

PRACTICES EXCHANGE

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YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: Metropolitan College of New York

Metropolitan College of New York

(MCNY) was founded in 1964 by Audrey Cohen and a group of social activists who believed that traditional higher education was fundamentally ill-equipped to serve adult and economically disadvantaged students. The goal of the College is to create new career opportunities for adults through a powerful model of integrated, workplace-embedded education and to provide a superior, experientially-based education that fosters personal and professional development. MCNY offers graduate and undergraduate programs

across three schools: the Audrey Cohen School for Human Services and Education, the School for Business and the School for Public Affairs and Administration.



MCNY serves approximately 1,000 students, 65% undergraduate and 35% graduate, on two campuses, one in Lower Manhattan and one in the South Bronx. With 79% of students above the age of 25, MCNY ranks among the top 10 colleges in the nation educating the highest percentage of adult students, according to US News and World Report. MCNY students are primarily from underrepresented populations, and many are the first in their families to attend college: 85% are either black and/or Latino, 72% are women, and 85% are eligible to receive

Pell Grants. The typical MCNY student is a 33-year-old, African American woman, who is a single mother, working full-time while attending college full-time. Low student-faculty ratios — 10:1 for undergraduates and 8:1 for graduates — provide students with individualized attention and a high level of support. Courses are offered within a three semester academic year, enabling many undergraduate students to graduate in three years or less.

Coming from all over the U.S. and the world, students are drawn to MCNY by its experiential focus, involved and committed faculty, and opportunities for intense, accelerated study. MCNY's mission is



unique in its explicit commitment to social justice, which the College aims to achieve through Purpose-Centered Education — a curriculum that empowers students to create positive change in their workplace and communities. MCNY’s unique education requires each student to design, implement and evaluate each semester a “Constructive Action,” a project aimed at improving operations or services in their workplace or internship site. Through these successive Constructive Actions, students learn to think critically and apply theory to practice. Through these deep learning experiences, MCNY students become skilled at adding value and implementing constructive change to benefit their workplaces and communities.

Some recent examples of student Constructive Actions include:

- A Human Services student started an orphanage in Haiti after a major earthquake, which is still serving dozens of children today.
- A Human Services/Emergency Management student started a transitional housing project for parolees and people with drug or alcohol addiction that provides job training and continuing education to ensure their success. Her model is being used by the City of New York to research the potential for similar city-funded facilities.
- An MBA student started an organization to diversify the bone-marrow registry and succeeded in passing “Jaden’s Law,” to make the bone-marrow donor registry similar to the organ donor registry in New Jersey.

MCNY offers non-traditional students an opportunity to succeed in college and acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to empower themselves, their families, their clients, and their communities. The College’s graduates go on to careers in business, education, emergency management, financial services, city and state government, healthcare, human services, information technology, media and public affairs. One alumnus, BPS Human Services ’12 and MBA ’13, stated that his MCNY education “utilized a focused, applicable, experiential and tangible way of teaching and learning, allowing me to be creative and think outside the box in an organized way. Truly, a hands-on multifaceted experience which prepares students for engaging or advancing in their career.”

Institutional Resources/Practices

Ferrum College (VA) is making a bold “Ferrum Promise”: beginning in fall 2020, students who transfer from a Virginia community college with an appropriate associate’s degree and meet certain criteria will be able to graduate within two years of the transfer, or they will receive free tuition for the remaining coursework. “Today, nearly 40 percent of students who graduate from a Virginia community college need three or more additional years to finish a bachelor’s degree because their new college will not accept many of their credits. This is not what they expected — it’s frustrating, time-consuming, and expensive,” said Ferrum College President David Johns.

The College already guarantees admission from all 23 community colleges in Virginia. The “Ferrum Promise” is the College’s next step to becoming even more transfer-friendly and applies to all students who are enrolled full-time, enter with an appropriate associate’s degree from a Virginia community college, and meet certain academic requirements. “We are excited to offer transfer students a seamless transition to Ferrum College, where they will receive individualized course mapping with our faculty,” said Provost Aimé Sposato. For further information go to: <https://www.ferrum.edu/academic-affairs/registrars-office/transfer-ferrum-college>.

YWMC Webinar Series

There's still time to register in advance for the next YWMC Webinar, "How to Create Trauma Responsive Educational Institutions," taking place on **Friday, January 31, 2020, at 1pm ET.**

To register, go to the following link:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wAazeGLKRxaGgphxtvmMBQ.

Webinars are free of charge.

Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. Send brief descriptions to Nia Lane Chester, YWMC Program Manager. niachester@gmail.com.