

Bronx Community College
PRESIDENT'S COMMUNITY REPORT – OCTOBER 2020
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I cannot believe that we are halfway through the Fall 2020 semester and we remain primarily in a distance modality with very few students and faculty coming to campus. The CUNY Board of Trustees voted on Monday, October 26th to continue the offering of online instruction for the delivery of courses in degree and non-degree programs and the offering of some remote support services for the Spring 2021 semester. I know many of us would prefer to physically be on campus; however, this decision represents the University's commitment to our health, safety and well-being. With this decision, the challenge for all of us is to build on the foundation we created during the Spring and Fall 2020 semesters to improve the offering, delivery and support for our students and faculty in order to finish the academic year strong.

We were very happy to have hosted CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, on October 8th, when he stopped by BCC to thank all of the essential staff who have been working tirelessly to implement our re-occupancy plan and to help maintain the facilities on campus. The Chancellor also used the opportunity to visit the few classrooms and labs open for in-person instruction where he met some faculty and students. The highlight of the tour was the visit to the Early Childhood Center where the Chancellor was greeted by the staff and children. He was able to see first-hand the tireless work that the ECC staff does to ensure learning continues for the children during the pandemic.

Last year I began meeting monthly with the College's faculty leaders (Senate Chair, Faculty Council Chair and Chair of the Chairs), a practice even more necessary in light of the extraordinary times. In our most current meeting, we discussed the peculiar challenges of distance learning. The issue of class size was raised, and as a result of this discussion, in Spring 2021 class cap/size will be reduced from 30 to between 25 and 27. One of the primary concerns raised during our talk is the shared governance structure of the College and how faculty feel disconnected and not valued with respect to the decision-making process of the Administration. I have brought this issue to Cabinet and we are working on solutions to not only solicit feedback and input, but also to do a better job in communicating and closing the loop on final decisions.

The next Town Hall will be scheduled for early December. Stay tuned for further announcements to be shared via BCC Broadcast.

BUDGET: The University Board of Trustees has yet to vote on the University budget; as a result, each College is on a month-to-month budget through January 2021. In this regard, BCC has been informed that our total monthly allocation from July 1, 2020 to January 1, 2021 will total \$42M. 90% of this total will support salaries with the balance just covering OTPS. On a general level, we know that New York State faces over a thirteen (13) billion-dollar deficit and the City is also grappling with a projected nine (9) billion-dollar deficit.

In response to the pandemic, the Federal government passed the CARES Act. Under this Act, the University received \$9,658,626 on behalf of BCC. 50% (\$4,829,313) of this was earmarked for direct student support. This disbursement was done through CUNYFirst and mailed directly to students by CUNY Central. The remaining 50% (4,829,313) is scheduled to provide institutional assistance to the College to offset increased costs incurred due to COVID. Of this amount, \$1,109,677 has been released by CUNY Central. The allocation is as follows: Tuition and Fee Reimbursement - \$65,823, Health and Wellness - \$257,507, Central Office Services - \$20,271, IT Investment - \$236,046, Centrally Procured Equipment - \$530,030. The College is required to submit a plan to secure these funds from Central Office. Additionally, the College has also submitted a request to FEMA for reimbursement for COVID related protective equipment.

WINTER/SPRING PLANNING: As indicated earlier, the CUNY Board of Trustees voted to continue the online modality for the Spring 2021 semester. Registration for Winter and Spring 2021 is open and ongoing. We are encouraging faculty and staff to remind students to register early. To accommodate late registration by new students, we are setting up a Spring II course schedule that will commence two weeks after the start of the semester. This will allow for admission for late applicants. Block schedules are also being created for incoming freshmen in a limited number of programs to facilitate registration and enrollment of this group. In an effort to assist faculty with the online modality, the University continues to offer the Online Teaching Essentials workshop this semester. The College will continue to offer professional development on online teaching to interested faculty.

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STUDENT SUCCESS: The Office of the Registrar, along with fellow Student Success departments all came together to complete a [Diploma Distribution](#) for Fall 2019, Winter and Spring 2020 graduates! This was a huge undertaking on behalf of our students. Congratulations to all our graduates! The Winter and Spring Registration Broadcast was sent to all Faculty and Staff on Friday, October 16th. Please review the broadcast for pertinent registration information. Admissions is currently hosting Live Q&A sessions for potential students and our Admissions Counselors are offering individual appointments. The Live Q&A events and to book an appointment can be found on the BCC Admissions and Financial Aid [Visit Us webpage](#).

As a reminder, the College Food Pantry is open to our students. The Food Pantry distribution dates and updated procedures to ensure the safety of our students and staff when picking up food can be found on the BCC Campus Resources [Access Resource Center](#) webpage.

CUNY has launched two online courses for faculty and staff intended to support our mental health and wellness. The courses are optional, asynchronous, and self-paced. They are available in Blackboard under “My Organizations”. For more information, please view the BCC Broadcast entitled “Support for our Mental Health and Wellness – PERSONAL COUNSELING” which was sent on Tuesday, October 20th.

Disability Services hosted a virtual career fair for students with disabilities and workshops held from October 22nd – October 29th and workshops held for our veteran students covered a range of topics including, improving their credit score and buying a home. The Early Childcare Center continues to serve student parents with e-learning and in-person school for the children of our students attending in-person classes.

ADVANCEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS: Bronx Community College is hosting a week-long Domestic Violence Social Media Campaign running from Sunday, October 25th - Saturday, October 31st in support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

BCC was awarded a \$40,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grant to host a virtual conference to share and advance innovative research with the potential to improve food access, eating patterns, and health in low-income communities.

Athletics [Director Ryan McCarthy was featured on BronxNet](#) to discuss the impact of COVID on student athletes. [Assistant Director Kelly Peloquin was featured on CUNYAC's Talk About it Tuesdays - On Campus Support Systems](#).

The BCC Office of Communications and Marketing has just released our updated Branding Guidelines 2020. This 50-page online booklet provides a comprehensive explanation of the design rules for every document produced by BCC, from flyers to ads to posters to signage to videos to emails and more. These guidelines are brought together in one user-friendly guide that establishes a uniform BCC visual identity as unique as the College itself. It is in pdf. form, so you can bookmark it, download it or even print it out. The link can be found [here](#) and on the BCC Communications and Marketing -Visual Identity Elements and Resources webpage.

GOOD NEWS: I will conclude on what I believe is a very positive note. Despite the multitude of challenges faced by faculty, students and staff over past several months, BCC student success metrics are on the rise:

- One-year retention rate of first-time, full-time students increased from 56% to 60;
- Percent of first-time, full-time students who complete 20 credits in their first year increased from 24% to 32%;
- Percent of first-time, full-time students who completed gateway English in the first year increased from 57% to 62%;
- Percent of first-time, full-time students who completed gateway Math in their first year increased from 24% to 34%.

As we enter the second half of the Fall semester, I am urging the faculty and the staff to continue to help to engage our students as they manage challenges due to the pandemic. I want to close out by asking everyone to take the extra time to be patient, kind and flexible as we interact with one another and our students virtually. Thank you for everything that you do for our students and the college.