



Hostos Community College



# COMMUNITY REPORT

INAUGURAL ISSUE  
SUMMER 2021  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021

## HCC: A Caring Academic Community of Purpose



### The Hill We Climb (excerpt)

By Amanda Gorman

When day comes, we step out of the shade,  
Aflame and unafraid.

The new dawn blooms as we free it,  
For there is always light,  
If only we're brave enough to see it,  
If only we're brave enough to be it.

(Excerpt from: The Hill We Climb and Other Poems,  
by Amanda Gorman, Penguin Random House, New York)

It is a question of hope and pride as I begin these brief introductory remarks. What a remarkable year of living together through a pandemic with purpose, with hope and with integrity to ensure that academic and student life would continue to be sustained in a healthy and yet encouraging environment. We have worked hard in the classroom, in our activities to support students, to support academic integrity and to achieve success.

These few pages gather lovingly some of the activities that sustained us as we worked to ensure that at the end of the year, quality education with kind support produced the awarding of over 1,200 credentials, granted to students aged 17 to 67 years old. This is one very fine story of success as you consider the South Bronx, one of the hardest hit areas of COVID-19, home of the poorest congressional district in the State of New York.

These pages will also speak of the generosity of spirit and the opening-up of many pockets to support our students from basic needs to academic achievement. We close the year as the recipients of the College's largest Philanthropic Gift, \$15 million, unrestricted dollars, thanks to the generosity of MacKenzie Scott, and as indicated in the letter of the grantor and in the language approved in its receipt of the Gift by our CUNY Board of Trustees: *This unrestricted gift for the benefit of Eugenio María de Hostos Community College and its students. Use of the gift shall be subject to the priorities, guidance and final approval of Eugenio María de Hostos Community College President.*

A new day comes, and to borrow Ms. Gorman's words, we will be brave enough to seize it on behalf of student success, our College's growth and our engagement with College and community stakeholders.

Mil gracias y bendiciones,

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.

President

Eugenio María de Hostos Community College, CUNY

## THE SIX PILLARS OF OUR MISSION STATEMENT

1. Provide access to higher education.
2. Serve as a community resource.
3. Celebrate diversity and multiculturalism.
4. Facilitate socio-economic mobility.
5. English and math skills development.
6. Foster intellectual growth and lifelong learning.



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, Hostos presented a series of forums and town halls in support of social discourse, exchange and celebration. The Office of the President in collaboration with Hostos' divisions, discipline-based departments, student organizations and leaders held a series of forums and town halls including political and literary discussions, faculty book presentations, honors presentations, and candid conversations, to support and enhance a sense of a cultural, educational, and inclusive life outside of the classroom.

The *Veladas Hostosianas* / Hostos Culture Talks initiative alone offered over a dozen cultural gatherings during its virtual inaugural year with emerging, established, and renowned authors, poets, educators, doctors, politicians, and government diplomats.

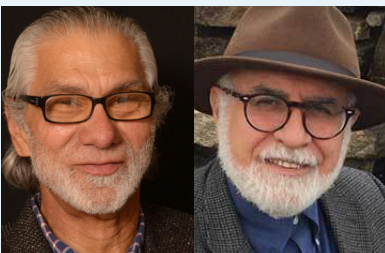


The *Veladas* hosted a book presentation for Professor Juno Morrow's newly-published book "Marginalia." The series also welcomed Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.,

who joined Professor Sandy Figueroa in conversation in celebration of Puerto Rican Heritage Month.

Award-winning filmmaker and Hostos Lecturer Joelle González-Laguer screened two of his short documentaries, "Los Reyes Cantores" in December and "CHAKALMEX" in honor of Pride Month.

Professor Emeritus Orlando J. Hernández and poet and critic David Cortés Cabán ('76) marked Don Eugenio María de Hostos' birthday in January with a discussion about his life and legacy.



In observance of Black History Month, Interim Associate Dean and Financial Aid Director Leslie King and Assistant

Professor of History at Saint Peter's University John Wesley Johnson, Jr., Ph.D. discussed what it means to be Black—historically and currently—in America in "A Conversation On Blackness."

The Women's History Month *Velada Hostosiana* had seven women elected officials offer advice and inspiration to students, on the pursuit of dreams.

Authors, academics, and literary leaders paid tribute to the late Norberto James Rawlings in honor of National Poetry Month.

Former Alumni Relations director Dr. Nydia Edgecombe returned to discuss the life of the late and great freedom fighter Evelina López Antonetty with President Daisy Cocco



De Filippis, Hostos Board Member and "Madrina" Elba Cabrera, and Activist Anita Antonetty.

Alumna Lina Cruz engaged in a one-on-one

talk with fellow Hostos grad and Development Manager, Idelsa Méndez, on Cruz's journey to becoming the Manager of Multicultural Affairs for the New York Yankees in "Preparing for the Real World."

The students' call for a Black Lives Matter forum led to the Office of the President creating and presenting a three-part "Black at Hostos" town hall series spanning the Spring 2021 semester.

The first town hall, "The Stories We Tell: Race in America," held on February 17, covered three distinct periods in American history and asked participants to define Americanism, citizenship, and who gets to claim the American Dream.

"Becoming Jim Crow: A Long, Legal History," the second town hall that took place in March, examined the long history of anti-Black racism and its codification of U.S. laws.

"We Too Sing America: From Experimentation to Participation,"



held in April, closed the series and focused on race, medicine, and health care in the U.S.

Hostos also presented "Speaking Up for

AAPI at Hostos," which addressed the recent spike in anti-Asian hate crimes and racism against AAPI communities across the city and country, contextualizing it within the broader sphere of violence against communities of color.

The discussion was part of the College's 12th Annual Center for Teaching and Learning Professional Development Day hosted by the CTL Advisory Council and dedicated to the late and beloved Hostos Professor Isabel Li.

The distinguished panel of guests included Congresswoman Grace Meng, Senator John Liu, The City University of New York's Asian American and Asian Research Institute Executive Director Joyce Moy, Guttman Community College Assistant Professor Grace Pai, Hostos professors Kristopher Burrell, Helen Chang, Victor Torres Vélez, and student Sadia Zaman.



# PROGRESS IN PANDEMIC TIMES

Professors Nelson Nuñez Rodríguez and Kate Wolfe, Middle States Commission on Higher Education Steering Committee Co-Chairs, ensured the effective and timely progress of our 10-year Self-Study, due this fall.

We held three All-College meetings and a State of the College Address. Consistent throughout the gatherings was our adherence to Hostos' Mission, a statement affirming our purpose and dedication to access, socio-economic mobility, diversity, and multiculturalism in education.

Hostos' legacy extends to arts and culture. The College's Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development offered "The History of Latin Music and Latin Jazz Part XIII," a free virtual workshop hosted by noted music historian Joe Conzo, Sr., attracting people from all over the world.

Hostos Community College is deeply entrenched in the purpose, determination, generosity, intelligence, and expertise of so many who have dedicated their lives to our mission. In this spirit, we recognized the first and founding president of Hostos, Dr. Nasry Michelen, and Congressman José E. Serrano, who came before us and fought for the Bronx and Hostos' promise.

Designed to share information from multiple voices, *El Semanario Hostosiano* / The Hostos Weekly, is a communications vehicle for all of our audiences. With thirty-three issues published thus far, the publication has showcased the significant work being done at the College and our purposeful collective performance.

Together, with OAA, OIERA, and SDEM and our technology experts, we bolstered varied technology assets designed to keep our students on track to complete courses and achieve graduation goals — contributing to Hostos granting over 1,200 awards at this year's Commencement.

Hostos' Digital Design and Animation program is also making its mark — from "Quarantined: Films Made During a Pandemic" to student Natasha Villegas interning for TED-Ed as an assistant pre-production artist in fall 2020. Moreover, recent grad and 2021 Class Salutatorian Taisiia Smekalenkova is one of six Digital Design and Animation students selected to participate in the artist residency summer experience on Governors Island.

Hostos students Rosina Asiamah, Boinzemwende Jarmila Roxane Ouango, and Oumou Traore were among the 13 newly accepted 2021 Kaplan Leadership Scholars. Boinzemwende Jarmila Roxane Ouango was selected for a summer internship at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, NY.

HEAT Scholar Bielka Peña was awarded the Guttman Transfer Scholarship for High-Achieving Community College Graduates.

Acting Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Charles I. Drago was selected President of the Association of Educators in Radiologic Technology in the State of New York (AERTSNY) and of the Association of Educators in Radiological Sciences (AEIRS).

"EdCast," the CUNY TV program produced, written, and hosted by Hostos Professor Linda Hirsch, received two 2021 Bronze Telly Awards for excellence in television broadcasting.

Thanks to Professor Amy Ransom, Hostos is a part of the Stevens Initiative Global Scholars Achieving Career Success (GSACS), led by LaGuardia Community College.

Assistant Professor and Reference Librarian Jorge Matos Valdejuli was an invited panelist at the "Eunice Kennedy Shriver 100: A Legacy of Inclusion" event on July 10.

Assistant Professor of Modern Languages Humberto Ballesteros was commended for his service to the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB) and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

Professors Sarah Hoiland and Antonios Varelas, members of Hostos' Behavioral and Social Sciences Department, and Silvia Reyes, Director of Special Projects & Student Engagement and CLIP, recently published "The Impact of a Supplemental Instruction Program on Diverse Peer Leaders at a Two-Year Institution."

President Cocco De Filippis appeared as guest speaker at the American Council on Education at the "Mental Health and Its Impact on Student Success at Community Colleges" forum, the NYU Langone health panel discussion on "Ethical and Policy Challenges regarding schooling during the Covid-19 pandemic," the "CUNY Career Compass for Women Leaders Conference," the Bildner Center Conversation on "Spanish Languages at CUNY," and the Brookfield Library of Connecticut event, "Early Writings of Julia Alvarez: Julia's Journey Home — From Homecoming to In the Time of the Butterflies."

Early on, then Interim President Cocco De Filippis was also recognized by "City & State New York" as one of the Bronx Power 50 and NY's Higher Education Power 100, and, as one of the Power Women of the Bronx by Shneps Media.



# ADVANCEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Comprised of business, government, and cultural leaders within the larger Metro and Bronx community, alongside faculty and staff members of the College, the Hostos Community College Community Advisory Council (CAC) was established by Dr. Cocco De Filippis with the intention of positioning Hostos as a community hub for conversations, mutual support, enhancement of our students' learning experience and job placement opportunities.

The CAC met for five roundtables resulting in the formation of "big ideas" surrounding mentorship, mental health workshops, arts support and workforce partnerships: Coming Out of the Pandemic Healthy: Mental Health Support Initiatives; Networking to Create Opportunities for Hostos Students; Discussion on Emerging (or Promising) Workforce Trends Hostos Can Lead on; Fostering Collaborations between Hostos Departments and Corporate Partners; and Networking with Educational Leaders to Identify Opportunities at Hostos.

Hostos established the Committee of Sponsored Programs and Grants (CSPG) in the Spring of 2021, co-chaired by President Cocco De Filippis and Professor Yoel Rodríguez of the Natural Sciences Department with the goal of generating opportunities for colleagues to develop ideas for institutional innovation through the submission of grant proposals.

Leading the advancement efforts for the College, the Division of Institutional Advancement (DIA) moved



quickly to respond to students' changing needs throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

Using its most accessible emergency funds, the Hostos

Community College Foundation collaborated with the IT department to secure Wi-Fi hotspots for students in temporary housing and facilitated partnerships between the Hostos Food Pantry and local businesses to help students facing food insecurity.

The Hostos Community College Foundation 2021 Virtual Annual Scholarship Benefit raised more than \$107,000. There again, the digital animation students shined with the short films "Hope" directed by Sky Candelario and "Day in the Life of a Student" featuring former SGA Secretary Isabel Neira Sánchez.

The Office of Alumni Relations applauded the many selfless Hostos graduates who work in healthcare combating the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted six outstanding healthcare professionals who were featured in the Hostos Alumni on the Frontlines series.

DIA also received a generous \$150,000 grant award from the Robin Hood Foundation to provide assistance to students who have experienced financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.

In April 2021, the Nasry Michelen Foundation established the Dr. Nasry Michelen Endowed Scholarship for students in Allied Health Sciences and Public Health.



The commitment of the Michelen Foundation also extended to partnering with Hostos to present "The Dr. Nasry Michelen Allied Health Lecture Series," offering, so far, a talk on mental health during

the pandemic and another on the senior population in the pandemic. Additional lectures are scheduled for the Fall 2021 semester.

The Hostos Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development (CEWD) continues to be a significant resource to the Bronx and neighboring communities and at the forefront of adult learning education in New York City.



At the center of their work are imbedded strategies for creating student articulation agreements to facilitate adult learners' entry into college. CEWD students

can also receive college credit as enrolled Hostos students for completing certificate courses in Certified Nursing Assistant, Clinical Medical Assistant, and HIV Counselor certificates; Medical Billing & Coding Certificate; Culinary Arts & Food Protection Certificate; Health Information Technology or Electronic Health Records Specialist certificate programs; Child Development Associate Credential; Basic Construction Management Certificate Program; and the Community Healthcare Worker Certificate Program.

CEWD received a NYC Department of Youth and Community Development Award for \$193,000 to continue the Train and Earn Career Pathways Program. CEWD and the Division of Academic Affairs also received a \$430,000 award by New York State through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process in Next Generation Job Linkage funds. The Hostos Job Linkage Proposal is intended to expand opportunity to build more robust partnerships between employers, the public school system, and the public university system to ensure that public education is relevant to the demands of the contemporary workplace.



# COLLEGE REOPENING

Phase 2 of Hostos campus reopening began August 2021, marking a gradual shift in additional in-person activity to a maximum of 50% of our normal campus occupancy — half the number of people who would usually be on campus. This change allows the College to more effectively support our students for Fall 2021.

However, our return to campus began long before now. Starting in March 2020, a group of our Hostos colleagues have been working to implement strategies and support processes that prevent the spread of COVID-19 in campus buildings. The protocols they've helped put in place meet or exceed requirements and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), and others.

This has resulted in measures such as:

- Use of face coverings/masks and physical (“social”) distancing.
- Pre-visit and building entrance guidelines, which may include health screenings, verification of vaccination, or COVID-19 testing.
- Support for tracking infections and contact tracing.
- Robust cleaning and disinfecting.
- Upgrades to air handling/ventilation systems and other physical modifications to building spaces.
- Appointments and scheduled work to limit the number of people in campus spaces.
- Support for hand hygiene practices that everyone must do.

These strategies are outlined in Hostos’s Campus Reopening Plan, which was developed and has been revised to match the CUNY Guidelines for Safe Campus Reopening and CDC and NYSDOH guidelines.

Information on the College’s operations and response to COVID-19, including the Reopening Plan and a general FAQ, can be found on our website on Hostos’s Ready page (<http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/Ready/>).

However, we must not forget that safety during the COVID-19 pandemic is a collective responsibility.

So we remind you to continue the key public health behaviors that should be familiar by now: use face coverings/masks, keep 6 feet from others whenever possible, clean your hands frequently, and stay home if you’re sick or have been exposed to COVID-19. These are not just good ideas, however: all of these measures are required for everyone who comes on campus.

Finally, we urge you to engage in one more public health activity: get vaccinated if you’re able but haven’t yet done so. Getting vaccinated protects you and the people around you. Some of us can’t get vaccinated or won’t be fully protected from the vaccines, and it’s important to come together and keep each other safe, now more than ever.







# BUILDING COMMUNITY

