



# A HALF-CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE

A FULL MEASURE OF DETERMINATION



THE CASE FOR YORK COLLEGE

**“York College at 50 is a dream fulfilled but not yet fully realized. We can thank our founders by extending their vision. York will become the college of choice for students from Queens and beyond, for faculty who want to transform futures as they teach, and for donors who want to invest in a higher education institution that is on the rise—just like the Jamaica community we call home.”**

**—DR. MARCIA V. KEIZS**

President, York College, The City University of New York

# BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF A YORK EDUCATION

*York College is many things to many people.*

*To the Jamaica, Queens community it anchors,* the College is a source of abundant pride. Residents fought throughout the late 1960s to have CUNY locate its new four-year college in Jamaica and later to transform 50 acres of the nation's most diverse county into a vibrant academic village charged with energy and possibilities. The community refused to let this dream die. Their reward is seeing children and now grandchildren earn bachelor's and master's degrees close to home.

*To all students,* York is a place to aim high. Here students find a college that fits them exceedingly well—intimate enough, at 8,000 students, that faculty members can mentor them while delivering a personalized education; expansive enough that they find new passions that develop into career paths.

*To students who come to the College later in life,* opportunity shines more brightly—in part because it is polished by experience and time, in part because York responds expertly to the needs of a diverse, adult community. This has always been a York mandate: serve students from all walks of life, from every corner of our City and the globe, at every stage in life. The majority of students, determined to better their odds, are the first in their families to attend college. Our student body comes from 125 countries around the world.

*To faculty who build careers here,* York is the most rewarding place to teach. Within a large educational system, they are able to touch lives in the most personal way, and they find the independence to craft courses found nowhere else in CUNY nor at any other college in the region. The Aviation Institute is a proven career pipeline. Pharmaceutical BS and MS programs leverage a dynamic partnership with the Food and Drug Administration. A unique ROTC program offers a curriculum grounded in military science. Other courses, such as “The Impact of Incarceration,” acknowledge inequities and spark the fight for social justice.

*To community members and donors who support York's growth,* this is the best way to invest in the future. Often because they share backgrounds with and have faced the same adversities as students, donors want to support the College and help students change their destinies.

The capacity to exceed expectations and maximize potential is the common thread unifying these perspectives and others. York continues to be the people's college—offering value, excellence and access at a time when the need for an affordable, high-quality college education is as great as it has ever been.

*This is our history, 50 years strong, encompassing the success stories of more than 27,000 graduates. This is our promise for the next 50 years and tens of thousands more futures.*

# STAND WITH YORK, INVEST IN FUTURE GENERATIONS

A half-century mark is a fitting time to look back on a history replete with accomplishments and a tradition of surpassing expectations. Over five decades, York College has become a beacon of educational opportunity for Jamaica and Southeast Queens. Countless success stories have put York on the map and positioned it for greater impact.

Looking forward, we have a long road to travel, and because we are on the ascent, the path will become steeper. Our ambitions are greater, our needs more complex. Your role in supporting York's constant evolution—and students whose lives change for the better—comes at a watershed moment on many fronts.

*Daunting financial challenges remain for our students*—and these may soon compound. Many experts forecast a new push for privatization of federal college loans, resulting in higher interest rates and injecting a new sense of urgency in what we can do as a philanthropic community. We must keep York affordable and make sure graduates do not have burdensome debt at the start of careers filled with promise.

York's commitment on the latter front is extraordinary. Twice we have been ranked #1 nationally in lowest student debt upon graduation, and we must continue to be a leader.

*Today's workplace is an environment of higher expectations and global competition.* In response, we must place greater emphasis on professional development, experiential learning, faculty-student mentoring and approaches tailored to

individual student success. Many students—the majority of them first-generation college students—come to York underprepared for a rigorous college education. We play an essential role in helping students become lifelong learners and preparing them to graduate ready for successful careers.

*At the same time, our graduates have more opportunities in a growing local job market.* According to The New York Community Trust, the City's economy has expanded dramatically in the last five years, with 425,000 new jobs—the most robust burst of growth since York's founding. To take advantage, we must put more resources into refining curricula, courses, majors and degree programs to fit the marketplace.

*Building a civil society is a priority for everyone.* York backs up its diversity with an education that values inclusiveness and respects differences, and that offers all students opportunities to become change-makers, starting in Jamaica and reaching far beyond.

“Our graduates are interested in helping the underserved, expressing themselves and figuring out how to stimulate their communities to be more activist-minded,” says Hope Knight, president and CEO of Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, who serves on the York College Foundation Board. “Nothing could be more important right now.”

York began its storied history as a cause worth fighting for. While it still inspires the dreamer in each of us, a track record of success and a wealth of opportunities now make York worth investing in.

We turn to you because you recognize the value of this moment, the urgency of coming together to act.

Your gift will nurture dreams, when finances are the major barrier to access and success.

Your gift will augment skill sets so graduates continue meeting and exceeding expectations.

Your gift will leverage the potential of our economy—and just how much York adds to it.

Your gift will bring about a more caring, committed citizenry.

Please join us today in realizing the brightest futures possible—for our College, our students, our Borough and our City.

**“People say to me, ‘York is part of CUNY. It’s publicly funded.’ Yes, but that only keeps the lights on. Sustaining and growing an extraordinarily diverse college always calls for private investment. We require more resources to serve traditionally underserved students; more, still, to continue developing progressive curricula and programs. It is once again time for our community to stand with York.”**

**—LORI BASSIN**

Trustee, York College Foundation Board

***OUR MISSION:* York College enriches lives and enables students to grow as passionate, engaged learners with the confidence to realize their intellectual and human potential as individuals and global citizens.**

# FIND THE YORK PRIORITY THAT MOTIVATES YOU

When you invest in York College's Priority Giving Areas, you are setting the table for our next 50 years—giving students with grit, moxie and a strong work ethic the chance to succeed, and enabling their talents to rise to the top.

Educational leadership—across all five Boroughs, stacked against all CUNY and public institutions—will be the the defining asset of our second half-century. This leadership begins with you and many fellow donors, when you choose a giving opportunity that reflects what you care about most.

## *PRIORITY #1: INCREASE ACCESS AND ACCELERATE SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS*

York has represented a pathway to a better life for one generation after another—immigrants and first-generation college students, neighbors in Jamaica and commuters from the Bronx. This transformative education leads to rewarding careers and represents turning points in the lives of students and graduates.

However, despite a competitive tuition and an uncommon commitment to ensuring that students graduate without debt, our education remains out of reach for too many students.

According to our Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, almost all York students hold down at least one job. Some juggle two or more jobs—or work longer hours to make their tuition payments. These extra responsibilities constrict the ability to participate in experiential learning and research projects, and sometimes force students to take time off and stretch out their education. Everyone benefits when students graduate in four or five years: a key metric for York, student persistence, goes up, and students receive degrees before their financial aid packages expire.

### **HIGH-PRIORITY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:**

- Growing the number of scholarships, including new named, endowed scholarships. These are especially important as York competes with other schools seeking the best students, and they advance an extraordinary track record of ensuring students graduate with manageable debt.
- Establishing a new Student Graduation Fund, which will focus on getting students to the finish line, helping them graduate in four or five years. These resources will help students navigate unexpected circumstances and emergencies and stay on track for their career goals.
- Adding a named Experiential Learning Fund, which will expand horizons by allowing students to take advantage of life-changing opportunities—such as international travel during their time at York and competitive internships, which often result in job offers.

## **PRIORITY #2: MAKE A GAME-CHANGING INVESTMENT IN FACULTY**

Our accomplished faculty are the lifeblood of a York education. Graduates consistently point to the impact of mentoring and the one-on-one attention they received.

“You don’t become a number at York,” says current student government president Rachelle Antoine. “Most of your professors will know you and are there to support your studies. That’s our strength. And because we are a smaller school, you can discover hidden talents. It’s how I became a leader.”

This level of faculty involvement is essential given the challenges many students face. As York continues to expand enrollment, new students arrive with widely varying levels of academic preparation, requiring faculty to nurture their hidden talents. Most students need extra support as they struggle with demanding course loads for the first time. Faculty members help them become effective learners, develop study habits and time management skills, and find the passions that motivate them.

Since this relationship-driven brand of education requires a special dedication, we have long realized the need to invest in our faculty. In addition to strengthening our ability to recruit and retain the best teachers, who are also productive researchers and scholars, these investments will build prestige and name recognition for York.

### **HIGH-PRIORITY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:**

- Creating more named Distinguished Professorships through single or multiple endowed gifts. The addition of these professorships allows York to go toe-to-toe with public and private institutions.
- Establishing a named Professional Development Fund, which will consider requests from all faculty members. This fund may, for example, enable a faculty member’s research—at the same time creating opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student research projects. It can provide travel and summer stipends and spur broader participation in conferences.

## ***PRIORITY #3: CONTINUE SUPPORTING YORK UNDERGRADUATE EXCELLENCE***

York has historically been a pacesetter, within CUNY and in the region, across a range of signature academic strengths, including general nursing, RN and BSN, accredited clinical laboratory science, food studies, accounting and much more.

York is also a leader in experiential learning. Some academic programs, like our Aviation Institute, are based on this model, and the most popular York major, psychology, requires field placements for behavioral science courses. Other programs have incorporated opportunities along the way. All pre-law students spend many hours observing the Queens courts. Education majors sit in on classes and assist at local high schools. Accounting students staff the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance co-curricular program, helping Jamaica residents prepare and file tax returns.

### **HIGH-PRIORITY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:**

- Establishing three named Academic Innovation Funds, one for each York school—Arts and Sciences, Business and Health Sciences—to allow faculty to continue actively developing programs that will set York apart while meeting students’ needs and marketplace demands.
- Adding a named Service Learning Fund to enable all of York’s academic programs to find innovative ways to incorporate experiential learning in curricula, leveraging industry relationships and, whenever possible, adding competitive internship opportunities.

## ***PRIORITY #4: EXPAND MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAMS AT YORK***

York was the first CUNY college to offer a BS/MS track in occupational therapy, and the recent additions of master’s programs in physician assistant studies and pharmaceutical science up the ante on the College’s commitment to graduate education and launching the most successful careers.

Adding new master’s tracks to correspond with in-demand fields will uphold York’s reputation as an educational pacesetter and will respond to new directions and opportunities in the surrounding community and the marketplace. There are also unique York academic programs that may need to accelerate to the master’s level. Food studies, currently a minor at York and available at no other CUNY school, represents an important track that is in demand at the Port Authority. New donor investment could potentially turn food studies into a major and then a master’s program.

### **HIGH-PRIORITY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:**

- Establishing a named Seed Fund for Future Arts and Sciences Master’s Programs to explore the first graduate-level program for this school, potentially in chemistry.
- Establishing a named Seed Fund for Future Business Master’s Programs to explore this school’s first graduate program, potentially in accounting or economics.
- Establishing a named Seed Fund for Future Health Sciences Master’s Programs to explore expanding this school’s growing roster, potentially in nursing education and nurse practitioner studies.

## PRIORITY #5: ENHANCE YORK'S ROLE AS A CENTER OF ARTS AND CULTURE

As soon as York opened its current campus in 1986, it began connecting the surrounding community to the arts, public lectures and events, and athletics—first-of-their-kind opportunities for Jamaica and Southeast Queens residents. The centerpiece arrived in 1990, with the College's Performing Arts Center, recently named for its second president, Milton G. Bassin. The Center's 1,400-seat main stage and 152-seat black box theater have become lively arts meccas and hosted nationally and globally acclaimed visiting artists.

Exciting development projects now promise to take this engagement to the next level. With hotels going up on Archer Avenue and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, a long-time York partner, moving ahead with a number of plans, including the long-awaited Crossing at Jamaica, philanthropy will enable York to take advantage of this moment. There is a great deal of anticipated return on investment. Growth in arts-related activities will generate rental income for the College, in addition to providing more cultural opportunities for residents and visitors to the area.

### HIGH-PRIORITY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

- Creating a named, endowed Artist-in-Residence Program, which will attract a wide variety of working artists to teach at York for a semester or a year at a time.
- Upgrading the Bassin Performing Arts Center, which is beginning to age, so that visiting performers, who will soon have optimal accommodations nearby, will have state-of-the-art facilities.

**“I'm constantly amazed by the impact of York, from the first classes I took to the classes I now teach. York students are unique—determined to change their own lives, ready to engage in open dialogue. First they need professors who understand where they're coming from and just how far they can go. Everything depends on access to teachers who mentor and nurture, a tradition I strive to carry on.”**

**—TINA REYNOLDS, MSW '02**

Lecturer, Behavioral Sciences, School of Health Sciences

## INSPIRE A CULTURE OF PHILANTHROPY AT YORK

Previous generations of Jamaica residents and York advocates demonstrated and vociferously lobbied elected officials to establish the College and then to build this campus. A half-century of achievements and of shared success has shown the merit of these momentous steps.

*Now it is your turn to transform the future.*

*Your voice still matters—and so does your investment.* More than ever, York needs consistent alumni participation in annual giving and sustained philanthropy from across our community, beginning with you.

*Your gift is a vote of confidence in York's capacity to transform lives.* You enable us to recruit and retain faculty and equip them with new tools and options. You help strengthen the fabric of the academic village that is York. And your gift models an example that others should and must follow.

*You also make it possible for York to think about the future—and plan for it—in a different way.* Broader, more consistent philanthropy will add important stability to the constantly shifting landscape of public education funding. Since 2008, New York State has cut \$350 million, or more than 17 percent, of the combined budgets of CUNY's 12 senior colleges. Recent plans in Albany have run the gamut from no future funding for CUNY to fully subsidizing tuition for many students. Such uncertainty puts the futures of tens of thousands of students at risk.

Becoming a philanthropic success story is York's next chapter—and perhaps its most important one. Tomorrow's students depend on it.

*Please join your fellow York alumni and advocates in lifting our College even higher so it can light the way forward for generations to come.*

**“I want to invest in York one day, because they invested in me. They took me in as an undocumented student and I found my mentors here, enabling me to pursue a career in the sciences. Every opportunity at York—competitive scholarships, undergraduate research, presentations I made at academic conferences, summer research at Princeton—led to Yale and will lead me beyond.”**

**—ROBERT W. FERNANDEZ '13**

Soros Fellow; Ph.D. candidate at Yale University in Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry

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