

The S·D·E·M Gazette

CUNY

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT + ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT • Issue #15

O·V·P
Office of the
Vice President
SDEM Hostos Community College



From the desk of VP Yates

Welcome to the Spring 2023 term! With an array of welcoming events over the past few weeks, I am delighted to see the Hostos campus in full swing and that the SDEM staff are at the forefront, ready to help lead our students to success. The energy and excitement you all bring to our campus are inspiring and will propel us forward stronger than ever. This spring semester we saw an enrollment resurgence and it is because of the your contributions and extraordinary dedication to our students and our community that this was possible. Thank you. Let's continue this momentum and work together to offer superior student-centric services and prepare for the upcoming enrollment year!

In this issue, you will find out of what's new with our resilient students, including highlights about some of our top-notch scholars, and individual student support units.

La Toro Yates, Ph.D.

OUR RESILIENT STUDENTS

The Student Development Enrollment Management (SDEM) division started off the spring semester with great excitement and optimism as we welcomed the new and returning students to campus. We celebrated the re-opening of the cafeteria, students converged - the energy was quite palpable. "This is like old times," someone said. There was a cacophony of laughter, shrill screams, and chatter. Our students are back in person.

Our students have grit. They are able to rise above the challenges of the pandemic and make their way to in-person classes. In spite of the incredible challenges of dealing with family losses, and economic, social, and educational inequities during the pandemic, our students realize that education is a major part of their life plan. Although they continue to face educational and economic barriers in their pursuit of higher education, students returned to Hostos to work on fulfilling their life's dream. Determined to overcome these challenges, they will stay with us as long as they can, and do their best – and we as faculty, administrators, and staff recognize this. Collectively, we create bridges to help our students and direct them to resources to navigate and overcome obstacles and personal challenges in their lives. Our students are managing competing responsibilities: studying, working to meet financial obligations, parenting, heading households, etc. We are well aware of the importance of wrap-around services to holistically meet their needs so they can remain in school and succeed academically.

The SDEM team at Hostos is dedicated to allocating and repurposing resources and developing initiatives to support our students' success. We expanded services to create more flexible options for students to meet with advisors through our hybrid enrollment sessions. The recent re-launch of Caiman Direct, our virtual One-Stop Student Center creates the opportunity for students to conveniently meet with someone who will assist them with navigating various aspects of college life without having to be on campus in person. We rewarded students' academic performance by focusing on their financial needs through the \$50,000 initiative and strategically awarded BTSA Funds. Overall, these initiatives are contributing to our student success and retention.

As the Associate Dean of Student Development and Enrollment Management, one of my goals is to remain steadfast in examining and reassessing the evolving priorities of our students' needs. Our team will continue to seek out opportunities to implement initiatives that will enhance the student experience at Hostos. I believe in the students' ability to succeed and we should all stand strong in our shared commitment to support our students through a blend of the opportunities and services that we offer.

To the SDEM team, let us continue to build on the momentum we have developed by inspiring and supporting each other and working in partnership towards the common goal of enhancing our student experience! We celebrate the resilience of our students and celebrate the commitment and dedication of our team to accomplish this.

— Dr. Althea Sterling

The Café is OPEN!

The Hostos Café, on C-building's third floor, is officially reopened! After a thorough process, the Office of Administration and Finance selected A La Carte Menu Services, Inc.

On Wednesday, January 25, the revitalized cafeteria space hosted a soft opening, inviting students, staff, and faculty to get a glimpse of the delectable they will be offering. Some free items at the inauguration included deli subs, wraps, garden and fruit salads, meat, turkey, and veggie burgers, pizzas, assorted chips, cupcakes, cookies, and beverages. The cafeteria hours will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, making it convenient for students, faculty, and staff to grab a bite.

POLICY UPDATE:

Health & Wellness

CUNY has updated the COVID guidelines for the Spring 2023 semester and they can be viewed on Hostos' Campus COVID-19 Plan and COVID-19 Readiness website.

Effective February 1, 2023:

- CUNY will no longer require proof of vaccination or a recent negative COVID test for visitors. A visitor to a University campus is defined as someone who is not a CUNY student, faculty, or staff member.
- CUNY will reduce Random Testing from 10% of the on-campus population to 5%. Participation in the random surveillance testing is mandatory and failure to comply will result in the removal of the individual's Cleared4 access pass to CUNY spaces.
- CUNY will no longer require gateway testing for student-athletes.

HOSTOS SEMESTER KICK-OFFS

SPRING 2023 WELCOME DAYS: A TWO-DAY CELEBRATION!

Thanks to the support of the President, divisional Vice Presidents, and staff students began the Spring semester with a two-day celebration. Welcome Days was designed to connect our professionals and student leaders with new and continuing students coming to campus during the first and second days of classes. It is laudable that volunteers have emerged from offices and programs across the divisions and service directors have donated Hostos swag for student prizes. This retention effort strives to connect volunteers with upwards of 2,000 students, faculty and staff over the two days and will help establish the tone for the semester for what students can expect when using campus resources and reaching out for support.

As part of this retention activity, all campus professionals greeted students in the hallways around campus. The more we help students connect with us, the more reasons they may find to complete their educational journey and achieve their goals at Hostos.



FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE ORIENTATION

This past week on January 21st the First Year Experience Committee hosted our first in-person post-pandemic New Student Orientation. A healthy turnout of approximately 120 new incoming students graced the campus, eager to start off their first semester on the right foot. Students were welcomed by our Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Wang, Vice President of SDEM Dr. La Toro Yates, and SGA President Leaghton Ozoria. The new students were fully engaged in the information sessions, campus tour or simply conversing with administrators and staff who were on site to share the wonderful resources Hostos has to offer.

Thanks to the First Year Experience Committee for planning and executing the new student orientation. This would not have been possible without the commitment of the staff from both the academic and administrative units as well as the student leaders who participated. Thanks to Public Safety for their diligence in ensuring we had an incident-free event and for facilitating the taking of photo ID's. To the custodial staff, thank you for ensuring we had a well-kept building to host our new students.

Kudos to everyone for showing up to support and create a welcoming experience for our new students!



Student Corner

Nataliya Dixon— Carpe Diem



Nataliya Dixon left everything she loves in Jamaica in pursuit of a better education. She began her studies at Hostos in the Fall of 2021. A full-time student, majoring in forensic science, Nataliya maintains a 3.8 GPA and still finds time to participate in campus activities. She is the Vice President of the Math Club, serves as the Vice President of Fellowships as a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, and was recently approached to be a Research Assistant with Professor Prince of the Math Department.

Thanks to the Jobs on Campus initiative, we met Nataliya and immediately hired her as our SDEM Social Media Intern. Nataliya is an integral part of the communications team. She helped initiate the @Hostos_SDEM IG page and drafted its communication plan. While researching best practices, she also brings in a fresh take when creating SDEM social media content from a student's perspective; and provides a forum for students to connect, get informed, and be motivated.

Her educational goal is to obtain her Ph.D. In Forensic Science. Nataliya states "I intend to join and fight against crime, especially against women and children. More investigative minds are needed to solve some of the cases and bring the perpetrators to justice."

We are proud of her accomplishments, appreciate her hard work, and look forward to supporting the bright future she has ahead!

Two Hostos Students Recognized by NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

On December 7, Hostos Community College students, Gianna Pascal and Yonaleska Russo, each received \$1,000 at the NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Holiday Awards Ceremony to honor their established track record of serving their communities.

Pascal and Russo major in Early Childhood Education and Community Health, respectively. They are both transferring to Lehman College after graduating in Spring 2023.

The accolade is a reminder of their journey to success. "This milestone is proof of all that I have been able to accomplish until now," said Russo. "It is nice to know that my hard work is recognized. Being a student at Hostos is a privilege and an honor," added Pascal.

(L-R) Dean of Community Relations, Ana García Reyes, Hostos student Gianna Pascal, and Hostos student Yonaleska Russo at the Holiday Awards Ceremony of the NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. (Photo provided by Dean García Reyes)



Calling All Units!

#HostosChildren

Children's Center

CULTURAL FASHION SHOW

Our littlest twos celebrated the end of November with a fashion show representing the flags of their countries. November was a time to be thankful and reflect on the many cultures of our families. Some countries represented were Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Burkina Faso, Africa.

TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

On Thursday, December 8, our three and four-year-olds attended the Hostos Community College Tree Lighting Ceremony along with the Hostos community of faculty, staff, and students. The children treated us to a colorful rendition of Jingle Bells and then joined in the festivities while dancing up a storm, and jingling their handbells. Great time had by all!

#Mental Health Matters

College Discovery

The College Discovery Office hosted a workshop led by Eric Rodríguez, Chair of the CUNY-Wide Mental Health Committee. The workshop was on December 8 called "Reclaim Yourself: The Importance of Self-Talk." This workshop was created by the SEEK/CD MH Committee and was the last of a series of workshops that gave students an opportunity to engage mental health professionals around topics of mental health in an informal setting. The importance of Self Talk gives students a chance to understand the power of language and how it impacts subsequent actions toward change. The conversation allows students to understand obstacles to positive self-talk while also exploring skills to possess and process more positive thoughts.

Counseling Center

The counseling center hosted an in-person event in collaboration with SGA. The focus was to create a safe space for students to process the reopening of the college and the world after the pandemic. Students (25) and staff in attendance were able to share openly, processing themes like anxiety, safety, purpose, social life, wellness, mental health, and adjustments. Attendees were able to support each other and adhered to the house rules while building community, normalizing concerns, and managing stress. Counselors were able to recognize common trends and the need for additional support for older students, specifically those who have been out of the educational session for a long period of time. The Counseling Center provided coloring books, coloring pencils, a few sound machines, psychoeducation on anxiety and stress management as well as information about our services verbally and in written form.

#HostosRecreation

Accessibility Resource Center

In collaboration with CUNYAC and the Wheelchair Basketball Association, hosted a Fall Winter Wheelchair Basketball Tournament Saturday, December 3, in the Hostos Gym. The day began with the men's Basketball team VS Philadelphia Magee from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., followed by our women's team VS Philadelphia Magee 2 to 4 p.m.

Athletics

- The Women's Basketball team remained ranked #2 in the nation in this week's NJCAA national poll and was selected as the preseason #1 team in the CUNYAC preseason poll.
- Savannah Williams was selected as the preseason CUNYAC player of the year.
- Sophomore Aiyana Hicks was selected as the CUNYAC Player of the Week for her on-the-court performance to start the season.
- Men's Basketball was selected as the preseason #1 team in the CUNYAC preseason poll.
- Marquise Paulin was selected as the preseason CUNYAC player of the year.

#StudentFundsStudentAssist

Transfer Services

The divisions of Student Development and Institutional Advancement collaborated on a grant and were awarded \$100k (over 2 years) for Peer Mentors. These Peer Mentors will work with students that are transferring to senior colleges to facilitate smooth and seamless transitions.

[Continued next page](#)

The S·D·E·M Gazette

Unit Highlights, continued

Financial Aid

A total of 2,114 Hostos students received just over \$1M dollars of Book Advances from Jan 20 – Feb 3, 2023, with an average amount of \$500; the Financial Aid Office processes Book Advances based on Pell/TAP/SEOG awards.

The U.S. Department of Education allocated to Hostos \$1.25M in Supplemental Support under American Response Plan (SSARP) funds that the Financial Aid Office awarded for direct refunds to 3315 Hostos students to support housing, tuition, food insecurity, basic needs, and institutional funds to expand mental healthcare, create retention programs, and monitor and suppress the spread of COVID-19, among other initiatives designed in response to the pandemic.

Hostos Financial Aid awarded a combined \$550K in CRRSAA MSI and Discretionary SEOG funds to 578 Continuing students enrolled in Fall 2022, to assist them during the COVID-19 national emergency with unexpected expended unmet need, including any component of their cost of attendance—particularly past due tuition & fees.

- 70% have been retained and registered for Spring 2023
- 5% have applied to graduate.

SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS/and much more!

Four Hostos Students Recognized By Kaplan Educational Foundation

Four Hostos students were selected as scholars of the 2023 Kaplan Leadership Program (KLP), a longstanding advising initiative of the Kaplan Educational Foundation (KEF). With four out of eleven spots earned by Hostos students, the College became the institution with the most participants in KLP's 2023 classification. **José González, Yassine Gaye, Fatima Bah, and Andre Watson** are this year's awardees. They will join a cohort that receives mentoring to transfer into four-year colleges successfully.

The students have started meeting with their Kaplan mentors to work on their applications. Each year, they must apply to 25 schools. The program covers many costs: applications, travel, and books. Additionally, all students are advised on the availability of all-expenses-paid financial aid programs at each of their desired institutions.

According to awardee and Accounting major José González, the achievement sets an example for future generations. "Being selected for Kaplan is a monumental opportunity to get closer to my dreams and be a role model to those that come after me," he affirmed. "I am very excited and grateful to take the next steps in the college transfer process," added awardee Yassine Gaye, who majors in Chemical Engineering and serves as Student Affairs Commissioner in the Student Government Association at Hostos.

The opportunity the KLP gives to students comes at significant junctures in each of their lives. "As a single mother, not only is KEF giving me a chance but also providing me with all the support a determined student would need to achieve greatness. I am genuinely happy and grateful," stated Fatima Bah, Mathematics major.

Hostos has an established success record with KLP. In past years, students have transferred to Stanford University, Cornell University, New York University, and others.

We wish all the best to our 2023 Kaplan Scholars!



Welcome to SDEM!

Angel Santana
Emani Palma

SSCU Coaches

Santa Arocho

Associate Director, SSCU

Gloria Santiago

Interim Student Appeals Coordinator

Jessica Sutherland

ARC/CUNY Unlimited

The S·D·E·M Gazette

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THIS SEMESTER:

Check your email for schedules, brought to you by Ursula Sanders of the Office of Health and Wellness:
Salsa • Keep Calm and Carry Yarn • Heidi's Healthy Canasta • Staff & Faculty Salsa Social

For a full calendar of campus-wide Black History Month events, and more, [click here](#).

Want to take advantage the amazing array of athletics facilities here at Hostos?
[Click here](#) for the spring 2023 Recreational Schedule.

Did you know that you can read to the Hostos Children? Just ask VP Yates, once a month he takes time to read to the children and you can too! If you are an energetic story teller and want to take a break from the everyday hustle and bustle that is student services volunteer some time and read to the Hostos Children at the Children Center. To schedule a read, email Ms. Paulina Martinez at pmartinez@hostos.cuny.edu.

Unsung Hero

SDEM would like to recognize the incredible efforts made by our Scholarships Coordinator, **Marina Esquilin**. Over the past two semesters, she has helped distribute and expand external scholarship offerings to support our student's financial needs. With her previous experience with the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC), she listens and assesses students and refers those she believes could utilize additional services. She also connects ARC students to scholarships and grants to help with financial difficulties, including tuition balance.

She is someone who is truly passionate about her job and is committed to enhancing financial support to our Hostos Community College students. We are excited to have her officially join our team this semester and see what she has planned next for the Scholarship Office.

Poems to Inspire Our Community

To Black Women *by Gwendolyn Brooks*

Sisters,

Where there is cold silence
no hallelujahs, no hurrahs at all, no handshakes,
no neon red or blue, no smiling faces
prevail.

Prevail across the editors of the world
who are obsessed, self-honeying and self-crowned
in the seduced arena.
It has been a hard trudge, with fainting, bandaging and death.
There have been startling confrontations.

There have been trappings. Trappings of monarchs and of other men.
But there remain large countries in your eyes.

Shrewd sun.
The civil balance. The listening secrets.

And you create and train your flowers still.



Stay tuned for our next issue in the fall!

**Do you have a recommendation for SDEM's Unsung Hero*
If so, email ebonilla@hostos.cuny.edu your nominations.
A committee will then review and select the SDEM Unsung Hero.**

**nominations remain anonymous*