



A message from **THE PRESIDENT**

*“We mean to be the people we meant to be,
to keep on going where we meant to go...”*

Friday, April 22, marks the 54th anniversary of Eugenio María de Hostos Community College’s founding.

Can more than a half-century have passed since a dedicated band of educators, administrators, and community activists joined together to create a source of higher education in the South Bronx? Strange as it may seem, it has.

The odds weren’t always in the College’s favor, but Hostos has weathered bad times, celebrated good times, and remains firmly committed to its roots in the South Bronx. Over the years thousands of students have found a home here, a place where they can dream their dreams – and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to turn those dreams into reality. Every day at Hostos (in-person or on-line) is a powerful demonstration of the transformative power of education.

Let us take a moment to remember the College’s storied past, celebrate its current resilience, and plan for an even brighter future. Our founders require nothing less of us. It is a privilege to honor the visionaries who bent their every effort to creating and sustaining this institution. We stand on the shoulders of these giants; it is our task to make sure the College continues to embody and build upon their ideals. It is a task we relish.

I am pleased to acknowledge past and present students, faculty members, and staff who have given so generously of their talents over the years. Though the seas may be rough on occasion, and the waters uncharted, the Good Ship Hostos sails on, and it’s due to the hard work and determination of these marvelous people.

These modern-day titans have seen the College through the challenges of a global pandemic. They have guided Hostos through the lengthy and delicate process of accreditation required by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. They have shared their insights as participants in the

Veladas Hostosianas/Hostos Culture Talks, an ongoing series of virtual salons dealing with the social, cultural, and literary issues of the day. All this and much, much more is undeniable proof of the vitality of life at Hostos and its connections with the diverse communities it so proudly serves.

What we do has been noted by Hostos' inclusion in the 2015 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence selection process. Being chosen as a Top 10 finalist – the only community college in the Northeast to earn such a distinction – validated the extraordinary achievement of this institution and proved that we are one of the best community colleges in the nation. We have once again submitted Hostos for Aspen Prize consideration and we are confident that, no matter the outcome, the College's achievements will be recognized and appreciated.

Our anniversary couldn't be celebrated without mentioning the \$15 million gift from philanthropist/author/activist Ms. MacKenzie Scott in June 2021. This is the largest single gift in the College's history and one of the largest in the history of The City University of New York (CUNY). We share Ms. Scott's passionate belief in the community college system, and her most generous gift is being used in a variety of wide-reaching initiatives to support student success.

Hostos has focused on student success from its inception to the present day. The College provides a bridge of opportunity for all who pass through its portals. To those who created the institution and to those who play a vital role in keeping it running, day after day, in good times and bad, my heartfelt thanks. Together, we work wonders. Together, we will – in the words of the poet Miller Williams – “fashion the future.”

I'd like to share Williams' poem “Of History and Hope”

*We have memorized America,
how it was born and who we have been and where.
In ceremonies and silence we say the words,
telling the stories, singing the old songs.
We like the places they take us. Mostly we do.
The great and all the anonymous dead are there.
We know the sound of all the sounds we brought.
The rich taste of it is on our tongues.
But where are we going to be, and why, and who?
The disenfranchised dead want to know.
We mean to be the people we meant to be,
to keep on going where we meant to go.
But how do we fashion the future? Who can say how*

*except in the minds of those who will call it Now?
The children. The children. And how does our garden grow?
With waving hands—oh, rarely in a row—
and flowering faces. And brambles, that we can no longer allow.*

*Who were many people coming together
cannot become one people falling apart.
Who dreamed for every child an even chance
cannot let luck alone turn doorknobs or not.
Whose law was never so much of the hand as the head
cannot let chaos make its way to the heart.
Who have seen learning struggle from teacher to child
cannot let ignorance spread itself like rot.
We know what we have done and what we have said,
and how we have grown, degree by slow degree,
believing ourselves toward all we have tried to become—
just and compassionate, equal, able, and free.*

*All this in the hands of children, eyes already set
on a land we never can visit—it isn't there yet—
but looking through their eyes, we can see
what our long gift to them may come to be.
If we can truly remember, they will not forget.*

Happy Anniversary, Hostos!

Mil gracias y bendiciones,

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.
President

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