
"We Must Stand United"

STUDENT ACTIVISM & COMMUNITY BUILDING AT BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Since its founding in 1957, BCC has demonstrated a rich history of achievement, from presidential firsts to grassroots student protests.

"We Must Stand United" traces the contributions of countless generations of BCC students who made this college a center of activism, with a special focus on the 1960s and 1970s when higher education students across the country demanded greater equity in their places of learning.

"We Must Stand United"

Curated by Dr. Prithi Kanakamedala (History), based on a project originally developed by Dr. Ahmed Reid (History), Dr. Prithi Kanakamedala (History), and Professor Cynthia Tobar (Library)

Generously Supported by the President's Conversation Series

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<http://unitedstandbcc.wordpress.org> #unitedstandbcc

Student Activism



"Power to the people [...] we showed the administration that we had the power."

Black and Latinx Studies

In 1969, Black and Hispanic students occupied BCC's main 5 story building (when it was still located at Creston Ave and 184th Street) for 12 hours. As a result, they forced classes to be canceled.

Students demanded that BCC:

- **Hire more Black, Hispanic, and Asian faculty**
- **Provide separate freshmen orientation for Black and Hispanic students**
- **Allow four additional school holidays for Black and Hispanic students, with one named in honor of noted Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara.**

At this time, 40% of the student body was Black and Hispanic but the college employed on a "few" black faculty. Protests also took place at CUNY's City College, Queensborough Community College, Brooklyn College and Queens College.

Student Strike At BCC

The militant movement that has taken shape in other parts of the City University finally hit Bronx -community. On May 5, 1969 Black and Puerto Rican stu-

cafeteria contracts, 3) Albert Einstein College of Medicine should have representation in the B.C.C. Advisory Board, 4) Balance out the race proportion of

The BCC student protest followed a wave of national protests across campuses demanding changes in curricula and academic studies that reflected the diversity and complexity of the United States.

As a result, Black and Latino studies emerged as distinct academic subjects across U.S. college campuses. Their inclusion was made possible by the activism of faculty and student protests such as the one at BCC. Exactly one year after the BCC student sit-in, the college's English department introduced **Puerto Rican Studies** to the curriculum, and the History department had two new course offerings: the **History of Africa** and **Afro-American History**.

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| HIS 35 | History of Africa | 3 rec 3 cr |
| | The history of Africa from a multi-discipline approach; ancient and mediaeval African societies, the era of slavery, geographic discovery, missionary contact, imperialism and the emergence of modern nationalism and independence. <i>Pre-requisite: HIS 11, 12 or corequisite: HIS 12 and permission of instructor.</i> | |
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| HIS 37 | Afro-American History | 3 rec 3 cr |
| | The African experience; development and abolition of slavery in America, reconstruction after Civil War; migration out of the South; manifold consequences of urban relocation. Deals with Black education, church and arts; writings of Black Americans including Frederick Douglass and Franklin Frazier. | |

Black Power

Simba ("lion" in Kiswahili) was a Black Power student organization formed at BCC in 1965. The club's achievements included a clothing drive for sharecroppers in Mississippi, buying books on Black history and achievement for the college library, and inviting Betty Shabazz -- wife of the late Malcolm X, and an activist in her own right -- to speak to students and faculty on campus.

Otherwise its activities were generally secretive -- in line with many other Black Power organizations that were targeted by authorities for being radical and therefore "un-American." Simba's student members were also active in both the Black Panthers and the Young Lords Party, both radical organizations committed to social justice in New York City.



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[SIMBA, 1968], ARCHIVES, BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK