

## Baruch-BMCC Business Academy Launch

October 19, 2022

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Thank you, Linda—and thank you, President Munroe, for your inspiring remarks and your partnership in making the BMCC-Baruch Business Academy a reality. I am thrilled to have everyone here, join us for this landmark achievement, for both of our institutions. What a great way to celebrate the National Transfer Student Week 2022!

We will be hearing more from our esteemed guests in a moment, but I would like to first give a quick shoutout to one of our inaugural Business Academy students. **Julius Morris**, would you please stand up? Julius is a student in the first cohort in the BMCC-Baruch Business Academy. He is a Business Administration major at BMCC, and expects to graduate in December this year. Starting in the spring, he plans to attend Baruch with an intended major of Accountancy in the Zicklin School of Business. He is also interested in Entrepreneurship and has been growing his own business. Julius, we are pleased to have you—and we are honored to be part of your journey.

[Lead applause.]

On behalf of Baruch and BMCC, I would also like to extend our gratitude, for the support of the donors who helped make the Business Academy possible:

- The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation, Dr. Dennis Gilbert, and The Heckscher Foundation for Children all provided early support that made the creation of this program possible.
- We are also grateful that Cass Conrad, of the Petrie Foundation, and Peter Sloane, of the Heckscher Foundation, shared their thoughts and ideas, as well their support. Their input helped guide us and create a better program. Mr. Alex Roland, we appreciate that you are here on their behalf.
- Our thanks goes as well to the College Completion Innovation Fund, for supporting in the seed idea that created this program, and providing additional funds to help expand it.

I want to express my gratitude to the ingenious and collaborative spirit of Baruch and BMCC faculty. Without their vision and persistent effort, none of this would be possible.

Thank you for investing in our students and their futures.

At Baruch, we pride ourselves on our rich tradition of academic excellence, accessibility, and outcomes. The Business Academy is an important initiative in our overarching mission to **make excellence accessible**, to all students who are willing to work hard to attain a top-notch college degree.

Education is a critical part of the **Infrastructure for Opportunity**. Over the last several decades, we have seen this infrastructure for opportunity in decline. Education is supposed to be an equalizer that helps all citizens overcome social, economic, and class barriers to success. But increasingly, the extraordinary cost for attendance made higher education itself a barrier.

And yet, given the dramatic changes in our social and economic constructs, **a college education is more important than ever** to participating in key economic activities. We as a nation need to prioritize **high quality, accessible education** for all members of our society.

Partnerships between community colleges and four-year colleges are crucial components, in the effort to rebuild the infrastructure for opportunity. And the BMCC-Baruch Business Academy is a great model for that effort.

As time will show, the Business Academy model will be a game-changer for our students, and for society at large.

- With early academic guidance, the Academy will ensure that students take the right classes toward *two* graduations—at the associate’s, and the bachelor’s levels—without wasting any credit hours.
- Dedicated staff and services at BMCC and Baruch will prepare students not only academically but psychologically. Working together, they help to give students a sense of belonging and ease the transition into the Baruch community.
- Through BMCC’s career service—and an early introduction to Baruch’s robust Starr Career Development Center—the Academy will make career outcomes visible, and ultimately, attainable.

At Baruch, our Academy students will have all the benefits that make our college exceptional:

- Mentorship opportunities with our expert faculty, alumni, and business leaders
- Internships, and community-based research opportunities, that give students valuable real-world experiences
- And, more than 100 student clubs, organizations, and affinity groups to explore and join

- As graduates of BMCC and Baruch, they will also have access to our vast and global alumni networks, by the way, ranked top-20 in the country.

At Baruch, we look forward to building on the Business Academy model to include different majors and many of our community college partners in the CUNY system. Being a part of CUNY is a secrete sauce that will help us scale the Academy in a way that will greatly benefit our students and New York.

Here to represent the City University of New York, it is my pleasure to introduce Wendy Hensel, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost. As CUNY's chief academic officer, and chief executive of the Office of Academic Affairs, Provost Hensel oversees—among many things—initiatives to improve the student transfer experience and K-16 efforts to promote enrollment growth, and student success.

Provost Hensel, we look forward to hearing from you.

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