

## **Lester Strong Urges Prospective Students to Accept the Cambridge College Challenge**

*By Kimberly Dunbar  
Communications Specialist  
Cambridge College*

Former Boston television personality Lester Strong stressed the power of education in an address to potential Cambridge College students. On Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Strong, Chief Development Officer at BELL Foundation and former WHDH Channel 7 news anchor, spoke to a group of over 50 prospective Cambridge College students.

Cambridge College hosted an information session in order to promote its undergraduate and graduate programs to adults interested in a college degree. Following the information session, Mr. Strong delivered a presentation in which he addressed civil rights and the importance of education.

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Mr. Strong says that like many others, his initial drive to attend college was both social and economical. His total focus was to go to college, get out of his hometown, and out of poverty.

“The difference in income level of having a college education or not is one million dollars over your lifetime,” Mr. Strong says, who attended Davidson College in North Carolina on a basketball scholarship. “I saw the transformative power of education. I was learning for the sake of learning. In college, I was, for the first time, fully challenged both intellectually and socially.”

Mr. Strong also earned a degree from the Institute for Non-Profit Management at Columbia University. In addition, he was a Watson Fellow in Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia, and an Aspen Fellow at the Aspen Institute for International Study in Colorado.

Mr. Strong is well-known in Boston as a former television news anchor and medical editor for WHDH-TV. During his time at WHDH, Mr. Strong won an EMMY award for his coverage of gang violence, was recognized as the Most Outstanding Health Journalist in Massachusetts, and won the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Cancer Society.

He has served as the Chief Development Officer at BELL since April 2005. He leads development activities in all BELL regions and is spearheading new initiatives to ensure that BELL has the resources it needs to educate a growing number of scholars.

“The BELL Foundation has served over 10,000 children,” says Mr. Strong. BELL recognizes that the pathway to opportunity for children lies in education. BELL transforms children into scholars and leaders through the delivery of nationally recognized, high-impact after school and summer educational programs.

Previously, Mr. Strong served as the President & CEO of the SYDA Foundation in New York, where he excelled in securing large individual donations, aligning SYDA's international programs, and strengthening the foundation to achieve a broader impact.