



**I**t takes more than one strategy to ensure student success. At BMCC, Open Educational Resources (OER), the new BMCC app and the Early Childhood Center's recent accreditation help students thrive.

**Innovate: Finding New Ways to Make Resources Available**

At BMCC, where the majority of students qualify for financial aid based on family income, the high cost of textbooks can impact academic performance and delay graduation. In fact, the cost of college textbooks has soared 73% in the last ten years, according to a 2016 report from the non-profit Public Interest Research Group. Individual books often cost more than \$200 and sometimes go as high as \$400.

To remove that barrier, BMCC has joined the nationwide OER Degree Initiative led by Achieving the Dream, Inc. This initiative seeks to make Open Educational Resources (OER), or free online textbooks, available to college students who are struggling to buy them. BMCC, along with Hostos Community

College and Bronx Community College, comprise the CUNY consortium within the 38 colleges involved in the project, and will share an award of \$300,000 over a 3-year period.

"Open Educational Resources makes dollars and sense for BMCC students and faculty," says **Jim Berg**, Associate Dean of Faculty at BMCC. "Since the beginning of our involvement with OER, students have saved \$500,000 on course materials." He adds that the BMCC Criminal Justice program has committed to be the first academic program at BMCC to provide a completely OER-based degree.

"The interesting part of doing it within an entire degree program is that it brings in all the department courses a student would take to earn those 60

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Borough of Manhattan  
Community College  
199 Chambers Street  
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- 5 New Degree Programs Build Student Retention**
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# Innovate. Connect. Grow.

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credits,” says BMCC Librarian **Jean Amaral**, who co-led the college’s OER program from its inception in Fall 2014 with a textbook affordability meeting for faculty and students. “What’s exciting is that it’s not just a textbook-for-textbook conversion; the OER material is often an enhanced version of the textbook, and it opens up a world of other materials that could include primary documents, articles online, videos and more ways to engage students in learning.”

## Connect: Enhancing Learning with Mobile Technology

The BMCC community stays connected through the college website, email, texting — and now those modalities have converged in the new BMCC app. Launched in Spring 2016 and designed to be compatible with Apple and Android phones, the app was developed through an in-house group — **Matthew Conroy, Lawrence Dumaguing** and **Milla Wynn** — led by **Joseph Spadaro**, BMCC’s Vice President for Information Technology. “They’re a super team,” Spadaro says. “Milla works on web development, Larry does database design and Matthew is the programmer.”

Their hard work is yielding promising results. “Mostly, we see people looking at their course schedule or using something called ‘Classmates’, which is the online chat tool we developed,” Spadaro says. “That’s probably the most innovative component of the app. When you enroll in a course, you’re automatically put into a chat room for that section of that course — and that’s exactly what we hoped people would use the app for; getting quick information about their experience at BMCC.”

The chat feature, he says, is unique to BMCC’s app. “No other college within the CUNY system has

an app with a chat feature that integrates with your course schedule. We are also the only CUNY school that wrote their own app. We didn’t contract with a vendor to write it. We did contract with vendors to load-test and security test the app independently, which is important.”

Future enhancements on the app include an online menu for the BMCC cafeteria, “plus links that tell you whether or not a textbook is available on reserve in the library,” Spadaro says. “It will also have an electronic cuing feature, so you’ll be able to check into a line, for example at the registrar, and then the device will notify you through your phone when it’s your turn.”

Eventually, he says, the app will even include an interactive wayfinding feature. “It’s like an internal GPS inside the buildings. So if you’re standing on one floor and you want to know where the nursing department is, you ask the app and it will tell you how to get there.”

## Grow: Meeting High Standards in Early Childhood Education

“We have a rich history, including our relationship with the BMCC Teacher Education Department, so we know the importance of providing developmentally appropriate practices for young children,” says **Cecilia Scott-Croff**, Executive Director of the BMCC Early Childhood Center. “We are also committed to sharing best practices with parents who use the Center.”

The Center was recognized recently for its commitment when it was awarded accreditation from the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC). Accredited status “often makes the difference between getting funded and not funded,” says Scott-Croff, and it reflects a childcare center’s alignment

“No other college within the CUNY system has an app with a chat feature that integrates with your course schedule.”

**VICE PRESIDENT  
JOSEPH SPADARO**

with national standards of quality programming. Close to 150 children a semester, ages two to 12, attend the BMCC Early Childhood Center, which “serves single parents, single moms, single dads — a variety of student parents,” says Scott-Croff. “We give priority to matriculating students, but we also serve special populations at the college; veterans, families living in transitional housing and others.”



with national standards of quality programming.

Highly subsidized, the cost to student parents and guardians using the Early Childhood Center ranges from \$5 to \$35 a week, and Scott-Croff emphasizes the Center’s impact on their academic success. To help build

graduation rates for student parents, the Center has received U.S. Department of Education funding through a program called CCAMPIS, the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program. It also houses a Family Childcare Network Program, serving an additional 20 children not age eligible for the campus program, in a supervised network of about 15 homes.

The NYSAEYC accreditation will be renewed every five years, and will enable the Center to focus more on staff development, says Scott-Croff. “Also, BMCC students doing work study, and those who are interning and volunteering at the Early Childhood Center will benefit.”

**BMCC Commons**

Please address any queries or information about the Commons to: [publicaffairs@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto:publicaffairs@bmcc.cuny.edu)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Reinforcing Strategies to Strengthen Student Retention

Our college is expanding its leadership, scholarship opportunities, degree offerings and partnerships. At the heart of this growth is our commitment to create an environment where students, faculty and staff thrive, and to set the bar higher for community colleges nationwide.

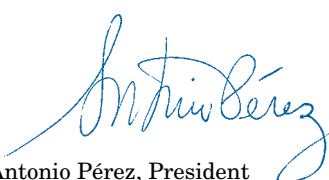
At BMCC, our Gilman Scholars travel abroad and join the cultural exchange that fuels the global economy. Our professors create national forums on issues at the forefront of higher education, and our development and grants offices join with faculty to bring major gifts to our college, opening doors for students in STEM and other fields.

As part of our student retention strategy, we have also expanded our associate degree programs at BMCC, adding Psychology and Science for Health Professionals to a list that has grown to include Animation and Motion Graphics, History, Studio Art, and others. We not only provide a growing list of academic programs, we are committed to removing the barriers our students face as they pursue these degrees. For example, we have addressed issues including the high cost of textbooks by joining the Open Educational Resources, or OER movement, making free, enhanced classroom materials available to our students.

These efforts are part of the carefully planned growth of our college. To ensure that we remain aligned with our strategic goals — to strengthen our students' college readiness, improve graduation rates, develop 21st-century workforce opportunities and cultivate sustainability — we have reinforced our leadership team with individuals applying dedicated focus to those areas.

The fiscal and social realities our students face may seem daunting, but we are optimistic that a balance of close mentoring, rigorous academics and special opportunities make their success within reach. After all, our students are complex. They are driven to respond to community needs, yet drawn to worldwide, emerging industries. They embody the independent spirit of the entrepreneur; yet thrive in small groups with a common goal.

As the title article in this issue of the *Commons* suggests, at BMCC we value innovation, connection and growth. To that list, I would add reflection, assessment and the flexibility to change and create overarching strategies that ensure our students' success.



Antonio Pérez, President  
Borough of Manhattan Community College  
The City University of New York



## Milestones

BMCC Professor of Business Management **Katherine Conway** donated \$5,000 to the BMCC



Foundation during the BMCC Gala on June 6. "Professor Conway was inspired by the wonderful student presentations and the challenge match of \$50k from Stephen Meringoff, a friend and supporter of the college," said Joy Cooper, BMCC Director of Development.

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BMCC Professor of Sociology **Soniya Munshi** (pictured right) and the



BMCC Center for Ethnic Studies has received a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) award of \$99,998 to fund a year-long project, "Building Asian American Studies across the Community College Classroom." The project team also includes **Patricia Mathews-Salazar**, Director, Center for Ethnic Studies, and **Nita Noveno**, English Lecturer at BMCC. Other members are **Jennifer Hayashida**, Director, and **Linta Varghese**, Professor, Asian American Studies Program, Hunter College/CUNY, and **Caroline Hong**, Professor of English, Queens College/CUNY.

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BMCC Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs **Karrin E. Wilks**



was selected by The Aspen Institute for its inaugural class of the Aspen Presidential Fellowship in July. Wilks is one of 40 extraordinary leaders nationwide being recognized for having the drive and capacity to transform community colleges to achieve higher levels of student success.

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The BMCC Office of Grants and Research Administration offers a wide range of resources to faculty and staff as they search for external funding sources, develop proposals and manage funded projects. For more information, call (212) 220-8010.

The BMCC Office of Research and Scholarly Inquiry provides training and support for faculty and student researchers, as well as providing Core Student Research Laboratories in a number of disciplines. For more information, call (212) 220-8320, Ext. 7980.

BMCC Modern Languages Assistant Professor **Sophie Maríñez**



is one of six faculty scholars from across CUNY to have been accepted as a 2016-2017 Faculty Fellow by the Center for Place, Culture and Politics at the CUNY Graduate Center. The fellowship provides release time for two three-credit courses over the 2016-2017 academic year, enabling Professor Maríñez to dedicate time to her research project, "The Dynamics Between Haiti and the Dominican Republic."

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BMCC professors **Christa Baiada**, **John Beaumont**, **Nancy Derbyshire** and **Jeff Gonzalez** were awarded the Diana Hacker Award in the category of Fostering Student Success at the Two-Year College English Association (TECA) Conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in October 2015. The group earned the award for their presentation, "The BMCC Teaching Academy: Building a Teaching College One Cohort at a Time."

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The first BMCC Distinguished Teaching Awards were presented at a reception on Thursday, May 19 in the Shirley Fiterman Art Center. The awardees were **Nicholas R. Marino** (pictured above), Adjunct Lecturer, English; **Chamutal Noimann**, Assistant Professor, English, and **John Beaumont**, Associate Professor, Academic Literacy and Linguistics. BMCC President **Antonio Pérez** and Provost and Senior Vice President **Karrin E. Wilks** presented the awards. "I'm very impressed by the magnitude of what happens in this institution, and in our classrooms," said President Pérez.







Diane K. Waller



Christopher Shults



Jim Berg



Janice Zummo

## College Welcomes Leadership Team Members

Reflecting a commitment to enhance opportunity for faculty, students and staff, BMCC has expanded its leadership team to include **Diane K. Waller**, the college's first Vice President for Enrollment Management; **Christopher Shults**, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning; **Jim Berg**, the college's first Associate Dean of Faculty, and **Janice Zummo**, the college's first Assistant

Dean of Academic Support Services.

"I am thrilled to welcome these very strong leaders to our team in Academic Affairs," said **Karrin Wilks**, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs. "They collectively bring the skills, knowledge and experience to further our strategic priorities; particularly to improve student success and support faculty development and scholarship."

## BMCC and Year Up Form Partnership

On April 21, a reception was held in the Shirley Fiterman Art Center to celebrate the new partnership between BMCC and Year Up, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the opportunity divide for young adults ages 18 to 24. The BMCC Year Up program is an intensive, one-year experience for students earning an associate degree while completing internships at some of the largest U.S. corporations. BMCC President **Antonio Pérez** welcomed guests at the event, and **Gerald Chertavian**, Year Up Founder and CEO, remarked that "The most important institutions in the United States today are our community colleges. It is in these four walls, that global competitiveness will be won." Guests included Year Up participants and their professors, as well as **Garrett Moran**, President of Year Up, who was honored at the BMCC Foundation 2016 Gala, "Invest in a Future," on June 6.

## Faculty and Staff Foster National Dialogue

At BMCC, faculty and staff attend conferences to build their academic networks, compare research findings and participate in debates on the most pressing issues in higher education today. BMCC faculty and staff have also founded conferences that are gaining a national audience and establishing BMCC as a hub for scholarly inquiry and growth.

The launch of one new series, *An Interdisciplinary Conference on Inequality & Social Justice*, is scheduled for October and will address the theme *Transcending Punishment*. This series was founded by **Benjamin Haas**, a professor in the Speech, Communications and Theatre Arts department, and **Michelle Ronda**, a professor in the Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice department. Their intention, says Ronda, is to address ways to transcend punishment in seeking social, political and economic equality and social justice. The speakers will include **Baz Dreisinger**, Founder and Director of the Prison-to-College Pipeline at John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNY; **Daniel McGowan**, a prison reform activist and subject of the Oscar-nominated documentary film *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, and **Joshua Allen**, whose analyses of race and gender

have been featured in news outlets including CNN, MSNBC, BBC and ABC.

*Transitions and Transactions*, another conference series started at BMCC, is "dedicated to helping community college teachers flourish and excel as we envision, invent and expand our ideas of teaching, given the demands of the community college population and the demands and constraints specific to our profession," say its founders, Professors of English **Margaret Barrow** and **Manya Steinkoler**, in their call for submissions to present at *Transitions and Transactions III*, held April 2016. More than 135 faculty from across the country, as well as 30 students, attended the conference. Over the years, guest speakers in the series have included acclaimed poet **Billy Collins**, NY1 journalist **Errol Louis**, and pre-eminent scholar on the teaching of writing, **Sheldon Blau**.

Also in April, the nineteenth **Colloquium of the Modern Languages Department** presented *Music of the World: A World of Music*. "The colloquium was devoted to issues that impact the music industry across the globe, and how languages and cultures are intimately involved in this topic," said event organizer and Modern Languages Professor **Alejandro Varderi**.



## One of 15 Colleges Nationwide, BMCC Wins \$1 Million NSF Grant

BMCC has received a \$1 million S-STEM grant from the National Science Foundation for a project, "Broadening STEM Participation Among Minority Students in an Urban Community College." The project runs July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021, and its Principal Investigator is Computer Information Systems Professor **Anna Salvati**. It serves low-income, full-time, academically talented S-STEM students who receive \$5,000

per year for tuition, books and student fees, as well as MetroCards. They meet with dedicated STEM advisors and take a five-week course in preparation for faculty-mentored research projects. Other options include internships within the entertainment, finance and other industries. The project team, in addition to Salvati, includes Science Professors **Lalitha Jayant** and **Adolfina Koroch**, and Mathematics Professor **Abdramane Serme**.





## New Degree Programs Build Student Retention

**Janice Walters**, a Professor of Psychology within the BMCC Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Criminal Justice department and Chair of the Teacher Education department, authored the proposal to create the college's new Associate in Arts (A.A.) in Psychology degree program, which kicks off in Fall 2016. BMCC psychology faculty have a broad spectrum of interests within the field, she says, and "students will have the opportunity to develop research projects with these professors. In addition, psychology is part of STEM, so that opens up opportunities for students in terms of funded research at the associate degree level and beyond."

Professor of Science **Charles Kosky** wrote the proposal for BMCC's new Associate in Science (A.S.) degree in Science for Health Professions, offered through the Science department. Students will complete courses in general, organic and biological chemistry as well as general physics and other areas such as microbiology, nutrition and pathophysiology. "It's the kind of science-based program that students need for many health professions," says Professor Kosky. "We articulated the program so that it would fit

into nutrition and also exercise science bachelor's degree programs. Graduates of the program will also be able to transfer into accelerated bachelor's degree nursing programs."

These and other new associate degree programs at BMCC — including Sociology, Modern Languages, Animation and Motion Graphics, History, Gerontology, Art History and Studio Art — are part of a strategic plan to build retention at the college, says **Erwin Wong**, BMCC's Dean of Academic Programs and Instruction.

He refers back to the high-retention rates of students in the BMCC Learning Academy, which places them in cohorts led by faculty with whom they shared a subject-area interest — subject areas not reflected, when the Learning Academy began, with a degree program at the college. Those students showed much higher persistence and success than their Liberal Arts peers. As a result, Wong says, "The college has made it a priority to create niche Liberal Arts degree programs that allow students to engage with faculty on a consistent basis in their areas of interest."

## Student Researchers Honored at Undergraduate Research Symposium

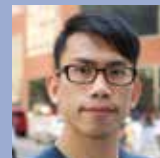
The February 2016 BMCC Undergraduate Research Symposium featured a faculty discussion led by Science Professor **Jun Liang**, Psychology Professor **Marjan Persuh** and Engineering Professor **Kibrewossen Tesfagiorgis**. Student winners of the Annual Poster Presentation included Engineering Science major **Rron Dedushi** and Science majors **Hillel Wolin**, **Obeng Buu**, **Shivron Sugrim**, **Shivron Sugrim**, **Kateryna Zhadnova** and **Hilario Garcia**. Each winner received \$500 toward presenting their poster at a national conference.



## Milestones

BMCC's Fall 2016 Guttman Transfer Scholarship winners are:

**Emily Ally**, **Abd-Manaaf Bakare**, **Hrvoje Budimir Bekkan**, **Arlette Butcher**, **Znobia Dixon**, **Christina Escobar**, **Renata Gumkowska**, **JianMing Kang** (pictured above), **Crystal Leonard**, **Mansha Liu**, **Benjamin Margulies**, **Ariel Mazor**, **Desiree Mendez**, **Sultan Mirzhalilov**, **Gina Mitchell**, **Joel Picon**, **Sara Singh**, **Chris Tejada** and **Lin Yank**.



BMCC and CUNY BA student

**Michael Clark** will travel to Uganda in Fall 2016 to study the role of conflict and stigma in public health, primarily as it relates to HIV. The trip will be funded by an Access Africa scholarship from the School of International Training (SIT), and a Fund For Education Abroad (FEA) scholarship.



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Seven BMCC students — the second largest number among all community colleges in the United States — were selected to receive the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to take part in BMCC Study Abroad in Summer 2016: **Daisy Crispin**, **Miriam El**, **James Perez**, **Rafael Gell**, **Michelle Murillo**, **Jessica Bravo-Martinez** and **Jane Wu**.

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BMCC Science major **Aurela Dragani** (pictured right) was one of 85 students nationwide to win the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship in Spring 2016. The scholarship is the largest private scholarship for two-year and community college students. Winners receive up to \$40,000 to complete their bachelor's degrees at a four-year college or university. Dragani is a 4.0 student at BMCC and has been involved in cellular research with Science Professor **Mario F. Benavides**. She was also awarded the BMCC Foundation's Loretta Lee Scholarship.



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**Esi Panyin Asmah** will enter Northeastern University in Fall 2016, thanks to a \$54,000 scholarship from Northeastern University. "I will continue my studies as a business major with a concentration in marketing," she says. "I plan to build a volunteer organization in Ghana and other parts of the world."

**Nathanael Alexander** just completed his Associate of Science (A.S.) degree in Studio Art at BMCC, and is a recipient of the Loretta Lee Scholarship, making it possible for him to transfer to Alfred University in upstate New York this fall and begin studies for his bachelor's degree in Drawing, Painting and Photography (artwork above).



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BMCC students **Christoni Mbiada Fongue**, **Bintou Kone**, **Kristen-Kaye Barnaby**, **Diandra Williams** and **Ricardo dos Santos Almeida Nunes** have been accepted to the College of Arts and Science at New York University through the Pipeline Opportunities for Inter-College STEM Education (POISE) program at BMCC.

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**Norbesida Bagablia** (pictured right), **Jasmayne Brathwaite** and **Melanie Poggi**



have just been accepted into the Kaplan Leadership program. "We meet with the Kaplan staff once a week," says Brathwaite. "They mentor us to become really good candidates to top schools in the country, and they also help us apply for private scholarships to transfer to those schools once we graduate from BMCC."



## Milestones

**Leslie Siegel** recently donated \$50,000 toward the naming of the piano lab on the third floor of BMCC's Fiterman Hall in memory of her parents, **Art and Rita Siegel**. The donation will help support MoneyWorks scholarships for BMCC students seeking to improve their financial literacy.



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**Ami Efrati** ('15, Business Management), a licensed real estate broker currently working on his bachelor's degree in accounting at Baruch College, CUNY and president of Entrepreneur Properties, was just recognized as the New York Real Estate Journal Executive of the Month.



**Louis Chan** ('06, Business Administration), went on to earn both a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) and Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Studio Art with a Concentration in Photography at Hunter College, CUNY. His large-format photograph, a digital C-print (chromogenic print), "Untitled (37 Allen St.) III" (above), will be included in the exhibit, *Portrait of a Landscape*, featured in the Shirley Fiterman Art Center, August 3 through September 10.

### Stay in touch with BMCC!

Share news about your recent significant recognitions, achievements, board appointments and promotions; learn about BMCC's Alumni Council and other opportunities to get involved by emailing: [alumni@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto:alumni@bmcc.cuny.edu).

## BMCC Foundation 2016 Gala Raises More Than \$1.17 Million for Scholarship Fund



L-R: Antonio Pérez, Edie Falco, Don Callahan and Garrett Moran

The BMCC Foundation 2016 Gala, "Invest in a Future," held at Cipriani on June 6 raised \$1,174,468 to benefit the BMCC Scholarship Fund. This year's Honorees were **Don Callahan**, Head of Operations & Technology, Citi, and **Garrett Moran**, President, Year Up. **Cindy Hsu**, Emmy award-winning CBS 2 News anchor was MC for the evening. BMCC President **Antonio Pérez** hosted the event. Special Guest Star Honoree was **Edie Falco**; Four-Time Emmy Award Winner, Golden Globe Award Winner and Tony Award-Nominated Actress and Philanthropist. Film and television producer **Paula Weinstein** introduced Ms. Falco, who said she was inspired by the BMCC scholars who spoke at the event. "Events like this help balance out the bad news in the world," she said.

## American Express Awards \$100,000 Grant to BMCC Leadership Fellows Program

In Spring 2016, American Express awarded \$100,000 in grant funding to the BMCC Leadership Fellows Program, which provides trainings and hands-on exercises to encourage emerging BMCC leaders from a broad cross-section of the college community. "American Express has long-recognized the importance of strong leadership in the nonprofit and social purpose sectors," said **Timothy J. McClimon**, President, American Express Foundation. "We are inspired by BMCC's commitment to employee development and are excited to support the growth of talented leaders in higher education."



## Alumni Attend Inaugural Council Meeting

In December 2015, the BMCC Alumni Council was launched with a meeting led by **Theresa Clark Messer** ('81, Accounting), Chair of the Alumni Committee of the BMCC Foundation Board. More than 45 alumni attended and took part in discussions such as how to strengthen alumni communications and connect with BMCC stu-

dents. The Alumni Council Leadership Group emerged from that launch meeting and has met several times since. To join the alumni email list and learn of upcoming events, please contact [alumni@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto:alumni@bmcc.cuny.edu). Join other BMCC Alumni on Facebook and LinkedIn by visiting [www.bmcc.cuny.edu/alumni](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/alumni).



## BMCC Among Beneficiaries of Goldman Sachs Gives Community College Fund

Goldman Sachs, in collaboration with the American Association of Community Colleges, has selected nine community colleges, including BMCC, to receive grants from the *Goldman Sachs Gives* Community College Fund. The \$1 million donation from *Goldman Sachs Gives* will be distributed to community colleges

throughout the country and is being matched 1:1 by donors in their respective communities.

"Grants from *Goldman Sachs Gives* reinforce our belief that community colleges serve a unique need by providing educational opportunities to individuals who may not otherwise be able to pursue or complete a degree,"

said **Lloyd C. Blankfein**, Chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs.

"We are deeply grateful to the *Goldman Sachs Gives* Grant, and the ways in which it will enable us to grow as an institution and a community of learning," said BMCC President **Antonio Pérez**.



# Donor Loretta Lee Provides \$75,000 for Scholarships and Internships

BMCC supporter **Loretta Lee**, founder of the Merchant House International Group, donated \$75,000 to the BMCC Foundation in Spring 2016 to fund a scholarship, an international internship and an upcoming art exhibit at BMCC. **Nathanael Alexander**, who just graduated from BMCC, received the Loretta Lee award of up to \$25,000 a year, for two years, to complete a bachelor’s degree in art. BMCC students **Fiona Stone** and **Xuemeng Wang** were selected to take part in a Summer 2016 internship at Lee’s factories in Mainland China and Hong Kong. “We are excited about this generous scholarship, and this unique opportunity for our students to learn first-hand, the practical aspects of textile design, printing, manufactur-



ing and merchandising,” said BMCC President **Antonio Pérez**. “We are grateful to Loretta Lee for enabling our students to continue their education and apply their art and design skills in a global setting.”

# Out in Two Program Receives \$50,000 Grant from BNY Mellon

In Summer 2016, BNY Mellon provided \$50,000 in grant funding for the funding for scholarships for the BMCC Out in Two Program. Founded in 1999 by BMCC President **Antonio Pérez**, the Out in Two scholarship program helps students graduate within two consecutive years. The BNY Mellon grant will enable BMCC to admit 10 additional students to the program, increasing the Fall 2016 cohort to 70 students. Each participant will receive a scholarship for three semesters, meet with a dedicated advisor and join community service activities.

“We are grateful for this generous support from BNY Mellon, which enables us to expand the BMCC Out in Two program scholarship and serve an increased number of outstanding students,” said **Doris Holz**, Vice President of Development and Chief Operating Officer, BMCC Foundation. “We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with BNY Mellon.”



# Time Warner Foundation Funds Screenwriting Fellowship Program

The BMCC Foundation has received a \$20,000 grant from the Time Warner Foundation to provide a screenwriting fellowship in Fall 2016. Up to 10 BMCC students or 2016 alumni who have taken a BMCC screenwriting class will be selected for the program. The student fellows will meet for 14 Saturdays to develop a feature screenplay or long-

form television pilot. The program will begin September 10 and conclude with a gala presentation of readings from the completed scripts, featuring professional actors in January 2017. The fellowship includes the cost of transportation, lunch, books, films, screenwriting software and laptop computers for those who complete the program.



The BMCC Office of Development launched its “Why I Give” campaign, highlighting donors at all levels of giving. The campaign features video profiles of recent alumni, community leaders and friends. Watch the videos on: [www.bmcc.cuny.edu/foundation](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/foundation)

*“In 2001, my mother and I decided to fund a scholarship for BMCC students because as a professor here, I know how hard our students work. I know how they struggle to pay tuition, to make time to go to school and study, while earning a living. So we decided in memory of my father, to fund an endowment and call it the Simon Peskoff Scholarship, and now in the memory of my mother, too, we have the Lila and Simon Peskoff Scholarship.”*

**Fred Peskoff**  
BMCC Mathematics Professor and Chair of the Mathematics Department





### What is your role at BMCC?

My title is CUNY Administrative Assistant. I came in at that title on January 2, 1971. I came to BMCC from the CUNY Graduate Center, where I was a clerical worker, having successfully passed a Civil Service Exam. I take care of PAFs [personnel forms] so people can get paid. I also try to help students when they come to the office needing assistance with forms.

### What do you really do at BMCC?

I'm not a cheerleader but I do hold hands if a student is upset. I remember a student who had gotten to her class late and she felt the teacher embarrassed her about her

lateness and she wanted to drop the class. So I said to her, 'Who is your teacher?' and I told her, 'He's a wonderful teacher. So many students say good things about him. Go back to him. Apologize for your lateness. Say you won't be late anymore.' At the end of the semester she came back to me and said, 'Thank you'. And she got an "A" in the class.

### What are some of your proudest accomplishments at BMCC?

I just do my daily job. I come in and open email to see if there's anything urgent, and I try to continue with the work I was doing the day before.

### What are some of the changes you've seen at BMCC in the 45 years you have worked at the college?

When I transferred to the Music and Art Department, we had about eight full-time professors. We now have 23 full-time professors and students are coming in daily with their form to become an art major. Here is another change: When we moved to Chambers Street, it was a real ghost town down here. We had warehouses, empty lots. I remember taking a walk on my lunch hour and saying to myself, 'If somebody killed me here, they wouldn't find my body till spring'. After some time, tenants started filling the apartment buildings on both sides of the street. Then McDonald's opened, increasing pedestrian traffic. When I started hearing the youngsters squealing in the new playground out in front of the main building, I felt joy.

### What is something about yourself that no one knows, but has an impact on your work at BMCC?

I'm busy helping to raise four grandchildren in my spare time — what spare time? On weekends, I give them their breakfast and as I'm washing the breakfast dishes I hear, 'Grandma, what's for lunch?' I'm either at the stove or at the sink.

## Then and Now



The BMCC/CUNY men's basketball program, founded in 1979, has garnered many honors over the years. The CUNY Men's Community College Basketball Tournament began in 1988 and BMCC has appeared in 16 championship games winning four times. Most recently, the team ranked third in the 2014-15 NJCAA Division III Top Ten National Poll.

The photo on the left is from a 1984 BMCC Yearbook. The photo on the right shows the BMCC Panthers versus the Bronx Community College Broncos in the CUNY Athletic Conference Semi-Finals on February 17, 2016.