

Marlon Myers
The New York City College of Technology
Black Male Initiative Program

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Marlon Myers, and my major is Computer Engineering Technology. I am a student at the New York City College of Technology (CityTech), and I am a member of CityTech's Black Male Initiative (BMI) Program; I am also the President of the BMI Club.

Dr. Reginald Blake is the program director of our City Tech BMI program. Our BMI program is the only STEM designated BMI program in CUNY.

I was first introduced to the City Tech BMI program through a City Tech Academic Intervention Initiative that was led by Associate Provost Dr. Pamela Brown. It was at this meeting that I met

BMI champions - Dr. Blake and Ms. Sonia Johnson. When I first enrolled at City Tech, I was one of a group of students who did not need to take remedial courses; however, I ended up doing poorly in my first two semesters.

- For those two semesters my GPAs were 1.808 and 1.854 respectively;
- By this time, I was on probation, which meant that I was on the verge of being dismissed from CityTech for poor academic performance, and, by then, I had lost my Financial Aid to begin the third semester.

It was then as a dejected and discouraged student that the BMI program found me, saved me, transformed me, and gave me hope. Dr. Reginald Blake and Ms. Sonia Johnson became my mentors at the critical third semester juncture of my academic life. The third semester was the pivotal turning point for me. With the guidance, help, support, and academic empowerment I received from the BMI, I started to see that I could "do it." I could actually hit the reset button and begin a new pathway toward academic success. That semester, with a new attitude and renewed aptitude, my GPA rose to 3.420. In my fourth semester, I made the Dean's List with a 3.750 GPA. I could not have done so without the support I received from my mentors and from my BMI family.

Not only was my academic life positively transformed by the BMI, but my social life was as well. I became a member of the “500 Men Making a Difference” – A Non-Profit Organization that Ms. Johnson introduced to me and to other young men in the BMI. Since then, we have worked on a number of community events alongside congressmen, senators, and Brooklyn’s Borough President, the honorable Eric Adams.

Emotionally, I am definitely in a better place in my life since I became a member of the BMI Program. I have found the support and the encouragement I need to grow into the scholar and the man that I am supposed to be. When I was on probation, my mentor, Ms. Johnson not only assisted me in writing my Appeal Letter, but she also helped me to put my package together for submission to the Appeal Committee so that my Financial Aid would be reinstated. Additionally, she prepared the letter which my mother needed to submit so that our family’s Public Assistance Program would be reinstated. These acts of kindness provided me with the emotional stability I sorely needed so that I could focus on my academic pursuits. Without a doubt, were it not for the City Tech BMI program, I would not now be aligned to graduate with my Bachelor’s Degree.

As far as extra-curricular activities are concerned, since becoming a member of the BMI Program, I have become involved in tutoring, mentoring, STEM exposure trips, STEM conferences, and a whole host of community services. Thanks to the BMI, I am now a well-rounded individual. From my perspective, we build leaders at the City Tech BMI, and I am extremely grateful that the City Tech BMI program has “Built me.”

Presently, along with being the President of the City Tech BMI Club, I am:

- A member of the National Society of Leadership and Success;
- A member of National Society of Black Engineers;
- A Senator at Large in the Student Government Association;

- A Dean's List student.

As I look forward to a bright academic future, I will forever strive to enhance and support the BMI program so that students who come after me may be afforded the same opportunities for academic access and success that I received. I am ever so appreciative of all that I have gained from this life transforming program, and I say a sincere and profound "Thank You."

Testimony of CUNY BMI University Director Jermaine Wright

For New York City Council Higher Education Committee

“Oversight - Status of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) and

Black Academic Offerings at CUNY Colleges”

Good afternoon Chairperson Barron and the members of the Higher Education Committee. The City University of New York Black Male Initiative (CUNY BMI), through its focus on one of the most severely underrepresented populations in higher education, represents one expression of CUNY’s most significant commitments to access and diversity. CUNY BMI was established in 2005 and is based on a promising model first started at Medgar Evers College. With the continuous support from the New York City Council over the last eleven years, CUNY BMI funds projects throughout the university; as of November 2013 CUNY BMI’s funding was baselined, therefore, the \$2.5M CUNY BMI receives from the New York City Council is now a part of CUNY’s operating budget allocation from the New York City Council. These projects are designed to strengthen the education pipeline for severely underrepresented populations in higher education, particularly African, African American, Black, Caribbean and Latino/Hispanic males by increasing the enrollment, retention and graduation rates of these students. Since its beginning in 2005, CUNY BMI has grown from 15 projects to over 30 projects in 2016. CUNY BMI projects do not discriminate based on race or gender and will serve as models for improving educational outcomes of all students. All programs and activities of the CUNY Black Male Initiative are open to all academically eligible students, faculty and staff, without regard to race, gender, national origin or other characteristic.

CUNY BMI Central provides vision and leadership and monitors the progress of the 31 campus-based BMI projects. CUNY BMI Central provides fiscal management and oversight of the \$2.5M yearly grant from the New York City Council, directs cross functional staff and establishes strategic directives and organizational goals. CUNY BMI Central designed a bi-yearly site visit process in which each project can be viewed and assessed. The goal is to view BMI projects *in action* with the purpose of understanding each projects’ strengths and areas that need improvement. Each project should contain three fundamental components: Diversity Recruitment, Structured Mentoring and Academic Enhancement. All visits include a 60-60 approach: A 60 minute meeting with BMI project staff and senior campus administrators and 60 minutes of observing program activities and interacting with students. After each site visit, the

CUNY BMI Central staff provided a site assessment looking at the key areas of the program model. Each assessment is designed to be uplifting, with the goal of providing technical support where needed. Based on the site visit assessments CUNY BMI Central identified best practices as it pertains to the following areas: institutional commitment, diversity recruitment, structured mentoring, academic enhancement/programming and advisory committee within 5 categories: Pre-College, Community College, Comprehensive and Senior Colleges, Graduate and Professional School Programs, and Reentry Programs. Each project listed under a category will provide a 1-2 page description of their area of expertise. Overall, this is an exciting opportunity to expose some of the best practices of CUNY BMI to both parties internally at CUNY, as well as other higher education institutions to spread the impact of the CUNY BMI model. Our best practices document is now completed and can inspire other universities around the state and country to start their own BMI program and help attract/assist more underrepresented students, particularly men of color.

All 31 CUNY BMI projects contain three components, Diversity Recruitment, Structured Mentoring, and Academic Programming, with the following goals: to increase the enrollment and matriculation of underrepresented students, to increase retention of underrepresented students, improve the overall grade point average of underrepresented students and increase the graduation rate of underrepresented students. Diversity recruitment involves strategies that increase enrollment of underrepresented students participating in BMI projects. CUNY BMI projects recruit current and prospective CUNY students using a wide range of methods such as letters, emails, student workshops, teacher recommendations, and basic word of mouth. All of which has resulted in the successful recruitment of students.

For example the Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA) at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) recruits current and prospective BMCC students through a variety of methods. Student workshops, teacher and staff recommendations, email blasts, flyer distribution, and basic word of mouth have all resulted in the successful recruitment of UMLA participants. Recruitment efforts take place on an ongoing basis throughout the school year including summer sessions. One of UMLA's most successful recruitment strategies centers on its involvement with the college's Summer Immersion Program, which provides free developmental courses to incoming freshmen in need of remediation. The UMLA program coordinator serves on a team of special advisors to Summer Immersion students, coaching them through the academic and personal challenges they face during the program. Through this advisory role, the program coordinator is able to develop strong relationships with these new students, ensuring they are aware of the various support services that UMLA provides. The program coordinator provides advisement and support to all

Immersion students, but is primarily focused on engaging men of color. To supplement this advisory role, the program coordinator runs a series of workshops geared towards men of color that teach practical principles for college success (i.e. time management, networking tips, and test-taking strategies). Student participation in these workshops is ensured by requesting that each Summer Immersion professor send a minimum of two male students to each workshop.

Structured mentoring can include a peer advisor and/or a faculty/ administrator element. Peer mentoring is where high performing upper classmen are trained to be peer advisors to assist lower classmen. Faculty/administrator mentoring pairs a faculty member with a student who has similar interests. Mentors undergo extensive formal orientation/training facilitated by the project administrators. Mentors are provided the tools and strategies to motivate students to work toward achieving long term academic and career success. Over the past five years, participation in the CUNY BMI Structured Mentoring component has grown from 1500 in 2010 to 2500 in 2014.

For example the mission of the Urban Male Initiative's Peer Advocates Mentoring Program is to empower men of color at John Jay College of Criminal Justice while creating a meaningful college experience while improving academic performance, retention and graduation rates. These goals are achieved through participation in mentoring activities and support programs, mentors encourage academic excellence, self-esteem and personal growth.

Expectations & Qualifications

Advocates are expected to meet with their assigned mentees (maximum of 5 students) at least 3 times a month on campus during the academic school year. This position requires a nine month commitment during the fall and spring semesters. Advocates will seek to gain a better understanding of their mentee's strengths and weaknesses while facilitating activities towards their success. Some outcomes for mentees include increased self-knowledge and improved self-esteem in social, academic, and professional settings. Students selected will be required to attend training at the beginning of the fall semester.

Peer Advocates must:

- Be able to build constructive, positive relationships
- Have strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Possess the ability to effectively engage with peers, students, faculty and staff
- Possess the ability to demonstrate good judgement and ethical behavior
- Have the desire to assist students in transitioning to college and persist
- Demonstrate organizational and time management skills

- Be sensitive to individuals of different educational, economic, cultural and racial backgrounds

Time Commitment

- Students must commit to one full academic year as a Peer Advocates (Fall-Spring)
- Be available to complete training, bi-weekly submissions of supplemental questions, attend staff meetings once a month
- Attend 2 academic or professional development programs on/off campus with each mentee assigned
- Attend a minimum of 2 diversity recruitment events throughout each semester

Trainings and workshops include:

- Perfecting your elevator pitch
- Networking tips
- Do's and Don'ts when interacting with your mentees
- Academic Opportunities on campus
- Time Management
- Motivating Others

Eligibility & Stipend

- Interested applicants must have at least 60 credits by the time of employment
- Must be a full time student in good academic standing (cumulative 3.0 GPA or above preferred)
- Compensation of a total \$1,000 split into \$500 per semester

Finally, academic enhancement/programming provides an additional layer of academic support and contributes to a sense of inclusion to the institution for underrepresented students in the form of: conferences, distinguished speaker series, workshops, talk sessions, learning communities, tutoring and lending libraries. Students who perceive that they shared common interests and academic abilities with other students and faculty are more likely to feel a sense of integration with the college environment which has the likelihood of increasing persistence and graduation.

For example BC Bound a BMI project at Brooklyn College that is designed to provide students who have received a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) with the opportunity to attend Brooklyn College as a first-time freshmen rests its success on the foundation of an academically-rigorous, full-time learning community informed CUNY BMI best practices and high-impact student support services. About two weeks prior to the start of the semester, the cohort begins a

mandatory one-week orientation to help prepare them for college. The orientation introduces students to the tutoring component, academic coursework, advising and counseling. The one-week orientation helps students establish personal connections to the people they will be interacting with at Brooklyn College: their fellow students, faculty, staff, administrators, and students from former BC Bound cohorts. Students are also connected to the support services available during their time at Brooklyn College (e.g. The Career Center & Student Affairs, etc.). Through the orientation, we and they start building a community and strong support within the cohort. This community-building is essential for the population we serve. The learning community students are placed in for their first semester consists of 12- credits. Students are required to take: English Composition (ENGL 1010 – 3 credits – 3 hours); Precalculus A (MATH 1021 – 2 credits – 4 hours); Freshmen Seminar (INDS 1011 – 1 credit – 2 hours); General Ed Music Course (MUSC 1300 – 3 credits – 3 hours); and an elective of their choice (the Precalculus course is part one of a two-part sequence.)

Data from CUNY's Office of Research and Assessment shows that students in cohorts 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 who participated on a regular basis in CUNY BMI on average outperformed other students in those cohorts. When BMI Black and Latino males were compared to Black and Latino males who did not participate in BMI, BMI Black and Latino males consistently have better first-year retention rates and GPAs. Specifically, data from 2014 illustrates that BMI Black and Latino males pursuing an Associate degree on average had a **2.32** GPA, while Black and Latino males pursuing an Associate degree who did not participate in BMI on average had a **2.18** GPA. When we look at the retention rate for BMI Black and Latino males at the Associate degree level it is **65.6%**, in comparison to **58.7%** for Black and Latino males pursuing who did not participate in BMI. Similarly, 2014 Baccalaureate data from 2014 illustrates that BMI Black and Latino males pursuing a Baccalaureate degree on average had a **2.79** GPA, while Black and Latino males pursuing an Baccalaureate degree who did not participate in BMI on average had a **2.69** GPA. When we look at the retention rate for BMI Black and Latino males at the Baccalaureate degree level it is **87.4%**, in comparison to **80.1%** for Black and Latino males pursuing who did not participate in BMI. Hence, indicating the positive impact of CUNY BMI.

Lastly, before I conclude I would like to share an email I received from a BMI student at Brooklyn College yesterday.

Dear All,

So far, I've been admitted to six doctoral programs.

1. the University of Delaware
2. Howard
3. the University of California Riverside

4. the University of Virginia

5. Indiana University Bloomington

6. Yale

Yes, I've been accepted to Yale's English Ph.D. program.

March is going to be a very busy month for me.

March 6-8- I'll be in Delaware

March 9- I'll be in California

March 14-15th- I'll be in Virginia

March 25th- I'll be in Indiana

March 29-30- I'll in Connecticut visiting Yale.

I owe the lion's share of my success to Black and Latino Male Initiative (BLMI) BMI project at Brooklyn College. This program has been my foundation from day one. There's no way I'd be where I am today had it not been for Mrs. St. Clair's leadership, Mr. Patterson's wisdom, and Ms. Fernandez's warm encouragement. Together, the three of you form a trifecta that cannot be reproduced. BLMI is without a doubt is the best thing that has happened to me in my academic career.

Testimony of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Frank D. Sanchez

**The City University of New York Hearing with the New York City Council on
Higher Education Committee**

**Status of the Black Male Initiative and Black Academic Offerings at CUNY
Colleges**

February 26, 2016

Good morning, Chairperson Barron and members of the New York City Council Higher Education Committee. My name is Frank Sanchez, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the City University of New York (CUNY). Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about the CUNY Black Male Initiative (BMI) program. Members of this panel would like to share with the committee specific strategies CUNY is using to advance the BMI program as well as additional efforts to further support our Black students across CUNY colleges. I am joined by the University Director of the BMI program, Jermaine Wright, Cheryl Williams, Associate Dean of Special Programs and a BMI student at New York City College of Technology, Marlon Myers.

CUNY is deeply dedicated to serving the young people of NYC and NYS, many of whom come from historically underrepresented groups in higher education. Specific to educating and serving our Black student community, CUNY has made remarkable strides. For instance, among all public and private institutions of higher education in NYC, CUNY educates 80% of all Black undergraduates. Furthermore, CUNY

educates 74% of all Pell grant recipients who are studying in NYC. In fact, in 2014, 42% of CUNY's undergraduates were the first generation in their families to go to college.

While The City University of New York is committed to providing all of our students with the resources, services, and support they need to succeed in college, as the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, I am especially privileged to oversee several programs and projects dedicated to providing opportunities to historically underrepresented groups in higher education. Among these programs is the CUNY Black Male Initiative.

I believe it is extremely important to offer some historical context at this hearing regarding CUNY BMI and the unwavering support of individuals who took it from a concept to a reality.

In May of 2004, the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York unanimously approved its Strategic Plan for 2004-2008. This comprehensive planning document included for the first time in the University's history a "Chancellor's Initiative on the Black Male in Education."

In the fall of 2004, Chancellor Goldstein established a University Task Force on the Black Male Initiative. He asked then Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Selma Botman to identify faculty members and administrators with relevant knowledge and expertise to serve on the Task Force and charged it with developing recommendations that would include a series of action-oriented projects to help Black males overcome the inequalities that lead to poor academic performance in the K-12 system, the weak enrollment, retention, and graduation from institutions of higher education, and high rates of joblessness and incarceration.

During its six months of deliberations, the Task Force was presented with convincing evidence that Black males in New York City and beyond face patterns of ongoing and distinctive discrimination in many aspects of their lives, most evidently in education, in treatment by the criminal justice system, and in employment. The discrimination they face has profound consequences for their well-being and security, and is manifested in unacceptably high rates of leaving school before high school graduation and imprisonment and in unacceptably low rates of postsecondary degree completion and stable participation in the work force. These grim realities have adverse impacts on family members and communities.

In its final report to the Chancellor, the Task Force proposed nine major recommendations, including:

1. Provide strong University leadership on the challenges facing Black youth and men;
2. Strengthen the school-to-college pipeline to enable many more Black male students to move into higher education;
3. Increase admission and graduation rates at CUNY colleges;
4. Improve teacher education to prepare professionals for urban education;
5. Improve employment prospects for black males;
6. Contribute to the reduction of the incarceration rate for black men;
7. Establish an Institute for the Achievement of Educational and Social Equity for Black Males;
8. Involve experts in the implementation of the recommendations;
and

9. Establish benchmarks and hold Colleges accountable for implementing these recommendations.

After hearings before the Higher Education Committee of the New York City Council chaired by the Honorable Charles Barron, the University was awarded funding from the New York City Council and began to implement some of the aforementioned recommendations. Through the initial grant, fifteen (15) demonstration projects were funded to improve the enrollment and/or graduation rates of students from underrepresented groups, particularly Black males. Funding was also allocated to increase opportunities for individuals without a high school diploma to enroll in GED courses oriented towards college preparation; to provide support for formerly incarcerated individuals to enroll in college; and to survey workforce development opportunities in New York City's construction industry.

Though targeted towards Black males, these projects do not discriminate based on race or gender and will serve as models for improving educational outcomes of all students. All programs and activities of the Black Male Initiative are open to all academically eligible students, faculty and staff, without regard to race, gender, national origin or other characteristic. Now, in its tenth year, the CUNY BMI program continues to grow and build on the successes of the past nine years.

Over the years, CUNY BMI has seen significant growth in student participation. With an initial grant of 15 demonstration projects, Today BMI is the largest program of its kind in the US distributing \$2.5M to 31 projects across 19 CUNY campuses including the graduate center, serving 2500 students. Jermaine Wright, Director of CUNY's BMI, will be addressing the Committee shortly and will be going into greater depth

about BMI's current programs, its dedicated staff, the students it serves and its many, many successes.

In addition to BMI, CUNY has a long, proud history of providing access to college through higher education opportunity programs. In fact, CUNY has been a national leader. This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge) program. In 1966, the Honorable Percy Ellis Sutton, as a member of the New York State Assembly, fought to create SEEK and I am proud to say that in 2011, CUNY renamed the SEEK Program The Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Program. Associate Dean Cheryl Williams is here today and she will speak about the tremendous success of this program now serving over 8200 undergraduates and experiencing recent successes recruiting Black students at our senior colleges. Dean Williams will also tell you about College Discovery, SEEK's partner at CUNY's community colleges as well as exciting programs such as our work with Single Stop and the federal TRIO program and our new Foster Care Initiative. The intent of the SEEK program in 1966 and as well as more recently established programs were designed specifically for underrepresented students including many Black students enrolled at CUNY.

All of these programs are designed to provide access and support to students who might otherwise not have equality of access to high quality higher education. Many of our Black students face challenges and obstacles, beyond recruitment, retention and graduation rates. A recent Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that Black students major less frequently in the lucrative fields of engineering and pharmaceutical sciences than in such lower-earning areas as social work and psychology. Although Black college enrollment grew from 10 percent to 15 percent from 1976 to 2012, according to the

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the new report suggested that this group of students is still not being funneled toward the highest-paying careers. This study highlights our need to do more in the area of career and other services and I believe the CUNY BMI should be the leading vehicle to make this happen.

CUNY is grateful to the New York City Council for your ongoing leadership, advocacy and support of the BMI program. Jermaine Wright.

The New York City Council Committee on Higher Education

Status of the Black Male Initiative and Black Academic

Offerings at CUNY Colleges

Friday, February 26, 2016

Testimony of Cheryl N. Williams, University Associate Dean of Special Programs

Good afternoon, Chairperson Baron and members of the City Council Higher Education Committee. My name is Cheryl Williams, and I am the University Associate Dean of Special Programs which is the office that oversees The Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK and College Discovery Programs. SEEK and College Discovery have the distinction of being the first higher education opportunity programs in the nation. Both were created during the Civil Rights movement for the express purpose of providing black and Puerto Rican students access to the City University of New York. Given that history, it is appropriate that we be asked to give an accounting of how well we've lived up to the mission and vision of our founders. It's for this reason that I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to address you today and to share how SEEK and College Discovery are serving students of color, particularly black students. I have three goals today: 1. to give an updated student profile since I testified two years ago; 2. to briefly describe our new foster youth initiative; and 3. to share what we have done to address the decline in enrollment of black students, particularly at the five most selective senior colleges.

The Profile. Currently, there are eleven SEEK programs at CUNY senior colleges and six College Discovery programs at six of the seven community colleges. In fall 2015 SEEK enrolled 8,324 students; College Discovery enrolled 2,401. Their family incomes are low and can be no more than 185% of the federal poverty level. For a family of four that means earning less than \$45,000 a year. You can imagine the financial needs they face. In both SEEK and CD about 60% are female. The average age is 19. The vast majority are people of color. Hispanics comprise the largest ethnic group in both programs—41% in SEEK, 58% in CD. Asians are the fastest growing population in SEEK and make up 29%; their numbers are smaller in CD, 12%. Black enrollment is nearly equal in SEEK and CD--21% in SEEK and 23% in CD.

A profile wouldn't be complete without pointing out that admission to SEEK and College Discovery is contingent on having academic as well as income need. While the requirement in CD a high school average of less than 80, the mean high school average for CD freshmen is 71. In SEEK, academic need means being academically inadmissible at the enrolling college. The mean SAT score of SEEK students is 210 points lower than regular admits'. Forty seven percent of SEEK students and 59% of CD students started fall 2015 needing remediation.

I won't go into performance data today, but simply put our students are a good investment. Who demonstrate the value of providing academic, social and financial support.

Foster Youth. Out of a growing concern for the plight of foster youth and their low college completion rates, NYS Legislators appropriated nearly one half a million in this year's state budget to support additional services for foster youth enrolled in SEEK and College Discovery. The program is in its infancy, but we are off to a good start. We've hired a clinical social worker with a background in youth services to design and lead the program which we've branded Youth Matter. Thus far we've enrolled over 60 foster youth who are either currently or formerly in care. The overwhelming majority are black and Latino. The students receive services and resources beyond those available in SEEK in College Discovery. Among the benefits are: support from a Youth Advocate (a social work intern), social support through affinity group meetings and excursions, tuition to take summer and intersession courses, a monthly MetroCard, campus meal vouchers, and access to an emergency fund. Several of the students attended the CUNY Luncheon held at the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus weekend. Again, we're just getting started, so I hope you will invite me back to give a more robust report.

Black Enrollment in SEEK. Between 1990 and 2015, while Latino enrollment grew by 5 percentage points, total black enrollment in SEEK fell by 17 percentage points. At the five most selective seniors the drop was 20 percentage points. This trend was a grave concern in light of our mandate and mission, but we were making little headway until 2010. Each fall the Office of Special Programs issues a request for proposals, an RFP, as a way of encouraging innovation and program enhancements. That year Baruch SEEK secured funding to create a program that would increase the number and success of black and Latino males--the Urban Male Leadership Academy was born.

The program success, design, and student outcomes were beyond phenomenal. Piggybacking on the idea of changing the recruitment process, in fall 2012 and again in 2014 we made the Special Programs RFP theme "increasing the number of underrepresented populations, particularly blacks" a priority. The two most successful programs were at Baruch and Brooklyn. You will hear about the UMLA this afternoon. Let me give you a snapshot of the Brooklyn Brothers Project. The "Brooklyn Brothers Project" is aimed at increasing the number and retention of Black and Latino males enrolled in the SEEK Program. The Brooklyn Brothers are SEEK upperclassmen that are trained as mentors who help recruit and support incoming freshmen and transfer students. Each Brother is responsible for ten mentees and helps them negotiate the Brooklyn College environment, understand course requirements, and become informed about various college activities. While I don't have hard performance data on the program, the anecdotal information I've received suggests that the presence of the Brothers has made Brooklyn College a more welcoming place for black males.

What we have begun to see is a small increase in black enrollment. In fall 2015 black enrollment went up by one percentage as compared to 2010. The trend is even more promising, at Brooklyn College where black freshman enrollment increased by six percentage points, and more dramatically at Baruch, by 15. We are encouraged but definitely not satisfied. The Office of Special Programs will continue to widen the net so that our population more closely mirrors the demographics of the NYC public school system. What is needed is continuous intentional recruitment, support from campus senior administrations, collaboration with faculty and staff, and widespread communications of our students' successes.

Thank you for your attention this afternoon and for your continued efforts on our behalf.

Name: **Kevin LaMonte Jones**
Major: **Television/Radio – Pre-Law**
School/BMI Project: **Brooklyn College Black and Latino Male Initiative**
Program Director(s): **Nicole St. Clair**

How did you get connected to BMI?

Upon my return to school after 24 years, my first week at Brooklyn College, during the welcome fair on the yard I was introduced to some of the members of BLMI. This group of well-dressed young men engaging everyone passing by especially impressed me with their confidence, as I was unsure and apprehensive to reengage at my age. This particular group stood out to me as they were the only group out of the 75 plus clubs participating that looked like me. As I approached the table, greeted with genuine excitement, I knew instantly, there was a place of refuge in this group and I want to be among these young men visibly destined for greatness.

Who is your BMI mentor?

Lawrence Patterson, the project coordinator, was among that group upon my first introduction. I am ever grateful for his unwavering support and encouragement. Mr. Patterson's council is one of the most treasured gifts I receive among the many as an Ambassador. It is without question that Mr. Patterson is more than a project coordinator for the 180 plus men in the program but he is a passionate mentor in every sense of the word and he certainly is my mentor indeed.

The impact BMI has had on your academic performance:

My enrollment in school prior to Brooklyn in 1990, I ended with a semester GPA of 1.66 and cumulative GPA of 2.20. My fears in conjunction with my last performance held me captive for many years. I was told that only iron can sharpen iron and so one man does another. This proverb became so clear as a member of BLMI. My first semester, through the solid commitment of Nicole St. Clair, Lawrence Patterson and the amazing gentlemen of BLMI, I earned a 4.0 GPA. I have repeated this performance for all 5 semester I have been enrolled at Brooklyn College and currently enjoy the 4.0 cumulative GPA. This is a direct result of the inspiration, accountability and challenge I receive among this body of Brown Skinned Scholars free to reclaim my agency and navigate my success. I have created a space in my home for many of the students to come and study every Friday, Saturday and Sunday whereby this self-initiated learning community has been one of the driving forces of my continued inspiration and success. All of the participants are brothers I've met in BLMI.

Other impacts on social, emotional and extracurricular performance:

As a result of my involvement with BLMI, I was introduced to Ron Brown Law Prep Program and received the highest honors among my peers. I have been equipped to participate in community affairs and have become a member of the 77th Precinct Council. I have interned with the Kings County DA's Office and currently serving as an intern for the Hon. L. Priscilla Hall, Associate Justice Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department. As a member of Brooklyn College Black and Latino Male Initiative, my journey continues.



Office of the University Student Senate
555 West 57th Street, 1420
New York, NY 10019
Tel: (646) 664-8844
Fax: (646) 664-8863

**NYC Council Committee on Higher Education Hearing: BMI and Black Studies Programs
at CUNY**

Testimony of Jaleel Thomas, Student at Bronx Community College

February 26, 2016

Greetings Honorable Inez Barron and committee on higher education

My name is Jaleel Thomas and I am a student at Bronx Community College. I'm studying Business Administration with a concentration in management. I am grateful to be speaking about BMI and how this initiative has created another success story.

I came to the New York from Chicago a couple of years ago. Being 17 with no family in New York or familiarity with the New York's culture was extremely nerve wrecking. When I was in Chicago, I was not the ideal student. While in High School , I attended 3 different high schools and summer school three consecutive years. I simply wasn't disciplined enough and my environment took a huge effect on the lifestyle and decisions I made. Fortunately, I graduated on time and 3 days after my graduation I moved to the Bronx. I knew no one; my mother and brother were my immediate support system.

The proximity of my home and BCC was perfect, which prompted my decision to start there. I knew nothing about CUNY but I knew a beautiful campus was staring me down high from a hill and that was the place where my college career would begin. After attending my first college orientation, I was excited and about the road ahead; I immediately reached out to a student life Faculty for leadership opportunities. When I was introduced to the recent director of the BMI program at my school, Jonelle Knox, a bond was made, and coincidentally he was also a Chicago native. After a long talk he extended an invitation to the BMI kickoff meeting at our school. During that kickoff meeting I met some amazing gentlemen, many of them had a similar story to mine. They were all welcoming and goal oriented.

My Specific BMI subsidiary is Called Men of Color initiative. It is so unique as it is one of 4 other CUNY campuses that run under a program and club structure. The club structure gave me the opportunity to run for an executive club position in Spring 2015 and I was elected Vice President of this club. During my term I was exposed to the amazing opportunities on my campus and took advantage of each and every single one. I was awarded as a Unity Day scholar,

Emerging Leader Award, and the Men of color Initiative was awarded best new club on campus last year for our exemplary work. The Men of color initiative abided by 8 core values that all members had to exemplify on a daily basis. The environment that was created around me led me to make better decisions and help other people around me grow as well.

After the tenure of being the VP of Men of color intuitive, I'm proud to say because of the connections I've made, and the reputation I built, I stand before you today as the elected Student Body President at Bronx Community College. Not only did I beat the statics of the average 6-year graduation rate of African Americans in community college. I am the youngest member on board and out of the 15 members 6 of them ran with me for student government and all were elected. The impact of this program is so powerful that I am requesting from this council to advocate for more funding for this program so that we can hear more success stories.

Thank you.



Office of the University Student Senate
555 West 57th Street, 1420
New York, NY 10019
Tel: (646) 664-8844
Fax: (646) 664-8863

**NYC Council Committee on Higher Education Hearing: BMI and Black Studies Programs
at CUNY**

***Testimony of Chika Onyejiukwa, Student at Hunter College
February 26, 2016***

Greetings Councilwoman Barron and Committee members on Higher Education .

My name is Chika Onyejiukwa. I serve as the vice chair for Legislative Affairs to the CUNY University Student Senate and as the President of the Undergraduate Student Government at Hunter College. I'm a resident of City Council District 27 in Jamaica, Queens.

I would like to start off by thanking you all for your commitment to higher education. In the midst of the conversation regarding the future of CUNY due to major proposed cuts, I am grateful to be here today to speak about the BMI program which has impacted me, but also because this program aligns itself so well with the University Students Senate's mission preserving the accessibility of higher education within the city of New York.

The troubled status of African American males in higher education has attracted tremendous attention nationally. Researchers have made the complexities of the problem increasingly clear, while educators, administrators, and policymakers alike have grappled with the question of what must be done to improve African American male student success.¹ At CUNY we begin to find our answers to these problems with BMI.

According to the Fall 2014 Hunter College Office of Institutional Research Undergraduate Students Profile, only 12% of students at Hunter are African-American. So three years ago when I arrived at Hunter, I was in need of a community of African Americans scholars at Hunter College to help encourage me through my journey. Fortunately for me, CUNY BMI was my first home and I am grateful to have joined. BMI helped me secure an internship the summer of my freshman year at Downstate Medical Center. When I decided to explore leadership opportunities, it was my BMI family that supported me. In less than three years at Hunter, I have had the opportunity to serve as the Vice President and as the President of the student body in large part due to the great BMI team that believed in me. In my time in these capacities I have helped to

¹ African American Males in Higher Education: <https://www.cambridgecollege.edu/news/african-american-males-higher-education>

promote diversity and student involvement on campus. My amazing Hunter experience was shaped by the dedicated and loving BMI staff: Shawn Best, BMI University Associate Director, and former Hunter BMI Program Coordinator, Dean John Rose and Dr. Marcella Cantarella. Shawn never fails to remind me that I was once so shy and now-- I never stop stop talking.

I am so humbled to have found a home at BMI. I can attest that BMI is fulfilling its mission and investing in the lives of African American men and women, and students of all races and ethnicity at CUNY. My colleague and I are proof that the program is also producing student leaders. I cannot thank you all enough for making the commitment nine years ago to invest in such an initiative that provides authentic mentorship, academic and social support to African American students actively engaged in the journey to graduation and future success. Your investment is proof that this committee understands that there are systemic barriers that deter racial achievement and lead to opportunity gaps, and that postsecondary institutions alone cannot close them. But through your commitment and support, we can succeed! Thank you. And thank you for your steadfast support and investment in the students of CUNY.

Name: Javon Henry

Major: Political Science, Minor: Latin American Studies

School/BMI project: John Jay College of Criminal Justice/Ronald H. Brown Law School Prep Program and Urban Male Initiative

Program director(s): Professor Jodie Roure, JD, Ph.D-Ron Brown Director and Founder and Maria Vidal-UMI Director

How did you get connected to BMI?

I was connected to the BMI Programs I belong to because I was sought out by the Ron Brown and UMI directors, Professor Jodie Roure and Maria Vidal, who each advertised their respective Programs throughout the College and additionally, Prof. Roure emailed me an application directly to my home address. For the Ronald H. Brown Program, students have to apply and I had one of the most intense interviews of my life where I saw the applicant before me leave with very watery eyes. The Ron Brown Program was worth the tears.

BMI mentors: I am fortunate enough to have several BMI mentors. Professor Jodie Roure, Maria Vidal, Professor Jose Morin and Jermaine Wright are my most immediate BMI mentors. The Ron Brown Program also provides me with a structured mentoring program where I am paired with a practicing attorney mentor as well.

The impact BMI has had on your academic performance

The BMI Program is directly related to my academic success, grade point average increase, and my personal development. This has to be NYC Council's best-spent money! The Ronald H. Brown Law School Prep Program is a two-year intense academic law school prep program. During the first summer of the Ronald H. Brown Program, I partook in three weeks of simulated law school classes taught by the law school faculty of St. John's University School of Law. The curriculum was extremely challenging and very difficult. It was similar to learning a second language. Because of the Ron Brown Program, I have grown exponentially both academically and professionally. The Program assisted me in increasing my grade point average, which typically resulted in me obtaining a 3.0 GPA per semester before the program to me achieving a 4.0 GPA for the following semesters through my junior and senior year. The real support provided through the Ron Brown Program raised my self-esteem and confidence overall and made me a more nationally competitive student.

The Ron Brown Program has provided me with a plethora of legal internship experiences including a clerkship with the Hon. Shawndya L. Simpson at the Brooklyn Criminal Court and at the New State Attorney General's Office, Consumer Protection Division in Harlem. Witnessing what can be attained with a law degree at such a professional level inspires me to work harder. That motivation made me realize that I can be the next US Attorney General or US Supreme Court Justice if I so desire.

Other impacts on social, emotional and extracurricular performance

During the recession in 2008, my family's home was foreclosed upon. That was a time frame where things turned for the worst. I could remember staying in a place where we had to heat the house with a stove to stay warm. Then when I started high school, academics were the least of my worries. I was focused on real life and getting by day by day. I originally wanted to be an attorney, but when I applied to colleges almost all schools except for John Jay rejected me. After being rejected so many times, I rejected the idea that I could be an attorney. As a result I started John Jay with the intent of becoming a police officer. The Ronald H. Brown Program has allowed me to pursue my original dream of becoming an attorney and has made it a reality! This week, I had a law school call me offering me a leadership scholarship, which covers 75% of the tuition to attend law school! I had to ask the Admissions Dean to double check that they called the right person. The law school acceptance offers keep coming. Because of my BMI mentors, I have been able to attend programs at The United Nations, go to Albany to meet representatives, study abroad in Argentina to learn to speak Spanish, and the list goes on. Attorneys of color are represented in single digits, especially Black and Latina/o attorneys. The Ron Brown Law School Prep Program is working hard to change that by diversifying the legal profession with students who are diverse like me. As a Black male, I add a diverse perspective both to the legal profession and legal discourse of these United States of America.

I would like to conclude by saying thank you for supporting the Ron Brown Law School Prep Program and the UMI Program by funding BMI. I cannot say I would be on the same path if I had never met my BMI mentors and participated in these programs. I would like to publically thank Mr. Jermaine Wright for supporting me and the programs I have participated in. To the New York City Council, I ask that you please continue your support of these programs so that we can change the face of the legal profession one student at a time. Thank you.

FOR THE RECORD

My name is Fabrice Charlemagne and I am a student at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) and a proud member of the BMCC Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA). My journey with UMLA began in the fall of 2015. Through my time in UMLA, I've learned invaluable lessons and picked up skills that have not only helped me with my school assignments, but also equipped me with the resources necessary for professional and personal success. The UMLA family has definitely been an asset that has set me up for success in college and beyond.

My experience with UMLA was not what I expected. The program has forced me out of my comfort zone and taught me adaptability. I had to communicate with people I'd never met before, knowing that I'm extremely shy, and think about my future in detail and learn how to work as a team. UMLA has also afforded me the opportunity to become a peer leader and test my skills. I'm currently the Treasurer of Honor Society of Black Scholars, which is one of the clubs that is affiliated with UMLA. My mentor, and the UMLA director, Ashtian Holmes encouraged me to take on these challenging roles. UMLA is a family; because of its focus on mentorship, community, brotherhood, sisterhood, and excellence, we are able to come together as a family to address the individual challenges we face. I learn something new every day simply from being around the group and soaking in all of the collective knowledge.

UMLA has opened my eyes to new opportunity. Through various workshops, seminars, and presentations, we learn about professionalism, black and Latino history and culture, business, careers, health issues, and of course academic success. We even had a winter fitness camp. UMLA, along with the CSTEP program, has peaked my interest in improving the health of individuals and populations through the combination of medical, public health and policy perspectives. Currently, I am interested in taking more classes that explore the intersection between race and health as well as courses that seek to understand the developmental, historical and sociological factors behind the diseases that most affect the black populations of the world, including cancer, diabetes, and mental health. I also want to understand how global health problems have an impact on the growth and development of nations.

I plan to concentrate in one of the life sciences and continue my education in global health and health policy to cater to my intellectual interests.

UMLA has truly brought the best qualities out of me. I am grateful to be part of the UMLA family, and it is absolutely necessary that young black men like myself have organizations such as UMLA and the CUNY Black Male Initiative to support our goals and cater to the specific needs of underserved communities.

Name: Omar Cyrille
Major: Public Administration
College Program: Medgar Evers College/Brotherhood Mentoring Program.
Program Directors : Dr. Robert Waterman & Mr. Larry Martin

Testimony: I got connected to BMI through Medgar Evers College's Male Development & Empowerment Center. I work for a program called the Medgar Evers Brotherhood, which serves as a mentoring program for the male population at the college to address retention and build life skills. The Brotherhood aims to address issues of student engagement by holding participants accountable for themselves and for each other. Advocating for yourself as an individual is a process that involves knowing who you are. That is the biggest question any youth will face, who are you? Being honest with life, yourself and others is the first step. You must be honest about your weaknesses and confident in your strengths. During that process, humility sneaks in. Humility is a very important trait when it comes to working in or with a group. The skill to put others importance above your own is learned through trial and error.

Weekly meetings take place outside of the school setting and traditional meeting format. Students gathered to play basketball, work together in the libraries and cafeteria. Students also attend an annual Barber Shop. The Barber Shop is a gathering of men of all ages getting haircuts, eating and conversing. The atmosphere is the most important factor of the Barber Shop because of the discussions and the bonds formed. I personally have received a huge boost of knowledge just by having a conversation over a chess game. It pushes forth an environment of positive criticism, positive bonding and an unofficial workshop on the important question, what is a man? Plenty of young men grow up in a community where a man is not present in the home and negative role models exist at

every turn. Influence is a silent force that pushes anyone down the wrong road or the right road. Being able to be a mentor for the Medgar Evers Brotherhood has allowed me to give back to where I see a need. My role gives me purpose, fulfillment and joy. Its joyful to see a young man come in with his arms crossed and cautious then comes out of his shell to laugh, lead and share.

Human connection is still important even as technology is soaring. A handshake, a hug and even uttering a simple phrase such as “have a great day” can change the mood of a young man. Everyone has hardships and I had friends, family to turn to in times of need. Where does a teenager or young man turn if friends and family are absent? Being someone to turn to has only motivated me to be on top of my game and letting my actions be influential and a stepping stone to improve. That means going to class, showing up at office hours, communication with my professor, asking for extra credit and maintaining a respectful GPA to be proud of. Teachers, educators and mentors can still learn from their students. Life is a constant lesson, good or bad. My purpose includes giving out a few cheat codes to students so they can skip over certain mistakes that can turn into setbacks. I see the BMI everyday in the mirror and I decided that being an influence is who I am.

YouthComeUp:

A Proposal for a Student Resource
App to help Bridge the Achievement
Gap

Joshua Davis
davis.joshuaproductions@gmail.com
718-360-3448

Nathalie Lebron
Natleb101@gmail.com
347-525-1277

Statement of Need

Closing the Achievement Gap

According to the Child Trends Research Center, "Improving student engagement may be the best way to close the achievement gap."

YOUTHCOMEUP is an app that will be created for students to interact with one another for educational advancement purposes. It will provide easy access to college and academic information, calendars, study strategies, relevant services, and the support of educational professionals and the students' newly expanded support from and interaction with their peers, the **YOUTHCOMEUP** community. **YOUTHCOMEUP** will be a personal and powerful tool to close the achievement gap.

Target Population

The target population for this proposal has been selected because they have the gravest need for academic intervention and wrap-around support services. Most have not accumulated enough credits, nor passed the necessary Regents exams to graduate within four years, and the chances that they will do so fade as more time passes. Our students and their families grapple with a wide range of economic survival issues that, at best, negatively impact academic outcomes and, at worst, divert students from the path to success onto a pipeline to prison. They commonly live in neighborhoods beset by unemployment, violence, drug abuse, and rising rents. They struggle with attendance, are disconnected from available resources, and are not meeting the benchmarks they must in order to pursue higher education and find gainful employment.

According to an analysis of student performance on the ACT, students of color are much less likely to be college ready than white students. The study showed that "...Native Americans and Hispanic Americans are only about half as likely as the total population to be ready for college level Biology, and African Americans are about five times less likely to be ready." The article, "College Preparation for African American Students: Gaps in the High School Educational Experience," also found high levels of disparities in mostly minority high schools. These disparities are manifested in the lack of access to advanced course work, limited number of experienced teachers, and lack of access to guidance counselors.. The lack of access to the resources within these three areas has made it difficult for minority students to be ready for college, and has limited their awareness of the existence of the resources.

Aside from providing emotional counseling, part of guidance counselors responsibilities include supplying information about resources such as after school programs, internships and volunteer opportunities. So if students do not have access to counselors, they miss out on that knowledge and emotional support. Not having access to experienced teachers also affects student's knowledge of resources, since experienced teachers are more likely to know of programs that can benefit students. The study, "The Role of Motivation, Parental Support, and Peer Support in the Academic Success of Ethnic Minority First-Generation College Students" published by the Journal of College Students Development, conducted a quasi-experimental study of minority first-generation college students. Before conducting the study, researchers found that first-generation college

students were less equipped for college due to poor academic preparation from high school and lower critical thinking scores prior to college. When students lack the basic necessities that should be provided in high school they also lose the opportunity to succeed in high school as well as college.

The Answer to the Problem

As minority college students, we know how important it is for minorities to have access to proper resources, which is why we have designed an app called **YOUTHCOMEUP**.

YOUTHCOMEUP will:

- Be designed as a handheld resource hub for high school and college students...
- Provide information on internships, employment opportunities, and after school programs that provide peer support...
- As well as information to prepare them for college...
- Inform students about colleges and financial services...
- Also allow students to talk to other students. By allowing high school students to talk with each other, YOUTHCOMEUP will be providing access to additional peer support needed for high school students to succeed.

Many adults may believe that high school students can simply Google information on after school programs or college readiness programs. However it is not that simple; information on programs is spread across many different websites, which can be overwhelming. This app is designed for simple navigation in which a student can simply select a category such as "internship opportunities," and find legitimate opportunities in their area.

One may argue that designing a website with the same features can be just as sufficient. However, data from app analytics provider Flurry has found mobile Smartphone users spend more time on apps than websites. Of the 2 hours and 42 minutes per day they spend on their phone, 2 hours and 19 minutes (80%) are spent on apps. And only 14% of that time is spent on Google. Additionally, since teens spend more time on their phones than their laptops, teens are much more likely to search for information on their phones. Finally, navigating a website on a mobile device is not as simple as navigating an app. An app, not a website, would most benefit high school students.

YOUTHCOMEUP WILL provide great database for high school and college students looking for the activities and opportunities that will assist in their academic and personal growth today, so that they will be equipped with the skills and confidence they need in college tomorrow.

YOUTHCOMEUP will provide information on and access to these vital resources in a culturally relevant context.

Initial Development steps

Requesting amount of \$10,000

As stated above, upon receiving the amount of \$10,000 dollars the donation to the **YouthComeUp** is crucial for the initial development stages. These steps will provide the materials needed, design focus groups for students, interview school administrators, receive assistance from tech developers, and obtain future collaboration with other information providers that will help in the development of this app. Gathering information for the app will keep the engine running, and enable partners and participants to focus on the conceptual development and delivery of the app.

Design Procedure

Within 3 months we will interview students, as well as school administrators for insights. We will also gather information from technical developers and information providers.

Deliverable

YouthComeUp will

- Asses and plan for the next stages of development
- Expansion and growth of conceptual design
- Provide the evidence found to support it's claim.
- Provide new partners of support
- Give detail description of direction

City Council Higher Education Hearing

"Oversight-Status of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) and Black Academic Offerings at
CUNY Colleges"

February 26, 2016

Written Testimony of

Kristy Clementina Perez, MSW
Interim Director of the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program
Director of the Urban Male Leadership Academy Scholars Program

Good afternoon. My name is Kristy Clementina Perez. I am the Interim Director of the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program at Baruch College and the Director of the Urban Male Leadership Academy. The UMLA Program was created in 2009 by Dr. Angela Anselmo, the SEEK Director at Baruch to address the low enrollment of black and Latino males within SEEK and the college.

Since 2009, Dr. Angela Anselmo has written several RFPs on expanding the admissions criteria to increase the number of black and Latino males within the SEEK Program and Baruch College. Each of the RFPs was approved both by the CUNY Central Office of Special Programs and Enrollment Management Division at Baruch College. Additionally, for the past several years, the CUNY Black Male Initiative has also funded the Urban Male Leadership Academy.

The broader admissions criteria included less emphasis on GPA and SATs, an interview process, letters of recommendation and personal statements. In this way, males with potential who would have otherwise would not be accepted into SEEK and Baruch would still have the opportunity to attend Baruch's SEEK Program.

This has resulted in the slow but steady increase in the percentage of traditionally underrepresented students in the SEEK population from **31.8%** of the total SEEK enrollment in 2012 to **90%** in 2015. The increase of underrepresented in our incoming 2015 class was made possible with the institutional support from President Mitchel B. Wallerstein who charged the Enrollment Division and SEEK with increasing the underrepresented student SEEK population.

Year	N	Black	Latino
2010	155	4.52%	31.0%
2011	190	5.8%	21.6%
2012	68	8.8%	29.6%
2013	62	14.5%	22.5%
2014	95	10.5%	30.5%
2015	134	20%	70.4%

Our vision for the UMLA was not only to increase the enrollment and graduation of black and Latino men but we wanted to:

- ▶ Develop socially conscious male leaders within an anti-racist and anti-oppressive framework.
- ▶ Provide life-affirming & transformative men of color-centered environments and programming.
- ▶ Create concrete leadership development opportunities and roles for UMLA students within the UMLA program.

Thus, a UMLA student is also a SEEK student and is provided with all the support that every other SEEK student gets. But there are also added responsibilities and expectations made of these men. Additionally, a UMLA student:

- Is required to attend the Pre-freshmen Summer Program for 5 times a week (versus 4 times a week) to participate in Saturday workshops run by clinical Black and Latino social workers.
- After the Pre-freshman summer Saturday workshops, a UMLA student must attend one Saturday workshop a month. During this time he will take a works on topics such as what it means to be a responsible man of color, exploring oppressive language or understanding institutionalized racism.¹
- Is required to take a two-credit course in Leadership (SP 2016).
- Is required to take a three-credit course in Black or Latino Studies.
- Is required to actively employ leadership skills. This has taken many forms. Students formed an Advisory Board that has been responsible for creating an UMLA logo, interviewing prospective UMLA candidates, visiting high schools as ambassadors for Baruch, SEEK and UMLA to encourage and help prepare students for college. Other students have become officers in students clubs and peer mentors.

How are we doing?

Academic Indicators of UMLA students

Year	Cohort	N	Retention	1 st Semester	Graduates
2010	UMLA	20	95%	3.02	14 (70%)
2011	UMLA	16	93%	2.83	13 (81%)
2012	UMLA	12	100%	2.85	0
2013	UMLA	16	100%	3.22	0
2014	UMLA	10	100%	3.00	0
2015	UMLA	20	100%	3.31	0

In Fall 2014, we hired James Bravo, UMLA/SEEK alum to serve as the UMLA Program Coordinator and he now co-facilitates the UMLA workshops, FRO seminars and is responsible for UMLA recruitment and outreach. In 2015, we renamed the UMLA Program to the Urban Male Leadership Academy Scholars Program.

Several of our UMLA graduates are employed in the public and private sector and still volunteer their time to give back to the UMLA Program.

Recommendations:

- Partner with OSP & BMI-similar vision and goals. RFP's invaluable
- Partner and work closely with enrollment and admissions

- Get buy-in from the college President, Faculty senate, faculty & staff, student and community organizations
- Have counselors, facilitators and students take the Undoing Racism workshop (anti-racist & anti-oppression lens)
- Have students take ownership of the program. Our vision was to work ourselves out of a job:
 - Foster a sense of community, identity, specialness, “scholars”
 - Provide leadership opportunities-UMLA advisory board, mentoring, creation of UMLA logo, retreats
 - Be open to feedback from the students and adjust program based on their feedback
 - Expect excellence-accountability and high standards

The UMLA is a great example of what can be accomplished if students are given an opportunity and financial, academic and emotional support. The urgency and need to provide quality access to higher education for Black and Latino students particularly for Black and Latino males exists today. SEEK and programs such as the UMLA can play a critical role in this.

I have included a link to a video that was created about the UMLA as well as the SEEK 50th Celebration video that features one of our UMLA/SEEK alum, Mr. Jeffrey McClellan.

<http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/seek/umla/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-rugBBt4G4&feature=youtu.be>

Thank you for your attention

***“Oversight - Status of the Black Male Initiative (BMI)
and
Black Academic Offerings at CUNY Colleges”***

City Council Hearing
Committee on Higher Education
February 26, 2016

Written Testimony of

Angela Anselmo Ph.D.
Director of the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program
Director of Urban Male Leadership Academy
Baruch College

Good afternoon, my name is Angela Anselmo, an associate professor at Baruch College who serves as the Director of the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program, the Director of the Urban Male Leadership Academy Scholars Program (UMLA) and the Director of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) at Baruch. I am currently on Travia leave and will officially retire in August 2016 after 43 years of service at Baruch.

This is a follow-up to the testimony I presented on December 10, 2014 at a hearing entitled the "Oversight of the Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Program and College Discovery."

At that hearing, I spoke about the diminishing number of underrepresented students especially black males enrolled in SEEK and in the UMLA at Baruch.

This afternoon, my colleagues, the University Associate Dean for Special Programs, Cheryl Williams and the Interim Director of SEEK, Kristy Perez have shared the good news that the numbers for under represented students especially Blacks in Baruch's SEEK Program have increased dramatically. Seventy per cent of the 2015 SEEK freshman class was from under represented students. The black student population in our 2015 freshman class increased from 4.5% in 2010 to 20%. The overall SEEK population is now 50% from under represented students. Most importantly, these students are being retained and in many cases are academically out performing the regularly admitted students who are admitted with higher GPA's and SAT's.

My testimony is meant as additional information to better understand how this change came about. It is my hope that these particulars can assist in replicating our results at other CUNY campuses.

This transformation was the result of many forces over a long period of time (approximately ten years)-sometimes concurrent but all consistent with regard to the urgency of increasing the enrollment, retention and graduation of under represented students especially Black males in CUNY. It truly "takes a village."

These forces included:

1. The report of the Chancellor's Task Force on Black Male Achievement in 2008⁴ lay bare what was happening nationally and locally with the education of our black males. The report shocked many of us.
2. The support of the New York City Council was essential in two ways. First, it provided grants for the creation of the CUNY BMI resulting in the creation of many programs across CUNY including one at Baruch. Second, the Council kept the issue of black males achievement as a priority and has consistently asked for accountability.
3. The University BMI under the leadership of Elliot Dawes and later Jermaine Wright and his team have nurtured and fostered effective and viable programs across CUNY. Their efforts with the BMI at Baruch have resulted in a transfer bridge program with BMCC, the UMLA and the BMI Collaborative at Baruch-all projects focused on the increased enrollment, retention and graduation of under represented students especially Black males.

4. Likewise the University Office of Special Programs (OSP) under the leadership of Dean Cheryl Williams has been with us from the very beginning of the process. The dramatic shift in our enrollment could not have been possible without OSP's continual support. OSP provided:
 - a. Seed money in the form of a planning grant for the creation of the UMLA.
 - b. Subsequent grants that aimed at the development of alternate admissions strategies to better align SEEK enrollment with the original mission of the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program.
5. The *People's Institute for Survival and Beyond* inspired and made us think about accountability in a new way. Their *Undoing Racism* workshop which was taken by all members of the SEEK staff changed our perspective with regard to the institutionalization of racism and to our role as gatekeepers.
6. Many members of the Baruch faculty through the venue of the Faculty Senate came together and voiced their concerns about the lack of student diversity and the reliance of only the SAT as the litmus test for admissions into Baruch. In fact, one Faculty Senate session was held in reserve to discuss this issue.
7. One such faculty member, Arthur Lewin, organized an Open Forum on *CUNY Admissions Policy and Its Impact on Black and Latino Enrollment*. The CUNY Director of Admissions, Richard Alvarez, was one of the featured speakers. It was open to the public. New York City high school teachers and guidance counselors had the opportunity to voice their concerns. Even a member of the Community Service Society that published one of the most influential reports on enrollment at CUNY, *Unintended Impacts*, attended this forum. What became clear was that many felt that the CUNY Admissions Process was flawed and was not serving the young people in many under served communities.
8. But perhaps the great game changer in the struggle to diversify the SEEK enrollment was the support of the President of Baruch College, Dr. Mitchel Wallerstein. After meeting with SEEK and studying the matter, he charged the then Vice President of Enrollment Management to work collaboratively with SEEK to ensure that at least 50% of the 2015 SEEK freshman class would come from under represented groups. This directive changed the nature of our relationship with Baruch's offices of enrollment, recruitment and admissions. We are now included in their meetings. We participate in the decision-making process including setting enrollment targets and admissions criteria. We have become partners with them resulting in improved recruitment and outreach strategies. All this has resulted in a dramatic shift in our freshman enrollment.

Today, the SEEK Program is once again aligned with its original mission of providing access and opportunity to under represented students. It has taken several years of conviction and commitment on the part many people to reach this point. Most importantly it has taken institutional support both on the university and campus level. It is only a beginning. The students in SEEK represent a fraction of the overall CUNY student population. Over 70% of the students in the New York City DOE are black or Latino and only a small number of these students will be admitted into the top tier institutions at CUNY. It is our hope that the best practices learned at Baruch can be utilized to open more doors for these students.

Testimony for The Black Male Initiative

February 23, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Emelin Velez and I am currently a junior at Baruch College. My area of study is operations management with a minor in communication studies. I am currently the president of Women Empowered for Success or WES, powered by the Black Male Initiative (BMI) at Baruch College. WES is a club that commenced under the BMI umbrella in 2013. After attending various WES meetings at its early stages, I became the first president of the organization at the end of my freshman year.

Essentially, my involvement with this club organization was how I became connected to the BMI. Rebecca Quainoo, the founder of Women Empowered for Success and an administrator for the BMI, became my mentor. The BMI was able to make my club WES possible and because of that I was able to evolve academically, socially, and professionally. A lot of the skills that I learned through being president such as organizational skills, have been applied to my academics, allowing me to currently maintain a 3.5 GPA. Due to the BMI supporting WES, I was able to help grow the organization allowing me to learn about my strengths and weaknesses, ultimately clarifying my desired career choice. Through my relationship with my BMI mentor, Rebecca, she has coached me on valuable skills such as communication and leadership. I have also been able to have her as a support system for two and a half years. Through WES, I also host events and meetings frequently allowing me to step outside of my comfort zone and ultimately be more confident in my capabilities.

Due to the BMI, I have excelled in my academics, solidified my career goals, and have developed a wide range of skills. The BMI has been a crucial component of my growth and development. It has also made my experience in college that much more meaningful and enjoyable. After my experience with The BMI program and its conference, I am certain that this is an excellent tool and platform that is necessary in all CUNY campuses.

Thank you.

Signed,

Emelin Velez

New York City Council Higher Education Oversight Hearing
February 26th, 2016
CUNY Black Male Initiative
Urban Male Leadership Academy Scholars Program, Baruch College/CUNY

Hello my name is Digno Melo and I am currently a full-time student majoring in Finance at Baruch College. Within Baruch College, I am enrolled in the SEEK and Urban Male Leadership Scholars (UMLAS) Program. Kristy Perez, UMLAS Program Director, surrounds young Black and Hispanic male students, men of color, with an outstanding supporting cast. If it was not for the constant outreach of staff and current UMLAS members, I would have never known about the various opportunities at my reach. Personally, with the one-on-one mentorship UMLAS Program offers, I do not know how I would have surpassed rigorous barriers in my personal and educational life. For instance, as an incoming freshman the first semester can be overwhelming: meeting professors, sitting in long lectures, and adjusting to the College environment. However, with the tremendous help between James Bravo, Program Coordinator, and Akeem Wilson, UMLAS mentor, Baruch College became a second home for me. These guys developed a road map, bombarded me with 'must-know' information about the College, but most importantly 'held my hand' during my first semester at Baruch College. As previously mentioned, the UMLAS Program does not only focus bettering your academic performance, but also enhancing your personal life. Before enrolling in the UMLAS Program, I did not possess a father-figure at home, but thanks to the UMLAS members that all changed. Regardless of the time of the day, I can email or send a quick text message to any of the UMLAS members and expect constructive feedback at an instant. My issue does not have to pertain to anything specific, as long as I have a question, they have an answer. This program, my brothers, have

helped me and supported me through a lot so far and I am confident that we will all excel academically and professionally in the coming years.

Good afternoon, my name is John Rose and I am the Dean for Diversity and Compliance at Hunter College where I also serve as the Project Director for the Hunter College Black Male Initiative Program, known as Brothers for Excellence. I am pleased to be here this afternoon to thank the City Council for its continued support of BMI and to briefly discuss our campus program.

The goal of the Brothers for Excellence Program is to foster personal and academic success for participating students in a mutually supportive community. It has been modeled after Dr. Shaun Harper's study of successful black men in predominantly white institutions and based on 5 success factors:

1. Academic achievement at 3.0 GPA or higher
2. Leadership in a club, activity or initiative
3. Service to the community
4. Relationship with faculty and administrators
5. Being part of a community- feeling welcomed, centered, respected

We have structured our program so as to provide opportunity for students to fully achieve each of these 5 success factors. We have developed the Passport Program that is designed to walk students through their academic journey and identify the activities and actions appropriate in each of the undergraduate years that will contribute to their personal and academic success. My colleagues and I structured our program over each semester to provide a combination of Informational Supports (about resources, opportunities, scholarships, graduate/professional programs, financial support, etc.), Emotional Supports (proactive advising, peer support, mentoring), Instrumental Supports (workshops on writing personal essays, developing "elevator"

talks and networking skills) and Appraisal Supports (assessment of progress toward individual goals, feedback loops)

Our Informational Supports includes weekly programing that is relevant to the needs, goals and aspiration of our students. This semester, drawing from the energy of the “Black Lives Matter” movement, our programing is about “Words Matter” and concerns a variety of self-help topics from personal brand and reputations to financial literacy to health and well-being know how.

Informational Support also includes taking students to opportunities. Thanks to President Raab and her generous support of our program, we have taken students on trips to graduate schools in Philadelphia and New Haven so they can first hand learn about opportunities that are available to them in graduate school programs and meet the administrators and decisions makers who can help them.

This approach has been refined over the successive Student Cohorts we have had the privilege of serving, which we now estimate to be over 700 students since our program began. Within that group we have 8 who are now in Ph.D. programs involving some of the most challenges programs in bioengineering at UCSF and Oceanography at Oregon State. One of the first students in our program has now completed his Ph.D. in English, is on the faculty of William Paterson University and comes back frequently to teach our students the art of writing personal statements for internships or graduate admissions. Two of our students went to law school and are now practicing law representing indigent clients. One of our

students worked as an intern for then City Council member Leroy Comrie and then went into graduate school in urban affairs, and two of our students have MPHs and work for the City Health & Hospitals Organization focusing on helping underserved populations.

Finally, we thank a rising tide lifts all boats. Our students' academic success has increased over time. Generally we have seen a rise in GPAs from the Fall to the Spring; but the base GPA of our students is now higher than before. Back in 2008, 75% of our students in the Fall had GPA at less than 3.0. This past fall 65% of our students had GPA's above 3.0. This has implications for retention and graduation as well.

Thank You

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CUNY Panel 1 of 4

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Name: Frank Sanchez, Vice Chancellor-Student Affairs

Address: _____

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

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CUNY Panel 2 of 4

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Name: Jermaine Wright, Dir. Black Male Initiative

Address: _____

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

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CUNY Panel 3 of 4

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Name: Cheryl Williams, Univ. Dean Special Programs

Address: _____

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

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CUNY Panel 4 of 4

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Name: Marlon Myers

Address: _____

I represent: Student - NYC Tech - CUNY

Address: _____

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Name: ANGELA ANSELMO

Address: 300 FIRST Ave / 4c

I represent: SEEK Program Baruch College

Address: 1 Berward Baruch Way, NYC 10010

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Name: Kristy Perry

Address: _____

I represent: Baruch College CUNY

Address: 55 Lexington St.

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Name: Kevin Lamonte Jones

Address: 2900 Bedford Avenue (Brooklyn College)

I represent: Black & Latino male Initiative

Address: _____

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Name: Jovan Henry

Address: 82 Carl St Valley Stream

I represent: BMT Ronald H. Brown Program

Address: _____

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Name: John Rose

Address: To Hunter College, 695 Park Ave NY 10022

I represent: Hunter College BMT

Address: 695 Park Ave, NY 10022

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Name: OMAR CYRILLE

Address: 523 Jerome St

I represent: MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE

Address: 1650 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn

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Date: 2/26/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emelin Velez

Address: _____

I represent: Baruch College - BMI

Address: _____

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Name: Fabrice Charlemagne

Address: 115-96 233rd Cambria Heights

I represent: Borough of Manhattan Community College

Address: 199 Chambers

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Name: CHERYL WILLIAMS

Address: 555 W 57th St NY 10019

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

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Name: S. Lupe Guinier

Address: 351 Lenox Ave

I represent: my community

Address: _____

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Date: 2/26/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chika Onyejiukwa

Address: 16353 Sayres Ave

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Date: 2/26/2016

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Name: Joshua Davis

Address: 475 Prospect Pl Apt 3R Brooklyn NY 11238

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

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Name: Marlon Myers

Address: 711 Miller Avenue Apt. 3R, Brooklyn NY

I represent: New York City College of Tech. BMI program

Address: 300 Jay Street

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Name: Jaleel Thomas

Address: 1854 Cedar Ave

I represent: Bronx Community College / USS

Address: _____

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Name: Clare Norton

Address: 360 E 88th St. 37B, NY, NY 10128

I represent: CUNY

Address: 205 E 42nd Street, NY, NY ~~10017~~ 10017

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