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As CUNY Students Succeed, New York Wins

BY DR. CLAUDIA SCHRADER

Kingsborough Community College (KCC) is the college where dreams begin. As the nation's leading engine of social and economic mobility, CUNY is the university that serves and elevates all.

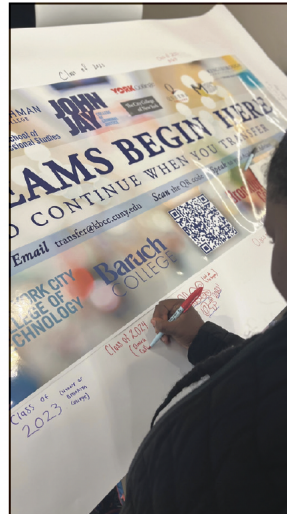
As Kingsborough's president, I am inspired by the students who have chosen to attend. Some are students who never thought college was for them. Students who are the first in their families to go to college. Students who are giving this college thing another try.

And they succeed because of CUNY's signature programs like the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), which has helped many students, like KCC's Nikki Tam, wife and mother of two, to stay on track to graduating within three years. Since its launch in 2007, the high-touch advisement model, coupled with tuition reimbursement and other financial resources, has helped more than 88,000 students stay on track toward meeting their

goals.

With city and state funding, every dollar allocated to CUNY programs is an investment in our future entrepreneurs, nurses and teachers, paramedics, bankers, engineers, and elected officials -- our NY workforce in general. An investment in CUNY is an investment in New York. A 2021 report from Scott Stringer, former NYC Comptroller, provides compelling evidence of CUNY's impact in New York State, revealing that 79 percent of CUNY graduates work full-time, within the state, after graduation. Increasingly, CUNY graduates increase the New York tax base, building a better, more prosperous New York.

Nikki enrolled in KCC during the height of the pandemic to earn a degree in business so she can better help her family's business. After doing exceedingly well in her first accounting course, her professor encouraged her to pursue accounting as a major. Her story is not isolated. Kingsborough has played a criti-



Scores of Kingsborough Community College students were able to meet their educational goals and graduate with the help of CUNY signature programs funded by city and state entities.

cal role in this post-pandemic

world for adult learners as well as high schoolers. We are helping high school students who were hit hard and have much ground to make up, mentally and academically. The college also provides many opportunities for adults seeking to change careers and find jobs with more secure outcomes; jobs where they can earn a living wage to support their families.

As someone who receives accommodation for a disability, Nikki says the office of Accessibility Services (AAS) at Kingsborough helps to provide her with incredible support. While she takes courses full-time, her son, who will be 2 years old at the end of this month, is enrolled in the KCC Child Development Center. She is grateful for his teachers, who understand and work to support her son, who has a speech delay.

It may surprise you that CUNY saw its most significant growth during the Great Depression. The current days are less austere, and the demand for

an educated workforce is high. Graduates are better equipped to face the challenges of an ever-changing economy and society. They are likelier to be engaged citizens and contributors to the common good like Nikki, who is already active and engaged member in the college community. She volunteers with the IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), is president of the Student Government Association and was recently named a Dream Scholar by Achieving the Dream. I urge our lawmakers at the city and state levels to keep their eye on the future and support the KCC students -- all CUNY students, for that matter -- who will make the future brighter for not only themselves and their families, but also our city and state.

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is Kingsborough Community College's seventh Community College's seventh president and the first African American to hold the position. Kingsborough is a top 10 finalist for the 2023 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.

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