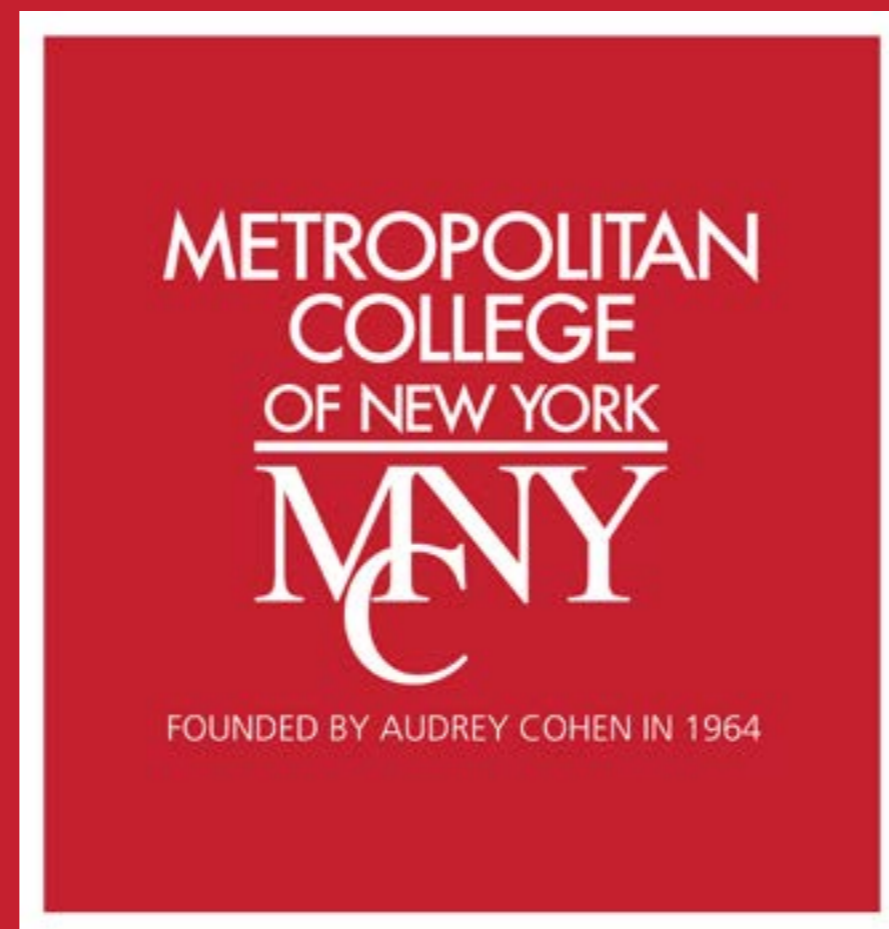


# ANNUAL REPORT



2021

# INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE



Charles E. Armstrong  
Chair, MCNY Board of Trustees

2021 was a challenging year. The COVID-19 pandemic altered —perhaps forever —the way we function as college, as individuals, and as a society. Adjusting to a new normal of how we can best serve our students and amidst all the change, we continue to strive to build an ever-more equitable and inclusive environment in which all can thrive. The Board of Trustees unanimously supports the College’s mission and leadership, and we remain unwavering in our commitment to delivering a truly Purpose-Centered Education.

Diversity at MCNY means equity of representation, equity to effectuate the purpose of opportunity for all through engaging positive educational interaction, constructive action and instruction that inspires our learners to do more and to achieve more.

We are excited to report that the Board of Trustees continues to purposefully increase the representation of alumni leaders on the Board who will help lead the college into the future. These esteemed leaders include our Chair-Elect, Gary P. Jenkins.

We are heartened to know that the same purpose-centered tools that have enabled our graduates to soar both personally and professionally are now hard at work on the board leading us all to a brighter future.

Our administration, staff and teaching professionals have proven to be nimble, adaptable and remarkably resilient as we continue to evolve, adapt and weather these turbulent times. Our collective successes have enabled us to now turn our attention to the ways we will continue to invest in the future. And it is the Board's belief that through these Constructive Actions of change, MCNY will see clearer skies ahead as the current pandemic, we hope, enters its final phase.

Sincerely,

**Charles Armstrong**

Board Chair, Metropolitan College of New York



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the midst of a very challenging year, MCNY students persevered in their studies in 2021 at levels that far exceeded our expectations. Their courage and tenacity inspired all of us as they persisted despite illness, economic uncertainty and the many inequities of the pandemic. It was deeply gratifying to hear from so many students that these experiences served to reinforce their commitment to lead purposeful change in their communities.

Students come to MCNY for that very reason: they know that our powerful curricular model, Purpose-Centered Education, will develop their skills in linking theory with practice and will prepare them, through successive Constructive Action projects, to advance positive change.

Last year, MCNY faculty and staff redoubled their efforts to serve our amazing students. We increased student tuition grants; offered proactive academic and student support services in multiple virtual and on-campus formats; and created safe spaces—within and outside of the classroom—for students to discuss the challenges of the pandemic and support each other in achieving their goals. We continued to offer food pantry services, which became more important than ever, and thanks to Trinity Church Wall Street and other donors, we were able to provide holiday turkeys and groceries to students at both campuses. A generous grant from the Robin Hood Foundation, combined with continued federal COVID relief funding, enabled us to provide emergency funds to students that helped them persist in college while caring for children and loved ones, and navigating changing employment circumstances.



Cassiana Laventure, BBA'20, MA'22





Occupy Wall Street “The People’s Library at Zucotti Park”  
Photo credit: Gwenn Levine

Throughout 2021, the MCNY community continued to innovate to support our students and advance our mission. In addition to what I have already described, other examples of their collective efforts include:

- A new book, *The Power of Purpose*, was published in January 2021. It highlights the personal journeys of more than twenty MCNY alumni, their experiences with Constructive Action projects, and their impact on our communities.
- The MS in Education program was recognized by the National Council on Teacher Quality as one of the top programs in the country for “leading the way by maintaining selective academic admissions requirements and driving greater teacher diversity.”
- Students in the MPA in Emergency and Disaster Management program have been working closely with government, communities, and non-profit organizations to develop recovery and resiliency plans in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- An art exhibit commemorating the 10th Anniversary of Occupy Wall Street opened at the Bronx and Manhattan Campuses, with works by artist Carolyn Sortor and photographer Gwenn Levine.
- The second Purpose Institute was held over two days in the fall. Trustees, current students, alumni, faculty and staff participated in lively discussions about the powerful impact of Purpose-Centered Education with a focus on assuring effective online pedagogies during the pandemic.



Joanne Passaro, PhD

In the pages that follow you will find other examples of the outstanding, mission-focused work of the MCNY community.

Our experiences last year taught us that MCNY's mission of social justice and community service is more important than ever. The MCNY community is proud of the way we have navigated through the first two years of the pandemic while keeping the needs of our students, and their academic success, at the forefront of our work. We are grateful to our donors for supporting our mission of advancing social justice through Purpose-Centered Education. An investment in MCNY is, indeed, an investment in a stronger and more equitable New York. Thank you for being an integral part of our work.

Sincerely,

**Joanne Passaro, PhD**

President, Metropolitan College of New York

# 2021 IMPACT



## Return to Campus: Fall 2021!

In fall 2021, MCNY's Manhattan and Bronx campuses resumed normal operations for the first time since the pandemic started in 2020. In order to provide safe teaching and learning environments, vaccination was required of all students, faculty, staff and visitors who wished to enter campus. All other health and safety practices put in place since spring 2020, including a masking requirement, remained in effect. Mobile vaccination vans from NYC Health and Hospitals were onsite at both campuses to help facilitate vaccinations and ensure they were available to the MCNY community.

Many of our students were excited to return to campus to make personal connections with faculty, staff and their peers. Other students took advantage of both options, enrolling in classes and participating in services offered remotely as well on campus. As we move forward, MCNY will continue to make its campuses, programs and services available to students in a range of in-person or online options, to ensure that Purpose-Centered Education remains accessible to all students.

## Board of Trustees Expansion: Alumnus Elected as Chair-Elect

Over the last several years, the MCNY Board of Trustees has purposefully engaged in expanding and diversifying the Board and assuring that membership and leadership reflect the MCNY community. In December 2020, the Board unanimously adopted a Statement on Diversity, Anti-Racism and Inclusion, which helps guide MCNY's commitment toward creating a more inclusive institution. In June 2021, MCNY MPA alumnus Gary P. Jenkins, who currently serves as Commissioner of the Department of Social Services of the City of New York, was named to the new position of Chair-Elect of the MCNY Board. In summer 2022, Mr. Jenkins will assume the role of Chair, becoming the second alumnus to do so in MCNY history.

[Click to view statement](#)



Gary P. Jenkins, MPA '06,  
Chair Elect, MCNY Board of Trustees



## The Power of Purpose In Their Own Words

In 2021, MCNY published [The Power of Purpose: The Impact of Metropolitan College of New York on Our City and Our Communities](#). This inspiring book highlights MCNY's amazing alumni and students who have found their purpose in government, social agencies, non-profits, media, education, healthcare and corporations, where they leverage their passion and commitment to advance social justice. With insight and pride, they tell their remarkable stories of self-transformation, and describe how Purpose-Centered Education and their Constructive Action projects helped create positive change in their businesses, workplaces, and communities. The book and several of their stories come to life in these videos:

Thomas Brian Lee, MEd'17

Corrine Alauna Foster, BPS'07, MPA'16

Adlette Charmant-Oliver, BPS'00, MPA'02  
and her daughter  
Cassiana Ladventure, BBA'20





## Support for Women in Higher Education

For more than 20 years, the LCU Fund for Women's Education has helped promote the success of MCNY students by providing crucial funding to support women's housing costs. The LCU Fund understands the role that stable housing plays in enabling students to access the power of higher education. With this barrier alleviated, LCU Scholars are able to focus on their coursework, pursue the completion of a degree, and graduate into family-sustaining careers. MCNY is grateful for its longstanding partnership with the LCU Fund for Women's Education and applauds its commitment to supporting the personal, academic and professional success of women students.



## Partnership with Trinity Church Wall Street and Leadership High School

Thanks to support from Trinity Church Wall Street, MCNY established an exciting new program with the staff of Leadership and Public Service High School to offer college classes to its students. The program aims to build on students' interest in public service and social change by engaging them in experiential Constructive Action projects that are the hallmark of MCNY's unique curriculum, Purpose-Centered Education. The program is also designed to increase the graduation rates of Leadership students and prepare them to complete their college degrees at MCNY or elsewhere. MCNY is proud to partner with Trinity Church Wall Street to increase the educational success of underserved youth in our neighborhood as we work to advance our mutual mission of social justice.



## Power of Purpose Virtual Fitness Challenge

One creative way that MCNY helped students, alumni and friends stay healthy, engaged and connected during the pandemic was through the “Power of Purpose Virtual Fitness Challenge.” During the summer of 2021, the College invited alumni, students, faculty, staff, family and friends to get fit and help MCNY fundraise through a physical activity challenge that created a sense of community and reconnected people as NYC emerged from the pandemic. Participants created personal fundraisers, joined teams or supported as individuals. Fundraising and fitness progress was shared via social media, which added endorsements and a personal touch to the campaign. The three-month event helped raise crucial funds to support student scholarships.

[See more about the fitness and FUNdraising here](#)

## Providing a Pathway to Success

Thanks to City Council Member Rafael Salamanca, Jr. and the New York City Council, MCNY expanded its impact on its Bronx communities through a new pilot program called Pathways to Success. In January 2021, we welcomed a cohort of 30 adults into the new initiative, which offered an alternative route to a high school equivalency diploma from New York State. The program was funded entirely through donations and free of charge to students, many of whom were in minimum-wage jobs and had tried and failed to pass the various components of the GED exam. By December 2021, despite the many challenges Pathways students faced, 40% of students completed the 24-credit program within a calendar year. Of those, 9 students enrolled at MCNY to continue their college studies. This small pilot demonstrated the potential of this program to make an immediate and lasting difference to individuals and communities. MCNY will continue to identify donors and community partners to support continuing and expanding this important program.





## Grants and Scholarships Help Students Stay on Track

Scholarships and grants provide critical financial support for adult students who balance a range of competing responsibilities. In 2021, MCNY supported 140 students through scholarships and grants, helping ensure that these students were able to persist in the attainment of their goals. In addition, with a grant from the Robin Hood Foundation, the College had the opportunity to provide emergency cash assistance to 215 undergraduate students in financial need due to the ongoing pandemic. These crucial funds helped undergrads alleviate the stress of providing for their families as they continued to pursue their educational goals. Fundraising to bolster MCNY's endowed and restricted scholarship funds, and to secure new grant support, remains a high priority as we seek to expand access to Purpose-Centered Education and eliminate barriers to degree completion.



# OUR DONORS

## 2021 GIVING CATEGORIES



### FOUNDERS SOCIETY

(\$100,000+)

Robin Hood Foundation  
Trinity Church

### 1964 SOCIETY

(\$50,000-\$99,999)

LCU Fund for Women's Education

### EMPOWERMENT SOCIETY

(\$15,000-\$29,999)

The Howard and Katherine  
Aibel Foundation  
Dr. Louise Feroe  
Jonathan and Micki Reiss

### VISION SOCIETY

(\$10,000-\$14,999)

Frank & Dr. Grace Roosevelt

### CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION SOCIETY

(\$5,000-\$9,999)

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(\$1,000-\$2,499)

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Gary Jenkins, MPA'06  
Mighty Cause Foundation  
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# LOOKING FORWARD

As we build on the lessons of 2021, the MCNY community is focused on enhancing its capacity to achieve its educational and social justice mission in a rapidly changing world. One of the immediate impacts of the pandemic has been a significant decrease in college and university enrollment; this trend is especially pronounced among adult students and students of color—the students that MCNY serves. To the extent that these students do not return to higher education, social and economic inequality will continue to grow, and the quality of life in our communities will decline.



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OF NEW YORK  
MCNY  
FOUNDED BY AUDREY COHEN IN 1964

In this context, the MCNY community is purposefully focused on reimagining its programs and services to assure that we are focused on initiatives that hold the highest promise for expanding access to transformational higher education to all students, particularly those who have been socially or economically marginalized. MCNY trustees, faculty and staff will work together to reach new populations of students and offer them the life-changing power of the MCNY educational experience, which is characterized by four unique strengths:

- Purpose-Centered Education and its centerpiece, Constructive Action
- Our experience and expertise in educating adults, particularly those from underserved populations
- MCNY's historic role as a college that is uniquely positioned to promote the effectiveness of governmental agencies, community-based-organizations, and businesses within NYC and beyond
- Our Community: The individualized, supportive environment of MCNY

MCNY's mission of social justice is more important than ever. We look forward to working with our current and future partners to support our students in achieving their personal and professional goals through Purpose-Centered Education, which empowers them to lead positive change and strengthen our communities.



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# METROPOLITAN COLLEGE OF NEW YORK MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a superior, experientially-based education that fosters personal and professional development, promotes social justice, and encourages positive change in workplaces and communities.

As approved by the MCNY Board of Trustees,  
September 23, 2003



## VALUES

- Integrity: Establishing and maintaining the highest standards.
- Innovation: Identifying and implementing creative opportunities to provide quality programs and services.
- Empowerment: Assisting ourselves and others to become more effective and productive.
- Diversity: Actively promoting and supporting a community of different people and ideas.

## VISION

To be acknowledged as the college of choice for experiential learning and applied scholarship.

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