

# BMCC Commons

Spring 2021

THE NEWSLETTER OF BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## BMCC Receives Game-Changing Donation of \$30 Million

MacKenzie Scott's unprecedented gift will take student success to new levels.



Students gather outside BMCC's Murray Building in lower Manhattan.

On December 15, 2020 in the open platform Medium, philanthropist, activist and author **MacKenzie Scott** announced she would donate more than \$4 billion in gifts to 384 organizations across all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington D.C.—including a \$30 million gift to Borough of Manhattan Community College, The City University of New York (BMCC/CUNY).

“I was moved to tears, at the news of this unprecedented gift. It set off tremendous gratitude, pride and enthusiasm around the college” said BMCC President **Anthony E. Munroe**. “This game-changing donation sends a powerful message of hope and validation to our college community and especially to our students, whose neighborhoods have endured the highest rates of COVID cases in the city, and who were disproportionately hit with pandemic-related economic fallout, causing devastating loss of family income.”

Citing the impact of COVID on low-income communities, Scott writes in her Medium piece, “This pandemic has been a wrecking ball in the lives of Americans already struggling. Economic losses and health outcomes alike have been worse for women, for people of color, and for people living in poverty.”

Scott's team identified grant recipients at organizations including those meeting basic needs, such as food banks and emergency relief funds;

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# BMCC Receives Donation of \$30 Million from MacKenzie Scott

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those providing debt relief and employment training, offering civil rights advocacy and legal defense, and those dedicated to creating higher education access for marginalized students.

As a federally identified Minority Serving Institution (MSI) and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), 39 percent of BMCC's 25,000 students are Hispanic and 33 percent, African American. In Spring 2019, almost 65 percent of BMCC students received federal financial aid such as Pell grants, based on family income, and over half are first in their families to attend college.

Raising the success rate for marginalized students is a strength for which BMCC has been recognized, nationally. In June 2020, BMCC was announced a finalist for the 2021 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of community colleges, especially those that enable students not just to complete college, but to succeed after graduation.

“This game-changing donation sends a powerful message of hope and validation to our college community.”

**ANTHONY E. MUNROE,  
PRESIDENT, BMCC**

The post-graduation success of BMCC students is reflected by BMCC's number-three ranking among two-year public colleges in raising student economic mobility, according to a 2017 Stanford University study that tracked students from nearly every U.S. college and measured their subsequent earnings against millions of anonymous tax filings and financial-aid records.

BMCC is also known for its agile approach to building student success,



MacKenzie Scott's gift will enable BMCC to scale up efforts addressing food insecurity.

a process that has involved hundreds of faculty and staff to identify student needs, design a response to meet those needs, assess student outcomes, redesign accordingly and scale up what works.

The \$30 million gift, Munroe says, “will enable BMCC to accelerate, in data-informed and strategic ways, efforts to raise retention and graduation rates; to address race, equity and inclusion; to examine gender equity; to nurture innovation in education, and ultimately, to more forcefully propel our students' upward economic mobility. In the long term, it will make it possible for us to scale up what we already know works—based on years of careful, systematic assessment—in terms of strengthening student success.”

In the short term, he says, the enormous infusion of funds will enable the college to more effectively address students' pressing immediate needs, from food insecurity to academic support.

According to Vice President for Student Affairs **Marva Craig**, “This generous gift could afford us the luxury of thinking beyond the cost of tuition and books to scaling up our most successful programs that have proven to be extremely effective in boosting student persistence and degree completion.”

The additional funding, she says, will allow BMCC “to feed many more food-insecure students, provide additional emergency grants, childcare services, and remove other barriers that make it difficult for students to continue their education.”

“BMCC students are among the best, the brightest and the most highly motivated students in higher education,” says Acting Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs **Erwin Wong**, and although they face challenges, “We know that when our students complete their

degrees they are very successful academically and professionally; building careers, earning life-sustaining wages and contributing to the economic growth of our country.”

That observation is backed by the fact that an average of 65 percent of BMCC graduates transfer to a four-year CUNY college, and others transfer to private colleges and universities including Vassar College, Cornell University, Columbia University and many others.

“This generous gift could afford us the luxury of thinking beyond the cost of tuition and books to scaling up our most successful programs.”

**MARVA CRAIG,  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR  
STUDENT AFFAIRS, BMCC**

The remarkable gift from MacKenzie Scott will also allow BMCC to expand successful initiatives and create new ones, Wong says, “so that all of our students will benefit and have the same opportunities as those



While 98 percent of BMCC courses are online, in-person classes follow strict safety guidelines.

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BMCC provides associate degree programs in paramedic, respiratory therapy, nursing and other healthcare fields.

attending an Ivy League institution. These funds will enable us to make our students' aspirations a reality."

The continuum of student success that reaches toward graduation and upward mobility in the years beyond that, begins with recruitment and enrollment. "With this grant from MacKenzie Scott, we can put equity in the forefront of all we do," says Vice President for Enrollment Management **Diane K. Walleser**. "This reinforces our goal to offer every student equal access and barrier-free enrollment as we prepare them for a rewarding college experience."

To start, the \$30 million gift will support the creation of the BMCC President's Fund for Excellence and Innovation, and the impact of that gift will extend beyond the college to the City of New York itself.

"As residents of New York City, BMCC graduates—and community college graduates, in general—increase their average lifetime earnings by over \$400,000 with an associate degree, and \$1 million with a baccalaureate," says Munroe. "As our city embarks on the long road to recovery from the most destructive pandemic any of us have witnessed, the impact of BMCC graduates will be profound."

That impact, says Craig, is not always something that can be quantified. "At BMCC, we educate the entire student; the student as an informed citizen, a compassionate community member, a peer-mentor, a

"When our students complete their degrees, they are very successful academically and professionally . . . and contribute to the economic growth of our country."

**ERWIN WONG,  
ACTING PROVOST AND  
SENIOR VP FOR ACADEMIC  
AFFAIRS, BMCC**

future leader." She points out that the groundbreaking example of Scott's recent gift, as well as her Giving Pledge of 2010—a commitment by some of the world's wealthiest people to donate the majority of their wealth to alleviate pressing societal needs—can inspire individuals at all economic levels.

"BMCC students in our cohort programs and other groups are always asked to give back," says Craig. "We expect them to tutor other students, to volunteer in their communities, to be mindful of their ability to make a life-changing impression on others. They will pay forward MacKenzie Scott's gift, not just by earning their degrees and starting careers that support our city's economy, but by bringing others up with them, and contributing to the society they will both inherit and make stronger."

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Faculty, Staff, Alumni and Friends of BMCC,

At BMCC, we hold ourselves accountable to supporting the success of each and every student, at every stage of their educational journey. Thanks to the generous \$30 million gift from philanthropist and activist MacKenzie Scott—and the support of all our funders—we are better able to provide our students with a world-class education and meaningful career exploration, alongside the vital services and diverse community that supports their goals.

We do this through our 2020–2025 strategic planning process, "Designing for Success: Taking What Works to Scale." From 2015 to 2020, this in-depth examination of every facet of BMCC was led by over 1,000 faculty and staff. It was built on the hard work of committees, focus groups and college-wide forums. It reflected insight gained through institutional reporting and predictive analytics.



Most of all, it was grounded in four priorities we have transitioned to the 2020–2025 strategic plan, as well as adding a fifth goal; one that addresses the economic hardship caused by the pandemic and embraces the role of community colleges in societal change.

The Designing for Success priorities for 2020–2025 are 1) to increase student completion rates, transfer and baccalaureate attainment; 2) to improve learning through culturally responsive pedagogy and support; 3) to expand career development leading to meaningful work with family-sustaining wages; 4) to achieve equity in student outcomes in a college community in which all members can thrive, and 5) to strengthen BMCC's role in creating an equitably thriving New York City.

Each staff and faculty member has a vital role in ensuring these priorities are met. Coming from our unique areas of expertise, we share a steadfast belief in the potential of our students, and an unwavering commitment to equity. That commitment is also expressed by our funders, from MacKenzie Scott to the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Heising-Simons Foundation, NBCUniversal News Group, Robin Hood Foundation and others. We are grateful for their support.

I invite you to visit the BMCC strategic planning website, [www.bmcc.cuny.edu/bmcc-strategic-plan-2020-2025](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/bmcc-strategic-plan-2020-2025). I look forward to working with you, as we scale up what works and dramatically raise student success. With MacKenzie Scott's support and that of all our funders, we can change more lives, faster, and advance our vital mission.

With Warm Regards,

Anthony E. Munroe, President  
Borough of Manhattan Community College  
The City University of New York



## Milestones



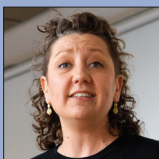
Modern Languages Professor **Sophie Mariñez** was named a CUNY 2020–2021

William P. Kelly Research Fellow.



**Anthony Watson**, Executive Director of the Manhattan Educational Opportunity

Center (MEOC), was selected by Schneps Media as a 2020 Honoree of the Kings of the Bronx award.



Associate Professor of Communications and Women's Studies Program Coordinator

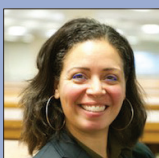
**Brianna Waychoff** was named General Co-Editor of the peer-reviewed journal, *Women's Studies Quarterly* and will serve alongside Co-Editor **Red Washburn**, Associate Professor of English and Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Kingsborough College.

Criminal Justice Professor **Jason W. Ostrowe** was appointed to the Scientific/Technical Advisory Committee of the World Trade Center Health Program, representing over 79,000 registered 9/11 responders.



Professor **Alvin Eng** in the Department of Speech, Communications and Theatre

Arts was awarded the New York State Council on the Arts/New York Foundation for the Arts Artist Fellowship in Nonfiction Literature for his memoir-in-progress.



The American Society of Criminology (ASC) Division on People of Color and Crime

(DPCC) has awarded the Teaching Award to Criminal Justice Professor **Shirley P. Leyro**.

## BMCC Partners With Hunter College to Enhance Academic Support for Asian American and Pacific Islander Students



Grant serves first-generation and other students.

The Center for Ethnic Studies and the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship (CETLS) at BMCC have partnered with the Hunter College Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) Project (HCAP) as part of a \$2 million, five-year U.S. Department of Education Cooperative grant.

For the past few years, BMCC Center for Ethnic Studies Professor **Linta Varghese** and Sociology Professor **Soniya Munshi** have collaborated with HCAP to connect BMCC students to AANAPISI programs at Hunter, while CETLS Director **Gina Cherry** has

shaped faculty development workshops. The new grant will widen BMCC's capacity to serve Asian American and Pacific Islander students, says Varghese, "including those who are first-generation college-goers from poor and working-class families and have limited English proficiency."

Together, BMCC and HCAP will support 200 transfer mentees and 100 student mentors. In addition, 800 Hunter and BMCC students will join free academic writing and speaking skills seminars, and 250 Hunter and BMCC faculty and staff will attend seminars on student-centered, culturally relevant pedagogies.

## Researchers Receive \$85K to Improve Teacher Training

New findings from BMCC faculty researchers **Jennifer Gilken**, **Jennifer Longley** and **Jillian Crosby** highlight the need to improve infant toddler teacher training through specialized curricula, skill-building experience and improving the credit-transfer process from two- to four-year programs.

The professors received \$85,000 from the Heising-Simons Foundation through the New York City Early Childhood Research Network to examine degree courses, career pathways, fieldwork and professional development opportunities for infant-toddler educators.

"The highest quality pre-K programs cannot mitigate the impacts of a low-quality infant-toddler program," says

Longley. "And if we don't have a high-quality, prepared workforce, we won't have high-quality programming."



BMCC Early Childhood Center.

## Innovative Pedagogy Recognized With Distinguished Teaching Award



Once a year the BMCC Distinguished Teaching Awards recognize faculty whose sustained excellence in teaching incites intellectual curiosity in students, inspires colleagues both within and outside their department, and demonstrates effective and innovative pedagogy. This academic year, 165 eligible faculty members were nominated from a total of more than 230 nominations from students. Due to the pandemic, the awards celebration, co-sponsored

by BMCC's Academic Senate, was broadcast through a Livestream on December 16. The 2020 winners are (L-R) Social Sciences Assistant Professor **Cara O'Connor**; Social Sciences Adjunct Professor **Kimora**; Accounting Professor **Joel Barker** and Mathematics Professor **Jae Ki Lee**. "We remain a community college with the emphasis on community stronger and more vital than ever," said Professor **Kenneth Levinson**, Chair of BMCC's Academic Senate.

## BMCC Celebrates Tenured Faculty

BMCC recognized 88 newly tenured and promoted faculty in November 2020 with a video that features congratulatory appearances from cabinet members, professors and lecturers. The faculty are from 16 academic departments at the college, as well as the BMCC Library. "You've worked hard under very difficult circumstances," said President Anthony E. Munroe. "Your scholarship has continued to lead the way in the academy and your commitment to our students is unparalleled." Associate Dean of Faculty **Jim Berg** said in a time of great challenges, it important to celebrate as well. "Although we couldn't bring everyone together to recognize the achievements of our faculty, we wanted to celebrate them publicly," said Berg.



## \$3 Million Conexiones Grant Benefits Hispanic Male and Low-Income Students

As the Fall 2020 semester began, BMCC was awarded a \$3 million Conexiones Title V Project Grant—\$600,000 a year for five years—to increase student engagement and help students connect to their career interests. The grant supports Latino males and low-income students not enrolled in special programs, as well as activities including peer support, professional development, leadership development and parent engagement. It also supports the refinement of student services from recruitment through graduation.



## NASPA Awards BMCC \$50K for Virtual Student Services

BMCC is one of 10 colleges and universities nationwide to win the Virtual Innovation Award: Excellence in Delivering Virtual Student Services from NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. Of those 10 institutions, BMCC is one of the top three receiving \$50,000 each for their holistic approach to virtual services, while the other seven each received \$15,000 and all are recognized for exemplar academic, financial and

community-building services to students. According to BMCC Vice President for Student Affairs Marva Craig, “Student support services have been an important component of our mission long before the pandemic. I’m deeply grateful that BMCC has been recognized for the work we do in delivering virtual supports to keep our students engaged and on track. With this generous award, we will expand online services and continue to leverage technology to meet our students’ needs.”

## BMCC Team Wins First Place, College Fed Challenge



For the third year in a row, a team of BMCC students—**Dayan Avila, Oscar Corzo, Alexandre St-Cyr, Kin Yee Gung, Alex Hill, Sulay Restrepo Maroulis** and **Stavors Paganos**—earned First Place in the Maiden Lane division of the College Fed Challenge, a college competition sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Mentored by Business Management Professors **Ioannis Tournas** and **Julian Schroeder**, the BMCC team bested three senior colleges in the final round of the competition, November 13. An awards ceremony on November 18 featured a presentation by **John Williams**, the New York Fed President.

## Students Claim Their Role in the Democratic Process

BMCC students gathered in virtual events sponsored by Student Affairs and the Student Government Association to share responses to the 2020 presidential election. On October 26, more than 100 students joined a presidential debate watch party on Zoom, and on November 6, students attended the virtual

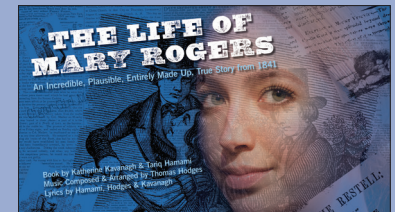
forum Speak Up, Speak Out Series: Post-Election Student Conversation, Your Voice Matters. “We are the future. We can get into politics and even sway an election,” said SGA President and English major **Josiah Ramesar**. “Who knows, the president of the United States might come from BMCC one day.”

On December 9 in Theatre 1 and via livestream, the Allied Health Sciences Department celebrated the graduation of seven Paramedic majors: **Romina Cornielle, Jayvee Delossantos, Erstein Edwards, Edith Garcia, Jennifer Huang, Garrett Hughes** and **Matthew Wong**. The students had delayed their clinical rotations in Spring 2020—and their graduation—to take ambulance shifts at the height of the COVID surge in NYC.



## Milestones

Computer Science major **Benjamin Rosado**, selected as a research fellow at the Center for Anticipatory Intelligence and Adaptive Influence at National Intelligence University, presented his project at the 2020 Interagency Advanced Analytics Summit.



An audio production of *The Life of Mary Rogers*, an original musical play created by Theatre Arts Professors **Katherine Kavanagh** and **Tariq Hamami** and featuring 17 student performers, will be available in Spring 2021.

Psychology major **Sarah Kinlaw** released the music video, “Permissions” from her debut solo album, *The Tipping Scale*.

Engineering Science major **Samuel Boadu**, Business Administration major **Sulay Restrepo Maroulis**, History major **Johann Smith**, Computer Science major **Chanthea Quinland** and Liberal Arts major **Jon Williams** have been named BMCC’s 2020–2021 Kaplan Scholars.



Led by staff from Public Affairs and Student Affairs, students took the lead in a series of videos encouraging their peers to take part in the U.S. Census (**John Martinez, Amadou Diallo** and **Juanlin Li**), and to vote (**Lamyaa Araf, Elle Byers, Jessica Castro, Josiah Ramesar, Sakshee Sharmaa** and **Brandee Simmons**).



## Task Force Works to Improve Enrollment Experience



The BMCC Rapid Response Enrollment Management Task Force, launched in response to Fall 2020 enrollment declines, held a kick-off meeting September 28. Goals of the group are to examine the enrollment management process from recruitment through attendance, improve communication with students, support cross-department work and strengthen student services. “In every facet of the enrollment process, we want to partner with each and

every student as they journey toward their self-identified goals,” said BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe, who has championed the initiative and chairs the committee. “We want students to know from their very first interaction with BMCC that we affirm their goals, we believe in their potential, and we are here to help guide their decisions as they complete their degree and work toward the life they envision for themselves.”

## BMCC Offers Resources to Get Through the Pandemic



Whether focusing on fitness or finding support in a time of crisis, the BMCC Resilience, Health and Wellness website ([www.bmcc.cuny.edu/resilience-health-and-wellness/](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/resilience-health-and-wellness/)) provides resources for students, faculty and staff. The website also links to articles on subjects such as tackling stress through exercise

and removing the stigma from mental health issues. “COVID has been a traumatic experience we were all forced to face,” says BMCC Counseling Center Director **Neda Hajizadeh**. “The year 2020 also uncovered systemic racial injustice in this country and what is for many, the most stressful presidential election in their lifetime.” The BMCC counseling service can be reached at [counselingcenter@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@bmcc.cuny.edu). Other resources on the Resilience, Health and Wellness website include the Panther Pantry, for students facing food emergencies, at (212) 220-8195.

## NBC Universal News Group Donates \$100K for Student Scholarships and Internships

BMCC is one of 17 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions selected as an academic partner with NBCUniversal News Group’s NBCU Academy. In addition to providing \$100,000 to support 20 students with internships and \$5,000 scholarships, NBCU News Group will

provide equipment and collaborate in seminar development. Also, journalists and executives from NBC News, MSNBC, CNBC and Telemundo will participate as guest lecturers. The initiative is part of Comcast NBCUniversal’s \$100 million commitment to address systemic racism and inequality.

## Race, Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee Assumes Its Charge

The BMCC Equity and Inclusion Task Force, established in 2017, has been reconstituted by President Anthony E. Munroe as the Race, Equity and Inclusion (REI) Steering Committee, co-chaired by BMCC Chief Diversity Officer **Odelia Levy**, College Discovery Director **Pedro Perez** and Criminal Justice Professor **Shenique Thomas-Davis**. Five REI subcommittees will focus on the curation of resources, pedagogy, providing space and design opportunities for inclusion, assessing current programming, and

institutional review. According to a statement released by the co-chairs, “This Committee, which will ensure that the College holds itself accountable to prioritizing equity, inclusion, and social justice, will be one of the major bodies designed to support the implementation of the strategic plan, tasked not only with providing recommendations, but also with aiding the college in implementation and monitoring of the soon to be completed 2020–2025 strategic plan.”



## BMCC Welcomes Development Manager/Asst. Director of Grants



**Aleksandra Cataruzolo** has joined BMCC as Development Manager/Assistant Director of Grants in the Office of Sponsored Programs and will serve as the liaison between the CUNY Research Foundation and BMCC. She will communicate government and private grant application guidelines to the BMCC community and review proposal submissions, as well as conduct workshops for faculty and staff on grants management.

## BMCC Single Stop Renamed Advocacy and Resource Center

The BMCC Single Stop office is now the Advocacy and Resource Center (ARC)—but its array of free services remain the same.

Students facing a food emergency can take home a three-day supply of non-perishable food through ARC’s Panther Pantry, and get assistance applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

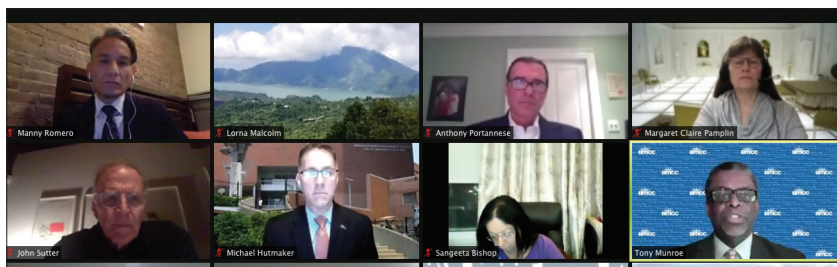
Students experiencing financial hardship can apply for emergency assistance grants to pay for rent, utilities and other emergencies. They can also

apply for an emergency no-interest loan to help with the cost of textbooks.

Other free services for students include assistance enrolling in health insurance, tax preparation and legal services to assist with immigration and other issues

Students are encouraged to reach out to [arc@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto:arc@bmcc.cuny.edu) or call (212) 220-8195 and leave a detailed message, to learn more about these services and how ARC can help them get through a crisis that is threatening their ability to stay in college and meet their goals.





## Virtual Evening of Thanks Recognizes BMCC Community, Foundation Board and Donors

On December 17, a virtual Evening of Thanks recognized BMCC’s donors, Foundation Board members and community members who stood by the college as the coronavirus pandemic gripped New York City and forced an abrupt switch to distance learning and remote services. Speakers included BMCC President Anthony E. Munroe, who said that throughout this difficult time, the college maintained “a strategic and heartfelt commitment to the BMCC mission.” Munroe also shared news of the \$30 million gift from philanthropist and author MacKenzie Scott, announced

two days earlier. BMCC Foundation Board Chair **Anthony J. Portannese** underscored the tireless efforts of the BMCC Foundation Board members in 2020, and Dean of Student Affairs **Michael Hutmaker** applauded students who rose to the challenge of remote learning. Videos screened that evening highlighted BMCC staff distributing free laptops to students, and showcased the college’s efforts to address food insecurity with help from Feed the Frontlines, NYC. A final video featured BMCC mascot **Manny the Panther**, who wished everyone a healthy and safe new year.

## CUNYTuesday 2020 Fights Food Insecurity

By year’s end, BMCC had raised its goal of \$50,000 to fight student food insecurity. In New York City’s pandemic-slammed economy, the number of New Yorkers facing food insecurity has gone from 1.2 million to about 2 million people, according to Mayor **Bill de Blasio**’s office. That means about one in four New Yorkers—



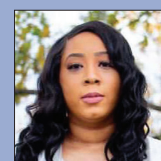
including a large swath of BMCC students—face food insecurity each day. BMCC has partnered with Feed the Frontlines NYC, a pilot program providing restaurant-quality meals to students facing food insecurity and founded by restaurateur **Luca Di Pietro** and his family, founders of the Tarallucci e Vino restaurant group. Funds raised through CUNYTuesday 2020 also support the work of the Panther Pantry, an on-campus food bank for BMCC students.

## Milestones



**Brian Olson** (Science, '05) now completing his doctorate in biochemistry at CUNY Graduate

Center, published research findings on coronavirus targets in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Computer-Aided Molecular Design*.



**Kristina Williams** (Theatre, '15) made the 2021 *Forbes* “30 under 30” list for

founding Women Talk Sports TV in 2018.



**Judy Sheridan Gonzalez** (Nursing, '80), who has served as president of the New York State

Nurses Association, was profiled in *LaborPress* for her expertise on COVID safety in health care.

## Robin Hood Foundation Makes a Significant Contribution to Critical Programs

In Summer 2020, BMCC received a \$150,000 grant from the Robin Hood Foundation to fund the college’s COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund. In Fall 2020, the Robin Hood Foundation donated \$270,000 for the BMCC Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA), which serves about 350 students per year. The program’s three-year graduation rate for Black and Hispanic males is about double the rate for those not in the program.

## Scenic Terrace and Mathematics Lab to be Named in Memory of BMCC Leaders



The BMCC community was saddened to lose two of its most admired administrators, who died in the last few years. A state-of-the-art mathematics lab will be named in honor of **Sadie Bragg**, (*above left*) a champion of mathematics education who served as BMCC Provost

and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs until her retirement in 2014. A scenic, 14<sup>th</sup>-floor terrace at the Miles and Shirley Fiterman Hall will mark the legacy of BMCC Vice President for Administration, Planning and Finance **Granville Scott Anderson** (*above right*). Please support these naming opportunities at [www.bmcc.thankyou4caring.org](http://www.bmcc.thankyou4caring.org), (click on the Designation field; a drop-down menu will show these memorial funds). Thank you for your support.

## BMCC Only Community College Nationwide to Receive Knowledge Challenge Grant

The Robin Hood Foundation has provided a \$150,000 grant for BMCC’s COVID-19 BMCC is only community college among 13 institutions nationwide to receive a \$363,260 Knowledge Challenge grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The funds will support a project centered in the Small Business and Entrepreneurship (SBE) program of the Business Management Department. SBE Professor **Roderick Shane Snipes**, the grant’s Principal Investigator says, “SBE students have direct access to some of the most economically challenged neighborhoods in New York City. For at least four years, they will study businesses in the neighborhoods where they live.”



Roderick Shane Snipes (*left*) with student.

## Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation Gives \$304K

In November 2020, the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation provided two grants to BMCC. One is \$250,000 for the Finish Line Tuition Waiver Program, which provides summer tuition waivers and results in higher retention and graduation rates. The other is \$54,000 for Project Impact, which provides mentoring and support services for students who have been justice impacted.

Hosted by the BMCC Small Business and Entrepreneurship program, a Founders Festival on December 2 featured alumna **Alicia Tulsee**, founder and CEO of Moxie Apparel Inc.; **Grant Sahag**, attorney turned entrepreneur and **David Steingard** (Business, 1994–1996), BMCC Foundation board member and founder/CEO of Laughing Man Coffee.

## BMCC Alumni, want to participate in an Alumni Spotlight Panel?

Students benefit from hearing from your “Start Here. Go Anywhere” journey! If you are one of the alumni of BMCC and would like to share your career journey with students, please reach out to Alumni Relations and Annual Fund Manager **Yaritza Gonzalez** at [ygonzalez@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto:ygonzalez@bmcc.cuny.edu).







# Q&A

*Tiffany James,  
Director of Student Success,  
Office of Student Affairs*

**What is your role at BMCC?**

As Director of Student Success, in Student Affairs, I help guide outreach, advocate for students and implement programs for high-achieving students, undocumented students and Excelsior scholars. We also help students with INC and W grade processes, Title IV appeals and more.

**What do you really do at BMCC?**

Every day, we call, text, email and Zoom with hundreds of students. We take students through appeals processes, help them navigate communications with faculty and

staff, and prepare for transfer. We think of student success as something that extends beyond graduation, and connect alumni with current students. I also coordinate the annual Honors Convocation Ceremony and have served as the voice of commencement for the last few years.

**What are some of your proudest accomplishments in your current role?**

What makes me proud is our work assisting students with INC grades and driving institutional conversations on grading policy. We have also developed programs for undocumented students, and I was a member of the Student Affairs writing team for

the Title V Conexiones grant, through which we are implementing a program to support the success of Latino males and low-income students at BMCC.

**What is one thing you've noticed about the BMCC community, as you have worked with faculty and staff in your current role?**

We are indebted to faculty and staff we can call on at a moment's notice to help us problem-solve specific issues and clarify policies. Our team consults with colleagues in Academic Advisement, the Registrar's Office, the Office of Financial Aid, the Bursar's Office and beyond.

**Tell us something about yourself we might not know, but has an impact on the good work you do, at BMCC.**

I earned a computer programming degree at BMCC and worked as a computer technician and technical writer. I apply this experience to grant writing and analyzing student cohort trends, so we can program accordingly. Given our conversations about equity, I also encourage my team to consider how we can learn from students, just as they learn from us, and accomplish more than they dreamed possible.

## Did You Know?



From 2012 through 2017, 30 percent of Black male students and 26 percent of Latino males in the BMCC Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA), graduated within three years—compared to 12 percent for Black males and 13 percent for Latino males not in UMLA.

Data courtesy of the BMCC Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics: [ins@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto:ins@bmcc.cuny.edu).