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Despite his busy agenda, Farley Herzek, appointed president of Kingsborough Community College in June 2014, and started in June 2014, makes time to walk the hallways of his school — where students speak 70 foreign languages and represent 160 countries. And when he does, he keeps a lookout for anyone who seems unhappy.

"Can I help you?" he then asks.

The new president also requests that his staff phons students who, despite good academic standing, are in need. Herzek himself called one, only to find that the $256 she owed the college made her feel she could not return. With such a small balance, the president knew the school could help — perhaps with a payment plan, a loan or a grant — so he immediately connected her to an admissions officer.

For incoming freshmen, there is also a new free "app" that aims to help them to be proactive if they are in need.

"My agenda is to focus primarily on retention, completion. If we can't keep students here, we can't graduate them," Herzek says. He emphasizes he is grateful to have a faculty and staff who "take a holistic approach to serve our students. They all know it is about more than what happens in the classroom."

Crenshaw Height-born and Canarie-raised, Herzek played basketball at Biddulph Junior High School. A City College alumnus, '79, he spent 34 years as an educator in Southern California. He taught technical education — carpentry, wood working, drafting, metal working and even home economics — on the junior high school and high school levels. Later, as a college administrator, he used his experience from those earlier days to act as a liaison between high schools and colleges. Most recently he was interim president of East Los Angeles College.

Now he has moved home to Brooklyn and KBCC, where students speak 70 foreign languages and represent 160 countries. And when he does, he keeps a lookout for anyone who seems unhappy. "Can I help you?" he then asks.

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