

**Bronx Community College**  
**PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY – OCTOBER 2017**  
*Thomas A. Isekenegbe, Ph.D.*

---

We are halfway through the Fall 2017 academic year and I couldn't be more pleased to share all of the good things happening on campus and with Bronx Community College in the news. I hope everyone is having a good semester. It has been a busy and productive year thus far. This week winds down the celebration of our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with our 2017 Foundation Gala on Wednesday, October 25, 2017. The Sunset Cocktail Reception, held in our Hall of Fame for Great Americans, could not have been more beautiful if it was painted. Dinner followed in a completely transformed Colston Hall.

This year's Gala theme was Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Future. To that end, the Lifetime Leadership Award was granted to Professor and Bronx Community College Alumna Deborah Morris, the Chairperson of the award-winning Nursing and Allied Health Sciences Program. The Visionary Leadership Awards were given to the producers of "Time: The Kalief Browder Story" (Jenner Furst, Michael Gasparra, Julia Willoughby Nason, and Nick Sandow). The Legacy Award went to Montefiore and Dr. Philip O. Ozuah, Montefiore Chief Operating Officer. It was an excellent night to take a break from the normal daily business of the college and celebrate the amazing works of those at and around BCC. I look forward to announcing the amount of money raised by our Foundation this year to support student scholarships. Thank you to all those who participated in organizing, planning, preparing for, and hosting this night. It truly did Honor Our Past.

As we move forward, we will continue to focus on Celebrating Our Future. It was once said that, "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today." Celebrating Our Future continues at Bronx Community College with the thoughtful preparation and delivery of high-quality education and resources to our students. The "35 by 65" Challenge was issued at our Fall 2017 Faculty and Staff Convocation. Celebrating Our Future means that we have to help many more of our students to become successful. I have asked Provost and Senior Vice President Claudia Schrader to develop activities that will help meet (and hopefully exceed) this challenge. Additional details are forthcoming. It takes all hands, all minds, and all hearts, working together to reach our goals.

You can learn more about where we are currently in the Annual Report 2017: *Celebrating 60 Years of Service to Our Community*. This year's theme is "Looking Back, Moving Forward", which dovetails with our Gala Theme. Should you need or want them, copies of this report are available on the second floor of Philosophy Hall in the main office of the Division of Advancement, Communications and External Relations.

We have already begun laying the groundwork for student success and higher retention. In July 2017, we received an award of \$899,490 from the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technology Education program to fund a three-year program at the BCC Geospatial Center of the CUNY Crest Institute. Chancellor's Research Fellowships were awarded to Susan Amper in the English Department, Giulia Guarnieri in the Modern Languages Department, William deJong-Lambert in the History Department, and Cormac O'Sullivan in the Mathematics and Computer Science Department. Members of the faculty have been actively researching and presenting their scholarly and creative works here at BCC and around the world. Debra Gonsler, Chairperson of the Communications, Arts and Sciences Department, received her fifth Emmy for her work in *Beauty of Their Dreams*, a documentary focused on the struggle to educate girls and women in developing nations. Thank you to everyone contributing to the academic excellence of our institution and improving pedagogy. These are exciting times for the college and I'm glad to be here with you as we begin to climb our great next steps.

In addition to the stellar work of our faculty, I would like to sincerely thank the members of Physical Plant Services, the Business Office, Information Technology, Public Safety, and others for their work on the major capital projects currently taking place across the campus. The \$3.8M Alumni Gym Swimming Pool Renovation project is expected to be completed by the end of this year. This will allow us to expand our

Health, Physical Education, and Recreation offerings to include swimming classes and hopefully, a swim team. The \$822,000 Nichols Hall ASAP Advisement Offices project is also slated for completion by the end of this year. This renovation significantly expands our capacity to serve the ever-growing number of ASAP students at BCC and provide them with the necessary resources and support to guide them through their education. The \$27M Campus-wide Utility Upgrades – Phase IV project has an anticipated completion date of 2018. This will provide the campus with appropriately-tempered hot and chilled water, updated electrical and telecommunication lines, and involves the construction of a new electrical service building. This project will improve the experience of anyone visiting the campus, using electronics on campus, or trying to communicate with the campus. Plans to upgrade the telephone system are forthcoming as well.

I am pleased to share that The Chronicle of Higher Education ranked Bronx Community College 6<sup>th</sup> among United States 2-year public institutions in Student-Mobility Rate. This is a measure of the percentage of all students in a birth cohort at a particular college whose parents were in the bottom 20% for household income, and who reached the top 20% percent for individual earnings. One way BCC contributes to the increase in student mobility is by providing a pathway to graduation and continued education at 4-year institutions and beyond. The Graduation Project and Reverse Transfer Outreach Initiatives Program held a mixer on October 19, 2017. They will be hosting a Graduation Degree Completion Workshops on November 16, 2017, in Roscoe Brown Room 311A at 11am, noon, 1pm, and 2pm. Their Council Retreat is also scheduled for December 8, 2017, in Roscoe Brown Room 311A/B from 10am-4pm. Please reach out to Assistant Registrar Karen Thomas for more information. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Karen and the Reverse Transfer and Graduation Project teams for all of their efforts towards increasing the retention and graduation rates of our students.

On October 2, 2017, the CUNY Board of Trustees' Committee on Academic Program, Policy, and Research approved BCC's proposal for an AAS and Certificate in Cybersecurity and Networking. This approval represents a major step on the road to full approval. The next step is securing NYSED approval, which we hope to have by Spring 2018. This would allow for a Fall 2018 rollout of the new program. Thank you for the work already completed by all those involved in the Offices of Academic Success, Information Technology, and Public Safety. I look forward to congratulating them in the Spring.

In other good news, the Leaders of Promise Scholarship, sponsored by the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, recognizes 200 Phi Theta Kappa members with awards totaling \$200,000 each year. This year's recipients were selected by a panel of independent judges from nearly 1,000 applicants. Bronx Community College student Anthony Zapata was selected as one of the 2017 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholars and scholarship recipients.

In support of Caribbean and Mexican hurricane disaster relief, the BCC community donated over 380 in-kind items. Donations were sent to drop off locations throughout the Bronx; including The Consulate General of Antigua and Barbuda in New York and El Maestro Cultural Center. These groups have agreed to absorb the cost of shipping to Antigua, Barbuda, Dominica, and Puerto Rico. For countries that do not accept in-kind donations (Mexico), financial contributions are being collected in the Bursar's Office. Emotional support is available in the Office of Personal Counseling for any students affected by the recent hurricanes and earthquake. Students can be referred to 718-289-5223 or Loew Hall 430. NYC Well is also providing support at 888-NYCWELL or [nyc.gov/nycwell](http://nyc.gov/nycwell). Any faculty or staff experiencing distress can receive assistance from our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). More information is available online at <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/ohrm-updates/2015/05/18/new-vendor-for-cuny-worklife-program/> or by contacting the Department of Human Resources in South Hall.

If you have any items you would like considered for inclusion in future President's Reports, please email Karla Renee Williams, Deputy to the President, at [karla.williams@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:karla.williams@bcc.cuny.edu).