

President's Monthly Message to the College Community
March 2024

Dear College Community,

Happy spring!! Here's to the celebration of Women's History Month, St. Patrick's Day, Purim, Holy Week, Easter and the observance of Ramadan.

Staff Satisfaction

Thank you to Sharon Davidson, Silvia Nava and Safiya Faustin for your review of the findings of the recent Employee Satisfaction Survey and your feedback regarding areas in need of improvement/attention identified as follows:

- Improve employee morale
- Improve communication throughout the campus
- Staff do not feel respected/acknowledged
- Improve initiatives to maintain wellness

The full committee report which includes recommended action items can be accessed on the OIESP intranet <https://www.york.cuny.edu/institutional-effectiveness/survey-results>.

We are working to ensure a college community where everyone feels valued and appreciated. To this end, in April we will celebrate the Administrative Professional's Day for a special lunch for our COAs and CAAs. More information will be forthcoming. I am excited for what I hear will be the return of the York College Years of Service Celebration on May 2, 2024 hosted by the Office of Human Resources. We will celebrate employees (faculty and staff) who have 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35+ years of service.

We continue to work on improving communication with monthly reports from Administration and Finance, Enrollment and I.

Fiscal / Staffing Update

I know that the financial health of the college remains first and foremost in our minds. York College is actively working on reducing its deficit, focusing on careful spending and identifying ways to improve investment returns. We continue to be follow the required 2 for 1 framework for hiring, and focus on priority areas with regards to increasing enrollment, generating revenue, improving facilities/operations. As per the recently Staff update from human resources, I am pleased to welcome Stephannia Cleaton as the interim Director for

Communications and Marketing. In addition, I've made a special request to hire a VP for Administration and Finance and it is moving through the approval process. Ed Rios is a seasoned administrator who has deep experience in CUNY managing administration and facility matters. I have every confidence he will be an asset to the college and work with the Personnel & Budget Committee and the Senate and many other stakeholders as a partner in this work to improve our operations, outcomes, facilities, financial health.

Good News!

As you know, York College received \$300,000 for upgrades to its wind tunnel lab and power supply courtesy of Congressman Meeks. We are grateful for his consistent and unrelenting support of the College.

I am also pleased to share with you that we have been given the green light to sign the first of a two-part agreement for the \$7.5 million gift from the NYC Football Club. This initial award will be a check for \$2 million dollars. Many thanks to former president Eanes, Russell, Earl, Dana and Claudio for their efforts in bringing this to fruition. These one-time funds are to be used to for athletics and health related activities/expenditures. We already have wish lists from several of the allied health departments, athletics and student affairs. We will be soliciting input from the Resource Committee as well as the college community for additional recommendations/ideas. The remaining \$5 million will be awarded upon completion of the NYCFC stadium.

We are also weeks away from the ribbon cutting of our new track/soccer field. We anticipate that our field will be a steady source of revenue for the college.

VIPP: Very Important People and Places

Since my last report to the Senate, I have had the pleasure of visit the JFK Redevelopment Community Information Center where I met three York alum, Akshar Patel, Rachelle Antoine, MSW and Edferson J. Gernier who are leading the critical work of the JFK Redevelopment Community Advisory Council ensuring that the community is not a bystander, but a beneficiary of the economic opportunities that come with the redevelopment project. I am excited to serve as co-chair of the Education Committee alongside Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman. Last week I visited Resorts World and met with our board member Michelle Stoddart. We discussed the many career opportunities that exist at Resorts World beyond gaming such as IT, Human Resources, and Management. I was also over the moon to chat with Ralph McDaniels about possible partnerships. You may know Uncle Ralph as the founder of the Video Music Box from back in the day,

but he is currently Hip-Hop Coordinator for Queens Public Library. In fact, he recently donated books to our child care center's library, recently named for Professor Robert Machalow, our former, long serving and what I understand, outstanding Chief Librarian.

This past month I was also excited to launch my first article in the Northeast Courier - "York College/CUNY On the Frontlines of Nursing Education in Queens" as part of my new monthly column with Schneps Media. A special thank you to Dr. Wright for the conversation and inspiration.

<https://www.calameo.com/read/0065303637aa322cce09b>

Thurgood Marshall College Fund Consultant Update

I also had a productive follow up meeting with Thurgood Marshall College Fund. From their January visit, they recommended the following immediate, top-level Key Strategies:

- Focus all staff and faculty on the critical importance of everyone being on-board and involved in bringing in the new student class
- Coordinate and streamline the Communications Sequence from the Big Five offices
- Increase overall institutional marketing, paying specific attention to the academic marketing messages and enhancing our social media presence
- Involve the faculty in:
 - providing departmental information needed for recruitment communications and academic marketing
 - engaging personally with prospective students, with direction provided by Provost Brazille and VP Williams
 - collaborating with advising to address potential advising and registration log jams
 - creating four-year degree plans (Cardinal Maps)

Interestingly enough, prior to receiving the report from Thurgood Marshall, I had already begun to identify the same areas in need of attention, marketing, academic marketing, social media presence, and removing barriers to student matriculation.

The pipeline to York

I shared some of my plans regarding marketing/ advertising with you at the last senate meeting. Implementation requires your assistance. We will need your help in enhancing the content and your overall websites to speak to the audiences we want to attract.

Colleagues, we are York College it means that when you go the CUNY website, you have to scroll through over 20 colleges to get to our site. That’s what happens when your name begins with ‘Y’. If we can’t rearrange the alphabet, we need to rearrange and rethink how we attract students. In addition to marketing, and our website, we have to build and strengthen the high school, transfer and community pathways to our physical doors and virtual doors.

Having worked at three other CUNY campuses, I can say that the level and quality of community engagement with our college is off the charts. We need to harness this strength, the community pathway as a formal way to address one of our critical priorities: enrollment.

Admission Type	Fall 2019		Fall 2020		Fall 2021		Fall 2022		Fall 2023	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
Advanced Standing Transfers	800	600	581	462	499	376	482	372	500	390
First-time Freshman	1122	1104	849	842	898	835	777	734	684	663
Continuing Degree	4737	3732	4776	3873	4186	3308	3573	2824	3064	2449
Total	8337	6100	7784	5853	7027	5176	6446	4607	6161	4283

Admission Type	Spring 2019		Spring 2020		Spring 2021		Spring 2022		Spring 2023		Preliminary Spring 2024	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
Advanced Standing Transfers	356	499	516	373	372	285	256	186	293	212	272	65
First-time Freshman	108	101	92	86	44	40	57	50	69	57	70	213
Continuing Degree	5748	4551	5610	4492	4978	4133	4648	3620	3950	3133	3554	2867
Total	7964	5541	7755	5457	6574	4941	6543	4412	5876	3911	5960	3823

I convened a small committee (Jean Phelps, Earl Simons, Nyisha Howell, Nicholas Jones and Karen Williams) to develop a framework for the York Opportunity Network (modeled after the Bronx Opportunity Network). The YON will be a **partnership among organizations** in Southeast Queens (as well neighboring Long Island and Brooklyn communities) **who serve pre-college youth**. Our mission will be to use the Network **attract students and market the college as high-quality, affordable, student-centered, logistically-convenient college where the pre-college youth they serve can earn their college degrees**. We would then work with the body in a similar fashion that we work with High School Guidance/College Counselors.

- Invite them to campus for a breakfast (Spring and late fall) where we can have faculty/student/alumni speakers and tours

- Arrange tours for the pre-college youth they serve;
- Invite them to events on campus
- Provide support through the application/and matriculation process;
- Monitor progress and ensure they are aware of and use college resources to help support their success throughout their studies
- Celebrate graduates and the success of the partnership

Many students come to us because of recommendations from their high school counselors or teachers; others come because family/friends are alum; but community-based organizations that students are connected to are also **powerful forces in their lives**. I know many of these relationships already exist. We need to coalesce them into one force to support our enrollment and provide students with a platform for their futures to take flight.

Colleagues, I am inherently solution centered. I will not harp on problems for long, because I am interested in finding solutions. Right now, enrollment and retention are major problems for all of us: students, faculty and staff. Last week I met with the Big Five and other members of the Enrollment Management team to thank them for their efforts in bringing in the students that we do have walking our halls and logging in to our classes. I also took the opportunity to discuss potential solutions to the challenges we face.

A review of the data shows us that that there are over 1000 students who have not declared a major. Enabling first year students to declare a major not only provides them with early focus and engagement in their intended field of study, but it enhances a department's ability to schedule classes and assign mentors effectively, and it helps to establish cohorts who are following their four-year degree plans. so, the likelihood of having only 2 students in a class that need it for graduation is lessened. And yes I know students move at their own pace. I also understand that there are some majors where exceptions may have to be made.

This spring we have 8000 students who have been admitted to York. Many of these students have also been admitted to other colleges. The Admissions team has developed a new communications approach to encourage students to commit to York. But once that happens, it is imperative that we "seal the deal" by ensuring that students are not only advised but registered. Currently, we do not advise and register. Students register on their own. These cannot be separate actions but one seamless act. We don't want students getting advised, but then deciding to register elsewhere. No freshman student should leave an advisement session without having their class schedule in hand.

There are many models as to how this can happen. For one, Advising/Registration may happen on a one-to-one basis and it is also possible that once advising is completed, and students know what courses they need to take, that registration can happen in groups in our computer labs with advisors who are available to walk them through the process. And because there are many students who are not able to get to campus, we need to have clear protocol (like we did during COVID) for meeting virtually and individually with students to register them for classes. Staff in the Welcome Center and Student Affairs are trained to assist students with registering after advisement. The beauty in these approaches is that not only are students being registered, they are learning the process of how to register themselves in real time.

As I shared at my meeting, there are so many tools in the CUNY toolbox- Blackboard, Navigate, Degree Works, Schedule Builder, Course Dog.... If we are overwhelmed, imagine how students feel. Whether they are part of the 56% of students who are first generation college goers or not, taking the time to walk them through the process and seal the deal is important to ensuring that they have everything they need to walk through our physical (and virtual doors) on the first day of classes ready to learn and take flight.

The goal of advising students to carry a full-time load is still an important one. We know that many students are not able to for many reasons, but data shows that 57% percentage of our students are full time. In either case, students should be advised of the benefits of full-time study.

I asked the team can we support student success with C.A.R.E. a framework that provides a uniform approach to how we work with students. I know many areas already operate in this way, but some may not, or perhaps there is uneven implementation. What I am proposing is a college-wide adoption of the CARE framework.

Connect	Advise	Register	Engage
Taking the time to know who students are, what they want and where they want to go will help us guide them more effectively	Given the information we receive, we can then guide and advise students more effectively	For advisors it means ensuring they have their classes for the next semester; but everyone it means they are Ready for the semester as it pertains to any area (e.g., Financial Aid forms are completed; Payment arrangements made)	Ensuring that we take the time to close out conversations by letting students know the resources, supports, opportunities and offices at York that they can further engage with.

In the coming weeks, I plan to meet with all staff to further discuss CARE and how it can be best actualized in their areas. In the interim, we have work to do. I asked the team to develop a list of action items (and completion dates) as it pertains to the aforementioned areas and complements the transformative efforts that they are already engaged in. I have also asked them to consider if there are policy changes that need to occur. VP Karen Williams will lead this work.

Colleagues, once again its fate that York College sits in Jamaica, Queens, because in Jamaica, West Indies their motto is “out of many, we are one”. Similarly, even though each office has a different function, our approach and our mission must be the same: student success. We are One York speaks to how we should function as a college.

However, we have no mantra that speaks to the aspirations for our students and our vision.

- BMCC has *Start Here, Go Anywhere*
- NYC Tech has *The Public Path to Possible*
- Queens College has *Discimus ut serviamus*, which translates to *"We learn so that we may serve.*
- John Jay has *Fierce Advocates for Justice*
- Kingsborough has *Dreams begin here*

But now at York, the home of the Cardinals we will now have

Where Futures take Flight!

All Aboard Colleagues!

If you are interested in participating in any of the work I have shared in this report, please let me know.

Many thanks,

Schrader