

**Bronx Community College**  
**President's Monthly Report to the Campus Community**  
**November 4, 2016**  
*Thomas A. Isekenegbe, Ph.D.*

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I hope that you are all having a good Fall 2016 semester. It has been wonderful to see so many walking around the campus with excited and smiling faces. I am pleased that BCC values of Respect, Integrity, Engagement, Excellence, and Empowerment are being demonstrated in a multitude of ways. I strive to live by these values in my daily work at our college. I urge and encourage all members of our community to embrace these values and use them as a guide in the way in which we deal with our students and one another.

I am excited to share that a lot of positive activities and improvements that are going on at our college, some of which are highlighted below.

- **ACADEMIC & STUDENT SUCCESS:** BCC, partnering with Lehman College, has been awarded a five-year (Hispanic Serving Institution) **HSI-STEM** grant of nearly \$6M. This grant will fund multiple initiatives including a dedicated advisor, faculty development, student research and immersion opportunities, peer mentors, and more. The initiative will also include a guaranteed admission component and a Lehman advisor-in-residence. Hostos will join the grant in the third year.

The Divisions of Academic & Student Success and Advancement, Communications, and External Relations have partnered with **Per Scholas**, a leading nonprofit IT training provider, to explore ways to move Bronx residents from IT certifications to college degrees. This stackable credentials effort focuses on the building of a new AAS degree in Cybersecurity and Networking being developed by the Department of Engineering, Physics and Technology. BCC has applied for a Capitol One grant to support this effort.

Recently, New York State approved BCC as a private testing site for students and community residents to take the **Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC)** [formerly the GED]. We are awaiting our State site visit. Stephanie Marshall will serve as our campus coordinator. This is exciting news, as our students have traditionally traveled to Staten Island, Brooklyn, or Queens for testing. We will now be able to provide more comprehensive service to our students in the Adult Education Training Program, Future Now, Workforce Development, and other community-based organizations on campus.

BCC's Office of Student Life is partnering with the Student Government Association (SGA) to formalize leadership initiatives. One program, **Leader to Leader**, matches members of the Executive Cabinet with members of SGA for mentoring.

- **Technology Advances:** BCC has purchased and is implementing **Starfish**, the gold standard in student retention systems used by many colleges throughout the US. Starfish will integrate with and replace portions of our OSSES platform to allow for greater student engagement and early alert notifications. It will be piloted to ASAP and FYS and rolled out to the entire college in FY18. BCC is also advancing a student course focused scheduling solution called **Ad Astra** which will enable us to further improve scheduling. BCC will also begin using the **Waitlist** function in CUNYFirst for the Spring 2017 registration period. Students will be able to add themselves to the waitlist for classes that are already filled. A student on the waitlist will be automatically added to classes when a seat opens. This program will also help improve scheduling. Lastly, our **Website Rebranding and Redesign** is underway. We welcome your input and suggestions for ways to improve from our current website.
- **Administration & Finance:** The **PSC Contract Implementation** has several complex dimensions which Human Resources and CUNY Central are working on to ensure timely and accurate implementation. Ratification bonuses which were paid on October 21, 2016. As implementation information is made available, it is being shared on our BCC website; please visit the website to help answer any questions related to the contract implementation.

**Budgets** have been disseminated and we encourage areas to submit requisitions for processing. Please note that requests will be prioritized and processed as funding is allocated. We have received our preliminary funding allocation and will receive the second allocation soon.

BCC has been selected to participate in the **Administrative Excellence Project** and will be working with McKinsey Consulting group in 3 main areas of study – Enrollment Management, IT, and Stakeholder Advisory. Only one senior and one community college were selected and we are honored to be chosen by the Chancellor and CUNY Executive Team.

We have kicked-off the planning of the Bronx Express. The old library in lower Meister will ultimately be transformed into a “one-stop” for student success. The marks an important milestone for the campus and culminates the hard work of Campus Planning and support of various CUNY and City supporters. This is a large-scale capital investment in our campus and is a cornerstone for our college redesign efforts.

- **ADVANCEMENT, COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS:** BCC received a grant for the **Talent Search Program** from the US Department of Education for \$1.2M over 5 years running from September 1, 2016, through August 31, 2021. This program provides substantial assistance to individuals from disadvantaged background who have the potential to succeed in higher education.

On October 4, 2016, the **Thompson Family Foundation** awarded BCC \$200,000 to support the preparation of an existing conditions report of Gould Memorial Library as part of the restoration effort.

- **RECENT EVENTS:**  
On October 6, 2016 CUNY Board of Trustee member, Barry Schwartz visited our campus. He met with myself, students, Department Chairs and the Vice Presidents. Additionally, he toured our lovely campus. Our students, faculty and staff impressed him with their insightful discussions, as well as their knowledge of and commitment to BCC. We anticipate more Trustee visits in the near future.

This years’ **CUNY Black Male Initiative (BMI)** conference “The Power of Words: Black and Latino Voices of Change” was held at BCC on October 7, 2016, for over 1,000 participants. More than 200 members of the BCC community joined the conference. Thank you to all who made this event a success.

On October 16, 2016, BCC hosted our First Annual Architecture & Arts Festival featuring Open House New York tours by leading NY architects and historians; demonstrations from Lorenz Latin Dance Studio, MAD About Dance, BCC Student Dance Workshop, and Craig Murray of The Bronx Arts Ensemble; student showcases of artwork; art displays by Daniel Hauben; and samplings of student films. BCC’s Automotive Technology department displayed a student-built Cobra Mustang. The event attracted nearly 1,000 attendees.

BCC co-sponsored and hosted the “GearUp for the Future” **Morris Heights Health Center Youth Conference** on October 23, 2016, to discuss health-related, civic engagement, and social issues and parental involvement. I brought special greetings and speakers included Shaun Derik of R.E.A.C.H. Communications, Inc. and VH1 co-stars of Black Ink Crew, Ceasar and Dutchess.

On November 3, 2016, from 12:15pm until 1:15pm, BCC kicked off CUNY Month with a **Quad Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** in front of Roscoe Brown Student Center. CUNY Chancellor Milliken, Speaker of the State Assembly, Bronx Borough President Diaz, and numerous other elected officials representing the Bronx on the State and City levels of government joined the SGA and Office of the President in hosting this event. This celebrated the completion of this \$102.4M Capital Project. I thank everyone that worked to ensure its success.

- **UPCOMING EVENTS:** The **BCC Food Pantry** Blue Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and grand opening will take place on Tuesday, November 15, 2016, from 10:00am until noon. The Pantry will be located in Loew Hall, Room 120 with hours of operation on Tuesday and Wednesday from 10:00am to noon and 3:00pm to 5:00pm. Food Pantry coordinators are Dedra Polite and Lorraine C. Diaz (Ext. 5840). Donations of healthy choice food items are being accepted. Additional details will be sent out to the college community soon.

BCC will recognize **Veterans** throughout the month of November. From November 1<sup>st</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>, yellow ribbons will be placed on trees lining the path from Loew Hall to Colston Hall, either In Honor of or In Memory Of a Veteran. Donations are being accepted for each ribbon with raised funds donated to a Veterans' Charity. On November 1, 2016, a flag-raising ceremony will take place in front of Language Hall. A student obstacle course will be held on November 3, 2016. The President's Office will be hosting a reception for student, faculty, and staff Veterans on November 16, 2016. More information is forthcoming.

This year, **Giving Tuesday** will be on November 29, 2016. We will participate in this national day of giving back to raise support for the *Help a Bronco Graduate* scholarship for students with financial needs who are approaching graduation. More information will be provided by the Development Office soon.

**SAVE THE DATE:** BCC's Holiday Celebration will be on Wednesday, December 14, 2016. More information is forthcoming.