

# President's Report to the Bronx Community College Community

Summer 2017



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As this beautiful summer comes to a close, I would like to welcome each of you back to Bronx Community College for another great Fall semester. Since the end of the Spring 2017 semester, we have hosted ongoing summer classes, various camps, meetings, and a number of other interesting activities on campus. It will be nice to get back to the main business of the college and see the large body of students and bustle that I look forward to in the Fall. I am sure you are equally eager to welcome back our new and returning students on Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup> for the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester.

We are halfway through our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year and what a year it has been. Our 60<sup>th</sup> Celebration kicked off with the awarding of a New York City Council Proclamation honoring BCC on April 5<sup>th</sup>. They continued with on-campus celebrations on May 11<sup>th</sup> as BCC students, faculty, and staff showed their pride by wearing green and gold, designing sidewalk chalk art, tweeting, participating in student raffles and the African parade, and wrapping up at Colston Hall for birthday cake. In honor of this milestone, we launched the Distinguished Alumni Award and I am pleased to announce that five (5) alums have been chosen and will be announced at the Fall 2017 Convocation on Friday, September 8, 2017. I look forward to seeing all faculty and staff there for the debut of a special challenge and to welcome the newest members of the BCC family.

The executive team and I have spent much of this summer plan for the second half of our Jubilee Year and looking for ways to effectuate meaningful positive change over the 2016-2017 academic year and beyond. A Cabinet retreat was held on June 9<sup>th</sup> in Snow Hall to review the year, discuss the college's financial picture, and develop goals, objectives, and plans for the 2017-2018 academic year. The Senior Vice President and Provost also held a retreat for members of the Academic and Student Success team to focused more narrowly on a review of the 2015-2016 academic year and planning for ways to increase student success through better service and increased retention and graduation. Additional details from both retreats will be shared in greater detail with the College community at the upcoming Fall Convocation.

This semester, we will be continuing Chats with the President. This time is scheduled for students, faculty, staff, and members of the BCC community who wish to hold a brief conversation on any subject related to BCC. All appointments are limited to 25 minutes and must be scheduled in advance. To arrange an appointment, please email my Confidential Executive Assistant, Amirah Cousins Melendez, at [amirah.cousins@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:amirah.cousins@bcc.cuny.edu). The specific subject of your meeting request must be shared prior to scheduling. The dates for the Fall semester are:

- Friday, September 1<sup>st</sup> from 1-3pm
- Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup> from 9-10:30am
- Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1-3pm
- Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup> from 9-11am
- Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> from 1-3pm

**FALL ENROLLMENT:** Please join me in congratulating the Offices of Admissions, Registrar, Advisement, and Financial Aid. These powerhouse teams have been very busy recruiting, advising, and registering new and



returning students for the Fall semester. At this time, we are paced to meet all internal BCC targets and to meet the CUNY targets for enrollment for the Fall semester. These offices have utilized as many communication methods as possible to reach the greatest number of students. Now that the students are in the door, we need to continue to focus our efforts on the retention and graduation of as many students as we can. This means focusing on remediation and building stronger supports to identify the needs of our students and meet them proactively.

**NEW GOVERNANCE:** The 2016-2017 academic year brought about an updated Governance Plan. This Plan was adopted by the CUNY Board of Trustees in January 2017. I would like to extend my thanks to the members of Senate, Faculty Council, Student Government Association, and all other participants who were instrumental in engaging in thoughtful dialogue and debate about the Plan. Making changes such as these is no easy feat.

**MIDDLE STATES:** This time last year we celebrated the Middle States Commission Higher Education (MSCHE) acceptance of our monitoring report, which was submitted on April 1, 2016. Our next accreditation visit is scheduled for the 2018-2019 academic year and BCC continues to actively plan. The Steering Committee for the MSCHE Self-Study and Evaluation visit was established this past academic year with Jordi Getman-Eraso and Irene R. Delgado serving as Co-Chairs. Simone Rodriguez-Dorestant, Manny Lopez, Alexander Ott, Robert Beuka, Laro Lawton, Paul Jaijairam, Nancy Ritze, Shylaja Akaraju, Jessenia Paoli, Gina Galligan, and Angela Wambugu Cobb comprise the remainder of the Committee. Thank you to all who have agreed to serve on either the Steering Committee or one of the Standards Committees. This work cannot be done without the help of all hands and minds.

**COMMENCEMENT:** BCC's 57<sup>th</sup> Commencement Ceremony was held on Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> on Ohio Field on a gorgeous day. Following Commencement, members of the planning team met to debrief and begin to plan in advance for the 58<sup>th</sup> ceremonies. Suggestions are always welcome and you can feel free to reach out to Manny Lopez or Irene Delgado with ideas for ways in which Commencement and Honors Convocation can be improved.

**GOALS FOR 2017-2018:** I have asked each of the Vice Presidents to identify goals for the upcoming academic year and I have set out five (5) goals that align with BCC and CUNY Strategic Goals. They are as follows:

- Goal 1: Develop and Maintain a Strong Leadership Team and an Effective College
- Goal 2: Increase Student Retention, Success, Learning, and Completion
- Goal 3: Maximize Utilization, Allocation and Evaluation of Fiscal, Technological and Facilities Resources to Support Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success
- Goal 4: Support and Enhance Human Resource Development, Systems, and Processes
- Goal 5: Develop and Expand Community and Business Partnerships

These goals were set in response to the Student Enrollment, Performance, and Persistence Metrics, and in response to the concerns and suggestions of students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders. We assessed retention and graduation rates, enrollment trends by departments and programs, new admissions trends by department and program, graduation trends by departments and programs, graduation survey results on employment status, and course pass rate trends by department. We discussed ways in which faculty and staff could be supported to a greater extent by the BCC administration. This included a review of the COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey results. Through the College-wide Personnel & Budget Committee, we developed faculty guidelines for reappointment, tenure, and promotion and templates for curriculum vitae that can be used for both faculty and CLT. We hope that increased transparency in many



areas will allow faculty and staff to focus on the main goal of Bronx Community College – the success and graduation of our students.

**SPRING 2017 FACULTY & STAFF SATISFACTION SURVEY:** A survey of Faculty and Staff Satisfaction was conducted again this past semester. It identified areas of the greatest satisfaction as Campus Culture, Instructional Environment, Support Services (Faculty and Staff), Services to Students, Personnel Resources, and Physical Environment (Walkways, Pedestrian Traffic Control, and Hallways). The survey also identified areas where we can seek improvements in the upcoming year. These include Academic Preparation of Students, Appropriate Use of Mobile Devices, Physical Environment (Bathrooms, Handicapped Accessibility, and Elevators), and Support for Scholarship and Collaboration. To address the areas needing improvement, I will be offering Presidential Grants again this academic year for ideas that support student success initiatives and research. We continue the bathroom renovation project and movement on funding requests for capital renovation projects. Additionally, the Division of Advancement, Communications and External Relations has nearly completed the search for a full time Grants Officer, who will assist the campus in identifying and seeking opportunities for scholarship and collaboration. This Division also continues to seek and provide scholarship opportunities for students and various grant opportunities for faculty and staff.

**FACILITIES AND IT:** There have been exciting technological advances on campus in 2017. In Spring 2017, the BCC Mobile App was completed and launched. To date, approximately 1,000 have registered to use the app. Please encourage students to register and use this helpful tool. We also continue to move forward with the website rebranding and relaunch. Designs and layouts have been chosen and you may have noticed them appearing on the existing website already. The rebranding team will continue to work with all divisions and departments to migrate existing information to the new site and format, as well as create new content to fit the needs of the new website. Also launching soon is the BCC Virtual Tour, which will allow a 360-degree interactive tour of the campus coupled with a guide highlighting features of the campus and our programming.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with technology initiatives on campus, please consider joining the Technology Oversight Committee or one of the newly-formed Community of Interest Technology Advisory Workgroups. These groups are working to revamp the Technology Planning Process and guide the College's IT strategy, monitor project progress, and report on efforts. A BCC Broadcast was sent out detailing the Workgroup focus areas on Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please email your name, contact information, and advisory workgroup preference(s) to [toc@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:toc@bcc.cuny.edu) by September 15<sup>th</sup>, if you would like to volunteer.

The next phase of scheduled Nichols Hall renovation to accommodate the expansion of ASAP programming on campus is nearing completion and will be ready for occupancy mid-September 2017. The space has been restored to maintain all of the original charm, while allowing for updates for modern office amenities. This renovation includes additional classroom space and accommodations for twenty-plus staff members.

**GRANTS & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:** Over the course of the 2016-2017 academic year, a number of awards were granted to BCC. Some notable awards include:

- Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. allocated \$500K, which has a state matching fund of \$500K (for a total of \$1 million dollars), for the renovation of The Hall of Fame Playhouse at Roscoe C. Brown Student Center. These improvements will provide a fully accessible route from the entrance to the exterior entrance of the Hall of Fame Playhouse through the lobby, and onto the stage. The project also includes related upgrades to the telecommunications, AV systems, signage and mechanical equipment.



- \$300K to purchase furniture and new equipment for the Child Development Center by The Dormitory Authority State of New York (DASNY).
- \$300K from the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation to provide emergency relief to students in need.
- \$200K from The Thompson Family Foundation.
- \$85K from The Luis and Rachel Rudin Foundation.
- \$55K from ConEdison, Inc.
- \$25K from the Lincoln Fund.
- \$15K from the New York Landmark Conservancy.

**ONGOING CAMPUS ACTIVITIES:** The soft launch of “We the People” - The Democracy Project interactive art installation and information center was held on Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. This Project aims to inform, engage, and support a political point of view without pressure. The interactive installation invites the BCC community to “Write the right,” in response to the prompt, “I have a right to...” and, after sticking their note to the sign, insert their pencil into holes drilled into the sign. With the climate across America heightening tensions for those who celebrate diversity, I want to remind and reassure you that Bronx Community College is a safe space. We will not, under any circumstances, tolerate the incitement of hate, bigotry, fear mongering, or violence of any kind here. We will remain vigilant in our protection of your safety and at all times create a space for learning, teaching, and working that is inclusive and open to the beautiful differences among us.

As we prepare for each month’s President’s Report, we want to hear about your good works and exciting projects! If you are involved in any BCC projects or activities that you would like shared with the campus community in upcoming President’s Reports, please email Deputy to the President Karla Renee Williams at [karla.williams@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:karla.williams@bcc.cuny.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

Another school year means new opportunities. I know that this year will be a great one. Remember that each of you is an inspiration – bringing new ideas and change to all those you encounter. You have the ability to impact our students and one another in profound ways. Each day that you set foot on this campus or reach out online is a chance to illuminate. Let’s make those days count together. Welcome back!

Best wishes,  
Thomas A. Isekenegbe, Ph.D.