President’s Report to the College Community- December 2020

Despite many dark days this past year, Kingsborough’s indomitable spirit continued to shine brightly in December. We started this last month of the year continuing to put students first by exceeding our CUNY (Giving) Tuesday goal of $50,000 by $7,485. Over 80% of all our CUNY Tuesday donors were KCC faculty, staff and alum! Thank you to all those who donated and participated in Spirit Week activities; and a special thank you to Interim VP Sutton Young and all the staff in the Division of Institutional Advancement for their efforts in coordinating and managing a successful campaign that helped us to not only raise funds for our students, but also helped us to raise our collective KCC spirit. This month we also received notice that the Venable Foundation awarded Kingsborough Community College (KCC) a $10,000 grant to help stock the College’s food pantry.

This month we held the last of our Student Town Halls for the year. Student participation was at an all-time high due to the implementation of the Credit/No Credit Policy for the Fall 2020 semester. Colleges were asked to select from one of three options (Option 1, all courses included; Option 2, some courses excluded, and Option 3, no courses included). Kingsborough, as did the majority of CUNY colleges, opted for Option 2 to allow the use of CR/NC grades for all Fall 2020 courses except those the College designated that must be excluded. Despite an aggressive timeline, I am grateful that we were able to engage in a consultative process that included meetings, with Department Chairs, the VP of Enrollment Management, the Director of Financial Aid, the Provost, and the College Council Steering Committee; and the College Council. Thank you all for your input in this important process. The list of exclude courses were posted online at https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/Creditnocreditpolicy/index.html#announcements.

Our planned Faculty and Staff Community Chat was revised to accommodate the Chancellor’s Virtual Hall with the KCC Community. Chancellor Matos Rodriguez addressed questions that were submitted in advance by members of the community and as time permitted, questions from KCC faculty and staff. He talked about the dip in enrollment that is occurring across the University; addressed concerns about additional layoffs, ECP furloughs, postponed salary increases; and answered questions about our expected to return to campus, and a potential university policy for working from home. The Chancellor also shared that essentially our budget outlook remains the same. As I indicated in previous reports, we anticipate additional state and city reductions for FY 22. More recently, while a new COVID relief package was signed by the President, which will include aid to colleges and university, it is not yet known what funding will be awarded to CUNY.

As part of the continued commitment to the health and well-being of the University community, this past month the Chancellor announced that the University worked to secure priority testing...
at designated NYC Health + Hospitals testing sites. Priority testing was made available for faculty, staff and students working living and or attending classes on campus. More information about CUNY COVID Priority-Testing can be found here at: https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/distancelearning/chancellorletter_12-02-20.html.

A special thank you to the KCC COACHE Steering Committee (Richard Fox, Rachel Ihara, Melissa Jn. Pierre, Tyronne Johnson, Lisa Paler, Stuart Parker, Rick Repetti, Joanne Russell, Michael Sokolow, Red Washburn and Scott Cally- Committee Chair) for conducting feedback response sessions and subsequently developing and submitting a comprehensive report on their recommendations to the Senior Staff. Over the next few weeks, we will have the opportunity to review the report and its recommendations and share an action plan with the college community in the spring.

Earlier this month, we were honored to be named Dime’s Best of Brooklyn- Best College/University by Dime Bank. We were also excited to see our some of our alumni are also making their mark. Dr. Kinta Alexander (‘98) was named to the KCC Foundation Board; and Dr. Francisco Ianni (‘97) was profiled in the Long Island Herald after being named Superintendent for Oyster Bay-East Norwich School District. At a time where CUNY proudly announced a 36% increase in procurement expenditures involving minority and women-owned business, we were proud to see two KCC alumna who became small business owners, Iris Clarke, profiled in the NY Times “The Bra-fitter Who Wants You To Dance in Her Shop” and Latisha Campbell profiled on EastNewYork.com “Real People of ENY: Latisha Campbell, Salon Owner Brings Resiliency and Hair Flair to East New York”. We were also excited to have profiles of two KCC faculty members who recently published books, Objects and Intertexts in Toni Morrison’s Beloved: The Case for Reparations by Prof. Maureen Fadem profiled by SUM CUNY and Tolstoy and the Birth of Literatures Most Enigmatic Heroine: Creating Anna Karenina, by Prof. Bob Blaisdell profiled in the Brooklyn Eagle.

Kudos were also in order this month for our Theatre Arts Program Students who treated us to a live performance of Language of Angels by Naomi Iiska and We’re Gonna Die, by Young Jean Lee. Their performances literally had the audience glued to the screen. Hats off to the Theatre Arts Program faculty and staff who helped to prepare students and present two magnificent virtual productions. A special thank you also to Prof. Janice Mehlman for sharing with me amazing photos produced by her photography students this semester. You can check it out and be blown away like was at https://youtu.be/-JVr5nQcN1o. This holiday season, I was also pleased to share with you a holiday card that was designed by another one of KCC’s very talented students, Anna Povalinkska a current first-year student. Her design not only captures the beautiful diversity of our college community, but it reminds us of why we are here, as we see each one of the characters that are included in the illustration smiling in response to and
reaching for the light that KCC offers to so many. As we look toward new year, let us all see and celebrate the light in each other and in our work.

Here’s to new opportunities to lift KCC higher.

President Schrader