



**Brooklyn
College**

BLMI

ANNUAL REPORT
2024-25

Letter From the Director



It is with great pride that I share the accomplishments and continued growth of the Black and Latino Male Initiative (BLMI) at Brooklyn College. As a campus-based project of the City University of New York's Black Male Initiative (CUNY BMI), our

mission remains steadfast: to provide comprehensive academic, socioemotional, and professional support to students from underrepresented backgrounds—particularly African, African-American, Caribbean, and Latino/Hispanic men. Through mentorship, community engagement, and targeted programming, we work to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, while fostering academic and professional success.

While our focus is on supporting men of color, BLMI programming is inclusive and open to all Brooklyn College students regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity. Our vision—empowering men to achieve success and be the leaders of tomorrow—is reflected in the achievements of our alumni, who have earned advanced degrees from institutions such as Harvard University, Brown University, New York University, and CUNY Law, and have gone on to become entrepreneurs, educators, corporate professionals, artists, and authors.

This year, BLMI continued to strengthen campus culture through strategic partnerships and innovative programming. We proudly collaborated with student organizations and departments to support events such as Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, and the Donning of the Kente ceremony, a tradition led by the Black Faculty and Staff Association.

We also launched several new initiatives this year: The Phoenix Collective, the BLMI Mural Project, the Cultural Exploration Series, and the MBK Fellows Kindness Summit. See Page 14 for details.

As we reflect on the past year, we remain committed to our mission and energized by the impact of our work. BLMI continues to be a vital part of the Brooklyn College community, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

Christopher Rodriguez

Director, Black and Latino Male Initiative
Brooklyn College

While Black or African-American and Hispanic or Latino students make up a significant portion of Brooklyn College's student population (22.8% and 22.4% respectively), institutional data still reflect notable achievement gaps that BLMI aims to address.

Source: [2023 Data USA report](#)

A Brief History of BLMI

Once known as the Center for Diversity and Multicultural Studies, BLMI's location in 3309 James Hall has been an epicenter for community, inspiration, and perseverance, which planted seeds that have flourished into our ancestors' dreams come true over twenty years.

2005

The CUNY-wide Black Male Initiative was officially launched at Medgar Evers College with financial support from the New York City Council. This program aimed to create model programs at individual CUNY campuses that provide academic and social support for underrepresented male students. Honoring the call from the City Council to continue the work started at Medgar Evers College's Men's Development and Empowerment Center, Professor Noel Anderson recruited several of the college's most brilliant and charismatic student leaders.

2006

ERIS (Empowering, Recruiting, Investing, Supporting) was formed and served as the precursor for what would later become BLMI. Students like Dane Peters, David Wells, Marcus Richardson, and Kiev Davis were instrumental in the original grant proposal to expand the CUNY initiative to Brooklyn College.

2010

BLMI was founded at Brooklyn College to support students from underrepresented backgrounds, particularly African, African-American, Caribbean, and Latino/Hispanic men. A key focus was to increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of these students.

2015

The Kurz Family Foundation made a \$99,000 gift to BLMI to support technology, peer mentoring, and campus speakers. The Kurz Family Foundation then provided a second, \$1 million donation to BLMI later that year. This larger gift, inspired by donor Herbert Kurz's lifelong fight for racial equality, led to the creation of the Herbert Kurz Leadership Academy within BLMI.

2023

CUNY BMI formed a strategic partnership with Mentor Collective, a platform that BLMI adopted and implemented to enhance data-informed student support practices and expand mentorship opportunities across its programs.

2025

Celebrating its 15-year legacy, BLMI remains committed to boosting student success. The program continues to provide comprehensive support services and critical interventions to improve retention and graduation rates.

ABOUT
THE
INITIATIVE



WHO WE SERVE

	2024–25			2025–26 (as of this report)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
African American/Black	36	21	57	53	20	73
Hispanic/Latino	16	7	23	21	8	29
Asian American		1	1	2		2
Two or more races	2		2	8	1	9
Middle Eastern/North African				1		1
Total	54	29	83	85	29	114

BLMI GOALS AT A GLANCE

Expand Enrollment: Grow the number of Black and Brown men at Brooklyn College through strategic outreach and partnerships.

Strengthen Retention: Achieve 80% first-year retention through proactive advising and mentoring.

Support Academic Success: Raise the average GPA of BLMI students to 3.00 with targeted academic support.

Build Mentorship Capacity: Recruit and train 10 culturally responsive peer mentors.

Foster Community: Host events that promote belonging and address student needs.

Advance Career Readiness: Increase student participation in internships and career development programs.

Track Impact: Use assessment tools to measure student progress and program effectiveness.

Secure Resources: Grow funding to expand services and support.

Promote Global Engagement: Increase study abroad participation.

Support Wellness: Offer regular mental health and wellness workshops.

Inclusive Recruitment: Focuses on enrolling students from underrepresented backgrounds

Socioemotional Programming: Builds community and promotes well-being to support student persistence

KEY PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

BLMI's success is rooted in strong partnerships across Brooklyn College, the CUNY system, and external organizations. These collaborators provide mentorship, resources, and programming that support students' academic, professional, and personal growth.

Brooklyn College Faculty: Collaborations span departments such as Sociology, Puerto Rican and Latinx Studies (PRLS), Africana Studies, Anthropology, and Business.

Student Support Programs: Partners include the Magner Career Center; Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership (SAIL) Center; Center for Academic Advisement and Student Success (CAASS); Percy Ellis Sutton Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) program; Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP); Pre-Health Programs; and the Learning Center.

Campus Organizations: BLMI works with the Brooklyn College Black Student Union (BSU), Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA), and affinity centers (Immigrant Student Success Office (ISSO), LGBTQ+ Resource Center, Women's Center) to promote inclusion and community.

Admissions and Study Abroad: Joint efforts support recruitment and global engagement.

Student Clubs: BLMI mentors student leaders and co-hosts events to build leadership and involvement.

CUNY-Wide Partners: BLMI collaborates with NYC Men Teach and CUNY BMI to provide critical support for men entering the education field, directly addressing the need for a more diverse teaching workforce in the city.

External Collaborators: Genius Potential and My Brother's Keeper support leadership development and outreach to high school students.



BLMI ADVISORY BOARD



Alan Aja Department Chair and Professor, Department of Puerto Rican and Latinx Studies

Yasmin Ali Interim Vice President, Student Affairs

Lawrence Bosket Assistant Director, Office of Admissions

Shemeka Brathwaite Program Manager, NYC Men Teach

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Moraima Smith Assistant Dean, Student Life

Benjamin Stewart Director, Pre-Health Advisement Office

Richard Vento Director, Learning Center

David Wells Director of Recruitment



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS AND IMPACT

THE HERBERT KURZ LEADERSHIP ACADEMY SUMMER INSTITUTE

The BLMI Herbert Kurz Leadership Academy Summer Institute is a three-week program designed to prepare students for college success through workshops and networking. It focuses on three core areas:

Career Readiness: Résumé writing, LinkedIn skills, goal setting, and professional communication

Academic Success: Study strategies, degree planning, and global citizenship

Personal Development: Mental wellness, identity exploration, time management, and growth mindset

Daily networking lunches with staff, faculty, alumni, and campus leaders fostered community and strengthened students' connection to Brooklyn College.

Summer Institute	Total Attendance	Incoming Students (FTF & FTT)
2025	28	27
2024	33	10

STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

BLMI provides personalized academic support to help students thrive:

Success Planning: One-on-one guidance using Brooklyn College's EAB Navigate system helps students create and track individualized academic and career plans.

Workshops: Sessions focus on study strategies and encourage use of campus academic resources.

Study Halls: A dedicated, comfortable space with computers and refreshments supports focused learning.

Resource Connection: BLMI ensures students are linked to tutoring, accommodations, and other essential college services.

LEADERSHIP, MENTORSHIP, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BLMI fosters student leadership, mentorship, and community through a range of impactful programs:

High School Outreach: BLMI partners with local schools and Brooklyn College Admissions to guide underrepresented students through the college application process and improve enrollment outcomes.

Community Partnerships: Collaborations with campus and external organizations create safe, supportive spaces and connect students to vital resources.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Peer Mentors: Ten trained upperclassmen mentor first- and second-year students annually.

My Brother's Keeper Fellows: BLMI mentors high school seniors in community service and leadership projects.

Faculty and Alumni Mentorship: Events like the Mouth of the Phoenix lecture series connect students with faculty and alumni for informal mentorship.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Mouth of the Phoenix and **Impromptu Talks** offer space for dialogue and reflection.

Community Reflections and **Joint Forums** address sociopolitical issues and access to higher education.

Donning of the Kente celebrates Black graduates in partnership with BSU and BFSA.

SOCIOEMOTIONAL PROGRAMMING

Community Mondays provide monthly wellness-focused town halls.

Cultural Exploration Series highlights Black, Afro-Caribbean, and Latino traditions through themed events like Frijoles and Freedom, Un Baile Inolvidable, and Sip, Paint & the Art of Resistance.

CAREER READINESS

The Phoenix Collective supports professional development and identity exploration.

Leadership Retreat engages students in off-campus leadership training and wellness.

Internships and Work Study offer hands-on experience through BLMI roles and programming.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

BLMI offers \$15,000 in Kurz Foundation scholarships for study abroad. Recent destinations include Ghana, Japan, South Africa, and Spain, among others.

BLMI fosters student leadership, mentorship, and community through a range of impactful programs.

KEY METRICS AND DATA

PROGRAMMING OUTCOMES

Category	Number of Events
Academic Enhancement	13
Diversity Recruitment	21
Socioemotional and Wellness Programming	19
Career Readiness	16

Total Event Attendance	
Spring 2025	269
Fall 2024	140
Spring 2024	88
Fall 2023	177

BLMI OFFICE VISITS SEPTEMBER 2024-MAY 2025*

Total	
Unique Student Office Visits	507
Overall Student Visits	1,301
Appointment	45
Casual Visit	739
Computer Use	21
Sign-up for BLMI	15
Study Hall	189
Workshop/Event	13
Mentor/Mentee Meeting	39
Two or More Reasons	240
Student Success Meetings	70

*This data is extracted from our digital sign-in form that students complete as they enter the BLMI office.

RETENTION RATE (FALL 2024-FALL 2025)

	Men	Women
First-Time Freshman	86%	N/A
First-Time Transfer	60%	100%
All Students	87%	94%

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (GPA)

	Men	Women		
	Fall '24	Sp '25	Fall '24	Sp '25
First-Time Freshman	2.68	3.31	N/A	N/A
First-Time Transfer	2.27	2.11	3.60	3.61
All Students	2.95	3.03	3.20	3.08



The CUNY BMI framework supports increased enrollment, retention, and graduation rates for traditionally underrepresented students.

TESTIMONIALS

THE BLMI 2025 SUMMER INSTITUTE

"This has been a truly wonderful time getting to know fellow students, gain insight about my academic options, solve enrollment issues, and discover sources of financial aid. I'm so glad I decided to join."

Freddy Jesse Izaguirre Merlos, Transfer Student

THE PHOENIX COLLECTIVE



"I often speak about the power of community and the need for representation. This is what The Phoenix Collective is to me. A safe space where young men can gather and be their most vulnerable selves. In a world where our voices are often masked by anger and machismo, PC strips that away and allows us to just be men. We gather, we ground, and we grow, together."

John Alante Richards, '25

"Being part of the BLMI's Phoenix Collective was an extremely empowering experience that allowed me to explore and discuss a multitude of topics that directly impacted young men of color like me. The Phoenix Collective provided a space for young men to feel heard while also being comfortable sharing experiences that we often shy away from discussing in our day-to-day conversations."

Sergio Leon Hidalgo



THE BLMI MURAL PROJECT

"My experience was fun. As someone hasn't painted a mural before, it was great to explore more of my artistic side and try something different. It allows students to connect to their culture through art and gives them an outlet to create."

Jaylen Brissett '24

"Projects like this help others understand that they are a part of a community and they're not by themselves, and they hold meaning not just to themselves but those around them as well—even if it's not seen. Along the way I learned to understand that patience is a virtue, and it is meant to be treated as such. This project has helped me grow my patience and made me more detail oriented."

Steev Previlon

"In a world where our voices are often masked by anger and machismo, The Phoenix Collective strips that away and allows us to just be men."

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

BLMI

BLMI continues to innovate with new initiatives and ongoing projects that support student development, leadership, and cultural engagement.

NEW BLMI PROGRAMS

The Phoenix Collective: This professional development series focused on identity, leadership, and life after college, featuring guest speakers from Brooklyn College and CUNY BMI.

BLMI Mural Project: Students collaborated with muralist Julia Cocuzza to create a culturally rich mural reflecting Black and Latino heritage and identity.

Cultural Exploration Series: Annual events celebrate the food, music, and rituals of the Black, Afro-Caribbean, and Latino diaspora.

MBK Fellows Kindness Summit: A youth-focused summit promoted empathy and socioemotional learning, organized by My Brother's Keeper Fellows and hosted at Brooklyn College.

ONGOING PROJECTS

BLMI Fellows Program: Empowers high-performing seniors to lead peer cohorts through socially conscious projects tied to their academic interests.

Student Voices Journal: In partnership with PRLS, BLMI will launch a monthly "Cafecito Lounge" series culminating in a year-end journal showcasing student art, writing, and oral histories.

OUR PARTNERS AND ALLIES

Admissions Office
Africana Studies Department
Black Faculty and Staff Association
Center for Academic Advisement and Student Success
CUNY Black Male Initiative
Immigrant Student Success Office
International Programs and Study Abroad
Magner Career Center
Student Activities, Involvement, and Leadership

FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2025

The Brooklyn College Black and Latino Male Initiative receives funding from a combination of city, state, and private sources. These funds support the initiative's programs.

Expenses

Program Expenses

Study Abroad Scholarships	\$12,000
Summer Institute	\$ 7,703
Leadership Retreat	\$13,435

General and Administrative Expenses

Salaries and Payroll	\$74,643
Miscellaneous	\$ 6,358
Total Expenses	\$114,139

Revenue

CUNY BMI	\$81,000
Endowment Income	\$29,213
Total Revenue	\$110,213

During fiscal year 2025, BLMI incurred an operating deficit of \$3,926, which was offset by drawing upon previously unutilized endowment income reserve funds.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

LOOKING AHEAD: 2025-26 GOALS

BLMI is expanding its impact through new leadership, mentorship, and career development opportunities:

BLMI Fellows Program: Empowers high-achieving Black and Latino seniors to lead peer cohorts through socially conscious academic projects

Expanded Mentorship: Strengthens connections between students and staff, faculty, and alumni for formal mentoring

Networking and Career Development: Students will continue attending high-impact events such as the BLMI Gala, BMI Legislative Breakfast, and Latinx Leads conference, while gaining access to internships and career planning through programs like CUNY's Justice Careers Exploration Clinic.

CUNY BMI Annual Conference: Brooklyn College BLMI will host the 21st annual conference in fall 2026, marking a major milestone in its leadership within the CUNY system.

JOIN US IN EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION

The Brooklyn College Black and Latino Male Initiative is committed to supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds across the Black, Afro-Caribbean, and Latino diaspora. Through academic, socioemotional, and professional development, we help students thrive and become leaders in their communities. Your partnership is essential to building a more inclusive and equitable campus.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT

Community Partners and Leaders

Sponsor Programs: Support BLMI events through financial or in-kind contributions.

Advocate: Use your voice to champion CUNY BMI programs and promote equity in education.

Brooklyn College Staff and Faculty

Mentor Students: Share your professional and academic journey to guide BLMI participants.

Refer Students: Help connect eligible students to BLMI.

Collaborate: Integrate culturally relevant content and learning opportunities into your courses.

Brooklyn College Alumni

Expand Networks: Offer informational interviews, career talks, or participate in events like Mouth of the Phoenix or The Phoenix Collective.

Support Scholarships: Contribute to the BLMI scholarship fund to assist students in need.

Provide Internships: Offer paid opportunities that give students real-world experience.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GRATITUDE TO DONORS, PARTNERS, AND ALLIES

On behalf of the students we serve, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your support of the Black and Latino Male Initiative (BLMI) at Brooklyn College. Your generous contributions are not just a gift; they are a direct investment in the futures of talented and determined men from underrepresented backgrounds. The mission of BLMI is to increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of our students by providing them with committed academic, socioemotional, and professional support. The resources you help provide—which fund our Summer Institute and leadership retreat, and provide scholarships for students to study abroad who otherwise would not have the financial means to do so—are critical to achieving this mission. Thank you for believing in our students and for helping to create a more equitable and successful future for them and their communities. We are honored to have you as a partner.

DONORS

The State of New York
The New York City Council
Herbert Kurz '41
Kurz Family Foundation, Ltd.
Forest Creatures Foundation
Anonymous
Robbin Chapman '94
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