

*this is...*

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Business News From The Queens Chamber Of Commerce

# QUEENSBOROUGH

## NEW YORK

CUNY SCHOOL HAS NEW  
LEADERSHIP FOR THE FIRST  
TIME IN 14 YEARS

## ALSO

- QUEENS CHAMBER HAS A NEW HOME
- WEWORK PUTTING DOWN ROOTS IN LIC
- QUEENS DAY AT THE US OPEN

*"Being able to equip students with their education is the most amazing thing we can do to transform their lives and the lives of their families."*

YORK COLLEGE PRESIDENT DR. BERENECEA JOHNSON EANES



## COVER STORY

## EANES DISCUSSES VISION FOR YORK

**NEW POST  
MARKS RETURN  
TO CUNY  
SYSTEM**

BY BENJAMIN FANG

On her first day as interim president of York College, Dr. Berenecea Johnson Eanes had a packed schedule.

She did a walkaround of the school's Jamaica campus, met with dozens of students and hosted a reception in the afternoon.

"I'm excited and grateful," she said. "I can't wait to meet my new community."

Eanes was named interim president on July 25, her appointment pending approval by the CUNY Board of Directors. She is replacing a longtime leader of York College.

On August 31, Dr. Marcia V. Keizs stepped down after 14 years at the helm, a tenure marked by several accomplishments, including increasing enrollment and expanding the school's national profile, restructuring academic departments, and launching new undergraduate and master's programs.

Keenly aware of her predecessor's achievements, Eanes, who had known Keizs since she was a vice president at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said she spoke to the former York College president several times before her arrival.

She learned not only about where the college is now, but where Keizs hopes York College will go in the future.

"Dr. Keizs has been extremely generous in her time and her attention to sharing every bit of information that she can," Eanes said. "I'm grateful for all of it, especially for the attention to detail."

In many ways, Eanes has been prepared for this new role, which is the latest in a 25-year career in higher education at both public



*Dr. Berenecea Johnson Eanes comes to York College after a seven-year stint at Cal State Fullerton.*

and private institutions.

At 18 years old, Eanes began her student affairs life as a residence hall director at Dillard University in New Orleans, where she received a bachelor of science in public health.

She later received a master's degree in social work from Boston University and a Ph.D. in social work from Clark Atlanta University.

After teaching social work at several colleges on the east coast, and a stint as associate dean of students for diversity and accessibility at Hamilton College, Eanes joined CUNY's John Jay as vice president for student affairs, a post she held for six years.

Her journey then took her to California in 2012, where she served as vice president of the Division of Student Affairs at California State University (CSU) Fullerton. Eanes led a division of more than 400 employees to support the personal, social and academic development of nearly 40,000 students.

The CSU system, Eanes noted, is similar to CUNY in that the student body is diverse and full of first-generation students looking to transform their lives through education. The CSU system is also very mission driven, she said.

At Cal State Fullerton, Eanes said overseeing 40,000 students was like "managing a small town." But she also wanted to make such a big place feel small for every student.

"That's the only way our students succeed, by finding their place on a campus," she said. "Every student has to know they belong and find where they belong."

Her leadership at Cal State Fullerton won her national accolades. In January 2019, Eanes was the sole recipient of the NASPA Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Performance as a Dean.

The year before, she was the only administrator in the CSU system to receive the Wang Family Excellence Award for her con-

tributions and achievements at the school.

Eanes said she comes to York College with a deep commitment to students and education.

"I believe that education is the social justice dilemma of our current world," she said. "Being able to equip students with their education is the most amazing thing we can do to transform their lives and the lives of their families."

As the new interim president, Eanes said she will spend a lot of time listening, learning and getting to know people at York College. She said she's focused on understanding CUNY Chancellor Felix V. Matos Rodriguez's mission and how to connect that to the campus.

She also wants to better understand the relationship between the local community and York College, and how the school plays a crucial role in the neighborhood.

Finally, Eanes will learn more about the faculty and staff, and figure out what opportunities they



## COVER STORY



*Dr. Eanes meets with students as part of her first day on the job.*

would like the college leadership to pay attention to to better educate students.

She noted that York College is in the process of putting together

a strategic plan that will focus on the education, environment and future of the school.

“A very robust and appropriate conversation has been going on

well before my coming here,” she said. “I’m just going to join in on that conversation.

“It will be a living plan,” she added. “Once we get our strategic plan, we’ll know where we’re going, and we’re all going to do it together.”

Eanes said she’s also aware of the challenges facing higher education leaders today — although she prefers to view challenges as opportunities. One in particular is the lack of resources, whether it’s space, people or time.

“There’s never enough,” she said. “Resource management is really important.”

Another challenge, she said, is figuring out how to come into a place where people have had a “wonderful president for 14 years” but have to adjust to a new leader.

But after an exciting first day, Eanes said she feels more than honored to be the interim president at York College. “I feel really privileged and blessed to be able to do this,” she said.

### YORK AT A GLANCE

**Founded: 1966**

**Location: Jamaica, Queens**

**Total Student Enrollment:**  
8,693 (fall 2018)

**Student to Faculty Ratio:**  
20 to 1

**Schools: 3 (School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business and Informations Systems, School of Health Sciences and Professional Programs)**

**Degrees: Over 70 B.A. and B.S. Majors**

**Student Clubs: 42**

### CUNY AT A GLANCE

**Campuses: 25**

**Students: 274,906 (Fall 2018)**

**Degrees Conferred: 53,942 (2017-2018)**



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