



# A Community of Many Communities:

The College, The Borough, The City, The Nation, The World

*Annual Report 2019*



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## A message from President Thomas A. ISEKENEGBE

**B**ronx Community College was founded in 1957 in response to years of local activism fighting for more opportunities for higher education in the borough. Sixty-two years later, BCC continues to serve the community. But what we now define as “community” has grown far beyond the borders of our campus.

Within our gates, BCC is a community of many communities. Our students come from some 100 different countries and speak more than 50 languages. We have campus resources, student clubs and special events that speak to the diversity of religion, race, gender, orientation, age and physical ability that is the hallmark of our college.

Meanwhile, BCC students, faculty, staff and alumni contribute their talent, wisdom and commitment. In turn, these larger communities play a fundamental role in the life of our campus.

This year’s Annual Report takes a look at the kaleidoscope of communities that we shape and that shape us, from the College to the Borough to the City to the Nation and ultimately the World. These pages will take you to the streets of India, where BCC students have conducted original research into the environment and sustainability and passed on their knowledge to young Indians; to the halls of the United Nations, where a BCC professor shares his insights with a global audience; to the avenues of the Bronx, where the BCC community races side by side with the people of our borough during our annual Run the Bronx 5K and 10K runs, the second oldest footrace in the city; to Manhattan’s Directors Guild of America movie theater, where our student-filmmakers show their work to industry professionals; to the many places that have felt the impact of BCC “Broncos,” some of whom are profiled in each section of this report. Wherever there is a community devoted to making its part of the world a better place, there you may well find members of our BCC community contributing to that outcome.

Join us now on a journey through the BCC community of communities. Consider this annual report your invitation to be a part of it.



**Thomas A. Isekenegbe**  
President, Bronx Community College





# *The College*

The first community of Bronx Community College is the College itself: the leafy green grounds and its 34 buildings, some of them architectural gems, but most important the people within those buildings, who explore, reflect, guide and serve in a school year rich with events and discovery.

# Manny LOPEZ

## A LIFE DEVOTED TO STUDENT LIFE

The Office of Student Development/Student Life covers a broad range of non-academic activities of BCC students. The administrator who oversees it all, Associate Dean for Student Development Manny Lopez, has to occasionally pause as he enumerates his many responsibilities: “Student leadership, civic engagement, student organizations, honor societies, the Student Government Association. Also what we call ‘affinity groups’: the Male Empowerment Network, the LGBTQIA+ Resource Room, the Womxn Up! Space. Other units in my portfolio include the Office of Personal Counseling, the Office of Judicial Affairs and the Office of Health Services. Then there’s the new student orientation and at the end of the academic year... Commencement!”

In short, Lopez is in charge of the “community” of Bronx Community College.

And he loves it.

“I work with the students and for the students from the very first day they start here up to their graduation to facilitate their success, both at the institution and in life.”

His career has been almost entirely at Bronx Community College. “I started in the Office of Disability Services as a counselor a dozen years ago.” But his BCC roots go even further back than that.

“I have an associate degree from BCC in Liberal Arts,” says the native New Yorker. “Then I went to Hunter for my baccalaureate in Urban Public Health.” At Hunter, he also got a master’s in Urban Affairs. At the CUNY Graduate Center, he earned a master’s in Philosophy and most recently a Ph.D. in Urban Education.

“I grew up in Harlem. The crack epidemic and AIDS were the huge social issues of my generation. That influenced a lot of my thinking about how to be solutions-based. I don’t like to just sit behind a desk. I like to get out and sit with the students in the cafeteria and try to understand how I can be of benefit to them in their lives.”

That work has involved mentoring students, taking them to conferences, helping them through personal crises or just sharing coffee with a student who suffers from sickle cell anemia and talking about his passion for Japanese graphic novels.

For Dr. Manny Lopez, one of the most gratifying moments in his job is Commencement. The students he helped to bring to that point often leave him a note or a card or an email. The sentiment is always the same: “Thank you.”

“I grew up in Harlem. The crack epidemic and AIDS were the huge social issues of my generation. That influenced a lot of my thinking about how to be solutions-based.”





## NSF GIVES BCC A RECORD \$5 MILLION GRANT

In a dramatic affirmation of the quality of a Bronx Community College education, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded BCC a \$5 million grant for Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (S-STEM). Announced in August 2018, this is one of the largest grants of its kind that the NSF has awarded to a community college.

Over a period of five years, this award will ultimately benefit 575 Bronx students who are pursuing degrees in math and the sciences. It will fund a collaboration with Lehman College to provide and coordinate scholarships, research opportunities and faculty mentoring to STEM students while at BCC and as they transfer to continue their studies at Lehman College. The NSF grant will also fund BCC faculty to research, develop and design an instructional model to support these STEM students as they persist and succeed in their studies.

"This NSF S-STEM grant will help BCC as it builds a community of excellence," said BCC President Thomas A. Isekenegbe. "The grant will leverage proven resources on both campuses to provide academically talented, low-income students with academic, financial, advisement, mentoring, career and enrichment support to help them obtain a degree, further their education and enter the STEM workforce."

Securing this major award was the last great contribution to the BCC community by the late Dr. Vicki Flaris, whose tragic death was mourned across the campus by her colleagues and students. (See page 83.) As Principal Investigator, Dr. Flaris would have implemented this grant with Co-Principal Investigators Luis Montenegro, Nancy Ritze and, at Lehman College, Pamela Mills. It is a fitting legacy for an educator who devoted her life to diversity in science.



## "BRONX READS" *BECOMING*

*Becoming*, the best-selling memoir by Michelle Obama, is the featured book of this academic year's "Bronx Reads: One Book, One College, One Community," the campus-wide program in which all of BCC reads the same selected book and participates in events and activities focused on issues and ideas raised in its pages.

In the pages of *Becoming*, the former First Lady provides her unique insights into American history, racial identity, gender and feminism, education and civil rights as viewed through the prism of her own life experiences. As part of the Bronx Reads experience, students have received a free copy of the book. Faculty are encouraged to incorporate this reading into their curricula.

This is the third year of Bronx Reads, which was launched in the 2017-18 academic year with a communal reading of Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. For 2018-19, the book chosen by students and faculty was *Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola* by Michele Wucker. Programs devoted to themes explored by the work included an essay contest, musical performances, lectures and panel discussions and an appearance by the author. Similar events will celebrate *Becoming*.

# FACULTY & STAFF HONORS, AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS



## JOHN ASIMAKOPOULOS

### *Social Sciences*

Wrote *Why the Oppressed Hate the Left*  
CUNY Book Completion Award Winner 2019-2020

## MONIQUE BRIGGS

### *Art & Music*

Publication of CD, *\*di.vi.sion of premieres: Of Death and the Planets* by Jim Lahti. Performance by di.vi.sion. Albany Records, September 2019.

## STEPHEN DUNCAN

### *History*

Wrote *The Rebel Café: Sex, Race, and Politics in Cold War America's Nightclub Underground*. Johns Hopkins University Press, November 2018.

## ANTHONY GATTO

### *Art & Music*

Released a CD, *Plastic Facts*, for saxophone quartet, commissioned by New Thread Ensemble, on New Focus Recordings, 2019.

## IVAN HOROZOV

### *Mathematics & Computer Science*

Appointed to the doctoral faculty at the Graduate Center at CUNY, Fall 2018.

## PRATHIBHA KANAKAMEDALA

### *History*

Co-authored, *The City Amplified: Oral Histories and Radical Archives*. A collection of essays from The City Amplified Working Group at The Center for the Humanities at the Graduate Center CUNY. New York, NY: Printed at The Print Shop, The Graduate Center, CUNY, 2019.

## DEBORAH LEWITTES

### *History*

Authored *Berthold Lubetkin's Highpoint II and the Jewish Contribution to Modern English Architecture*. Routledge, May 2018.

## ULANA LYSNIAK

### *Health, Physical Education and Recreation*

Honored as an Ivy League Legend in March 2019 by The Ivy League. Inducted into Columbia University Hall of Fame in October 2018.

## SETH OFFENBACH

### *History*

Wrote *The Conservative Movement and Vietnam War: The Other Side of Vietnam*. Routledge, 2019.

## DAVID J. PUGLIA

### *English*

Wrote *Tradition, Urban Identity and the Baltimore "Hon."* Lexington Books, September 2018.

## JULIA MIELE RODAS

### *English*

Wrote *Autistic Disturbances: Theorizing Autism Poetics from the DSM to Robinson Crusoe*. University of Michigan Press, August 2018.

## NELSON SANTANA

### *Library*

Awarded the Dan C. Hazen SALALM Fellowship for Fall 2019 for his project, *"José Mesón: Transnational Hero of the Movimiento 14 de Junio."*

## CHEYENNE SEYMOUR

### *Communication Arts & Sciences*

Published *The Perks and Problems of Posting: Social Media's Impact on Pursuing Degrees*. Routledge, 2020.

## JAMES WEBB

### *Communication Arts & Sciences*

Wrote the play *The House of Jean-René*. Essential Theater, Tallahassee, Florida, July 2019.

# BUILDING A BETTER CAMPUS

The campus of Bronx Community College has been a work in progress ever since it began as the campus of New York University at the turn of the 20th century. That progress continues to this day.

The Roscoe C. Brown Jr. Student Center is undergoing replacement of the exterior masonry and roof. It is the first overhaul of the Marcel Breue-designed building since it first welcomed students in 1954.

The completion of major work on the pool in the alumni gym was marked with a ribbon cutting ceremony in September. The pool was lengthened to make it regulation size, retiled and given a new bedding and lighting. The pool and bathroom will now be accessible for swimmers with disabilities. A new bridge making the gym's main entrance accessible was opened the same month.

The 120-year-old Gould Memorial Library, designed by master builder Stanford White, is also part of the wave of renovation. To allow for larger gatherings in the green marble-columned Rotunda, construction of a second exit stairway began in the summer of 2019 and will be completed in a year. "It's going to be very skillfully snaked back over the stage of the auditorium below so it won't have any impact on the exterior of the building," notes Robin Auchincloss, BCC's former Director of Campus and Facilities Planning. The long-awaited restoration and repair of GML's roof will begin in 2020.

Meanwhile, the electrical infrastructure and fire alarm system across campus will be upgraded as part of BCC's never-ending process of renewal.



# THE COLLEGE IS REACCREDITED

BCC students beginning their college careers with the fall 2019 semester were the first to come to our campus since our accreditation was officially reaffirmed for eight more years by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education on June 29, 2019.

It was the culmination of a two-year, campus-wide undertaking, beginning with a lengthy Self-Study process. That included Bronx Community College Assessment Day, held on December 7 in North Hall and Library. The conference was comprised of 16 different presentations from BCC faculty and staff. Dean Nancy Ritze, a major leader in the accreditation drive, called the event "a snapshot of the quality of the assessment work that's being done on campus, its depth and range."

The MSCHE evaluation team, led by Passaic County Community College President Steven M. Rose, came to campus for four days in March, concluding the visit with the delivery of its oral report in the Roscoe Brown Student Center. Of the seven exacting MSCHE standards for accreditation, Bronx Community College met... all seven, from "Educational Effectiveness" to "Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience" to "Ethics and Integrity." In the standard of Educational Effectiveness Assessment, BCC received a commendation.

"This is a great accomplishment for BCC and demonstrates how effectively we can work together, collectively committed to excellence and student success," said President Thomas A. Isekenegbe. "We will use the recent Self-Study findings and the MSCHE Team's recommendations as the foundation for BCC's upcoming Strategic Plan."

"This is a great accomplishment for BCC and demonstrates how effectively we can work together, collectively committed to excellence and student success."



# SINGLE STOP, MANY BENEFICIARIES

Part of what makes Bronx Community College a true community is the assistance provided to less advantaged students (and their immediate families) who need benefits and services to stay in school and graduate. Much of that help comes from the Single Stop office in Loew Hall, a year-round presence on campus funded in part by the BCC Foundation.

Days before Thanksgiving, Single Stop partnered with Municipal Credit Union and the BCC Foundation for the College's Second Annual Holiday Turkey Raffle. MCU provided the 50 fowl as part of their own annual turkey drive that distributed hundreds of holiday birds across the city. Said one lucky winner, an electrical engineering student named Alexander, "I'm thankful to be in school. BCC took the time to help me go to the next semester."

During tax season, students were invited to drop by Single Stop to e-file their returns with free guidance from certified tax preparers and safe and secure online tax software.

That same month saw the first annual Single Stop Spring Food Distribution, with much of the donated food coming from BCC faculty and students. Spring and Fall saw the surfacing of "pop-up" clothing drives at Snow and Colston Halls, again made possible by the generosity of the BCC community and its friends, staffed by campus volunteers.

Single Stop also hosted a "Legal Aid Mobile Justice Van," featuring a team of lawyers with free advice for students on such issues as divorce, child support, government assistance and housing.

# A PLACE FOR THE LITTLEST LEARNERS

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) has hosted many birthday parties for its young clientele. So it was only fitting that on May 2, its 10th anniversary, there was a birthday party for the ECC, the accredited preschool program attended by the children of BCC students while their moms and dads are taking classes elsewhere on campus.

BCC President Thomas A. Isekenegbe greeted the families gathered at Colston Hall and praised the ECC staff. "Folks, if you're going to build a strong house, you need a solid foundation," he observed. "And this is what they provide every day."

EEC Director Jitinder Walia, full of emotion, declared "I can't believe that 10 years ago, we began our commitment to childhood education on Sedgwick

Avenue in a three-story house with six staffers and 20 children. Now, we have a staff of 30 and are serving over 125 children each semester."

Outside visitors are common at the center, from a delegation from Puerto Rico to local public figures, such as Council Member Andy Cohen and New York City's First Lady, who read to an audience of rapt young ones.

The Center already provides a popular afterschool program for older children and Director Walia launched a Family Resource Room for parents in September. "And we're planning an infant/toddler center to complete the circle and serve children from six weeks to 12 years of age, so no student has to drop out when they get pregnant. That's the goal."





## WOMXN UP! A SPACE TO RE-SOURCE

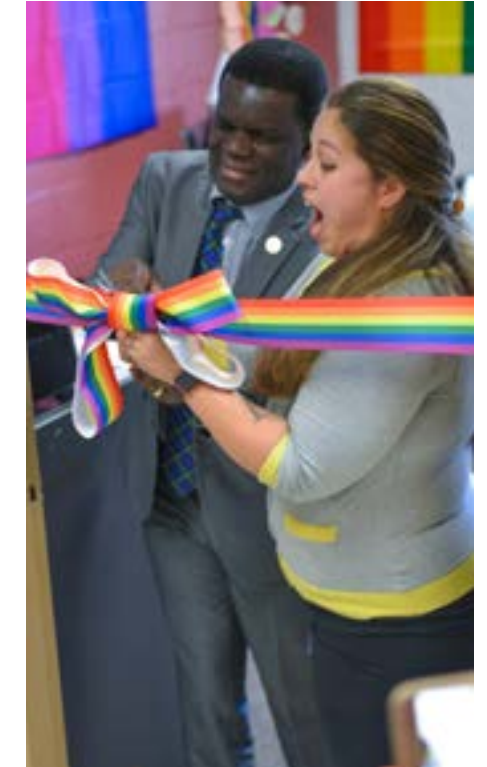
To the rhythm of traditional drumming and the bilingual chant of “Yo soy ella! I am she! Womxn Up!” 50 BCC women marched across the Quad and up the stairs of the Roscoe Brown Student Center for the March 19 ribbon-cutting ceremony and official opening of “Womxn Up! A Space to Re-Source,” the first campus home for women and female-identified students and the only such service in CUNY’s three Bronx colleges.

Gloria Rodriguez, lecturer in the BCC Department of Social Sciences and Faculty Director of the re-envisioned teal-colored space, addressed a crowded corridor of excited celebrants in front of Room 203B. “Thank you to everyone who is here and everyone who has been a part in making this a reality,” she said, noting that “We began working on the creation of Womxn Up! two years ago.” Those who participated

in the creation of the resource room were easily identifiable by their teal scarves. Speakers at the ceremony included President Thomas A. Isekenegbe and Student Adviser Amanda Perez, as well as BCC student Stephanie Dorleans representing the Student Government Association.

The Womxn Up! headquarters, as outlined in its original proposal, serves as “an on-campus resource for outreach and support services addressing the needs of women in the BCC community.” It is the guiding spirit or organizing force behind woman-oriented events and programming throughout the academic year.

The auspicious debut of Womxn Up! A Space to Re-Source ended with a song, a reception and great expectations.



## A ROOM FOR THE LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY

On October 30, 2018, the ribbon was cut on the LGBTQI+ Resource Room at Bronx Community College. This inclusive, safe and welcoming environment was created for students, faculty and staff of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. The Resource Room provides visibility and a sense of community with LGBTQI+-focused education, programming and support services. The Safe Space Program, the Rainbow Alliance student club, the LGBTQI+ Support Group, as well as the *Loud!* newsletter, all serve that mission.

April 6 saw the first LGBTQI+ College Fair at BCC as representatives from some two dozen CUNY, SUNY and other four-year colleges and universities from across the city and the state came to the campus to promote their LGBTQI+-friendly programs, services and organizations. Cosponsored by The Office of The Bronx

Borough President and the LGBTQI+ Resource Room, the gathering kicked off a month of “GAYPRIL” events.

The campus as a whole reflects a commitment to honoring the LGBTQI community in all aspects of college life, from its inclusion in classroom topics and campus services to BCC’s policies of non-discrimination that include sexual orientation no less than race, gender, religion and country of origin.

“That Gay literary genius, James Baldwin, once said, ‘The place in which I’ll fit will not exist until I make it,’” says Edwin Roman, adviser for the Rainbow Alliance. “The BCC LGBTQI+ Resource Room is that place for LGBTQI+ students, faculty and staff.”



# GRADUATION CEREMONIES

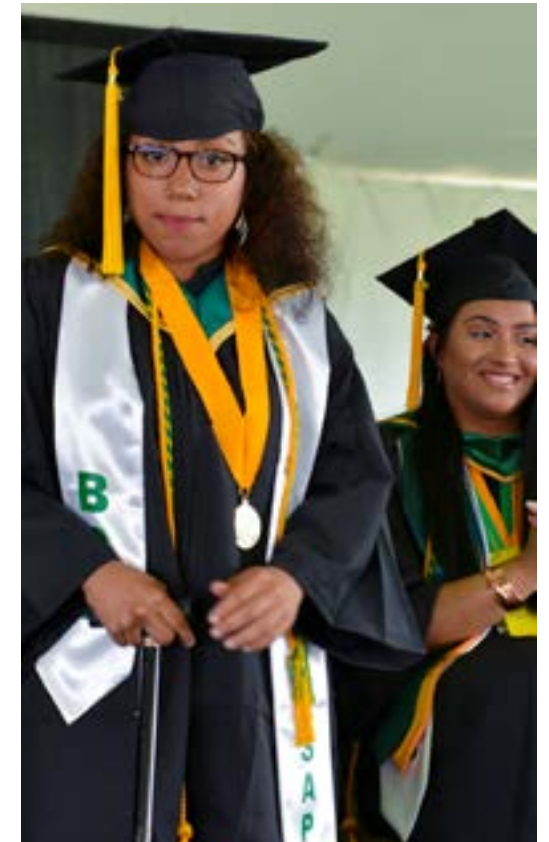
May and June are a time of many graduations in the College community, when merit is honored and diplomas dispensed.

The first ceremony of the season was the Dean's and President's Lists 2019 Convocation, which was held in the Gould Memorial Library Auditorium on May 2. In total, 1,730 students earned a place on the Dean's List, 1,613 students on the President's List and 3,343 Broncos made both.

Members of the BCC Class of 2019 who excelled in a broad range of academic accomplishment had their achievements recognized at the Graduation Awards Ceremony Luncheon on May 28. The award winners heard a special address from Joanmaris Cuello, BCC's 2019 Salutatorian. Among her many accomplishments was a perfect attendance record from her first day

in class to her last. "I made certain that even if I was struggling with certain material, I would always show up. I experienced many ups and downs, but it was those down moments that made me who I am today. My commitment was stronger than any obstacle." In all, 121 awards were handed out to stellar BCC students.

BCC's 59th Commencement commenced on Friday, May 31, held under a huge white tent pitched on Ohio Field. Some among the 2,157 who began the day as students and ended it as alumni expressed their joy by decorating their caps with declarations like "Educated Black Queen" and "Para Mi Familia." "You are an incredibly diverse group," observed President Isekenegbe, noting that "You come from 100 countries around the world. The flags outside clearly show that. The youngest among you is 19, and the most



senior is 76. Ninety-five of the graduates today are BCC employees. With all that you have accomplished in these past years, you will achieve still more in the world beyond our gates." Class Valedictorian Tatyana Kuptsevich told her story, which was similar to many of those in her audience: arrival in American as an immigrant, followed by years of struggle. Other speakers included Fernando Ferrer, former Bronx Borough President, current member of the CUNY Board of Trustees and one-time student at New York University's Bronx campus before it became BCC. The morning ended with the reason for the ceremonies as each student's name was called and they rose to receive their diplomas, some accompanied by children or carrying babies in one arm as they shook President Isekenegbe's hand with the other.

Finally, on Friday, June 14, a sea of royal blue caps and gowns filled the auditorium of Gould Memorial Library for the graduation ceremonies of Future Now. The acclaimed program offers free High School Equivalency exam training and college preparation for 17-to-24-year-olds whose educations were derailed by life. Since Future Now began in 1998, over 5,000 students have attained their HSE diploma and more than 3,000 have gone on to enroll in BCC or other colleges. A highlight of the afternoon was an address by New York City Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson. "If you persevere," he promised the graduates, "if you don't let anybody tell you what you can't do, but focus on what you want to do, and you work at it and fight for it, you can get there. That's how change happens."

# Kathryn ARIAS-KALINOWSKI

## A STUDENT AND THE COLLEGE

“It was never in my head to go to college,” recalls Kathryn Arias-Kalinowski, mother of three boys and a full-time student at BCC. “I figured if I worked it would be as a fast food person or a sales rep. But jobs like that would basically just cover the cost of a baby sister, which made no sense. So I came to college to get a better job.”

It would quickly lead to far more than that.

“When I first came to BCC, it gave me the feeling that I was away at college. You walk through a great, grand entryway and you go up the steps and you see greenery, you see the Quad and everything in a circle. I could walk through the Hall of Fame and be at peace with nature and think about what I wanted to do in life. It’s a calm place in the middle of the Bronx. You’re not supposed to find that on University Avenue.”

Kathryn started out with an eye on nursing. “But I took a CHEM 02 class and fell in love with chemistry.”

Dr. Neal Phillip, the chairperson of the Department of Chemistry, Earth Sciences and Environmental Sciences, encouraged her new passion. “I went to the American Chemical Society Conference in Orlando. It was like Disneyland for a chemist.” Kathryn particularly credits her two trips to the Black Engineer of the Year Awards conference in Orlando for the new arc in her life. “It opened my eyes. I thought, ‘Wow, I can do that. That can be me. It doesn’t matter where I came from or what my family couldn’t do. It’s all about what I do now.’”

Kathryn is deeply involved in the life of BCC outside of the classroom. “I’m a senator in student government and I love representing my campus. I love advocating for students. I just got a job as a peer mentor so I can actually help students plan their stay here at BCC and stay focused on their path.”

Sometimes I just walk around campus and tell people “My name is Katherine, if there’s anything you want or need I can help you, and if I can’t help you. I’ll point you to someone who can.”

Kathryn has her eye on City College of New York after she graduates. “I want to do chemical engineering. I can’t believe the woman I have become just by coming to Bronx Community College.”

“When I first came to BCC, it gave me the feeling that I was away at college... I could walk through the Hall of Fame and be at peace with nature and think about what I wanted to do in life.”





# *The Borough*

Bronx Community College has a symbiotic relationship with the Bronx community. BCC is kept alive by the borough's constant infusion of students looking to transform their lives. The College in turn plays a central role in the life of the borough, opening its doors to its neighbors for major events and preparing its graduates to be the next generation of Bronx leaders.

# Michael SPIERMAN

## MAKING THE BOROUGH SING

Last December, a Bronx Community College tradition returned to the campus for the seventh time. The Bronx Opera Chorus, The Bronx Orchestra and four soloists took to the stage of the Hall of Fame Theater in the Roscoe Brown Student Center for their annual performance of Handel's masterwork, *Messiah*.

Wielding the baton as he has for all seven BCC *Messiahs* was Michael Spierman, Bronx native, conductor of the orchestra and Artistic Director of The Bronx Opera. "We do *Messiah* in a way that I've never encountered elsewhere," he said, referring to the reading by local Bronx personalities of the biblical texts that inspired the music in each portion of the oratorio. The result is a concert that brings together all the disparate communities of the community of the Bronx, a true point of pride for Spierman.

"Where else is the President of Hostos going to meet the lady who coordinates all the nurses at a local hospital? Where is a religious studies teacher from Mount Saint Ursula going to meet the president of the Bronx Rotary Club? I try to represent the entire Bronx."

The last speaking slot of every BCC *Messiah* so far has gone to U.S. Representative Jose E. Serrano, who always answers "Count me in!" to Spierman's annual request.

"I like the intimacy of the 352-seat theater in Roscoe Brown Student Center. I like the people I work with and their enthusiasm, I like the campus and I always have since I was a student here." Maestro Spierman made his academic home on what are now the grounds of BCC when they were the grounds of New York University, where he was a music major from 1963 to 1965.

His interest in opera began in 1967 when he returned from graduate studies at Brandeis University. "I was a freelance percussionist and got a gig playing *La Boheme* in Manhattan. We had only one rehearsal and didn't get through the whole opera." The result was a performance that was an unintended comedy of errors. "But the audience didn't care as long as the singers were hitting the high Cs."

That experience led Spierman to start The Bronx Opera in November of 1967 with Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*. "I decided to do the operas in English so people could understand them", a philosophy that The Bronx Opera follows to this day.

Offstage, Spierman taught in the Hunter College music department from 1970 to 2008. Onstage, in addition to his musical responsibilities in the Bronx, "I've guest conducted in different places in the world, from Brazil to Mexico to Bulgaria to England."

Over 60 singers from The Bronx Opera have gone on to the stage of the Metropolitan Opera. The audiences have included luminaries like "Yip" Harburg, the native Bronxite lyricist of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, and Jessye Norman, the internationally renowned dramatic soprano.

Spierman's outreach to the borough isn't limited to the BCC *Messiah*. He has programs for senior centers, for immigrants and for students in schools across the Bronx.

Mozart's *Don Giovanni* will be the Bronx Opera's first offering in 2020. And of course, the year will end with the eighth iteration of the *Messiah* at Bronx Community College.





## RETHINKING A MAJOR BCC LANDMARK

On Friday, March 8, Bronx Community College students, faculty, staff and alumni joined local figures from the worlds of education, economic development and the arts in the elegant marble Rotunda of BCC's beloved Gould Memorial Library to brainstorm potential uses of the very building they were in. Joining them were representatives from community-based organizations focused on workforce, social services and social justice issues, as well as historic preservationists and elected officials.

Gould Memorial Library hasn't served as an actual library in a half century. During that time, it has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Parks Service, served as a set for numerous movies and television shows and hosted major events including film screenings, mayoral debates and speeches by presidential hopefuls. But this marvel of late 19th-century Beaux Arts architecture remains underutilized, and with expected costs of a planned restoration perhaps as high as \$80 million, a major role for the building in the life of the borough is essential to justify that price tag.

So a day-long symposium was convened by a team of graduate students from the New York University Wagner School of Public Service, who have taken this on as their Capstone project. NYU's participation was fitting. The legendary architect Stanford White designed Gould Memorial Library (or "GML" as it is known across campus) for the uptown campus of NYU seven decades before it became the current home of BCC. NYU alumni from that earlier era in University Heights were among the symposium attendees.

The morning began with networking and greetings from Bronx Community College President Thomas A. Isekenegbe. "It's cold outside but it's warm in here because of the presence of all of you," he said. "The work you do here will impact the students sitting at your table today and the students who will be here in the future."

The president then thanked the Save GML Advisory Board and was followed at the podium by two of the Board's co-chairs, architects Sherida Paulsen and Samuel White. First Ms. Paulsen observed, "This morning we are going to do what every good architect

and planner does when they start a project. We're going to understand the existing conditions. And in the afternoon, the Capstone team will walk you through a series of targeted questions to think about how we can approach the reuse of the building."

Samuel White, a great-grandson of GML's master builder Stanford White, then briefed the symposium on the fascinating history of the building, with photos and architectural renderings over a period of a century. "So that is Gould Memorial Library," he concluded. "A building of immense symbolic significance, but very difficult to program. But I'm sure with a group like the one we have today, we'll come up with some great ideas."

The Capstone team of NYU graduate students also spoke, pointing to case studies of the restoration of similar buildings from The Rotunda at the University of Virginia to the Founders Library of Howard University.

A tour of GML's interior spaces, usually unseen by the public, followed.

Then came the major purpose of the day. The attendees broke up into small groups to develop ideas for a future renovated GML. Some of the proposals included an arts center with studios, galleries and performing spaces; a gathering area for students; a home for national institutes around issues important to the College and the surrounding community; a conference space to compete with Manhattan's more expensive venues and more. Student Government Association President Carolina Valenzuela spoke up for a strongly student-focused GML, complete with such simple necessities as quiet spaces for individual reading and study.

A day's worth of information, brainstorming and debate came to an end by mid-afternoon. In the weeks that followed, the NYU Capstone team analyzed the strengths, weaknesses and feasibility of the ideas generated by the symposium and issued a findings report. It will greatly impact the future of a gift from the past.



# A HALL OF FAME FOR TODAY'S BCC

For over a hundred years, the Hall of Fame for Great Americans on the campus of Bronx Community College has been a celebrated monument to major figures in the history of our nation. On September 21, it was the focus of an afternoon of art that challenged the whole ethos of the Hall of Fame. "Diversity in Public Art: Empowering Community Voices at Bronx Community College's Hall of Fame" featured music, film, photography, painting, sculpture, mixed media, dance, spoken word, performance art and visual art that offered a contemporary take on what and who is "great." Cynthia Tobar, head of BCC's Archives, conceived and organized the festival.



The Central American drumming, singing and dancing of the Bodoma Garifuna Culture Band kicked off the day from the stage of the Gould Memorial Library auditorium.

The Five Boros Project presented storytellers Latanya DeVaughn, James McSherry and Peggy Robles-Alvarado. Each told the story of unsung but "great Bronxites" in their lives.

Visual art in The Hall of Fame Gallery in Bliss Hall included a scale model of the bust of Robert E. Lee recently removed from the Hall. But this one was covered with fungus, "a metaphor for the 'Lost Cause' myth of the Civil War," said artist Zaq Landsberg.



Back at the Hall of Fame, artist/poet Grisel Acosta invited participants to place their heads on Lee's now empty pedestal and become human busts, which were then photographed.

A video from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture was screened in Gould Memorial Library's Rotunda. Student interns selected new figures for the Hall of Fame and the film featured artists' renderings of nominees like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and Harvey Milk.

The day ended with an awards ceremony and talk of the event returning next year.

# Rubén DÍAZ JR.

## POLITICS, PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PLURALISM

“I wasn’t born to rich parents,” observes Rubén Díaz Jr. “My parents came from the island of Puerto Rico. I was born and raised in the Bronx in public housing. I am the product of the public school system, District 7 in the South Bronx. I graduated from a public high school.”

It is a background similar to many students at Bronx Community College and it has made Díaz a champion of education throughout his career, from his days as a New York State Assembly Member to his current position as Bronx Borough President and perhaps as New York City’s next mayor.

“I was working before I was able to go to college,” the Borough President recalls. That first job pointed towards his future. He was a messenger in the New York City Council. As he worked, he attended college part time.

“It took me 13 years to get two CUNY degrees — La Guardia Community College and Lehman College. Many nights I had to choose between paying the rent, buying food or buying that new textbook.”

Those CUNY experiences shaped the public official he became.

“A lot of the knowledge that I have about different commonalities, cultures, religions, I got from the people I sat next to. It gave me a ground level understanding of the complexity of everyday lives. You take someone like Bassal Omar, who’s Palestinian Muslim, who sat next to me in class. I encouraged him to become my intern when I was in the Assembly. He was the reason why I was the first person to introduce legislation that allowed New York City public school students who are Muslim to stay home during Eid. He is now my deputy chief of staff.”

By the time Díaz received his B.A. in political theory, he was already a member of the State Assembly, elected in 1998 at the age of 23, the youngest person to hold that position since Theodore Roosevelt over a century earlier. Today, as Bronx Borough President, he remains a major promoter of CUNY and of Bronx Community College.

“BCC has been tremendous in accommodating the diversity of our borough: West Africans, Dominicans, poor people, women, single moms who just want opportunity. They just want a chance.”

His commitment to BCC is reflected in his frequent visits to the campus. Most recently, he spoke at the September ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated swimming pool in Alumni Gymnasium, a project that received crucial funding from his office.

Borough President Díaz sees the role The City University of New York plays today in the city as “critical.”

“CUNY is educating New Yorkers, whether they are immigrants or have lived here for a while. If we want to create an economy for New York City and make sure people can afford to live here, then more of our workforce should be coming from CUNY graduates.”

The Borough President has already announced that he is a candidate for Gracie Mansion when term-limited Mayor Bill de Blasio leaves office, and education will continue to be a fundamental priority. “Shame on me if I don’t do my best to help BCC do its job. We’ve done that every year that I’ve been here as Bronx Borough President with capital funding. And I hope that the next Borough President does the same.”





## A MARCH FOR SURVIVORS

Braving an autumn chill, dozens of members of the Bronx Community College community marched across campus on October 10 for BCC's Second Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Walk. The event was intended to draw attention to an issue that is a central focus of the College's Department of Public Safety, which organized the event.

The walk was preceded by a brief rally in the Meister Hall Lobby, which was lined with tabling displays by state, city and campus police and concerned community groups. On hand was a retinue of local elected leaders and officials, whose presence highlighted the importance of domestic violence prevention to the borough. They included Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr. and New York State Assembly Member Victor Pichardo.

"Quite honestly, I wish we didn't have to do this," observed Borough President Díaz, "but certainly here in the Bronx we know that we have more than our fair share of domestic violence. This day is about shedding light on this dark secret."

Assembly Member Pichardo addressed those who experience domestic violence, whom he insisted

should be called survivors, not victims. "It is not your fault. It is NOT YOUR FAULT. If a domestic partner is abusing you physically, mentally, economically, it's not about love. It's about control."

Following a presentation by the BCC Dance Workshop inspired by the themes of the day, the rally poured onto the Quad and morphed into a march of defiance and commitment.

The event concluded with a women's self-defense demonstration conducted by Public Safety Specialist Alexandria Torres, the organizer of the day who is in charge of the Domestic Violence Unit of Public Safety. BCC's peace officers talk to hundreds of students every year about the issue and often accompany victims to their local precincts to report the crimes committed against them, thus becoming involved in cases in the Bronx, Queens, Manhattan, Brooklyn and even Yonkers.

Until domestic violence is banished from the borough, the BCC marchers vow to return every year with their message of support.



## FUNDING THE FUTURE

Five New York City Council Members from the Bronx came to the campus of Bronx Community College on Tuesday, July 16 to announce over \$18 million in capital spending for the borough in the Fiscal 2020 budget.

After a welcome from BCC President Thomas A. Isekenegbe, Council Member Andrew Cohen of District 11, the head of the Bronx delegation, told the gathering, "Every year the Bronx Delegation works very hard to bring back the necessary resources to build a better borough for all Bronxites. This year was no exception!" He cited such "amazing projects" as \$950,000 for a new pavilion at Wave Hill, \$2.5 million for a new state-of-the-art nursing facility at Lehman College and \$1.2 million for cafeteria renovations at Bronx Science High School.

Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson, who represents District 16, singled out funding for the Bronx Museum of the Arts (\$2.2 million), a new exhibit center at the Bronx Zoo (\$4.4 million), the Bronx Universal Hip Hop Museum (\$2 million) and \$3 million for the host of the occasion, Bronx Community College. "We look forward to continuing to prioritize the needs of the Bronx in future budgets to demonstrate our commitment to these institutions and their contributions to our community," she added.

"As Bronx representatives, we have a responsibility to bring home the bacon, and ensure our borough is fairly resourced," observed Council Member Andy King of District 12. Our FY 2020 budget reflects responsible, wise negotiations and choices to deliver for our communities."

District 14's Council Member Fernando Cabrera added that "These much-needed resources will help support arts and education, our CUNY institutions, technology, services for the homeless, economic development and renovation of iconic public spaces."

Council Member Rubén Díaz Sr. of District 18 was full of praise for the efforts of his colleagues, speaking for all of them when he said, "I am proud of the collaborative efforts of this Bronx Delegation. I look forward to seeing these projects come to fruition."

The event took place in BCC's historic Gould Memorial Library, itself a previous recipient of city funds.

# Alhassan UMAR

## A STUDENT AND THE BOROUGH

*If you are an immigrant*

*You are a flower*

*Brought to where you are right now out of necessity*

*Your melanin shines through your petals*

*Your fists are hard-working but gentle leaves*

*And your heart strengthens your stem*

*Keeping you up through bad weather*

*Your language so powerful your grandmother is still present in your roots*

These are the words of Bronx Community College senior Alhassan Umar, president of the BCC's Muslim Student Association and spoken word artist, two credits that have made him a presence across the borough.

Born in Ghana, Alhassan came to the Bronx when he was two years old. "When I was 13, I was a bright student but I wasn't in the best environment," he recalls. "So I was sent back to Africa. I was there for five years. I lived in a village, farming, building houses from scratch, digging wells, catching what I eat. The responsibility it takes to live such a life style really helped shape me."

In Africa, he also developed a deeper appreciation of his faith and when he returned to the Bronx, he became a part of the borough's thriving Muslim community. As assistant imam at Masjid Sidiki (Masjid meaning "house of worship" and "Sidiki" meaning truth), Alhassan is the youngest imam in New York City. "A lot of the youth find it difficult to explain themselves to the adults. I am able to take their

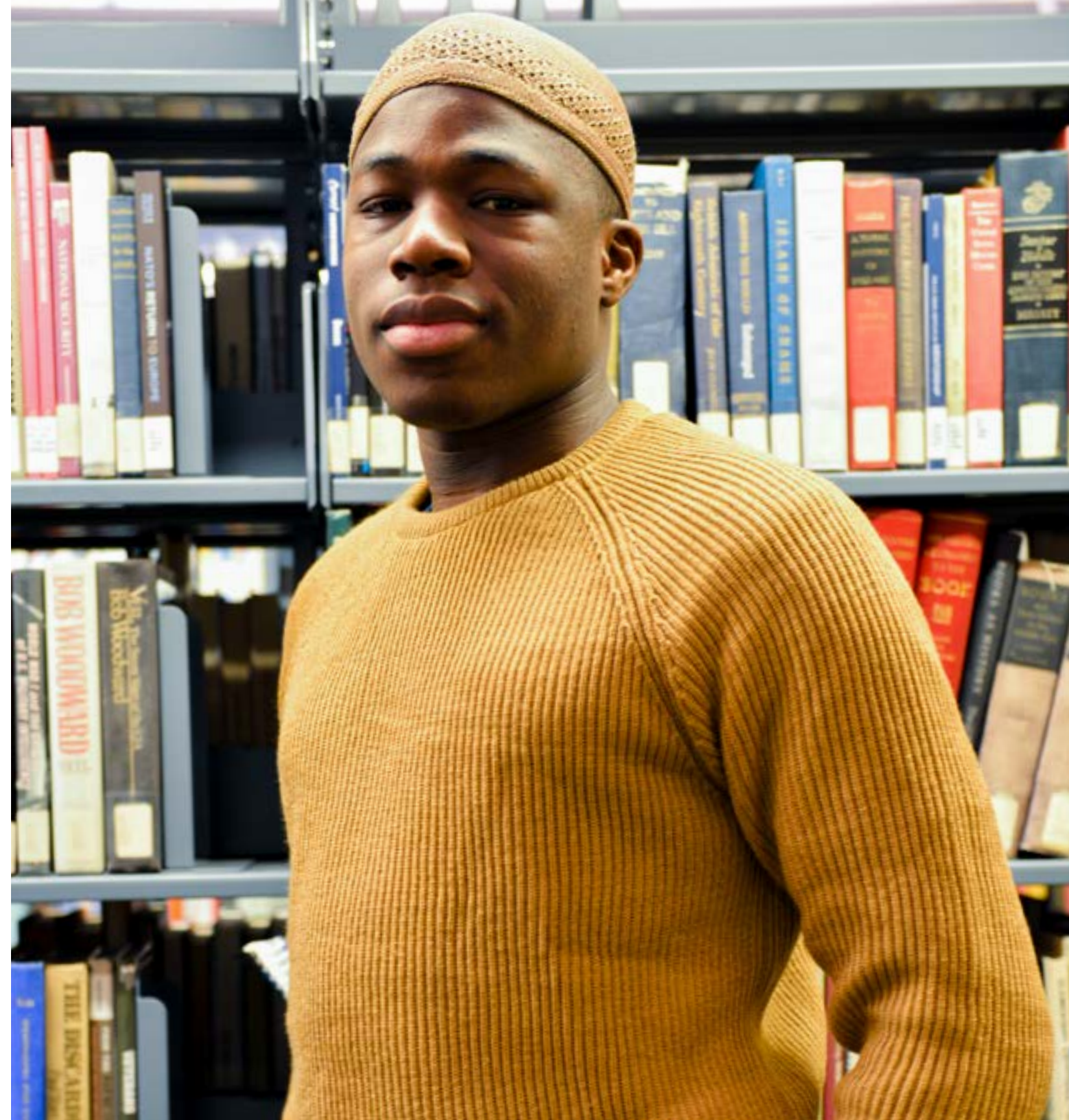
thoughts and present them to adults, who respect me."

"AT BCC, I've taken communications classes. That has helped me in my work as a mentor. Any class I take at BCC, I always find something I can bring back to the world I live in." Some 30 current BCC students are from that world thanks to Alhassan's encouragement.

His ties to the borough also include his life as a spoken word artist. "I have always been fascinated by the ability to use words to inspire and change people." He honed that skill at Lincoln Center's "Poet-Linc" program. Today, he uses performances of his poetry to reach out to young people with his mentoring work. He is a familiar figure at mosques across the Bronx. Meanwhile, his YouTube channel has attracted an international following.

Classes at BCC and counseling at the mosque led to Alhassan's interest in psychology, which will be his major when he pursues his B.A. "The Bronx is a place full of interesting people and potential. And Bronx Community College has been a place that helped me develop MY potential."

**"A lot of the youth find it difficult to explain themselves to the adults. I am able to take their thoughts and present them to adults, who respect me."**





# *The City*

Bronx Community College is an active participant in the community of New York City and our status as part of The City University of New York is only the beginning of that relationship. Our students and faculty are an intrinsic part of city life, often taking what they teach and learn to all five boroughs. As an institution, we regularly host events and conferences that all New Yorkers can be a part of. In turn, the City shapes who we are and what we aspire to be.

# Scott STRINGER

## “CUNY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PLACE WHERE BEAUTIFUL THINGS HAPPEN”

“My parents were very political,” says New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer. “My mom was a city council member, my dad worked for the mayor, my cousin was Congresswoman Bella Abzug. That was the first campaign I worked on. I thought as a kid everyone went to anti-war demonstrations and community board meetings.”

That family heritage inspired his own career in public life, first as a member of the New York State Assembly, then as Manhattan’s borough president. In his current position, Stringer is the city’s fiscal watch dog. His responsibilities include overseeing a \$208 billion investment portfolio for New York City’s five pension systems and analyzing the City’s budget.

And it all began on the streets of the city he now serves.

“Growing up, for me the world started in Washington Heights and the Bronx, Fordham Road, Kennedy High School. I grew up at a time when New York was on the edge of bankruptcy, when there were 2,000 murders a year. People were fleeing the City. But others decided to stay and rebuild the Bronx, rebuild Washington Heights. That has always been a compelling story. I want very much to now use the opportunity I’ve been given to create economic opportunity for everyone in the Bronx, everyone uptown.”

Stringer sees New York’s public schools and The City University of New York as key to that goal.

“CUNY has always been a place where beautiful things happen. You come into the CUNY system, it gives you not just an education but also a very culturally diverse view, not just of New York City, but of what the world is going to be. I think CUNY is ready for transformational change. I want this university to think about what the

next economy will look like. We should look at our community colleges. They’re situated in our diverse areas.”

CUNY also figures into Stringer’s plans for a residency for public school teachers. “Forty percent of teachers leave within in five years. So if we are going to retain teachers, we have to do a better job creating professional development programs and mentorships. We want a pipeline from CUNY. We want CUNY at the table.”

CUNY is part of Stringer’s larger concern that the Bronx and the city of which it is a part remain accessible and affordable to all of their citizens.

“We have to make sure that the Bronx is for the people in the Bronx who didn’t leave. We have so many people who gave a lifetime to this borough, who now are being priced out. You see luxury towers being built near the waterfront. People of diverse backgrounds walking on the concourse and throughout the Bronx, they look at those buildings and say, ‘That’s not going to benefit us.’

“If the City becomes a place of the very, very wealthy with enclaves for the poor and nothing between, what are we doing here?”

What time Stringer has outside of work he devotes to his family.

“What I love about my job is that I know I am doing this for my children and kids I’ll never know. I’d like them to say someday that their Dad really took care of the city.”



# HONORING A BCC PRESIDENT AND HIS LEGACY

Former Mayor David Dinkins and a host of New York City luminaries came to City Hall on Thursday, April 18 to honor the late Dr. Roscoe C. Brown Jr., a legendary New Yorker whose legacy still touches the lives of so many in the city he served and loved. The occasion was a New York City Council Proclamation hailing Dr. Brown as one of the Tuskegee Airmen, who “played a critical role fighting for democracy in the skies over Europe” and “in our schools as a tireless educator and activist,” most notably as president of Bronx Community College from 1977 to 1993. In that role, President Brown helped launch “Run the Bronx.” That celebration of health and fitness was also praised by the proclamation and the people who gathered to hear it read.

“Dr. Brown, an avid runner who ran in nine New York City marathons, was also deeply concerned about the health and well-being of the community,” read the proclamation. “In 1978, he co-founded the race later called ‘Run the Bronx,’ and today officially known as the ‘Roscoe C. Brown Jr. Hall of Fame 10K, 5K and 2-Mile Walk.’ Now in its 41st year, Run the Bronx is

a major annual event in the Bronx and the second oldest footrace in the five boroughs.”

BCC’s current President Thomas A. Isekenegbe welcomed the celebrants and described the Run the Bronx experience. “It starts and ends on the BCC campus and weaves through the streets of our borough of dreamers, strivers and achievers,” the President said. He was followed by Bronx City Council Member Fernando Cabrera, who introduced Mayor Dinkins, the city’s first African-American occupant of Gracie Mansion, an achievement he credits in part to the counsel of Roscoe Brown.

Mayor Dinkins spoke with great warmth and admiration about his good friend. “When the little ones ask you ‘Who was Roscoe Brown?’ you can tell them he was one helluva cat.”

The spirit of President Brown lived again on May 4 when the starter’s horn sounded at 10:00 a.m. sharp on the BCC campus and racers from around the world tore through University Heights for the latest run of Run the Bronx.



## BCC FILM FESTIVAL

The great filmmakers of today often show their latest work at the Directors Guild Theater in mid-town Manhattan. On June 20, the great filmmakers of tomorrow may well have shown their very first works at the 26th Annual Bronx Community College Film & Video Festival.

For two hours, 12 five-minute films by members and graduates of the BCC Media and Digital Film Production program of the Department of Communications Arts and Sciences were screened for an audience of industry professionals, as well as BCC classmates and faculty, family and friends. The student directors experienced the thrill of seeing the ideas they first pitched in a BCC class now projected in a professional movie theater through the very best video and audio equipment.

An awards ceremony followed the screenings. First, a series of special distinctions were handed out:

- The Peter J. Rondinone Memorial Awards, presented to Antonio Rodriguez, Ifeoma Ezinwa, Christian Rodriguez and Kevin Herrera
- The Avid Technology Editing Award presented to Ingvar Denis
- The Marie Nesbitt Promise Prize presented to Ingvar Denis
- The Sol Negrin Memorial Award presented to Keith Burrus
- The Nancy Littlefield Memorial Award presented to Emmett Ferrer

- The Milos Forman Memorial Award presented to Johenfy Duran

Then came the grand finale: the naming of the winners of the 2019 Eastman Kodak Student Filmmaker Awards.

Coming in fourth was Joseline Calixto, director of *Abused*, a portrait of a mother and child surviving domestic abuse.

The third-place winner of the evening was Emmett Ferrer, director of *My Brother’s Girlfriend*, an exploration of a young girl coming to accept her sexuality.

In second place was *Lost One*, director Josh Badillo’s cautionary tale of racial profiling.

And finally, Dr. Debra A. Gonsher, chair of BCC’s Department of Communications Arts and Science and Emmy award-winning documentarian, presented the first-place prize to Johenfy Duran, whose film *Check* depicted a life-or-death chess match between a supernatural being and its unsuspecting human prey.

The film program’s director, Professor Jeffrey Wisotsky, began the festival 26 years ago at a café off Times Square where the big screen was a bed sheet. “It’s the best night of the year,” said Dr. Wisotsky. “The students get networking opportunities, jobs, money and most important, they see their work come to fruition.”

The reception that followed was made possible by Arthur Avenue Caterers. Like the filmmakers, it was straight out of the Bronx.





# AUTO GIANT NISSAN JOINS THE BCC FAMILY

A major collaboration between the Automotive Technology program of Bronx Community College and automaker Nissan-USA was launched on September 13, 2018 as representatives from Nissan and local Nissan-Infiniti dealerships joined with BCC faculty and administrators to announce the coming of the Nissan/Infiniti Technician Training Academy Program to the campus. The partnership included the contribution of four late model cars on which students will master the skills of today's computer-savvy automotive technician, training for Auto Tech faculty in the latest developments in the field and internships at service centers across the city that can lead to well-paying careers with Nissan/Infiniti.

Welcoming BCC's new partners was President Thomas A. Isekenegbe. "Thank you so much for supporting this program," said Dr. Isekenegbe. "This partnership will enable us to train the next generation of auto technicians."

Nissan senior manager Michelle Johnson told the attendees she was excited by "partnering the students

with a dealership so that they actually get hands-on, real-world experience."

Other advantages of the program: online courses that prepare students for working at Nissan and tuition reimbursement if they are ultimately hired by the company.

The director of BCC's Automotive Technology Program, Clement Drummond, praised the undertaking. "This is going to allow us to expand our internships. The students will be working with a mentor and they'll be paid!"

Since its launch, the BCC/Nissan partnership has lived up to its promise. Auto Tech Lecturer Vincente Moreno notes that "We have 22 students registered in the Nissan Academy and we are recruiting even more students into the program. Five students are currently interning at Nissan Dealerships, four others have moved on to other endeavors and we're working on expanding our contacts with more Nissan and Infiniti dealerships to increase the internship positions for our students."



# BCC BASEBALL BRONCOS WIN THE CUNY CHAMPIONSHIP!

On a cold, rainy night in May at MCU Park in Brooklyn, BCC's own Broncos baseball team defeated Kingsborough 9 to 7. It was a victory that clinched the 2019 City University of New York Athletic Conference baseball championship.

Many students contributed standout performances, including freshman Adrian Urena, who was named the game's Most Valuable Player. He collected a double, two singles, three RBIs, two stolen bases, and two runs scored. Sophomore Quincy Williams added a pair of singles and drove in a run, and Neudy Salvador singled twice and stole a base.

On the mound, Victor Pena picked up the win over 3.1 innings, allowing just one earned run and four hits. Fellow freshman Esteban De Los Santos earned the save with an incredible performance of 3.1 scoreless innings in which he allowed no hits.

But to Coach Adolfo de Jesus, every one of the team's student-athletes was a champion.

"We started the journey preparing for this year back in August. I noticed the kids were hungry and willing to work hard. They never missed a practice, rain or shine, cold, hot. I knew I was going to have a special team."

For BCC, it was the first title since 2015 and 11th of all time.

Those winning ways continued in Fall 2019, as Bronco women's volleyball player Nayely Rodriguez was named CUNYAC Rookie of the Year.



## FUTURE COLLEGE STUDENTS EXPLORE THEIR FUTURE

Five years from now, they may be students at Bronx Community College.

In June of 2019, they were the middle-schoolers from around the city who came to the BCC campus for the athletic Sports Day and the festive 2019 Summer Finale and Awards Presentation of the College's CUNY Explorers program.

The New York City Department of Education and The City University of New York partnered to create the Explorers program, which ensures that every middle school student has the opportunity to visit a college. The BCC incarnation of the initiative has been extraordinarily popular. Over the past year, 12,486 Explorers have come to the campus. They had an opportunity to tour the campus, meet faculty members, current BCC students and recent graduates and get hands-on experience in fields as varied as biology, chemistry, radiology, nursing, television production and automotive technology.



They returned at the end of the school year for two days of sheer celebration. Sports Day, on June 7, drew 645 kids from 16 schools to a celebration of athletic skill and friendly competition. They played against other schools, on the basketball court and the track, and earned trophies and medals.

A week later came the Summer Finale, where 586 students enjoyed an exuberant dance competition, received awards and heard speakers encouraging them one last time to think of themselves as college material. Emceed by BCC's Assistant Vice President of Communications and Marketing Richard Ginsberg, the event was mounted with the assistance of the Liberty Partnership Program, which provides academic and cultural enrichment for middle and high school students.

Opening remarks were delivered by BCC Associate Dean of Academic Success Simone Rodriguez-

Dorestant. "The number of schools participating is growing every year, due in part to the unique experience students have during our Explorers Program at BCC," she says. "All of this is possible with the facilitation of our Program Coordinator, Andre Christie."

Mr. Christie was pleased as well, observing "It was exciting just having the students who represented different schools within the boroughs come together on this special occasion." The Jamaican-born Christie is a BCC graduate who received his bachelor's in Applied Psychology at New York University.

BCC's CUNY Explorers program celebrated itself in September at the Second Annual Staff and Faculty Appreciation Ceremony and Luncheon. The honorees were from departments across the campus, all of whom played their part in the symphony of CUNY Explorers,



# Aristides CABRAL

## A STUDENT AND THE CITY

**A**ristides Cabral is a Bronx Community College twofer. As a student, he will be graduating in May 2020 and moving on to get his B.A. in psychology at City College of New York. As an employee, he works as a college assistant with the Men's Empowerment Network (M.E.N.), BCC's iteration of The City University of New York's Black Male Initiative. In that position, he has become a familiar face across the city.

"I've been to 22 campuses in CUNY. We just came from a leadership conference in Manhattan at Baruch College. One of the most beautiful experiences we had was when we went to a BMI conference at New York City College of Technology. We had a retreat in Queens College. In one semester, we were invited to four colleges in a month: John Jay, City College, Hunter and Medgar Evers. When you're part of BMI, you get to go to a lot of places."

M.E.N. events focus on developing leadership skills and addressing obstacles to success in college. "I often hear 'I'm not able to do this because I'm working two jobs, because of problems in my family.' We have a day when we do workshops and talk about the barriers to study like anxiety, depression, mental health in general. One workshop is called Real Talk. It's an open mic for any issue the students like, how to deal with the loss of someone you love."

Tutoring and mentorship are major components of the M.E.N. program. "The bond between a student

and another student is often better than the bond between the student and the staff. I tell the students 'Our goal is to help you graduate.'"

Despite being called the Male Empowerment Network, it is open to all, and most who attend its events are women. "Males have a little more trouble staying committed to college than females. Men are also perhaps less comfortable with introspection. I'm taking a psychology class right now and there are only three guys in it."

Born in the Dominican Republic, Cabral is the first of his nine siblings to go to college. "I identify with my students. I was very shy. I didn't know English properly. I never thought I was good enough to be a student. Now, I work here, they pay me to do what I love, and I am making a difference."

"The bond between a student and another student is often better than the bond between the student and the staff. I tell the students 'Our goal is to help you graduate.'"





# *The Nation*

Through conferences, internships, research and the national attention that events on our campus often attract, the Bronx Community College community extends its reach to every corner of the great experiment called America.



# COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXCELLENCE AND THE DREAM

On Friday, February 22, educators from BCC and other community colleges in The City University of New York came to our campus for the sixth annual Conference on Community College Excellence. The day of presentations and panels was an opportunity for the attendees to learn, listen, discuss and network with their colleagues, while considering the conference theme of “Reflecting on the Promise.”

The keynote address was given by Dr. Tiffany Jones, director of the higher education policy team at The Education Trust, where she promotes legislation to improve access, affordability and success for low-income students and students of color.

Dr. Jones spoke of the challenges of establishing free community college for all, the goal of the Obama Administration’s 2016 “America’s Promise” grants initiative, which also inspired this year’s conference theme.

“Community colleges obviously have immense value in the system of higher education for students and families like my own,” Dr. Jones observed after her address. “When we are designing policies using phrases like ‘college promise,’ we have to make good on that.”

Following the speeches came 19 different sessions on topics ranging from “Using Game-Based Learning to Promote Active Learning among Community College Students” to “Engaging Adult Online Learners” to “Bringing Accelerated Learning Programs to High School Students,” with breakfast, lunch and a concluding reception for all the participants to exchange their thoughts on the daylong brainstorming and take what they learned back to their classrooms.



# COOKE SCHOLARSHIP WINNER SHINES BRIGHT

In May of 2019, Bronx Community College graduate Bright Tsagli was named one of only 61 students nationwide to win a Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, an award that is as competitive as it is remunerative. Recipients receive up to \$40,000 per year to help cover the cost of educational expenses such as tuition, living expenses, books and required fees as they complete their bachelor’s degree. Additionally, Cooke Scholars are eligible to apply for graduate school funding of up to \$75,000.

Ghanaian-born Bright was a very active member of BCC’s Class of 2017. He was executive treasurer of the Student Government Association from 2016–17, Vice Chairperson of BCC Inc, a mentor with the Black Male Initiative, a supplementary instruction leader and a math tutor. The engineering science major was also part of a CUNY Scholars Research program. Additionally, he played for BCC’s soccer team and was named a 2016 CUNY Scholar-Athlete.

The last BCC student to win a Cooke Scholarship was Kojo Wallace in 2008. Today he is Dr. Wallace, a resident surgeon at Mount Sinai Hospital.

“I’m forever grateful to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation for giving me this opportunity! To the staff at Kaplan Educational Foundation and Bronx Community College, this journey wouldn’t be possible without your endless support!”



## BCC'S MLT PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

In a major milestone, the BCC Medical Lab Technician (MLT) Associate in Applied Science program has received an initial five-year accreditation from the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS).

NAACLS accreditation is not only a valuable endorsement of the quality of our program, it is also of great practical importance to our MLT students. For example, it makes graduates eligible for the

certification required for employment as a medical lab technician in some states outside New York.

This accreditation was the result of the efforts of many over a long period of time. In particular, it is due to the exceptional leadership of the program director, Prof. Diane Price-Banks, and the program faculty, Prof. Allan Gilman and Dr. Latchman Somenarain.

The BCC name is a nationally recognized guarantee of quality education.

## HISPANIC CONFERENCE INCLUDES A BCC CONTINGENT

Some 40 BCC students attended the Spring 2019 conference of SOMOS, Inc. a nonprofit organization committed to addressing the needs of the Hispanic population of New York State. From March 8 to 10 in Albany, SOMOS brought together legislators, scholars, business and labor leaders and students from colleges and universities across the state to address the issues facing the Latinx community.

"SOMOS this year was very interesting and the students were able to get a lot out of it," said BCC's Student Government Association President Carolina

Valenzuela, who was one of ten SGA officers at the conference. The events included workshops and seminars; a CUNY/SUNY luncheon with New York City Council Member Vanessa Gibson and several CUNY trustees; a model senate session that debated the legalization of recreational marijuana use; and another luncheon with New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, which included Council Member Fernando Cabrera. The leaders of today thus inspired and encouraged the leaders of tomorrow.



## A YOUNG POLITICAL LEADER'S WORDS OF INSPIRATION

"You have the opportunity to capitalize on everything that life presents to you, but it's up to you and the mindset you have and the actions that follow."

That was the message brought to Bronx Community College campus on Thursday, October 11 by Jevin Hodge, Arizona Democratic Party Vice Chairman. Mr. Hodge was the guest speaker at the ASAP Men's Roundtable, a pre-midterms academic pep rally for all students in BCC's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). "This event is meant for you guys," said ASAP student Ian Astacio to 150 of his classmates. "To reassure you, re-motivate you and re-energize you for the rest of the semester, for life and for any future goals you may have."

Co-hosted by the Male Empowerment Network (MEN), the afternoon included comments by Nathaniel Smith, coordinator of the Roundtable, Nadine Browne of

BCC's ASAP and Junior Cabral from MEN, songs by student Santana Sankofa, lunch and even a raffle of pens, MetroCard holders, key chains and other ASAP swag.

But the main event was Mr. Hodge, who travels the country as a national engagement consultant, particularly for millennials. At 24, he is the youngest African-American state-level Democratic party official in the country. His words and stories and vision were enthusiastically applauded by the audience.

"Education is the route to building a foundation that our society can stand on," Mr. Hodge declared, an idea embodied by the dedicated students who heard his message.

# Quiana BERRY

## A STUDENT AND THE NATION

When Quiana Berry graduates from Bronx Community college in 2020, she will move on to Lehman College prepared by both what she learned at BCC and what she has been taught by her many journeys across the globe. "Travel is something that is important to me and a part of who I am. I always think about how I can research an issue that applies to everyone."

The biology major did a summer internship in 2018 at the University of Oklahoma, where she spent ten weeks studying the effects of climate change on the tic population. Quiana also engaged in the personal research that is a part of all her journeys, experiencing the local culture and environment. "I met a lot of native Americans in the area and visited cultural sites. At a national park, I saw bison for the first time."

That winter she presented the results of her research at the American Geophysical Union conference in Washington D.C. "I met people from all walks of life. I gravitated towards the women, who had stories like mine about overcoming adversity. Many people were impressed that I was doing all these things coming from a community college."

A major milestone in her learning was the year Quiana spent in Puerto Rico, living with a local family. She took classes at the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón in San Juan, but the most memorable lessons took place out of class. "I had a biology lab where we went into El Yunque Forest. The professor showed us different plant species, like the Venus Fly Trap, that were sensitive to touch. Kayaking through mangroves, I saw bioluminescence when I scooped up the water

and saw glowing plankton. That was a really magical experience."

In addition to exploring the United States, Quiana has backpacked through Europe, Asia and North Africa. This past summer, she was in Brazil, where she took samba dancing classes and also met the president of an impoverished favela. "I want to mix my travel with working with underrepresented communities in different parts of the world."

At Lehman, she will pursue an interdisciplinary degree in biology, chemistry and anthropology. "I definitely want to stay in the STEM field, especially being a woman of color," says the East Harlem native of Peruvian and African-American ancestry.

And where does she want to travel next? Quiana Berry smiles broadly.

"Everywhere!"

"I want to mix my travel with working with under-represented communities in different parts of the world."





# *The World*

And finally, there is the greatest of all communities: the world. It encompasses every human being in every country, separated by natural and artificial borders, but joined by a common destiny and a shared vision. It is the Bronx Community College vision writ large and BCC prepares its students to play their part in it.

# Ahmed REID

## A BCC PROFESSOR AT THE UN

With students from over 100 countries who speak 53 different languages, Bronx Community College can often seem like a miniature United Nations. And as it happens, for the past three years, a BCC professor has been working for the actual United Nations. Dr. Ahmed Reid of the Department of History is one of the five members of the UN's Human Rights Council's Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent.

"I sit as the representative for Latin America and the Caribbean," says the Jamaican-born scholar who first came to BCC in 2011. "We are tasked to study the problems of racial discrimination faced by people of African descent. Then we submit our report to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.

"We have two sessions per year in Geneva. There's a public session when we flesh out thematic issues. This past spring, for instance, we looked at racial justice and the emerging use of algorithms. If a data scientist approaches his or her job with preconceived biases about people of African descent, then whatever goes into the algorithms feeds those biases."

The other meeting is private and determines what the Working Group will consider in the future. "We also discuss what countries we'd like to visit."

Those semi-annual visits are the other great responsibility of the Working Group. Professor Reid and his colleagues have traveled to Belgium, Argentina, Spain, Germany and Canada with the purpose of examining the state of people of African descent in those parts of the world.

"On these trips, we engage with members of the government, the judiciary, law enforcement, statistical bureaus, prisons, civil society groups. Our report on Belgium was in the news — the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, BBC and other major news outlets."

As the current chair/rapporteur, Professor Reid is often the face of the Working Group. In that capacity, he has spoken before the UN Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and conferences around the world.

"I try to be BCC's ambassador on the global stage. And every new class of students I involve in my UN work. Many of them come from backgrounds like mine, a single-parent home in Jamaica, the first one in my family to enter a university. I think it is good for them to see me and potentially see themselves through me.

"I am always passionate about students and passionate about BCC."

"I try to be BCC's ambassador on the global stage. And every new class of students I involve in my UN work. Many of them come from backgrounds like mine..."





## AFRICA COMES TO BCC

On September 27, 2018, a group of nine West African delegates to the United Nations Youth Leadership Network visited Bronx Community College at the invitation of President Thomas A. Isekenegbe. The diplomatic guests were participating in the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. President Isekenegbe coordinated the visit with Dr. Djibril Diallo, President and Chief Executive Officer of African Renaissance and Diaspora Network, Inc.

The Youth Leadership Network delegates were from Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, France and Guinea. They spoke to the audience about the importance of the United Nations in today's geopolitical environment. "Africa has an abundance of resources," said M'jid El Guerrab of France. "What we need from the West is technical assistance and investments in our growing infrastructures."

Gene Adams, Director of BCC Collaborative Education and adviser to the BCC African Students Association, told the students "You can begin your journey to international involvement while you are here at BCC by joining student clubs and tackling global issues on campus."

Musa Bugundu of Nigeria, who recently retired from the Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS, started his education in the United States as an international student at a community college. "I believe that BCC's academic programs offer a solid foundation for entering international service," said Bugundu.

The session ended with students' questions and a deeper appreciation of the diversity that shapes the world, including the campus of Bronx Community College.



## UNSUNG HEROES FIND THEIR VOICE

In all of the United States, there has never been a tribute to the American servicemen and servicewomen of Dominican heritage who fought for the freedom of their country and the world during World War II...

...until Friday, November 2, 2018 on the campus of Bronx Community College, where the ribbon was cut on the nation's first World War II Dominican Veterans Monument. Under a canopy of clouds, leaders from the Bronx and the Dominican Republic hailed the new addition to the New York City landscape and the 351 heroes whose names are carved into its façade.

Following performances of the national anthems of the United States and the Dominican Republic, the event opened with remarks from BCC President Thomas A. Isekenegbe, who noted "our location in University Heights, home to many in New York City's thriving Dominican community."

Also on hand was New York City Council Member Fernando Cabrera. Through his efforts, BCC was awarded \$400,000 to erect the structure in front of Nichols Hall on the main campus walk. "More than 300 Dominican men and women risked and sacrificed their lives for the United States during World War II," observed Council Member Cabrera. "These soldiers have been largely left out of U.S. history and I believed their rightful and public recognition was long past due."

Following the dedication, guests were serenaded by a Bachata band and enjoyed Dominican delicacies and fond memories of those whose names are now immortalized in marble.



## A HELPING HAND FOR STUDENTS OVER HERE

Every class at Bronx Community College includes some 50 students from overseas who attend BCC on student visas. Their special needs are the concern of International Student Services in the Registrar's Office.

Twenty-year BCC veteran Esteban Rodriguez is in charge of this essential outreach.

"International students contact us initially by phone or email and say 'I'm in Bangladesh, I want to go to school in New York City.' We give them the information about how to apply to CUNY and BCC, helping them from the very beginning."

The majority of international students at BCC are from the Caribbean and West Africa, with others coming from South Korea, Bangladesh, Japan, Canada and South America. All of them face challenges unique

to their status. For instance, they cannot drop classes because attending BCC full time is one of the conditions of their visa. They are also not eligible for financial aid.

"When they graduate, they have three options," Rodriguez explains. "They can go back home with their degree, they can transfer to another school to continue their education and pursue a bachelor's degree or they can take a break from school and apply for employment authorization for one year to work in something related to the major they just completed. We help them with all that."

The most rewarding part of his job, according to Rodriguez, is "the interaction with the students. We try to be the best for what they need."

## THE BCC PODCAST: A GLOBAL VOICE FOR THE COLLEGE

In the fall of 2019, BCC joined the worldwide community of podcasters with the launch of The View from University Heights: The People, Programs and Experiences of Bronx Community College.

The premiere episode featured Bronx Community College President Thomas A. Isekenegbe speaking about his plans and vision for BCC and the life journey that brought him here. Other episodes include:

- Dr. Neal Phillip, the globe-trotting Chemistry department chairperson, with a student who has participated in his study abroad science expeditions.
- Professor Jeff Wisotsky, director of the Media and Digital Film Production program, accompanied by a winner of BCC's acclaimed student film festival.
- Professor Diane P. Banks discussing the College's popular Medical Laboratory Technician program and its remarkable record of job placement.

• Elizabeth Payamps and two student-mentors from Future Now, the BCC program that has transformed the lives of thousands of students whose high school educations were derailed.

• Andre Christie, Program Coordinator of BCC's CUNY College Explorers program, and a mentor talking about the innovative program that introduces middle school students to the possibilities of higher education.

Future editions of The View from University Heights will feature further conversations with students, faculty, alumni, donors and friends of the College. Profiles of BCC departments and inspiring student success stories will also be a part of the intriguing mix.

These podcasts will widen the reach of BCC, highlight important events and information and give listeners across the world a glimpse of the life and offerings available at the College.



## BCC'S INDIA CONNECTION

India's New York City Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty, Bronx Community College President Thomas A. Isekenegbe and BCC faculty and staff inaugurated a new "India Books Corner" on Tuesday, October 22 in North Hall and Library.

The addition of 51 books on Indian history, politics, culture and related topics expands the Library's collection and reflects the more global perspective the College hopes to encourage. The gift will benefit students in courses and degree programs that touch on the topic of India and its place in the world.

"This is a seed for developing an interest in India for BCC students," said Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty shortly after the ribbon cutting for the India Books Corner on the Library's third floor. "We have developed this wonderful relationship with BCC.

We have done a study abroad program for BCC and other CUNY students in India and are trying to start a faculty exchange. We are also inviting your college to more events at the Consulate."

Addressing the attendees in the Thurgood Marshall Law Library Collection, President Isekenegbe noted "India has been a part of this community for a long time. We have a lot of faculty with an Indian background — in the Chemistry department, approximately 25% of the faculty were born in India."

Consul General Chakravorty predicted "This is not a one-off event. We will continue doing things together, so that the students of BCC can take more interest in what is happening in India."



## FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO THE WHITE HOUSE TO THE WORLD

During the 2019 Bronx Community College Foundation Gala dinner, a moment was taken to raise support for an exciting new opportunity: the Interns Equity Fund, which provides stipends for BCC students in internships with small businesses or non-profit organizations. Being an intern can be a profoundly life-changing experience. It was for Deesha Dyer, who interned with the Obama administration and became the White House Social Secretary. She was interviewed at the Gala by Michael Robinson, Vice Chair of the BCC Foundation.

"I am a community college graduate," Dyer told the audience. "At 27, no college would accept me but the Community College of Philadelphia." But Deesha discovered that a community college can be a doorway to anywhere. "I applied for a White House internship and became an intern for Barack and Michelle Obama with only six credits to my name!"

That led to Dyer's paid position in the Obama administration. While at the White House, she completed her associate degree. "It took me a while, but I had a great excuse: I was working for the president."

As White House Social Secretary, Dyer says "I talked to people around the world about community college and how wonderful it was."

At the Gala, Dyer extolled the benefits of internships to those who provide them. "You want new people in your organization to keep it fresh, new and hip. Student interns bring that fresh perspective."

Her message had the desired effect, opening wallets for the Interns Equity Fund and future BCC interns.

# Grissel DE JESUS

## A STUDENT AND THE WORLD

Over the last two years, Grissel de Jesus has travelled to three continents after knowing no more of the world than the Dominican Republic, where she was born, and the Bronx, her home since 2015. Her magic carpet was the study abroad programs led by Dr. Neal Phillip, Chair of BCC's Department of Chemistry, Earth Sciences and Environmental Sciences. Dr. Phillip has taken students across the world on trips where they conduct genuine science and some person-to-person diplomacy.

In the summer of 2018, Grissel went to the Spanish island of Majorca for two weeks, one of nine students from BCC and other CUNY colleges. The trip reflected the focus of all Dr. Phillip's expeditions: the environment, climate change and sustainability.

"We set up a weather station and used portable backpack weather stations to test the air around the island. We also tested the acidity of the water. Majorca is a place where tourists just throw their trash, so the water is becoming more acidic for some species of fish."

Grissel remembers with particular fondness snorkeling in the ocean, surrounded by herds of seahorses.

"When I came back after two weeks, I was like 'Whoa, there's a world out there and I can go there and leave my footprint.'"

That November, she went with Dr. Phillip and another BCC student to Australia to Global Eco Conference 2018. Again, a weather station was set up and the

students showed the locals how it was done.

"We spoke at the conference about what we did in Majorca. I was thinking 'This is crazy. How do you go from a little girl in the Dominican Republic to representing your college in Australia?'"

In the summer of 2019 came Grissel's greatest adventure: India.

"We stayed at an eco-village over there. We did reforestation. In Mumbai, we helped elderly people whose family members had left India so they were all alone. Everyone was crying when we left." Similarly moving was a day at an orphanage. "We gave the children toys, served food and played with them. They gave us bracelets. I still have mine."

Grissel graduated from BCC later that year and is now majoring in biochemistry at City College of New York with plans to become a doctor.

"There was a lot of poverty in India. If I can do medicine and go there and help people, that would be amazing."

"This is crazy.  
How do you go  
from a little girl  
in the Dominican  
Republic to  
representing  
your college in  
Australia?"





# THE BCC FOUNDATION



# Yokasta SEGURA-BAEZ

## AT THE BCC FOUNDATION, A ROLE MODEL FOR BCC

“I was born and raised in the Dominican Republic,” says Bronx Community College Foundation Board Director Yokasta Segura-Baez. “I wanted to be a diplomat,” she recalls, which certainly would have been an option for someone who speaks three languages. “But when I moved to the U.S. when I married, I discovered private equity and I never looked back. That’s what I’ve been doing for close to 15 years, almost six with Ardian, seven at Pantheon, and now I’ve been at Campbell Lutyens for nearly two.”

It was at Pantheon that she met Dr. Eddy Bayardelle, the president of the Bronx Community College Foundation, who approached her with the idea of joining the Foundation’s board. “Their mission aligned with what I wanted to do,” notes Segura-Baez. “I’ve always wanted to be involved with organizations that further knowledge and education.”

Bronx Community College also promotes a value that has been a central concern of Segura-Baez’s career.

“I joined an industry that has traditionally been very white male dominated for a very long time and still is today. Few women like me exist in this industry. That makes me proud, but at the same time it makes me sad. It’s my objective to break that pattern and incentivize more minority men and women to be a part of the financial services industry.

“In this industry, the ultimate beneficiaries are quite diverse. The main objective of private equity investing is to maximize returns for its beneficiaries. We are often investing capital on behalf of pension plans both private and public, endowments, foundations and family offices. You want to have that sort of representation among those who are sitting at the table making the decisions.

“I became part of the Bronx Community College Foundation because I wanted to have an impact. A young woman of color sees me and says, ‘Well, look at this woman, she came from the Dominican Republic,

she’s an immigrant and she has made it on Wall Street.’ I can be that role model.

“BCC serves a community that needs it so much. At BCC, you can have a second chance, no matter your age, your race, where you came from. You can achieve something here.”

Segura-Baez has played a part in organizing every Gala fundraiser since she joined the Board. “Everybody at the Foundation is so committed, so invested in making this one of the top colleges in the country. We’re all busy people, but we find time to make it happen.”

“I became part of the Bronx Community College Foundation because I wanted to have an impact. A young woman of color sees me and says, ‘Well, look at this woman, she came from the Dominican Republic, she’s an immigrant and she has made it on Wall Street.’”



# THE GIFT OF GIVING

One of the most generous donations to the Bronx Community College Foundation in 2019 came from a familiar face on our campus: Kathy Lonergan, a math teacher in BCC’s CUNY Start/Math Start program.

“Our family is giving this gift to honor my late husband, Dr. Edmund O. Rothschild,” she explains. “This is where he went to college when it was New York University. One day when we were courting, he brought me here to show me the campus and the Hall of Fame. He was so proud of it. He had a feeling for this place and the people. We wanted to leave something of him here.

“In his medical practice and in his personal life, he devoted himself to supporting other people, especially people who thought they were out of options. To continue his work, as I told the Foundation, we want this donation to generate an annual scholarship for an undocumented student who would not otherwise

qualify for financial aid. And if the day comes where there is no such need for those students, then for other students who have met all the requirements and jumped through all the hoops but still don’t qualify for financial aid.

“I’m really impressed with BCC students. They’re hard working, very motivated, trying to advance themselves. They are role models for their children and other family members. They use their time here to do some deep thinking about the direction they want their lives to go in and how to take control of that direction.”

That challenge will now be made easier by the generosity of Kathy Lonergan’s family and other donors who share BCC’s passionate commitment to education for all.

# BCC LOSES A FRIEND



Aleksandr Kraytser, Bronx Community College Foundation Board member and friend and colleague to many in the BCC community, died in May. His wife, BCC Professor Anna Kaplan, was by his side.

Born in Ukraine, Kraytser rose to vice president of Global Head Life Cycle and Established Medicines at Novartis Oncology, Novartis Pharmaceutical Company. He also previously held executive level positions at Novartis and other pharmaceutical firms, including Sandoz. An MBA from Wharton, Mr. Kraytser had ties to The City University of New York before he came to BCC, having earned a master’s in Civil/Environmental Engineering from City College of New York. He was deeply devoted to CUNY and its students, and though he kept a hectic schedule travelling around the world, he found the time to be an active member of the BCC Foundation Board.

“Aleks was a problem solver,” recalls Dr. Neal Phillip, chairperson of the Department of Chemistry, Earth Sciences and Environmental Sciences. “When I asked him, ‘Aleks, I want you to chair the advisory board of our Environmental Technology program,’ he did it. He led the board of our Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology program as well. He was a keynote speaker at our 2017 BCC Graduation Council Retreat, where he tried to figure out how to increase graduation rates. He looked at it from a business point of view.”

Professor Kaplan summed up her husband as “professionally, very sharp. But a super kind person. Somehow, he managed to combine both. He was extremely proud to be on the BCC Foundation’s Board of Directors. On his very last birthday, he asked me to go to the BCC shop before it closed and buy him BCC t-shirts and shorts. He paraded around in them. After all he had achieved, he thought that was the greatest thing.”



# NYU JOINS BCC TO RESCUE A CAMPUS ICON

The ongoing effort to restore BCC’s elegant but aging Gould Memorial Library has already led to a restoration of a different sort: the renewal of the ties between the College and New York University, which called our campus home from the turn of the last century when Gould Memorial Library was dedicated to 1973 when BCC moved in.

As work to restore Gould Memorial Library continues, a question loomed: what to do with the space when the work is complete?

BCC and the Save Gould Memorial Library Advisory Board turned for assistance in this quest to New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and its Capstone program, which brings together teams of graduate students to address complex challenges and identify new opportunities for governmental, urban planning and international agencies.

A team of five graduate students pursuing master’s degrees in land use and economic development spent the 2018-19 academic year on the BCC campus. Supported by the BCC Foundation, the students interviewed historians, preservationists and other key figures from the College and the community to gather ideas for GML’s future role. This culminated in a daylong symposium on the subject (see page 28).

Based on all the information gathered by the Capstone group, a 62-page final report identified four top potential uses for GML: a Center for Social Justice, which would concentrate on education, advocacy and civic engagement, both internally and externally; a Center for Arts and Culture that embraces the rich history of those values within BCC and the larger community; a Center for Community College Teaching and Learning to leverage pedagogy, research and collaboration and enhance the skills and knowledge offered at BCC and other community colleges; and a Business Incubator that would connect small businesses in the real world to academia while fostering economic development.

“The Capstone project was a wonderful research endeavor because it brought a lot of additional information to our thinking and allowed for a focused target for adaptive reuse of the building,” says Save GML Advisory Board co-chair Sherida Paulson. Co-chair Samuel White, architect and great-grandson of GML designer Stanford White, added “It also provided a structure for evaluating and testing any future suggestions for how to reuse Gould.”

Thanks to the Capstone students, a BCC landmark has taken a major step to a new role on campus.



## BCC FOUNDATION 2019 SCHOLARSHIP GALA: AN ELEGANT AFFAIR

On June 4, the 2019 Bronx Community College Foundation Scholarship Gala began on the outdoor patio of the Tribeca Rooftop with cocktails and a spectacular view of midtown Manhattan at sunset. By the time it ended in the dining room downstairs, the evening had generously added to the coffers for student scholarships and grants.

The formal program was kicked off by BCC Foundation Chair Olga Luz Tirado, who introduced BCC President, Thomas A. Isekenegbe to the 250 guests. “At BCC, we are mission-driven to serve our students from diverse backgrounds by providing them with an education that is broad in scope and rigorous in its standards,” President Isekenegbe proclaimed.

President Isekenegbe was followed by Michelle Johnson, a senior manager of Nissan North America, one of the evening’s co-chairs and sponsors. Ms. Johnson discussed the partnership of BCC’s



Automotive Technology program with the Nissan/Infiniti Technician Training Academy program (see page 44).

A particularly stirring moment in the evening was the address by the BCC Class of 2019 Salutatorian Joanmaris Cuello, who first came to BCC when her mother took classes while pregnant with the future Salutatorian, only stopping her studies to take care of her new baby, who was born with physical disabilities. “Being a student at BCC changed me from the person I used to be,” Ms. Cuello recalled. “I became more willing to show people as well as myself that I have what it takes to make it out there.”

The four “Hall of Fame” honorees of the evening also had their time at the podium: Arthur Antin, Founder and Former Chief Financial Officer of the pet health care company VCA and a BCC Distinguished Alumnus; BronxCare Health System, a BCC training

and education partner for over 50 years, represented that night by Rita DiMartino, Chair of the BronxCare Board of Directors; Joseph Kelleher, President of Simone Group and Chairman of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce, a BCC corporate partner and chair of the College’s annual Run the Bronx footrace; and Morris Heights Health Center, a BCC community health partner, represented by Mari G. Millet, the President and CEO.

The outgoing president of BCC’s Student Government Association, Carolina Valenzuela, told the Gala, “Each one of my fellow students is indeed unique. But we all have one thing in common. We had a compelling and wondrous journey at BCC.”

The Gala helped make future journeys possible.



## BCC'S DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI HONORED

Students at Bronx Community College are often told that from BCC they can go anywhere. There was no better proof of that in 2019 than those who are winners of the Distinguished Alumni Awards, the highest honor BCC bestows on a graduate, which “celebrates individuals who have maintained the BCC traditions of discovery, achievement and excellence through their personal accomplishments, professional achievements or humanitarian service.”

Three new honorees were inducted at the second annual Distinguished Alumni Induction Ceremony held on Thursday, October 10, in the Thurgood Marshall Law Collection of North Hall and Library. This year’s award winners were:

**ARTHUR ANTIN** received his AA from Bronx Community College in 1967. He is the co-founder of VCA, Inc., the largest family of animal care providers nationwide which was recently purchased by Mars, Co. Since its establishment in 1986, VCA has expanded its operations to include 807 hospitals in 46 U.S. states and five Canadian provinces. “I am humbled to be here,” he said before receiving his award. “Humbled to be in an institution that without it being here and accepting me I would not be what I am today. Like many Distinguished Alumni, Antin has given back to his alma mater, from addressing its students as part of the Alumni Trailblazers Lecture Series to providing scholarship and resource support to BCC students.

**VICKY PRYOR** attended BCC the very first year it moved to its University Heights home. She is now



Managing Principal of Change Create Transform LLC, which helps businesses, organizations and individuals succeed and grow. With senior leadership experience in health care, insurance and finance, she was twice named by *Crain’s New York Business* as one of the 50 Most Powerful Women in New York and by *Black Enterprise* magazine as one of the 75 Most Powerful African American Women in Business. “I am deeply honored to get this award from Bronx Community College,” she said as the evening began. “Just coming back here brought back my memories of being a student here and how life changing it was for me.” Ms. Pryor has been a featured speaker of BCC’s Womxn Up! and Lunch with Leaders lecture. Every year, Ms. Pryor and her foundation provide support and leadership training to two promising students through her Marie Nesbitt Promise Prize, named for her grandmother.

**BALMATEE BIDASSIE** has been both a BCC student (Class of '90) and an instructor in the Electrical Technology Program from 1995 to 1999. Today, Bidassie is President/CEO of Data Analytics & Process Improvement Consulting and Master Faculty



Specialist in the College of Engineering at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. Over the past 30 years, Dr. Bidassie worked as a data scientist in computer science, electrical engineering, industrial engineering, information technology, manufacturing, statistics, research, safety, healthcare, project management and operations. After receiving her award, Dr. Bidassie said, “I felt like someone had given me a baton to do great things for BCC. The mission and the journey has just started.” Earlier that same day, she delivered a Trailblazers Series speech that was part autobiography, part inspirational message that included her father’s advice “An obstacle is what you see when you take your eye off your goals.”

Each distinguished alum was introduced by a BCC student and made a few brief remarks before receiving a medal on a ribbon with the school colors as a framed photograph and an account of their accomplishments was unveiled to the applause. Those tributes now adorn a wall on the first floor of North Hall and Library, where they will be joined by other Distinguished Alumni in years to come.



# OUR DONORS

The Bronx Community College Foundation is the recipient of numerous acts of generosity throughout the year. Contributions of every size, given by individuals and organizations, assist in providing scholarships, program funding and a broad range of student resources that ensure access to education for those who need it most. We are thankful for every gift we receive and are reliant on new and renewed support.

The donors listed below provided leadership level gifts between July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019.

## \$250,000 +

Robin Hood Foundation

## \$100,000 - \$249,999

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## \$50,000 - \$99,999

The Achelis and Bodman Foundation  
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Vikki L. Pryor  
Joseph M. Ramos  
Tamar Y. Rothenberg  
Monica Somocurcio  
Mark N. Stein  
Anthony Weaver

## \$250 - \$499

Grisel Y. Acosta  
Eugene Adams  
Katherine Arnoldi  
John P. Athanasourelis  
Ellen M. Balleisen

Lorenzo Barcelo  
Roni Ben-Nun  
Howard Clampman  
Marta Clark  
Melissa Coss  
Stephen Duncan  
Kay Ellis  
Emeric Productions, LLC  
Susan Fiore  
Alán Fuentes  
Bernard J. Gantt  
Dexter Gibbs  
GNR Building Services  
Luisa Guzman  
Randolph B. Hunt  
Edward Jackson  
Jonathan Levinson  
Manny Lopez  
Luisa Martich  
Octavio Melendez  
Mohamed Messaoudene  
Ron Morse  
Jack Needleman  
Andy Nguyen  
Julia Oliva  
Elizabeth Payamps  
Leonard Pilo  
Michael Porcelli  
Laura Rand  
Sharon Raynor  
Edwisimone Rodriguez  
Gloria M. Rodriguez  
Loren Sackett  
George L. Sanchez  
Kaivan M. Shakib  
Venkata Subramanian  
David A. Taylor  
Unique People Services  
Zhe Wang  
Karla Renee Williams  
Michael G. Williams  
Rolly Wiltshire

## \$100 - \$249

Lisa Amowitz  
Brandon Antin  
Chelsea Antin  
Evangelia Antonakos  
Loic Audusseau  
Annecy Baez  
Bubacarr Bah  
Ruth Bass  
James Berliner  
Richard K. Blot  
Laura Broughton  
Robert Bryan  
Katherine Buboue  
Carol V. Burga  
Marilyn A. Burrell  
Wilhelmina Carney  
John P. Caruso  
Carlos A. Cerezo  
Amy Chernoff Elkind  
Lawrence Cohen  
Jonathan Crane  
Mercedes Crespo  
Laurel Cummins  
John W. Davis  
Michael R. Denbo  
Aliou Diop  
Deesha Dyer  
Dylan Elkind  
Mary A. Faison  
Fred Fensterer  
James V. Ferebee  
Corey Fernandes  
Teresa A. Fisher  
Stephen Fix  
Casiano Fontanez  
Candice Francis  
James Gillson  
Richard Ginsberg  
J.E. Roland Gosselin  
Rony Gouraige  
Mark Greenfield

Santiago Grullón  
Monique A. Guishard  
Christina M. Guy  
Michael Hausman  
Thomas Isekenegbe  
Florence Jackson  
Danielle Jean-Marie  
Tonya Johnson-Orr  
Femi Jones  
Elaine Kaufmann  
Roman Kossak  
Herb Landmann  
Erasmo Lara-Pena  
Mehdi Lejmi  
David W. Levers  
Dahlma C. Llanos  
Paul H. Mackenzie  
Donna Mangiante-Naughton  
Alex Margovsky  
Kirssy Martinez  
Marie M. Maxwell  
Carolyn McCrea  
Nichole K. McDaniel  
Arlen McNerney  
Anesta I. McTier  
Panayiotis C. Meleties  
Sibongile Mhlaba  
John R. Morales  
Melanie Mortimer  
Grisselle Nadal

New York Adventure Club, Inc.  
Kate O'Boyle  
Seth Offenbach  
Victor T. Oliva  
Linda Peterson-Royer  
Ivan B. Petrovic  
Marianne Pita  
Stephen Powers  
Maria Psarelli  
Cassandra Ramharrack  
Nancy Raynor  
Timothy Raynor  
Vivian Rice  
Julia T. Richie  
Hector A. Rivera  
Sterling Roberson  
Julia M. Rodas  
Edwin Roman  
Philipp Rothmaler  
Sue Ellen Saad  
Salesforce  
Ann Schaumberger  
Claudia Schrader  
Susan L. Serrano  
Felipe Silvestre  
Therese Soosairaj  
Richard Southwick  
Dennis Stokes  
Paris Svoronos  
Vaso Thomas

Lillian Torres  
Doris Travis  
Gina Ugarte  
Sharon Utakis  
Catherine Velkoff  
Howard M. Wach  
Robert Wechsler  
Robert J. Whelan  
Sara Whitner  
Lou H. Williams  
Peter D. Yom  
Edward C. Zeligson

**Gifts in Kind**  
Amblin Partners  
Avid Technology, Inc.  
B&H Photo Video Pro Audio  
Bronx Terminal Market  
The Coca-Cola Company  
Directors Guild of America  
Eastman Kodak Company  
Island Current  
Just Bagels  
Kenmar Shirts  
Jeffrey Leiter  
Michael Matta  
New York Botanical Garden  
Nissan North America, Inc.  
One Bars  
Panavision  
Royal Waste

“Kindness is the language which  
the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”  
—Mark Twain

# IN MEMORIAM



The Bronx Community College family lost a beloved educator with the death of **DR. VICKI FLARIS** in February. Dr. Flaris joined BCC as a Substitute Assistant Professor before becoming an Assistant Professor in the Chemistry Department in 2004 and eventually a Full Professor. Highly published and presented, Dr. Flaris was a relentless advocate of diversity in the sciences, a cause she embraced as a graduate student in her native Australia when she visited high schools to encourage girls to consider studying STEM. “I believe in mentoring because I believe it’s important to share experiences, to have role models in the industry, to follow in the footsteps of someone who you admire and for students to love the area of research,” she said in 2007. That crusade reached its peak when in Fall 2018, Dr. Flaris became the Primary Investigator on BCC’s \$5 million National Science Foundation Grant for Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (S-STEM), one of the largest awards of its kind ever given to a community college. Through her collaborative efforts, 575 Bronx students pursuing degrees in math and the sciences will have additional support for scholarships, research opportunities, and faculty mentoring before transferring to Lehman College. A speaker of four languages, Dr. Flaris was also actively engaged in campus and community service activities, including serving on the Academic Review Committee. Her passing is a great loss to all of the communities of which she was a part.

In April, **DR. MARCIA JONES** of BCC’s Nursing and Allied Health Sciences department passed away

after a long illness. After working as a staff nurse and teaching student midwives at Columbia University, Dr. Jones taught at BCC for 15 years, specializing in obstetrics. A widely published writer on the topic of women’s health, Dr. Jones shared her knowledge and talent with the world, participating in medical missions to Haiti, St. Vincents, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Africa, sometimes accompanied by BCC students. “She was one of the best, who loved and supported her students,” says her colleague Dr. Virgena Bernard. “She was a giver.”

December of 2018 saw the passing of **DR. ANDREW MCINERNEY**, a mentor, leader, educator and passionate activist at Bronx Community College, The City University of New York and beyond. Dr. McNerney was a member of the CUNY family beginning in 1994 who rose to become the chairperson of BCC’s Department of Mathematics. As a College senator and member of the Senate Committee on Governance and Elections, he pushed for improvements in governance practices and procedures. Dr. McNerney was a thoughtful and outspoken leader within the Professional Staff Congress Union, working tirelessly on behalf of the BCC faculty and staff. He served as a member of the Academic Review Committee, where he reviewed and recommended the reappointment, promotion and tenure of faculty. But above all, Dr. McNerney was dedicated to his students, guiding them on their educational and personal journeys and taking pride in their development as thinkers and mathematicians.

# MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS AND EXPENDITURES

To further develop the College’s ability to better support its students, the following major improvement projects were funded by New York City, New York State and Resolution A funding from the Bronx Borough President and Bronx City Council Members.

## NEW PROJECTS

### Bronx Express -Design \$1,526,526

Bronx Express is a one-stop center for enrollment services that locates all student-facing departments (i.e., Admissions, Financial Aid, Bursar, Registrar) together in the same physical place to improve the quality of service to students and other stakeholders and to improve efficiency for the institution. The center will serve to welcome and offer assistance to current and prospective students with all their admission needs by providing a wide array of services to help explore, prepare and apply.

### Meister Lab renovation Patterson Garage Remodel (for use as an Advanced Transportation Technology Center) \$8,400,000

## COMPLETED

### Colston Hall Emergency Heating Repair Project \$530,000

## Public funding received during FY19

Public Grants	FY19
City	\$1,143,033
State	\$2,766,863
Federal	\$7,071,154
CUNY PSC	\$111,846
Total	\$11,092,896

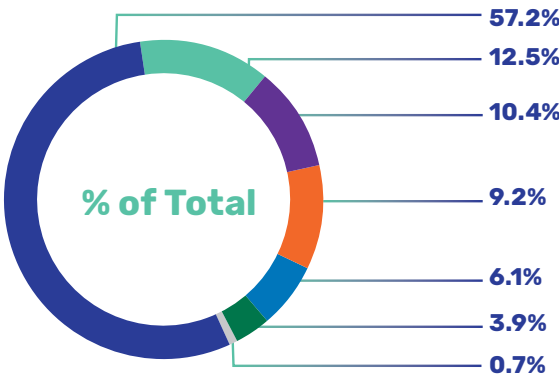
Reso-A-Capital Funding	FY19
City Council	\$ 400,000
Bronx Delegation	\$2,225,000
Borough President	\$750,000
New York State Match	\$3,375,000
Total	\$6,750,000

# Bronx Community College-CUNY Tax Levy Financial Data

For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019

## Expenditures by Major Purpose

	Tax Levy Ledger 2	Tax Levy Ledger 3 Tech Fee	TOTAL
■ Instruction and Department Research	\$55,531,736	\$0	\$55,531,736
■ Academic Support Services	\$3,592,797	\$203,227	\$3,796,024
■ Student Services	\$9,059,982	\$1,071,979	\$10,131,961
■ Maintenance and Operations	\$8,895,594	\$0	\$8,895,594
■ General Administration	\$5,921,782	\$0	\$5,921,782
■ General Institutional Services	\$11,729,415	\$425,000	\$12,154,415
■ College Discovery	\$656,827	\$0	\$656,827
Total Expenditures	\$95,388,133	\$1,700,205	\$97,088,338



# BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## BY THE NUMBERS

9,883

Total Enrollment  
Total full-time enrollment: 6,776



5,655

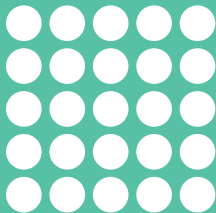
57%



4,228

43%

### Student-Faculty Ratio



• 25 to 1

#### Annual Tuition:

\$2,400 per semester  
full-time New York City /State Residents

\$210 per credit  
New York City/State Residents

#### Students on financial aid:



#### Top Ten Majors:

Liberal Arts and Sciences (AA)	2,930
Criminal Justice (AA)	960
Business Administration (AS)	827
Nursing (AAS)	565
Dietetics and Nutrition Science (AS)	345
Liberal Arts and Sciences (AS)	330
Computer Science (AS)	270
Digital Arts (AAS)	203
Radiologic Technology (AAS)	193
Human Services (AAS)	193

## MISSION

Bronx Community College serves students of diverse backgrounds, preparations and aspirations by providing them with an education that is both broad in scope and rigorous in its standards. We provide students with the foundation and tools for success, whether they choose to continue their education or immediately begin a career, and instill in them the value of informed and engaged citizenship and service to their communities.

## VISION

Bronx Community College will actively invest in each student's success by engaging with them in an integrative and supportive environment that facilitates the development and achievement of their educational and career goals. Graduates will be prepared to understand, thrive in and contribute to a 21st-century global community marked by diversity, change and expanded opportunities for lifelong learning and growth.



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