The ASAP Expansion

Time flies. I can’t believe that we are already recruiting our Fall-2016 ASAP Cohort 10. In the last ten years, ASAP has grown from a small, experimental program to a nationally recognized program that is at the forefront of the national discussion on community colleges. For us at BCC, the expansion of ASAP is both a challenge and a tremendous opportunity. Not IF but WHEN we roll out a college-wide ASAP, BCC will become a model for many other large public institutions of higher education that may be planning to embark on a transformational journey.

With the expansion, ASAP eligibility requirements will not change. To participate in ASAP, students need to be eligible for in-city tuition, have 15 or fewer college credits completed, have no more than two developmental course needs at the time of application, be in good academic standing, plan to attend college full time, and submit a financial aid application. What do ASAP students receive in return? Unlimited MetroCards, tuition waivers to cover any gap between full-time tuition and fees and a student’s financial aid award, and vouchers to reduce (or eliminate) the cost of textbooks. Roughly, half of our BCC students meet these criteria and most incoming students will qualify for ASAP within one or two semesters.

What will the ASAP expansion require of us? The list can be extensive, but from my little corner I can think of a few priorities.

Continue To Build Excellence. The financial benefits alone do not make ASAP. It is when they are combined with the personalized attention students receive that the full impact of ASAP becomes tangible. We are in touch with our students, often, continuously; we help them make sense of their college journey and feel confident about their potential; we guide, we facilitate, we advise, we remove roadblocks. BUT we don’t do this by ourselves. Students have the BCC community behind them. Often understood, seldom explicitly acknowledged, the success of our ASAP students is a testament to BCC’s excellence—faculty, department chairs, program coordinators, administrative offices, student supports, our colleagues from other special programs, and the student community at large. Each of you have contributed to the ASAP success and only with your continued support; now on a larger scale, will ASAP-BCC or BCC-ASAP (the order does not matter) shine.

One College. One University. We have the support of the University for this expansion. It is a real partnership, and the possibilities are immense when one imagines what may happen when we put together the combined talents of so many excellent people from BCC and CUNY at large. There is much to think about: partnerships with CLIP, CUNY Start, Summer Start, pre-college programs, partnerships with senior colleges, remediation, and support for STEM programs ... the list goes on and on. We must be open to constructive criticism and to embrace the growing pains that come with change.

One Goal. When we started ASAP back in 2007, some argued against a program that gave privileges to a small group of students. Now we are at the point that we can extend the ASAP opportunity to the majority of our BCC students. We should, however, avoid the temptation of thinking of two colleges: ASAP and the rest. We have one, and one goal only: the success of BCC students. With this common goal in mind, there is room for other existing and new excellent programs and initiatives that will support students who may never be eligible for ASAP or may move in and out of ASAP, or may choose not to participate in ASAP. It is the commitment to that unique goal that should move us to become more organized, more strategic, and more efficient in supporting all BCC students.

The expansion of ASAP is a daunting project—there are urgent and long-term matters, aspects that will require input from the larger community and from experts, decisions that must be made, disagreements to work through, and along the way, we will probably face dead ends, wrong turns and crossroads. At the end of the road, though, we will give our students and ourselves a better institution, one that will more fully realize the goals and aspirations of our students: to learn and to prosper.
ALEX’S CORNER

Dr. Alexander Ott

Lehman College and BCC are coordinating closely on a new initiative designed to improve the transfer pipeline from BCC to Lehman. While the initiative is still in the planning stages, it includes multiple possible benefits for BCC students, including guaranteed admission to Lehman for students in specific programs and a Lehman “advisor-in-residence” to assist BCC students in course selection and planning for transfer to Lehman.

Such close collaboration between two-year and four-year institutions is increasingly recognized in the transfer literature as essential to transfer student success in completing a baccalaureate degree. See, for example, the major recent report by Davis Jenkins and John Fink entitled, “Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor’s Degrees.” This report is available on the web site of the Community College Research Center at Columbia University: http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/tracking-transfer-institutional-state-effectiveness.html.

This collaboration between Lehman and BCC could go a step beyond guaranteed admissions and an advisor-in-residence: Lehman is applying for a Title V grant, which BCC plans to join, to support this initiative. If this grant is awarded, it could provide additional resources for BCC students, including co-curricular programming, events, academic support, and more.

This exciting initiative with Lehman in no way limits BCC student options for transfer elsewhere—we support our students exploring all good opportunities available to them. However, given that Lehman is by far the #1 destination for BCC students—with over 40% of our students who transfer within CUNY choosing Lehman—this initiative offers great promise for many of our students.

If you are interested in learning more about this initiative or have any questions or comments, please contact me at alexander.ott@bcc.cuny.edu.

ASSESSMENT NEWS

Dr. Richard LaManna

Task Stream in Spring

Task Stream is not some electronic wunderkind, but it does offer organization, alignment, and analyses. As a management tool, Task Stream gives us the ability to map BCC’s 2015-20 Strategic Plan, to scaffold continuous Program Review, to align outcomes, to prepare accreditation and self-study reports, to develop rubrics, and to perform GenEd, discipline-specific, and non-academic assessments in a manner that gives us a more integrated view of student learning, all of which supports BCC’s mission to offer students access to academic preparation that provides them with the foundation and tools for success in their educational and/or professional plans” (BCC Catalog 8). Task Stream, when fully implemented, will help unite learning and/or improvement across both academic and non-academic departments.

This semester, the Assessment Council, made up of faculty members from our 15 academic departments, will get its first hands-on experiences with Task Stream software. Council members will be introduced to this rich, easily accessible software that allows chairs and faculty the ability to post, share, and review elements critical to the success of programs and courses. During Fall 2015, academic and non-academic departments and programs submitted Mission Statements, Learning Outcomes or Objectives, Tools & Measures, and Fall 2015 assessment reports, all of which are currently being loaded into their respective Task Stream areas and pages.

The American Association of Colleges & Universities notes how normative and summative assessment allows us to see, for example, if on a final exam “certain specific areas of the curriculum were understood less than others” and “analyze a capstone or final project [or paper] for its ability to integrate across disciplines” and how consistent assessment feeds directly “back into revising the course, program or institution to improve student learning results” (website).

Task Stream enhances these processes and the practices we naturally employ to improve success from the institutional to the classroom level, and back again. Its repository features and multiple viewing windows allow for easy comparisons as well as transparency across the College’s programs. At present, several members of the Assessment/CTLT teams are working through weekly webinars with Task Stream trainers to help BCC make use of the software’s diverse capabilities. As we become more adept at Task Stream and firm up our assessment practices, faculty will hear, see and benefit (as will students) from the work currently underway.
Dr. Thomas A. Isekengebe, President of Bronx Community College, graciously welcomed the audience and urged them to continue to reinforce this year’s theme of “Keeping the Promise” to BCC students, by providing them higher education access and support to help them achieve their educational goals.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Marth J. Kanter, Distinguished Visiting Professor of Higher Education and Senior Fellow, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development at New York University, and Executive Director of the College Promise Campaign, recognized the many strengths inherent in BCC’s Strategic Plan, advocating the plan as a strong model to advance Bronx Community as a leader in academic and student excellence.

Dr. Kanter highlighted the importance of implementation reinforcements, rewards and milestones for completion, and other methods by which to engage and inspire students to persist. She made specific mention of academic success programs such as ASAP and CLIP, denoting them as “Islands of Excellence,” examples of student-centered programs that intentionally map career paths, assist students in charting their academic progress, and provide students with the individual attention and professional advising they need to meet their academic goals.

Dr. Kanter is presently working on college affordability and “College for All” policies to provide tuition and fees for U.S. students enrolling and completing the first two years of college at public institutions.

As BCC moves forward to implement Year 2 of the Strategic Plan, Dr. Kanter offered three additional pieces of advice for success.

- Continual conversation among BCC’s senate, vice-presidents, deans, leaders of the staff across academic and student affairs
- Let us keep the whole student in mind
- Let us work with colleagues in research and technology to improve the use of data about student performance and share this information across the campus. Disregarding the implementation gap can stop the best improvements from taking hold.

“Forty percent of our college students choose community college. Some are young and starting out. Some are older and looking for a better job. Some are veterans and single parents trying to transition back into the job market. Whoever you are, this plan is your chance to graduate ready for the new economy, without a load of debt.”

- President Barack Obama, 2015 State of the Union
The faculty/student session “Learning through Teaching: Student-led New York Times Discussion Circles,” provided an inside look at BCC's CLIP Program and its successes. Jose Reyes Medina and Gabriela O'Leary, representatives from the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), gave a presentation on how CLIP incorporates the New York Times as a teaching aid to help students both successfully complete the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing (CATW), as well as be able to read and digest the content that they've read, whether it be academic related and/or for leisure.

Mr. Medina and Ms. O'Leary enjoined three of their former CLIP students to explain how incorporating the Times helped them successfully complete the CLIP program, as well as aid their academic success. All three students made it clear that reading the newspaper greatly helped their development of language clarity. Student presenter Dahiana De La Cruz said, “Language clarity is essential, especially for students where English is not their first language.”

Student presenter Esmerly Franco explained that reading the Times on a regular basis helped him to determine the tone and position of the author on the content material; additionally, the details allowed him to cultivate an informed opinion based on the subject under discussion. All three students said that upon completion of the CLIP program, they were comfortable, ready, and confident that their presentation (a learning outcome that is required in the program), as well as any future presentations that they might give only helped with their success.

The use of the New York Times newspaper as a teaching tool in the CLIP program has given BCC's students confidence and the necessary skills to excel in all of their academic and personal endeavors. CLIP subsequently exposes the student’s innate skills. In short, CLIP is a great program not only to help fulfill a student’s remedial needs, but to help bridge the gap between student and the world.
Jose Reyes Medina, of the BCC CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), is a BCC alumus from the class of 2007. While he was a student, he was a member of Phi Theta Kappa and the recipient of the Booker Quattlebaum Scholarship and The Dominican Parade of the Bronx Scholarship Award. After he graduated from BCC, he attended NYU where he earned a B.S. in Applied Psychology.

**PRESENTER PROFILE: JOSE REYES MEDINA**

**PARTNERING PEDAGOGY WITH PROGRAMS - BEST PRACTICES THAT DELIVER THE PROMISE**

**RELATING VIA YOUTUBE: VIDEO-SHARING IN MEDIA COURSES ALLOWS STUDENTS TO EXPRESS KNOWLEDGE, POLITICS AND GOALS**

**BCC Student Learning Outcomes**

- Communication: Students will use reading, writing, listening and speaking to find, interpret, and communicate information in various modes, including aesthetic, statistical, symbolic, and graphic. Read, listen, and observe carefully in order to acquire and comprehend information and ideas communicated to them, and organizing them in an easily retrievable form.

  Interpret the information and ideas and communicate them effectively. They will speak and write clearly and coherently according to accepted standards.

**Dr. Theresa Smalec, Assistant Professor, Communication Arts & Sciences, BCC**
SCHOLARLY WORKS

Like many faculty during intersession doing research, Dr. Debra Gonsher, Chair of Communication Arts & Sciences, was busy with her own, filming a documentary in Rwanda and Uganda. Awarded a $25,000 grant from the Knights of Columbus to support the African production of Beauty of Their Dreams, Dr. Gonsher’s one-hour documentary is scheduled to begin airing on ABC affiliated stations nationwide in April. The film examines initiatives supporting girls’ education and advocates for people of faith to become involved in “the global social justice issue of our time.” Dr. Gonsher later received news that she had been nominated for her tenth Emmy award (she has won four) for her documentary, Every Word Has Power: The Poetry of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, which celebrates the noted philosopher, civil rights advocate and anti-war activist with a concert performance of his poetry set to music by noted singer, composer and musician Basya Schechter.

Dr. Sharon Utakis, Professor of English, was an honored Program Co-Chair at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Oral History Association meeting held October 14-18, 2015, in Tampa, Florida. Over 420 oral historians from around the world convened to examine stories of social change and justice through the oral history lens. A series of panels, films, keynote, performances, roundtables and posters focused special attention on the power of oral history and its ability to give rise to social change. For information or to view the program, visit, http://www.oralhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/OHA-2015-Program.pdf.

Cynthia Tobar, Assistant Professor and Head of Archives in the Library, was awarded over $4,000 for an online exhibit that will “examine themes of historical exclusion, diversity and achievement at the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, a designated landmark of national importance, for the CUNY community, the New York City metropolitan area, and state.” This exhibit, titled, “Vision of Greatness at BCC: Rethinking Racial Disparities at the Hall of Fame,” is made possible from the CUNY Diversity Projects Development Fund of the University Advisory Council on Diversity (UACD) and will shed light while preserving the legacy of the Hall of Fame in honoring the contributions of Americans in the advancement of welfare and culture within the United States. For more information, please contact Professor Tobar at Cynthia.tobar@bcc.cuny.edu

Gloria M. Rodriguez, Lecturer in Social Sciences, Psychology, was invited by Dr. Aurelie Athan, Director of LEO Wellness Center affiliated with Spirituality Mind-Body Institute at Columbia University, to present her (Ms. Rodriguez’s) research and work at the Grand Rounds lecture series for faculty and graduate students enrolled in both Clinical and Spiritual Psychology Master’s Program at Columbia. The title of her presentation on December 16, was “Spirit, Culture, Gender: Intersections for Healing.”

PUBLICATIONS


FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

What do you like most about teaching at BCC?

“I love the fact that no matter how high I set the bar, the students are willing to do the work required to get there. Many of our students have had to overcome all sorts of obstacles on their path towards higher education, and it is so gratifying to see them flourish both within our campus and beyond. We are blessed to have such a vibrant, dynamic, determined and gifted community.”

- Dr. Alicia Bralove Ramirez

EVENTS

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

SPRING 2016 LECTURE SERIES

March 16, 2016: Dr. Johanna Fernandez, (Baruch College) “Memories of Youth Activism: Women of the Young Lords.”

ENGINEERING, PHYSICS AND TECHNOLOGY

April 14, 2016: Monika Sikand (BCC-CUNY, Department of Engineering, Physics and Technology) “Bicycles and Climate Change: A Personal and Scientific Journey”

SAVE THE DATE: FACULTY DAY

What is Faculty Day? Faculty Day is an opportunity for all members of all departments to come together to share research, creative works, and pedagogical ideas to build interdisciplinary cooperation at BCC. Faculty Day is organized by the Committee on Instruction and Professional Development (CIPD) with the support of the Office of Academic Affairs and Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT).

Friday, April 15, 2016 | 9am to 3pm

THE LEARNING COMMONS

The Learning Commons is designed to encourage collaborative learning among students. The large new space provides for group, peer and individual tutoring, in addition to the Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program currently available to students. A resource corner is also available to students, featuring manuals, study guides, and models that students can use to aid their studies. Students can utilize one (1) of the study rooms through reservation. Students are welcome to lounge in the state-of-the-art seating area to catch up on their reading and/or studies. Eight computers available for students to use for research and course related work. Vending machines are also available, so students can enjoy a snack as they study, read, and/or do research. Please relay the message and spread the word!

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for the next issue are due no later than April 11, 2016 and should be sent to Ms. L. Vicki Cedeno, loida.cedeno@bcc.cuny.edu in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Submission guidelines:

• All text should be submitted in Microsoft Word
• Telephone and email information should be included with content
• Accuracy is key: names, dates, awards, locations, titles should be clearly and accurately represented
• All submissions are subject to approval and editing by the OAA