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**Monroe College Hosted Special Male Empowerment “My Brother’s Keeper”  
Townhall Today for Area High School Students**

**Programming Addressed Social Justice Issues, Education Equity,  
and Resolving Opportunity Gaps for Young Men of Color**

**BRONX, NY, November 10, 2021** -- [Monroe College](https://www.monroecollege.edu), a national leader in educating first-generation and international students, was proud to welcome 200 young men from local high schools to its Bronx campus today for “My Brother’s Keeper: Changing the Narrative,” a two-hour male empowerment townhall.

Led by Monroe President Marc Jerome and Michael Blake, Visiting Social Justice and Civics Fellow at Monroe College, the event held on the Bronx campus reflected the work and values of the My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) program created in 2014 by then-President Barack Obama to address persistent opportunity gaps facing young men of color. Mr. Blake had been instrumental in MBK’s launch, having served as an aide to President Obama at the time.

Messrs. Jerome and Blake were joined by guest speakers Dr. Anael Alston, Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Access, Equity, and Community Engagement in the New York State Education Department; George Patterson, Senior Director with the New York City Department of Education with oversight for its My Brother’s Keeper program; and Jordan Stockdale, Executive Director of The Young Men’s Initiative.

Nearly 200 high school juniors and seniors from one dozen NYC high schools attended this morning’s townhall, which began with a rousing tribute from the College’s marching band. The students then heard powerful messages from the panel on the importance of standing up to injustice and being a force for positive change within their communities. Inspirational words on academic excellence, personal accountability, character, and leadership were also emphasized.

“I am extraordinarily grateful to our amazing guest speakers and to the phenomenal students who attended this morning for making this townhall so impactful,” said President Jerome. “This was just our first step as we work to establish our own My Brother’s Keeper chapter on campus so that the work started here today may long continue.”

Compelling data on higher education outcomes was shared during a presentation on improving college access and opportunity for Black and Hispanic students. The data, compiled from publicly available information on the College Scorecard and IPEDs, the database managed by U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, show that college completion rates are far too low for people of color.

President Jerome noted: "There's a lot of attention and energy focused on improving college access, especially for historically under-served and under-represented student groups – and that's very important. However, we must also look at how many are completing their programs. The data is very telling. As a country, we must do better for these students."

### **ABOUT MONROE COLLEGE**

Founded in 1933, Monroe College is a recognized leader in educating first-generation and international students. The College is proud of its innovative programs to increase college access, affordability, and completion outcomes, and the recognition it has received nationally for its impact on students' social mobility.

Monroe educates more than 8,000 students each year, offering Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs from New York campuses in the Bronx and New Rochelle, as well as in the Caribbean nation of St. Lucia. Students may also pursue degree programs through Monroe Online.

Programs are offered through Schools of Allied Health Professions, Business and Accounting, Criminal and Social Justice, Education, Hospitality Management, Information Technology, and Nursing, as well as through its King Graduate School. Liberal arts and continuing education programs are also available. For more information and admissions criteria, please visit <http://www.monroecollege.edu>.