

Borough of Manhattan Community College  
President Antonio Perez  
State of the College Address  
Tuesday, February 28th, 2012, 1:00 pm

Theater II

WELCOME!

We are here today to CELEBRATE and CONGRATULATE!

We want to take the time today to highlight some of our many significant accomplishments and confirm our plans for even greater achievements in the future.

We are succeeding hourly and daily. We see the evidence of our success in every member of the BMCC Community.

BMCC continues to be recognized as a LEADER in urban-serving education nationally. We attract talented, enthusiastic and motivated students from all five boroughs and from over 165 countries. Every student, faculty or staff person who invests their future with BMCC is delivering their very best efforts to realize the promise of our institution.

We have made a contract with our students. We promise that you can???...

["START HERE AND GO ANYWHERE!"]

We are a LARGE institution. We are now THE LARGEST UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE IN NEW YORK CITY. We have more undergraduate students than any other school in CUNY—more than Baruch, City College or Hunter. We have more undergraduate students than NYU. This is a serious responsibility, and we are excelling in our charge.

In 2011, Community College Week ranked BMCC as NUMBER 2 among all community colleges in the nation for awarding Associate degrees in Business; NUMBER 3 in Computer and information sciences; NUMBER 2 in the nation for awarding degrees to African Americans; NUMBER 2 east of the Mississippi for awarding degrees to Hispanic students; and NUMBER 5 nationally, in awarding degrees to underrepresented students in general.

This is an extraordinary achievement. I want to say THANK YOU for having worked so hard. THANK YOU to all of the students, faculty and staff who have contributed their passion for learning, and their passion for excellence, to our collective success.

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Our First Strategic Priority Is Excellence In Teaching, Research And Learning.

Our efforts related to this priority have produced a long list of accomplishments in the last year.

Since last spring, we have added 55 full-time faculty in the areas of accounting, business, computer science, English, health education, mathematics, media, modern language, music, art, science, nursing, social sciences and speech.

We now have over 455 full-time faculty members teaching at BMCC, most of them with a doctorate or terminal degree in their fields. We also depend upon a large and qualified pool of adjunct faculty.

[I'd like to invite the full-time staff in the audience who were hired in the last year to stand so we may formally welcome them. Please state your name and title. Thank you all.]

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BMCC faculty and students continue to achieve special honors, academic awards and prizes. For the second time, the college highlighted more than 25 of its superlative students and their faculty mentors in a publication, Marks of Excellence, jointly created by the offices of academic affairs and public relations.

This second issue features a BMCC theatre major who won First Prize for Achievement in Innovation and Technology at the prestigious Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival; two math majors awarded \$1,000 scholarships from the New York State Mathematics Association of Two-Year Colleges; a BMCC history alum who received a tuition-free fellowship plus stipend at Yale University, and many others.

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Our academic programs continue to excel.

Our Nursing and Allied Health Sciences departments have consistently high graduation rates and state-of-the-art resources. NYU and CUNY, with BMCC as the lead institution, have now opened one of the largest urban health care simulation training centers in the United States. BMCC received 21 million dollars in state and city funds for the construction of the facility, and the center has enhanced training for our students in the nursing, emergency response, and other health care programs. The SIM Center also provides faculty development sessions. In the next year, there will be six courses offered for those who teach in the Center.

BMCC continues to be very active in implementing programs that will prepare our students for the 21st century workforce and transfer to the senior colleges.

As part of these efforts, we have implemented another—our third—joint degree program with John Jay College: an A.S. in Accounting for Forensic Accounting. This program provides the first two years of the B.S. in Economics with a specialization in Forensic Financial Analysis, at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

In January 2012, an A.A. in Communication Studies offered by our Speech, Communications, and Theatre Arts department, was registered with the State Education Department. This program prepares students for careers in advertising, corporate communications, counseling, event planning, human resources, marketing, media planning, political campaign management, public relations, teaching, and for becoming a self-employed entrepreneur.

Graduates of the program will be eligible to transfer to the Communication Studies program at Brooklyn College, and the CUNY On-Line BA Program in Culture and Communication, as well as to many other colleges and universities, both public and private.

Recently, the College's proposal for an A.S. Degree in Science and Mathematics for Secondary Education, was approved by the CUNY Board of Trustees. It is now awaiting registration at the State Education Department. This program will be housed in our Teacher Education department, and will articulate fully with the secondary education programs in mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics at Lehman College.

To continue our expansion into the field of technology, we are developing an A.S. Degree in Geospatial Science through our CIS department, with support from the Social Sciences and Human Services department.

And in response to the demand for careers in the health sciences, we have developed a letter of intent for an A. S. degree in Community Health. Additionally, a letter of intent for an A.S. in gerontology is in development.

To strengthen our graduation rates and build on what we learned from our Title V Grant in Academic Advisement for Liberal Arts Majors, we are also pursuing the development of A.A. degree programs in content areas. For example, a letter of intent will be for an A.A. in History out of the Social Sciences and Human Services department.

To provide additional opportunities for employment, and for transferring to senior colleges, we are also developing a letter of intent for an A.A. in Spanish-English translation that will articulate seamlessly with the B.A. in Spanish-English translation at Hunter College.

Moreover, to address the needs of displaced workers hardest hit by the economic recession, we are developing a certificate program in Accounting, that will be offered by our Accounting Department.

We have worked tirelessly to secure these and other articulation agreements with CUNY, public, and private senior colleges. In the past year, nine senior colleges have agreed to officially credit the work of our students from multiple programs. These colleges include Baruch College, Brooklyn College, John Jay, Lehman College, New York City College of Technology, The New School, SUNY Empire State, and Metropolitan College.

Our campus has fully embraced the use of technology, in and out of the classroom, and with particular attention to the needs of developmental students.

With the help of our new E-Learning Director, staff, and a 2.9 million dollar Title V Grant for the improvement of our E-Learning program, we have begun to implement the suggestions of our experienced, E-Learning Task Force. We are seeing measurable successes for students and faculty. BMCC's e-learning course retention is equal to that of the face-to-face classes, and our hybrid course students have better average persistence than face-to-face students. Since the implementation of the grant 54 NEW E-Learning courses have been developed.

One of the challenges that we will encounter for the next few years involves the CUNY Pathways Initiative. In order to provide our graduates with a seamless transition to CUNY's four-year colleges, we will review, revise and create courses that fulfill the University-wide General Education Common Core.

[Many of our faculty have been serving on University-wide committees that helped to establish the Common Core and to review transfer among our majors. I would like to thank those faculty for their time and effort. Please stand up and be recognized. ]

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### Our Second Strategic Priority Is Student Success And Retention.

BMCC was recently awarded a \$100,000 seed grant from the New York Community Trust to develop a Freshman Academies program for fall 2012. The Academies will provide guidance and coaching to incoming freshman who are majoring in the liberal arts, and they will select from five academies:

- The Visual and Fine Arts Academy
- The Understanding Human Societies Academy
- The Health and Wellness Academy
- The Language and Literature Academy, and
- The Math Science and Technology Academy

Academies will engage students in learning communities, service learning, project-based courses, community-based research, academic support groups, and capstone courses. The academies will provide a dedicated college advisor in developmental reading and writing courses. The BMCC Freshman Academy Model is being designed jointly by the Offices of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, with a cross-division Advisory Group made up of faculty and staff who have been studying best practices for Academies in higher education. Dean Michael Gillespie and Dean Michael Hutmaker are serving as co-directors of the project.

Despite the ever changing federal financial aid policies, BMCC remains highly ranked in the nation, among the top 20 colleges for Pell Grant recipients and funds disbursed.

BMCC students receive 12% of the federal aid dollars disbursed to CUNY students.

In 2010-2011, students received over ONE HUNDRED MILLION dollars in total financial aid by year's end! Students receiving government TAP funding increased from more than 13,000, in Fall 2010, to nearly 17,000 in Fall 2011.

As a complement to government aid, Student Affairs continues to help students find other means of financial support. For the Spring 2012 semester, the Scholarship Office chose 145 students to receive \$320,000 in scholarships. BMCC is also concluding a three year performance based scholarship study, managed by the financial aid office, that has served more than 1300 students with nearly \$1.5 million dollars in additional assistance.

Additionally, we know our students sometimes face unexpected financial difficulties which impact on their academic progress. For these students, the Office of Student Affairs offers emergency aid in the form of short-term loans for books, transportation costs, food, and housing. This past year, the office assisted over 700 students who needed short-term emergency aid.

For those who need longer-term assistance, our Single Stop office connected BMCC students to over \$3.6 million in government benefits such as Medicaid, food stamps, childcare assistance, housing assistance, and transportation.

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This help ensures our students' ability to stay in school, and to that end, the BMCC Enrollment Management Team continues to develop strategies to maintain our enrollment and retention standards. In fact, we have met our enrollment goal of 24,000 (+/- 500) this semester.

To streamline our students' enrollment experience, we have put web registration and on-line orientation in place, along with orientation sessions for family members and transfer students. And our Financial Aid office now works with students earlier in the process, to ensure their timely receipt of funds—not to mention, shorter lines and less frustration.

We have also brought together different campus services, to enhance organizational effectiveness. These programs (such as CUNYStart, CLIP, BLIIS, MEOC, and Immersion) have coordinated their efforts, in order to serve students better. Student support staff in Student Affairs, as well as staff in Financial Aid, Single Stop, ECC, Scholarship office, Counseling, and the Women's Resource Center are now permanently linked, in order to provide more efficient and comprehensive services for students.

These coordinated efforts also bring faculty and staff together to assist specific populations that once had to seek assistance and resources in different offices all over the campus. Now, for example, faculty and staff have been trained and certified as

SAFEZone Allies for members of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender student community.

And to better serve our veterans, many of whom are returning from difficult assignments abroad, we've set up partnerships between various offices, services and resources, and created a Web page that is specific to their needs.

The Center for Career Development helps students reach their goals for the future. The Center provides as many as five workshops, seminars and other activities a week, and brings in experts, volunteers and alumni from the workforce. The Center collaborates with Academic Affairs to stay aware of career trends. Faculty partnerships with the Center have led to beneficial opportunities for BMCC students. For example, Professor Karasek of the Media Arts and Technology Department, arranged a student tour of the SCRIPPS NETWORK, home of HGTV, the Food Network, and the Travel Channel, and helped students become aware of emergent careers in the field of media. The Center has also brought hundreds of business and governmental employment recruiters to campus, for Career Fairs and other events that connect our students with jobs, advice and opportunities.

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Student Leadership is pivotal in the future of our college. We have partnered with organizations to create unique programs for students such as our Goldman Sachs/ BMCC Leadership program.

Other programs at BMCC include the Academy for Leadership and Service through Student Activities, the SGA Leadership Retreat; the Women's Resource Center Leadership Program; the Peer Achievement Leaders, and the Welcome Ambassadors. Our students further expand their leadership skills when student organizations and their advisors compete in off-campus events. For example, BMCC's Finance and Economics Club, advised by Professor Yanni Tournas, received first place honors in the Federal Reserve's College Fed Challenge, held at Pace University.

We have again partnered with the national research organization, MDRC, to provide targeted support for the student population of African-American and Latino men experiencing academic difficulties in college. During this Spring 2012 semester, 75 students will participate in the Performance Based Scholarship, which will provide of enhanced academic support. The support includes mentors, academic advisors, and tutors; customized workshops, lectures, seminars, and meetings with guest speakers. At the end of the semester, once the PBS students have successfully completed their courses, they will be awarded a generous stipend.

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Our Third Strategic Priority Is Organizational Effectiveness And Accountability.

The college is now engaged in preparing a Periodic Review Report. This report, due at the mid-way point in a ten-year accreditation cycle in June 2013, will address the

recommendations for improvement that BMCC received in 2008. In that report, we will present evidence that we have updated our facilities and technology master plans, and strengthened our educational assessment to support student learning.

Working with the office of Academic Affairs, Professors Gay Brookes, Chair of the Department of Developmental Skills, and Professor Kay Conway, of the Department of Business Management are doing a superb job as co-chairs of the periodic review process. They have recruited numerous campus committees to assist with the preparation of the report. We are well on our way to completing our final Periodic Review Report, which will be submitted to the Middle States Commission in the fall of 2012.

In addition to the Periodic Review Report, a campus-wide effort has begun to enrich our BMCC Strategic Plan with strategic projects and initiatives. Our Strategic Steering Committees and Work Teams have been doing extensive research into best practices, and they are now presenting excellent, actionable, proposals to the BMCC Collaborative Improvement Council.

[I would like to thank all of you who are working so diligently on Committees to prepare the Periodic Review Report, as well as those who are members of Strategic Steering Committees. Would you please stand to be acknowledged by your colleagues?]

We will soon have more space to learn, think and work together. THE EXCITEMENT IS BUILDING AS FITERMAN HALL NEARS COMPLETION. We will be offering classes in the new space this Fall, 2012!

Fiterman will be a New York City showcase, unlike any Community College building anywhere! The new space will include community gathering areas, a public art gallery, a restaurant, and a conference facility. The building is located just a few steps away from an area of national significance, revered by Americans everywhere. People come from all over the United States to remember, and BMCC's Fiterman Hall will be a reminder of our national commitment to ALL students during challenging times. Our students ARE the future of New York City, AND our country.

In addition, the building will provide tangible improvements to the life of the BMCC community of students, faculty and staff. Fiterman adds approximately 40% more instructional space and will provide the college with 80 additional labs and classrooms. Those TRAILERS WILL BE GONE FOREVER!!

As Fiterman Hall becomes operational, BMCC will have a chance to make critical improvements to the main facility at 199 Chambers Street. Some of these changes include complete retrofitting our facilities to comply with current ADA standards, and renovating the heating and ventilation systems. It will allow us to create better and more attractive office spaces for our faculty at Chambers street.

In addition, we are now upgrading our labs and facilities for BMCC's science majors. We recently received two major grants, one in Forensic studies and another in Engineering, and these funds have allowed the college to retrofit three classrooms into a state-of-the-art student science research facility at BMCC in the Chambers Street

location. More than \$1.2 million in U.S. Department of Education funds have been used for this construction.

Also, as we address the issues of the physical space, it's important to note that BMCC is fully committed to the goals of a sustainable future. Our 10-year BMCC plan for Sustainability includes ambitious goals for energy conservation; curriculum and education; procurement; waste management, and recycling.

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Our Fourth And Last Strategic Priority Is Global Engagement And Economic Development.

Since BMCC began, we have been clear that our mission was to serve the residents of New York City, especially during hard times.

BMCC works closely with the local community, and each year partners with corporations, elected officials, local boards, community leaders, and government agencies to organize events and provide space for meetings, conferences, and programs. Over the past year, BMCC co-sponsored over 50 events open to the community, including the Tribeca Film Festival.

BMCC's Center for Adult Continuing Education & Workforce Development and the Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center in Harlem, play a critical role in meeting the needs of job-seekers and those seeking skill upgrades. In addition, both programs assist prospective students with college entry through preparation for college entrance exams such as SAT and the CUNY placement tests.

The College's workforce development programs work hard to create a stronger pool of qualified applicants for New York City employers. BMCC's Center for Adult Continuing Education & Workforce Development strengthens the college's connections with local businesses, by engaging them in dialogue about improving the skills of their incumbent workforce. The Center is a strong supporter of the Office of the Mayor's AGE-FRIENDLY NYC Initiative for preparing an aging workforce. BMCC is an AARP Foundation Work Search Training site, and an active trainer of Older Workers.

Another way that we reach out, is through the Department of Public Affairs. The Department of Public Affairs is the narrative voice of BMCC, telling the stories of high-achieving students, faculty and staff.

Through the latest technology; in Web articles, print journals, videos and other media, Public Affairs presents the BMCC community in an up-to-date and welcoming manner, one that appeals to a growing, and diverse audience.

Whether you're a student, professor, staff person, alumni or friend of BMCC, the Department of Public Affairs makes it easy to access the constant stream of information that keeps a college running.

Through our Web site and other media, we find what we need to know about special events, scholarship opportunities, and registration deadlines. The Department of Public



Affairs is a critical force in keeping the BMCC community aware of tutoring and counseling services, career fairs, student internships, and vital emergency or weather-related updates.

The Web site is a place to learn more about BMCC's academic departments and professors. Also, through the Web site and signage across campus, Public Affairs keeps us all informed of CUNY initiatives that BMCC is part of, such as our drive to be tobacco free by this coming September.

Public Affairs provides both a forum, and a resource to the BMCC community, through Facebook, a medium that is already a big part of many students' lives, and posts our college's Web stories on YouTube, iTunes U, Twitter, and in an email newsletter. A BMCC news feed delivers this rapidly changing Web content in digest form.

Keeping up-to-date with student needs, the department even created a BMCC "app," so students can access all of these resources on their mobile phone device.

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Students come to us from all over New York City and the world.

It is our responsibility and our privilege to serve these students.

I know we will continue to ensure that the BMCC experience fully prepares them to realize their tremendous potential and to build a brighter future.

In closing, I know that you share with me, a deep commitment to BMCC.

BMCC WORKS because you CARE deeply about each other, because you WORK very hard, and because you are optimistic that all of us, together, are steadily making improvements; improvements that will lead us to a better future for our students, our colleagues, our college, our city and our nation.