LaunchPad's network will provide students at BMCC with the resources and opportunities to support their entrepreneurial endeavors and career ambitions. The Blackstone Charitable Foundation has committed \$6 million to the program. BMCC joins Baruch College, Bronx Community College,

Brooklyn College, City College of New York, College of Staten Island, Lehman College, Queens College and Queensborough Community College as CUNY schools participating in the program.

“CUNY is pleased to partner with the Blackstone Charitable Foundation on this important skill-building initiative that will connect students on nine of our campuses with mentors, networks and professional development opportunities, while nurturing their entrepreneurial spirit,” said CUNY Chancellor **Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**.

“BMCC is grateful to be a part of this innovative program designed

to support future entrepreneurs, innovators and business leaders at every stage of their personal and professional development,” said BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe**.

Together with the recent announcement of Blackstone LaunchPad's expansion to three historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in Atlanta, the New York partnership is part of the Blackstone Charitable Foundation's effort to ensure that the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and skills—such as a business acumen and a creative approach to problem solving—are available to a more diverse set of students.

Team Places Second in Innovation Challenge

A student team comprised of Computer Science majors **Ryan Brandt**, **Sharna Hossain** and **Jadgesh Inderjeet** and led by Professor **Mohammad Azhar** has placed second out of 12 finalists for the Community College Innovation Challenge, a national competition from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in partnership with the National Science Foundation (NSF). The BMCC team is developing interactive virtual reality applications to help teach autistic children essential life-skills.



BMCC alumnus **Kwame Amin** (Science, '10) (left) earned a Bachelor's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. Now working in emergency services as a physician's assistant, he has become aware of healthcare disparities in New York City and will soon complete an M.B.A. in Strategic Healthcare Management—putting him in a position to help change the healthcare system. “What I've seen in emergency care is that a lot of people don't

have healthcare at all, or have inadequate access,” he says. “The healthcare field needs to go in a different direction. I want to be in a place to help make that happen.”

Samuel Adédèji (Science, '10) (right) who was president of the Future Alumni club and a member of Honor Society for Black Student Scholars at BMCC, earned a B.S. in Biochemistry and Biology at SUNY Stony Brook. After landing an internship at Bellevue Hospital, he was promoted to a management position in surgery and sub-specialties clinics. In that role, Adédèji helps ensure that every patient eligible for New York State of Health insurance plans gains that coverage.

Milestones



Charles Reid (Economics, '17), a Semester in DC fellow with the Colin Powell School for Leadership and

Global Leadership at City College of New York, CUNY, completed a remote internship at the Twelfth Federal Reserve Bank District Headquarters, San Francisco.

Batyah Sneiderman, **Rony Vasquez** and **Erika Carreon** (Economics, '21) were accepted to Columbia University for the Spring 2021 semester. **Thinn Nandar Soe** (Economics, '21) received a scholarship set aside for CUNY community college graduates to attend Columbia University's School of General Studies.

Kate Dorlan (Liberal Arts, attended 2017–2018) has founded Forthright, a 501(c)(4) non-profit that advocates for background checks and disclosing relevant non-criminal activity in step-parent adoptions.



Brian Romero (Human Services, '18), Chief of Staff for New York State Assembly

Member **Jessica González-Rojas**, was recognized by City & State New York in the media organization's 2021 Albany 40 Under 40 list, recognizing rising stars in state politics.



Jneyde Williams (Animation and Motion Graphics, '21) won Brooklyn Public Library's design contest

for a limited-edition library card celebrating Black American history and culture.

Calling all BMCC Alumni!

Share your “Start Here. Go Anywhere” story with the BMCC community.

Contact Vice President for Institutional Advancement **Lorna A. Malcolm** at lmalcolm@bmcc.cuny.edu.

Q&A

Penelope Jordan
**Director of Health Services,
 Office of Student Affairs**



What is your role at BMCC?

As BMCC's Director of Health Services, my role has expanded from ensuring students have met all their state immunization requirements to raising health awareness on campus. I've partnered with academic departments on bone marrow drives and guided BMCC's participation in CUNY health initiatives. I also represent BMCC on a CUNY-wide committee that has created guidelines for campus responses to outbreaks of infectious diseases like SARS, swine flu, chicken pox and others.

What do you really do at BMCC?

I look out for the health of our community. As a board member of the BMCC Early Childhood Center, I've opened up opportunities for student parents to get their children tested for hearing and vision. I follow up with health emergencies on campus, partner with Student Affairs and city agencies promoting health insurance access, and serve as BMCC's liaison with CUNY regarding COVID.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments in your current role?

Helping to develop CUNY's infectious disease protocols has been among my proudest moments.

Another is contributing to BMCC's reopening plans. It has also been rewarding to serve as a mentor. One former student went on to get his master's degree and is a drug and alcohol counselor for incarcerated individuals at Rikers.

What is one thing you've noticed about the BMCC community, as you have worked with faculty and staff in your current role?

My interactions with faculty were limited before COVID, but during this past year that has changed. I'm impressed by the amount of caring and respect shown to me when I reach out to them.

Tell us something about yourself we might not know, but has an impact on the good work you do, at BMCC.

Before and since joining BMCC, I've worked weekends as an emergency room (ER) nurse in hospital trauma centers. Whatever I learn in the ER, I put into practice at BMCC. I'll also share that my guilty pleasure is reading romance novels. They help me escape into an alternate reality and recharge. It's a kind of self-care. I've discovered TikTok, too, and it makes me laugh hysterically—which everyone needs.

Then and Now



When the World Trade Center's North Tower collapsed on the morning of September 11, 2001, heavy debris hit 7 World Trade Center. It burned the rest of day and collapsed at 5:20 P.M. against BMCC's Fiterman Hall (*left*). The debris heavily damaged the academic building—which had been



donated to the College in 1993 by Miles and Shirley Fiterman—making BMCC the only college in the United States to have lost a building to a terrorist attack. The current Fiterman Hall (*right*), which opened in 2012, is an architecturally stunning symbol of the College's resiliency and growth.