

 [CUNY Portal](#) [Library](#) [Directory](#) [Email](#) [Panther](#)

# NEWS

## "Start Here. Go Anywhere," Not Just BMCC's Slogan: It's Real

[BMCC New](#)  
[News Arch](#)  
[Events](#)  
[Printer Fri](#)

**August 24, 2007**

Consider Hamissou Samari, who enrolled at BMCC in the spring of 2005. Born and raised in Togo, Hamissou moved to the United States four years ago. Strapped financially, he was tasked with working full-time while completing his studies at BMCC. Moreover, coming from a French-speaking country, Samari had a language barrier to work through.

But, in the spring of 2006, the door of opportunity opened for Samari: the Kaplan Educational Foundation named him to its first cohort of Kaplan Scholars. The Foundation ([www.kaplanedfoundation.org](http://www.kaplanedfoundation.org)) launched in 2006 to help high-potential students struggling financially to get a full educational experience. Scholarships awarded to qualifying students provide help pay for not only tuition, but also living and other educational expenses like books, and even the cost of transferring to a four-year college.

Now, after graduating with Honors from BMCC in June 2007, Samari was accepted into the Honors Program at American University in Washington, D.C.

"For most people, the financial support is what makes a scholarship a real scholarship, but Kaplan Educational Foundation went beyond those traditional standards," Samari said. "Through leadership workshops and group trips I was able to learn so much. My co-scholars and I have become one family and are able to draw support from one another. Relationships like this are priceless."

The Foundation's director, Jennifer Benn, said the program is "very comprehensive."

"We work with students step-by-step, across the board. We ask students what their barriers are, and we address them. If students are just looking for a check, this is the wrong program," she said. "Even on those tough days, we're here to support the students and say 'there's no reason to doubt yourself, you can do it.'"

"Students are coming from communities where they may have not had role models," Benn added. "Now, we're grooming them to be role models. We push them to be community citizens ... global citizens."

While Hamissou attends American University, the help will keep coming. Program officials will maintain contact with Samari's on-campus advisors to ensure he is maximizing his educational opportunity, and the financial and moral support will continue, too.

Samari was not the only BMCC student to be awarded the Kaplan honor; out of 100 applicants, four were accepted, three of them BMCC students. Keisha Carrington earned her science degree here; both Howard University in Washington, D.C., and Goucher College in Maryland accepted her, and she will attend the latter. Martha Santos completed her degree in early childhood education at BMCC, and will attend New York University.

Another BMCC student, Sharrise Simmons, was recently named to the second cohort of Kaplan Scholars.

The Kaplan Educational Foundation will be seeking applicants for a third Cohort of Kaplan Scholars this fall. The application deadline date is Feb. 1, 2008. Applications will be available in early September. Please see Sussie Gyamfi in the Scholarship Office (Room S-343).



BMCC graduate, and Kaplan Scholar Hamissou Samari is attending American University in Washington, D.C.



BMCC graduate, and Kaplan Scholar Keisha Carrington is attending Goucher College in Maryland.



BMCC student Sharrise Simmons was recently named a Kaplan Scholar.



[News Archive](#)