

August 29, 2017

Chancellor James B. Milliken
The City University of New York
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Chancellor Milliken,

BMCC continues to make progress regarding the strategic objectives and outcomes established by the entire college community during the development of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan: Reaching Greater Levels. To further prioritize the operational planning process, the College Cabinet identified seven plan outcomes to focus on during the 2016-2017 academic year. The accomplishments and challenges listed below reflect these yearly priorities.

Additionally, the College completed the first year of its decennial self-study. Guided by the revised operational planning processes and institutional effectiveness system, we have completed a draft of the entire self-study report. As we move into our visit year and prepare for the Visiting Team Chair visit in November, we continue to make improvements that positively impact student learning and the environment for student success in alignment with the University and College missions and our institutional and strategic goals.

ACHIEVEMENTS

BMCC has focused on improving developmental education outcomes for many years now, starting with the establishment of Quantway courses. Our most recent results indicate that students taking the two Quantway Courses are nearly twice as likely to pass their course as students taking comparable traditional developmental math courses. For students who did not pass their developmental coursework the first time, the College offers short-term immersion programs that have proved to be very successful. In addition to increasing pass rates, which exempt students from additional developmental coursework within that subject, overall retention rates are around 90% for the following semester for students taking advantage of the immersion program.

In addition to providing greater assistance with passing developmental courses, BMCC faculty and administration have focused on eliminating the need for developmental coursework through the growth of co-requisite courses. These courses combine higher level developmental courses with credit-bearing gateway courses to decrease the number of non-credit courses taken and increase the speed in which students accumulate credits. These courses, like English 100.5 (a combination of English 95 and English 101), have resulted in higher pass rates than developmental courses as well as higher retention and persistence outcomes

The College has also increased learning opportunities for its students over the past year. These include:

- The addition of three new majors – Gender and Women’s Studies, Music, and Public Health;
- The addition of an online program – Associate of Arts in Modern Languages; and
- The establishment of a number of new articulation agreements, which brings the total to more than 90.

In addition to these changes, the College has continued to expand research opportunities for students. A new Social Science research lab was opened and the College hosted its largest student research symposium, with more than 200 student presentations this past year.

BMCC is committed to preparing students for future success, whether for the purpose of transfer or the world of work. The College has increased the number and quality of opportunities for students to receive preparation for their careers over the past year. In continuation of our partnership with Year Up, the College increased the number of students participating in the program and determined that more than 90% of the students who worked with one of the 19 top-tier companies in New York City were still enrolled. BMCC is currently the only community college participating in the CUNY Service Corps and more than 80% of students reported gains in workplace skills, career knowledge, civic engagement, personal development, and social/professional networks. Through the efforts of the Office of Internships and Experiential Learning, we have also increased the number of internships available to students to 225, which represents a one year increase of approximately 15%.

Finally, to ensure that our academic programs are regularly informed of occupational changes that could impact curriculum, 11 programs now have established industry advisory boards. In addition to these boards, Academic Affairs and the Adult and Continuing Education divisions are working with academic departments to create stackable credentials. These non-credit to credit pathways allow for a more seamless transition into degree programs and BMCC now has six pathways for students to choose from.

These accomplishments in regards to streamlining the development sequence, expanding opportunities and access to academic programs, and providing relevant, exceptional workforce preparation support has resulted in some noteworthy study outcomes this past year. These include:

- Ranking in the top 10 in the number of Associate degrees in 5 different programs;
- Ranking #10 nationally and #1 in New York in Associate degrees awarded to students of color;
- The largest graduating class in the history of the College;
- A 3-year graduation rate of 19.3% - which is the highest in the history of the College and reflects five straight years of improvement; and
- A 3-year graduation rate of nearly 60% for our ASAP students.

BMCC continues to experience significant student success due to the inspirational dedication of our diverse students and the phenomenal efforts and commitment of our faculty, staff, and administration. It is largely these factors that have fueled our success in spite of some significant challenges. The greatest of these challenges is felt directly by our students, that being their financial need. Approximately 90% of our students attended high schools with free lunches and more than 70% are Pell-Eligible, however, the recent Equality of Opportunity Project highlighted the true level of financial need felt by our students. According to the report, only 29 of the 748 community college enroll a higher percentage of students with high financial need. In fact, only 16 of the colleges enroll a higher percentage of students from families in the lowest economic quintile. Despite these numbers, the study, which tracked students over 15 years found the following:

- 6.1% of BMCC graduates were in the highest income quintile by age 34;
- The average salary for female graduates was among the highest for community colleges nationally; and
- 41% of students moved up at least two income quintiles.

Overall, BMCC ranked #3 nationally for economic mobility among community colleges. These results are impacted by the financial assistance provided by the College – assistance which allows our students to continue with their studies in spite of their challenging life circumstances. This assistance includes:

- More than 530 students receiving scholarships of more than 1.3 million dollars;
- An emergency loan program supplemented by Petrie (nearly 80% of recipients have graduated, transferred, or are still enrolled);
- The Open Educational Resources program, which was launched this past year with the goal of decreasing or eliminating text book costs;
- Expansion of the tuition waiver program for students nearing completion of their degrees; and
- Services provided by the Single Stop program to assist with the financial burdens that force students to leave the College.

As a result of this support, which results in less than 10% of our students graduating with debt, the College maintains higher than average retention, transfer, and graduation rates than most urban community colleges.

CHALLENGES

Based on accepted general principles and best practices within higher education, institutions of higher education are expected to have a target amount of square foot based on the numbers of faculty, staff, and students located within a building. Based on the total foot traffic within 199 Chambers, estimates indicate that we require an additional 800,000 square feet of space to come up to the expected space per occupant. To put this in perspective, our College would need space equivalent to either one additional 199 Chambers Street building or two additional Fiterman Halls. This lack of space significantly impacts our ability to add academic programming and student support services. We continue to work with the Office of Facilities Planning, Construction, and Management to pursue various options for increasing the available space.

CONCLUSION

As a result of our recent comprehensive strategic planning process in which more than 400 faculty, staff, students, and administrators invested their time, the College established a Strategic Planning Outcome that charges us with being a leading community college. We are moving towards realization of this outcome as our national profile is rising, our faculty, staff, and students are receiving more accolades and honors, and we are integrating high-impact teaching practices, cutting edge support programming, and advanced data analysis for the purpose of enhancing student success. We have achieved a great deal this year as we continue to take on and successfully address our challenges. As we document our positive impact on the lives of our students and our community in our Middle States Self-Study, we will continue to engage the college community, follow and develop best practices associated with student learning, and use our strategic plan to reach even greater levels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Antonio Pérez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Antonio Pérez
President