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YORK COLLEGE IS ON THE MARCH

Three years ago, Dr. Marcia V. Keizs assumed the presidency of York College. During this time, the administration implemented comprehensive and far-reaching changes involving all aspects of college life and operations. These changes have affected students, faculty, staff, enrollment, academic programs, facilities, and fundraising for scholarships. To summarize these developments, we began to use the phrase “York on the Move.” This has become more than a simple slogan; it’s shorthand for the excitement growing on campus and within the college community.

Building on this brand in 2006, we began publishing York on the March to highlight significant college events. These annual four-pagers are no longer sufficient to illustrate the “happening” place that York is today. Therefore, On the March has grown to 16 pages that provide a more extensive view of our dynamic institution. Every issue will feature articles about the exceptional people and achievements associated with our campus across four decades. We look forward to documenting an even brighter future.
Dear Friends:

Here are highlights of some of the stories explored in the following pages.

Enrollment
In June 2007, we graduated one of our largest classes in years. Last fall, we had the biggest freshman class in a decade, contributing to a 7.8% increase in overall enrollment. There has also been a substantial increase in the number of merit scholarships funded through the invigorated York College Foundation.

Academics
York’s core is its curriculum and related offerings. In these pages, we describe the latest faculty achievements and campus programs, including our new Provost Lecture Series. In 2007, York became the only CUNY institution to offer a bachelor’s degree in Aviation Management. York also boasts a unique collaboration with the Federal Drug Administration (FDA), which operates the region’s laboratory on the College campus.

Student Activities
Student life is flourishing at York. With a total of 15 men’s and women’s teams, we excel in athletic competition. Participation is widespread in all the performing arts, and student clubs are generating a sense of community and cultural interchange.

Facilities
There has been a dramatic change in the nature of the College’s facilities. The pictorial spread on pages 8-9 reflects our evolving concept of the co-curricular possibilities at a commuter campus with a student-centered approach.

Alumni
In its 40-year history, York College has awarded approximately 20,000 degrees. Our alumni have made an impact at the borough, city, state, national, and international level. A few of our more prominent graduates are profiled in these pages.

Special Events
York started the spring semester on a high note with its first annual scholarship benefit concert. Off-Broadway’s Three Mo’ Tenors sang to a full house in the Performing Art Center on January 21. Less than a month later, Dr. Muhammad Yunus, an economist who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, was welcomed by the college. This was an extraordinary opportunity for students, faculty, staff, and the community to hear from a revolutionary social thinker and doer.

We hope that you enjoy this presentation of the new, York story. We welcome your engagement and reengagement as we continue to build an exceptional higher education institution of which we can all be proud.

Marcia V. Keizs
President

Marcia V. Keizs
President
Two years ago, York launched the Men’s Center and Male Initiative Program as part of a CUNY-wide effort to recruit and support male students, particularly those from communities of color.

Led by Music Professor Jonathan Quash—a York alumus and a member of the Southeast Queens community—the Center provides a forum where male students can explore issues that challenge their health and academic performance. Participants are encouraged to develop positive relationships, discuss career goals, and focus on securing employment.

The Center also helps young men refine their social and critical thinking skills. The multi-faceted program includes mentoring and tutoring.

On his initiative, Professor Quash created a library of used textbooks which cash-strapped students can borrow. The Male Center library is open to all students regardless of gender.

Students in the Aviation Management Program at York College are giving the year-old program soaring praise. U.S. Navy veteran Arlington Aquebor says that the institute, which offers a bachelor’s degree in aviation management, combines top academics and individualized attention. “Compared to other schools it’s the most affordable,” says Aquebor, who hopes to become an airport manager. “And they pay a lot of attention to students here. You’re getting more for your money—way more.”

Faiza Parveen agrees.

“As a senior at Hillcrest High School, I was planning to go to Farmingdale,” she explains. “But this is nearer and I get flight lessons free.” Upon graduation, Parveen plans to return to her native Pakistan to utilize the skills she is honing at York.

Jenny Chimbo values the opportunities she’s had off-campus networking at conventions.

“The people we meet tell us [about] their career paths,” says Chimbo. “I get all their cards and they tell us, ‘When you’re ready, call us.’”

Jenny has also been an intern with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

York College and the FDA: A Thriving Collaboration

York College is in the fortunate position of having two FDA entities located on its 50-acre campus: the Northeast Regional Laboratory, and the New York District Office. There are five regional Offices for the FDA and the facility located on the York’s campus is one of the most modern. It is also the largest FDA laboratory in the country outside the headquarters in Rockville, Maryland.

The proximity of the FDA site to York offers students and faculty a unique opportunity to engage in joint collaborative activities. In fact, the York FDA Scholarship program was launched two years ago for Merit Scholars in the sciences at the College and the collaboration has been beneficial both to the FDA and to York. The FDA facility has also been a place of career opportunities for York graduates in the sciences. Approximately 60 students have interned at the facility.

York College has become more environmentally conscious.

Last year, Mayor Michael Bloomberg informed Chancellor Matthew Goldstein that CUNY had to reduce its environmental footprint. In response, CUNY asked each school to design a sustainable campus plan. York’s Green Initiative, introduced by Professor Donald Auriemma and supported by the administration, has started this process by allotting prime parking spots to hybrid vehicles and maintaining bicycle racks throughout the campus.

This spring, the New York City Parks Department, at the request of York Buildings and Grounds staff will plant forty new trees around the campus. Plans are underway for Con Edison to redesign the atrium and cafeteria lighting, replacing current fixtures with more energy-efficient units.

To learn more about York’s Green Initiative, visit http://york.cuny.edu/ and click on the Green logo.
GRADUATES

At York’s 37th Commencement in June 2007, 812 students graduated—close to the largest class in five years. The graduates majored in 44 different areas and ranged in age from 21 to 62. The diversity of the class was also a reflection of the multiplicity of backgrounds that has always been a part of York College. The graduates came originally from 55 different countries and were multilingual—speaking 36 different languages in addition to English.

It was fitting that the class valedictorian Sheridan Bisram and salutatorian Derell Kennedo are exemplars of different types of diversity.

Bisram was born in Trinidad. She is married and the mother of two young sons. She would like to pursue her dream of a PhD in Clinical Psychology. She states that her “conscientiousness and determined personality worked to my advantage, as I never gave up my goals.”

Kennedo, a History major, graduated with a 3.971 GPA and was a high school dropout. At his mother’s urging, he earned a GED; but lacking the motivation to continue his education, his mother, once again, encouraged him.

Kennedo’s goal is to become a public service attorney. His advice to himself and others is to “think about your priorities, make a plan and follow through.” It has worked for him. Kennedo has been selected as a 2008 Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellow. The fellowship program seeks to attract and educate outstanding young people who desire a career in the Foreign Service.

Bisram and Kennedo also share another trait common among successful York graduates. They both had committed and inspirational mentors—for Sheridan, Professor Michael Flynn and for Derell, Professor Laura Fishman.

THE NEWEST STUDENTS

Building on its near-record graduation numbers last June, in September 2007 York welcomed 1,017 freshmen, the biggest class in more than ten years. This was a 47 percent increase, the largest by far among all City University colleges and a number heralded by one CUNY administrator as “staggering!”

Overall enrollment rose by 7.8 percent while full-time students grew by almost 12 percent. In addition, the number of transfer students soared by almost 18 percent. These changes in enrollment patterns will result in a greater use of York College’s facilities and accord a more prominent role to extracurricular and student activities.

The freshman class includes 129 York College Foundation Scholars. This is a 72 percent increase over the 75 scholars who entered in fall 2006, the first year of the merit scholarship program.

Citing these trends, President Marcia V. Keizs says that York’s strategy to develop programs to attract the best and brightest from New York City and nearby suburbs is bearing fruit.

“York’s reputation among high schools in the metropolitan area is undergoing a sea change,” she observes.

Sheridan Bisram, Valedictorian, ’07

York’s graduates are increasing significantly.
Christopher Roberts Scholar/athlete, graduating senior

“I almost wish I was a freshman now because York has improved so much in my time here.”

—Christopher Roberts Scholar/athlete, graduating senior

Stacy Ruiz is glad she took York up on its offer to start college two weeks before the official start of her freshman year in August 2007. Like her fellow scholars, she had been invited to come in for a 10-day orientation. The incoming students were shown around the campus and introduced to freshman Mathematics and English. The schedule included a visit to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and a night at Shea Stadium to see the Mets play. It all made a huge impact.

“I had never been to MoMA before,” says Ruiz, who plans to major in Psychology and Secondary Education. “Seeing art ‘in person’ is different from seeing it in books. In person, you become one with the art. It becomes part of you. It makes you learn about math.”

Indeed it does, according to Mathematics Professor Rishi Nath, who took a group of about 30 students for the guided tour of the museum. “Cubism, for instance, is about mathematics,” he comments.

Lisa Atkins, a Communications Technology major, is another freshman who is grateful for the jump start on her college journey. “I liked the summer experience,” says Atkins, noting that the orientation helped her make friends and get acclimated to school ahead of time. “Professor Nath taught us more than Math. He taught us current events as well. I also got a lot of things out of the way, like my I.D., and I got to know the campus and where everything is.”

For most of the participants in this summer orientation program, York was their first choice among the CUNY colleges. In their second semester, they continue to thrive.
Doctoroff Speaks at Executive Leadership Series

Deputy New York City Mayor Dan Doctoroff was the main course on November 30, 2007, when York presented its latest Executive Leadership Breakfast. Doctoroff, who resigned his post the next month, discussed Plan NYC, Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s ambitious blueprint for the future of the city.

Among the topics were the Mayor’s controversial congestion pricing bill, which was proposed as a way to improve air quality, and the administration’s plans to build 265,000 new housing units to meet the needs of the million-plus people expected to move into the city over the next two or so decades. Doctoroff also talked about anticipated improvements in mass transit, water quality, and parks access.

The event was sponsored by JetBlue Airways, whose founder, David Neeleman, was an earlier speaker in the Executive Leadership Series, launched two years ago by President Marcia V. Keizs.

Lecturer Presents Tunnel Vision

Last fall, Provost Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith launched “The Provost Lecture Series” to promote faculty scholarship. Professor Nazrul Khandaker, Department of Earth & Physical Sciences, went “underground” to inaugurate the series, with a presentation called “Water at the End of the Tunnel.” His talk, illustrated with virtual rock cores and photographs, led the audience on a tour of the New York City Water Tunnel #3, where he is a consultant with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (EPA).

Khandaker’s presentation explored the role of geology in the newest and largest capital construction project ever undertaken by the City of New York and its bearing on the supply of pure drinking water for thirsty New Yorkers. Once this tunnel is completed, engineers can begin to inspect its predecessors, built in 1917 and 1936 and never repaired.

That’s something to think about next time you turn on the tap.

Professional Collaboration Crosses Borders

When international colleagues meet, the permutations are endless. That’s what Mathematics Professor Rishi Nath learned after visiting the University of the West Indies in St. Augustine, Trinidad, in February 2008. As a guest of UWI Math Professor Edward Farrell and Education Professor Steven Khan, Nath presented a pair of talks.

Now these faculty members are exploring possible collaborations between their institutions. “Traveling to the University of the West Indies in St. Augustine has internationalized my perspective on mathematics education and research,” says Nath, who plans to stay in contact with Farrell regarding future academic visits, guest lectures, and student support. Meanwhile, Khan and Nath have begun discussing areas of joint research in mathematics and social justice.

UWI serves 16 English-speaking countries and territories in the Caribbean, with major campuses at Mona in Jamaica, St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago, and Cave Hill in Barbados. Founded in 1948, the University has 35,000 students.

Because York College is smaller, your professors know your face, know your work ethic, know your personality and are able to recommend you better.

—Fiona Smith, Class of 2005 Jonas E. Salk Scholar, Penn State Medical College, Class of 2009
To promote the best pedagogical methods, York has opened the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). Launched in 2007, the Center encourages faculty to participate in disciplinary and national conversations about teaching, student learning, and professional development.

Under the direction of its director and board, CETL presents forums, workshops, and events. Each year, York professors will be eligible for small grants to study and implement practices that advance the outcomes of teachers as well as students. Faculty researchers will present their results to the campus community at an annual symposium.

A full slate of distinguished speakers will join York’s faculty each year as part of CETL activities. The first lecture, on September 19, 2007, featured Dr. Ken Bain, Vice Provost of Instruction at Montclair State University and the author of What the Best College Teachers Do.

Late last fall York was able to celebrate another milestone in its journey of excellence. The CUNY Board of Trustees approved the college’s proposal to offer a bachelor’s degree in Journalism.

The Journalism program, to be directed by Professor Glenn Lewis, will be launched in fall 2008 and housed in the Department of English, which is led by Professor Valerie Anderson.

In announcing the Board’s decision to the College community, Provost Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith noted, “Much remains to be done as we prepare for implementation of the Journalism degree next fall, and we will have the appropriate formal announcement and celebration next spring. For now, let us take pride in this ‘stage setter’ for a new set of degree programs.”

Last July, the York College Teacher Academy welcomed its first 11 students with a six-week program of field experience and academic support. The aspiring teachers worked on campus with the Science, Engineering, Mathematics, & Aerospace Academy (SEMAA) and participants in the camp. Their experience was enriched by a Blackboard component, which allowed them to reflect on their activities and read each others’ comments in an electronic forum. Participants earned six academic credits by completing a Student Development course and English 125. A mathematics support program kept their math skills sharp, in preparation for calculus in the fall.

York is one of seven senior CUNY campuses to offer The Teacher Academy, which is designed to increase the number of career math and science teachers in New York City schools. The program offers tuition support, stipends, and an innovative teacher education program that provides aspiring educators with rich and early experiences with students.

With three additional participants admitted over the summer, fourteen future educators were on board at York for the beginning of the fall semester. Eight plan to teach math; six are concentrating on one of the sciences—chemistry, biology, or earth science. All have immersed themselves in a demanding program that includes field experience, seminars, and course work. The cohort model is an important component of the program; students follow a planned curriculum and are scheduled into the same sections. Their field experiences are taking place at York’s host sites: Hillcrest High School and John Adams High School.

The York Teacher Academy students have brought new energy and excitement to the Department of Teacher Education. The College has been recognized by CUNY for successful recruitment efforts. Students have cited the caring atmosphere and attention of the faculty as reasons for selecting the Teacher Academy at York.
Recently, I visited York while on an assignment for CUNY Radio, and I was proud and excited to see how much York has been transformed. I’d heard of new academic programs; I’d seen the revamped website. But it’s when I saw the outdoor benches, the Starbucks Cafe, and a new office and new equipment at Pandora’s Box [that] I realized a lot has been done in those two years.

Now, the campus looks and feels more student-friendly and there is a certain energy and excitement about the future of this college. I’m proud to have graduated from York and I believe in the potential of its great faculty, students, and administrators. I’m looking forward to the next visit.

—Cathy Jedruczek ’06, former editor-in-chief of York’s award-winning student newspaper, Pandora’s Box
Take our virtual tour at www.york.cuny.edu
CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETICS

Music Minor Has Major Goals

Cassandra Douglas has a vested interest in the Performing and Fine Arts Department at York College: She has decided to pursue a major in Education and a minor in Music.

Douglas was introduced to the clarinet in the fifth grade through a school music program. As a teenager, she got involved with VH1’s “Save the Music” in an effort to replace instruments that were damaged in a flood at her high school.

At York, under the direction of Professor Tom Zlabinger, she discovered jazz. “I like jazz so much because it’s on the upbeat,” says the budding virtuoso.

Today, Douglas is a member of the Jazz Forum and assists with the Blue Notes, a program that gives college credits to high school students participating in music at the College. After she graduates, Cassandra plans to pursue a solo career and share her skills as an elementary school music teacher.

Clubs at York

There is always something exciting going on at York, whether it’s an appearance by a candidate for national or state-wide office, a nail-biting sports tournament or a festive club event complete with the aroma of ethnic cuisine permeating the Academic Core Building.

There are over 40 student clubs on campus including the Chinese Students’ Association, which puts on the annual Lunar New Year celebration, attracting elected officials such as City Councilman John Liu and Assemblywoman Ellen Young; the Pre-Law Club, which brings in speakers such as union leaders, prominent attorneys and law school recruiters; the Caribbean Students’ Association, Muslim Club and the Haitian Club, which all host cultural events in honor of their roots; or the Urban Enrichment Society, which focuses on campus and community activism; or just students showing off their works in the College’s Art Gallery. Students are always engaged in something enlightening.

Michele Montas, spokesperson for the UN Secretary General and widow of slain Haitian activist, Jean Dominique, was a recent guest as well. The award-winning journalist came to York to discuss the Jonathan Demme film: The Agronomist, based on her husband’s life.

Participating in the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge has been a smart move for York. In 2007, the school sent its first squad to the annual academic competition, picking up $3,000 in grants. This year, York returned to the contest, matching its earnings.

When Jean Phelps, director of Student Activities at York, heard about the All-Star Challenge, she immediately wanted York to get involved. “Participating students will be encouraged to study together and recognize their own strengths,” said Phelps, who served as a coordinator and judge for the event. “It will also give them an opportunity to network with students from top colleges around the country.”

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Over the past year, York’s scholar athletes have continued to distinguish themselves on the playing field and in their fields of study. These young men and women contribute to the College’s resurgence as a player in the CUNY mode of excellence on all fronts.

Christopher Roberts, ’08, a Business Management major, was Tournament MVP at the Surf & Slam Classic in San Diego. He was also named to the All-Tournament teams at the Lebanon Valley Classic in Annville, Pennsylvania, and the CUNYAC Tournament, where he won the CUNYAC Burt Beagle Sportsmanship Award. And that’s the short list!

Roberts credits York with turning him into an all-around winner. “York College has made me the man I am today,” says the 6-foot-3-inch forward. “We have great professors here and President Keizs has done a great job of improving the College. The basketball coaches preach a family environment and that’s what we have. I come by to see them even when I don’t have class.”

Alexandra Nkrumah, a Merit Scholar majoring in Chemistry, told the York College Foundation Board that without its support, she could not have afforded to attend college. She quickly demonstrated what a loss that would have been. She won the 800-meters at the Colgate Women’s Games at Madison Square Garden and was named Rookie of the Year for Indoor Track for the 2006-07 season.

This year promises more of the same. Nkrumah was named CUNYAC Indoor Track Athlete of the Week in February. The next month, she set a new meet record in the 400-meters at the Queensborough Relays – while maintaining her status as a Merit Scholar and enjoying the camaraderie of her peers from around the world. “York College made me aware of all the other cultures that were out there because it is such a diverse environment,” says the track star.

Athletics are reinforcing her performance in the classroom. “Coach Thomas Pope has taught us a lot and preaches hard work, discipline, and being on time,” says Nkrumah. “Those lessons have carried over to the classroom and improved my studies.”

Kafui Kouakou, a third scholar athlete, works toward his academic goals while preventing York’s soccer opponents from landing any in the net. A Business Management major with a grade point average of 3.575, he made equally smart sports moves last November, helping the men’s soccer team to its first CUNYAC title and NCAA Division III Championships appearance in six years. He was also named the Hospital for Special Surgery/CUNYAC Scholar-Athlete of the Month.

“It has been an incredible year,” says Kouakou, a native of Lome, Togo. “It seems like all the hard work is finally paying off. I thank all the coaches who support me.”
Jimmy Siegel, ’77 came to York after losing his enthusiasm for education. A caring faculty restored his interest. “I had some wonderful teachers,” says Siegel, who majored in English. “They made me love learning again. That’s when I said I wanted to become a writer.”

Mission accomplished. A former vice chairman and senior executive creative director at advertising giant BBDO, Siegel has written the best-selling novels Detour, Deceit, and of course, Derailed, which was made into a major Hollywood film, starring Jennifer Aniston and Clive Owen.

Meanwhile, the “retired” ad man has turned his efforts to political campaigns for state and national candidates. He has also proven his mettle at his alma mater, writing and producing a recruitment video featuring former New York City Mayor Ed Koch and former U.S. Senator Alphonse D’Amato.
Dr. Andrew Campbell, ’81, stands tall among York alumni. A professor in the Department of Molecular Microbiology at Brown University, he has joined the York College Foundation Board to help raise funds for qualified undergraduates. “I see a lot of students who remind me of me,” says Campbell. “York is building a great alumni base; students should find a mentor among them and alumni should find a protégé.” Campbell credits his alma mater—with its intimate science labs and low student-faculty ratio—with setting him on the road to achievement. “York helps prepare you for the world beyond York,” he explains. “When you come from an environment like I came from in South Jamaica, York teaches you about the benefits of hard work.”

“I see a lot of students who remind me of me,” says Campbell. “York is building a great alumni base; students should find a mentor among them and alumni should find a protégé.”

Wayne Hall, ’78, mayor of Hempstead, Long Island, grew up in Rochdale, a stone’s throw away from the College. But the 50-acre campus is less familiar to him—it did not exist during his school years. Even as a nomadic institution, York stressed the same values it promotes today. “Hard work and guidance from Dr. [Leslie] Lewis and Dr. [Jack] Schlein taught me discipline,” says Hall. “When I ran for mayor it was very, very helpful, because it was door to door, sun up to sun down, for five weeks straight.”

An Army veteran of the Vietnam War era, Hall got more than his bachelor’s degree from York. He met his wife, Derrah, at the College; they married just two days after their June 1978 graduation. But he did not start his working life in politics. Instead, he managed the medical lab of Peninsula Hospital for nearly 30 years, before becoming mayor of Hempstead three years ago.

TRIPLE CROWN EVOLUTION

In York’s 41-year history, pre-med students have achieved remarkable success in being recognized for Salk Scholarships. Recently, the College has scored an unprecedented “three-peat”: Fiona Smith ’05, Max Saenz ’06 and Angela Hopkinson ’07 have all been honored with the coveted award. Salk Scholars are chosen by distinguished physicians—all of them alumni of the program. The award is named after a CUNY graduate, the pioneering physician, Dr. Jonas Salk—based on the applicants’ prior research, academic excellence, and recommendations by professors and mentors.

York College is the brain trust of the Sixth Congressional District.
—Congressman Gregory Meeks, Sixth Congressional District
Jamaica became an off-Broadway venue on the evening of January 21. That’s when York College held its first major benefit, featuring Three Mo’ Tenors in a concert that encompassed opera, rock, gospel, and soul—both old-school and new. Appropriately scheduled for the evening of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, the show helped York realize one of its dreams: raising funds for the York Foundation Scholars, a merit scholarship program for academically high-achieving students. The event generated more than $270,000 in revenue.

Dispelling the winter chill with their vocal acrobatics, singers Kenneth Alston, Phumzile Sojola, and Ramone Diggs played to a packed theater in the College’s attractive Performing Arts Center. The evening paid tribute to the York College/Community Commemorative Quilt Committee (YCCCQC) in recognition of its 10 years of unwavering dedication to providing scholarships to deserving students.

“IT was only fitting that we honored the Quilt Committee at this inaugural event of the York College Foundation Board,” said President Marcia V. Keizs. “Their selfless service to the College and to our students has made a huge impact.”

Attendees included college presidents, chief executive officers, elected officials, senior CUNY administrators, York supporters, and members of the York community—alumni, faculty, staff, and students and their families. Serving as master of ceremonies, NY1 political correspondent Dominic Carter praised other celebrities seated in the audience, including a group of Tuskegee Airmen who were visiting the campus as guests of Aviation Management students.


**RE-ENGAGE. RE-CONNECT: www.york.cuny.edu**

York College Journalism students **Shereen Francis** and **Sade Kully**, contributed to this publication.
Economist Discusses Dollars and Sense  
(Excerpted from February, 2008 Article in Pandora’s Box, the College Newspaper)

In a rare distinction, Muhammad Yunus, recipient of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, addressed York College on February 11. Yunus is considered the person most responsible for the international micro-lending revolution that has helped move millions of people, primarily women, out of poverty.

Educated in Bangladesh and the United States—he completed a doctorate at Vanderbilt University on a Fulbright Scholarship—Yunus held a faculty appointment in Tennessee before returning to his homeland. He was teaching economics in Bangladesh in 1977 when he personally loaned the equivalent of $27 to 42 female basket weavers, who needed the money to buy supplies. Six years later he formed Grameen Bank. Named with the word for “village” in Bengali, Grameen is now a multibillion dollar enterprise that has spawned business ventures that affect almost every aspect of life in Bangladesh, including housing, education, nutrition, ecology, health care, and more.

Introduced by President Marcia V. Keizs, Yunus was presented with the City University Chancellor’s Medal for his humanitarian work by CUNY Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost, Dr. Selma Batman, who has taught about Yunus and Grameen Bank for two decades. Batman read the medal’s inscription, which states that “His great work has transformed great depths of despair into hope for one person at a time.”

Yunus spoke at length to an audience that filled the main theater in the Performing Arts Center. He recounted his experience with microcredit in Bangladesh and more than one hundred other countries, including the United States. He also talked about his involvement in a new concept that he calls Social Business, which is the basis for his best-selling book, Creating a World Without Poverty.

The economist’s visit was partially facilitated by York College student Rashidul Bari, a Bangladeshi author and filmmaker who has written about Yunus in Bengali and English. Bari is one of approximately 200 students of Bangladeshi descent at the college, which has an active Bangladeshi Student Association. Its members contributed to a journal about their lives in the United States and their education at York. Many of them wrote about their pride in having one of their countrymen receive worldwide recognition.

“Your comfort with diversity could be your advantage in the future.”
—Carlos Guiterrez, US Secretary of Commerce, York College speaker, Spring 2007
It was exciting! We were starting without a campus and I felt like I was building a place. This is my baby. That is why I have not retired.

—Dr. Robert Parmet, Department of History, York College
Founding Professor and the College's official historian