



COMMONS

SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER



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President's Message

Embracing Opportunities for a Brighter Future

As this issue of the "BMCC Commons" goes to press, I'm reminded that no matter what happens around the world that may deeply affect members of our community, we remain steadfast in pursuing our mission to provide a superior education and to celebrate our students' accomplishments—whether in the classroom, on the athletic field or conference stage; whether their focus is STEM-related, in the healthcare field or more.

We continually assess what works for our students, and scale up from there. We identify strategies that build enrollment and pedagogies that boost student outcomes. We examine our industry and academic partnerships. We expand our degree and certificate programs, adding information technology, data science and other in-demand areas of study to our offerings.

Most of all, we take careful measure of the academic gaps reflected in student data disaggregated by gender and race, and apply what works to close those gaps. This ongoing work happens in a culture of care and respect for the whole student—where they come from, what they are struggling with today, and where they want to go from here.

Recently, we learned that BMCC has been included among the 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the 2025 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Referred to as the "Oscars for great community colleges" by President Obama, the highly coveted Aspen Prize is presented every two years. For the 2021 award, BMCC made it to the top ten finalists. Our college excels in the areas the Aspen Prize recognizes: teaching and learning, certificate and degree completion, transfer and bachelor's attainment, workforce success, and access and equity for students of color and those from low-income backgrounds.

We know that we have more to do. Our strength as an institution is our ability to look inward as well as outward, to acknowledge the past and embrace opportunities for a brighter future. We persistently renew our understanding of equity and do the hard work to make an inclusive, safe and inspiring environment for every member of our community.

Thank you for being part of this important work.

Anthony E. Munroe



BMCC/PAC-NYC Alliance Yields Inspiring Student Performances

Students at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC/CUNY) thrive in opportunities made possible through partnerships BMCC has forged across New York City and in neighboring lower Manhattan. Students intent on careers in areas such as business and the arts complete internships and mentored projects in the nearby Financial District, historic Trinity Church Wall Street, the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, Hudson River Park and more.

Most recently, talented BMCC students have claimed their place in a series of world-class musical performances at the recently opened Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC-NYC). The series, known as BMCC Live at PAC-NYC, is led by the College's Music program and involves Music majors as well as students and faculty



BMCC Live at PAC-NYC kicked off a debut performance on September 27, 2023 produced by Music Producer Quentin Angus and featuring 20 students.

from the Speech, Communication and Theatre department.

On September 27, BMCC Live at PAC-NYC kicked off a debut produced by BMCC Music Professor **Quentin Angus** that featured about 20 students. Commuters, curious tourists and passers-by were treated to the sound of jazz, indie music and bluegrass as it wafted out from the PAC-NYC's Vartan and Clare Gregorian stage. A full house gathered in PAC-NYC's architecturally acclaimed structure, which is shaped like a marble cube and is located at the foot of the World Trade Center, just steps from BMCC's Fiterman Hall.

In October, a well-received monologue slam produced by BMCC Theatre Professor **Angela Polite** took the stage, and by the time this publication goes to press, more performances starring BMCC students will have been presented, with plans underway for 2024.

"The performance series BMCC Live at PAC-NYC is one component of an

exciting civic alliance and partnership between BMCC and PAC-NYC," said BMCC Speech, Communications and Theatre department Chair **Vincent Tzu-Wen Cheng**. "We are all excited about this alliance and the opportunities it will make possible for BMCC students, staff and faculty."

As he welcomed another full house audience to the October monologue slam, Cheng thanked PAC-NYC for making the space "available, approachable and accessible for our students, faculty and staff, and for opening another door for us to interact with our lower Manhattan community members."

In a press release announcing PAC-NYC's alliances with BMCC and other lower Manhattan community organizations, PAC-NYC Artistic Director **Bill Rauch** said, "These partnerships will invite and include our neighbors from all five boroughs, connect people across differences and help us discover how art can continue to inspire and heal."

In August, BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe** appeared in City & State's 2023 Manhattan Power 100, which highlights policymakers, outspoken advocates and others in New York City and beyond.



A paper by Mathematics Professor **Nkechi Agwu**, "Culture, History and Women's Stories: A Framework

for Capacity Building in STEM-Related Fields and for Fostering Entrepreneurship," appeared in the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship publication, "A Vision for the Future."



Ethnic and Race Studies Professor **Judith Anderson** is one of 11 faculty from U.S. community colleges and

minority-serving institutions selected to participate in a Council of American Research Centers (COARC) two-week seminar in cities throughout India, "Exploring Urban Sustainability Through India's Cities."



Professor **Lissette Acosta Corniel** is featured in the American Historical Association's

October 6 "Perspectives on History" spotlight series.

Mathematics Professor **Aradhana Kumari** presented on teaching fundamentals in mathematics at the 7th Northeastern Research in Undergraduate Mathematics Education Conference on November 4.



STEM Innovation Challenge Focuses on Social Good at BMCC

On November 4, the NSF-funded project, “Bridging the Gap: BMCC Technology Learning Community” hosted a “STEM Innovation Challenge for Social Good” event in Richard Harris Terrace. Over 100 people attended the event, including 65 students who formed 16 teams, as well as faculty, volunteers and industry mentors from Google, Meta, the NYC Department of Planning, the United Nations, Axon, the MTA, BetaNYC, Spectrum, AWS and CITE. The student teams brainstormed to create innovative solutions using technology and addressing topics such as diversity in STEM careers, student housing resources and other areas deemed as relating to the social good at BMCC.



“One thing hasn’t changed—our Nursing graduates excel in New York State in academic excellence and achieving their nursing license.”

—Nursing Professor
Sung Gwak, 37 years at BMCC

BMCC Leads Partnership to Address Dire Shortage of Early Childhood Special Education Teachers

The U.S. Department of Education awarded BMCC a two-year, \$200,000 grant to lead an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) partnership with CUNY’s Brooklyn College, Bronx Community College, Hostos Community College, Kingsborough Community College and LaGuardia Community College, as well as the Kennedy Children’s Center (KCC). Together, they will develop ECSE associate degree programs and more, addressing a dire shortage of early childhood special education teachers. BMCC Teacher Education Professor **Jennifer Longley** is principal investigator (PI) with three co-PIs: BMCC Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator **Jennifer Gilken**, Brooklyn College Early Childhood Education/Art Education Department Chair **Jacqueline Shannon**, and KCC Executive Director **Jeanne Alter**.

BMCC Named Eligible for 2025 Aspen Prize

Selected from a pool of 1,000 colleges across the country, BMCC has been named by the Aspen Institute as one of the 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation’s signature recognition of achievement among community colleges. The \$1 million Aspen Prize is awarded every two years. In 2021, BMCC was named as one of the Aspen Award’s Top Ten finalists.



Read-In of W.E.B. Du Bois Evokes Power of Speaking Out

The Voicing Poverty team—Professors **Sangeeta Bishop**, **Christine Farias**, **Cara O'Connor**, **Mahatapa Palit** and **Jamie Warren**—hosted a community read-in at BMCC of **W.E.B. Du Bois's** “The Souls of Black Folk” on September 22 and again on November 10 for the Students Giving Voice to Poverty Conference. Published more than a century ago, Du Bois’s seminal work champions what is possible when oppressed individuals refuse to be silenced.



Italian Heritage Month Provides Live Music, a Broadway Star and More

On October 24, **Dominic Scaglione, Jr.** (*above*), known for his performance as **Frankie Valli** in the Tony Award-Winning Broadway musical “*Jersey Boys*,” took the stage in BMCC’s Theatre 2 for Italian Heritage Month. Other events included a talk by acclaimed theatre director **Laura Caparrotti**, a tribute to Italian playwright **Mario Fratti**, a live performance by singer/songwriter **Mario Giacalone** and more. “We are proud to remind our students and our community that we are here if they want to learn the Italian language, culture, cinema, literature and more,” says Professor **Tom Means**, who along with Professor **Lisa Sarti** and others, presented the events.

Wilfred Cotto Named Changemaker



The NYC Department of Veterans Services (DVS) named BMCC Veterans Resource Center Manager **Wilfred L. Cotto** a Community Changemaker for September 2023. The DVS Veteran Community Changemaker Series highlights veterans, spouses, civilian volunteers and others who support the NYC veteran community. Cotto served in the Navy from 1977 to 2005, completing deployments with Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Rooftop Celebration Honors Tenured and Promoted Faculty



Almost 40 faculty members were celebrated during the 2023 Faculty Tenure and Promotion Recognition event held at the Fiterman Hall rooftop terrace on October 3. President **Anthony E. Munroe** and Senior Vice President and Provost **Erwin Wong** congratulated the group and BMCC Cabinet members, department chairs and staff joined the festive event.



Nathali Ocampo-Lopez



Ademola Opansewo



Lea Reimer

Athlete Scholars Excel in Fall 2023

Fall 2023 was a spectacular semester for BMCC athlete scholars. Freshman **Lea Reimer** captured the women's cross-country program's first-ever CUNY Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) Community College Individual Championship. Both men's and women's soccer teams took the 2023 CUNYAC Community College Championship. 2023 CUNYAC Community College Soccer Championship Most Valuable Player honors went to Sophomore **Abdul Mumin Seidu** (Men's) and Freshman **Nathali Ocampo-Lopez** (Women's). Freshman **Mamadou Diallo** was named CUNYAC Community College Men's Soccer Rookie of the Year, and Head Coach **Modou Seck** picked up Conference Coach of the Year honors. Sophomores **Ademola Opansewo** and **Abdul Mumin Seidu**, along with freshman **As Mouhamadou Ndiaye**, were named CUNYAC Community College All-Star selections.

Achievers Celebrate Academic Success

BMCC celebrated 58 newly inducted and returning 4.0 Achiever students at a recognition mixer on September 19 in Richard Harris Terrace. The Achievers is a cohort program of students who have earned a 4.0 GPA after completing at least 12 academic credits. The event featured congratulatory remarks from President Anthony E. Munroe and Provost and Senior Vice President Erwin Wong. Achievers **Anthony Chimbay** and **Irvin Aquino**, as well as SGA President **Jennifer Marquez**, offered closing remarks.



Student Performance Artist Finds Her Voice

Music major **Stephanie Marrow** enrolled at BMCC in Fall 2021, after working as a flight attendant and other ventures. She graduates in Spring 2024 and is a finalist for a BMCC/New York University Gallatin GUIDE transfer

scholarship. Meanwhile, in December she was featured performing her original song "Puzzle Piece" in a BMCC promotional advertisement that ran before screenings of "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé," in theaters across New York City.



Music major Stephanie Marrow was featured in a BMCC advertisement performing her original song "Puzzle Piece."

Panther Partner Students and Mentors Celebrate First Gen College Day

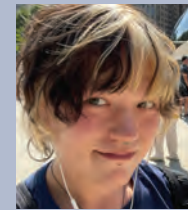


On November 8, the BMCC Panther Partners program celebrated First Gen College Day, an annual event launched by the Center for First-Generation Student Success along with the Council for

Opportunity in Education. Each year, over 100 students are served by the BMCC Panther Partners program, which matches students who are first in their family to earn a college degree in the U.S., with a staff or faculty mentor.



Computer Science major **Florian Charles** is the first BMCC student to receive a \$10,000 scholarship from Garden of Dreams Inspire.



Writing and Literature major **Kaya Fader** (left) and Computer Science major **Amanda Loeung** each received \$1,000 as this year's Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholars, an opportunity made available by their membership in Phi Theta Kappa, BMCC's Alpha Kappa Chapter.



Psychology major **Isadora Lima** received \$19,000 Presidential Scholarship from Pace University, where she begins attending in Spring 2024.

Music major **Malik Jardine** (below) performed with acclaimed French organist **Thomas Ospital** in an organ master class event on October 25 at The Brick Presbyterian Church in Manhattan.



Business Administration major **Barbara Abreu Biceis**, Ethnic and Race Studies major **Joely Castillo**, Computer Science major **Anthony Chimbay**, Liberal Arts major **Shayla Rose Jimenez** and Psychology major **Genesis Torres** were named Kaplan Educational Foundation Leadership scholars.



Students at the 2023 Founders Festival and Holiday Market.



Urban Male Leadership Academy and Conexiones & Connections Barbershop Talk event in May.



Student at February 2023 Office of Student Activities Club Fair.



Student plays guitar at Club Fair.



Nursing students learn skills in lab with human patient simulator.





Counseling Center Staff share details about available services at Wellness Fun Fest.



BMCC student meeting representative from a four-year college at Transfer Fair.

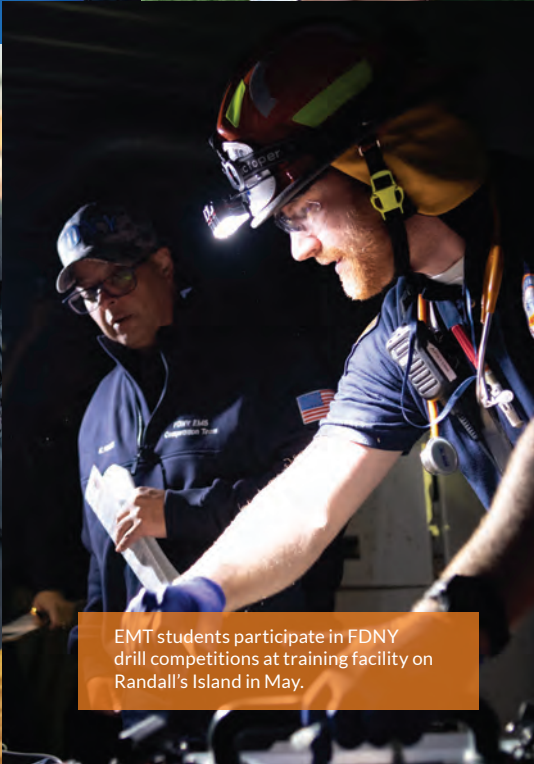


BMCC Commons Spring 2024

Table tennis tournament competition during Asian Heritage Month in April.



In October, BMCC's Women's Soccer team won the CUNYAC Championship. Photo by Brandon Koodish



EMT students participate in FDNY drill competitions at training facility on Randall's Island in May.



Members of the Panther Partner program picked up their graduation stoles at May celebratory event.

BMCC Hosts National Apprenticeship Week Event

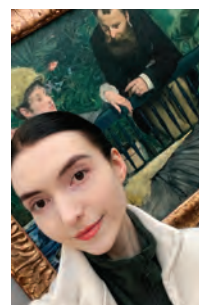


On November 15, at Borough of Manhattan Community College's Fiterman Hall, more than 100 city officials, corporate leaders and educators filled the 14th floor conference room for the 2023 National Apprenticeship Week–New York City Event Brief. The early evening gathering celebrated companies that participate in apprenticeship programs while also raising awareness among the business community members—specifically those who may be considering apprenticeships as part of their talent recruitment strategy—of the transformative, tangible benefits such programs provide. In addition to BMCC, the event was organized by the companies Accenture, Aon

and Zurich North America as well as the New York Jobs CEO Council (Jobs Council). Speakers and presenters included Zurich North America's Chief Operating Officer for National Accounts **Jeff Gallimore**, Jobs Council Chief Learning Officer **Karrin Wilks** and BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe. In his welcoming remarks, BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe told the group that BMCC was committed to the opportunity apprenticeships provide. "At BMCC, we are committed to creating exciting career pathways that help our students connect their education to career goals in ways that will offer them opportunities to sustain their families and build our economy," said President Munroe.

Art Major Wins \$62K Scholarship to Holyoke

Art Foundations/Art History 2023 alumna **Johanna Graedler** has been awarded a \$62,000 scholarship through the Frances Perkins Program at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. "I couldn't have gotten this far without the support of my Art Professors **Maya Jiménez** and **Yan Yang**, as well as my parents," says Graedler. "I also owe a lot to the Transfer Scholars Network program at BMCC. They set up zoom meetings with admissions officers and helped me send applications to more than a dozen colleges." She explains that having grown up in Germany, advanced degrees were never an option. "We have three types of high schools there, and only the top tier schools make you eligible to apply



to college. They sort you in elementary school, and when I was in 4th grade, the head teacher made the call and put me in line for the mid-level high school, not the top one." After graduation, she says,

"My only option was to consider vocational training, such as preparing to work in a grocery store, but I wanted to go to college and study art history." In 2018, Graedler made a trip by herself to New York City. "I was 19 about to turn 20. I stayed at a really shoddy Air B&B in Hell's Kitchen. While I was there, I went to an open house at BMCC, Hunter and Baruch." Graedler returned to Germany and learned English, she says, through movies and podcasts like NPR. She started classes remotely at BMCC in Fall 2020 and completed her associate degree online. Her parents, who were dubious of her plans at first, have second-mortgaged their home to help with her living expenses as she attends Holyoke, one of the top liberal arts schools in the country. "I am so grateful to my parents, my professors, the staff at TSN and the Frances Perkins Program at Holyoke for believing in me," Graedler says.



"My student just graduated from BMCC, overcoming issues that extended her journey to over 20 years. Now she's been accepted at Hunter. Her perseverance is inspiring."

—Academic Literacy and Linguistics Professor
Juliet Emanuel, 37 years at BMCC

BMCC President Munroe and SUNY Empire University President Vollendorf Sign Academic Transfer Agreement



BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe and SUNY Empire State University President Lisa Vollendorf

On October 26, BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe and SUNY Empire State University President **Lisa Vollendorf** signed a memo of understanding and transfer agreement for the BMCC/SUNY Empire University Pathways Transfer program. BMCC graduates in Business, Paramedic and other majors can transfer to a bachelor's degree program at SUNY Empire that blends online, independent and in-person studies. On December 7, President Munroe and University of Turin Rector **Stefano Guena** signed

a Statement of Shared Interest linking BMCC with the University of Turin, a public research university with around 80,000 students in Turin, Italy. On January 8, President Munroe and University of Albany President **Havidán Rodríguez** signed a partnership agreement that will enable BMCC graduates to seamlessly transfer to a bachelor's degree program at UAlbany. These agreements add to more than a dozen umbrella partnerships and over 50 articulation agreements that BMCC provides.

Washington Market Park Basketball Courts Refurbished

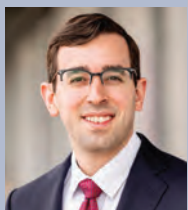
On September 8, a ribbon-cutting ceremony opened the newly refurbished Washington Market Park Basketball Courts next to the BMCC campus at 199 Chambers Street. Danish menswear brand Les Deux invested \$70,000 to refurbish the two basketball courts as part of the New York City Parks' Creative Courts initiative. VP for Student Affairs **Marva Craig** joined NYC Parks Manhattan Borough Commissioner **Anthony Perez**, City Council member **Christopher Marte** and representatives from Les Deux, as well as lower Manhattan community members at the event. The basketball courts are open to the public from 8 a.m. until dusk.



Danish menswear brand Les Deux invested \$70,000 to refurbish Washington Market Park Basketball Courts next to BMCC campus.

Daniel Katz Heads Up BMCC Office of Diplomatic Engagement and Training

Daniel H. Katz, Ph.D., has joined BMCC as Director of the college's inaugural Office of Diplomatic Engagement and Training (ODET) located in the BMCC Center for Continuing



Education and Workforce Development. ODET's mission is to provide training and build capacity for diplomats, consular officials and others throughout New York and beyond, as well as providing opportunities for faculty, students and staff to engage with the diplomatic community in New York City.

Four Students Win \$1,000 Each in BMCC Blackstone LaunchPad Competition

Digital Marketing major **Eric Salim Marlie**, as well as Business Administration majors **Afia Mubasshira**, **Leilani Highsmith** and **Danilsa Sala** each won \$1,000 in an annual virtual competition conducted by the BMCC Blackstone LaunchPad program co-led by Business Management Deputy Chair **Roderick Shane Snipes**. The students' project ideas ranged from a shoe-cleaning business to a 3D printer of recycled plastic.

Manhattan EOC Holds Partnership Breakfast

The SUNY Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) held its Partnership Breakfast in the art gallery of the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building in Harlem on October 4. MEOC Executive Director **Anthony Watson** spoke

on the importance of working with longstanding partners and forging new ones. New York State Assembly Member **Al Taylor** also spoke, as did MEOC alumnae **Jessica Cuba**, **Latricia Mercer** and **Stephanie McGraw**, who credit their time at MEOC with turning their career goals into reality.



Grow With Google Career Readiness Party a Huge Success

More than 250 students attended the BMCC Center for Career Development's Grow with Google career readiness block party October 11 in Richard Harris Terrace. "This program teaches students how to use Google workspace and other digital skills many companies expect job applicants to have," said **Elizabeth Yan**, IT Coordinator at the BMCC Center for Career Development.

Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation Awards \$250 Million to Project Impact

Project Impact at BMCC has been awarded an 18-month, \$250,000 grant by the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation. Now in its fifth year, Project Impact provides a close-knit cohort environment for students who are completing their high school equivalency exam, are first-generation college students or low-income. About 80% of Project Impact students identify as having been impacted by the justice system.

Michelle Hernandez Is AVP of Communications, Marketing and External Affairs

As Assistant Vice President of Communications, Marketing and External Affairs in the Office of Public Affairs, **Michelle Hernandez** will provide strategic vision and direction



for BMCC's public and external affairs. AVP Hernandez will also serve as a trusted advisor to the Office of the President in managing executive and crisis communications and lead communications, marketing and external affairs in the areas of government relations, community relations and civic engagement.

BMCC Invest in a Future Gala Applauds Scholars and Supporters

The BMCC Foundation Board of Directors annual fundraising gala was held October 25 at Tribeca 360 in lower Manhattan. Emceed by BMCC Foundation Board member **Jessica Gatti**, the event honored **Rob Fauber**, CEO at Moody's Corporation, which has welcomed BMCC students into

its global business ecosystem through internships and mentoring experiences. Long-time BMCC supporter **Elizabeth Butson** introduced Tony Award-winning playwright and poet **Lemon Andersen**, and BMCC Foundation scholars shared their stories. The evening closed with a vocal performance by students from

BMCC's music program. As BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe said in his remarks, "'Start Here, Go Anywhere,' the BMCC tagline, resounds with our belief that students from every borough of New York City and many countries around the world are the answer to tomorrow's questions."

Continued on next page



Public and Nonprofit Administration major Nanyamka Mead speaks at BMCC Foundation Board of Directors annual fundraising gala event.

BMCC Invest in a Future Gala Applauds Scholars and Supporters

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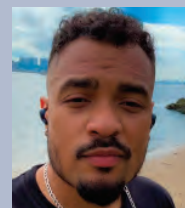
(L-R): Board Members Jessica Gatti and Elizabeth Butson; Board Chair Anthony J. Portannese; Honoree, Moody's Corp. CEO Rob Fauber, and BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe.

Calling All BMCC Alumni— Especially Those Going Back Decades!

Share your memories and your "Start Here, Go Anywhere" story with the BMCC community. Contact Interim VP for Institutional Advancement Karen Wilson-Stevenson at alumni@bmcc.cuny.edu



Poet, spoken word artist and actor Lemon Andersen at 2023 Gala event.



Kevin Jason Smith (Communication Studies, '23) was featured in profiles of Fall 2023 students at the Columbia School of General Studies.



Linda Phinazee (Nursing, '78) earned her Doctorate in Nursing at Phoenix University in Fall 2023.

BMCC Nursing Alumna Dr. **Sandra Lindsay**, the first American to receive the original COVID-19 vaccine, made history again as the first to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech 2023-24 COVID-19 vaccine, September 13.



Danielle Nyla Sostre (Theatre, '17) is now appearing in the ensemble cast of "Shucked" on Broadway.



"Over the last 28 years I've watched BMCC develop services, evening/weekend classes and much more, to support our diverse and talented students. It is a privilege to teach them."

—English Professor
Caroline Pari-Pfisterer,
28 years at BMCC



A Work-Study Student and English Adjunct Evolve Into College Leaders and Guide BMCC's Growth Over Decades



BMCC was founded in 1963, and on this 60-Year Anniversary, members of the College community are sharing their memories and contributions to BMCC's growth. In 1978, Marva Craig entered BMCC as a Liberal Arts major and work-study employee in the College's midtown location. In 1984, a year after BMCC

had moved to its 199 Chambers Street campus in lower Manhattan, Erwin Wong joined BMCC as an adjunct in the English Department. Now Vice President of Student Affairs Marva Craig and Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Erwin Wong head up departments of the College that ensure both the

intellectual and personal growth of students. Together, serving students with academic opportunities and degree offerings, as well as services and activities, they have helped guide BMCC's growth from a few hundred students in 1963 to close to 17,500 today, and from a handful of degree programs to more than 60, and counting.



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199 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007-1097
www.bmcc.cuny.edu

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In Memoriam

We profoundly mourn the loss of our BMCC community members. These include Academic Literacy and Linguistics (ALL) Professor **Lanny Lester**, who joined BMCC in 1987 and died in September 2023. “We are grateful to Professor Lester for his devoted service to the College, to our department, and to the countless students he inspired,” said ALL Chair John Beaumont.

Biology Professor **Man-Lim Yu** taught at BMCC for 49 years, retiring in 2018. “As chairperson from 1971 to 1980, Manny guided the Science Department through troublesome times, and his teaching ability made him a popular professor,” said Science Chair Joel Hernandez.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Sharmela Bisram
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Cynthia G. Blayer
WEB CONTENT MANAGER

Louis Chan
DIGITAL MARKETING SPECIALIST

Rob Gizis
GRAPHIC AND MULTIMEDIA DESIGNER

Thu Yein (Kai) Htan
MEDIA ASSISTANT

Cody Lyon
STAFF WRITER

Lynn McGee
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

David Pangburn
VIDEOGRAPHER

Roslynn Pieters
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

Samantha Ramirez
CUNY OFFICE ASSISTANT

Thomas Volpe
DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS

Jeff Wong
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Diamonte Wright
MEDIA INTERN

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