

BMCC Commons

Fall 2022

THE NEWSLETTER OF BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Transfer Opportunities Raise the Bar

BMCC and partner colleges enable graduates to transfer smoothly to bachelor's degree programs and meaningful careers.

Guiding students toward the better life they envision is a driving priority at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC/CUNY). BMCC ranks third among two-year colleges nationwide in raising low-income students into the middle class, and this recognition from a 2020 Brookings Institute report was earned through initiatives including those that engage students with career exploration and support their transfer into bachelor's degree programs in New York City and beyond.

One notable transfer partnership was signed into effect May 18 by BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe** and Morehouse College President **David A. Thomas**. This created a solid pathway for men who graduate from BMCC to continue their higher education at one of the nation's foremost Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), located in Atlanta.

"The BMCC/Morehouse College Partnership, rich with possibility and the expectation of success for our graduates, will help close the unacceptable retention and graduation gap between BMCC's Black male students and other student groups at the College," said President Munroe. "Years of research into student success at BMCC have shown that students are most successful when they join cohort programs with a clear academic pathway. This partnership provides a seamless transfer to a bachelor's degree program at one of our country's most prestigious HBCUs."

"Morehouse College is excited to partner with BMCC to create opportunities for young men to gain access to a Morehouse College education. Through this partnership of purpose, male students from BMCC will pursue an academic track with the intent of applying, and gaining admission, to Morehouse

Continued on page 2



BMCC graduates benefit from an array of partnerships and articulation agreements that smooth their way to bachelor's degree programs.

Inside:

- 5 More Than 4K Graduates Honored at In-Person Commencement
- 6 BMCC Named Top Community College for Hispanics
- 7 Robin Hood Awards \$1.2 Million to IT and Healthcare Project
- 8 Q & A with Evelis Cruz

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Transfer Opportunities Raise the Bar

Continued from page 1



(L–R) Presidents David A. Thomas and Anthony E. Munroe sign transfer agreement.

College,” said Morehouse College President David A. Thomas. “More importantly, Morehouse and BMCC are committed to easing the transition of students who participate in this partnership by creating several engagement opportunities that will educate young men on the academic offerings, culture and traditions of the College—which we, ultimately, believe will encourage timely matriculation upon their transfer.”

Transfer opportunities extend from Atlanta to just across lower Manhattan

The link between degrees and socioeconomic status is well documented. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that associate degree holders earn more than high school graduates but less than those with a bachelor’s degree. A study released this year by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shows that workers in their twenties with a bachelor’s degree earn a median annual wage of \$52,000, while those relying on a high school diploma earn

\$30,000—the highest pay gap the Fed has seen since it started tracking wage data in 1990.

As an institution, BMCC is dedicated to ensuring students have every opportunity to move up the degree ladder and enter a career that channels their passion and strengths. Altogether, BMCC has nine umbrella partnerships that facilitate the transfer of graduates into four-year universities, and more than 50 articulation agreements centered on a specific bachelor’s degree program or major.

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In addition to the BMCC/Morehouse partnership forged on May 18, a Dual Admission Agreement between BMCC and lower Manhattan neighbor Pace University was signed by BMCC President Munroe and Pace President **Marvin Krislov** on June 8.

Through this partnership, students graduating from BMCC with an Associate degree and grade point average of at least 2.5 are guaranteed admission to 42 Pace University programs including Art, Biochemistry, Marketing, Finance, Management, Entrepreneurship, Criminal Justice and Childhood Education.

Students seeking careers from public health to neuroscience benefit from transfer options

Another transfer initiative at BMCC that serves the career ambitions of BMCC students is the Public Health Academy (PHA), one of seven projects supported through the President’s Fund for Excellence and Innovation—which was in turn established in December 2021 through a generous donation to BMCC from philanthropist **MacKenzie Scott**.

The PHA was developed by BMCC Health Education Chair **Lesley Rennis**, Health Education Professors **Gloria McNamara** and **Lisa Grace**, and BMCC Learning Academy Director **Sara Crosby**. Launched in August 2021 with a cohort of 20 students, the PHA links students with careers in the fast growing public health sector, highlighted most recently by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As PHA scholars, Community Health Education and Public Health majors gain professional skills in public health and access an array of academic support services at BMCC. The PHA creates a pipeline for BMCC graduates into baccalaureate and master’s degree programs at Hunter College, CUNY and Columbia University, as well as providing entry to a variety of public health related careers.

“Internships provide students with an opportunity to connect the Public Health Academy curriculum to the community, and apply their knowledge in a work setting.”

GLORIA McNAMARA, PROFESSOR, HEALTH EDUCATION

The PHA scholars also receive stipends and take part in internships throughout the city. “The internships provide the students with an opportunity to connect the PHA curriculum to the community, and apply their knowledge in a work setting. It makes the scholars more aware of

the need for public health,” says Professor McNamara.

The PHA’s cohort model is reflected in a project that aims to create a path to STEM careers in psychology, for underrepresented students. This project was kicked off when five faculty members in the Department of Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice were awarded a \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, through its Advancing Innovation and Impact in Undergraduate STEM Education at Two-year Institutions of Higher Education program.

Senior Principal Investigators are Department Chair **Sangeeta Bishop** and Deputy Chair **Janice Walters**; Co-PIs are Professors **Monica Foust**, **Kelly Rodgers** and **Masha Komolova**. This team is developing a STEM minor curriculum in Psychology that will articulate with the Bachelor of Science in Psychology program at City College of New York, CUNY. Graduates of the program will earn an Associate of Arts in Psychology, with a STEM minor.

Among other goals, “We will evaluate how the new STEM minor builds student confidence to persist in a four-year, neuroscience-focused degree, and supports a positive outlook for neuroscience-focused careers,” says Department Chair Bishop.

New degree programs include transfer path

Housed in the Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice Department are two other academic programs with a focus on transfer opportunities. The Urban Studies Associate degree program, developed by Sociology Professor **Shirley Leyro** in partnership with the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies (SLU), prepares BMCC graduates to transfer to the Bachelor of Arts in Urban Community Studies at SLU.

Students in the program will examine how urban problems arise, how they have been addressed and how to plan cities of the future. The program will prepare students for careers in public administration, law, urban planning, social work, education, business administration, political analysis, non-profit community work and more.

Meanwhile, the Associate in Arts degree program in Political Science, set to start in Fall 2022 and coordinated

Continued on page 3

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Continued from page 2

by Political Science Professor **Heather James**, will prepare graduates to transfer to the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science programs at Brooklyn College, CUNY and The City College of New York, CUNY.

“Graduates of the Political Science program will gain perspective on how political systems impact our daily lives, and they will have ideas on how to make those systems more equitable,” says Professor James.

“This pandemic has reminded us that knowing how to read, interpret and process abstract information is essential. Critical Thinking and Justice majors will gain those skills.”

ROSARIO TORRES-GUEVARA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND DEPUTY CHAIR, ACADEMIC LITERACY AND LINGUISTICS DEPARTMENT

Through the Academic Literacy and Linguistics department, BMCC graduates with an Associate of Arts degree in Critical Thinking and Justice will be prepared to transfer seamlessly to the Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and Justice at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY.

“This pandemic has reminded us that knowing how to read, interpret and process abstract information is essential. Critical Thinking and Justice majors will gain those skills,” says **Rosario Torres-Guevara**, an Associate Professor and Deputy Chair in the Academic Literacy and Linguistics department who was instrumental in putting the new major together.

Another opportunity, this one tailored for Business Administration majors, provides access to academic, career and transfer services through the BMCC-Baruch College Business Academy. Students benefit from dual enrollment in both BMCC and Baruch College, and graduates with an Associate of Science in Business Administration degree are eligible to transfer to the Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.) in Baruch’s Zicklin School of Business.

Innovative programs make a lasting impact on transfer options for Black and Latino students

Business majors can also join B-UMLA, a collaboration between the Business Management Department and Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA) at BMCC, and funded through the BMCC President’s Fund for Excellence and Innovation. The B-UMLA Design Team

includes Business Management Professors **Peter Hoontis** and **Shawn Grant**, UMLA Director **Ashtian Holmes**, UMLA Assistant Director **Yuleisy Audain** and B-UMLA Coordinator **Azeez Alimi**.

The purpose of B-UMLA is to close equity gaps in the academic success of Black and Latino male business majors and raise their retention rate as a group. In this way, it echoes the purpose of the more recent BMCC-Morehouse College Partnership.

“B-UMLA will have a direct, positive and lasting impact on student experiences at BMCC with respect to academic advising, student sense of belonging and involvement, engagement with faculty and student support services and institutional bureaucracy—key factors influencing student retention,” says Professor Grant.

Overall, these new degree programs and transfer initiatives at BMCC share components including the cohort model, dedicated counselors, career mentors and academic support. They address the needs of first-generation college students and those who are underrepresented in the fields they seek to enter. They are often created in partnership with senior colleges, providing dual enrollment or a clearly articulated bridge to a bachelor’s degree program.

“B-UMLA will have a lasting impact on student experiences at BMCC with respect to academic advising, student sense of belonging, and engagement with faculty and student support services—key factors influencing student retention.”

SHAWN GRANT, PROFESSOR, BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

“Each articulation agreement, institutional partnership, pipeline program and career or academic academy at BMCC links our students to what they have identified as their next important step,” says President Munroe. “We create each new program with a strong sense of intention to open doors and propel our graduates to greater success. We do what it takes, to move them forward in their higher education and support their career aspirations as they move toward the life they are determined to build for themselves and their families.”

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Together, With Our Institutional and Internal Partners, We Bolster Student Success

Actions speak louder than words, and our talk of a culture of care at BMCC is backed with online degree options, academic support, and resources that help our students meet basic needs such as the nourishment of a hot meal. Our words are backed with opportunities such as internships that guide students toward careers that raise their economic mobility and tap into their passions and skills.



Our words are backed with articulation agreements and transfer programs that guide BMCC graduates into baccalaureate programs that put those careers within reach.

It is our utmost priority to create pathways tailored to our students’ needs, and which close gaps in graduation rates between groups of students at our College. Not only is every department and office at BMCC part of this process, so are our institutional partners. Every transfer agreement we create—such as the recent pathways BMCC forged with Morehouse College in Atlanta and Pace University in lower Manhattan—opens doors for our students. They bolster our students’ sense of purpose. They change lives.

It’s clear that attending college will never be the same, after the COVID-19 pandemic, and I choose to see this fact as an opportunity. BMCC is emerging stronger from the lessons of the last two years. Online courses we created in Spring 2020 enabled students to stay on track with their education. In fact, the option to complete a degree online was already growing strong at BMCC. Most recently, our Engineering Science program announced it will offer over half of its required coursework online. This option joins an expanding list of entirely online degree programs at BMCC in Human Services, Public Health and others.

Online programs, workforce opportunities and transfer agreements contribute to the timely completion of degree requirements for our students, many of whom are holding down jobs and caring for their families. We have listened carefully—through internal surveys, data analysis and important conversations—to assess what our students tell us they need and want, and we have taken action accordingly. I am proud of what our faculty and staff have accomplished. Thank you for being part of our community.

With Warm Regards,



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

Milestones



Race and Ethnic Studies Professor **Lissette Acosta** won the 2022 Haiti-Dominican Republic Section

Article Prize from the Latin American Studies Association for her article in the journal “Women, Gender and Families of Color.”



Accounting Professor **Sidney Askew** received the American Accounting Association/J.

Michael and Mary Anne Cook/Deloitte Foundation Award in May.



Criminal Justice Professor **Liza Chowdhury** won the Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice Inaugural Outstanding Service Award for undergraduate alumni.



Speech, Communications and Theatre Arts Professor **Alvin Eng** published a memoir, “Our

Laundry, Our Town: My Chinese American Life from Flushing to the Downtown Stage and Beyond,” with Fordham University Press in May.



The album, *The State of Things*, was released in March by Music Professor **Quentin**

Angus. The composition was performed by members of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in partnership with the TePapa Museum and featured animation by Media Arts and Technology Professor **Carlo R. Diego**.



English Professor **Cheryl J. Fish** shared her research into a 1964–65

collaboration between **June Jordan** and **Buckminster Fuller** at the Princeton School of Architecture’s Womxn in Design and Architecture conference, February 24 and 25.

BMCC Welcomes Team Members



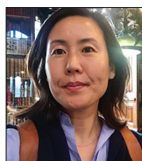
L–R: Mohammad K. Alam, Thomas F. Harbison, Julio W. Izquierdo, Geneen McCauley, Odaelys Pollard, Michael Reyes, Adan Rivera, Gulen Zubizarreta

BMCC leadership now includes **Mohammad K. Alam**, moving from Enrollment Registrar Director to Assistant Dean of Enrollment Management; **Nia Bell**, Women’s Volleyball Coach; **Thomas F. Harbison**,

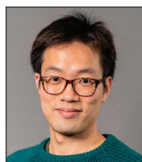
Director of Digital Education; **Julio W. Izquierdo**, Acting VP of Finance and Administration; **Damel Ling**, Women’s Basketball Coach; **Geneen McCauley**, Associate Director in the Office of Institutional Advancement; **Odaelys**

Pollard, Director of Research; **Michael Reyes**, Executive Legal Counsel and Labor Designee, **Adan Rivera**, Deputy Director in the Office of Public Safety, and **Gulen Zubizarreta**, Executive Director of Human Resources.

Funded Faculty Book Projects Address Compelling Issues



Jungah Kim



Chun-Yi Peng

These three faculty were each awarded \$40K faculty fellowships by the Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies: English Professor **Jungah Kim**, whose book project highlights representations of East Asia in Asian American literature; Modern Languages Professor **Chun-Yi Peng**, whose



Amy Sodaro



Sharon Avni

research examines the acquisition of Mandarin by migrant workers to Taiwan, and Sociology Professor **Amy Sodaro**, whose book project is “Lifting the Shadow: Memory, Race and Slavery in American Museums.” Academic Literacy and Linguistics Professor **Sharon Avni**, whose book project is

“Speaking of Hebrew: Language and Identity in Contemporary American Judaism,”

and Modern Languages **Sophie Mariñez**, whose book project is “Spirals in the Caribbean: Representing Violence in Haiti and the Dominican Republic,” were each

awarded \$6K in National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) summer stipends.

Professor Golda Solomon Is First Poet Laureate of Yonkers



Speech Professor **Golda Solomon**, who teaches at BMCC’s CUNY in The Heights campus, was named the first poet laureate of the City of Yonkers by Mayor **Mike Spano** at a ceremony on February 16 in front of Yonkers City Hall. Professor Solomon earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in speech at Brooklyn College and joined BMCC as a speech professor in 1968. She retired from teaching full-time in 1992 and has continued teaching at BMCC part time, mentoring BMCC student poets down through the years. “I always introduce poetry as part of the creative process in our classes,” she says.

Five BMCC Members Earn an Ed.D. Degree

Robert E. Cortes, Assistant Director of Outreach and GAINS Program Manager, BMCC Counseling Center; **Deborah Harte**, Director, Advocacy and Resource Center (ARC); **Michael C. Liu**, adjunct professor, Ethnic and Race Studies; **Harry Mars**, Director, Student Activities, Office of Student Affairs, and **Manny Romero**, former Executive Director, Public Affairs earned their Doctor of Education, Administration and Supervision (Ed.D.) at St. John’s University in Queens, New York in May.

In addition to earning his Ed.D., Dr. Cortes was one of three recipients of the St. John’s University School of Education 2022 Dr. Gene Geisert Outstanding Dissertation Award. Dissertations completed by the BMCC cohort range from research into stereotype threats to men of color in community colleges (Dr. Cortes); student parents who experience food insecurity (Dr. Harte); how arts integration affects students (Dr. Liu); the impact of co-curricular activities on academic success (Dr. Mars) and marketing to first-generation Latinx community college students (Dr. Romero).



L–R: Robert E. Cortes, Deborah Harte, Michael C. Liu, Harry Mars, Manny Romero

Transitions and Transactions VI Explores Learning in a Pandemic

BMCC, in collaboration with the New York College English Association, presented on April 9 the virtual conference “Transitions and Transactions VI: Teaching Literature in the Time of COVID.” Presenters from 33 institutions

across CUNY, the U.S., Canada and Spain shared best practices in a pandemic. “Our conference takes seriously the complex diversity of our student populations and issues that emerge in online teaching,” say conference organizers

Stephanie M. Oppenheim and **Manya Steinkoler** in a joint statement. “By exploring the changes our pedagogy has undergone in response to the COVID-19 crisis, we hope to enrich our teaching practices moving forward.”

BMCC Celebrates More Than 4K Graduates Honored at In-Person Commencement



BMCC’s 57th Commencement took place at the Barclays Center in downtown Brooklyn.

On June 9, BMCC hosted its first in-person graduation ceremony since the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated over two years of remote learning. The college’s 57th Commencement at the Barclays Center in downtown Brooklyn honored more than 4,000 graduates and conferred Associate degrees in over 50 majors. BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe led the speaking agenda and New York City Mayor **Eric Adams**

attended as a special guest. “To all the graduates, know your path and keep steadfast, like you have throughout your academic career, and I am sure you will continue to do great things,” Mayor Adams told the audience. CUNY Chancellor **Félix V. Matos Rodriguez** also attended as a special guest and U.S. Senator **Charles Schumer** participated via a video message. The BMCC Commencement Presidential

Medalist was **Gale A. Brewer**, District 6 New York City council member. “BMCC has prepared this class of students to tackle our city’s most pressing issues,” said Council Member Brewer. “I encourage each student to move forward with this excellent educational experience in a spirit of service to create positive change.” Science major **Mah Noor**, valedictorian and first in her family to attend college, will enter Yale University in Fall 2022 on a \$77.5K scholarship. The BMCC graduates in full blue-and-gold regalia filled the center arena at Barclays Center, surrounded by tiered rows of cheering family and friends.



L-R: Anthony E. Munroe, Eric Adams, Félix V. Matos Rodriguez

Milestones

Seven BMCC students, **Khaldoun Abou Tay**, **Valentina Gomez Acacio**, **Danny Blakeman**, **Rajvinder Kaur**, **Yiyang Sun**, **Shauna-Kay Thomas** and **Karolina Wiesiolek**—more than any other CUNY College—were named Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Semifinalists.

Science Major **Rajvinder Kaur** received the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship.

Criminal Justice graduate **Gideon Andrew**, Science graduate **Nana Wiafe Addae-Owusu** and Liberal Arts graduate **Moses Quiles** were selected for the Phi Theta Kappa All-New York Team; **Addae-Owusu** also received the Coca Cola Silver Team Scholarship of \$1,250.

Public Health major **Tsehay Gebreyes**, nominated by Health Education Professor **Yuliya Shneyderman**, received the 21st Century Student Scholarship to attend the virtual annual meeting of the Society for Public Health Education in March.

Josephine Huang (Computer Science), **Chaya Droznik** (Computer Science) and **Dulce Romero** (Criminal Justice) presented their GreenLiving BioCondo Project at the Biodesign Challenge Summit on June 22. BMCC was the first community college represented at the summit.

Science major **Imran Muhammad**, a member of BMCC’s e-sports team, received a Scholar-Athlete of the Year Honorable Mention from the CUNY Athletic Conference at the 34th annual CUNYAC Michael Steuerman Scholar-Athlete Awards Dinner on May 20.

Science major **Jade Brown-Godfrey**, Public Health major **Tsehay Gebreyes**, Psychology major **Davina Stewart** and Nursing major **Shauna Yetman** are 2022 Women’s Forum of New York Education Fund Award recipients.



Theatre Program Reimagines Twelfth Night

In April and May, the Theatre program presented seven performances of **William Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night**, directed by Theatre Professor **Diane Dowling**.

Student Creativity Showcased in a Range of Mediums

The Art Foundations program in the BMCC Music and Art Department and BMCC’s Shirley Fiterman Art Center presented an exhibition of student work developed in Color and Design, Digital Design, Drawing, Painting, Photography and Sculpture classes. “The artwork is terrific,” said Professor of Art and sculptor **Sarah Haviland**. “After a year-and-a-half of art classes on Zoom, it’s been wonderful to work in-person with our students again.”



Founders Festival Showcases Student Entrepreneurs

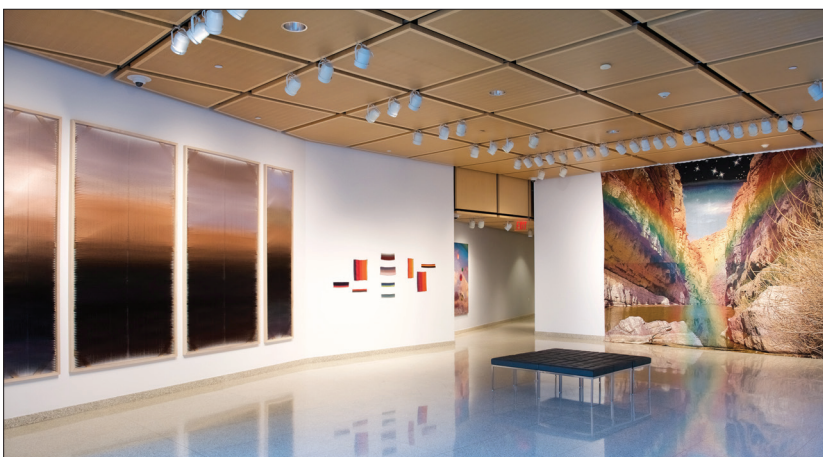
BMCC alumni and students presented pitches at the BMCC Blackstone Launchpad Founders Festival on May 4 at BMCC's Chambers Street campus. A panel of industry professionals provided feedback on the student entrepreneurs' five-minute business pitches and helped them hone their ideas. Organized by Business Management Professor and Deputy Chairperson **Shane Snipes**, the Founders Festival welcomed BMCC students in any major, including Small Business/Entrepreneurship.



SFAC Exhibitions Brighten the Summer

The Shirley Fiterman Art Center (SFAC) at BMCC presented two exhibitions over the summer. *¿Quién eres tu?*, part of the Park Place Window Project, featured the work of BMCC Professor of Art **Jessica Ramirez**. *By a Thread*, a group show

in the SFAC indoor galleries, featured the work of **Barrow Parke, George Bolster, Zoë Buckman, Manuela Gonzalez, Tamika Rivera, Latrelle Rostant, Kate Shepherd** and **Rachel Mica Weiss**.



BMCC Mourns the Loss of Brianne Waychoff



The BMCC community deeply mourns the loss of Dr. **Brianne K. Waychoff**, Associate Professor of Speech, Communications and Theatre Arts and co-founder, with Professor Amy Sodaro, of that department's Gender and Women's Studies Program (GWS). Dr. Waychoff died of 9/11-related kidney cancer after being diagnosed in 2021. She was 43, the loving partner of Associate Professor and GWS Co-Coordinator Ben Powell. Brianne Waychoff was a

feminist, a performance artist, a teacher and a force of nature. She was a prolific scholar recognized both nationally and internationally in Performance Studies and Communication Studies while focusing mostly on Gender and Communication courses at BMCC. Dr. Waychoff was a fierce advocate for students, an incredible teacher and mentor. In her honor, please consider donating to The Brigid Alliance, www.brigidalliance.org, or The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center in NYC, www.gaycenter.org.

Amazon Offers BMCC Tuition Benefits

BMCC is part of a partnership between CUNY and Amazon which allows the company's hourly workers to attend college and further their careers.

Amazon's Career Choice program, which started in January, helps cover tuition and select fees for all qualifying employees accepted into BMCC.

BMCC Community Joins Conversation on Critical Issues

On March 9, President Anthony E. Munroe held BMCC's first in-person State of the College event in two years. The President shared institutional priorities including efforts to increase enrollment and reduce equity gaps.

On March 29, an Enrollment Management Town Hall raised critical issues of student retention and graduation. Black and Hispanic men represent BMCC's largest enrollment drop, a gap addressed by the College's Race, Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee (REI), and the focus of an April 4 event that kicked off Social Justice Week with

an on-stage conversation between President Munroe and leaders of seven projects supporting student success and funded by the President's Fund for Excellence and Innovation.

A Town Hall on April 11 focused on BMCC's role as part of Academic Momentum (AcMo) 2.0, a CUNY-wide initiative to improve undergraduate graduation and transfer rates. BMCC Provost **Erwin Wong** hosted that event. "Even with degree maps and articulation agreements, some students are still losing credits when they transfer to a senior college," he said. AcMo 2.0 strives to reverse that trend.



President Anthony E. Munroe speaks at BMCC's first in-person State of the College in two years.

BMCC Named Top Community College for Hispanics

BMCC was named one of the nation's Top 10 Two-Year Schools by Region for Hispanic students by Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine. BMCC is the top-ranking CUNY college as well as the top-ranked college in the northeastern region for awarding the most—2,062 total—Associate degrees to Hispanic students.

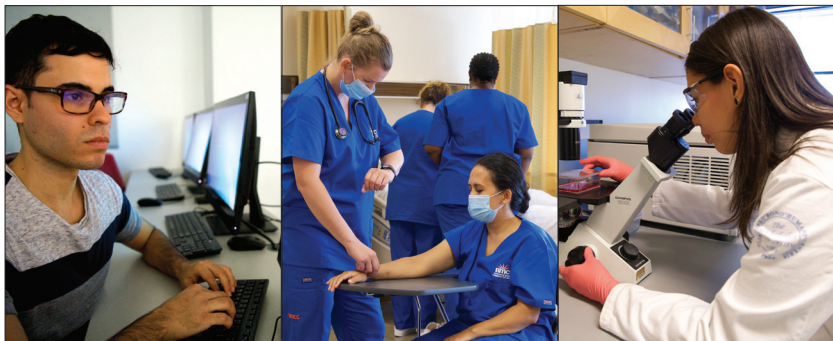
Pinning Ceremony Honors Nursing Graduates



On June 23, BMCC recognized 147 Nursing graduates at a traditional pinning ceremony in Theatre 1 at the College's Chambers Street campus. "You have learned many skills that equip you to

make a difference every day in someone's life—no matter how big or small," said guest speaker BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe. "You will be a light in their lives during the darkness."

Robin Hood Awards \$1.2 Million to Launch IT and Healthcare Training Project



In December 2021, the non-profit Robin Hood awarded \$1.2 million to BMCC to launch IHOPE—IT and Healthcare Opportunities through Programs in Education—at BMCC’s CUNY in The Heights campus in Upper Manhattan. IHOPE will serve 180 participants 25 years of age and

older, and 25% of those served will be single mothers or home health aides. “Our funding partners enhance our ability to empower student agency in shaping their own higher education path and moving toward meaningful professions,” said BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe. “Together, we reimagine successful program models to serve our lowest-income students, our non-traditional and returning students, students from Black, Brown and immigrant communities where tomorrow’s leaders will emerge.”

Invest in a Future Scholarship Gala Set for October 27

BMCC and the BMCC Foundation Board will host the college’s annual scholarship gala, Invest in a Future, on October 27 at Tribeca 360 at 2 Desbrosses Street in lower Manhattan. Amid the venue’s spectacular 360-degree view, the cocktail hour will start at 6 P.M. with dinner and the speaking program starting at 7 P.M. The Gala’s guest honoree is **Brian Ruane**, CEO Clearance and Collateral, Executive Committee, BNY Mellon. Funds raised will support scholarships and programs that enable the college’s most talented students to excel. To register, call the BMCC Foundation at (212) 220-8020.

Scholarship Honors the Memory of BMCC Professor Gail Mansouri



L-R: Gerard Klock, Ed Lakner, Phyllis Lakner, Karen Wilson-Stevenson, Sangeeta Bishop, Valerie Holliday, Shaneil Deas, Claudia Wells, and a family friend; (back row, L-R) Corey Burke, Anthony Gronowicz and a family friend.

BMCC faculty, staff and friends gathered in the lobby of the Miles and Shirley Fiterman Hall on May 24 to celebrate the memory of Dr. **Gail Mansouri**, long-time Political Science Professor, with a plaque on the Fiterman Hall Donor Wall recognizing a scholarship in her name and made possible by a generous donation from **Ed** and **Phyllis Lakner**. Each semester, one male and one female BMCC student will be chosen by the Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice department chair for the Dr. Gail Mansouri Scholarship. “This is the greatest way of honoring her,” said Ms. Lakner, the sister of Dr. Mansouri. “Academics was her life. She loved her students, her colleagues—every part of the educational system.”

BMCC Alumni Inspire Current Students

La’Shawn Allen-Muhammad (Liberal Arts, ’94), Executive Director of Central Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation, and **William Franklin** (Economics, ’18), founder of the non-profit Equitunity, have each contributed to student success at BMCC. A Spring 2022 internship course at BMCC on cooperative economics—provided through the Office of Internships and Experiential Learning, and Equitunity—inspired Psychology major Robert Victorian, along with Business Administration majors **Julius Morris** and **Renaldo Riggton**, to develop social entrepreneurship initiatives they plan to launch in NYC’s most impoverished communities. The initiatives will be incubated at the Brownsville HUB Cooperative, part of the Robin Hood Foundation Mobility Learning and Action Bets initiative. Each student also won \$500, matched by BMCC Launchpad, to continue their projects.

BMCC Alumna and Cancer Survivor Reunites With Nurse Who Inspired Her

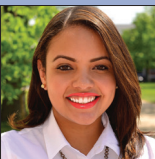
Sierra Flores (Nursing, ’21) was set to begin her studies at BMCC at age 18 when she was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. Inspired by the care she received from hospital nurse **Karen Devries**, she returned to BMCC more than a decade later, earned her Associate degree in Nursing and began a career at the same hospital where she underwent treatment. The emotional reunion between Ms. Flores and Ms. Devries was captured May 12 on NBC’s *Today Show*. “If I can just be a fraction of the nurse you are, I will excel in my nursing journey,” Ms. Flores said.

Milestones



Jiang Jay Yu (Business Administration, attended ’03–’04) was a recipient of the Outstanding 50 Asian Americans in Business award by the Asian American Business Development Center.

Evian Pollack-Blackwood (Science, ’22), received the CUNY Bridges to Baccalaureate T-34 Scholarship from City College of New York, CUN and presented findings from the BMCC research project “Antimicrobial and Antioxidant Properties of Central American Traditional Medicinal Plants,” at the 11th Annual Hybrid Conference, American Council for Medicinally Active Plants, June 28 through July 2 at the Inter American University of Puerto Rico.



BMCC alumna **Nolvía Delgado** (Liberal Arts, ’09) was named executive director of the Kaplan Educational Foundation.

Yamila Martinez (Liberal Arts, ’21) received a Public Policy & International Affairs (PPIA) National Fellowship to attend the PPIA 2022 Junior Summer Institute from May to July at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.



Romario Ricketts (Communication Students, ’19) was awarded a full merit scholarship to Penn State Law of Pennsylvania State University, starting August 2022.

Calling all BMCC Alumni!

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

Contact Interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement Karen Wilson-Stevenson at alumni@bmcc.cuny.edu



Evelis Cruz
CUNY Office Assistant,
Timekeeper for White Collar,
Human Resources Department

What is your role at BMCC?

I am a CUNY Office Assistant, Timekeeper for White Collar. I am responsible for receiving and processing timesheets for all White Collar employees including B&G and Public Safety administration.

What do you really do at BMCC?

I provide time and leave to supervisors for promotion opportunities and answer individuals' emails regarding their balance, policies, maternity leave and retirement. I forward emails to the correct contact person in HR to better assist staff who email me directly, provide transfer information to staff who are transferring to other CUNY schools and provide an Annual Report of Staff Time and Leave to CUNY Central. I also train new staff members in HR, since I have in the past done timekeeping for College Assistant, Faculty, HEOs and MEOC.

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

I am very creative in how I organize and manage all my records. I tend to simplify all the data we receive and in doing so, most staff members in my department tend to replicate and follow how I keep track. I have also taught many staff members in my department ASL (American Sign Language) so they are able to sign to me to communicate.

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

When I first started at BMCC as a deaf staff member, other people would not talk to me directly. They would ask other staff in my department to ask me certain questions, and when I provided the answer, they would look at my coworker rather than looking at me. Now that I have been here for so long, people are more comfortable talking to me face-to-face and knowing that I am deaf, they try to speak clearly to me. When I first started at BMCC there was no Office of Accessibility and no interpreters. Now, I can request an interpreter for events and meetings and BMCC has always provided me with a way of communication. In the past I had a TTY (teletypewriter) at my desk for phone calls, and more recently I have had a VP

(videophone) attached to my desktop. In the future, I am hopeful more staff members will be comfortable using Relay Services to speak to me over the phone.

What is it like, to have family at the same workplace?

I love having my family here with me. All four of my children have worked at BMCC as College Assistants while they were in college. I am so lucky now, as a deaf mother, to have the support of two of my children working full-time at BMCC. I can reach out to them for anything. Lunch time is never dull or boring with your own kids on campus. I'm proud that my kids were able to gain the experience of working for the City and working in an office as their first job. Three of my children are now working in administration, while my youngest is finishing his bachelor's degree.

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

I was born in Puerto Rico and moved to New York when I was seven years old. I was not born deaf, I started losing my hearing when I was 10 years old. I was hard-of-hearing for many years before I lost my hearing completely in my right ear than a few years later on my left and became fully deaf. I currently have a cochlear implant that helps me hear. My husband is also deaf. He worked for the Board of Education for 30 years and now works for the Department of Sanitation. I always strive to teach people that we in the deaf community are equal and like to be an example that deaf does not mean we are dumb. The first language in my household is ASL. My children have used it to communicate with me and my husband their whole lives, and now my two beautiful granddaughters, ages two and five, are starting to use it to communicate with us. When working in person (before COVID) my HR family also used ASL to communicate with me and never made me feel left out. In the future, I hope BMCC provides full access with videophones since I am not the only deaf staff member at the College. It would also be good to always have interpreters provided without advance notice. Hopefully more people of disability will be hired in higher education, because you would be surprised how intelligent and skillful we are.



L-R: Samantha Ramirez (daughter), CUNY Office Assistant, Office of Public Affairs; Evelis Cruz, CUNY Office Assistant Timekeeper for White Collar Human Resources Department; and Xavier Cruz (son), IT Support Assistant, Information Resources and Technology (IRT) Department