



Hostos
Community College

The S·D·E·M Gazette

Student Development + Enrollment Management

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2024-25



A message from Interim VP Althea Sterling

Dear SDEM TEAM,

As we wrap up the 2024–2025 academic year, I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you. This year was marked by transition, challenge, and meaningful progress, and through it all, you remained committed, focused, and deeply student-centered.

Amid administrative shifts and unit realignments—we still thrived. Thanks to your hard work, innovative thinking, and care, enrollment increased for both Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. That is no small feat — a true testament to your dedication.

Together, we cultivated a vibrant and welcoming campus community filled with engaging events, from high-energy BBQs and mental health workshops to game trivia days, Transfer Fairs, and Decision Day. These moments fostered connection and growth for our students. Our athletics program also had an outstanding year, earning historic victories and well-deserved recognition. The One Stop Center continued its vital role in addressing food insecurity, and the Family Empowerment Program delivered holiday magic to our families. This year also marked the opening of the Hostos Women’s Center— a safe , inclusive space where students of all identities can find support and community.

I also want to highlight the Admissions team for leading our new onboarding process, guiding students from admission to enrollment while keeping their experience at the forefront as we gear up for a strong Fall 2025.

And of course, our student leaders continued to shine—representing Hostos with pride across the city and on national stages. Your mentorship made that possible.

As we look ahead to Fall 2025, let’s carry this momentum forward. Let’s continue to work collaboratively, as one team, united by one purpose: student success.

Thank you for your commitment. It is a true honor to lead this important work alongside you.

With deep appreciation,

Dr. Althea Sterling

Interim Vice President, Student Development and Enrollment Management (SDEM)

»» CAIMANS BASKETBALL TEAMS SHINE IN 2024-25 SEASON

The Hostos Women's and Men's Basketball teams had an exceptional season marked by talent, dedication, and teamwork.

The Women's team went 26-1, winning their eighth straight CUNY title, the Region XV Championship, and a spot in the NJCAA National Tournament. Daja White earned Player of the Year and NJCAA First Team All-America honors, while Coach Dwight Shaw was named Co-Coach of the Year.

The Men's team finished 26-5 and won their second consecutive CUNY title. Tyrese Conway was named CUNY and Region XV Player of the Year and earned NJCAA Second Team All-America honors.

We're proud of both teams—LET'S GO CAIMANS!



»» EMPOWERING VOICES, CREATING SPACES: THE WOMEN'S CENTER AT HOSTOS

On December 4, 2024, Hostos Community College proudly unveiled its new Women's Center—an inclusive and supportive space open to individuals of all backgrounds. Backed by President Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis and Interim Vice President Sterling, the center offers resources such as gender-based programming and peer support groups designed to empower students and promote equity.

This initiative underscores Hostos' deep commitment to student success and well-being, ensuring every student feels seen, supported, and valued. The Women's Center is a vital step forward in fostering a thriving and inclusive campus community.

To learn more or explore collaboration opportunities, visit the center or connect with Ms. Lillian Morales, Director of the Women's Center.



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»» SDEM BBQS: CAIMAN, CONNECTION AND REFLECTION



The SDEM Fall BBQ and Spring BBQ brought together students, faculty, staff, and friends for delicious food, music, and fun activities. Each celebration marked a key moment in the academic calendar—welcoming the start of the fall semester and celebrating the close of the spring term. President Daisy Cocco De Filippis and Interim Vice President Sterling shared inspiring remarks at both gatherings, offering warm welcomes in the fall and heartfelt reflections in the spring.



Both events were filled with laughter, connection, and Caiman pride—creating lasting memories and setting the tone for a vibrant campus community.



»» HOSTOS PEER MENTOR PROGRAM ENSURES TRANSFER SUCCESS

Under the leadership of the Director of Transfer Services, Rocio Rayo, the Hostos Peer Mentor Program has significantly boosted the transfer rate of our students.

Rocio innovative approach has ensured that students are not only applying but also successfully enrolling and adjusting to life at four-year colleges.

Kudos to Rocio for paving the way for student success, providing ongoing mentorship, and fostering a supportive transfer process. The program's success reflects Hostos' commitment to increasing social mobility, and we look forward to its continued growth!





>>> FULL PLATES, FULL HEARTS @ HOSTOS

This season, the Hostos One Stop Center continued its mission to support students through two impactful initiatives aimed at addressing food insecurity.

In November, the Center hosted its annual Thanksgiving Turkey and Chicken Drive, distributing 100 turkeys, 100 chickens, and a variety of holiday sides—thanks to the generosity of donors and community partners. The event helped ensure that students could enjoy a festive meal and feel the support of the Hostos community before the holiday break.

Throughout the fall and spring semesters, One Stop also partnered with CUNY, the NYC Council, and B&Y Catering to distribute over 800 bags of fresh produce. These were handed out every other Wednesday at the Savoy Building, providing consistent access to nutritious food for students and their families.

A heartfelt thank you to Madeline Cruz, One Stop Coordinator, and the entire One Stop team for their tireless efforts. Your dedication continues to fuel student success—one meal at a time.

>>> WINTER WONDERS WITH FEP!

The annual Winter Festival, hosted by the Family Empowerment Program, brought students and their children together to celebrate the holiday season. The event featured a wide range of family-friendly activities, including music, an obstacle-course bouncy house, face painting, a magic show performed by elves, balloon animals, cotton candy, and carnival games with prizes. Children also enjoyed painting at festive craft tables. Christeen Francis, FEP Manager, shared that more than 75 toys were distributed during the event, adding an extra dose of holiday cheer to an already joyful celebration.



»»» HOVA CELEBRATES THE 2025 JOSEPH ALICEA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

This year, the Office of Veteran Affairs proudly recognized two outstanding students as recipients of the Joseph Alicea Scholarship, each awarded \$1,000 in honor of their dedication, service, and academic excellence.

The 2025 recipients were:

- Mr. Michael Smith, a U.S. Army veteran and Community Health AS major.
- Mr. Cameron Liz, a U.S. Air Force veteran and Radiologic Technology AAS major.

Both students made exemplary contributions to Hostos and the military communities. Their hard work and commitment to service truly embody the values of this scholarship, which is named in honor of our esteemed colleague Joseph Alicea, a Vietnam veteran. If you are a Veteran or family member, connect with Sergeant Ricardo Garcia, Veterans Coordinator at rgarcia@hostos.cuny.edu.



»»» TWO HOSTOS STUDENTS NAMED 2024-25 KAPLAN LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS

Congratulations to Marco Alvarez and Minerva Ramirez Sencion on being selected as 2024–2025 Kaplan Leadership Scholars!

Marco, an A.S. student in Interdisciplinary Studies, aims to launch a nonprofit focused on addressing community disparities. Minerva, a first-generation student majoring in Business Management, aspires to champion inclusivity within the gaming industry.

This prestigious award supports high-achieving, low-income students in completing their degrees and transferring to top universities. We're excited to see all that Marco and Minerva will accomplish!

If you know students who could benefit from scholarship opportunities like this, please connect them with Marina Esquilin, Scholarships Coordinator, at mesquilin@hostos.cuny.edu.

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>>> SDEM KEYS TO EXCELLENCE AWARD: TEMU WATSON



At this spring's SDEM divisional meeting, Interim Vice President Althea Sterling proudly presented Temu Watson, Associate Director of the Student Success Coaching Unit (SSCU), with the inaugural Keys to Excellence Award—an honor recognizing staff who go above and beyond in supporting student success.

In his role, Temu has been instrumental in guiding students through the enrollment process and connecting them to the resources they need to thrive.

“His unwavering commitment to excellence and student success reflects the core values of Hostos.” — Dr. Althea Sterling

Temu's leadership, passion, and dedication continue to inspire colleagues and students alike, embodying the mission and values of our institution. Congratulations, Temu, on this well-deserved recognition!

The SDEM Keys to Excellence Award will be presented annually at the division's meeting to honor outstanding contributions to student success.

>>> STAFF SPOTLIGHT: FABIÁN WANDER

In October 2024, Fabián Wander, Director of Counseling and Health and Wellness, was recognized at the 2024 EL Awards as one of 20 influential Hispanic/Latino leaders. With nearly two decades of experience, Fabián has been a tireless advocate for student well-being, leading impactful initiatives such as Family Empowerment and Domestic Violence awareness programs.

His commitment extends beyond health services—providing essential resources like food assistance, legal aid, and housing referrals. In addition, Fabián operates a private mental health practice in the Bronx, continuing his mission to support community wellness.

We are proud to celebrate his leadership and unwavering dedication to making a meaningful difference!





»» STAFF SPOTLIGHT: ADRIANA LAWTON

Adriana Lawton, a dedicated Admissions Advisor in SDEM, has been awarded a grant from the New York State Association for College Admissions Counseling (NYSACAC) to attend their upcoming conference in Oneonta, NY, from June 2–6. The conference supports the professional growth of admissions counselors through workshops and networking, aligning with SDEM’s ongoing commitment to staff development and student success.

Reflecting on this incredible opportunity, Interim Associate Dean of SDEM Carlos Rivera stated, “We are proud to support Adriana’s professional growth as it enhances her expertise and directly benefits our mission to deliver exceptional student services. At SDEM, we firmly believe that investing in our team is investing in our students’ success.”

»» STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: HOSTOS STUDENTS SOAR ON AND OFF CAMPUS

This spring, Hostos student leaders embraced growth through transformative experiences.

Six students attended the CUNY Emerging Leaders Conference at Guttman Community College, while Ángel Peralta and Cynthia Remadji Bongo represented Hostos at the National Character and Leadership Symposium at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The season concluded with the 2025 SGA/SLA SOAR Retreat at YMCA Camp Bernie, featuring team-building, archery, and leadership challenges.

Special thanks to Jason Libfeld, SLA Coordinator, Jerry Rosa, Student Activities Director, and alumnus Derick Moore for their continued support and this year’s SOAR t-shirt design.



>>> CONFRONTING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA IN BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES: A COLLABORATION WITH BWE AND PHI BETA SIGMA

In a time when Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts are being challenged nationwide, Hostos Community College's SDEM Division partnered with Bilal World Entertainment (BWE) and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. to present Confronting the Stigma: A Mental Health Event to Help Black and Brown Men Heal on February 8, 2025, at the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture.

The event aimed to break mental health stigmas, provide resources, and promote healing in communities of color. Interim VP of SDEM Dr. Althea Sterling shared, "Hostos was proud to partner with BWE to create space for dialogue and reflection on the challenges and triumphs Black and Brown men face when navigating mental health." Attendees also took part in a Mental Health Fair and a private screening of Bilal's film PERDIDO, which highlighted these important themes.



>>> HOSTOS STUDENT SELECTED TO 2025 ALL-NEW YORK ACADEMIC TEAM

On Tuesday, April 29, 2025, the New York Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa hosted a special recognition ceremony in Albany, New York, honoring members of the 2025 All-New York Academic Team from SUNY and CUNY community colleges.

Hostos Community College proudly celebrates Nursing student Nedelyn Helena-Diaz, who was selected for this prestigious honor for the 2024–2025 academic year. As part of the ceremony, all honorees received a medallion and certificate recognizing their academic excellence and leadership.

Nedelyn was joined at the event by her close friend and SGA Vice President Cynthia Remadji Bongo and her advisor Jason Libfeld, SLA Coordinator.

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>>> SDEM Team Updates: New Roles



- **Vice President's Office:**
 - Dr. Althea Sterling, Interim VP of SDEM
 - Carlos Rivera, Interim Associate Dean
- **College Discovery:**
 - Eric Rweyemamu, Counselor
- **Admissions and Recruitment:**
 - Gloria Perez Rosa, Assistant Director
 - Evelyn Hiciano, Enrollment Specialist
 - Adrian Furcal, Admissions Advisor
- **SDEM Communications:**
 - Emily Astacio, CRM Communications Coordinator
 - Matthew Torres, Marketing and Communications Specialist
- **ARC:**
 - Marie Ortiz, Director
 - Jessica Sutherland, Student Disability Services Specialist
- **Transfer Services:**
 - Samantha Maldonado, Assistant Director
- **Women's Center:**
 - Lillian Morales, Director

>>> A HUGE SHOUT-OUT TO OUR STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: THE UNSUNG HEROES OF HOSTOS!

As we reflect on another successful academic year, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the student support service teams who have made a lasting impact.

Through counseling, wellness initiatives, academic support, and leadership development, these teams have been instrumental in helping students thrive. The engaging events and activities they organized have also built a strong sense of community and connection across campus.

To all the dedicated staff—thank you for your unwavering commitment to student success and well-being. You truly are our unsung heroes!



WHAT'S TO COME!

>>> LIGHTS, CAMERA, ENROLLMENT: SDEM NEW VIDEO SERIES SUPPORTS STUDENT SUCCESS

We're excited to launch a new series of enrollment support videos highlighting the many services and resources available to Hostos students. These short, engaging videos will be shared across social media, text, and email to boost enrollment and showcase how Hostos supports student success. Ready to create your video? Schedule with Matt today at mtorres@hostos.cuny.edu.

Thank you to all the units who contributed—this marks the start of even more collaborative marketing efforts ahead!

>>> HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE OPEN HOUSE - MAY 31!

Join us for the Hostos Community College Open House on Saturday, May 31! This event offers prospective students and their families a gateway to explore Hostos' vibrant academic programs, student services, and campus life. Attendees will gain valuable insights into academic and career opportunities, empowering them to make informed decisions about their futures.

Administrative and academic units will also benefit from participating, as the event provides a prime platform to showcase educational programs, student services, and the college's commitment to academic excellence. Faculty and staff interested in attending the resource fair are encouraged to connect with Interim Associate Dean Carlos Rivera at carivera@hostos.cuny.edu.

Visit the official event page [HERE](#). We look forward to a day of exploration, insight, and connection!

>>> NOMINATE A HOSTOS UNSUNG HERO

Know someone who goes above and beyond behind the scenes? Nominate them for the Unsung Hero Award!

We're now accepting nominations for next spring's award, which honors individuals whose quiet dedication makes a big impact on the Hostos community. To submit a nomination, contact Elba Bonilla at ebonilla@hostos.cuny.edu.

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