

**Kingsborough Community College**  
**Convocation Address – Fall 2009**  
**By Dr. Regina Peruggi**  
**Thursday, September 3, 2009**  
**Performing Arts Center**

Good morning and welcome back. It seems that only a short time ago I stood before you for the very first time as president of Kingsborough Community College – but, incredibly, that was five years ago. Today, I will be addressing Fall Convocation for the sixth time.

For several of us with us today, I'm sure that their many years at Kingsborough, immersed in the important work that they do, passed as quickly as mine. The only difference is that they passed a lot more of their years here than I have – 35 years to be exact. As has been our custom at fall convocation, today we will honor full-time employees who have devoted 35 years of their careers to this college. This year, three individuals have reached that milestone. They are Dr. William Burger, Mr. Richard Cockrell, and Dr. Susan O'Malley.

Unfortunately, Mr. Cockrell could not be with us today, so I will present his award privately. But Professors O'Malley and Burger are both here. So, first I would like to say a few words about Susan O'Malley. After having earned graduate degrees and having taught at Tulane University, Professor O'Malley arrived in the English Department of Kingsborough in 1974. She is a published author in several fields, among them early modern drama, women's studies, education, and disability studies. She was active as a Kingsborough representative to the University Faculty Senate and in 2002 was elected chairperson of that body. (It was only the second time that the position was held by a community college professor.) By virtue of that office, she served on the CUNY Board of Trustees. In addition to teaching here, she has also taught at City College's Center for Worker Education and in the Liberal Studies program at the Graduate Center. Susan, please come forward.

Professor William (Bill) Burger also arrived at Kingsborough in 1974 joining the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Human Services, which I believe was called something else back then. He soon became the director of its Mental Health Program. Since 1995, Bill has served as the Chairperson of Behavioral Sciences. Early in my administration here at KCC I turned to Bill to Chair a committee and write a report that reinterpreted and clarified the college's standards for promotion and tenure. Bill did such a masterful job in that task that his work will have a lasting effect on this institution. Bill has just recently returned from sabbatical. And he used that time away from campus not only to perfect his tennis game but also to work on the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of his popular textbook entitled Human Services in Contemporary America, which has become the definitive text in that field. I've heard that the publisher has been so pleased with its success that they are encouraging Bill to begin work on another book. So, apparently, 35 years at Kingsborough may only mark the beginning of new professional experiences. Bill, please come forward.

Now, I would like to introduce members of our Kingsborough faculty and staff who will become eligible for their 35 year award in the year 2044. (I ask you to stand and remain standing until the entire group is introduced.) Those recently joining us in academic departments include:

- In Art – Brian Kite, Valerie Sokolova, Rick Klauber, Daniel McDonald
- In Biology – Christina Colon and Farshad Tamari
- In Business – Thomas McManus and Margaret Irizarry
- In Communications – Kaitlin Cruz
- In English – Karlene Gooding, Maria Romeo, Tara Thompson, Jennifer Fischer, Maggie Hill, and Renee Mizrahi
- In Foreign Languages – Alfredo Munoz Alacon
- In Health – Nancy Nemorin
- In History – Carline Barnaby and Christopher Chapman was newly reclassified
- In Library – Carlos Arguelles and Jean Boggs
- In Mathematics – Diana Kalechman, Ari Nagel, Shoshana Friedman, and Igor Melamed
- In Nursing – Lucille Cichminski was newly reclassified, Valerie Haskell, Diane McDevitt, and Marguerite Michaelson

Thank you. You may be seated.

Joining us in the Higher Education Officer categories are the following, and again I ask you to stand and remain standing until the entire group is introduced:

- In Student Affairs –
  - Freshman Year Office – Nicole DeCapua
  - Veterans Office – Peaches Diamond
  - Opening Doors – Damali Dublin Durrant and Stephanie Terry
  - Academic Advisement Office – Martha Greasley
  - and in Student Life – Tasheka Sutton-Young
- In Enrollment Management – Heidi Lopez
- In Administration and Finance, Public Safety – Pat Morena
- In Academic Affairs, Counseling – Oneika Rodriguez and George Nicolaidis
- In Continuing Education – Karolina Rasa and Kate Wayler
- In College Advancement – Kelly Freidenfelds
- and, in the President’s Office, Diversity and Affirmative Action Office – Angel Rivera

Thank you. Please be seated.

This year we are fortunate to welcome back three of our CUNY Writing Fellows from last year. These doctoral students support the work of faculty and students in KCC’s Writing Intensive courses. They are Noelia Diaz, Sophie Theven, and Doug Singsen. Three new Writing Fellows joining them this year are Noam Scheindlin, Amy Conoly, and Ted Powers. Would the Writing Fellows please stand. Thank you.

As long as I am on the subject of writing intensive courses, I’d like to remind you of something very important. Last spring, as part of our revision of general education, our College

Council approved a new graduation requirement. Beginning with the class that enters next fall, all students will be required to complete one writing intensive course before graduating. In order for our students to meet this new requirement, and in anticipation of a second writing intensive course requirement in the future, it is important for more faculty, across all disciplines, to become certified in writing across the curriculum. So far, 80 Kingsborough faculty have become certified. A new certification group will be forming in January, and I urge you to consider joining this group. Flyers describing three different paths to certification are in the lobby. Please pick one up, and, more than that, choose a path that's right for you and become certified.

I've digressed from my introductions, but I want to take this opportunity to formally announce the promotion of someone known to most of you. While his promotion actually took place quite some time ago, it was never really announced. So, I want to correct that oversight and announce that Associate Dean Richard Fox has become a full Dean. His functional title is Dean for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning. Rick, please stand.

As I reflect upon the past few years at this college, I think that we have made some notable progress. We have been able to build upon the foundation of the best programs and practices that were established in the past, ready Kingsborough for the challenges of today, and poise it for new directions in the future. I'm sure that you're all aware that assessment and accountability have been major themes in education for the past decade. From the classroom level to the institutional level, we are all examining what we do and trying to determine our effectiveness. At CUNY, you may have heard of the Performance Management Process (or PMP) by which all of the colleges are assessed in both academic and administrative areas on an annual basis. Each year, using a broad outline set by the University's master plan, we are required to establish college-wide goals in categories such as raising academic quality, improving student success, and enhancing management and financial effectiveness. Then, at the end of the year, we must file a year-end report, and, finally, I meet with the Chancellor to discuss the results. It's kind of like getting a report card for the college – only in the form of a private, personal interview with the principal.

Throughout the years that this system has been in use, Kingsborough has had its strong points and weak points, some ups and downs – but, overall, we've done reasonably well. This morning, I'd like to report on the past year's results. Now, I must tell you at the outset, that I believe that neither my parents nor the nuns in the schools that I attended ever read any of those books on building a child's self esteem. They had their very own ideas about that. And, while always supportive, they always believed that no matter how well you did, there was always room for improvement. So, bragging about an accomplishment really wasn't in the cards. But now, at the risk of violating the proverbial admonition that "pride cometh before a fall," please allow me to read some passages from the letter that Chancellor Goldstein sent me after our recent meeting:

"It was a sheer delight to meet with you...to talk about the banner year that Kingsborough Community College has had. As I noted in our meeting, KCC's performance was the most impressive of any campus in the University, and I congratulate you on a truly spectacular year.

I am very pleased with the impressive number of program reviews conducted and the new programs in the pipeline. The learning communities you have established are experiencing stunning success. Buttressed by your wonderful results in English, I encourage you to build similar momentum in mathematics.

I am deeply impressed by your efforts to bring in faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups; indeed, 56% of the last 32 faculty hires were from underrepresented groups.

In terms of student performance, I am quite pleased with the college's remarkable increase in the six-year graduation rate, which is now the highest of the community colleges. KCC has embraced the ASAP program, and I am delighted that the students are doing so well. In addition, the percentage of students passing gateway math courses has increased smartly and now greatly exceeds the community college average. The pass rate on the nursing exam (NCLEX) increased to nearly 90%, which is also highest among the community colleges....

...Let me conclude by saying how delighted I am that KCC has set the standard for performance for the University. We ...look forward to continuing to partner with you to further the college's success.

Warm regards, Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor”

I might add that nationally Kingsborough ranked 28<sup>th</sup> in the total number of associate's degrees awarded, 14<sup>th</sup> in the number of associate's degrees awarded to African Americans, 14<sup>th</sup> in the number of associate's degrees awarded in Business, 11<sup>th</sup> in Computer and Information Science, and 8<sup>th</sup> in Communication Technologies.

It was a very good year for Kingsborough. It was such a good year because so many of you in the classroom, in the department offices, in student support services, and in all of the other offices that support the mission of this college work so diligently day-in and day-out to help our students succeed. You all deserve part of the credit for the good work that we have done. This was a job well done – congratulations! And, just a cautionary note to the new members of the KCC faculty and staff among us: I borrow the words of the humorist Art Buchwald, when he said in a commencement address to a group of young graduates, “We've given you a perfect world; don't screw it up.”

So, now, what do we do for an encore? Well, we will certainly have our work cut out for us in the year ahead. For one thing, a number of factors – among them our difficult economy and the increased attention that has been focused on community colleges by President Obama and the economic stimulus package – have sent community college enrollments skyrocketing nationally. The community colleges of CUNY have been no different. In fact, some CUNY community colleges closed their admissions process much earlier than normal. We kept our admissions doors open for as long as possible, but carefully monitored our projected enrollment throughout the summer.

Each week, and during the last month or so, several times a week, a committee (consisting of Provost Suss; Deans Gomez, Friebel, Fox, Dalpes, and Cohen; Rachel Singer, Sonia Saladuchin,

Rosalie Fayad, Cindy Liu, and Brian Mitra) met to review admissions, testing, and registration data. Our concern is that, while we wish to provide the opportunity of higher education as many individuals who seek it, we also must ensure that we are capable of providing educational services of high quality. On the most basic level, we must be certain that we have a sufficient number of instructors, that we can offer enough sections of classes to accommodate the increased number of students, that those classes are of a reasonable size, and that we have enough classroom space. Taking all of these factors into consideration and with late registration still taking place, we are still on track to register the largest enrollment in our college's history. As of yesterday, our fall semester enrollment including College Now stands at 16,292. Excluding College Now, enrollment is 14,039. Overall enrollment, excluding College Now, is up 15.5% over a comparable time last year. That figure includes 9,620 returning students, up 8%; 2,710 first-time freshmen, up 34%; and 1,709 transfers, up 35%.

Recruiting, admitting, testing, advising, and registering all of these students was – and still is – a tremendous task. Luckily, we have a tremendous staff that was up to that task. Their names are too numerous to mention individually but I'd like to thank for their outstanding efforts everyone who works so diligently –

- with Bob Ingenito in Admissions Information,
- with Mary Smith in the Village Center,
- with Rosalie Fayad in Admissions,
- with Kelvin Gift in Testing,
- with Peter Cohen in Freshman Year and Academic Advisement,
- with Brian Mitra in Transfer Services,
- with Joanne Palmieri in Student Services,
- with Clement Hemmings in the Bursar's office,
- with Pat Morena in Public Safety,
- with Wayne Harewood in Financial Aid,
- and with Sonia Saladuchin in the Registrar's office

During this hectic registration period, I would also like to thank all of the Department Chairpersons, many of whom were called upon throughout the summer to add sections and hire additional appropriately credentialed adjuncts for the fall semester. I would especially like to salute the efforts of Professor Marcia Babbitt of the English Department who was especially cooperative in providing the many sections – 280 sections to be exact – of both developmental and regular English classes that are so necessary as the foundation for the academic work of our students.

A logical question to follow the news of record-breaking enrollment is, “Do we have a budget sufficient to handle all of these students?” At this point I have to answer that I am cautiously optimistic that we do. As you know, our budget derives from three sources – the State, the City, and student tuition. Our tuition revenue will be up not only because of our increase in enrollment but also because a tuition increase took effect. State and City funding also seem adequate right now. The “cautious” part of my optimism, however, is the realization that this is an election year and one never knows what mid-year budget cuts might be imposed after the November elections take place. By the way, in regard to that increase in student tuition, the University, through a number of budgetary initiatives, has taken steps to mitigate the negative

effects of those increases. Those steps include partial tuition waivers for some students whose tuition is not fully covered by financial aid or scholarships; increased allocations to the colleges for student employment; library purchases of electronic books and costly textbooks to ease the burden of textbook purchases; and covering the processing charge for students who elect to use a tuition payment plan.

Our students are here, our budget is in place, our campus is ready, and our faculty and staff are eager to meet their students. In fact, many of you met about 1,500 of them at yesterday's very successful Campus Fest, that was supervised by Amanda Kalin. Now, what can you expect in the year ahead?

I'd like to provide you with a brief overview –I believe the current business cliché is the “30,000 foot” or “high level” view – of some recent happenings and of plans for the coming year.

I'll begin with Academic Affairs and then touch on Student Services, College Advancement, Workforce Development, Continuing Education, and conclude with Administration. In many respects, these clear delineations of offices and activities are becoming more difficult to maintain. But that's a good thing, because while it makes the organization of my presentation a little more difficult, it also demonstrates that there is greater interdepartmental cooperation in our programs and that people are breaking out of their work silos. (You can see that I've been keeping up on my business clichés.) In this overview, I'm certain to miss many things, so I urge you to keep up on college news by visiting the Kingsborough website and by watching your email and paying special attention to releases from our Office of Public Relations, from Human Resources, and from the Center for Teaching Learning.

First, let me address the core of our institution – academic affairs. Believe it or not, in about another year-and-a-half we will have reached the midpoint in our ten-year cycle of accreditation by the Middle States Association. That means that we will have to submit to Middle States a Periodic Review Report that will detail the progress our institution has made since the last review and explain how we have addressed the suggestions made by the examining team at their last visit. Dean Richard Fox and Professor Janine Graziano-King will co-chair the writing our Periodic Review Report. I'm sure that many of you will hear from them as they assemble the information necessary for their work.

The Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, or ASAP, will continue with a new cohort. This program, initiated by Mayor Bloomberg and funded by the City, targeted highly motivated full-time community college students and provided them with supports and incentives to encourage their graduation in three years. In its last iteration, Kingsborough recruited the largest number of ASAP students. While the original goal was to have 50% of the students graduate in three years, 43% of KCC ASAP students have received their degrees in only two years, and 60% are expected to graduate by the end of this semester. The program is now being infused with foundation funding, and Kingsborough is one of three CUNY colleges to run the program for a second time. We will begin the fall semester with 100 new ASAP students.

The President's Prep program, which launched last year, will continue into the coming year. President's Prep is a pilot program for pre-freshman students who require developmental

education. With both foundation and university support, this intensive program is designed to accelerate a student's progress through developmental programs. There were some positive and encouraging early results. Over 66% of the students advanced at least one developmental level in a six-week period saving a whole semester's work and one semester of financial aid. Fifty-six students are enrolled in the current cohort.

If our college is to continue to grow and to serve a wider constituency of students, it's essential that we augment our program offerings. In the past year we registered two new academic programs in Fashion Design and in Criminal Justice (which, by the way, at last count had 227 declared majors). We also received University approval to proceed with a program in Biotechnology articulated with Brooklyn College. This year our proposed AAS degree program in Culinary Arts will be on the agenda for approval at the University level.

Several major events of academic consequence are coming up of which you should be aware. The first is the orientation for new faculty next week on September 8. Then, there will be an almost month-long examination of the nature of development and its effect on Brooklyn. The kick-off will be an exhibition entitled, "The Soul is the Size of Elsewhere: Brooklyn and Development, An Exhibition." The exhibition, which will run from September 9<sup>th</sup> through October 3<sup>rd</sup>, explores the often conflicted meanings of Brooklyn's transformation and the concept of development itself. The culmination of the month-long exploration of this topic will be a two-day conference on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> entitled, "Dreamland Pavilion: Brooklyn and Development." The conference will bring together more than 50 city planners, academics, journalists, activists, and artists who will discuss the meaning of development and Brooklyn. The event will also feature guided visits to local development sites. Throughout the month there will be a series of roundtable discussions examining development from a variety of perspectives. Many of these roundtables will be led by Kingsborough faculty. There are flyers in the lobby that will give you more information about these events. The entire series of programs was designed and organized by a committee that consisted of the following KCC faculty:

- Libby Garland, Department of History and Eben Wood, Department of English as co-chairs
- Jacob Segal of History
- and Rick Armstrong, Ingrid Ellis, Kevin Kolkmeier, and Frank Percaccio, all of the English Department.

The many factors that influence a student's life outside the classroom can often have a tremendous impact on a student's academic performance in the classroom. And that's where the Office of Student Services comes in. Dr. Paulette Dalpes was appointed Dean of Student Affairs only a few months ago and she is now making key appointments in her area that will affect the future direction of the department.

Though these individuals were already introduced at the beginning of this convocation, they are worthy of mention again because their appointments represent some new departures or changes in focus in the important offices that they will lead.

At the end of the spring semester, Angelo Pappagallo retired as Dean of Student Life. We'll be able to say a proper farewell, share some laughs, and thank Angelo for his many years

of service to Kingsborough at his retirement party on September 29. Just a few weeks ago Ms. Tasheka Sutton-Young was appointed as the new Director of Student Life. A native of Jamaica, but raised in Brooklyn, Tasheka holds bachelor's and master's degrees in Communication from Iona College. Most recently, she served as Coordinator of Student Activities at Cleveland State University in Ohio.

Because recently enacted legislation will provide enhanced benefits for veterans to pursue higher education, we expect to have a larger number of returning veterans on campus this year and in the years ahead. The Student Services office that handles veterans' affairs, formally known as SERVE, has been renamed the Veterans Affairs Student Office, or VASO, and a new full-time director has been appointed. Ms. Peaches Diamond, who holds degrees in Government and Public Administration and in Law and who also is a veteran of the US Navy, will lead VASO. Marking the importance of this office, this is the first time that a full-time director has been appointed to head veterans' affairs.

Other offices that are gaining full-time directors for the first time include the Office of Men's Resources, formally known as the Black Male Initiative, and the Women's Center. Michael Rodriguez will head Men's Resources and Karen Feister will lead the Women's Center. Another new, major initiative of Student Services deals with an unfortunate issue facing college campuses today. We have created the Assessment and Care Team, or ACT, to identify, investigate, assess, refer, monitor and take action in response to high risk behaviors exhibited by students. We certainly want to quickly identify anyone who may pose an immediate threat to our community; but, beyond that, we want to be able to refer students to appropriate interventions that may enable them to remain in good standing at the college. Anyone can bring an issue to the attention of ACT by contacting Public Safety or the Dean of Student Affairs or by completing an online referral form.

These are very difficult times for development offices at colleges and universities, charitable organizations, and all not-for-profits throughout the country. Our recession has made both individuals and philanthropies very cautious with their giving. Many have cut back drastically on the number of grants awarded. It's no wonder that Dean Basile and her staff in College Advancement go around humming songs like "Stormy Weather" and "It's a Hard Knock Life" under their breath. Nevertheless, even in these difficult times, our Office of College Advancement has had some notable success. In the past year, total alumni, corporate, foundation, and individual giving increased to over \$1.6million. Of course, one of the most important bottom lines of our development efforts is how much scholarship money we can channel back to our deserving students.

In fiscal year 2009, the total amount of scholarship and award money increased by 27% (to almost \$200,000). The biggest share of our scholarship money comes as a result of our annual fundraiser, the Seaside Splash. This year's Luau raised about \$130,000 after expenses. And that occurred despite the fact that our carefully planned beachside event had to be moved indoors. (You might recall that it rained almost every day in June. I'm beginning to think that we should plan for an indoor event. That should ensure a cloudless, balmy evening; in which case we could, then, move the Seaside Splash quickly to the beach.)

The other major event that the Office of College Advancement organizes is the annual Alumni Homecoming. This year, Homecoming will take place on Sunday, October 18, and I'm sure that we can expect another successful event and a few surprises from Michael Goldstein, who supervises alumni activities.

An important part of our fundraising mechanism is the Kingsborough Community College Foundation. Since that board was reorganized several years ago, Ken Daly, who works for National Grid (formerly Keyspan and, before that Brooklyn Union Gas), has been its chairman. Ken was very effective in that position and has been a great help to the college. Unfortunately for us, Ken's job is causing him to relocate to London, which will make it a bit difficult for him to continue on the Foundation. We'll miss him. Jim Slattery, partner in the law firm of Cullen and Dykman, will take over as board chairman. In addition, Mr. Paul Moore of the Screen Editors Guild, will be joining our board.

The other major function of College Advancement is to assist faculty and staff in the preparation of grant proposals. I'm pleased to report that the college's total of grants continues to increase. Kingsborough faculty grant proposals resulted in approximately \$100,000 of PSC-CUNY Research Awards. Other notable grants include: \$130,000 from Health Resources and Services Administration to Joanne Lavin for scholarships to Nursing students; \$20,000 from the MetLife Foundation to John Aaron for the Paired Care program; \$20,000 from the CUNY Community College Collaborative to Karen Goldman for Community Health Worker Training Assessment; \$2,500 from Chase Bank to Reza Fakhari for EcoFest; \$5,000 from the National Center for Community Engagement to Brian Mitra for ASSETS: Summer Project; \$50,000 from the Mayor's Office to Dean Katz for Adult Literacy; \$22,000 for the Community College Collaborative to Alexandr Davydov for a Physical Sciences project; \$20,000 from the Rudin Foundation for the Rudin Book Fund; and a sizeable portion of a \$5 million multi-year NIH grant to Arthur Zeitlin for the KCC and Medgar Evers Bridges to Baccalaureate program. Particularly helpful in these efforts to secure grants have been Kirsten Swansen, who has left us temporarily to tend to her newborn baby, Kelly Freidenfelds, and Erica Wright.

Not all faculty and college honors, however, are limited to the acquisition of grants. For example:

- In our Art Department, Manel Lledos exhibited his works at an exhibition in Madrid; Judith Wilde participated in several art exhibitions, and some of the works of Gregory Paquette are currently on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Mary Dawson of our Biological Sciences Department has been appointed to the Board of Trustees of St. Francis College.
- From our History Department, Anna Procyk, while on sabbatical, delivered guest lectures in Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Columbia University, and the University of Illinois; and Dr. Katherine Opello was in Brussels preparing a new research project on the European Union and women's political representation.
- In Behavioral Sciences, Lourdes Follins was awarded a 4-year NIMH fellowship in HIV prevention.
- From Nursing, Katherine Olubummo, Barbara Gatulo, and Colleen Kumar published articles in the Nursing Made Easy journal.

- In Health, Jose Nanin recently published three articles, made four presentations, and participated in two workshops.
- In Tourism and Hospitality, Jonathan Deutsch was elected to the board of the National Council for Workforce Education, released his new textbook, and had his book, Jewish American Food Culture, published in paperback. Also, Babbett Audant was elected Secretary of the Association for the Study of Food and Society.
- From our Communications Department, Scott Cally won the Latin Entertainment Critics of New York award for best lighting design of an off-Broadway production.
- And, the Athletics program of our Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the country by the National Alliance of Two-Year College Athletic Administrators for our performance in championship athletic events.

Several years ago, I announced the formation of the Kingsborough Center for Economic and Workforce Development. Since that time, the Center, under the leadership of Dr. Stuart Schulman, has broken new ground for the college in the area of workforce development. The Center's "Project Welcome," funded by a U.S. Department of Labor grant, became the largest grant-funded project ever awarded to Kingsborough. The management of many of the Center's activities is supported by our Office of Continuing Education, under the leadership of Dr. Billy Katz

In the past, the word "workforce" tended to evoke connotations of manual labor. And, in that regard, I'm reminded of a story that I heard recently in the tributes to Senator Edward Kennedy. On occasion Senator Kennedy told this self-deprecating story about himself. When as a young, inexperienced 30-year old, he was campaigning outside a factory for the Senate seat that had been occupied by his brother Jack. As he was shaking hands with workers exiting the factory, he met with an old, grizzly factory worker who looked him in the eye and asked, "Young man, have you ever done a day of hard physical labor in your entire life?" Teddy replied sheepishly and with some embarrassment that no he hadn't. The hardened factory worker looked back at him and said, "Well, you haven't missed an [expletive deleted] thing."

That exchange between Kennedy and the factory worker could have foreshadowed the condition of the labor market today, when the words "workforce" and "workforce development" have shed their old connotations of manual labor. The workforce of the future will rely less on the strength of one's back than on the agility of one's mind. And Kingsborough is positioned to be a leader in Brooklyn in the development of the new workforce. Some of the new projects that will be underway in the coming year include:

- The South Brooklyn Maritime Center. A Small Business Administration grant, supported by Congressman Anthony Wiener, and an additional Workforce Development Initiative grant, will help in the creation of the South Brooklyn Maritime Center in collaboration with our Maritime Technology program.
- The expansion of the kitchen teaching facilities at KCC to support new "enterprise" courses that allow students to develop and grow food, and nutrition courses. One of our students won the Borough-wide competition sponsored by BPL for the best business plan and new business in Brooklyn.

In addition, these facilities were used during summer weekends to teach Cancer survivors to plan, prepare and preserve, nutritious "green" meals during their treatment cycle, all in conjunction with the Department of Tourism and Hospitality.

- In conjunction with the Health Career Center, the development of a closed student social networking web site to provide health career information and "career chat" to students who are interested in the broad spectrum of careers and career opportunities in this growing professional area.
- The development of new student curricula and career opportunities for the "STEM Ready Workforce" supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and in collaboration with our departments of Biological Sciences and Mathematics and Computer Science.
- And, the launch of the first pilot Kingsborough certificate program that introduces concepts of Urban Agriculture, Green Roofs, and sustainable food production and preparation in conjunction with the Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation and the Office of Continuing Education, with courses given at KCC and at the Moore Street Market in Williamsburgh.

As I began to talk about workforce development, I mentioned that many of the administrative tasks of our Center were being handled by our Office of Continuing Education. As important and as large a role as that is, however, you should know that Continuing Ed continues its outstanding and creative work in providing certificate programs, contract courses, GED programs, the CUNY Language Immersion Program, ESL Intensive courses, and avocational and recreational activities to our community. The Office of Continuing Education finished the 2008-2009 academic year with its highest enrollment in 32 years. That enrollment was 25,629 and accounted for tuition revenue of over three-and-a-half million dollars (up 7.5% over last year). This is truly and outstanding achievement. Joining Dean Katz's staff this year were Karolina Rasa, as Director of Continuing Education Programs, and Kate Wayler, as Director of Special Events, Catering and Education.

The effective management of our financial and physical resources is an important function at this college. From Human Resources that gets us hired, gets us paid, and assists us with our health and pension benefits to Public Safety that tends to our security; from Campus Facilities that plans, maintains, and cleans our surroundings to Information Technology that keeps our computers running and our precious information flowing; from Lively Arts that entertains us to Budget and Business Manager that ensure the equitable allocation and prudent use of our funding – there's probably no other office that affects our day-to-day environment on the job than the Office of Finance and Administration. Here are some of the highlights of what's been happening in these areas:

- In Business affairs – We've added an additional shuttle bus during peak hours during our 12-week sessions. We've expanded our sustainable procurement policies to include more eco-friendly items.
- In Facilities – Construction work on the new Nursing labs and office in the MAC building has been completed. Construction of a new athletic field will begin by the end of September. A multi-million dollar project to upgrade our heating and air-conditioning

plant has been fully funded. As part of our sustainability efforts, we've planted over 200 trees on campus.

- In Human Resources – We've completed the first phase of the Human Resources module of CUNYfirst, the University-wide project to replace and upgrade all of our business, student records, and HR systems. During the coming months, all employees will learn about self-service aspects of the new system and about new hiring procedures.
- In Information Technology – The number of smart classrooms increased from 48 to 74 and the number of smart labs from 5 to 11. The number of computers in open labs increased from 100 to 142. Fifty additional wireless enabled laptops were added to the student laptop lending program. A project to triple the speed of the wireless network is underway.
- In Lively Arts and Events – The 2009 Commencement, featuring both Dr. Jill Biden and Mayor Bloomberg, was the largest and most complicated in many years. Compared to the previous year, there was an increase of over 100 graduates who participated in the ceremony. The Summer Concert Series was successful with per concert attendance averaging over 500.
- In Public Safety – We've expanded the capability of our Critical Response Team to improve emergency medical services. We've added more closed circuit cameras to our system for additional campus protection.

Before I conclude, I would like to say a few words on the topic of civic engagement. The national and local attention being paid to community colleges, especially regarding retention, and the resources being made available are unprecedented. Now is the time build upon what makes Kingsborough unique. I believe our demonstrated commitment to academic success partnered with social responsibility does just that.

We have been working diligently to move our civic engagement agenda forward. We began that effort with a symposium in the spring of 2008. At that time I announced my interest in creating a center dedicated to expanding our civic engagement activities and that I would chair an advisory committee to oversee those efforts. One important outcome from that committee is today's launch of the Civic Engagement website. I encourage you visit the website where you will see the range of activities and opportunities representing and supporting civic engagement at KCC.

Now, the advisory committee has come to a point where we are ready to have a dialogue about our progress as well as your ideas and suggestions. Following my remarks, we will be offering five distinct workshops that provide a chance to participate in a productive conversation about civic engagement at Kingsborough. I urge you to attend, and I look forward to your involvement in this initiative.

Just to wrap things up before you go on to the civic engagement workshops, I want to return to that concept of no matter how well you do, there's always room for improvement. It's true that we led the CUNY community colleges in the 6-year graduation rate. But do you know what that rate was? It was 34.9% -- and that was for six years from the date of admission. Our three-year graduation rate, which is a much more common measurement for community colleges nationally, is 22%. While that rate still leads CUNY by far and leads most major urban

community colleges in the country, it's still only 22%. What about the remaining 78% after three years or the remaining 65% after six years? What happens to them? Why do they give up on higher education? Do they lose interest? Does it take too long to get through developmental courses? Do the challenges just become insurmountable?

We are all well aware of the many challenges that our community college students encounter – not only in the classroom but also at home and on the job. These obstacles are usually much greater than those faced by the typical, traditional college student. We know that! And that's all the more reason that we have to work harder to put together the combination of innovative educational practices and student support services to help more of our students succeed. It's not just an innovative program here and a new initiative that there that will provide the answer. It must be a cohesive, coordinated, multifaceted approach. As we see more attention focused on community colleges and more public money directed there, I will bet you that eventually we will be asked if our student success rates are good enough. We will be held accountable for our outcomes.

This past summer, several of us worked on a grant proposal requesting support for the many coordinated educational activities that take place here at Kingsborough. It occurred to us, and we eventually used the idea in the grant title, that our varied programs were like a jigsaw puzzle. It was our responsibility to assemble the pieces of that puzzle in ways that best served our students.

I challenge you today and throughout the coming year to take part in putting those pieces together and to assemble a picture of a great college becoming even greater. Thank you and have a wonderful year.