

# Hard times = good times at CUNY

## Applications soar by 12% at borough's public colleges

BY JEFF WILKINS  
and RACHEL MONAHAN

GOING PUBLIC is the way to go this year.

With the economy in turmoil and families watching every dollar, Brooklyn's public colleges received a record number of applications for September 2009, up 12% since last year at this time.

Between 2004 and 2008, applications to Brooklyn's City University of New York campuses increased just 4.8%, making this year's spike all the more dramatic.

"There's no question that both parents and students are taking a closer look at [CUNY schools] in light of the fiscal challenges that they face," said CUNY spokesman Michael Arena, adding the public schools have become more competitive in recent years. "Our affordable tuition is really the cherry on top."

Citywide, CUNY saw a 10% increase in applications for the fall as of March 31 — and is on

target for the highest enrollment in the university's history.

"This was the smart choice for my family because we save money; they're feeling the economy just like everybody else," said Jermaine Brown, 17, of Queens, who last week registered at downtown's City College of Technology.

A year's tuition at City Tech, Medgar Evers College or Brooklyn College costs \$4,000. Even with a possible \$600 increase next year, that's a steal compared with the borough's private colleges, some of which charge more than eight times that amount.

"My sister went to a private school [Columbia], and it was a burden on my parents," said Guy Allen Lauture, 20, a City Tech freshman. "They're still paying off her loans. I didn't want to do that to them."

The increasing interest in Brooklyn's public colleges also comes at a time when the four-year colleges have upped the requirements for admission.

At Brooklyn College, just two years ago, applicants needed a 77 average along with a 910 on the SAT to gain acceptance. This fall's applicants must have a combined score of 1000 on the SAT, with an 81 average. Even with the boosted requirements, applications rose nearly 7% over last year at this time.

Two years ago, the Medgar Evers College admissions office gave tours twice a month for just 20 students at a time. Now, they're getting 40 to 50 students for tours three or four times a week, admissions officials said.

Medgar Evers' campus hit a record enrollment last fall — and has had a whopping 51% increase from last year in applications.

"I would be blind to think that finances didn't play a role in [parents'] decision to send their kids here," said Gloria Leon, Medgar Evers' director of recruitment and admissions, adding the school's growing popularity has meant better, more prepared students.



Guy Allen Lauture is a City Tech freshman.  
Photo by Jeff Wilkins

APPLICATIONS TO CUNY SCHOOLS IN BROOKLYN AS OF MARCH 31		
College	Applicants	% increase over 2008
Brooklyn College	3,939	6.7
Medgar Evers	461	50.7
City Tech	2,508	17.0
Kingsborough	1,025	9.4

SOURCE: CITY UNIVERSITY