

A Visionary Leader Steps Down

President Pérez led the college through adversity and expansion.

“Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC/CUNY) President **Antonio Pérez** will step down after 23 years of leadership at the college. Effective August 31, President Pérez will be leaving BMCC to serve as University Professor at Hunter College, a CUNY Board of Trustees appointment. “President Pérez is a proven leader with great vision and a long track record of accomplishments at BMCC. The leadership he displayed in the wake of 9/11 and the attack’s impact on lower Manhattan—an unusual role for a college president—will not be forgotten. We wish him great luck in his future endeavors,” said CUNY Interim Chancellor **Vita Rabinowitz**.

Appointed in 1995, President Pérez led BMCC to have the highest undergraduate enrollment of any college in New York City, increasing from 16,500 students when he came on board, to more than 27,000 today. BMCC has also grown to provide almost 50 Associate degree programs in the Liberal Arts and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

Under the leadership of President Pérez, BMCC has become a premier institution of higher learning on the national level, leading the way in grant-funded STEM research, Open Educational Resources (OER), pipeline programs to ensure seamless transfers for graduates, and staff and faculty leadership development. He has also led the development of programs at BMCC that increase the participation of women and low-income students in STEM other high-demand fields. Throughout these efforts, President Pérez has demonstrated a solid commitment to the BMCC mission that values, at its core, equity and success for all students.



BMCC administration and faculty give President Pérez a standing ovation.

President Pérez is widely known for having shepherded the BMCC community through the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001. BMCC is the only college in the United States to have lost a building to a terrorist attack. Fiterman Hall was destroyed when World Trade 7 collapsed and fell against it, and the college’s main campus at 199 Chambers Street became a command center for about 2,000 rescue workers.

“That was the beginning of a new chapter in the life of our college and in my presidency,” says

President Pérez. “Suddenly we were faced with new and unprecedented challenges.”

President Pérez approached those challenges with strategies and a vision that have helped define leadership in a crisis and impacted crisis management protocols for higher education institutions, nationwide. He also led efforts to create a public and private partnership that enabled BMCC’s Fiterman Hall to be razed and rebuilt. It reopened in 2012.

When classes resumed after 9/11, President Pérez addressed the BMCC community.

Continued on page 2

Inside:

- 5 **2018 Commencement Celebrates More Than 3,800 Graduates**
- 6 **Combating Hunger with a Campus Food Pantry**
- 7 **Gala Empowers Student Success With More Than \$1 Million Raised**
- 8 **Then and Now**

A Visionary Leader Steps Down

Continued from page 1



BMCC President Antonio Pérez, center, walking to Fiterman Hall groundbreaking ceremony, 2009.

“Darkness cannot be defeated by darkness,” he told students, faculty and staff who were determined to resume their education. “It will only be overcome by light, and education is all about light.” At commencement in Spring 2002, he spoke to graduates whose achievements sent a message of hope. “We at BMCC have witnessed first-hand the destructive power of terrorism,” said the President. “Terrorism feeds on hatred, and hatred is the child of ignorance. Hatred is overcome only

“Darkness cannot be defeated by darkness. It will only be overcome by light, and education is all about light.”

**ANTONIO PÉREZ,
PRESIDENT**

by understanding, by knowledge and by human compassion, all of which are the best fruits of education.”

In the years that followed, the revitalization of lower Manhattan gained momentum and BMCC thrived, increasing its enrollment, degree programs, retention rates, innovative curricula and student support programs.

“As the area revitalized, BMCC stayed in step with that growth,” says President Pérez. “The resiliency of

“The leadership he displayed in the wake of 9/11 and the attack’s impact on lower Manhattan—an unusual role for a college president—will not be forgotten.”

**VITA RABINOWITZ,
CUNY INTERIM
CHANCELLOR**



President Pérez greets Senator Barack Obama in 2008.

our institution reflects the types of students we attract, who are looking for a better life with the same tenacity and positive response to adversity that we hold as a college. Our faculty, staff and students show a determination that reverberates within the institution. I feel strongly that the most important thing I can leave to the college is the realization that our students can start here and they can go anywhere.”

BMCC Commons

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

Manny Romero
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lynn McGee
COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER

Cody Lyon
STAFF WRITER

Louis Chan
PHOTOGRAPHER

Rob Gizis
GRAPHIC AND
MULTIMEDIA DESIGN

David Pangburn
VIDEOGRAPHER

Cynthia G. Blayer
WEB CONTENT
MANAGER

Thomas Volpe
DIRECTOR OF
PUBLICATIONS

Rosslynn Pieters
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
OF MARKETING

Sharmela Bhagwant
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Jamal Jones
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Jeff Wong
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Annette Maccarone
OFFICE MANAGER

Clearing a Pathway to Student Success



Six months after graduation, 65% of BMCC graduates are enrolled in further education.

In Fall 2017, BMCC was selected to join the second cohort of the Guided Pathways Initiative (2.0) supported by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and other national organizations. A college-wide Design Team at BMCC has been charged with engaging faculty, staff and students in the project, *Guided Pathways: Designing for Success*, which seeks to improve rates of college completion and transfer, prepare students for careers that yield family-sustaining wages and achieve equity in those outcomes.

“Our highest priority is to improve student success, not incrementally but dramatically,” said **Karrin E. Wilks**, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs. “Guided Pathways provides a framework, a national network, and dedicated time through which to assess, integrate and coordinate all BMCC efforts to improve student success—to take proven success strategies to scale.”

There are four main practice areas in the Guided Pathways model at BMCC:

- *Mapping pathways to students’ goals*, which include earning an associate degree, transferring to and completing a bachelor’s degree program, and entering a career.
- *Helping students choose a program pathway* by providing an academic plan which follows curriculum requirements and helps them graduate within two or three years. Students who have not decided on a major will have the opportunity to

choose from Career Clusters of majors.

- *Keeping students on a path* by creating systems to frequently monitor their academic progress and using early alert and other support services to ensure they stay on track to graduate. A constant within these efforts is the academic mindset, or belief that all students are capable of achieving their goals.
- *Ensuring that students are learning*, with a focus on improving teaching and learning, and advancing equity. One strategy is to introduce students to a course within their major, early on. Another successful approach is to combine credit-bearing and developmental content in one course, rather than require students to complete non-credit remedial courses before they can advance to credit-bearing courses.

“Guided Pathways will improve the student experience inside and outside the classroom,” said **Erwin Wong**, Dean of Academic Programs and Instruction. “Degree maps include options to replace courses such as math, which are often stumbling blocks, with counterparts that are contextualized within the student’s major and career goals. Together these efforts build pathways to timely graduation, successful transfer and meaningful careers.”

<https://success.bmcc.cuny.edu/SitePages/home.aspx>

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Leadership in Challenging Times, and Times of Great Expansion

On August 31, I will step down from my role as President of BMCC. The past 23 years have seen many changes in the world our students are entering, and in our higher education systems. It has been my honor to help guide BMCC as we navigated this evolving landscape. I have felt privileged to have an impact on many generations of students as they transformed their lives, through opportunities at BMCC.



The College had about 16,500 students when I came on board in 1995, and today BMCC serves more than 27,000 students. We have grown to be a premiere center of higher learning, with close to 50 Associate degree programs. We have excelled within CUNY and on the national level, despite challenges including the impact of 9/11, when 7 World Trade Center fell against Fiterman Hall and our main campus became a command center for 2,000 rescue workers. What I know about leadership in a crisis was tested in that difficult time. BMCC reopened just three weeks after the attacks, and our college community moved forward with a galvanized commitment to reach new heights.

That commitment is why BMCC has the third-highest mobility rate, or students’ rise in household income, among two-year colleges in the United States, according to a 2017 report from the Equality of Opportunity Project. That commitment is why BMCC ranks #5 among associate-degree producing institutions nationwide for awarding degrees to minority students, as reflected in data from the U.S. Department of Education.

Leadership in a crisis remains an area to which I will always feel a deep connection, but it is leadership during times of growth that might test us even more. Growth must be strategic, with clear vision and planning. The success of an institution happens in an inclusive culture of leadership, where many voices can be heard.

I will miss our spirit of collaboration and hard work together, but it is satisfying to leave BMCC in the robust state it is in today, on the precipice of even more expansion. I have confidence in our community, our students and our mission of educational opportunity for all.

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

Milestones

At the May 11 CUNY CUE Conference at Medgar Evers College, Professor **Daniel Torres** presented on visual literacy in STEM; Professors **Mohammad Azhar** and **Janet Esquirol** presented on the Summer STEM Success Lab; and Professors **Louise Yan** and Mohammad Azhar presented on Summer Bridge initiatives.



Driada Rivas, Center for Career Development Interim Director, will participate in the 2018 National Community College Hispanic Council Fellows Program.



On June 5, BMCC Professors **Rifat Salam**, **Christa Baiada** and **Holly Messitt** (pictured)

presented a panel, “The Continuing Relevance of WAC Pedagogy: Lessons and Strategies for Sustaining a Vibrant WAC Program,” at the International Writing Across the Curriculum conference hosted by Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama.



The BMCC Writing and Literature program recognized student writers

at the 2018 James Tolan Student Writing Awards on April 24 at 199 Chambers Street. The awards have been renamed in honor of Professor and poet **James Tolan**, who passed away in March 2017.

The 2018 Employee Appreciation Award winners are **Rosslynn Pieters** and **Gabrielle Lloyd**, Rookies of the Year; **Mark Rivera**, Innovation/Technology Award; **Rosemary Zelaya**, Inspiration Award; Business Management (Front Desk) and Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center (Business Affairs), Team Achievement Award and **Chanel Coward**, Leadership Award.



Professor Roderick S. Snipes of Small Business and Entrepreneurship with students.

The Awards of Innovation and Creativity

The Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York (PSC-CUNY) awarded 42 BMCC professors with grants for their innovative research and projects in the creative arts, as well as for their research in the social sciences and humanities, natural sciences, curriculum development and other areas. The projects investigate gendered violence, the retention of nursing students, the impact of medication on children’s behavior, genetic models related to aging and many other topics. The Traditional-A Awardees are **Jamal Ali**, **David Allen**, **Upali Aparajita**, **Shoba Bandi-Rao**, **David Bahr**, **Tracy Bealer**, **Rachel Corkle**,

Bertie Ferdman, **Miguel Fiolhais**, **Sarah Haviland**, **Barys Korzun**, **Cynthia Lam**, **Stephanie Laudone**, **Kurt Levent**, **Jun Liang**, **Laurie Lomask**, **Sarah Madole**, **Micah Miller**, **Soniya Munshi**, **Abel Navarro**, **Maria Pagan Rivera**, **Robert Reed**, **Shari Rothfarb Mekonen**, **Roderick S. Snipes**, **Francisca Suarez-Coalla**, **Janice Summers**, **Jane Tezapsidis**, **Valerie Thiers-Thiam**, **Yan Yang** and **Hasan Yumak**. Traditional-B Awardees are **Maria de los Angeles Donoso Macaya**, **C. Ray Borck**, **Candido Hernandez**, **Orlando Justo**, **Kwasi Konadu**, **Leigh LaBerge**, **Sophie Marinez**, **Khushmand Rajendran**, **Lisa Sarti**, **Jill Strauss** and **Hao Tang**.

Instructional Design Builds Equity and Student Success

The 2018 Faculty Convocation was held January 24 in Theatre I at 199 Chambers Street. This day of panels and workshops presented topics that ranged from improving student reading comprehension to spatial thinking across the curriculum. Karrin E. Wilks, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, delivered an address that related student success to three overarching strategies: designing for equity, designing for a culture of care, and designing for progress and momentum. A faculty panel moderated by **Jim Berg**, Associate Dean of Faculty, examined pedagogy and student success, and featured Professors **Erica Campbell** (pictured below), **Matthew Marcus** and **Geoffrey Klock**.



Directors Bring Citywide Experience to BMCC



In February 2018, BMCC welcomed **Thomas Cisar**, Director of Procurement, and **Sharon Reid**, Director of the Office of Internships and Experiential Learning. Before joining BMCC, Cisar served as Manager of East Side Access Procurements at the MTA Long Island Rail Road, and Procurement Manager in the MTA NYC Transit’s Material Department. Reid served as Assistant Director of Career Services at The New School and worked in organizational development at Tate Ellington Associates, as well as at Lee Hecht Harrison/Drake Beam Morin, Inc.

Three Degree Programs Debut

An Associate in Arts degree program in Children and Youth Studies, set to begin Fall 2018, will serve students who envision becoming a child psychologist, pediatric nurse and more, says Professor **Chamutal Noimann**, who coordinates the program with Professor **Julie Cassidy**. They can transfer to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Children and Youth Studies at Brooklyn College, and a Master of Arts in Children and Youth Studies at The Graduate Center, CUNY.

Also new at BMCC is the Associate in Arts degree program in Ethnic Studies, which articulates to the Bachelor of Arts in Latino Studies program at Lehman College, CUNY. Another is the Associate in Arts degree program in Linguistics and Literacy, which links to the Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics program at Lehman, as well as to the Bachelor’s in General Linguistics program at Queens College, CUNY.



Athletic Program Ranks Highest in CUNY



The BMCC athletic program received the 2018 Commissioner’s Cup at the CUNY Athletic Conference’s Michael Steurman Awards on May 17, and is now the top-ranked community college athletic program within CUNY.

The BMCC Panthers finished with 91 points in the standings, making this their second Commissioner’s Cup in four years. It was also the eleventh time BMCC has claimed the

trophy, more than any community college in the conference. Former CUNY Chancellor **James Milliken** attended the awards ceremony and CUNY Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs **Christopher Rosa** gave welcoming remarks. “This is a culmination of such a remarkable year,” said Rosa of the BMCC program. “It is unprecedented in CUNYAC history.”

Also at the awards event, BMCC Liberal Arts major **Stela Vaso**



(pictured left) from the women’s volleyball team was named Scholar-Athlete of the Year. Born in Mondovi, Italy, Vaso first picked up a volleyball at age five. At BMCC, she maintained at 3.9 grade-point-average and now plans to continue her education and pursue a career in politics and social justice.

2018 Commencement Celebrates More Than 3,800 Graduates



BMCC conferred Associate degrees to more than 3,800 graduates during morning and afternoon commencement ceremonies on June 1 at the Hulu Theater at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Valedictorians were Accounting major **Goumattie Sukraj** and Economics major **Aleksandra Artyfikiewicz**. The 53rd Commencement Presidential Medalists were **Tim Tynan** and **Steven Fiterman**.

Steven Fiterman, a long-time friend of BMCC, is the manager and chief principal of real estate management

and development companies that invest in local communities across the United States. Along with his wife Susan, Fiterman is a trustee and principal donor to the Steven C. and Susan L. Fiterman Charitable Foundation, which has been a significant supporter to BMCC and its students.

Tim Tynan became the CEO of Bank of America Merchant Services in May 2014. For more than 20 years, he has volunteered with BMCC, serving on the College’s Board of Trustees and as Board Chairman from 2003 to 2005. Tynan also served on the New York Board of Junior Achievement and has volunteered with Bridges to Community, working with rural communities throughout Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic to repair and build homes, schools and health clinics.

Panther Partners Kicks Off With a Day of Activities



Panther Partners, a collaboration between New Student Programs and Student Affairs, matches BMCC students who are the first in their families to attend college, with faculty and staff who are their families’ first college graduates. On June 15, the program’s first cohort of about 20 BMCC students participated in a day of workshops and activities, including a complimentary lunch and impromptu walking tour of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway led by Vice President of Student Affairs **Marva Craig**.

Milestones



Business Administration major **Shuki Hasson**, one of 13 winners of the 2017–2018 CUNY *Making Work Visible* contest, won third place in the Visual Arts category for his graphic design for print, “Falafel.”



PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

Phi Theta Kappa officers **Halyna Shvets**, **Lotty Nunez**, **Pierce Hunter** and **Jessica Rosenthal** attended the April Catalyst 2018 PTK International Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, where the BMCC chapter was awarded the Distinguished College Project Award and the Top 35 Overall Distinguished Chapter Award. The officers also attended the New York Regional PTK Convention in Long Island, New York, in March, where the team won First Place for an Honors in Action website and video.



Sarahpraise Oki (pictured right with her instructor, **Arleyah Morris**), who earned her High School Equivalency (HSE) degree through the BMCC Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development, is one of 12 winners CUNY-wide of the Peter Jennings Laurel Award, which provides a scholarship to a CUNY college. Oki will attend BMCC in Fall 2018.



L-R: Matthew Tossman, Deemani Cardona, Bradley Highfield, China Camacho, Matthew Carrera.

MECA Celebrates Its First Graduates

The Manhattan Early College for Advertising (MECA), a partnership between BMCC, the New York City Department of Education and industry partners from the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's), held its first commencement ceremony on June 22 in BMCC's Theater 2 at 199 Chambers Street.

First-year MECA students take all their classes at MECA, located within the Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers at 411 Pearl Street in lower Manhattan. They begin taking college courses on the BMCC campus as early as 10th grade. More than 70 students completed high school at MECA while earning credit toward an Associate degree at BMCC. Ninety

percent of the graduates will attend college in Fall 2018, including 23 who will attend BMCC.

The graduates presented MECA Principal **Matthew Tossman** with a special award presented by MECA graduate **Anallely Romero**—who earned 41 college credits through MECA. “We have a principal who has a close connection with every student here,” Romero said. Guest speaker BMCC President Antonio Pérez told the graduating class, “During your years at MECA, you have learned first-hand, about careers in New York City. You have used strategy, hard work, resourcefulness and creativity. Congratulations on moving closer to your dreams.”

Partnership Enables High School Students to Earn Credit at BMCC

Students at 30 New York City Career and Technical Education (CTE) high schools can now gain stackable credits toward an Associate in Applied Science degree in Computer Network Technology at BMCC.

This opportunity reflects a partnership between the BMCC Office of Academic Affairs, BMCC Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development, and New York City Department of Education. On March 27, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by principals of the participating high schools who met with reps from BMCC (pictured below).

“This partnership reflects BMCC’s strategic goal to strengthen the college readiness of our students and build access to careers that will widen their opportunities in the 21st-century economy,” said Erwin Wong, Dean of Academic Programs and Instruction at BMCC.

“Graduates of the program will be prepared for entry-level jobs as IT technicians, or for transfer to a bachelor’s degree program to continue their higher education,” said BMCC Computer Information Systems Department Chair **Ching-Song (Don) Wei**.



Fast Track to Success

BMCC recently launched the Saturday Success Track, which enables students to mix Saturday courses on campus with online courses, in order to earn their Associate degree in Business Management or Liberal Arts. “The program was designed to simplify the college process for adult students and help them better

balance their many responsibilities,” said **Diane K. Walleser**, Vice President for Enrollment Management. “By offering flexible access to Saturday courses as well as online courses, we will be helping part-time students achieve their goals,” said Jim Berg, Associate Dean of Faculty. For more information, call (212) 776-7173.



Combating Hunger With a Campus Food Pantry

On April 23, BMCC hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony (pictured above) to celebrate the opening of the Panther Pantry, located in the College’s Single Stop Office at 199 Chambers Street. BMCC students facing food insecurity can take home a three-day supply of nutritionally balanced, nonperishable

food, and Single Stop staff can connect them to food sources including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). “To do their best, our students must have reliable access to affordable, nutritious food and other support services,” said Marva Craig, Vice President for Student Affairs.

Gala Empowers Student Success With More Than \$1 Million Raised



L–R: Antonio Pérez, Loretta Lee, Chieh Huang, Liev Schreiber and Baruch Shemtov.

The BMCC Foundation raised \$1,014,935 for student scholarships on May 15 at the *Invest in a Future: Empower Success Gala*, held at Cipriani, in lower Manhattan. The evening’s emcee was Fox 5 News entertainment reporter **Baruch Shemtov**. BMCC President Antonio Pérez presented the BMCC Award of Excellence to Honorees **Chieh Huang**, Boxed.com cofounder and CEO, and

Loretta Lee, Merchant House International Chairwoman. Special Guest Star Honoree **Liev Schreiber**, known for his award-winning role in Showtime’s powerful drama, *Ray Donovan*, was introduced by **David Steingard**, who co-chaired the Gala with fellow BMCC Foundation Board Member **Miles Fiterman II**. BMCC Foundation Chair **Anthony Portannese** also played a leading role in the Gala.

Dr. Sue Scholarship Fund Inspires Students to Excel

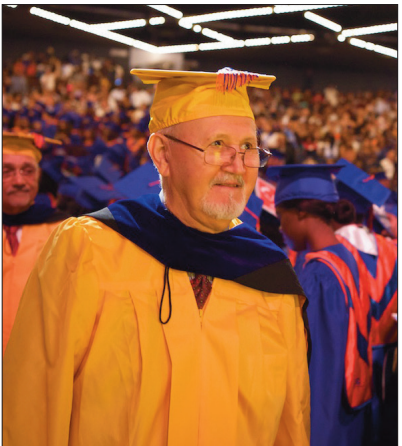


Professor of English **Susan Horowitz** has established the Dr. Sue Scholarship Fund. “I want to give our BMCC students the money and motivation to transform their lives,” she says. “The money can solve immediate problems, while receiving a scholarship can motivate students to believe in their own potential.” Professor Horowitz, known as “Dr. Sue,” is also a singer, songwriter, author and motivational speaker. “BMCC has given me the opportunity to be part of an educational community and express my creativity in and out of the classroom,” says Professor Horowitz, whose creative works include her family-friendly, original musical *Cinderella SssWitch*,

which sends a message of hope. In a similar way, she says the Dr. Sue Scholarship will be an impetus for students to follow their dreams. **Phillip A. Keefe**, BMCC Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving, explains that through an income tax planning opportunity available to those at least seventy and a half years of age, individuals such as Professor Horowitz can donate their required minimum distribution directly from their IRA to the BMCC Foundation without incurring federal income taxes on their gift. He adds that students who receive scholarships are nearly four times more likely to graduate within three years than comparable non-recipients. Please contact Phillip Keefe in the College Development Office at (212) 346-8650 or pkeefe@bmcc.cuny.edu for additional information.

50-Year Alumni Set Gold Standard at Commencement

On June 1, in partnership with the 53rd Commencement Ceremony, the BMCC Foundation honored more than 35 alumni from the classes of 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969 at a Milestone Reception in The Stewart Hotel in midtown Manhattan. Afterwards, the 1960s alumni joined BMCC’s afternoon commencement ceremony, marching together in gold robes and taking their place on the dais.



Professor Frank Navas, 1960s alumnus

Dr. Smith Names Faculty Development Fund



In April, **Joshua L. Smith**, the fourth president of BMCC, donated \$25,000 to name the Dr. Joshua L. Smith Faculty Development Fund at BMCC. “The importance of faculty development today cannot be overstated,” said Phillip A. Keefe, Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving in the BMCC Office of College Development. “This generous donation will make it possible for BMCC to support professors as they grow and adapt to the changing environment of today’s community college.”

Milestones



Deanna Garcia (Writing and Literature, ’18), is one of five student journalists to receive the \$2,500

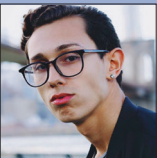
Deadline Club Scholarship from the New York City Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.



Timothy Rivera (Video Arts and Technology, ’17), was a finalist in the Best Narrative Film

category of the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival’s *Our City, My Story* program in Spring 2018. Rivera is currently working toward a Bachelor’s in Film Studies degree at Brooklyn College, CUNY.

BMCC Asian Club co-founder **Hugh Leung** (’79) and 30 former Asian Club members gathered to celebrate their 40th Milestone Anniversary on August 18 at a luncheon in Queens, New York. Leung organizes the event every five years.



Chris Santo (Communication Studies, ’17), now working toward his bachelor’s degree at New

York University, spent a semester at the school’s Sydney, Australia campus researching how the Australian government is closing the health care gap between indigenous and non-indigenous groups. In Summer 2018, through NYU’s School for International Training, he is interning at Kayakalp Palampur, India, an Ayurveda Center in the Himalayas, and assessing both the stigma against, and effectiveness of traditional medicine in India.

Stay in touch with BMCC!

Share your BMCC alumni news about your recent achievements, learn about BMCC’s Alumni Council and other activities: alumni@bmcc.cuny.edu.



with
Mark Rivera,
*Associate Director of Financial Aid for
Compliance and Operations*

What is your role at BMCC?

As the Associate Director of Financial Aid for Compliance and Operations, I am responsible for overseeing technical operations associated with the delivery of \$140 million in financial assistance from federal, state and city financial aid programs.

What do you really do at BMCC?

I work in collaboration with my colleagues to streamline processes and improve the student experience. At BMCC, each financial aid program is monitored by an individual or a unit, and I meet with them to identify any challenges and develop solutions. The solutions may require a change

in the process workflow or development of databases or custom reports.

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

When BMCC was transitioning to a new student information system, I served as a subject matter expert to help make the change as transparent as possible. I developed training manuals and collaborated with our Enrollment Services Contact Center to train staff on how to handle financial aid phone calls. Using resources at the college, I also helped develop a Wiki

that could be used as a central training location for staff FAQs and manuals.

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

In my 14 years at BMCC, I've loved the fact that faculty and staff are all focused on the same end goal, improving the experience for students. I also appreciate the community of support and recognition that is growing at BMCC. Recently, I was surprised and honored to be named a winner of the Innovation/Technology Award at the BMCC Employee Appreciation Awards celebration.

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

I am a product of the CUNY system and truly believe in its mission to provide opportunity for all. I would not have been able to succeed in college without the counseling, tutoring and advisement I received. My undergraduate experience was a hard time in my life as I had lost my father to cancer when I was 18, and the faculty and staff at John Jay College played an important role in the persistence I brought to my academic studies.

Then and Now



1968



2016



2018

In Spring 2018, more than 3,000 BMCC students voted on the school mascot's new name: "Manny," short for "Manhattan." First appearing in late 1965, "The BMCC Panther symbolizes oneness for students and the rest of the college community," said Marva Craig, Vice President for Student Affairs. "The BMCC Panther instills pride by generating school spirit, excitement and participation."