

PRESIDENT'S COMMUNITY REPORT – FEBRUARY, 2025

Interim President Milton Santiago, Ed.D.

Spring semester is off to a solid start! Students and staff are showing desire for connection and community, which was so clearly demonstrated at last week's Club Fair. It was a joyous occasion to see more than 30 clubs represented and feel the positive energy in the room. The investments we have been making (and will continue to make) in our equipment, facilities and programs are igniting great promise for the future of BCC! And, as I mentioned in my [State of the College report](#), all of this is made possible by our dedicated faculty and staff who work to get to know and assist each student – no matter how big or how small the students' needs. Together, we are working to eliminate barriers for our students and provide outstanding educational offerings.

ENROLLMENT/RETENTION

Our Spring 2025 enrollment numbers (as of February 24, 2025) show a continued trend in a positive direction. As of this date, we have enrolled 6,568 students, a 4% increase from 2024, and our FTEs are up by 5.8% this spring, surpassing our Spring target. Among other notable increases: Transfer students are up 6.7%; Continuing Students are up 4%; Degree Students are up 2%; College Discovery students are up 15%; Non-Degree students are up 18%, and Dual Degree Students are up 12%. Academic advisors and registration staff will focus again this spring on advising and registering as many Continuing Students as possible before the end of the academic year. Additionally, BCC is continuing its participation in a series of outreach events, partnerships and activities aimed at high school guidance counselors and prospective students and their parents.

FACILITIES & PLANNING

Boiler Project: As I have mentioned, we have been achieving major milestones with our massive new boiler project on campus, and the project is in its final stages. New boiler roof stacks have been installed, and three new additional boilers are scheduled to arrive on campus on March 26th through March 28th. We will require alternate driving routes and closures for this installation, so will follow up with further details as we move closer to the delivery dates.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Department of Government Relations & External Affairs successfully lobbied for significant funding for Bronx Community College in Fiscal Year 2025, reflecting a commitment to improving facilities, enhancing academic programs, and supporting student resources at BCC.

As you are likely aware, the Bronx Borough President, NYC Council Member Pierina Ana Sanchez, and the Bronx Delegation have committed \$4 million for Ohio Track and Field upgrades, including an outdoor control booth, audio-visual components, an electronic digital scoreboard, and LED field lights. This project, which will modernize our field for sporting events and elevate our athletic program, will benefit students, faculty, staff, and the entire Bronx community.

We've also received funding from New York State Senator Robert Jackson in the amount of more than \$187,000 to purchase new equipment for both our Radiologic Technology Program and our Nursing Program and enhance hands-on training opportunities for students through realistic patient simulations; an award from New York State Assembly Member Yudelka Tapia of \$100,000 for upgrades to cardio fitness equipment in Alumni Gym, and an award from the Bronx Delegation of the NYC Council and Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus (BLAC) in the amount of \$81,000 for discretionary funding for BCC's Food Pantry.

Additionally, we are beginning some promising conversations with Bally's and Mohegan Sun (which are both seeking licensures in New York City for workforce development needs) around possible partnerships concerning the training of their employees.

BUSINESS OFFICE

Budget: In the area of Budget & Finance, the final Mid-Year Financial report from CUNY is still pending. As of February 2025, BCC is on target to spend \$101 million for Fiscal Year '25, representing a 15% increase over FY2024 spending. The increase is due mostly to spending of funds from the one-time reserve account and retroactive payments due to contractual increases. **NYC's Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget** presented on Jan. 16 meets all obligations for union-negotiated contracts, but reflects full PEG (Program to Eliminate the Gap) funding cuts totaling nearly \$95 million for community colleges city-wide. For BCC specifically, this amounts to a budget reduction of \$6.8 million. We are asking for the BCC community's help in contacting City Council members/legislators to urge their support in restoring these funds.

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Cafeteria: The cafeteria contract was submitted to the vendor's attorney for review and approval. The vendor's attorney has agreed to majority of the contract, but has some inquiries pertaining to a couple of the sections. Our PPS team is working to address the vendor's concerns with the goal of finalizing the contract as soon as possible.

Purchasing: To ensure that all FY '25 purchase requisitions are analyzed, bid and awarded and that goods, services and commodities are delivered before fiscal year end, June 30, 2025, all requisitions must be submitted and approved by the following dates: Friday, March 14, 2025 for computers and furniture purchases and Friday, March 28, 2025 for all other goods/services.

Property Management: A reminder again that the College needs everyone's cooperation with the re-inventory of college-wide equipment. CUNY's re-inventory threshold is the lesser of 1% or \$200,000; however, currently we have \$1.5 million in non-found equipment. Any equipment (non-found) that cannot be located must be reported as lost to divisional VPs and Public Safety. A copy of the incident report must be provided to BCC Property Management so that we may process the asset disposal. The incident report must include BCC tag number information.

Accounts Payable: We will be scheduling three Travel and Expense navigation/training sessions in March, April and May. A broadcast will be sent out shortly on how to reserve space for the training. Additionally, we will be creating supporting videos and FAQs.

STUDENT SUCCESS

The Early Childhood Center's Infant/Toddler Program celebrated a milestone on February 14th, marking the 1-year anniversary of this program. The program aligns with our mission as a college to eliminate as many barriers as possible for our students in their pursuit of their education. I am continually impressed with the warm and nurturing environment that our ECC staff provides for the children of our student-parents. Happy Anniversary ECC!

Congratulations to our newly-elected Student Government Association president, John Thomas Lorino, as well as our three newly-elected SGA senators Brandon Goode, Maxwell Asare, and Jovaine Clarke and Legal Legislator Noelia Tavaréz.

Black History Month: Throughout the month of February, BCC celebrated Black History and Black Culture with a series of Black History Month events. Students, staff and faculty gathered on the first Tuesday of the month for "*Origin Stories: The African Diaspora and Afro Latinidad - A Celebration of History, Culture, and Identity*," a panel discussion and cultural celebration of the Black Diaspora, exploring African influence and history across the Americas and the Caribbean. Other event highlights included the official Black History Month Kickoff party with food, music & dancing, games, arts & crafts, free health screenings and representation from student clubs and organizations, as well as today's *Womxn Up! Author Series* with BCC History Professor Dr. Prithi Kanakamedala speaking about her new book titled, *Brooklynites: The Remarkable Story of the Free Black Communities that Shaped a Borough*.

Women's History Month: Womxn Up! together with the Office of Student Diversity Initiatives, the Office of Student Life, and the History Department will host the Women's History Month Kickoff Event & 7th Anniversary of Womxn Up! on Thursday, March 13th- 12-2pm in Roscoe Brown, Rm. 211A and a Celebration Luncheon: Honoring BCC Women on Tuesday, March 25th - 12-2pm in the same location.

Additionally, we are looking forward to hosting CUNY's 4th annual LGBTQI+ student conference at BCC on April 4th.

Finally, mark your calendars! BCC's 65th commencement ceremony will be held at 9 am on Friday, May 30th on Ohio Field

ADVANCEMENT, COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Run the Bronx: The [47th Annual Run the Bronx](#), a premier event in the Bronx and NYC, is scheduled for Saturday, May 3, 2025. Marketing for the event began early, with two successful promotions offering discounts for previous runners and faculty/staff: a Halloween and Valentine's Day Special. The run is free for students until Sat., April 26. As the borough with the poorest health indicators, Run the Bronx is an important event for Bronx residents.

Communications & Marketing: The [2024 Bronx Community College annual report](#), based on our theme, *Learning Today Leading Tomorrow*, is now available on our website. We hope you will take time to enjoy the images, stories, and news of the BCC community over the past year and reflect with us on the important accomplishments we have achieved together.

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Grants Awarded: In FY25, the BCC Grants Office, has 145 current awards with an operating budget of more than \$26 million; 43 grant proposals for nearly \$35 million submitted and pending, and 11 proposals for more than \$5 million in progress.

Blackstone LaunchPad hosted its Fall semester Stock Market Game, in collaboration with the SIFMA Foundation, highlighted its winners in BCC's February UPDATE newsletter. A new game has begun, with 68 participants, including 12 faculty and staff members. And don't forget to mark your calendars for the upcoming Second Annual Financial Empowerment Summit being held on April 10! This event will feature expert panels and a resource fair, providing opportunities to connect with our banking partners.

Green Action Challenge Grant: We have been busy with ongoing activities related to our Green Action Challenge Grant, including the successful Completion of our Phase I Water Conservation and work with an engineering firm, Arcadis, to implement Green Infrastructure to mitigate flooding on campus. And, we hope you will Save the Date for our *How Things Work Conference*, which BCC will host in celebration of Earth Day April 22 in collaboration with the Environmental Education Advisory Council of NYC, as well as our Workforce Development and Chemistry, Earth Sciences, and Environmental Sciences Departments. The event will encourage students and educators to explore and learn how essential environmental systems, from batteries to rain gardens, support our day-to-day lives!

OTHER

Know Your Rights/CDI: Recently, we hosted a Know Your Rights workshop on campus, guided by CUNY's Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI). This workshop, along with information available on our website and through communication we have put out through BCC Broadcasts and our UPDATE newsletter, aims to prepare our students to assert those rights during any encounter with ICE or law enforcement. As part of a broader initiative, BCC also has been part of trainings conducted this year by CDI to improve dialogue on CUNY campuses and combat hate. The trainings are focused on providing conflict leadership skills as well as developing a campus climate that supports a culture of trust and dialogue.

President's Search: CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez recently sent out a broadcast indicating that the search for the next president of Bronx Community College is in the final vetting process. A finalist is expected to be named at the CUNY Board of Trustees meeting on Monday, April 14.

Middle States: As you are aware, we are in the midst of planning for our Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Self-Study. Accreditation permits the college to disperse federal financial aid and for the credits earned by our students to be transferred to other institutions. Earlier this month, we submitted our Self-Study Design, BCC's blueprint for how we will organize the self-study process. And next week, many of you will be receiving an invitation from Self-Study Steering Committee co-chairs, Sahidha Odige and Seher Atamturktur to participate on a Self-Study Working Group. Your participation is critical to the re-accreditation process. Then, on April 3, we will host a visit by our Middle States VP liaison, Dr. Kristy Bishop. She will be on campus to meet with various stakeholder groups throughout her day-long visit. Your participation is critical to the re-accreditation process.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Engineering Conference: Earlier this month, a group of 35 BCC students, outfitted by our very own Career Gear Boutique, traveled to Baltimore, Maryland to attend the BEYA (Becoming Everything You Are) Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Conference. Students spent three days learning about STEM career opportunities and networking with industry employers and other college students from across the country. Thank you to Gene Adams, Director of Collaborative Education, and Alex Luma, CUNY Office Assistant, for organizing this valuable experience for our students.

Academic Master Plan: Planning for the next Academic Master Plan (AMP) is well underway. As a reminder, the goal of this academic planning effort is to ensure that BCC program offerings are well-aligned with educational and employment opportunities for students. The Academic Master Plan will represent our academic priorities and help guide academic decision-making over a five-year period. Contact Dean Jessica Seliger or Associate Dean Alex Ott with any questions.

Conclusion: So, as you can see, we have a lot going on here at BCC. I am pleased with the work we have done to offer high-impact experiential learning that provides chances for students to interact with the world around them in an authentic way.

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The activities that take place off campus through BCC, as well as those that take place on campus, are critical to students' educational experience. Whether it's traveling abroad, for instance to India or Columbia, or attending symposiums, conferences and workshops, we are providing learning experiences that engage, empower and inspire students from ALL backgrounds to achieve their absolute best and enable students to collaborate to solve real world problems.

I am confident this important work will continue beyond my term as your president. Thank you once again for helping to make my time here at BCC meaningful, and I look forward to our work together these next few months.