



Commons

The Newsletter of Borough of Manhattan Community College *summer / fall* 2012

31 Degrees of Excellence

Forensic Accounting,
Criminal Justice and
Biotechnology are just a few
of the dynamic new majors
BMCC students can choose,
as they prepare for a
fast-changing world.

(Story on **page 4**)



Borough of Manhattan
Community College
199 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Inside:

POETRY IS LIFE

Professor Hilario Barrero translates renown American Poets to Spanish, and shares his love of literature with students.

MULTI-GENRE MEGA TALENT

Alumna LaTasha Diggs directs an experimental media project, and delves into other genres.

MEET THE MET

Business major D'jory Vilsaint inspires fellow students to patronize the Metropolitan Opera.

Commons Knowledge

Items of interest to the BMCC Community



Roshen Weliwetta,
Prof. Yanni Tournas,
Ekaterina Ponkina

Finance Club Wins Fed Challenge

Members of BMCC's Finance and Economics Club—Ekaterina Ponkina, Zsuzsa Blasko, Cristina Misa, Mumza Butt and Roshen Weliwetta—competed in the 2011 College Fed Challenge last fall at Pace University, and earned first-place honors in the community college division.

Each team of contestants presented a proposal for Federal Reserve monetary policy, before a panel of judges including federal officials, business leaders and academics. “We argued that monetary policy should focus on extreme

accommodation for distressed homeowners,” said Ponkina.

“They were remarkable,” said the team’s advisor, Yanni Tournas, a veteran economist and associate professor in the Department of Business Management. “I’ve taught at a number of schools, including Rutgers and Northwestern, and I can tell you without reservation that these students would have held their own against any of them.”

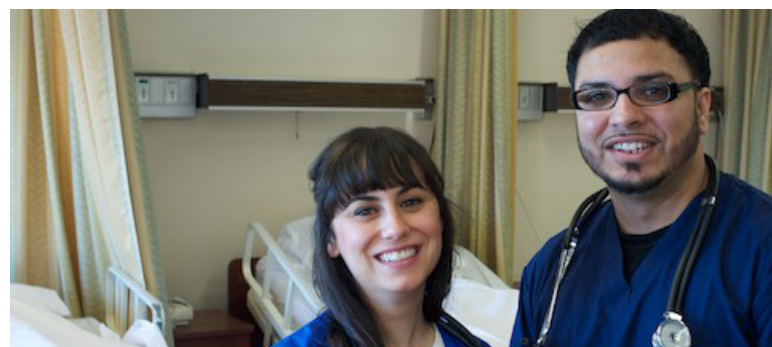
The BMCC students were formally presented with their award at a ceremony at the New York Federal Reserve Board last fall.

 www.bmcc.cuny.edu/news/news.jsp?id=7044

Nursing Candidates Hold Externships at Woodhull Medical Center

Sixteen BMCC nursing graduates recently completed 8-week externships at Woodhull Medical Center

in Brooklyn. Assigned to the Intensive Care Unit, alumna Janet Alaia observed bronchoscopies and neurological work-ups, and participated in a rapid response team, attending to cardiac arrest patients under “code blue” conditions. Fellow extern Mantreet Singh learned treatment



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protocols for stroke and cardiac arrest patients.

"It was in the BMCC nursing program where I learned how to work as part of a team, and the importance of being an advocate for my patients," said Singh. Other nursing alumni who held externships include Annette Alonzo, Claire Barbee, Tatsiana Boutenko, Mei Zhe Chen, Nan Essuman, Diana Fox, Shao Lin, Shelline Kerr, Rebecca Mathews, Tamara McFarlane, Aneta Raybin, Tanya Ruiz and Mariusz Wierzbicki.

 www.bmcc.cuny.edu/news/news.jsp?id=8437

Dennis M. Walcott Delivers 47th Commencement Address

New York City Schools Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott delivered keynote remarks at BMCC's 47th Commencement Exercises on June 1st at the

Jacob Javits Center. Charged with ensuring that all NYC public school students receive the best possible foundation for college, he shared with the 3,200 BMCC graduates his efforts to run his first marathon at the age of 60. "I walked one block, ran one block; walked one block, ran two blocks," he said. "This is just the next step in your marathon."



FOUNDATION NEWS

24th Annual Gala Raises \$600,000 for BMCC Scholarship Foundation

BMCC's 24th Annual Gala, held recently at The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers, raised close to \$600,000 to benefit the BMCC Scholarship Fund. Overlooking the Hudson River, the Gala featured a cocktail reception, Silent Auction and formal dinner. ■ The event's theme, "Focusing on the Future," celebrated BMCC's Foundation Scholars, as well as soon-to-open Fiterman Hall. The evening's honorees were the Miles & Shirley Fiterman family, and Frank J. Sciamé, founder and CEO of Sciamé Construction. ■ BMCC President Antonio Pérez spoke about *The Wall of Honor*, a glass donor wall to be featured in Fiterman Hall's lobby, bearing the names of BMCC benefactors. Master of Ceremonies CBS News Correspondent Jim Axelrod welcomed honorees and special guests.

 <http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/news/news.jsp?id=8621>



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Business and Community Colleges: Partners in Progress

President Obama's proposed \$8 billion "Community College to Careers Fund," to be jointly administered by the Departments of Education and Labor, is intended to support partnerships between community colleges and industries such as healthcare, transportation, clean energy and information technology.

At BMCC, we are continually looking for ways to prepare our students for tomorrow's workplace, through collaborative initiatives within these industries. One of the most notable examples is our Business Technology Onshoring Partnership (B-TOP), which supports students' career goals while providing local technology companies with a vital new source of human capital.

Developed by our Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development, the B-TOP process evaluates the partner company's skills needs, and creates training programs that provide students with those skills, as well as, in some instances, professional certifications.

Programs like this underscore the close relationship between community colleges and America's competitive position in the global arena. As President Obama has noted, "Jobs requiring at least an associate degree are projected to grow twice as fast as jobs requiring no college experience. We will not fill those jobs or keep those jobs on our shores, without the training offered by community colleges."



Unfortunately, not all politicians feel this way. State funding for community colleges has been cut dramatically, and Congress appropriated only \$2 billion for the administration's \$10 billion community college initiative. As we go to press, the President's proposal for a Community College to Career initiative is just that—a proposal, which will require Congressional approval to be put into action.

At a time when education and training are inexorably linked to our country's economic viability, I can't think of a better use of taxpayer dollars—or a sounder investment in America's future.

ANTONIO PÉREZ, PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

31

Degrees of Excellence

BMCC's new degree programs open doors to careers that didn't exist when many students were growing up.

If you haven't been to a commencement at BMCC in a while, you might not recognize some of the 31 majors embroidered on gold banners being carried to the stage.

Times are changing. Research is becoming globalized—and so are work teams.

Humanists are collaborating with ecologists, chemists with product developers, scientists with urban planners. Traditional disciplines are fusing into new ones, and students drawn to emerging fields know what to look for, when they choose a major.

"The word 'bio', plus 'technology', made me think it would help integrate me into the kinds of medical technology classes I'll be taking when I transfer to the Physician Assistant program at City College," said biotechnology major Andres Diagama.

Forensic Science major Myra Hart enrolled at BMCC after having been a licensed social worker for over 20 years, working with children in foster care and sometimes, assessing abuse. "We all had to take a medical examiner's training, so we could determine between old and new bruises or other injuries," she said. "Instead of feeling squeamish, like some of my colleagues, I became more and more intrigued."

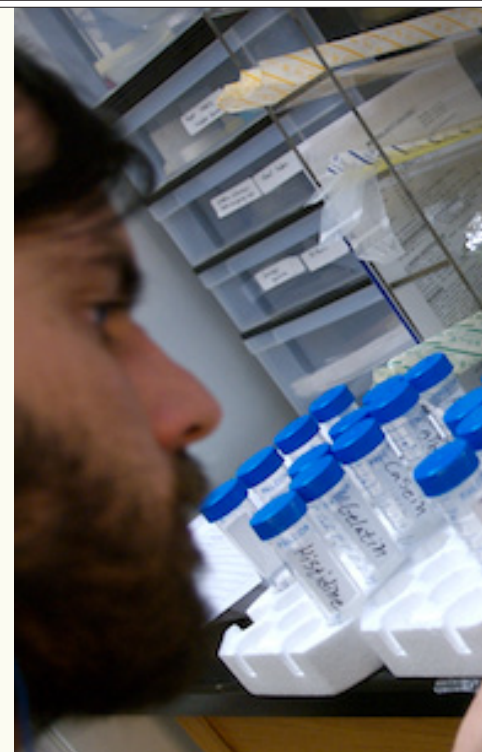
Now, she explores the content of chemicals in the body, and DNA. "After BMCC, I'd like to major in two areas of

forensic science, toxicology and biology," she says, "and maybe someday I can become a toxicology nurse, working within a bar association as an expert witness."

Eric Normil-Mendez just registered for classes in BMCC's newest major, Communication Studies. "One thing that is my passion, is expressing myself with words," he says. "At church I've been on the debate team, and I'm also a spoken word artist. I love to write. After BMCC, I'm planning to transfer to the public relations and advertising program at City College, with a minor in journalism."

Other new majors include Mathematics and Science for Secondary Education, Forensic Accounting, and on the horizon, Geospatial Technology. Each registration season builds toward a commencement that is unlike the one before it, preparing students for careers that didn't exist, when they were growing up.

"We already have 10,000 students registered for Fall 2012, and it's exciting to track all the new majors," said BMCC's Senior Registrar, Gregory Wist. "This fall is the first semester we're offering classes in the new Communication Studies major, while others that have been around a couple years, like Criminal Justice, are really gaining momentum. In fact, that one has taken off unbelievably, and it's been a challenge, keeping up with the registration demand — but it's the kind of challenge we like."



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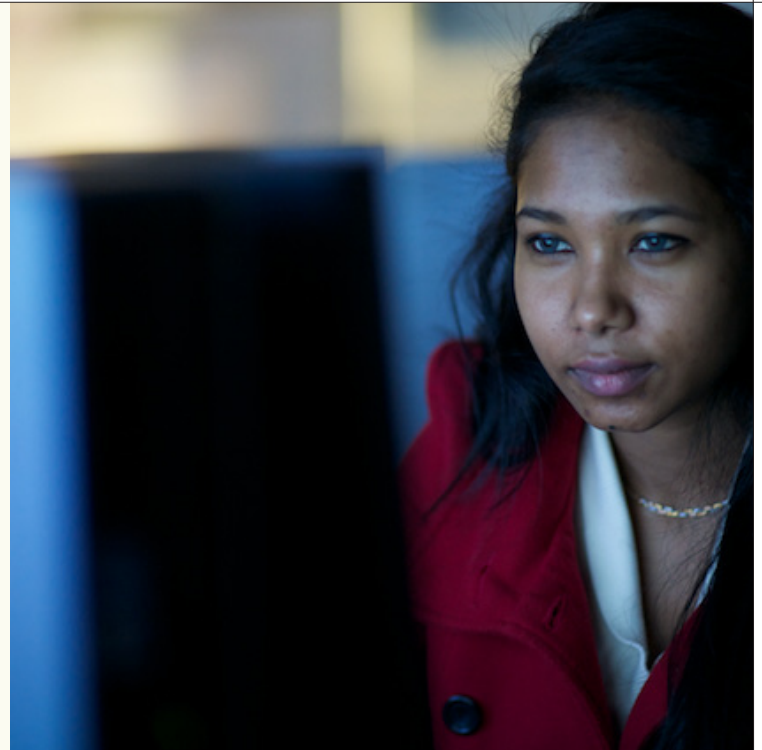
~ Communication Studies
Eric Normil-Mendez





“Maybe someday I can become a toxicology nurse, working within a bar association as an expert witness.”

~ Forensic Science major,
Myra Hart



debate spoken planning public advertising College, Journalism.”

Studies major,
ndez



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~ Senior Registrar,
Gregory Wist

Faculty & Staff

Items about the faculty and staff of BMCC



Poetry Is Life

Born in Toledo, Spain, BMCC's Modern Languages Associate Professor Hilario Barrero moved to New York City in 1978, and "the first thing I did," he says, "was go to a book store and open an anthology of American poets." This began a 30-year labor of love—translating poems from English to Spanish—and culminated with the 2011

release of *Lengua de madera, Antología de poesía breve en inglés (Tongue of Wood, An Anthology of Short Poems in English)*, from the prestigious Spanish press, La Isla de Siltolá—171 poems spanning almost 400 years, by poets ranging from William Blake to Emily Dickinson to Allen Ginsberg.

Barrero also just published

translations of work by former U.S. Poet Laureate Donald Hall; *El sabor de la piedra*, or *The Taste of Stone*, and a bilingual anthology of work by the late American poet Jane Kenyon; *De Otra Manera*, or *Otherwise*. Poetry, Barrero says, "helps students discover a new way of thinking. And they love poetry. Poetry is life."



FACULTY PROFILE

Math STaR

BMCC Assistant Professor of Math Jason Samuels is one of 34 people nationwide—and the only community college professor—to have received a 2012 National Science Foundation STaR (Service, Teaching, and Research) Fellowship. Samuels, who created a calculus curriculum organized around technology and used in schools across the country, will join other STaR scholars at a research institute in Park City, Utah this summer, where he expects to find "a greenhouse of ideas with math educators and researchers from different working groups."

Alumni News

Items for and about BMCC Alumni



First Decade Reunion, 1966-1975

Vermont State Senator Mark MacDonald—an alumni from BMCC’s first graduating class, 1966—traveled from his farm in Vermont to join over 80 alumni at a recent First Decade Reunion Dinner on campus. “At BMCC, for the first time in my life, I was a good student,” he said.

Alumna Fran Sobers, founder of Bumps Cookies, flew from Atlanta to join the festivities. “BMCC catapulted me into a

bigger world,” she said, or as middle-school principal Vicky (Carmen) Pizzaro put it, “I have BMCC to thank for my career path.”

“Our earliest alumni serve as inspiration for current and future students,” said Pat Splendore, Director of Alumni Affairs. BMCC President Antonio Pérez welcomed the group, and keynote speaker, Distinguished Alumni Philip Berry reminisced that the seventies “is really when I came alive from the standpoint of the student movement”—before decades championing diversity in the corporate workplace, and one night joining others of his generation, to tell their stories.

 <http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/news/news.jsp?id=8557>

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

Multi-Genre Mega Talent

BMCC alumna LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs has never confined herself to one genre. “I write mostly poetry, flash fiction and essays about a variety of topics, from my mother to anime characters,” said the Harlem native, and while admitting she’s not “a nine-to-fiver,” she certainly hasn’t been slacking off. She recently directed an experimental media project, *Artificial Africa*, at Dixon Place on the Lower East Side, and connects other artists to health-care options, workshops, and each other.



Request for Success

BMCC Alumni – send us your success stories! Write Barry Rosen, Executive Director of Public Affairs, at brosen@bmcc.cuny.edu

Keep in Touch

with the BMCC alumni office at www.bmcc.cuny.edu/alumni/

BMCC PROFILE

Meet the Met Opera Ambassador

D'jory Vilsaint is the only community college student serving as Student Ambassador for the Metropolitan Opera. "A lot of people perceive the Met as something for people of white descent, not for people of color, but the Met reaches out to different communities and I'm happy to be part of that. I've been thanked many times by BMCC students who had a blast at the opera," says Vilsaint, who provides access to free or discounted tickets.

 <http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/news/newsjsp?id=5896>



Commons Calendar

Upcoming events and performances

Tribeca Spotlight

Eli Yamin Blues Band. Celebrating their debut recording, *I Feel So Glad*, this versatile ensemble welcomes audiences of all ages into the rich world of the blues, and music ranging from spiritual to classical, bebop to folk. Oct. 26@8 p.m. \$15.

Spottiswoode & his Enemies.

Singer/songwriter Jonathan Spottiswoode has been "one of New York's most colorful band leaders for more than a decade," according to WNYC radio. Spottiswoode & his Enemies has released five acclaimed CDs,

toured worldwide, and received four Independent Music Award nominations, including Best Eclectic Album of 2011. Nov. 9@8 p.m. \$15.

Aabaraki. Brooklyn's own reduction-stutter-funk band features guitarist Brian Forbes, who has toured with the



Aabaraki

hip-hop rock band Nillaz; keyboardist Akie Bermis, who has opened for George Clinton; Aaron Steele, one of NYC's most sought-after session drummers, and Ari Folman-Cohen, who has opened for Patti Smith. Dec. 14@8 p.m. \$15.

Family Series

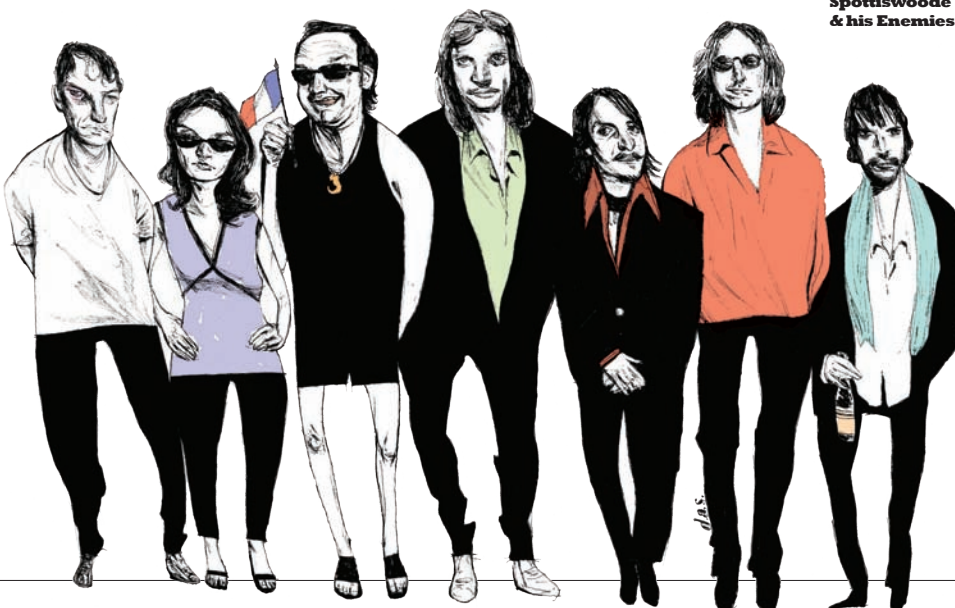
A Little Princess. Spirited Sara Crewe goes from rags to riches when her doting father disappears, leaving her in the clutches of evil Miss Minchin. Based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic novel, this original musical puts the powers of love, friendship and belief in miracles on vivid display. Ages 3-9. Nov. 11 @3 p.m., \$25; 10 Club Members \$15.

Sleeping Beauty. Live music and image projections transform a classic, rhymed-verse fairy tale into a magical, multi-media world in which our beautiful (and funky) princess is awakened by true love's first kiss...or not. Ages 4-10. Dec. 15@1:30 p.m. \$25; 10 Club Members, \$15.

Go to www.tribecapac.org for more events.



A Little Princess



Spottiswoode & his Enemies