



From the Ground Up – Marilyn Chernin’s Leading Role at KCC



Dean Marilyn Chernin

When Marilyn Chernin began her career, Kingsborough Community College was a converted army base that consisted of little more than two buildings. Years later, she would see the T-Buildings delivered by airplane, and the enrollment swell from 1,500 to over 15,000. Far from a bystander to KCC history, Dean Chernin did as much as anyone to shape it: “It has been amazing to see the college grow over the years, and I continue to be excited about its future.” This year, Dean Chernin reaffirmed her commitment to the college by endowing her graduation award, which each year honors a KCC student’s leadership and service.

As the college’s first Dean of Student Life, she was the architect of countless initiatives that make the KCC student experience what it is today, particularly regarding student leadership programs. Over the years, many of the students who directly benefitted from Dean Chernin’s mentorship have gone on to assume important positions at the college. “Marilyn Chernin has had an immeasurable impact on my life as a professional and a person,” says Anthony Andrews, KCC’s Director of Government and Community Relations. “It was Marilyn who encouraged me to become a Peer Advisor, and then later a student government leader. She had confidence in my ability before I did. She is the epitome of class and leadership, and influenced a generation of leaders.”

Even in retirement, Dean Chernin remains an active champion for KCC. She currently serves on the Executive Board of the KCC Retiree Group and as the editor of the Retiree Newsletter. In addition, Dean Chernin has distinguished herself as a donor. “When I retired, many of my colleagues wanted to send me off with a personal gift. But I told them, ‘The best gift you could give me is to help me start an award for student leaders.’” Following her wishes, her KCC colleagues helped her to fund the *Student Leadership Service Award* in her honor.

For the past several years, Dean Chernin’s award has provided support for graduating students who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership qualities through involvement, enthusiasm and innovation in student activities and student government. This year, she took this already-generous award to the next level, elevating it from a limited-term to an *endowed* award. “I chose to endow my award because I want it to last not just for the next two or three years, but in perpetuity,” she says.

Rechristened as the *Dean Marilyn Chernin Student Leader Endowed Service Award*, her award will honor the leadership and success of KCC students for many years to come. “My award is an outgrowth of my career’s work at KCC and my investment in its students. I have seen so many students become leaders, and I feel honored to have played a role in their growth.”

Every month, the Kaleidoscope presents a different facet of the Kingsborough experience—inspiring professors, student success stories, alumni testimonials, exciting new programs, news-making events and much more. We hope you enjoy these stories, and we also encourage you to share *your* unique KCC perspective with us. *Whether you are a current student or an alum, a faculty or staff member, a retiree or a distinguished donor, [you can also share your story!](#)*

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