



## A message from **THE PRESIDENT**

My Dear Students,

I hope your semester is going well and that you are enjoying the Fall weather. This is to update you and provide clarification on the College's efforts to assist students during this ever-changing time in which we continue to work and learn. As I have indicated before, Hostos Community College takes the health and safety of its faculty, staff, and students as the highest of priorities. Throughout the pandemic, Hostos has deployed various channels to keep the campus community informed. The College's Reopening Plan is continually revised as needed in accordance with CUNY, CDC and NYSDOH guidelines.

In May 2021, the Chancellor, in conjunction with New York State mandate, announced that COVID-19 vaccinations would be required for all students attending in-person classes beginning this Fall. CUNY also launched the #VaxUpCUNY hashtag campaign to encourage us all to vaccinate and come together to keep ourselves, our families, and our city safe. On August 23, 2021, upon the FDA's approval of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, the University provided students with a 45-day deadline to be fully vaccinated and upload their vaccination documentation into CUNYfirst. The University, as well as the College, sent a series of follow up emails, informing students who were taking in-person or hybrid classes to get vaccinated and have their vaccination documentation uploaded on or before September 27, 2021, so they could be approved by October 7<sup>th</sup>. These follow up communications indicated that failure to do so would subject students to potential academic withdrawal from their classes that could also impact their financial aid and make them ineligible for refunds on their courses (this does not apply to students who have been granted a medical exemption or religious exception).

The University also opened vaccination and testing sites at various CUNY colleges, including here at Hostos. In support of getting as many students vaccinated as possible, the College, in particular the Student Development & Enrollment Management Division and the Office of Academic Affairs, has been working diligently to help students navigate through CUNY's vaccination mandate. Targeted communications began before the start of the Fall semester and continues. Since the vaccination mandate announcement, the College has, among other things:

- Facilitated over 25 outreach campaigns, including emailing students, sending text messages, using social media platforms, and making telephone calls
- Sent out weekly distribution emails reminding students of the vaccination mandate
- Created and circulated flyers with information on vaccination
- Visited in-person classes to encourage students to upload their vaccination documentation

- Assigned and stationed staff in the lobbies for the first two weeks of classes to assist students upload vaccination documents
- Utilized multiple modes of communications to relay information to students as deadlines approached, including emails, Blackboard notices, faculty announcements, and CUNY Alerts
- Had staff work one-on-one with students to assist them in the vaccination process

It is important to note that since the vaccination mandate was announced, Hostos identified over 1,200 students who could be negatively impacted. Through our combined outreach efforts, the College has been able to help over 700 students vaccinate and upload their information successfully. We are now assessing the impact that the students who could potentially be withdrawn from their classes could face and working to identify ways in which we can help these students continue their education and mitigate any impact.

The College continues to make every effort to assist students comply with the vaccination mandate, with the hope of getting as many ready to continue their studies this semester as well as for the Spring 2022 semester. Students must be fully vaccinated to enter college facilities and participate in in-person classes, meetings, and activities, unless they have a medical or religious exception. Given the University's scale and reach, we have an opportunity to influence the health and well-being of the City's most vulnerable populations, who have suffered disproportionate impacts of the pandemic, by implementing the vaccination mandate responsibly. We will continue to provide outreach and support for our students so that they may continue in their studies and ultimately graduate and pursue their dreams.

If you are a student and are experiencing issues with or have questions about vaccination deadlines or documentation uploading, you are encouraged to contact the Hostos Health and Wellness Office:

- Nurse Maria Vasquez at [MAVasquez@hostos.cuny.edu](mailto:MAVasquez@hostos.cuny.edu) or call 718-518-6542
- Fabian Wander, Wellness Director at [FWander@hostos.cuny.edu](mailto:FWander@hostos.cuny.edu) or call 718-518-6567

One more time, and *mil gracias*,

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.  
President

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