Vice Chancellor Frank D. Sanchez cordially invites you to the College Discovery 50th Anniversary Gala.

Friday, December 12, 2014 6:00 – 8:00 PM
CUNY Graduate Center, New York, NY
As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the College Discovery Program of the City University of New York, I welcome each of you and thank you for your support. As a proud graduate of the EOP program at SUNY Albany, I know first-hand how opportunity programs can help turn the dream of earning a college degree into reality. Thus it is an honor to be a part of the legacy of access and innovation that started in 1964 when the then Board of Higher Education authorized an experimental program at the CUNY community colleges. The program goal was to demonstrate that gifted students whose high school records didn’t reflect their potential could in fact earn a college degree if provided appropriate support. The fifty year old experiment has been institutionalized as College Discovery, a program that continues to transform, not only the lives of program students and their families, but also how higher education is provided. Gone are the days when the full responsibility for learning rested solely on the students’ shoulders. Practices that started in College Discovery, such as pre-freshman summer programs, freshman seminars, and learning communities, were so successful that they’ve been widely adopted to help all freshmen make a smoother high school-to-college transition.

College Discovery’s academic, counseling and financial supports and services deliver the assistance our students need to overcome educational and economic challenges. The return on the investment New York City makes in the Program can be measured in both the tax revenues and the social capital generated by College Discovery graduates, most of whom continue to reside in New York City and State. We are proud of their contributions to a wide variety of fields, including the arts, business, education, health services, journalism, law, politics, and social work. College Discovery provides the access to higher education which creates these possibilities and realized potential. We share with you a glimpse of this achievement in the reflections provided by our students in the pages of the College Discovery Alumni booklet.

I extend deep appreciation to all who have supported the College Discovery Program. Congratulations to our students, alumni, and program professionals. Each of you plays (or has played) a role in shaping College Discovery. Celebrate the evening and the Program’s accomplishments. I invite you to stay connected and contribute to the next 50 years!
Welcome Greetings from the Chair,
CD Turns 50 Committee

On behalf of the Committee for CD Turns Fifty, I want to welcome you to our Gala Celebration. Last year, during a program retreat, I had an epiphany. I realized that our program was about to turn 50. Oftentimes, this number causes some internal conflict, as getting older is not necessarily en vogue. In this case, it is a milestone event.

When we think of the thousands of students that have come through College Discovery, it is completely heartwarming to know that so many lives have been forever changed. The alumni you see here with us today, represent only a fraction of the incredible things that the program has achieved. Clearly, the doctors, lawyers, elected officials, accountants, nurses, entrepreneurs, law enforcement officials, administrators, educators, academics, and the list goes on, are worthy of this celebration.

We also want to take this time to recognize those people who had the vision, and who fought the struggle to enact legislation for CD and SEEK. The literature shows Percy Sutton, Charles Rangel, David Dinkins, Basil Patterson, and others as the crusaders. We also know that many others, were behind the scenes fighting for the cause. To all of them, we raise our glasses. To our students we say, felicidades! To our alumni, remember to stop by and visit those people who have contributed to your decisions to pursue higher education, they will be thrilled to see you again.

Dr. Pedro Pérez, Chair, CD Turns 50
Director of the College Discovery Program
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CD Turns 50 Committee

Maria E. Greco
Hostos Community College

Brian R. Mitra & Brenda Vargas
Kingsborough Community College

Pedro Pérez (Chair)
Borough of Manhattan Community College

Cynthia Suarez-Espinal
Bronx Community College

Kyoko M. Toyama
LaGuardia Community College

Winston Yarde
Queensborough Community College

Cheryl N. Williams
Frances Kingston
CUNY, Office of Special Programs
After earning an associate’s degree from New York City Technical College (then known as New York City Community College), he graduated from Hunter College with a BA in sociology.

Before pursuing a career in politics, Assemblyman Barron was an activist and traveled across the United States visiting college campuses, churches, prisons and communities, “organizing around international, national and local issues.” During his early years as an activist he was a member of the Black Panther Party and the National Black United Front.

In the 1980s Assemblyman Barron began working as a community activist in the East New York neighborhood of Brooklyn. In 1997, he ran for the City Council, a position he won in 2001. The Honorable Charles Barron was re-elected City Councilor for the 42nd District in 2005 and 2009, each time with over 85% of the popular vote. He represented Brooklyn’s 42nd District on the New York City Council from 2001 to 2013.

In 2013, Charles Barron won the election for the state assembly, the seat formerly held by his wife Inez Barron.
In the year 2000 I was enrolled in the Language Immersion Program. Upon my completion one year later, I immediately applied to the Bronx Community College, College Discovery Program. My counselors were Ms. Rebecca Encarnación and Mrs. Marion Adejanyu, who were very supportive and gave me appropriate guidance in my education. I achieved honor recognition for my academic achievement during my studies, which to me was a great accomplishment. I graduated in the year 2007 with an A.S.S. in Paralegal Studies. I was given the opportunity to first work as a college work study in the College Discovery office in 2001, and then became a College Assistant in the year 2006.

As College Assistant, I have actively worked in many areas, such as recruitment, the Office of Academic Support, data entry, assisting students during registration and advisement, and in many other special projects. Today, I am still an employee in the College Discovery program. I have been part of the College Discovery family for thirteen years. One advice I would like to give current CD students is to take advantage of all the services the program provides, such as tutoring, workshops, and counseling. I have learned many things about CUNY and how higher education programs function. Here, I have been able to partake in Professional Development opportunities, and help many students who are now in the same shoes I was in years ago. One of the reasons why I am still here is the fact that we have a family environment; there is a sense of security, friendship, and collegiality. Lastly, in my experience the key to academic success is dedication, ambition, and self-determination.
After graduating BCC in 1996 with an AA degree in Psychology, I started looking for a job and secured employment with Elderly Safe At Home Program. In 2001 I went back to college. I attended The College of New Rochelle, and in 2004 graduated with a BA degree in Psychology. In 2004, I moved to New Jersey and completed a program and obtained a bilingual psychology teacher certification.

Currently I am working for Plainfield Public School as a teacher. It is my career objective to be a college professor. In 2013, I registered with Keiser University’s psychology master program. In 2016, I will be graduating with a master degree in psychology.

I am very happy with my effort and commitment to pursue my career goal. My college education had opened many doors to many exciting jobs and has allowed me to acquire a vast experience in many fields: elderly assistant, substance abuse counselor, child abuse investigator, coordinator of prenatal and post partum program and a teacher.

I have no regret, because everything has prepared me for the next career step or college entrance.

My advice to struggling students at BCC in the CD Program is to believe that everything is possible. Obstacles will come, but persist, do not get discouraged if you experience opposition. Your future is at stake. Aim high and because everything is possible if you just believe. Mrs. Davila, an angel sent by God to give orientation and guide my path and the career office, enabled me to obtain my first City job with the Elderly Safe At Home Program.
I went on to continue my education at City College, after graduating from BMCC in 2008. In May of 2013, I received a Bachelor of Arts Degree, double majoring in History and Black Studies. Although I graduated, I never really left BMCC since I served as a tutor of English for more than six years for the College Discovery program. Currently, I assist in overseeing the academic component of College Discovery at BMCC. It gives me great joy to know that I am giving back to the place that gave me my higher education foundation. In spring 2015, I will begin the pursuit of a Master’s in Liberal Studies at CUNY Graduate Center concentrating in African Studies.

For students who are struggling to complete their education, I always tell them, “you are not alone.” College Discovery provides a support system to assist with completing your goals. When I interact with students I always make it a point of letting them know I once walked in their shoes. Life happens to all of us but what I believe is important is how you overcome those obstacles. Throughout my journey, I would always reflect back on many enlightening sessions I had with my then counselor Professor Rozzelle. Thank you for always having an open door policy. Your kind words and reassurance assured me there was light at the end of my tunnel. I am proud to have been a part of CD and even prouder to be in a position where I make sure CD students experience a sense of community and caring environment.
After graduating from LAGCC, I was granted the opportunity to attend Baruch College (CUNY) to obtain a Bachelor’s Degree (BBA) in Small Business Management/Entrepreneurship. The journey was a learning experience. I first started off majoring in Operations Management, then Finance. I found those areas of concentration to be too dull and constricting, so I decided to change my major to something a little more intriguing; Entrepreneurship. Through my entrepreneurial studies, I was able to get a holistic education in how to build a business from the ground up.

From the construction of a business plan and bookkeeping to fundraising and organizational law, I was able to get an amazing insight on starting your own business. After graduating in the Spring of 2014, I was offered a job in the Financial District to do Sales & Negotiations for a finance/debt services company. Feeling stagnant, I made the decision to part ways to fully follow my passion in the Motivational Speaking and Authorial space. With the releases of my debut Motivational Speaking album, ‘COMPOSITION’ and debut book, ‘GUIDANCE 33,’ things are coming together and I continue to follow my dreams through my site, www.cjrbarnes.com

What the CD program taught me was perseverance. During my final months of my enrollment in the CD program, I was juggling a lot. I was the head of my household at my mother’s house which required me to be both a bigger brother and father to my younger siblings, while also taking on 50 hours a week at work. At times, things seemed unbearable, but with the support of Marianne Kaukianen, I was able to stay level-headed and finish out strong to get my Associates in Business Administration. If I can give any advice to the current and future students of the CD program, it would be to “listen to your counselors because they truly have your best interest in mind, and to keep keeping on; life will be sweeter due to what you will learn in the program.”
Following my graduation from BMCC as a Business Administration major, I transferred to Baruch College, where I successfully completed my Bachelor’s degree in Finance and Investments in 2015. The education I received at BMCC together with the fantastic foundation of the Baruch College Business school, the Seek and honor society groups, prepared me to take a position at the New York Life company.

My current work at New York Life allows me to experience various aspects of my field. The diversity of opportunities I have contribute to my current professional development. The advise I have taken to my current job is the same I had as a student. I would advise current College Discovery Students to prepare for a 4 year college education and to become part of school clubs and activities. My personal choice to join business related clubs while both at BMCC and Baruch were springboards towards my career.

My fondest memories as a College Discovery student while at BMCC were the wonderful counselors in the program. I have special regard for Dr. Pedro Perez for the help he provided. I considered myself lucky to have this chance, something many don’t have.
After graduating from LAGCC in June 2013, I was accepted to John Jay College because of the Justice academy in LAGCC. I earned my Associate’s in Science Degree in Criminal Justice in two years.

As a student in the College Discovery Program I benefited from a good relationship with my counselor, who was always there to help me address any situation that presented itself. The CD program provided valuable resources including, tutoring, computer laboratory resources and offered easy access to advising. I found these resources especially beneficial as I realized, as a CD student I didn’t have to compete with the entire La Guardia CC student population for these services.

For me, the most valuable aspect of the program was having direct counseling services and support. Using the resources in the CD program can be very essential towards your education. The person I remember most from the CD program was my counselor, Ms. Patterson because she helped me with my transfer process to John Jay, and when I was doubtful or worried she would help. Ms. Patterson continues to play a role in my academic career. In addition to Ms. Paterson, I continue to stay in contact with the College Discovery Program. My goal is to complete my Bachelor’s of Science in Criminal Justice by May 2015.
I am Gary Chang (CUNY’09), a proud alumnus of BMCC and the College Discovery Program, who recently received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Financial Economics from Columbia University.

While at BMCC, I have met many faculty members and students who have played a pivotal role in making my achievements possible today. At College Discovery, I served as the President of her honor society, Chi Alpha Epsilon, and worked on many strategic proposals with the director at the time, Mr. Orville Hill. Mr. Hill, among others, have been tantamount to an academic father figure to me.

As I continue to realize this ideal, I seek to work as an analyst in the financial industry for five years before returning to pursue my Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) from Wharton Business School. My longer-term goals also include starting my own investment firm, engaging in philanthropy, and starting my own family.

To all fellow BMCC and College Discovery students, I encourage you to keep pursuing your education, setting goals and standards for yourself to make your family and friends proud. I encourage you to pursue senior degrees after you leave BMCC and to never forget that your success in the future is in fact an embodiment of all the collective teachings, social dynamic. Teamwork.
Jaineba Chang, who spent her formative years living on the island of Jamaica and in New York City, came to Kingsborough Community College not knowing what to expect. She had aspirations of academic success, but was not sure which path to choose. She started out as an intended Biology major, but by meeting with her counselor and becoming more comfortable with her talents, she discovered her true passion, writing. Ms. Chang is now pursuing an English degree at SUNY, Binghamton focusing on becoming a published writer in the near future. While at KBCC, Ms. Chang was fully engaged in the College Discovery Program from the beginning of her first semester. She was an active participant in all the program activities which led to her becoming the secretary and then subsequently the president of the College Discovery Club. She helped to organize several club activities and was a support to the program staff as well. Ms. Chang was selected to attend the SEEK/CD Student Leadership Academy in 2013. After this experience, she gained more confidence in her capabilities as a leader and returned to campus enthused to become a great student leader. Despite being so involved, she learned to manage her time wisely and kept her academic performance as a priority and to that end she maintained a high GPA and was always on the College Discovery High Achievers List. Ms. Chang was also a Chi Alpha Epsilon inductee as well as the treasurer of the Chi Alpha Epsilon club. When she first came to KBCC, she was a bit reserved, but the opportunities within the CD program helped to foster her natural leadership skills. She has made her family very proud and she is looking forward to a career as a successful writer.
After BCC, I transferred to John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where I’m currently enrolled in the Forensic Psychology (BA/MA) program. I am currently working as an intern in the Manhattan District Attorney’s office with the New York City Police Department. I am learning about court procedures, different applications that the police department uses to work with criminal cases. Additionally, I am satisfied with my choice because I am guaranteed a job after completing my degree, and I am learning various skills that will help me with my career in Forensic Psychology.

My best advice for current students who are struggling in their education in College Discovery is not to let the CATW, math, and reading entry exams discourage them. I failed the CATW more than eight times and when I passed, I got good grades in my classes, and I was able to join the Phi Theta Kappa, and the Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Societies. My last bit of advice is, getting involved with on-campus clubs and honor societies is very important, because that is how I found out about all the opportunities that I had at BCC. Jeannette is the person I remembered the most because she was the first person I met when I went to the College Discovery office in 2010. I would see her almost every day because I used to go to tutoring at least three days per week.
I came to LaGuardia Community College (LAGCC) in 2007 at the age of 20 with the hopes of doing something good with my life, but with little vision of what I wanted to do with my future. Dr. Toyoma was definitely the most supportive and influential person that I remember from the CD program. She provided me with excellent guidance and opportunities that were life changing. After a year of juggling majors, she spoke to me of a rapidly growing occupation, a physician assistant (PA). I was drawn to the concept of that profession and set my goal on it.

I graduated from LAGCC in 2010 with an Associate’s in Science Degree and transferred to St. Johns University where I pursued a future as a physician assistant. I was accepted into the PA program in 2012 and graduated from St. Johns in 2014 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Science and a Certificate of Completion from Physician Assistant school. The two years of PA school were very intense and grueling. The workload exceeded everything that I had experienced before, challenging my spirits and limits.

At the moment, I am studying for the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE) to obtain my license as a PA. Afterwards, I plan on applying to different locations and areas of medicine to begin working as a professional.

I would advise the current College Discovery students to try their best to remain strong-willed and focused during the difficult times. At times, personal issues derail us from our paths and goals, but during tough moments you have to try to keep your eyes on the goal and try your absolute best to focus any negative feelings into a driving energy to continue studying and moving forward with your education.
I am a proud graduate of Kingsborough Community College and a proud College Discovery alumnus and will be pursuing my Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work at Lehman College in the Spring semester. While at Kingsborough I was a Liberal Arts major because at first I was not sure what my career path would be. However, as time went on, I became confident that I had found my calling. I fell in love with the social work field, particularly counseling and supporting others. While at Kingsborough, I was the president of the College Discovery Club and a Student Aide for the program. I am also a member of the Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honors Society. One of my best memories at KBCC was working as the president of the College Discovery Club. During this time we planned our first Mardi Gras event and organized the KBCC College Discovery Program’s first out of state trip, College Discovery Discovers Philly. We visited the Liberty Bell, the U.S. Mint, the American Jewish Museum, and Independence Hall.

I was also a member of the CUNY Service Corps. This was a life-changing experience, and it solidified my decision to go into the social work field. I had the opportunity to mentor students in the GED Adult Literacy program at Brooklyn College. I truly enjoyed that experience. My favorite part was organizing a trip for these students to come over to Kingsborough and tour the school and learn about the College Discovery program.

If there is anything I could say to other students, I would encourage them to stay focused and never give up. Despite whatever challenges you may be facing, you have to stay focused on achieving your goals. One of the most important things is to use your resources. I cannot stress enough how important it is to ask questions, ask for help, and be willing to be helped. There are so many people willing and ready to help you, but you must be open to receiving assistance as you strive towards your goal. I love College Discovery and I will cherish the great memories I made while at KBCC.
Upon graduating from QCC, I earned a BS in Geology from York College in September 2010. I was accepted into the M.S. program for Earth and Environmental Science at Brooklyn College and was awarded a fellowship from the U.S. Department of Education. While completing my coursework, I conducted independent research, and was an adjunct lecturer. Following the news of expecting my second child, I suspended my studies and research due to the potential for hazardous exposures and relocated to Suffolk county with my family.

Following my leave, I enrolled in the School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (SoMAS) at Stony Brook University where I’m currently pursuing my MA in Marine Conservation and Policy. Currently I work as a graduate assistant for the Faculty Center and serve as the Vice President of the SoMAS Graduate Student Club, the alternate Senator for SoMAS and the Stony Brook Graduate Student Organization (GSO).

When I first began my academic career at QCC, I was afraid that I would not be successful and lacked the confidence needed to overcome that fear. If not for the help of Ms. Elizabeth Watkins and the rest of the College Discovery staff, I would not be where I am today. It was this program that provided me the additional resources I needed to succeed, such as tutoring and a place to vent when I was overwhelmed and stressed. My advice to current and future CD students is to fully utilize all of the resources available to you.
Andre Doeman
Kingsborough Community College
Student, SUNY Geneseo

Andre Doeman is a proud KBCC College Discovery alumnus. Mr. Doeman is currently attending SUNY Geneseo pursuing a degree in English Adolescent Education. While at KBCC, Mr. Doeman was a very active student. He worked within the CD program as a program aide, even returning last summer to work as special program aide for our CD Scholars Initiative. During his time at CD he was always willing to participate in program events with dedication and enthusiasm. Mr. Doeman was also a NASPA fellow and a student athlete. He is currently doing his student-teaching practicum, and he plans on becoming a great English teacher for adolescent students. He also would like to continue on as a Track & Field athlete as well as improving his skills as a rhetorical speaker and writer.

Mr. Doeman has stated, “Being part of CD was quite beneficial to my continued success at my new college, SUNY Geneseo. To this day, I relish in the nostalgia of how I got one single opportunity that opened doors for me. That chance, as a result of my counselor's suggestion to fill out an application, was the acceptance to be a part of the SEEK/CD Student Leadership Academy. A circumstance like that is embedded in my memory and is a reminder that I just have to seek out the opportunity while I take advantage of those to come. From the academy, I developed a valuable relationship with the director and other counselors and staff in CD. From there, I ended up becoming a NUFP fellow in a mentoring program. You never know what doors will be open as a result. And remember, ‘If at first you don't succeed, try, try, and try again.'
I am an alumnus of Hostos Community College with a degree in Aging and Health Studies. I was not only fortunate to be a College Discovery student, but after I graduated I was hired by the program as a College Assistant/Peer Mentor. At this time, I am still working for the College Discovery program and have plans to continue my education at John Jay in Forensic Psychology.

I recall a moment in time when I was indecisive about what major and career path to pursue. My counselor, Eric Rodriguez, assisted me in narrowing down my options. I am grateful that I was given an opportunity to be a part of a program that benefited me so much when I was a student and continues to influence me today.

The staff of College Discovery program at Hostos continues to provide direction and valuable insight into career options. Specifically, my supervisor, Camelia Sotolongo has helped me continue to develop as a student, a professional, and a person.

I would advise current students to take advantage of the resources that are provided by higher education opportunity programs such as College Discovery. Additionally, the level of devotion that faculty and staff have to the students is unparalleled. As a student, I acknowledged the staff was helpful, but I assumed they were just doing their jobs. As an employee, I now recognize how the staff goes above and beyond what is in their job description. If students recognized this, it may push them to invest a bit more in a program that is heavily invested in them.
I was born and raised in Elmhurst, New York to immigrant parents. As a first-generation college student I faced many hurdles including whether or not to attend college. Growing up, higher education was more an aspiration than an expectation and in a neighborhood where over 50% of high school students dropped out I was destined to follow suit. Everything changed when I received my high school transcript and 4-years of failure hit me at once. I knew that it was time for me to change the path I was headed in and that it required discipline. I enrolled at Queensborough Community College with the goal of success, by any means necessary.

While at Queensborough I had the opportunity to become a part of the College Discovery family and led the CD club. The CD program played a quintessential role in my success while at Queensborough and was the perfect platform for me to give back. I hope to pursue a career in Investment Banking and gain experience across a variety of Industries while developing an advanced understanding of corporate strategy. I have participated in diverse academic activities including the CUNY Model Senate, and a study abroad program in Salzburg, Austria.

During my tenure at QCC I was selected to join both Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society and Alpha Beta Gamma International Business Honor Society for my academic achievement. I participated as a 2013 Fellow at New York Needs You. I interned at Mercury Capital Advisors Group, a leading global private fund raising and investment firm. Here I worked on both supporting the Origination and Distribution teams and served the Chief Financial Officer. Aside from academics and work I enjoy mentoring students who I find to have great potential. If there is one thing I would like students to know entering Queensborough Community College it is, “Not to look at Queensborough as a roadblock but a stepping stone to bigger and better things. It truly is a wonderful place and people want to help.”

I am currently attending Baruch College majoring in Finance and Investments with a double minor in Mathematic and Economics. I am also a student in the SEEK program at Baruch College. I also recently received an offer from JP Morgan for their Investment Banking Summer Analyst class of 2015.
Being a first generation college student I did not have sufficient guidance for a college career until I joined the College Discovery Program. I learned how to navigate through the most important years of my life from coaches that understood my strengths and weaknesses, and then fostered them to my benefit. Today, I hold a Bachelor’s degree from Queens College in Accounting and Economics and will attain a Master’s of Science in Accounting and Information Systems in December 2014. Currently, I am an employee of Modern Bank which is a private financial institution in Midtown Manhattan. Upon graduation I will start my accounting career in one of the “big four” accounting firms, PricewaterhouseCoopers.

All of my accomplishments are linked to the strong foundation of confidence and perseverance. Anyone who is struggling to make ends meet must realize that at the end of their journey their determination and dedication to succeed will be the reason why they will stand out in a crowd.

I would specifically like to thank my counselor Sandra Sacrestano for always believing in me as well as encouraging me to participate in Student Government and other extracurricular activities. My journey has been truly remarkable because of individuals who I met through the College Discovery Program, and I am very thankful to each and every one of them.
I will never forget my first day at LaGuardia: I felt the nerves and excitement, because I was a little bit closer to providing a better future for my two year old daughter. At first, I didn’t realize the good fortune of being accepted into the CD program, but I soon learned about all of the opportunities that would come my way because of it. I went away to a leadership conference where I learned about dressing for success, and how to develop communication and leadership skills.

The CD program allowed me to meet in a small group of students with our advisor Kyoko Toyama. Kyoko would foster insightful discussions on ways to reach our academic goals and manage our time and stress. However, the most significant opportunity the CD program provided was a scholarship to NYU. I remember thinking to myself, “Here is my chance to go to my dream school!” However, when I received the acceptance letter to NYU for the speech-language pathology major, I knew the course of my life had changed forever. I was thrilled to be accepted on a scholarship, Community College Transfer Opportunity Program (CCTOP) to NYU. Although I felt like a small fish in a big pond, my life quickly became enriched by joining the prestigious NYU community. NYU was the hardest experience I ever had. I spent all of my days and nights studying for classes and exams.

I began graduate school at Long Island University. I finally completed my masters, and had the good fortune to land a job in a progressive middle school in Manhattan. All of the nights without sleep finally paid off. I feel so complete to have the career of my dreams. I would advise anyone who is thinking of dropping out of school to never give up on their future. I attribute all of my success to my foundation at LaGuardia community college and the CD program. Without this foundation I would have never reached my true potential. I encourage all students in the CD program to take every opportunity they have to pave a brighter, happier future not only for themselves, but also for their loved ones.
After graduating from BMCC in 1967 in the second graduating class and in the first full CD class, I transferred to what is today NYU’s Stern School of Business and graduated in 1973. My mentor, first BMCC CD director Dr. Thelma Williams, deserves full credit; she directed me to transfer and not work full-time with an Associate's Degree. I also earned an M.S. degree in management at Manhattan College and a certificate in Management Development at Harvard University.

My 44-year career in higher education began at BMCC in the financial aid office. It culminated with my retirement from the University of Pittsburgh in 2013. In between I have circled the globe, met with and written about three Nobel Laureates, was befriended by world renowned figures, founded two newspapers, and was Vice Chancellor/Vice President at three universities, among other satisfying experiences.

Yet, I remain grateful to BMCC where both my higher education and my higher education career launched. As a street boy from Harlem, I counsel that it matters less how one begins life and far more how one manages his or her life.
My journey at LaGuardia Community College was filled with hurdles to jump followed by success. Migrating to the United States in 1992, and never attending high school in my country, were disadvantages for me as an adult learner. My initial goal was to pursue a career in Art, but soon became magnetized to the medical field. Sometimes there are bumps in the road and things do not always go as planned. So I set new goals and with perseverance I worked hard in achieving them.

My accomplishments at LaGuardia Community College includes obtaining a certification in Practical Nursing in 2011, an Associate Degree in Applied Science: Registered Nursing in 2013, and being on the Dean’s list twice. My family holds my success in high regard because I am the first of five siblings to graduate from college.

The College Discovery (CD) Program staff played an important part in my success. The CD New Student Seminar stands out as a valuable resource that provided time management skills. For me this was necessary because I had to juggle my role as a mother, a wife and a student. I also took advantage of the great tutoring offered to me. My CD Counselor was a source of information and was always steering me in the right direction. My other supporters were my family; especially my daughter who was also a nursing student while I was in college.

I am sincerely grateful for the foundation that was paved for me by the College Discovery Program and my achievements. I am now a Licensed Practical Nurse and Registered Nurse and I continue to seek new goals in my career. I am confident that if you put God first, everything else will fall into place.
Gregory Hunt  
Borough of Manhattan Community College  
Class 1996  
Attorney, Hunt Law, PLLC

After graduating from BMCC, I transferred to the City College of New York. In 1998, I graduated from CCNY with a BA in philosophy (magna cum laude). I then went to law school at Albany Law School. I also attended The Sage Graduate School of Russell Sage College. In 2001, I completed the joint JD/MBA program with both schools and graduated with a JD and an MBA.

I have a law practice in Charlotte, NC where I primarily focus on family law, criminal defense and personal injury. I am satisfied with my choice to attend BMCC. The CD program (and later SEEK at CCNY) was invaluable because it provided both financial and sometimes emotional support in dealing with the challenges of navigating college.

I would encourage current CD students to utilize the services that are offered; find a mentor and, most importantly, keep your eye on the prize. Don’t ever lose focus of your goal. It is there for you and waiting patiently for you to achieve it.

My fondest memory about the CD program is Professor Bland. She was very straight up, direct and supportive. I greatly appreciate College Discovery for introducing me to her.

My story is this, I was a returning student, having attempted college at least twice in the past. I found a wonderful mentor at BMCC named Dr. Lew Howard. I also met my wife of 19 years at BMCC.
In 2000, I walked through the doors of BMCC as a seventeen year old transitioning from the laid back town of Kingston, Jamaica. BMCC was the best choice for me due to its reputation as an institution that offers a quality and affordable education. This in fact proved true.

On account of the advocacy and mentorship of my CD counselor Dr. Beryl Duncan-Wilson, I was selected as one of the students to study at Vassar College as a participant in the Exploring Transfer Summer Scholarship Program. Following my tenure at BMCC, I enrolled in the University of Miami’s School of Business Administration and was offered a half tuition by Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship.

I graduated from the University of Miami in May 2004 with a BA in Accounting. Soon after, I was elated to receive an offer from Deloitte & Touche LLP, to work in the Audit division in New York. I was happy to be back in New York and I am truly grateful to BMCC and the College Discovery Program for being the springboard that launched me into the career I always dreamed.

Currently I hold CPA designation and work as a Senior Program Accountant for a multi-billion dollar insurance company. I also serve on the Board of Directors of several Not-for-Profit organizations, while assisting individuals with tax preparation and tax planning.

I would encourage every participant in the College Discovery program to capitalize on the financial support, tutoring, counseling, and mentorship that the College Discovery Program provides. With these tools working on their behalf there is no obstacle that can’t be overcome. Dreams can be realized and generations altered for good!
Upon graduating from LaGuardia Community College, I attended City College of New York to complete my Bachelor’s degree in Biology and Psychology. Through participating in the Inter-Collegiate Partnership summer program, I also completed my pre-med courses at Columbia University.

Currently I am preparing for the MCAT, which I plan to take by January, 2015. In addition I work in the field of Independent Counseling. As a former CD student, I am very grateful for the academic support and opportunities I received as a student of the program.

My advice for current students: take the time now to discover your interests and identify your goals; also take every opportunity offered to you. Although classes might be stressful and the process seeming to go nowhere, do your best and make your efforts count, it will all be worthwhile!
Rosalind Lamont  
LaGuardia Community College  
Class of 2006  
Teacher

Upon graduating from LaGuardia Community College, I immediately attended Queens College where I graduated Magna Cum Laude and received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, in 2008. After graduating from Queens College, I took a year off from my college career and was employed as a behavior technician at Sunrise Academy (a non-profit school for troubled boys). In 2009, I resumed my college career and enrolled at Howard University, where I received a tuition scholarship which allowed me to pursue my Master’s degree. I graduated Suma Cum Laude from Howard University in 2010 with a Master’s degree in Elementary Education.

Currently, I am employed as a 5th grade teacher for the District of Columbia Public Schools. I am very satisfied with my teaching career because I get to impact the lives of economically challenged children, of whom I was one. I am so grateful to Kyoko, the College Discovery Program, and LaGuardia Community College for the opportunities, support and sound advice that I received. If it weren’t for the CD program I would not have been afforded this opportunity to touch the lives of students who come from similar backgrounds as I did.

My advice to you is to persevere; especially when graduation seems impossible. Really seek advice from your CD counselor. I was fortunate to have the most amazing counselor in Kyoko who nurtured and encouraged me to be the best me that I could be. I actively sought her advice, and she made herself accessible for me to do so. Even when you think you know best, still seek advice with an open mind and no matter what, never give up.
I graduated from Hostos with a grade point average of 3.782 and transferred to Queens College. I graduated in 2013 with a double major in Political Science and Urban Studies. Presently, I am pursuing my Master’s Degree in Urban Affairs at Queens College and will graduate next semester. As an undergraduate at Queens College, I served as a senator for the Student Association, Vice Chair and Chair for the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities, and I am presently the Vice Chair of the Committee for Disabled Students at Queens College. My goal is to work with veterans and people with disabilities.

My advice for those students who are part of the CD Program is to ask for help if they need it, because the CD staff is always willing to help and want the best for them. A student should never feel that she or he will not make it because we all go through tough times. My motto to achieve success has always been, “Obstacles do not overcome us. We overcome obstacles!”

There are a few people that I will never forget from the CD Program. These people helped me through difficult times. Thanks to the support of Director Maria Greeco, Carmen Mondesire, and Counselor Camelia Sotolonco, I am where I am today. They were always there when I needed them. When I was stressed, they always gave me words of encouragement that lifted my spirits and motivated me. My tutors Anna Arevalo and Milagros Muñoz provided me with long hours of tutoring in math and Spanish. They took the time to explain things to me and never gave up on me and because of that I am very grateful. The CD Program has made an important impact on my life, and I will never forget everyone who helped me achieve my goals.

Liliete Lopez
Hostos Community College
Class of 2010
Graduate Student, Queens College
My whole life changed after graduating from Q.C.C. A few months before graduation my son was diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome. Upon graduation we moved to Bangor, PA. I began working at my son’s school as a paraprofessional for children with special needs, a job that wouldn’t have been possible had it not been for receiving my A.A at Q.C.C. Working as a paraprofessional allowed me to learn how the school operated and how to better help my son.

The benefits of the academics and guidance that I attained as a College Discovery student is immeasurable. In my everyday life I make connections to what I learned at Q.C.C. For example: Learning Styles, I had no idea before Q.C.C. of all the different learning styles. I was able to figure out that my son is a kinesthetic learner, and work to best meet his needs.

During my time at Q.C.C. I fully participated in the college experience. My College Discovery counselor provided guidance in a way that fit my schedule and financial needs at the time. This “V.I.P. guidance” allowed me to complete my studies at Q.C.C.

My advice to anyone in the College Discovery program is to work with your counselor so that your schedule best fits your needs. What you learn at Q.C.C. will connect once you leave and begin to experience life.

My experience at QCC and College Discovery was such that I persuaded my niece, a current CD student at the college, to become part of this wonderful school and what is has to offer its students.
I graduated from LaGuardia Community College in 1989. At the time I attended school I was raising my daughter. Upon completing my Associate’s degree, I worked for the Internal Revenue Service as a secretary. I decided to continue my education and elected to attend John Jay College where I received a Bachelor’s Degree in Forensic Psychology in 1994.

My nearly 15 year career in education began with my work at LaGuardia Community College, where I am currently Assistant Registrar. Prior to this position I worked at Valencia Community College for three years in the state of Florida.

I am the parent of three children ages 26, 24 and 18. Participating in the College Discovery Program, I believe, made me a better parent. The skills and resources I benefited from as a College Discovery student gave me the proper guidance to help my children succeed in their personal and professional lives.

The opportunities I had as a LaGuardia student in the College Discovery Program, opened the door for me to obtain my first job, working for Port Authority at the World Trade Center. The internship experiences then provided allowed me to begin my career in business and administration.
I began at QCC in the summer of 1964 while the campus was still under construction. My commute was almost two hours every day. As I remember it, two trains and two buses to get to class. Getting through the Norton Anthology of English Literature and the first semester of Chemistry was challenging, to say the least.

Dr. Ford and Dr. DeLeon were my counselors and extremely committed to our success. Once I graduated with an Associate’s Degree I transferred to Brooklyn College where I completed a baccalaureate and a Master’s degree and eventually a doctorate in Psychology at Yeshiva University.

QCC College Discovery not only provided me with counseling, tutoring and other academic supports but allowed me to do work study at a hospital and to become engaged in the co-curricular life of the college during the time of the civil rights movement and the war in Vietnam. The work I do now allows me to utilize all the skills and knowledge received from those first years in CD.

I would advise QCC/CD students to affirm each and every day, their commitment to learning, to be a student, and to completing a degree. I would also encourage them to never to forget to reach back and give a helping hand to others. We stand on the shoulders of so many who have come before us. Let us continue the tradition of paying it forward.
During my time at QCC, while in the College Discovery program, I was given many opportunities. I took advantage of every single one, and all of these opportunities have paved the way to my current educational path. My counselor, Sandra Sacrestano, urged me to apply for a Study Abroad opportunity and I gladly accepted. I was selected and had the chance to go to Austria; an opportunity that changed my life. My time in Austria inspired me to apply for school in Europe to pursue a career in business. I will commence my studies in January at the University of Huddersfield in the United Kingdom as an International Business major.

My stay at Queensborough would not have been the same without the CD program. From tutors, to charity events, info sessions and the great counselors willing to help at any time, I cannot express my gratitude enough.

My advice to the continuing students in the CD program is to take advantage of all resources and help available, because it is just going to get you a step closer to your dreams, or even set you on a path you would have never thought of otherwise.

Lastly, I want to give a special thanks to Sandra Sacrestano because she has really made a difference in my future. Thanks again.
Upon graduating from BMCC, I earned a Bachelor’s degree in Economics at Baruch College. I began my career as an Analyst with Moody’s Investors Service. After two years at Moody’s I accepted an Associate position with Credit Agricole Corporate & Investment Bank in the Metals & Mining industry.

Life inevitably comes with some form of struggle. I believe that sacrificing the wants for the needs, and formal education, is necessary to fully experience life’s rewards and challenges. Prioritizing is particularly important because everyone has the same 24 hours.

While at BMCC, and during my time as a College Discovery student, one person, Mr. Nelson Izquierdo, was instrumental. I am most grateful to him for his time and advice. Equally influential, Mr. Orville Hill, who planted a seed of forward thinking in me. Mr. Hill helped instill in me, the practice of having goals & working towards them; something I never really had before I met him. An important member of the CD family, Dr. Pedro Perez, had a lasting impact on me. Dr. Perez, with his charisma and optimism, was a reliable source of support during my time at BMCC. With a smile on his face and always reliable, despite not being my assigned counselor, together made my College Discovery experience that much richer.
After I graduated from Bronx Community College I transferred to Baruch College where I currently attend part-time. My goal is to major in Corporate Communication and History.

The education I received at BCC and am now receiving at Baruch, is currently helping me with the tasks I am currently performing at my full time job at Bronx Community College. As an employee for the Workforce Development & Continuing Education department, I am able to apply the knowledge and skills gained during my tenure in these institutions. In my current job I have the opportunity to perform various duties across campus programs. I find working with students especially rewarding.

My advice to CD students is to not give up. It is a long journey that in the end will produce the results you have fought for, cried for, lost sleep for, and studied until 4am in the morning for. It is all worth it, and the journey is only half the battle. I still remember my days in the College Discovery Program. I have met people with whom I have developed close bonds and now consider part of my family.
Following BMCC, I transferred to Hunter College where I earned a BA in Biochemistry with a minor in Physics and Mathematics. I earned an MPhil. in Biochemistry at CUNY Graduate Center where I also currently enrolled in the Biochemistry PhD program. Presently I am an adjunct lecturer at Lehman College while working on my dissertation.

Always, when I think of my time in the CD Program, I fondly remember Dr. Adrienne Faison. When I started school, I was biased against the idea of seeing a counselor. For what could I possibly need a counselor? Eventually, I found out. I was so fortunate to have her support through extremely difficult times while I was at terrible risk of being unable to stay in school. My time with her as my CD counselor helped me to keep my head together despite my troubles, and for that I will always be grateful.

To current CD students struggling to complete their education, I urge them to clearly define their goals and to do what they love without compromise. They’ll need their passion to achieve their goals and they’ll spend a large part of their life at work, so they should choose what excites their interest no matter what anyone else thinks. Of course, with ambition comes responsibility, so rational planning is a must. Nobody can decide for you what your ambition should be but once you can decide on a goal, rational planning of your future road can give you an advantage in achieving your goals. When I plan ahead, I start with my destination and work my way backward to the present time to find what I must do now in order to reach my future goal.
After earning my Associate at BMCC, I transferred to John Jay to pursue a degree in Criminal Justice. Being a part of the College Discovery program at BMCC gave me an incredible advantage at pursuing my goals. During my senior year in high school, I was constantly lectured by teachers and even college advisors on the idea that “no one will look out for me at college.” I was warned how lonely college could be and how I would only have myself to rely on.” As a CD student I quickly learned how wrong they were.

The CD Program would sound surreal for the average senior in high school. The program provided me with tutoring, counseling, and most importantly, a family. Being a part of the program never felt distracting or burdensome. The meetings I would have with my counselor never felt mandatory. Everything felt natural and comfortable. The program eventually became an extension of my time at BMCC. I found myself spending more time in the CD office and I became an active participant.

I joined the CD Club my first semester and was the President of the club in my last year at BMCC. As an active member of the club, and considered it my duty to promote a sense of comfort. The counselors in the CD Program also became a major part of my life. I felt comfortable reaching out to Dr. Perez and Mr. Solomon for support in all areas of my life. When it came to making a decisions on future colleges, I would always turn to Mr. Nelson Izquierdo for his sincere yet caring advice. The CD Program is a part of my life which I will always remember and feel forever grateful for being a part of.
After LAGCC, I began coursework toward my BS at New York University. I went on to receive my BS in Teaching Physics in 2013 and my MA in Science Education in 2014, both from NYU.

Presently, I am working as a public school teacher in Queens, New York. I work at BTECH High School, a school that just opened this year. I am one of the founding members of this school and it has proven to be both a challenging and educationally stimulating experience. I feel really lucky to have stumbled upon this opportunity and plan on using it as a spring board to developing my career further.

To current students, particularly those who may be struggling to complete their education, I will say the following: The things in life that are worth anything of importance are always hard to get. The road to achieving your goals will be one filled with pain, tears, and disappointment. Use the resources you have in school and through CD, great things can become of anyone who has a strong support system and an impenetrable desire to succeed. Go to tutoring, learn good study habits, and grab any and every opportunity that you can find.

The person that I remember most in the CD program was my advisor LuAnn. She was like my second mother. When I was lost, I went to her. When I was discouraged, I went to her. When I succeeded, I went to her. She was my backbone and instilled in me that as long as I put my mind to something, I could do it. She truly helped me develop the confidence I needed to excel in anything. Now, confidence is sort of a hallmark of who I am.
I began my education at the Language Immersion Program and enrolled at BCC in 2001. At first the transition was difficult. The College Discovery Program helped me ease into college level course work by providing academic support services.

I graduated with honors in 2006 with an associate degree in Art Psychology, and enrolled at John Jay College. I was admitted into the Police Academy a year into my program and decided to defer college after graduating from the academy. I returned to John Jay College where I proceeded to earn a BA in Forensic Psychology and I have been employed with the New York City Police Department for the past thirteen years as a Police Officer.

One advice I would certainly give CD students is to never give up. No matter how long it takes, no matter how many times you have to retake the ACT or any other remedial exam, persevere! Take advantage of all of the services the College Discovery Program has to offer. Attend tutoring! The Academic Support Services truly helped me with my most difficult courses and helped me succeed in the end.

The entire CD staff from BCC is very memorable to me; from the program secretary Jeannette Davila, to my great counselor, Professor Marion Adeyanju, to the tutoring staff and the Program Director Augusto Quinones. College Discovery make me feel I was part of a family.
Alex Royt is currently attending SUNY, Binghamton with aspirations of pursuing a career as a History professor. Mr. Royt was an active member in our College Discovery Program at Kingsborough Community College. While in our program, Mr. Royt was a Chi Alpha Epsilon inductee, a member of the College Discovery Club and a member of the Chi Alpha Epsilon Club. Mr. Royt, who excelled academically, was an Honors student and participated in the Model UN. As an Honors student, he presented at the KBCC Honors Symposium and was published twice in the Honors’ program’s journal, Distinction. He was also inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society and was part of the Dean’s List. Within his limited time, he also found time to be a College Discovery Peer Mentor and a contributing writer to our school newspaper, Scepter.

Affectionately called, “Professor,” Mr. Royt, served as a great example of academic excellence to his fellow College Discovery peers. Many of the students in the College Discovery program sought him out for advice and assistance as they recognized how resourceful he was as a student. When he first started at KBCC, he was hesitant to become very involved and engaged in the CD program. However, he says that after meeting with his counselor and receiving assistance from several CD staff members, he realized that this was a family and not just another regular program. Mr. Royt also added that CD became an integral part of his support system and he is forever grateful.
After earning my Associate Degree in Liberal Arts: Math and Science, I transferred to Binghamton University and double majored in Biological Sciences (Pre-Med Track) and Africana Studies. After graduation I served with AmeriCorps Health Corps stationed in Brooklyn. It was the most soul enriching and humbling journey I am blessed to have experienced. I learned so much about myself and the power of service to others.

Currently I am attending the University of Buffalo School of Medicine where I am pursuing my lifelong dream of becoming an international physician, specializing in Cardiology or Neurosurgery. The medical school journey has been the most challenging yet exciting time of my life. The setbacks that I faced prior to medical school has equipped me with the tools to face the future.

College Discovery was my lifeline during my undergraduate career. It provided me with a platform to explore myself. It was a safety nest and a home away from home. Coming from Ghana, it was extremely important for me to have a support system who not only believe in your dreams but also invest in them. I became more involved on campus activities because CD encouraged the small voice in me and urged me to speak on issues that matter to me. My CD family taught me to be the voice of change that I wanted to see in this world. From there, I went from this shy foreigner to becoming vibrant activist and an unstoppable powerhouse.

My advice is pretty simple: Ask yourself, what do I want to be? Once that decision is made, be fearless in pursuing this dream. CD will help you reach it. Trust me, you are in great hands. Just avail yourself and you will be in for a ride of your life.
My foundation at LAGCC allowed me to explore my professional and personal interests. The CD program offered me the academic support I needed to pursue my interests in first veterinary technology and then social work.

After LAGCC, I attended Lehman College where I majored in Social Work. My interest in Social Work began through a job I applied at LaGuardia's career center. When I obtained my bachelor's in Social Work, I applied and was accepted to Hunter College's one year advanced standing program for Social Work. During both schools I worked part-time while being a full-time student. Since completing school in August, my internship has offered jobs where I have been able to learn the roles of being a high school drop-out prevention counselor, internship co-coordinator, and assisting families in obtaining child care. My passion to help youth began while being a student at LAGCC.

The support of my CD counselor and the program went a long way in navigating CUNY's complicated system and helping me discover my passion to aid under resourced youth and communities. I am very happy about my accomplishments. My advice to current students struggling to complete their education is learn what your weaknesses are, strengthen them and use your strengths every day and make a list of goals. My first goal was to graduate high school and then to receive an Associates degree. The person I remember most in CD is my counselor Kyoko Toyama because of her support during times when I struggled academically and personally, her kindness and wisdom.

Cynthia Silva
LaGuardia Community College
Class of 2010
Social Worker The Committee of Hispanic Children and Families
Ms. Tamara Sokolova is a Kingsborough Community College, College Discovery graduate of class 2010. While at KBCC Ms. Sokolova was part of the Honors Program and the Dean’s List. After graduating from Kingsborough Community College with a 3.9 GPA she applied to Pace University and was accepted. Ms. Sokolova is a highly motivated student who has continued her professional career.

Ms. Sokolova mentioned, “My interest in Communication Science dates back to my first year in the US, when I worked in a day care. Working with kids, I became aware that kids with autism have different brain structures. Over the last few decades the prevalence of autism has increased. It is my primary reason to work with kids who have communication problems and autism. These problems have a strong connection. Autism is difficult to diagnose and can be confused with other conditions. It is so important that parents and teachers talk to the doctor who would help make an accurate diagnosis. Educating children with autism is a challenge for both parents and teachers. I want to be able to help the child and his family to understand that she/he has the ability to function and be a productive member of society. If we can start treatment earlier, kids will develop their skills and improve their lives. My desire to work with children with speech delays made me interested in the Speech Pathology and Audiology Program.”

Ms. Sokolova was recognized as a student of merit by Pace University professionally-oriented programs in business, law, arts and sciences, information technology, education, and nursing, with a core curriculum based in the liberal arts in 2011. She made Dean’s list in 2011 and 2012. After earning a bachelor’s and a master’s degree, Ms. Solokova is planning to continue her doctorate degree at the same institution.
After high school, I really did not want to go to college but I knew I wanted to meet a lot of people. Being a college student, I started thinking differently and seeing new horizons with the assistance of my College Discovery Counselor, Vanessa Rozzelle. I started developing a passion for giving back and helping others. Obtaining a college degree was no longer inconceivable but now becoming a reality.

Upon completing the requirements for my Early Childhood Education degree at BMCC, I transferred to The City College of New York as a SEEK student and earned a BA in Elementary Education. Thereafter, I attended Hunter College School of Social Work and earned my Master of Social Work Degree (MSW).

With an MSW under my belt, I started working at BMCC in the College Discovery Program. I am working with students who are from the same type of community as mine and I am working with students with economic and educational backgrounds similar to mine. I am giving back and helping others.

I attended New York Law School in the evening and earned my Juris Doctor degree while working full time at BMCC. I have started my own law practice, The Law Office of Adrian T. Solomon, Esq., and continue to work as a College Discovery Counselor.

Am I satisfied? Yes, I am satisfied but my mantra is, "Never Stop Learning!"

My Advice to students:

Dream Big! Aim High! Set your own limits! Nothing is Impossible!

This is your education and you have to care about it more than anyone else.

Believe in yourself and ignore all doubters!
After QCC I attended Brooklyn College and earned my Degree in Business. From there I went on to attend NYU and finish my MBA as well. Right now I work in Sales, for Thomson Reuters, and I am very happy and motivated towards the work that I do. The best advice I can give somebody who is struggling is to think of the opportunities in store when one completes their education. At the moment, things may be difficult but the rewards from finishing will only set you up to have a better future and life down the road.
Jose Vasquez was an extraordinary College Discovery student from fall 2007 to spring of 2009. He graduated in 2009 with an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts and was part of the Honors Program. After many years away from a school setting, Mr. Vazquez managed to overcome the many obstacles he encountered as he began taking the steps toward academic and professional success. Mr. Vazquez strived tirelessly to be a great student, an inspiring leader, and an effective professional. He earned a baccalaureate degree at Brooklyn College. Mr. Vazquez graduated with honors with a double major in art, and Puerto Rican Latino Studies.

Mr. Vasquez art work has been exhibited, earning recognition at the galleries of the Lower East Side of Manhattan. While at Kingsborough, Mr. Vazquez was an active member of various organizations and held positions of leadership in most of them. He was a CUNY SLA leader, a member of the Phi Theta Kappa society, Chi Alpha Epsilon honoree, a treasurer to the Italian Club and the president of the Hispanic Committee Club. In the spring of 2009, Jose conducted the first multi-cultural event in the College Discovery program, which was well attended. Jose possesses outstanding organizational skills and a genuine desire to help others develop their full potential.

Among his most recent accomplishments, in May of 2014, Mr. Vazquez conducted a fund raiser to assist High School students with college scholarships. He is currently the chairman of the Dr. Antonia Pantoja Fellowship Organization. Through this organization, Mr. Vazquez advocates for quality and accessible education for all students and promotes the development of Puerto Rican and Latino Leaders.
After I graduated from LAGCC, I applied to Binghamton University, with the goal of obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences. I am currently in my last semester at Binghamton and I have already applied to graduate school to pursue a career in Health Care administration.

Being in College Discovery played an important role, helping me realize my potential to succeed coming from an under resourced background. CD has helped me every step of the way, providing extra resources and motivation from its compassionate counselors. I was introduced to the Inter-Collegiate Partnership Program through CD and in turn, ICP has helped me further realize my academic potential. This inspired me to reach for more.

I would like to express to current CD students that the road to success will never be easy and having a great support system such as CD is beneficial. Take advantage of all that College Discovery has to offer and think of them as a second family you never had. I will always remember my counselor, Kyoko Toyama, because she was with me throughout all my struggles providing tremendous emotional and motivational support. She saw something in me that I didn’t; the ability to become someone great. I became someone that never wanted to settle for less when I knew I had the potential to do better.
Upon graduating from LAGCC, I was accepted at City College and earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science. While attending LAGCC, I was actively involved in student life. I became an advocate for campus child care and was elected and served as a Senator and Vice President for Student Gov’t. I was concerned about proposed tuition increases and wanted to serve as a voice for students who were parents. When I left LAGCC, I turned my activism and became active in my community. I was hired by a local housing organization as a Tenant Organizer. I helped tenants form tenant associations and helped them fight for repairs and qualify to become low-income cooperatives. I worked for a number of not-for-profit organizations to help residents and communities fight for better schools, housing and against police brutality.

I currently work for Councilmember Inez Barron and was hired by her husband Charles Barron in 2009. I am responsible for legislation, reviewing the city's budget and responding to issues that affect CUNY students and faculty. I am grateful of my time at LAGCC as a College Discovery (CD) student. My counselor, LuAnn Butironi was extremely helpful and contributed to my overall success. Students who are fortunate to receive insight and guidance from counselors are less likely to make mistakes, like taking classes they do not need to graduate and their support helps with remaining on track to graduate on time.

Since college life I ran for political office, self-published a poetry book, "Ndigo's Blues: A Journey of Love, Politics, Self-Awareness and Relationships" and started the Healing Drum Collective. The purpose of this effort is to teach young girls aged 13 and up women the basics of how to play congas, djembe and other hand-held percussion instruments. I will continue to use my voice, drumming and skills to help advocate and advance civil and human rights.
The College Discovery (CD) Program of the City University of New York celebrates 50 years! College Discovery is a Special Opportunity Program, sister to the SEEK Programs in the four-year colleges. Each year, College Discovery provides almost 2,1000 of CUNY’s neediest students with academic, counseling and financial support that helps them get into college and remain in school through graduation.

In 1964, at the height of the Civil Rights movement, the City University of New York Board of Higher Education established the College Discovery program as an experiment at each of the community colleges. The program mission was to demonstrate that, given proper support services, students who were being excluded from the University because of existing admissions criteria could attain a college degree.

In its 50 years of existence, College Discovery has enrolled approximately 160,000 students, transforming their lives and educational trajectory. Higher education innovation is a hallmark of College Discovery. Many currently common best practices were piloted in College Discovery. Among them are pre-freshman summer programs, freshman seminars, and formal basic skills courses. College Discovery continues the tradition of innovation through mentoring programs, the grant funded College Discovery Scholars program, and membership in the national honors society, Chi Alpha Epsilon.

In its 50 year history the CUNY College Discovery program has enabled thousands of low-income, underachieving high school graduates to improve their lives and contribute financial and intellectual resources to New York City and State.
College Discovery has managed a *trifecta* in retention, graduation, and transfer to four year colleges. When compared against national and regular CUNY students.

**Retention:** At each of the six College Discovery community colleges, CD student are achieving higher average 1-year retention rates compared to non-CD admits.

**Three-Year Graduation Rates:** College Discovery three-year graduation rates are higher than the general CUNY community college population. Those of non-CD students at each college. The University total is eight percentage points higher. At the individual campuses the difference varies and is as much as 17 percentage points higher in College Discovery.

**Transfer Rates:** College Discovery graduates are far more likely to transfer to a bachelor’s degree programs than regularly admitted CUNY college students—46% for regular admits as compared to 69% for College Discovery graduates.
