

**BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**PRESIDENT'S COMMUNITY REPORT- MARCH 2019**

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I hope everyone is having a good Spring 2019 semester. We have just passed the midterm examination point and we are looking forward to Spring Break. We have had a very eventful first few months of the year. While preparing for the Middle States Team site visit we have also had to deal with various major facilities issues.

**MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT:** I am pleased to report that we have successfully completed our Middle States Commission on Higher Education (“MSCHE”) site visit which occurred on Sunday, March 24, 2019, and ended Wednesday, March 27, 2019. The team of eight was chaired by Dr. Steven Rose, President of Passaic County Community College. In total, the MSCHE team met with approximately 200 individuals including CUNY Interim Chancellor Vita Rabinowitz, Trustees Barry Schwartz and Fernando Ferrer. On Wednesday, March 27, 2019, the visit concluded and Dr. Rose delivered the team’s exit report. The report indicated that BCC is in compliance with all 7 standards and 15 requirements. There were a few suggestions and recommendations that primarily echoed our own Self-Study recommendations. There were also a few commendations, including for Standard V (Educational Effectiveness Assessment).

**NEXT STEPS:** Within six weeks of the visit the College will receive a draft report from the chair of the team. The College will review the report for factual errors only and respond back to the chair within two weeks. The team chair will then present the final report to the MSCHE at their June 2019 meeting. At that meeting the Commission will vote to reaffirm the College’s accreditation.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the entire college community for their participation in making this visit a huge success. Special appreciation and gratitude to Dean for Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment Nancy Ritze, the Middle States Steering Committee Co-Chaired by, Vice President for Student Success Irene R. Delgado and Professor Jordi Getman-Eraso, and English Department Chairperson and Professor Bob Beuka for his leadership in coordinating the compilation and copy editing of our document. It is beautifully written and actively demonstrates that BCC truly lives our **Values** of Respect, Integrity, Engagement, Excellence, and Empowerment.

I would also like to thank the staff in Public Safety, Physical Plant Services, Institutional Research, and the President’s Office for coordinating and executing the visit schedules. I received multiple compliments on the quality and seamlessness of the visit and the exceptional professionalism of our staff while the team was on campus. It truly took the BCC community to make this happen. Thank you all.

With the completion of the Middle States Self-Study, the plan is to use the Self-Study and the Team’s recommendations as the foundation for planning our next Strategic Plan and addressing the other issues facing our campus community. More information will be forthcoming.

**COLSTON HALL UPDATE:** At this time, Colston Hall has been fully re-occupied. Emergency repairs are complete. Internet, phone service, and personal computers are all operable. The building has also been fully exterminated to ensure that there is no rodent or pest activity. The Office of Academic Affairs rescheduled all classes in CUNYFirst, so that students, faculty, and staff were able to access the most up-to-date information via their CUNYFirst accounts. Members of the local chapter of the PSC participated in a walkthrough of these spaces in advance of re-occupancy. In response to earlier concerns, I met with the PSC Chapter Chairperson along with the Chair and Co-Chairs of the Faculty Council and proposed a removal and review of sheetrock in select rooms within Colston Hall during Spring Break. Open dialogue continues on this and other infrastructure issues.

The incident in Colston Hall brought out the very best in BCC’s team. I want to extend a special thanks and appreciation to all of the Physical Plant Services, maintenance and custodial staff for their professional handling of this extreme issue. Without their dedication and diligence in getting Colston Hall cleaned, re-occupancy would have been impossible.

BCC also received requests for additional information on Colston Hall from various sources. The following are the questions and the responses provided.

1. “What preventative measure are in place so that a disaster like the one at Colston Hall does not happen on campus again?”
  - *Bronx Community College (“BCC”) has Stationary Engineers and Public Safety Officers/Staff on duty seven days a week and twenty-four hours each day to monitor and quickly respond to any emergency situations that may arise. During periods when extreme weather conditions exist (such as the polar vortex causing the damage in Colston Hall), additional college staff are assigned to work to ensure greater coverage.*
2. “If it was known that the fan coil units were outdated, why were they not replaced?”
  - *BCC routinely performs preventative and remedial work across the campus. While the fan coils were outdated, they were operational and did not require replacement. The pumps, not the coils, were the cause of the failure that prevented the water from circulating through the fan coils. Subsequent freezing in the coils after that pump failure caused the coils to fail. This could have happened with new coils and was not related to the age of the coils.*
3. “What critical repairs are needed at BCC right now? How are they prioritized?”
  - *Critical repairs are currently needed for campus-wide infrastructure upgrades, fire alarms, fume hoods, roof replacements, and increased accessibility (i.e. elevators, ramps, etc.). BCC has a preventative maintenance schedule that we are working to balance against the outstanding work orders. These items are all prioritized considering factors such as emergency needs, environmental health and safety needs, compliance with applicable regulations and standards, in response to litigation, student/faculty/staff needs.*
4. “What plan is in place if the capital budget request for BCC does not meet the college’s needs?”
  - *BCC works diligently to ensure that capital and ResoA funding is optimized. These are the two major sources of funding that are used in order to make capital improvements and upgrades. BCC also requests funding from Auxiliary Enterprises Corporation, where appropriate. Additionally, we compete for grants and seek public/private partnerships to supplement the funding that we receive from other sources.*
5. “What efforts are being made in order to inform faculty, staff and students about outdated infrastructure?”
  - *BCC and CUNY have been aware of the needs of our aging infrastructure for many years. Each year, we make capital requests for funding. Over the past ten years, BCC has received more capital funding for infrastructure and upgrade projects than any other CUNY Community College (approximately \$140M). However, this funding is not nearly the amount necessary to bring BCC into full repair and the infrastructure continues to degrade with normal wear and tear. Many of these concerns were incorporated into the college’s Middle States Self-Study which has been widely disseminated and discussed in multiple forums and have been communicated to the incoming CUNY Chancellor.*

*These BCC reports can be accessed at the following links:*

[\*BCC MSCHE Self-Study 2019\*](#)

[\*Executive Summary of the BCC MSCHE Self-Study 2019\*](#)

[\*BCC Institutional Federal Compliance Report 2019\*](#)

6. “Where did the money come from to repair Colston Hall?”
  - *Emergency funding was provided by CUNY Central and the outstanding costs are the responsibility of BCC.*
7. “Why did BCC administration choose not to follow the full recommendations of Microecologies, which included changing out sheetrock?”

- *The initial recommendations made by Microecologies were shared with BCC and University Environmental Health and Safety Officers during the initial walkthrough. Questions were asked and answered about potential health and safety conditions based on visual inspection of the building (specifically floors 4-8). During this time, questions were asked about preventative repairs to the building (i.e. removal and replacement of the sheetrock) without any indication that there was a health and safety need associated with the request. No indication was made that mold was present that would require the wholesale removal and replacement of the sheetrock throughout the building.*
8. “What is being done in terms of the asbestos abatement in Colston Hall?”
- *As a result of the flooding and leaks within Colston Hall, there were some uneven and/or warped flooring in various classrooms or offices. This created tripping hazards, so repairs were warranted. Full replacement of non-friable asbestos tiles (which these were) requires strict assessment and removal using certified asbestos abatement vendors, technicians, and workers. All rooms where the floor tiles required replacement or repair due to water damage were tested prior to attempting removal. For those locations where asbestos tile had been used, a company specializing in asbestos abatement was engaged to remove the tiles. The company sealed off the room and deployed safety precautions to prevent any materials from becoming airborne and is responsible for properly removing and disposing of the materials. A third party company monitors the air during this procedures and provides a certification that the location is all clear after the abatement. All abatements were successful and **the air quality testing results for each abatement location are attached to this message**. \*The abatement clearance materials were provided to the PSC and will be posted online with this President’s Report.*
9. “In the February 14 town hall meeting, it was mentioned that there was a spreadsheet that detailed all the infrastructure upgrades that are needed at BCC. Can I have a copy of this spreadsheet?”
- *All BCC Capital priorities are set forth in our Five Year Capital Plan and supported by our requests for funding. These documents, and other similar documents, are located on BCC’s website at <http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/about-bcc/administration-governance/administration-finance/financial-reports/>. The specific document you requested is entitled, “Five Year Capital Plan FY 2019-2020 through FY 2023-24”. If you have specific questions about the campus planning and priorities, you can reach out directly to Vice President for Administration & Finance Kay Ellis or Director for Campus Planning Robin Auchincloss.*

I am sure that you will agree with me that it has been a very hectic semester. Yes, we have had to deal with many adversities but there is also much for us to be proud of. In approximately two months, on Friday, May 31, 2019 we will be holding our 59<sup>th</sup> Commencement Exercises on Ohio Field. I look forward to working with all of you to celebrate the success of our students.