

Bronx Community College 2017 President's Commencement Message

Good Morning! Good Morning!

Welcome to Bronx Community College of the City University of New York and to our 57th Commencement Ceremony.

Graduates, are you ready? I hear you! Before we get you to the podium to get your diploma, I do want to extend first, a warm welcome to:

- Friends and family of our graduates. These individuals stood by you, giving you the necessary support and encouragement. Graduates please join me in thanking them.
- Welcome as well to the many elected officials who honor us today with their presence:
 - Senator Chuck Schumer
 - Assemblyman Victor Pichardo
 - Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson
 - Councilman Fernando Cabrera

Additional welcome to:

- CUNY Trustee Rita DiMartino

- Vice Chancellor Gloriana B. Waters
 - BCC Foundation Chair Olga Luz Tirado
 - And BCC Alumni Association President Michael Williams
- Welcome to our esteemed faculty and staff. These individuals taught, advised and mentored our Graduates during their studies. Faculty members of BCC, please stand so that you can be acknowledged. Graduates please join me in thanking your faculty and staff.
- But, most of all, welcome to all of our graduates, the BCC Class of 2017. Congratulations!! The moment you have worked towards for so long has arrived. This is your last morning as BCC students and you will leave here today as a BCC alumni.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I present your BCC 2017 graduates.

This year's Commencement is a unique milestone in the history of our College.

This year we celebrate the 60th Anniversary of our college and this makes you, the

Class of 2017, the Class of BCC Diamond Jubilee. You know what they say about

diamonds... they say a diamond is a chunk of coal that did well under pressure.

Graduates, you know all about pressure right? You preserved through bad

weather, work, family responsibilities, challenging course work to get to this day.

Our Diamond Jubilee class is 2,209 strong with diversified background of race, ethnic and gender. Your class truly represents what makes our Country great, 48% percent of our graduates were born outside the United States. The youngest graduates are 19 and the eldest is 66 years young. Our research shows that 60 % of you will transfer to a four-year college and 40% will enter the work force.

We are also excited to recognize the graduates who are active members of the Armed Forces or Veterans. All Veterans and active members of the service please stand. Thank you for your service and sacrifice to our nation.

I want to close out with an excerpt from the letter from our first college President, Dr. Morris Meister to the college's first graduates in 1961.

"There is always a beginning and beginnings aren't easy". "We stood shoulder to shoulder in the difficult tasks of bringing into being the important things that make a college. We watched you grow towards a better and deeper understanding of the world about you and the part you can play in it. We take pride in your many successes.

"Now that the ship is launched, you the passengers and we the crew sail out into the world where no doubt we shall be buffeted by wind and storm. But the ship is secure and the engine strong. Bronx Community College goes with you to gainful

employment or a continuation of your education in another College. We will never forget you or these years together.”

We too, will never forget our years together. You must not forget us. Wherever your destiny takes you from here, always consider Bronx Community College one of your academic homes, a place where you will be forever welcomed. Your wisdom and continued engagement will help us better serve the students who come after you. So as you move forward in this next step in the journey of your life, don't forget to always reach back to Bronx Community College.

Once again, Congratulations!!