

BMCC Commons

Spring 2023

THE NEWSLETTER OF BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BMCC Makes an Impact Around the World

As career paths go global, academic partnerships here and abroad prioritize student goals.



BMCC main lobby at 199 Chambers Street features flags from around the world.

The Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC/CUNY) motto is *Start Here. Go Anywhere*. Those words affirm student potential and reflect the breadth of opportunity students access as they complete associate degree programs in computer science, business, engineering, healthcare and other high-demand areas.

“The global nature of today’s growth industries is a natural fit for ambitious BMCC students who hail from over 140 countries, speak more than 100 languages, and have every intention to follow their dream, raise their family’s economic mobility and apply their talent in industries that will benefit from their contribution,” says BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe**. “With our students’ goals at the forefront, we are exploring faculty and student exchanges and collaborative projects with universities here and in other countries. Enabling students to choose the degree-to-career path that meets their highest expectations and goals is our top priority.”

Recently, BMCC established partnerships with two universities in India, in order to support student and faculty exchanges, research collaborations and other academic opportunities. As **Sanjay Ramdath**, Vice President of Enrollment Management explains, “There are 1.4 billion people in India. It is one of the largest countries today with a population under age 25 and a middle class that are both growing at an exponential rate. These factors create a massive opportunity for affordable education, which is where CUNY fits in perfectly.”

He adds that in response to the need for quality education across all universities in India, the Indian

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BMCC Makes an Impact Around the World

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Honorable Consul General of the Dominican Republic in New York City, Eligio Jáquez (third from left), visits BMCC's Paramedic Department.

government released its New Education Policy 2020, encouraging academic collaborations at the grassroots level between Indian and foreign higher education institutions. "This supports the goal of launching interdisciplinary courses and most importantly, recognition of two-year diplomas," VP Ramdath says.

At the start of the Fall 2022 semester, a group of higher education vice chancellors from India toured CUNY colleges including BMCC. "We hosted a campus tour and had conversations about educational collaborations, Study Aboard, career paths and research opportunities that could benefit both Indian students and those at BMCC," VP Ramdath says. "As of now, we have entered agreements with two institutions; Mumbai's Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thakersey (SNDT) Women's University, which has about 60,000 women students, and Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), which has about 700,000 students and almost 600 affiliated institutions."

"The global nature of today's growth industries is a natural fit for ambitious BMCC students as they apply their talent and raise their family's economic mobility."

ANTHONY E. MUNROE
PRESIDENT, BMCC

The initial focus in these partnerships will be degree programs leading to career paths in education, business, information technology, cybersecurity and STEM. "In our meeting with **Bhagat Singh Koshiyari**, the Governor for the Indian state of Maharashtra who oversees higher education, we learned they have a high interest in promoting women in STEM," VP Ramdath says. "Based on VISAs for students leaving India to study abroad, 37% are for women, and they are looking to balance that out as a 50-50 push."

Alongside BMCC's focus on developing bridges with universities in India, President Munroe is forging educational connections with countries in the Caribbean.

The Honorable Consul General of Jamaica to New York City, **Alston Roach Wilson**, met with President Munroe and members of his cabinet in the Fall 2022 semester to discuss learning and leadership opportunities for students, as well as possible academic and research collaborations.

The Honorable Consul General of the Dominican Republic in New York City, **Elegio Jáquez**, along with a Consular Delegation, also visited with President Munroe and others at BMCC in Fall 2022. They met students and faculty in BMCC's respiratory health, paramedic and STEM research programs, and discussed partnership opportunities that serve the educational and workforce needs of the Dominican community in New York City, as well as in the Dominican Republic.

In addition to academic partnerships, BMCC's global reach is reflected by the college's presence at prestigious conferences around the world. In September, President Munroe joined a group of BMCC faculty and staff to

attend the Twelfth International Conference on Health, Wellness & Society, "Responding to Pandemics," at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. Professor **Lesley Rennis** and BMCC Learning Academy Director **Sara Crosby** presented their BMCC Public Health Academy project, "Public Health in Community College Settings: Addressing Health Equity and Building the Public Health Workforce," which they led with Professors **Lisa Grace** and **Gloria McNamara**.

"What all of these partnerships have in common, is that they speak to our students' career goals, their competitive edge and personal development."

SANJAY RAMDATH
VICE PRESIDENT,
ENROLLMENT
MANAGEMENT



L-R, front row: BMCC VP Sanjay Ramdath, BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe, Governor of Maharashtra Shri Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Vice Chancellor, SNDT Woman's University Professor Ujwala Chakradeo, SNDT Woman's University Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Ruby Ojha, SNDT Women's University and Registrar Dr. Vilas Nandavadekar, and U.S. Dept. of State Public Diplomacy Officer and Deputy Cultural Attaché in Mumbai Sita Raiter, with signed Statement of Shared Interest

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BMCC Commons

Please address any queries or information about the BMCC Commons to:
publicaffairs@bmcc.cuny.edu

Lynn McGee
COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER

Cody Lyon
STAFF WRITER

Louis Chan
DIGITAL
MARKETING
COORDINATOR

Rob Gizis
GRAPHIC AND
MULTIMEDIA
DESIGNER

David Pangburn
VIDEOGRAPHER

Cynthia G. Blayer
WEB CONTENT
MANAGER

Thomas Volpe
DIRECTOR OF
PUBLICATIONS

Rosslynn Pieters
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
OF MARKETING

Sharmela Bhagwant
GRAPHIC
DESIGNER

Jeff Wong
GRAPHIC
DESIGNER

Samantha Ramirez
CUNY OFFICE
ASSISTANT

Mike Fabian
MEDIA
ASSISTANT

Asfi Raihan
MULTIMEDIA
INTERN

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Honorable Consul General of Jamaica to New York City, Alston Roach Wilson

This past June, BMCC students and faculty participated in the 11th Annual Hybrid Conference organized by the American Council for Medicinally Active Plants at the Inter American University of Puerto Rico. BMCC alumna **Evian Pollack-Blackwood** (Science, '22) presented findings from a BMCC research project on the antimicrobial and antioxidant properties of Central American traditional medicinal plants, part of ongoing research with participants including BMCC alumni **Nadjet Cornejal**, **Rajvinder Kaur** and **Ashana Persaud**, along with BMCC Science Professors **Jose A. Fernandez Romero**, **Adolfina Koroch** and **Christine Priano**.

Also in June, BMCC was the first community college to be represented in the International BioDesign Conference. Mentored by Sociology Professor **Elizabeth Wissinger**, Computer Science majors **Josephine Huang** and **Chaya Droznik**, and Criminal Justice major **Dulce Romero** presented their speculative community, the GreenLiving BioCondo Project. The BMCC team presented alongside 54 finalist teams from 17 countries, and before an esteemed international panel of 60+ judges from academia, the arts and industry.

As BMCC strengthens its presence in scholarly communities around the world and impacts the conversation on important global issues like health and sustainability, partnerships with other universities both in New York and beyond, are being developed. A growing list of over 50 articulation agreements, including a recent partnership forged with Morehouse College in Atlanta, puts BMCC students on track for the bachelor's degree programs and careers they seek. They can also explore careers and cultures through BMCC's Study Abroad programs, which provide three-credit courses through trips to Argentina, China, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Greece, Italy, Peru, Canada and other countries, including India.

"What all of these partnerships, these transfer agreements and opportunities have in common, is that they speak to our students' career goals, their competitive edge and personal development," says VP Ramdath. "I look at our partnerships with other colleges both here in the United States and abroad, as a powerful recruitment tool. It's a win/win for everyone involved. Most of all, it's a win for BMCC students who are eager to move forward in their lives and push themselves to new heights."



Professor Lesley Rennis and BMCC Learning Academy Director Sara Crosby in South Africa

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Join the Conversation of Change

As you read this issue of the *BMCC Commons*, I think you will be impressed, as I am, with the breadth of accomplishments by our faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

It is satisfying to hear the good news—whether it's from a student researcher presenting at a prestigious conference or the BMCC women's volleyball team which won its first CUNYAC championship in 16 years. It is inspiring to read of our College's new partnerships across the globe through Study Abroad and with universities in India, in Atlanta with Morehouse College, and here in New York City with the launching of the BMCC-Baruch Business Academy enabling our graduates to transfer seamlessly into the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College—all paving the way for exciting academic exchanges.

"Community" is a concept that links these highlights.

Community is affirmed by BMCC's outreach efforts that include a fundraising event hosted at our CUNY in The Heights campus in support of the hurricane-ravaged Dominican Republic where many of our students have family. Our BMCC community is strengthened by the support of our friends, including Trinity Church Wall Street, an organization committed to addressing student homelessness and housing insecurity, and through our partnership with Amazon Fresh/Amazon Go, whose contribution addresses campus hunger.

Every new initiative, event, student award, and faculty grant reported in this Spring 2023 issue of the *BMCC Commons* reflects many semesters of growth and hard work. As a campus, we have evolved together into who we are today—an institution that strategizes to ensure inclusivity, that actively seeks partnerships that benefit our students, and that creates a supportive environment for the progress and development of faculty, alumni, students, and staff.

Whatever your role at BMCC, I urge you to explore and support the College programs and offerings that speak to your core values. Join the conversation of change propelling our growth by attending campus events that celebrate our community, and let others know about opportunities you've discovered at our College. Thank you for your support, and your unique contribution to BMCC.

With Warm Regards,



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



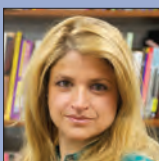
Milestones



Mathematics Professor **Nkechi Agwu** was awarded the White House Presidential Lifetime Award at the Worldwide Chaplaincy Re-Imagined Awards Gala, October 15.



Early Childhood Education Professor **Kirsten Cole** weighed in on the impact of segregated schools in a September 7 article for the nonprofit news organization, WhoWhatWhy.



Teacher Education Deputy Chair and Professor **Cara Kronen** was featured as a content expert on criteria for Best Community Colleges in WalletHub, August 16.



President Anthony E. Munroe was named a 2022 Power Player in Education by PoliticsNY.



Early Childhood Executive Director **Cecilia Scott-Croff** presented “Courageous

Conversation: Supporting Children and Adults with Disabilities,” in a New York State Association for the Education of Young Children webinar, October 19.



Computer Information Systems major **Marcus Benoit**, Science Professor **Chiaki Yanagisawa** and Hofstra University Neuroscience major **Valeria Gromova** presented a research poster on breast cancer cell analysis that won first prize in the clinical category, 55th Annual Metropolitan Association of College and University Biologists at SUNY Westbury, November 5.

Cannabis Workforce Program Receives Funding

BMCC and partner Lehman College will receive \$2 million in New York State funding over three years to create credential programs and pathways to employment in the growing cannabis

industry. “We are thankful for Governor Hochul’s commitment to equity and inclusion in what is projected to be a multi-billion-dollar industry that will generate thousands of new jobs in

New York state,” said BMCC President Munroe. “BMCC is thrilled to be able to offer our students the skills training and knowledge to access a direct path into this fast-growing sector.”

BMCC Hosts William Whitaker Justice For All, Fair Chance Symposium



President Munroe led the William Whitaker Justice for All Fair Chance Symposium at BMCC, October 27. Keynote speaker **Divide Pryor**, Chief Executive Officer of the People’s Police Academy at the Dubois-Bunche Center for Public Policy, spoke on issues of justice for the formerly incarcerated as did **Annabel Palma** (above right), Chair and Commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights and **Abraham Tejeda**, Lead Advisor for Reentry Services at the New York City Commission on Human Rights.

Student Team Wins Fed Challenge

For the fifth year in a row, a BMCC student team led by Business Management Professors **Julian Schroeder** and **Yanni Tournas** has been awarded First Place in the Maiden Lane Division of the National College Fed Challenge, New York Region. The team delivered a 20-minute presentation, then took part in a Q & A with a panel of judges including academics and economists. To prepare, they met through the BMCC Finance and Banking Club to discuss monetary policy and other related topics.

Colloquium XXIV Honors Resiliency

The Department of Modern Languages hosted the XXIV Modern Languages Department Colloquium on October in BMCC’s Theatre 2.

This year’s program, “Women’s World,” recognized women’s creativity, resilience and determination by showing their contributions as creators and protagonists in two documentaries and four films based on fictional stories.

BMCC Welcomes Executive Staff



Michael Reyes (above left) was named BMCC’s Executive Legal Counsel and Labor Designee. Mr. Reyes serves as a member of the President’s Cabinet. Prior to joining BMCC, he served as Executive Agency Counsel with the Office of the General Counsel of the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services. **Judith Eisenberg** (above right), a government funding expert, was appointed Dean of Sponsored Programs and provides leadership and strategic direction for the Office of Grant Development as well as serving as BMCC’s chief liaison with the CUNY Research Foundation. “Bringing a wealth of experience to their positions, these professionals address compelling legal and funding issues that enable us to move forward with important projects at our College, and better serve our students and the BMCC community,” said President Munroe.

\$605K NSF Grant Funds STEM Track for Psychology Majors



Psychology majors at BMCC can now enroll in a STEM track that will prepare them to pursue a career that is

focused on neuroscience and other areas, and transfer without loss of credit to the Bachelor of Science in Psychology program at the City College of New York, CUNY. The STEM/Psychology program, part of the Department of Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice, was created through a \$605,000 grant from the National Science Foundation’s Advancing Innovation and Impact in Undergraduate STEM Education at Two-Year Institutions of Higher Education program.

In Memoriam



Director **Vinton Melbourne**—over 260 pictorial quilts (shown left) that, along with his traditional quilts, brightened BMCC’s open spaces for decades.

Health Education Professor **Maria Chen**, who died September 7, earned a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from Brooklyn College, CUNY and a Master of Arts in Community Health from New York University. She taught physics, biological sciences and health sciences at BMCC and other colleges.

Nursing Professor **Edna Asknes**, who died September 13, guided hundreds of nurses into professions caring for pregnant women and their children. In 2021, Professor Asknes shared insights into teaching in a pandemic at BMCC’s Recharge, Reconnect, Restart conference.

Recognized in 2017 for his 40 years of service to the college, Business Administration Professor **Percy L. Lambert** died on August 18 and was known for his compassionate way of approaching students and colleagues alike. Colleagues sharing friendships that lasted decades, mourn his passing.

Academic Literacy and Linguistics Professor **Edward M. Bostick**, who retired in 2020 after 47 years teaching, died August 25. Professor Bostick, a quiltmaker, sewed images of famous African Americans painted on canvas by BMCC Media Center

BMCC Celebrates Paramedic Graduates and EMT Certificate Recipients



On September 15, a celebration at BMCC honored 74 students and graduates planning careers in emergency response. These included graduates of the Allied Health Sciences department’s A.A.S. in Paramedic program as well as current A.A.S. students and high school seniors dual-enrolled in the program—both of which earned EMT certifications through the Paramedic program or the BMCC Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development.

Pride Month Holds First In-Person Events



A kickoff brunch on October 11 embraced Pride Month themes of inclusion with a hot buffet and presentation by author and LGBTQIA+ advocate **Cindy Rizzo** (above) at Richard Harris Terrace. For the first time since the pandemic began, some of the month’s events were offered in person and included a roundtable pizza lunch, Rainbow Pride and Mental Health; a Pride Love Letters display, an “Imaginarium,” in which community members contributed with mini-paintings on a large public canvas in the BMCC Library, and more.

BMCC and CUNY Partners Break Ground for Future State-of-the-Art Labs at SPARC Kips Bay

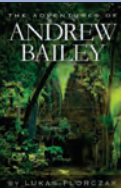
On October 13, New York Governor **Kathy Hochul**, New York City Mayor **Eric Adams** and CUNY Chancellor **Félix V. Matos Rodríguez** announced plans for the Science Park and Research Campus (SPARC) Kips Bay, a public health innovation hub and the first of its kind in the state. BMCC students in health care-related degree and certificate programs such as community health education, nursing, respiratory therapy and health information technology will benefit from state-of-the-art laboratories and more, at SPARC Kips Bay.

BMCC Students Explore Historically Black Universities

More than 1,500 New York City high school students attended the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) college fair at BMCC on September 16. The event, sponsored by the HBCU Tools for School Foundation and the Morehouse College National Alumni Association, featured representatives from more than 30 HBCU institutions including Morehouse College. In May 2022, BMCC formed a partnership with Morehouse College that guarantees admission for male BMCC graduates who complete an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) and meet all requirements for their degree program. On October 5 and 6, BMCC students traveled with President Munroe and other staff members to Morehouse College in Atlanta, where they joined campus tours and events, and met with the Morehouse community.



Milestones



Political Science major **Lukas Florczak** published his first book, the spy novel, *The Adventures of Andrew Bailey* (Barnes & Noble Press, 2022).



The BMCC Women’s Volleyball Team earned the CUNY Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) Community College championship. The Men’s Soccer Team won the CUNYAC Community College men’s soccer championship.



Political Science major and DACA recipient **Eva Santos** was a guest panelist on the CUNY TV documentary series, *I Am a Dreamer*, which aired September 22.



Video Arts and Technology major **Renzo Esposito**’s short film *Talk Louder* won the Grand Jury Prize at the 5th Annual Joyce Forum Jewish Short Film Festival as well as the Best Editor Award at the International World Film Award. The film was also a semi-finalist at the American Jewish Film Festival and a Nominee in the Cannes World Film Festival, Global University Film Awards and Student World Impact Film Festival.

NYSED Awards \$4.25 Million to Adult Continuing Education

The New York State Education Department awarded four grants totaling \$4,250,000 to the Adult Continuing Education (ACE) division of the BMCC Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development. The five-year, federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Title II funding awards \$150,000 a year for five years to three centers of educational opportunity provided in partnership with BMCC. These include the Bridges

Literacy Zone at Hamilton Madison House, the Chinatown East River Literacy Zone at the Educational Alliance and the Lower East Side Literacy Zone at P.S. 188. In addition, the ACE program DigitalWorks will receive \$400,000 a year for five years to provide ESOL classes linked to Microsoft Office Specialist training in partnership with BMCC's Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center and the non-profit Sanctuary for Families.

BMCC Partners With Baruch College to Launch Business Academy



Presidents Munroe (left) and Wu (right)

The BMCC-Baruch Business Academy was launched October 19 with a signing ceremony led by BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe and Baruch College President **S. David Wu** at the Baruch College Clivner=Field Plaza in Manhattan. The Academy propels BMCC students on academic and career paths by providing a smooth transfer into the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College. Speakers at the signing included Assemblymember **Deborah J. Glick** and CUNY Executive Vice Chancellor, University Provost **Wendy F. Hensel**.

Artists Address Race Inequity in History-Conscious Exhibition

Exhibitions by artists **Johannah Herr** and **Jean-Marc Superville Sovak** were on view in BMCC's Shirley Fiterman Art Center, September 15 through December 22. "I Have Seen the Future: The American Home," an exhibition by Johannah Herr, focused on the 1939 and 1964 World Fairs in Queens and related propaganda including 20th-century visions of a utopia excluding people of color. "The Price of Half-Freedom," an installation by Jean-Marc Superville Sovak, was based on the life of **Manuel de Gerri de Reus**, formerly enslaved

by the Dutch West India Company in New Amsterdam, a colony renamed "New York" by the English.



Hispanic Heritage and Italian Heritage Months Inspire Community

In November, Hispanic Heritage events ranged from a film about living under the dictatorship of **Rafael Trujillo** in the Dominican Republic, to an evening with Garifuna activists who raise awareness of Afro-Indigenous peoples of Central

America. In October, a full day of events celebrated Italian Heritage, including musical performances by **Mario Giacalone** as well as by BMCC Music majors led by Department Chair **Eugenia Oi Yan Yau**, and more.

BMCC Commemorates 9/11



BMCC became the only college in United States history to have lost a campus building to a terrorist attack, when Fiterman Hall was struck by 7 World Trade on 9/11. That history, along with the spirit of resiliency that followed, were honored in two special events.

On September 11, artist **Cristóbal Gabarrón** created a 9/11 tribute painting on a large canvas staged at a BMCC outdoor terrace. While this was happening, in a program curated by Professors **Maureen Keenan**, **Andrew Levy**, **Domenick Acocella**, **Margaret Barrow**, **Justin Cabrillos**, **Cheryl Fish**, **Andrew Levy**, **Syreeta McFadden** and **Elizabeth Weaver** read their 9/11-related writing. Speakers included CUNY Chancellor Félix V.

Matos Rodríguez, BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe, New York State Higher Education Services Corporation President **Guillermo Linares**, New York State Senator **Brian Kavanagh** and Professor **Teonilda Madera**.

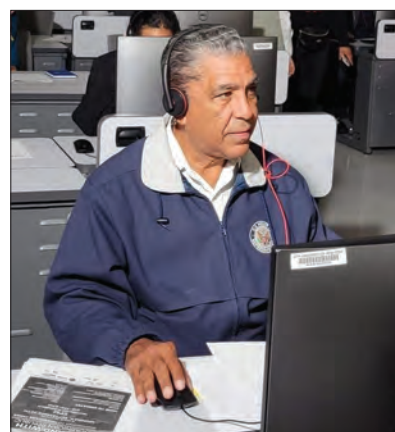
On September 12, President Munroe led a wreath-laying ceremony at a commemorative plaque at BMCC's Chambers Street campus, in remembrance of all those lost that day, including eight members of the BMCC community. Student Government Association President **Carlene Hunte-Nelson** and Video Arts Technology major **Jordan Sutton**, a member of the U.S. Army National Guard, participated in the event.

BMCC Receives NSF Grant to Develop Mobile App Developer Job Pipeline

A group of BMCC Computer Information Systems (CIS) professors received a \$615,608 Advanced Technological Education grant from the National Science Foundation to guide women and minority students into careers as mobile app developers. Classes are set to begin in Fall 2023. CIS Professor **Tamer Avcilar** is serving as the Principal Investigator (PI), and professors **Ching-Song Wei**, **Hao Tang** and **Maryam Vatanikhah** are co-PI's on this three-year project.



Telethon Supports Hurricane Relief



A September 26 telethon hosted at BMCC's CUNY in The Heights campus raised funds to support the Dominican Republic's recovery from Hurricane Fiona, which left more than 12,000 people displaced, nearly 1.4 million without drinking water, and thousands without electricity. Spearheaded by the Office of Congressman **Adriano Espaillat** (left), the event was attended by BMCC President Anthony Munroe and community leaders, representatives from non-profits and the general public.

BMCC and Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies Address Student Homelessness



Homelessness or housing insecurity can mean many things—“couch surfing,” living in a vehicle or shelter, or needing to escape domestic violence.

A collaboration between BMCC and Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies provides housing insecure students with the opportunity to live in The Towers at The City College of New York, CUNY for one to three years while attending BMCC.

These dorm rooms are being offered to about 40 BMCC students taking at least nine credits and maintaining a grade point average of at least 2.0. This program is made possible by a \$2,000,000 contribution from Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies.

Amazon Fresh and Amazon Go Donate \$100K to Reduce Campus Hunger



In September 2022, Amazon launched its support of BMCC’s efforts to reduce food insecurity on campus by donating \$100,000 for non-perishable and fresh food. In addition, Amazon donated an industrial refrigerator so

that the BMCC Panther Pantry can stock pre-prepared sandwiches, cold products and salads from Amazon Go. The Panther Pantry is in the Advocacy and Resource Center (ARC) at 199 Chambers Street.

Foundation Gala Supports Student Scholarships



The BMCC Foundation was pleased to present the College’s most important annual fundraising event, BMCC’s Invest in a Future Gala, on October 27 at Tribeca 360 in Lower Manhattan. This year’s theme, Empowering Student Success, was reflected in student testimonials and videos, and the event raised over \$950,000. The Gala Honoree was **Brian Ruane**, CEO, Clearance & Collateral Management, Executive Committee Member, BNY Mellon. Mr. Ruane was selected as this year’s honoree for his leadership in finance, as well as for his and BNY Mellon’s long-term commitment to BMCC and its students. The 2022 Gala Award of Excellence recipient is BMCC Nursing alumna Dr. **Sandra Lindsay**, the first

person in the United States to have received the COVID-19 vaccination and who has served on the frontlines of the pandemic response. “Proceeds from the Gala provide scholarships to hundreds of hard-working students who demonstrate their courage and commitment to education in the face of many obstacles,” said **Karen Wilson-Stevenson**, Interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement. “Students who are awarded scholarships are nearly four times more likely to graduate within three years, than comparable non-recipients. Your contribution will support BMCC’s mission of advancing socioeconomic mobility, equity and inclusion for all students.”

BRESI and Mellon Foundation Fund Faculty Research

CUNY’s historic Black, Race and Ethnic Studies Initiative (BRESI) Council has awarded five BMCC professors grants totaling \$72,200 to develop their research projects from September 2022 through June 2023. The awards are made possible through the generous support of the Mellon Foundation. The awardees are Professors **Lissette Acosta**, **Kirsten Cole**, **RaShelle Peck**, **Lesley Rennis** and **Linda Varghese**.

Trinity Church Wall Street Awards Healing Rhythms Initiative

Healing Rhythms, a counseling collaboration between the BMCC Early Childhood Center and Counseling Center, has been kicked off, thanks to a \$10,000 grant from Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies. Student parents and other students seeking counseling will benefit from the project. “We aim to decrease barriers to care by offering new means of connection for BMCC students who may not want to engage in traditional talk therapy,” says Counseling Center Director **Neda Hajizadeh**. “According to research, drumming therapy can help reduce anxiety and depression, as well as build community and social resilience.”

Bundles of Joy NY Donates to Early Childhood Center



The BMCC Early Childhood Center at 199 Chambers Street received its first large donation of essential items—diapers, maternity apparel, toddler clothing and more—for student parents from the nonprofit charitable organization Bundles of Joy New York on October 5.

Milestones

Ryan Bias (Communication Studies, ’14) is now Executive Assistant to the Chief Revenue Officer and EVP of Research and Scheduling, CNN.



Jeremiah Chaparro (Video Arts and Technology, ’22) won Best Student Film Award at the 2022 International Film Festival Manhattan for his film *Harmony*, which focuses on academic struggle and feeling isolated.



Michelle Horton (Psychology, ’21), (writing as Elizabeth Cross) authored the science fiction novel, *The Covenant of Magic* (Barnes and Noble, 2022).

Domonisa Hurley (Respiratory Therapy, ’13) authored her first book, *The Forgotten Heroes, COVID-19 From the Lens of the Respiratory Therapist*, (Prindle House Publishing, 2022).

Ana Carolina Alas Iglesias (Business Administration, ’13), selected by UNU-CRIS Research Internship Programme, has joined a research team formed by Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand to measure regional integration and development in the Eastern Caribbean States Region.

As this issue goes to print, BMCC’s **CUNY Tuesday** fundraising effort on November 29 has raised \$175,599. Funds raised enable the next generation of talented BMCC scholars to move forward with their academic and career goals, as well as provide faculty and staff with opportunities and support in their drive for excellence.



Tammie Cinder Velasquez

*Student Life Manager, Women's Resource Center
Grant Project Lead, Social Justice & Equity Centers*

What is your role at BMCC?

I am the Manager of the Women's Resource Center (WRC), as well as the Grant Project Lead of the new Social Justice & Equity Centers (SJEC), which include a Pride Center and Multicultural Center. In my role with the WRC, I oversee an amazing staff. Together we create resources, events, programs, dialogue groups and workshops that support and empower women, LGBTQIA, BIPOC and other minoritized students. This includes educating and connecting with campus community members, to help us all become better allies and strengthen our awareness of power, privilege, and advocacy.

What do you really do at BMCC?

Every day looks so different, I never really know what a day will bring. It can be anything from providing pads, tampons and contraception to students or planning and facilitating a dialogue about intersectional identities, to having confidential meetings with a student who has experienced gender-based violence. Regardless of what the day holds, it will always involve creating a welcoming and engaging space for students to learn about themselves, their community, and things outside of themselves, to be a better global citizen and agent of change.

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

Something that brought quite a bit of joy was receiving the President's Grant for Excellence and Innovation to create and pilot the Social Justice & Equity Centers. Never in a million years did I think it would be possible for me to invent and create a brand-new pilot department and build it from the ground up, especially one that is so student-centered and focused. Seeing how much our programs have grown since I began in 2019 has been mind-blowing. We have such strong attendance at all of our programs and events, and so many students have become "regulars." Seeing the student community grow within the WRC and SJEC, which provides a safe space and a home-away-from-home for students has been a huge win.

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

The dedication to students and the creativity that is needed to make things happen never ceases to

amaze me. The programs at BMCC are incredible—everything from the Counseling Center to the Advocacy and Resource Center, Veterans Center, Accessibility Office, Library and everything in between. The reason these programs and resources are so great is the creativity, passion and dedication of the staff behind them. They really go above and beyond and give life to them so our students have access, opportunities, resources and fun.

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

Growing up, my dad was a woodworker and custodian. My mom was a legal secretary but she was also the

"human Pinterest" before there was Pinterest. I always saw my parents making the most out of what they had and thinking outside of the box to create memories and make things happen. This resulted in me also becoming a creative—I was good with my hands and had a gift for writing and stories. As I got older and went to college, I developed a huge interest in social justice, diversity, inclusion and advocacy. I ended up majoring in Gender, Ethnicity and Multicultural Studies—I hadn't even known these were topics you could take classes in and it opened up my world. I also was extremely involved as a campus leader and in cultural centers. It was the first time I had language for my own lived experience of being the first-born sibling, a first-generation college student and Latina, working three jobs to pay for college. My own personal experience helps me connect with BMCC students. It creates empathy and students know that I "get it." My creativity mixed with my love for social justice helped me revamp the Women's Resource Center at BMCC. It also helped me ideate the vision for the Social Justice & Equity Centers. It gives me ideas for our events, programs, activities and calendar of events so that education and learning can be experienced in a non-traditional and effective way. I am able to use art as activism and storytelling to amplify voices, to show how celebrating culture and identity is resistance, and how community and learning is advocacy and powerful.

