

## PRESIDENT'S COMMUNITY REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2024

*Interim President Milton Santiago, Ed.D.*

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I was thrilled to see so many of you at our Fall 2024 Faculty/Staff Convocation. It is hard to believe that Convocation kicked off my second term as BCC's Interim President. It was inspiring to hear Dr. Ligia Alberto recount her experience as a BCC student who started in the CLIP Program. Her message of empowering students through communications and the words we choose when counseling our students, truly resonated with the audience. It was inspirational to hear her recount the words that gave her confidence to continue on her path to her Ph.D. I hope many of you will implement the advice from Dr. Alberto and help your students navigate the myriad of challenges they encounter while they work to further their education and work together to create a culture of excellence. My thanks to our Provost and Vice President, Dr. Luis Montenegro for acting as emcee and highlighting the many accomplishments of our faculty and staff and outlining the goals for the upcoming academic year.

As I highlighted during my Convocation remarks, "student centered-student focused" continues the theme for this semester and academic year. "Customer service" with consistent and targeted purpose should be a top priority and a campus-wide effort. Let's strive for ways to keep our students engaged, not only in the classroom but on campus and for events as well. Let's reimagine how we connect and impact those who need it most.

**Academic Affairs:** OAA is happy to report that New York State has approved BCC's application for a distance education certificate program in Nuclear Medicine Technology. This program, the first of its kind in NYS, promises to relieve the severe shortage of nuclear medicine technologists in Upstate New York. In particular, the program will be focused on the Capital Region and Central New York, but may also be offered in other locations in the future, including the New York City Metro area. Congratulations to Professor Grace Tursi-Wenzler for this achievement. More information will be forthcoming in press releases and articles shortly.

BCC's AS Health Sciences degree, exposes students to many health career pathways, both clinical and nonclinical, while at the same time providing them with industry-aligned, "stackable" certification and experiential learning opportunities. This degree was launched in Spring 2024; we are very happy to report that enrollment is exceptionally strong, with over 650 students. We are confident that the AS Health Sciences will have a positive impact on retention and graduation of these students interested in health fields. Many thanks to program director and creator, Dr. Stacia Reader, of the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Bronco Bash, held on August 22, 2024, was a tremendous success, welcoming over 450 new, transfer, and continuing students along with their supporters to kick off the fall semester. Supported by the Title V grant: *Avanzando: First Year Success and the First Year Program*, this initiative is part of a broader effort to enhance the first-year experience ensuring a smooth transition to campus life for new students. Program highlights included Academic Major Pathway sessions with representation from 12 academic departments, campus tours, Academic Departments and Student Support resource fair, fun activities on the quad, and a Hyflex Start Smart evening session to engage evening students. The vibrant atmosphere and participation reflected the community spirit that defines Bronx Community College. Special thanks go to the First Year Program, the Integrated Calendar Committee, and the entire college community for the success of the event.

The Learning Commons successfully hosted its third Accelerate/Adelante Summer Bridge program from August 12-22, 2024, preparing 183 students for their upcoming co-requisite courses. This free two-week program focused on critical thinking through reading and writing and math/science workshops. The programming included growth mindset discussions, study skills, and a faculty and alumni STEM panel, concluding with the BCC Orientation Bronco Bash. Special thanks to Professors Charles Maliti and Dickens St. Hilaire for their continued participation and collaboration.

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**CUNY News:** CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez announced the University's plan to work to implement Judge Jonathan Lippman's recommendations to bolster efforts to combat discrimination. Judge Lippman, former Chief Judge of the State of New York and Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeals conducted an independent third-party review with assistance from the New York office of Latham and Watkins, of the University's policies and procedures regarding antisemitism and other discrimination. The Chancellor committed to implement Judge Lippman's recommendations and to "redouble our efforts and build on our progress to create a more inclusive campus environment for students, faculty and staff."

**Business Office and Finance:** I am happy to report that BCC's budget and financial plan is sound. I will be discussing certain highlights of the plan today. I presented the plan during the General Personnel and Budget Committee Meeting and to the Senate Budget Committee as well. You can access the plan [HERE](#).

**Enrollment Management:** BCC's Fall '24 enrollment cycle has closed and I am happy to report impressive results from the Enrollment Management Team. BCC ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in enrollment growth among the community colleges. Total enrollment, or headcount in the CBIL Enrollment Report: is 7247 students. This number comprises regular enrollment, permit-in students and CLIP and CUNY/Math Start. FTE's stand at 4,707 exceeding the goal of 4,451.

These impressive results are a testament to the hard work, dedication and commitment of the entire TEAM. A big thank you to those who worked tirelessly over the summer during our in-person registration events; your work went a considerably long way to this effort. All those involved, Registrar, Financial Aid, Bursar, Admissions, Advisement, Student Affairs, and the Integrated Communications Center (ICC) and Faculty support must be congratulated for this success. As significant as these results are, more work needs to be done. We must not rest. The college continues to repair deficits since 2020; but I believe this effort shows we are heading in the right direction! Let's keep the momentum going!!

**Student Success:** Thank you to all the employees and student leaders who participated in Welcome Week. Your efforts in assisting new and returning students, as well as employees, in navigating the campus, answering their questions, and extending a warm welcome to the college were greatly appreciated. In an effort to enhance student success, Student Affairs has created the Office of Customer Solutions and Retention, directed by Karen Thomas.

The BCC CARES food pantry has served over 700 students this fall already. The Office of Disability Services has registered 455 students for the fall semester and the Early Childhood Center has registered nearly 50 children with 5 active classrooms including infant/toddlers.

This year's Latinx Heritage Month kicked off with a joyous festival organized by the Offices of Student Diversity Initiatives Student Life. The event featured a live band, dance lessons, food, games, and tabling from various offices. The event was an opportunity to celebrate the rich heritage and culture of the Latino community. The festival was sponsored in part by Beatstro restaurant who generously donated all the food for the event, and Rica Foods who gifted the College five professional dominos tables to be used during the event and beyond. The festival was attended by approximately 200 students, faculty, and staff. Latinx Heritage Month events continue through October 15<sup>th</sup> and can be found on the College website.

**Office of Administration:** BCC's plant personnel are hard at work on the boiler project: The team is first ensuring structural retention and then will begin removals of four unground oil tanks which will continue into the beginning of October. Interior installation of new pipe work for the three new boilers has begun.

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DASNY's façade repair work has required protections which have impacted some of the college's parking areas. The contractor's schedule to commence work should begin in October, depending on arrival of all material for repairs and delivery of boom lifts and equipment.

The long-awaited Bronx Express should begin interior demolition soon. DASNY/Architects are working on all interior furniture and equipment and coordination with BCC. Completion of exterior protection continues.

The Loew Hall new elevator installation work is preparing for bidding. Bidding is scheduled for end of year/early spring 25'.

**Communications & Marketing:** The 2024 edition of *The BCC Value*, is now available and provides a description of the value Bronx Community College offers students and the community (low costs/financial assistance making higher education possible on any budget; extensive support along the way, and courses leading to high-paying jobs and economic mobility). You can access the newest edition [HERE](#). The BCC value includes: a snapshot of BCC enrollment & student and faculty demographics along with student and staff achievements, a summary of campus resources, a glimpse of academic and non-academic programs and extracurriculars and a distinguished alumni listing. Fast Facts, provides a condensed version of the BCC Value, providing topline info/stats on student enrollment, majors and outcomes and the diversity of our students and faculty.

Think of this piece as part of a tool kit for recruitment, chock full of the facts and figures that make the case for BCC. We hope you will use it both internally and externally. Feel free to share it with non-profits, school officials, teachers, counselors, parents, guardians and students. It also is a great source for grant proposals and presentations.

**Moving Forward:** It is my hope that we can continue to serve our students and help them work to achieve their goals. Our college is replete with faculty and staff who dedicate themselves to the mission of BCC. As Edward Everett Hale said *coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success*. Let's work together to find ways to even better serve our students. This is how we continue to evolve and support our collective missions. This is how we create a culture of excellence. I know we are all up to the challenge.