

SOAR

A PLACE TO LAUNCH YOUR LIFE™

SEEK/CD Mission

The SEEK/College Discovery Mission is to increase the level of education, social mobility, and vocational capability in NYC and NYS by providing access to higher education to students who are:

- **Educationally disadvantaged**
(as defined by CUNY)
- **Economically disadvantaged**
(as defined by NYS)

To provide comprehensive services in:

- **Academic support**
- **Counseling**
- **Financial Aid**

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Baruch Creates Passport For Success

Baruch College's SEEK Program has developed a pilot program with three of CUNY's community colleges to ensure that College Discovery students transferring to Baruch receive the support they need to make a smooth transition.

Known as the *Special Programs Transfer Student Bridge Program*, the pilot targets students from three feeder College Discovery Programs at LaGuardia Community College, Borough of Manhattan Community College, and Queensborough Community College. In the second phase, the pilot will be expanded to other CUNY campuses.

"One of the major outcomes of the program has been the development of a *Passport*," said **Dr. Angela Anselmo**, Baruch's SEEK Director. The *Passport*, which was developed with all three community colleges, clearly states the eight core courses required by Baruch's Zicklin School of Business and how these courses fit into majors at the community colleges.

"Many of the students attending community colleges dream of attending Baruch," Dr. Anselmo said. "The *Passport* represents a blue print, that if followed by a student, will maximize the opportunity for a successful transition to Baruch. If College Discovery students meet all of these requirements, their chances of getting accepted to Baruch are much higher."

Dr. Anselmo said it's a common practice for colleges and universities to lavish attention on incoming freshmen. However, as standards for four-year institutions rise, more inner city students will first attend community colleges, making outreach to and communication with these institutions essential. The focus on transfer students also reflects the priorities of the Governor's Office and CUNY's 10-year master plan.

Baruch's SEEK Program has designated one person, **Gloria Paulus**, to oversee the Transfer Student Bridge Program and develop relationships with her counterparts at the three community colleges. Of the 650 SEEK students attending Baruch, 55 have transferred in from the College Discovery Programs at CUNY's community colleges, and 69 from CUNY four-year and private colleges.



Gloria Paulus (L) and Dr. Angela Anselmo, Baruch's SEEK Program Director

Ms. Paulus is focused on providing guidance to students before they apply to Baruch, during the application process, and finally supporting them once they arrive at Baruch. She is in constant contact with the College Discovery counselors and keeps them apprised of any changes in Baruch's curriculum requirements. The counselors also give Ms. Paulus the names of students applying to Baruch, which helps her see that incoming students are prepared, placed in the appropriate classes, and given the resources they need when classes begin.

As part of the college's outreach efforts, Ms. Paulus coordinates open houses for counselors from all CUNY's College Discovery Programs and an orientation for College Discovery students interested in transferring to Baruch.

"We're seeing a difference in the past year of the performance of transfer students in the first semester," Dr. Anselmo said. "It's a combination of the SEEK Program pilot and rising expectations on the part of the college."

Medgar Evers Proves the Mission is Possible



Janice Zummo (Center) was honored by Sen. Eric Adams' Team Adams on March 26, 2009, for her dedication and work in the SEEK Programs.

Elizabeth Freeman, a gifted young student at Medgar Evers College, was efficiently juggling her responsibilities as a tutor, wife, mother, and student, all while maintaining a 3.6 GPA. It was only when her family faced eviction during finals week that she became overwhelmed.

Fortunately, she confided in a SEEK counselor who helped her develop a strategy that enabled her to complete the semester. The young student contacted each of her professors individually, explained her circumstances, and asked for an incomplete in exchange for a pledge to finish the courses as soon as she was settled. She honored her commitment, completed her coursework, and finished the semester with a cumulative 3.4 grade point average.

Janice Zummo, Director of the Medgar Evers SEEK Program, cited the student's dilemma as an example of the barriers many of the SEEK students face. A personal crisis can prompt even the most promising students to disappear in the middle of a semester and never return.

To help students develop the skills to cope with adversity while attending college, succeed academically, and increase graduation rates, Ms. Zummo is developing a new program called Mission Possible, which she plans to introduce to freshmen in the SEEK Program in the Fall of 2009.

"Mission Possible will help students take control of their lives and understand that everything won't always go as they plan," Ms. Zummo said. "The barriers that our students face are huge — homelessness, illness, and family emergencies are common. Our goal is to help them develop coping skills and problem-solving techniques to manage their education in the midst of what may be a chaotic personal life."

But identifying barriers is only one part of the six-part Mission Possible contract freshman SEEK students will create. The other five parts include: motivation, or helping students identify why they are going to college and what they hope to gain with their education; identifying their strengths and unique skills; identifying areas where they could improve; helping them develop long-term goals; and understanding the importance of adaptability, or having the ability to rebound from adversity.

The incoming freshmen in the SEEK Program will be divided into groups of 20. Each of the eight SEEK staff members will be responsible for 20 freshmen and will help these students develop their contract. Four students will serve as mentors. The content of the contract will be reinforced in freshman counseling classes and revised throughout the student's academic career. "The contract will create a structure for the students," Ms. Zummo said. "They will write it their first year and will change it based on what is going on in their lives."

While Mission Possible is designed to give support to students, it's also designed to encourage the development of stronger relationships between the SEEK Program's staff and students.

Dear Readers:

We in the Office of Special Programs take great pride in launching SOAR, a newsletter devoted to sharing the achievements of the two CUNY opportunity programs, SEEK and College Discovery. Both programs have been in existence for over forty years and have been instrumental in launching the careers of thousands of students who might not have earned a degree without the support they received in SEEK and College Discovery.

As this first issue of our newsletter illustrates, we embrace a holistic approach to fulfill our mission. We understand the barriers facing our students — low family income, academically under-prepared by their high schools, and frequently chaotic personal lives. In most cases, they are the first in their families to attend college. We also recognize that with consistent support such as rigorous pre-freshman summer sessions, student centered freshman seminars, intrusive counseling, and high caliber academic support, we can help to level the playing field. We assist our students to assess their academic needs, capitalize on their strengths, and develop the confidence to transform their lives through education.

The results speak for themselves. Graduation and retention rates for College Discovery students are consistently higher than those of their regularly admitted peers. Current SEEK and College Discovery pass rates on the CUNY Proficiency Exam, our "value added" instrument, now exceed those of non-program students. For more than 40 years, students who participated in our SEEK and College Discovery Programs have repaid the city and state investment several times over by becoming successful, hard working, tax paying citizens.

I want to express my gratitude for the dedicated service rendered by the SEEK and College Discovery Program staffs, and for the continued financial support we receive from NYS legislators, local officials, and the University. Their belief in our students' potential has enabled us to continue to expose them to a new world with limitless possibilities — to help them soar!

Sincerely,


Cheryl N. Williams
University Associate Dean of Special Programs

Leadership Academy Inspires Student

It didn't take much for Keston Boyce to find his inner leader, just involvement in the SEEK and College Discovery Student Leadership Academy.

"I'm more involved than I ever dreamed I'd be," Keston said. "I think this program can work wonders for everybody. It's a great experience for anyone who wants to be a leader."

For the 26-year-old sophomore at Medgar Evers College, the Student Leadership Academy has been a life changer. Having already earned an Associate's Degree in Business Administration Magna Cum Laude, Keston's involvement in the Leadership Academy inspired him to continue his studies and begin working toward a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration.

"I want to work in public service and a degree in Public Administration will allow me to do that," he said.

In 2008, Keston was awarded the Edward T. Rogowsky Internship in Government and Public Affairs, an honor CUNY bestows on only one student each year. The internship gave him the opportunity to work in City Comptroller Bill Thompson's Community Action Center last summer where he found himself on the front lines of the country's foreclosure crisis. Keston has been on the Dean's List for four consecutive semesters.

He also was one of three freshmen from Medgar Evers to attend the SEEK and College Discovery Student Leadership Academy Retreat last June, which charged student leaders from all the CUNY campuses with creating a plan to increase student involvement and school spirit at their respective schools.

Keston, who served as Freshman Class Representative, and currently serves as president of his sophomore class, ran with the idea.

"I want students to get involved and enjoy college life," he said, acknowledging that coordinating activities on a commuter campus is challenging. "The objective is for them to have as much fun as possible — to put the fun back in learning."

As part of the initiative, Keston worked with **State Sen. Eric Adams** during the summer of 2008 to organize a fundraising trip to Great Adventure for Medgar Evers students, families, and friends, and SEEK students from other CUNY campuses. The students had a great day at the amusement park but also raised money for student scholarships.

After the semester began, Keston planned a trip for Medgar Evers freshmen to **106 & Park**, the top-ten video countdown show on BET. Sen. Adams sponsored the event and provided each of the students with t-shirts that said, **Medgar Evers Freshman Class...Creating Success One Freshman at a Time**, which captured the students' pride in their school.



Anthony Maniscalco, director of the Edward T. Rogowsky Internship Program in Government and Public Affairs, Keston Boyce, and Dr. John Fleateau from the Public Administration Department at Medgar Evers.

But for Keston leadership isn't just about having fun, it's also about helping people in need, which is what he did when he saw news footage of an elderly Brooklyn woman being beaten in an elevator and robbed of \$900. Keston and other members of Sen. Adams' Youth Task Force went door to door to collect \$900 and gave it to the victim, 85-year-old Lillian France. In recognition of their efforts, the Daily News and local television stations profiled Keston and the Youth Task Force members with the grateful senior citizen.

Janice Zummo, Director of the Medgar Evers SEEK Program who helped the Student Leadership Academy evolve from a small leadership conference for students on one campus to a year-long, system-wide program, cited Keston as a model leader.

She said freshmen are recruited for the Student Leadership Academy so that they can share their leadership skills with fellow students for more than one year. Students who participate in annual leadership retreats receive training in public speaking, etiquette, and dressing for success, and learn to work in groups and implement projects on their respective campuses.

"The students have been so enthusiastic and appreciative," Ms. Zummo said. "Some have volunteered in student government, the SEEK student association, Habitat for Humanity, and with local politicians. The program is achieving its goals."

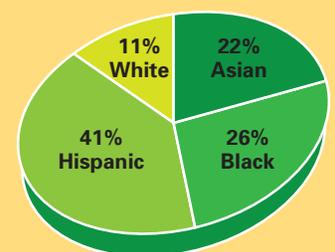
"I'm more involved than I ever dreamed I'd be."

— Keston Boyce

Did you know?

- SEEK enrollment is 8,722
- College Discovery enrollment is 2,501
- Approximately 80% of incoming SEEK freshmen finish their first semester in good academic standing.
- CUNY Proficiency Exam pass rates in Fall 2007 were higher in SEEK/College Discovery than for regular admits.
- College Discovery students have higher graduation and retention rates than non-program students.
- SEEK six year graduation rates have risen by 18% since 1995.
- Baruch SEEK's current six year graduation rate is 3.4% higher than regular admits'.

SEEK/College Discovery Student Profile: Fall 2007 Race/Ethnicity



SEEK/College Discovery

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**SEEK/College Discovery
on the Web**

View the SEEK 40th Anniversary
Video on You Tube at:
www.youtube.com

Keywords: "SEEK history"

Summer Math Institute Boosts Confidence and Success Rates

Omar Jaber used to spend hours studying math, but when it came time to take a test, he froze. That changed after he completed the 2008 Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) Summer Math Institute, a workshop created to help SEEK and College Discovery students improve their math skills and pass their placement exams.

The Summer Math Institute used the Self-Regulated Learning method, which teaches students to assess how they learn and adopt effective learning and test-taking strategies, and was part of a federally funded research project conducted by the Center for Advanced Study in Education (CASE) at the CUNY Graduate and University Center.

"I had test anxiety, but the class cleared it up for me," said Omar, a 20-year-old, second year student in Police Studies at John Jay College. "The professor made sure that everyone understood everything. She made me feel comfortable in class when I got nervous and my mind went blank. She gave us quizzes every day and tests once a week and made me work at the board until I got it."

The result was Omar relaxed and successfully passed his math placement exam.

Wilfrid Beliard, 26, a first year student studying Physical Therapy at Kingsborough Community College, also praised the Summer Math Institute because it condensed a two semester course into several weeks.

"The staff really wanted you to succeed and get the most out of the program," Wilfrid said. "For me this experience was unforgettable. But it wasn't just about taking the test, it was about learning."

Wilfrid, whose first language is Creole, last took a math class as a student in Haiti where he lived before immigrating to the United States in 2003. He said the individual attention he received in class and extra tutoring outside of class boosted his confidence and enabled him to master the material, successfully pass the exam, and qualify for a higher level math class.

His advice for other students? "When you find help take advantage of it. It feels great to succeed."

John Hudesman, a former SEEK counselor at City Tech and now a senior principal investigator at CASE, directed the program and is conducting the research on the effectiveness of the SRL method. The project was jointly supported by a three-year federal grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), and the CUNY Office of Special Programs.

The program is based on a math curriculum developed at City Tech and adapted by **Grazyna Niezgoda** and **Sandi Han** who were the Institute instructors. Also present at each class session were two tutors and a counselor assistant. The team worked with more than 20 student participants three hours a day, Monday through Thursday, for five weeks. The tutors were available before and after class and on Fridays and even organized weekend study groups to prepare students for the placement test.

Dr. Hudesman said because the students' confidence had been shattered by failing the test multiple times, the teachers did more than just present the material, instead they taught new learning and test-taking strategies so the students wouldn't get discouraged and give up.



(Seated from left to right) Sandi Han, John Hudesman and Grazyna Niezgoda.

"It feels great to succeed."

— Wilfrid Beliard