



Educating for Diversity

Ms. MacKenzie Scott's Gift: President's Initiative



Spring 2024 Grants

The Office of the President is pleased to announce the **Educating for Diversity Initiative Grant Awards for Spring 2024**. The Educating for Diversity Initiative is generously supported by the Ms. MacKenzie Scott's Gift: President's Initiatives for Student Success, College Growth and Stakeholders' Engagement. The grants represent Hostos' continued commitment to fostering student and community engagement in scholarly discussions and creative activities that will spark dialogue and communal learning on important issues relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion. We extend our warmest congratulations to all the grant recipients and wish them much success as they carry out their proposed events and activities.

- Awardee/Project Lead:** Marcella Bencivenni, Ph.D., Professor of History, Behavioral and Social Sciences Department
Project Title: "Stonebreakers – Film Screening and Panel Discussion"
Award Amount: \$1,000
Project Description: *Stonebreakers* is a 2022 documentary about the national fight over controversial monuments and statues that arose in the United States following the murder of George Floyd and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020. Set against the backdrop of the pandemic, a tense presidential election, and historic uprisings for social and racial justice, the film documents the collision between history and present, pushing the viewer to question triumphalist myths and traditional narratives of the nation's past. The screening will be followed by a Q/A with the film director, Valerio Ciriaci.
- Awardee/Project Leads:** Aaron Botwick, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English; and Lauren Wolf, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Mathematics
Project Title: "Hostos Reads"
Award Amount: \$700
Project Description: Students, staff, and faculty are invited to read the poet Javier Zamora's *Solito*, a memoir about his migration at age nine from El Salvador to the United States. The grant will be used to buy copies of the book and hold a series of discussions on literary and political questions raised by this story, which is especially relevant as the mayor of our city has declared a migrant crisis and many of the services that are used by immigrants (such as Hostos) face grave budget cuts. During one of these events, Zamora will be available to speak and answer questions from students.
- Awardee/Project Lead:** Michelle Cheikin, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Humanities Department

Project Title: “The Hostos Neighborhood”

Award Amount: \$700

Project Description: The neighborhood around Hostos Community College will be photographed by students taking First Year Seminar: A New York State of Mind. Ten students will be awarded a \$25 prize for their images which will be exhibited for the Hostos Community. The impetus of this project is to have students recognize infrastructural, cultural, and justice issues as part of the historical make-up of the South Bronx. By photographing historical, cultural, personal, and architectural images that show the diversity of the surrounding culture, students will provide a “visual voice” to the surrounding neighborhood and its people.

4. **Awardee/Project Leads:** Travaras Geter, Associate Director, College Now; and Stacey J. Cooper Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology, Behavioral and Social Sciences Department

Project Title: “From Classroom to Community: Hostos Inspires Civic Action”

Award Amount: \$1,400

Project Description: Building upon the themes of the Addressing Anti-Blackness at Hispanic Serving Institutions conference held in November 2023, The Hostos DEI Incubator Group will host an interactive forum to inspire civic engagement among students, faculty, and staff. The goal is to connect students, faculty, and staff with organizations engaged in grassroots work and offers a practical avenue to address inequities through both scholarship and community action. The forum will challenge participants to question their roles in addressing societal challenges, promoting equity, and contributing to the well-being of their communities.

5. **Awardee/Project Lead:** Teresa Gray, Assistant Professor of Nursing, Allied Health Department

Project Title: “Nursing Day – Celebrating Nurses of Color”

Award Amount: \$550

Project Description: The Nurses’ Day event celebration will be held at Hostos Community College during Nursing Week on May 9th, 2024. Nursing students and other students will receive imperative information about the nursing profession which includes the role of nurses, the history of nursing, vital statistics including diversity, job availability, education, and salary. The program will also have poetry and music that pays tribute to nurses. There will be three accomplished nurses of color (nurses with the minimum qualification of a master’s degree) who will be guest speakers who will discuss their journey in nursing.

6. **Awardee/Project Leads:** Laura Hand, Assistant Director of Career Services; and Lisanette Rosario, Director of Career Services

Project Title: “Candid Careers and Conversations: Virtual and In-Person Activities to Promote DEI in the Hostos Community College Community, Careers, and Curriculum”

Award Amount: \$500

Project Description: “Candid Careers and Conversations” launches the Career Symposium on April 11th in partnership with CUNY Career Success Fellows. This project builds on Candid Careers and the Hostos President’s industry panels by providing practical, accessible career insights through Candid Conversations focused on pathways for STEM, Community Health, Education, Digital Media, and Liberal Arts/Humanities. At the Symposium’s diverse panels and sessions, industry professionals, alumni, and community leaders will discuss networking, opportunities, career trajectories, rights, and employer expectations. Enhancing curricular connection to career readiness, this work advances socioeconomic mobility and JDEI on campus and throughout the South Bronx.

7. **Awardee/Project Lead:** Kelsey Hillebrand, Development Corporate and Foundation Relations Manager, Division of Institutional Advancement
Project Title: “Nourishing Conversations”
Award Amount: \$1,000
Project Description: Nourishing Conversations events will continue the series started during the Division of Institutional Advancement’s CUNYTuesday campaign. Following the format of the pilot, two additional events will feature a guest presenter discussing the social value of cultural foods, especially to diasporic communities, and issues affecting food access in communities like the South Bronx. A guest chef or industry expert will share career advice gleaned through their personal experiences and a budget-friendly recipe that attendees can make at home, even with a limited kitchen. This series will also help highlight on-campus resources, like the Food Pantry at Hostos.
8. **Awardee/Project Lead:** Gregory Marks, Ph.D., Professor, English Department
Project Title: “Reading Objects: How History is in Things”
Award Amount: \$1,300
Project Description: Students in First Year Seminar and other classes will engage with historical documents and objects in the Research Center to increase their awareness of other cultures, diverse political opinions, and different historical circumstances. Students will learn how even small historical objects often contain people’s histories and voices embedded in them. Drawing from a pool of about 30 items (owned by Prof. Marks) from the 19th and 20th centuries (letters, small objects, and a book of the sermons of John Jewett, printed 1609) students would, during class time, describe, do research on, and present their findings on their chosen item.
9. **Awardee/Project Lead:** Jorge Matos, Assistant Professor and Reference Librarian, Hostos Library
Project Title: “Digital MoCHA: The Online Archives of the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art Collection”
Award Amount: \$600
Project Description: The award will support the promotion of a new digital repository available at Hostos Archives. The open access portal, Digital Culture

of Metropolitan New York, will showcase materials from our premiere archives collection, the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Arts Records. Better known by its acronym MoCHA, it was one of the leading museums in New York featuring works by Latinx/e and Latin American artists during the 1980s. The planned event will launch the new digital gallery and host a speaker from the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian who will discuss the museum's history and its prominent role in the rise of Latinx/e visual arts in the United States.

10. **Awardee/Project Leads:** Alexandra Milsom, Ph.D. Assistant Professor; and Charles Rice-Gonzalez, Assistant Professor, English Department
Project Title: "Chat GPT and Equity of Access in the Writing Composition Classroom – An English Department Professional Development"
Award Amount: \$1,300
Project Description: "Chat GPT and Equity of Access in the Writing Composition Classroom" is an English Department Professional Development designed to explore how artificial intelligence-based writing assistance supports and also interferes with student writing in our classrooms. This will familiarize instructors with research and generate best practices to follow within the Hostos English classrooms. Our students deserve both tech-competence as well as the opportunity to develop their own writing skills, and this training will foreground the issue of equity: how can we prepare our students to use these tools without depriving them of the opportunity to learn to use their own voices?

11. **Awardee/Project Lead(s):** Ana Ozuna, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Black Studies Unit Coordinator; and Anamaría Flores, Ph.D., Lecturer, Black Studies Unit, Humanities Department
Project Title: "Black Studies Black History and Futures Month Program"
Award Amount: \$1,000
Project Description: The theme of this year's Black History Month celebration is African Americans and the Arts, this includes the broad artistic production of African-descended people in "...field of visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music..." among other artistic expressions as noted by the Association of the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). The 2024 Hostos Black Studies Black History and Futures Month program will concur with ASALH's 2024 theme of Black Arts by exploring how African-descended people contribute to artistic movements and expand transgenerational and transcultural artistic art forms in the United States.

12. **Awardee/Project Leads:** Elizabeth Porter, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) Coordinator; Jennifer Tang, Ph.D., Assistant Professor & Acquisitions Librarian; Marcella Bencivenni, Ph.D., Professor of History, Behavioral and Social Sciences Department; and Inmaculada Lara-Bonilla, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Humanities Department
Project Title: "Women's History and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion"
Award Amount: \$1,500

Project Description: This year's Women's History Month activities will consider women's history in relation to discourses of diversity, equity, and inclusion through a series of events that will engage students and the College community in enriching discussions. Prof. Jennifer Tang will explore the fraught history of Barbie and its ever-changing relationship to themes of diversity and inclusion. Prof. Marcella Bencivenni will host a conversation on the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire's continued legacy with Prof. Edvige Giunta and Maryanne Trasciatti, the co-editors of [Talking to the Girls: Intimate and Political Essays on the Triangle Fire](#). Prof. Inmaculada Lara-Bonilla will host a roundtable of contemporary Latina writers and editors to explore their role in nurturing the continuum between writing and publishing in this community, in New York City and beyond.

13. **Awardee/Project Leads:** Emmy Thelander, Adjunct Assistant Professor; and Andrew London, Lecturer, Media Design Unit, Humanities Department

Project Title: "Animating Difference"

Award Amount: \$1,450

Project Description: This grant will provide supplies for introductory animation students to make stop-motion puppet films that tell stories based on their personal experiences related to their diverse backgrounds. Students will write and produce a scene that represents a time they felt different or that expresses a unique aspect of their culture. In creating an original animated film by hand, students learn new tools to express themselves, gain confidence in their abilities to narrate their experiences, develop team-working skills, build community, and begin a career in media production. Students will share their animations during the DUM-D Festival, thereby celebrating their individual backgrounds and enriching the Hostos community.

14. **Awardee/Project Lead:** Khadidia Traore, Hostos Student

Project Title: "Cultural Event – Zakat Festival"

Award Amount: \$1,000

Project Description: The event will introduce our campus to the true meaning of Islam by inviting the campus community to come celebrate Eid-al-Fitr, an Islamic Festival that marks the end of Ramadan. Students will learn about Islam's vast cultural history through stimulating conversations and engaging activities that will increase their appreciation for difference. The festival will look at Islam's history, from its beginnings to the present day. Activities will focus on the diverse cultures that make up the Islamic world, ranging from traditional ceremonies to modern expressions, and feature diverse West African foods for the Hostos community to enjoy.

15. **Awardee/Project Lead:** Elizabeth Wilson, Director, School-College Partnerships

Project Title: "Management in A Changing World: How to Manage for Equity, Sustainability, and Results"

Award Amount: \$1,000

Project Description: The goal of this project is to engage HEO directors and managers in a reflective practice on managing teams through a Justice Diversity Equity and Inclusion (JDEI) lens. This project provides professional development to directors across divisions, and also offers small groups discussions on JDEI management topics. Managers will identify challenges and opportunities for growth within their roles. They will learn concrete management skills, specifically supervising through an equity lens including how to fairly exercise power in an environment that spans racial, generational, gender, and other identity divides.