



Students Help Shape the Future of Public Green Space

A survey of visitors to Battery Park City impacts resource allocation.

“We’re helping the parks in this part of the city. People need a place to visit, to clear their minds, and sometimes I go there, too,” says Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC/CUNY) alumnus **Michael McConnell**. He’s talking about the public green spaces within Battery Park City in lower Manhattan, and his perspective

on the area has grown since he joined a field research team contracted by the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) and led by Sociology Professor **Robin Isserles** and Criminal Justice Professor **Michelle Ronda**.

Liberal Arts major **Ophelia McBean** is also a member of the survey team, which receives stipends through BPCA. “I love the part where you interact with

people from different cultures and find out why they use the park,” she says. “Tourists are amazed at how beautiful it is, that they can see the Hudson River. The mothers and nannies that live here get to interact with other caregivers. The park helps people not be isolated, to socialize and get to know their community.”

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Students Help Shape the Future of Public Green Space

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Altogether, 42 research assistants—BMCC students and alumni, CUNY students and BPCA interns—are participating in an extensive user count and visitor survey of the lower Manhattan public green spaces now through June 2018.

“Sometimes, like with the elderly, it seems they just need someone to talk to. Doing the survey has opened up my eyes to their experience.”

**OPHELIA MCBEAN,
LIBERAL ARTS MAJOR**

They have interviewed around 400 park visitors so far, and are compiling data to help inform the allocation of resources for the 92-acre strip of land bordered by Chambers Street to the north, the West Side Highway to the east, the Hudson River to the west, and Pier A at the southern tip of lower Manhattan.

“The survey has about 20 questions,” says McConnell. “We ask things like, ‘What places did you visit in the park

today?’ ‘How often do you visit the park?’ We also make notes on what they are wearing, like exercise clothes, and if they are riding a bike or on their lunch hour.” Determining how, when and why people use the park underlies those questions. “People need the park for a lot of reasons,” McConnell says. “They might not have air conditioning, and it’s a place to cool off in the summer. They can also take their children to free events.”

An aspiring law enforcement professional now attending John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, McConnell wants to make New York City a better place, he says. His experience with research surveys began in an earlier project he took part in through a class with BMCC Professor **Yolanda Martin**. “We examined people’s perception of crime in their neighborhood,” McConnell says. “I went door-to-door in my own neighborhood, Morningside Heights in Manhattan. Before we started, we got certified through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) on how to interview the subject in an ethical way. We reviewed the guidelines then took an online test.”

McBean also received training to conduct research surveys. Like McConnell, she wants to make New

York “a better place to live, a safer place,” she says. “My plan is to graduate from BMCC and go to City College, CUNY because they have a bachelor’s degree program in Forensic Science. I want to work on a team that investigates crime scenes.” As it turns out, recording observations of the park visitors and building a rapport as she administers the Battery Park survey is helping McBean develop skills that relate to her goal of being an investigator. It also increases her insight into fellow New Yorkers.

“Sometimes, like with the elderly and others, it seems they just need someone to talk to,” she says. “Doing the survey has opened up my eyes to their experience.” As a result of these interactions, “I’ve been signing up for more volunteer opportunities at BMCC through the Office of Student Affairs, like helping out in soup kitchens around the city,” she says. “I’ve gotten help from public agencies in my life and now I can give some of that back by helping others.”

“Soliciting the park users’ input speaks to BPCA’s commitment to support the democratic principles that public spaces embrace,” says Professor Ronda. Her own introduction to social science research began in the mid-1980s, when she was an undergraduate

at Queens College, CUNY and worked with Professor **William Kornblum**, now Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Years later, she worked with Kornblum on a Central Park User Survey and 2011 report that showed the number of annual park visitors had increased from 25 to 45 million over a 15-year period.

Working with Professor Kornblum, Ronda says, led her to consider a career in social science. “This is some of the best we do at CUNY,” she says, “finding ways to engage in public scholarship, educating students along the way and maximizing collaboration with faculty and community partners.”

Professor Isserles, who has incorporated the Battery Park Study into her research-driven Sociology Capstone course, explains that in addition to learning how to conduct

systematic counting and randomized survey interviews, as well as learning to enter data in the statistical analysis software SPSS, “the students will have very hands-on experience to apply when they take a research methods course at the bachelor’s level.”

According to **Abby Ehrlich**, BPCA Director of Community Partnerships and Engagement, the student researchers “are gaining experience using the city as a classroom and are instrumental to the project’s success. We hope that one of the project’s outcomes will be that students administering the study become part of the Battery Park City community, along with their friends and families.”

BJ Jones, acting BPCA President, says that the Battery Park City Parks are visited by tens of thousands each year, “in a lower Manhattan more vibrant, sustainable and interconnected than ever before. Anecdotally, we have a sense of when and why people visit our Parks; this study will enable us to put science behind those estimates—and there’s no better local partner for that than BMCC.”

“Soliciting the park users’ input speaks to BPCA’s commitment to support the democratic principles that public spaces embrace.”

**MICHELLE RONDA,
PROFESSOR OF
SOCIAL SCIENCE**



Professor Michelle Ronda (far right) and BPCA Director of Community Partnerships, Abby Ehrlich (center)

BMCC Commons

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Debate on Opioid Epidemic Becomes Learning Opportunity



Speech 100 students present their propositions in classroom debate.

Twelve students in Professor **Heather Miller**’s Speech 100 class met on November 16 to debate the nation’s opioid crisis. “By the time we leave this room tonight, as many as eight people will have died from something related to opioids,” said Miller. In the three weeks leading up to this night, students had researched and formulated evidence-based persuasive speeches about the crisis. Each was

set to argue the pros and cons of their team’s assigned proposition, such as the claim that shame impacts on whether or not people will seek treatment. As student **Michelle Ramirez** argued, “To shame someone for their faults is to further the suppression of such faults, rather than providing a solution. To fight this epidemic we must start with understanding rather than with judging.”

Single Stop Extends Hand to Students in Foster Care

The BMCC Single Stop office provides free legal services, access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other vital resources for students. That support has widened to include

“Our intent is to build a relationship with students in foster care, and help them connect to BMCC and each other.”

DEBORAH HARTE, SINGLE STOP

outreach to students who have lived in the foster care system and now reside in CUNY dorms at no cost through the Fostering College Success Initiative, otherwise known as the Dorm Project. This project, run by The New York Foundling along with the New York City Administration for Children’s Services and CUNY, supports students CUNY-wide, including about a dozen

who attend BMCC and live in dorms at The City College of New York, CUNY. Single Stop’s outreach to students in foster care began in 2015 with the Comprehensive Assistance and Retention Empowerment Services (CARES) program. “We’ve worked with about 100 students through CARES,” says **Deborah Harte**, Student Life Manager for Single Stop. “Many of these young people have a lot of trauma associated with their lives. Trust is not something they give immediately or easily. We provide support and connect them to services at BMCC and throughout the city that can improve their lives.” Recently, the Single Stop office hosted a Meet and Greet with BMCC students who had been contacted by the Dorm Project. “We’re planning workshops for them throughout the year, and we have gathered liaisons throughout BMCC to act as special contacts for Dorm Project students who are navigating services,” Harte says. “Our intent is to build a relationship with students in foster care, and help them connect to BMCC and each other.”

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The Impact of Our Students on New York City and Beyond

We often hear how students are impacted by their learning environment. We hear about the impact of the economy on our students, or correlations between family income and academic achievement. At BMCC, we keep a close eye on these factors and others in the equation of student success, and we have programs in place to address them.

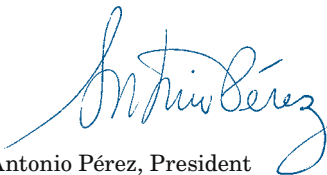


Flipping the lens, we not only look at how the world affects our students, but how our students impact the world. One example is their participation in an extensive survey of public spaces in Battery Park City, lower Manhattan. Led by Sociology Professor **Robin Isserles** and Criminal Justice Professor **Michelle Ronda**, 42 students and interns are acting as social researchers, collecting information that enables the Battery Park City Authority to ensure those public spaces reflect the needs and preferences of the people who use them.

This past October, BMCC students came together in Central Park to join the BMCC Breast Cancer Walk team of more than 125 participants and help raise close to \$3,000 for the American Cancer Society. Moved to action by recent hurricanes and natural disasters in Mexico and the Caribbean, they set up collection tables throughout BMCC and gathered over \$1,750 for disaster relief efforts.

The impact of BMCC students can also be felt in ways that aren’t quantifiable. Led by Academic Literacy and Linguistics Professor **Patrick Flink**, BMCC students build confidence in their own reading skills as they share their love of storytelling and read to children in the BMCC Early Childhood Center.

Our students care deeply about issues that affect their neighborhoods and beyond. They are keenly aware of the importance of relief efforts, how public spaces are used, and factors that affect health and the quality of life for all New Yorkers. They are having a significant impact on the world around them as they develop skills and values at BMCC that will be a constant in their education, their careers and their lives. I’m proud of our students, and what they are accomplishing inside and outside the classroom.



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

Milestones

Professor **Sophie Marinez** is author of *Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Writings, Chateaux, and Female Self-Construction in Early Modern France*, released in 2017 from Brill/Rodopi.



Modern Languages Professor **Alister Ramirez-Marquez** has been awarded Full Member status in the North American Academy of Spanish Language.



In July 2017, Sociology Professor **Sheldon Applewhite** was honored in “Profiles of Pride: 10 People Making a Difference for LGBT New Yorkers,” a feature article in *City & State New York*, for his focus on health disparities among marginalized and LGBT communities.



Media Arts and Technology Professor **Josephine Culkin** co-authored *Learn Electronics with Arduino: An Illustrated Beginner’s Guide to Physical Computing* in 2017 from Maker Media, Inc. The work grew from her comic strip, *Arduino*, which went viral in 2011.



English Professor **Geoffrey Klock** is the author of *Evil, Homosexuality and Hannibal: If Oscar Wilde Ate People*, published in November 2017 by Lexington Books, a unit of Rowan and Littlefield.



The faculty-led, **Zero-Textbook-Cost Open Educational Resources** (OER) movement at BMCC will convert 43 additional courses to OER and create an OER math website with \$371,750 in tax-levy funding from the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs.

College Celebrates Tenured and Promoted Faculty



The BMCC community celebrated recently tenured and promoted faculty at a reception on September 28 in the Shirley Fiterman Art Center. “Reaching this point in your academic careers is a testament to your excellence in teaching, your commitment to our students, and your pedagogical leadership, scholarship and research,” Provost and Senior Vice President **Karrin E. Wilks** said in welcoming remarks.

Recognized faculty included **David Allen, Silvia Alvarez-Olarrá, Sheldon Applewhite, Edna Asknes, Shoba**

Bandi-Rao, Joel Barker, Margaret Barrow, Peter Bratsis, Yan Chen, Bertha Ferdman, Heather Finn, Alexander Gossiau, Lisa Grace, Benjamin Haas, Christopher Jackson, Adolfina Koroch, Barbara Lawrence, Jun Liang, Marci Littlefield, Sophie Marinez, Christopher McCarthy, Shane McConnell, Gloria McNamara, John T. Means, Howard Meltzer, Joyce Moorman, Maria Pagan Rivera, Alicia Perdomo, Kelly Rodgers, Silvia Roig, Lisa Sarti, Kelly Secovnie, Achraf Seyam, Yuliya Shneyderman, Amy Sodaro, George

Stevenson, Hao Tang, Kibrewossen Tesfagiorgis, Rosario Torres, Oksana Vorobel, Lauren Wickstrom, Chiaki Yanagisawa, Hong Yuan, Hasan Yumak and Shengkun Zhang.



Art Professor **Charles McGill**, who passed away in July 2017, would have been among the honorees.

“Charles McGill was a key member of our faculty, very serious about his art and really devoted to his teaching,” said Art Professor **Thaddeus Radell**. “His students loved him.”

Building Student Success through Global Awareness

“Part of the BMCC mission is to globalize the curriculum across disciplines and prepare students to achieve success in an increasingly globalized world,” said History Professor **Alex d’Erizans**. To meet this goal, a group of BMCC faculty engaged in a 2-year project to strengthen their humanities curricula with assignments that cultivate global competencies including intercultural communication and integrated reasoning.

This project, *Cultivating Global Competencies in a Diverse World*, was funded by a \$100,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in Fall 2015 and concluded with a symposium on September 29 and 30, 2017, at BMCC and the NYU Center for Humanities. Panels, breakout sessions and faculty global competency presentations featured BMCC professors Alex d’Erizans and **Vincent Cheng**, who served as Co-Project Investigators for the NEH grant; **Eva I. Kolbusz, Cynthia Wiseman**, and BMCC Librarian **Phyllis B. Niles**, a member of the NEH-project Steering Committee.

BMCC Welcomes Directors



L–R: Kristin Albright Waters, Bryan Dowling, Sara E. Crosby, Christopher Oscar Medellin

Four new members of the BMCC community—**Kristin Albright Waters**, Director of Enrollment Management; **Sara E. Crosby**, Director of the BMCC Learning Academy; **Bryan Dowling**, Director of Assessment, and **Christopher Oscar Medellin**, Director of E-Learning—are applying decades of experience and special skills as they build student success at the College.

That success is impacted as early as the enrollment process, which Albright Waters is streamlining with the offices of the Registrar, Financial Aid, Testing and Admissions, ensuring “timely responses to inquiries and emails, decreased wait times for office transactions, and implementation of technology services for students both on and off campus.”

Once students are attending classes, they can join small learning communities where they benefit from

close academic support and other services. “I’m honored to be a part of the Learning Academy’s efforts to support students all the way to graduation and transfer,” says Crosby.

To support that cycle of completion, says Medellin, he will work with faculty “to implement models of online education and create dynamic student-centered learning. We will do this through research and evidence-based methodologies that are scalable, affordable and effective.”

These and other programs measure their impact through the process of institutional assessment at BMCC. “I am delighted to help carry out the mission of our public colleges,” says Dowling, who started his education at a community college and then earned degrees at SUNY and CUNY. “It is my goal to help provide a quality education for all our students.”



Students in POISE and GUIDE cohorts meet with BMCC administrators (standing).

BMCC/NYU Build Career Pipelines

BMCC graduates earn bachelor's degrees at CUNY 4-year schools and elite private colleges. These transfers are supported by projects such as the Pipeline Opportunity for Inter-Collegiate STEM Education (POISE) and Gallatin Undergraduate Initiative for Discovery in Education (GUIDE), partnerships between BMCC and New York University (NYU).

POISE links students to NYU bachelor's degree programs in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), psychology and related majors. GUIDE is tailored for students interested in a wide range of social

justice careers. Each program provides mentors and participants are eligible to apply for full scholarships to NYU. "My original plan was to just keep my grades up and go to SUNY," said Engineering Science major and POISE member **Mayumy Cordova Lozano**. "The chance to earn an NYU scholarship changed my plans completely." Liberal Arts major **Kevin Zambrano**, a member of the GUIDE cohort, says, "I've designed my major around Postcolonial Feminism and Philosophy. My career goal is to become a human rights lawyer."

The 2017–18 POISE cohort includes **Michael Caridad, Mayumy Cordova Lozano, Serge Dontsa, Ehab Elrawi, Kimberly Espejo, Jihad Gadsden, Shaiku Jalloh, Amanda Mckenzie, Alicia Nnenna Chime, Babatunde Ogunniyi** and **Adam Rahman**. The GUIDE cohort includes **Saif Al-Islam Mozeb, Ahmad Bhatti, Zainab Floyd, Chaya Konig, Jahshana Olivierre, Shaquasha Reynolds, Remiesha Siddo, Cascia Thompson** and **Kevin Zambrano**.

Students Build Skills Reading to Children

Studies show that nationwide, a majority of incoming college freshmen are not reading proficient. At BMCC, these students take developmental reading courses to prepare for college-level work—but still, about a third do not progress or drop out of college altogether.

To make developmental reading courses more engaging, two professors in the Academic Literacy and Linguistics Department, **Patrick Flink** and **Tim Leonard**, have taken a unique approach. Once a week, their developmental reading students read aloud to the preschool-aged children of fellow BMCC students in the college's Early Childhood Center. The project is part of BMCC's Service Learning efforts, which guide students to apply classroom skills as they give back to their communities, "and the experience builds confidence for developmental students," Flink says. "When I work to get a child's

attention for an hour, it helps me learn how to communicate with others," says Accounting major **Zhinyuan Chen**.



Pre-Law Program Mentors Next Generation of Professionals

Ten BMCC students have joined a mentoring project at Brooklyn Law School. They were selected by the BMCC Pre-Law Program, which started Fall 2017 through the Academic Advisement and Transfer Center. "The experience will provide role models to underrepresented students who might not have considered the option of a legal career," says **Rick Naughton**, a Senior Academic Advisor and BMCC's Pre-Law Advisor. "The BMCC participants will sit in on actual law school classes and witness the rigors of law school firsthand," Naughton says. "They will also learn about the long-standing tradition of minority lawyers who graduated from Brooklyn Law School and went on to be trailblazers in their fields, including David Dinkins, the first African American mayor of New York City."

Milestones

Accounting major **Joshua Reid** received a \$10,000 scholarship from the Department of Workforce Development of Bermuda. At the award ceremony in Bermuda, **Diallo Rabain**, Minister of Education and Workforce Development said, "We all look forward to seeing you accomplish your educational goals and return to Bermuda to begin your careers."



PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

Engineering Science major **Oluwatosin Fajobi** is one of 207 Phi Theta Kappa members nationwide to have been named a 2017 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholar, and will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.



Human Services majors **Joanne Torres** and **Janice Mahan** have



each received a \$10,000 grant from The Women's Forum Education Fund, which serves women

over 35 who have demonstrated high potential and faced adversity which disrupted their education.

Five BMCC students—**Christiana Agyepomaa, Brittany Broderick, Kasson Colon-Mangin** and **Tredesha Howard**—as well as BMCC alumnus **Milton Henriquez**—traveled together to the Republic of Ghana for ten days in August 2017. The trip, co-sponsored by the CUNY Black Male Initiative and Birthright AFRICA, was led by **Shawn Best**, University Associate Director of CUNY BMI, along with Birthright AFRICA's Founder and Chief Umoja Officer **Walla Elsheikh**, and its Founding Fellow and Program Director **Ashley Johnson**.

Students Raise Funds for Those Displaced by Natural Disasters

The Fall 2017 hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands mobilized BMCC students to assist in relief efforts. Led by the Office of Student Affairs and in collaboration with the Caribbean Students Association, they set up tables and collected non-perishable goods as well as \$1,788 in donations.

Other efforts to help students displaced by recent natural disasters include the waiving of application and enrollment fees for BMCC's Math Start program. "We take pride in our global community," says **Sunil Gupta**, Dean of the BMCC Center for Continuing Education and Workforce Development. "Gaining

an education is a critical part of the recovery process for individuals affected by these devastating events."

These measures reflect the spirit of a Fall 2017 CUNY Board of Trustees vote to allow full-time students displaced by the hurricanes to pay tuition at the in-state rate—and this could save eligible BMCC students \$10,000 in tuition, according to **Diane K. Walleser**, BMCC's Vice President for Enrollment Management. Admissions and Financial Aid teams are also available to help them access tuition grants and scholarships. "We hope to help students whose education has been disrupted and are looking for a fresh start," Walleser says.



SFAC Director Takes New Role and Highlights Faculty Artists

The Shirley Fiterman Art Center continues to make its mark in the Tribeca and New York City art community, featuring artists from across the country as well as BMCC faculty artists, who will be showcased in an exhibition that opens February 14.



Lisa Panzera, who joined BMCC as Director of the Shirley Fiterman Art Center in September 2017. "It's exciting for our new Art History and Studio Art majors to see the artwork of their professors displayed as part of the continuum of a career in art. Also, the Shirley Fiterman Art Center is a unique resource for faculty in other disciplines who link its exhibitions to their curricula, and it is a bridge between the communities of BMCC, lower Manhattan and beyond."



Financial Management and Digital Marketing Programs Address Talent Gap

Starting Spring 2018, BMCC will offer Associate in Science degree programs in Financial Management and Digital Marketing. "Both programs respond to our students' goal to enter the fields of business and finance with highly competitive skills," says **Mahatapa Palit**, Chair of the Business Management Department. "Our Digital Marketing program will also address the talent gap that exists today, as companies seek candidates in that area. Financial management is another in-demand field our students are keenly interested in, and that program will provide a base from which they can specialize, as they prepare for lucrative careers overseeing the financial health of an organization."

Each of the new programs will articulate with Bachelor of Arts programs at The City College of New York, CUNY. Financial Management graduates will be eligible to enter the Economics and Business program, with a specialization in Finance, and graduates of the Digital Marketing program will be eligible to enter the Advertising and Public Relations Program of the Media and Communication Arts Department.



Alumni Mentoring Program Supports Nursing Students

The BMCC Nursing Alumni Mentoring Program, sponsored by the Nursing Department, Office of Student Affairs and Office of College Development, pairs nursing alumni with current nursing students. Coordinated by Nursing Professors **Janice Summers**, **Melissa Butler Haughton** and **Edward Williams**, the group met October 18 at 199 Chambers Street. Many nursing students balance their studies with family and work responsibilities, and mentors connect them with counselors at BMCC, financial aid, and other services to support the completion of their degrees. "Of course the mentors will also just be somebody to talk to, who has successfully completed the Nursing program and is working in the field," says Summers.

Second Steinway Soirée Celebrates New Music Major



L-R: Paul Shaffer, Valerie Simpson and Grace Kelly perform at Steinway Soirée.

Celebrating BMCC's new Associate in Science degree in Music, the College's Second Steinway Soirée Benefit was held October 25 in the Shirley Fiterman Art Center. "To support our ambitious music scholars, we're providing naming opportunities to link the philanthropy of our donors with our students," said **Doris Holz**, Vice President for Development and Chief Operating Officer of the BMCC Foundation.

The Soirée speakers included **Antonio Pérez**, BMCC President; **Elizabeth Butson**, BMCC Foundation Board Member and **Michael D. Hattem**, BMCC alumnus and 2017–18 Schwartz Postdoctoral Fellow, New York Historical Society. The evening's entertainment opened with the BMCC Music Faculty Ensemble featuring Professors **Robert Reed**, **Maureen Keenan**, **Amber Yiu-Hsuan Liao** and **Howard Meltzer**, and Music

Chairperson **Eugenia Oi Yan Yau**. Celebrity Guest Artists were **Paul Shaffer**, former bandleader on *The Late Show with David Letterman*; **Grace Kelly**, award-winning saxophonist and singer, and **Valerie Simpson**, singer/songwriter known as part of the Songwriter Hall of Fame duo, Ashford and Simpson.

While still receiving donations, says Vice President Holz, "We want to thank the following Soirée donors for their generosity: **Kim Charlton** and **Stephen Meringoff**, **Seema Boesky**, **Cathy Bonelli**, **Cathy Boyle**, **Kim Garfunkel**, **Fred Peskoff**, **John Buzbee**, **Elizabeth Butson**, **Anthony Lee** and others." In addition, she said, "The BMCC Foundation will establish the Cathy and Paul Shaffer Music Scholarship and recognize these friends of the College on the Donor Wall of Appreciation in Fiterman Hall."

Keefe Starts Role Reaching Out to Supporters



"My role is to find additional sources of revenue for the College," says **Phillip A. Keefe**, who began as Director of Major Gifts and Planned

Giving in the Office of Development in August 2017. "I'm looking forward to reaching out to alumni and supporters of BMCC to hear their stories, reaching out to our constituents to learn what interests them, growing our existing relationships and building new ones."

Donations Support MoneyWorks

More than 16,000 students and members of the BMCC community have attended the BMCC MoneyWorks program, co-founded in 2006 by **Judith Volkmann**. Participants gain skills related to budgeting, taxes, starting a business, and other fiscal areas.

The seminars are led by pro-bono Certified Financial Planners and have continued through a variety of funders. Most recently, MoneyWorks scholarships were supported by a 2017 grant of \$25,000 from the MetLife Foundation, as well as a \$5,000 gift that accompanied the Pro Bono Advisor Award presented to Judith Volkmann by *Financial Planning Magazine* and the Foundation for Financial Planning.

Dynamic Business Leaders Inspire BMCC Students



The BMCC Leadership Breakfast Series—presented by the Office of College Development and BMCC Foundation, the Office of Student Activities and Urban Male Leadership Academy—provides opportunities for students to engage with prominent business leaders. On October 11, the Series featured guest speaker **David Steingard**, CEO of Laughing Man Coffee and Tea, Director of the Laughing Man Foundation and a member of the BMCC Foundation Board. On November 15, the guest speaker was **Rochelle Stewart**, Director of Digital and Social Strategy at Condé Nast.



Milestones



A Stone of Hope: A Memoir, released by HarperCollins Publishers in 2017 and co-written by **Jim St. Germain**

(Human Services, '10), recounts his journey from encounters with the juvenile justice system to graduating from BMCC, co-founding the nonprofit Preparing Leaders of Tomorrow (PLOT) and advocating for at-risk youth.

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Ahmed Jallow (Liberal Arts, '16), who attends Brooklyn College and is a reporter for the *Brooklyn Eagle*, was selected from a pool of 275 candidates, nationwide, to receive the ProPublica Emerging Reporters Award.

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BMCC doubled last year's funds raised on **CUNY Tuesday**, November 28. This annual giving challenge provides essential funding to support student scholarships.

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Tasmia Hoque (Liberal Arts, '13), along with Science Professor **Jun Liang**, and others

have co-authored an article, "Chloride intracellular channel proteins respond to heat stress in *Caenorhabditis elegans*," in the open-access science journal, *PLOS*. The article presents findings of a National Institutes of Health-funded project led by Professor Liang that studies molecular responses to stress and their impact on aging.

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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.



What is your role at BMCC?

I am the Benefits Manager in the Office of Human Resources for all the employees at BMCC. I oversee people's benefits from health insurance to voluntary enrollments such as tax-deferred annuities.

What do you *really* do at BMCC?

I help people make the best choices for themselves, regarding their health care, pension and other benefits they are entitled to receive. New employees come to me for a one-on-one orientation, and I provide personalized assistance. I ask questions such as what their priorities are, in terms of health insurance; whether it's having

a good prescription drug plan, or keeping a doctor they trust. Everyone has different priorities.

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

I started the Open Enrollment Fairs again at BMCC, and this time around, we have gotten much better attendance. Our new wave of employees seems to be more proactive in their benefits choices, and they like to educate themselves about the different plans. Another thing I feel good about is that I talk to the insurance companies on behalf of employees who have turned in all their paperwork, yet still haven't gotten their health insurance cards. That

doesn't sound like a big thing, unless you are the person unable to access your health care because of the delay.

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 37 years at BMCC, I went from being a College Assistant to a CUNY Office Assistant and Head Timekeeper, before becoming Benefits Manager. My career has grown and I have worked with employees whose careers have grown, too. I've noticed that whether people are just starting out or preparing for retirement, they can have fears about coverage and benefits, and I can ease those concerns for them.

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

Something that gives me more heart as I perform my role is that I took care of my mother-in-law who had a stroke and was bedridden for 15 years. I would come to work and then run home to help her, along with my husband and my children when they were home. When an employee comes in, upset about the health of a parent or a child, I have empathy for what they are going through, and I go above and beyond to ease their pain with kind words and help them get through it.

Then and Now



In Spring 2017, BMCC and the New York Power Authority began installing the largest solar array in Manhattan, on the college's rooftop at 199 Chambers Street. A battery storage system will capture the sun-charged electricity—saving thousands of dollars, reducing the college's carbon footprint and helping transform BMCC into a more energy-efficient and sustainable campus.