



A message from **THE PRESIDENT**

WELCOME TO THE SPRING 2025 SEMESTER!

My Dear Colleagues and Students,

Welcome to the Spring 2025 semester. It is so encouraging to see you all back on campus, with the hope and energy that new beginnings invite. Thank you, everyone, for working closely on ensuring proper class placement and spending time reviewing syllabi and asking questions, as needed. There is a lot of support available so please do avail yourself of services.

2025 begins in a very auspicious manner. The U.S. Department of Education announced on January 8 that Hostos Community College, a CUNY school in the South Bronx, is the winner of the inaugural Postsecondary Success Recognition Program (PSRP) award. The College is one of only six institutions chosen from hundreds of eligible colleges throughout the country to receive this recognition. According to Nasser Paydar, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, Hostos was selected because its work “is a shining example of the transformative power of higher education, especially for underserved students.”

During discussions throughout the semester and our Executive Cabinet retreat, we reflected as a group: *How does culture and context inform our work at Hostos situated as we are in the South Bronx, in the place we proudly occupy on the Grand Concourse, situated in the midst of the nation’s poorest congressional district?* Here are some of our thoughts, as we welcome any feedback you’d like to offer.

Hostos is a proud member of the City University of New York, critical urban infrastructure that advances equity throughout the five boroughs. We take seriously our role as public servants committed to serving our students and supporting their academic and career pathways in the South Bronx. Our strategic priorities, identified by six working groups, comprised of nearly 100 faculty and staff, articulate our mission in relation to today’s realities. Given a shared commitment to advancing equity as justice, Hostos’ strategic priorities align closely with the Chancellor’s and the CUNY Strategic Roadmap. That this alignment is a holistic one speaks to a deeply understood shared responsibility to our city and the students we serve.

We are also, at Hostos, an anchor institution in a broader geography of resistance. Looking out the window, there is new construction in every direction, redefining this

corner of the South Bronx. As developers, “incentivized” by tax exemptions and other gifts of public funding, radically change the skyline around us, students come to Hostos, seeking the credentials that provide them with opportunities to earn family-sustaining wages. Their daily trajectories to campus inscribe individual geographies of resistance against the insecurities (food, housing, child care, employment), degradation (environmental, health) and obligations that stand in the way of their prioritizing education — maps of determination and of insistence that their value, their worth be realized.

At the core of this resistance is love. The warmth and humanity that is communicated through daily interactions with staff and faculty are among the qualities that define Hostos. Our students feel love, they return seeking it when challenges arise at four-year partner institutions, and we continue supporting their success. Love is expressed by faculty and staff in a post-Covid embrace of systems, processes and clarity of roles in the name of equity. Love of institution and of purpose is a palpable driver in learning to better integrate data with decision-making, with reviewing past practices to ensure we anticipate barriers in advance and do not hold up our students for whom time is money.

Love produces spaces at Hostos, spaces in which our students see other possible narratives, other futures in the faces and experiences of faculty, staff and leadership who are — like our students — majority minority, majority female, largely immigrant and first generation, often English language learners. We cannot discount the importance of these spaces of love in which our students form their own intersectional identities as scholars, as professionals, as citizens in a democratic society armed with empowering frameworks that name their histories, their experiences and their embodied realities.

When we speak to the culture of Hostos and how it drives and defines our work, this is the culture to which we refer. How has it changed? It has become sharper, more impatient, less parochial and increasingly strategic. Why? Because the world around us demands more of us and because staff and faculty come to Hostos ready to roll up their sleeves. If our students see themselves in us, we, too, see ourselves in our students. To honor them and our own roots, we do not accept the status quo or stop resisting the forces that drove our founders to claim our place where we stand today.

Mil gracias y bendiciones,

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.
President

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