

Eugenio María de Hostos Community College
State of the College Meeting
September 16, 2020
President's Welcome Remarks

Dear Members of the Hostos Family,

It is good to be with you all, sharing my first State of the College gathering. Thank you Diana Kreymer, our moderator, and the wonderful team of speakers this afternoon. This presentation is intended to feature a rich array of diverse voices, underscoring the generous team efforts taking place on our college. We will schedule four State of the College gatherings this year, one at the beginning and the end of each academic semester. It is also in keeping with the creation of our Hostos Weekly, designed to share information often and widely and for the college community to hear it from multiple voices.

The first lines of "Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens set the stage for my brief remarks today, "It was the best of times, the worst of times..." One could understandably argue that these are the "worst of times." Yes, the devastating spread of the COVID 19-coronavirus, the illnesses and deaths, the economic hardships, and the increasing uncertainties about the powerful and devastating impact of climate change can make us sad and fearful. They are testing us in ways most of us have not seen since previous world wars, natural disasters and pandemics. We add to those worries the continued struggle for just treatment for all and the valiant leadership of the Black Lives Matter movement, leaders and participants, even as they face opposition.

However, and let me embrace the hopeful side of me, of all of us; the one that has made us get up and continue to move forward with our mission: We are seeing "the best of times" among those around us who demonstrate kindness, patience and resilience during these challenging times. The calls for helping each other have been heard by many in our communities, the state and the nation. Each day we hear about family helping family and neighbors helping, especially for our most vulnerable citizens.

Here at Hostos Community College we are striving for the best of times amid this seemingly worst of times. Our faculty members continue to prepare and strengthen offerings of online courses. Thanks to our technology experts our students are supported with the devices and technology needed and class interactions to benefit from the revised ways of teaching and learning. Web access to tutoring and academic advising and coaching are designed to keep our students on track toward completion of their course responsibilities and graduation goals. You will hear more from colleagues about this and many other efforts shortly.

Hostos Community College is committed to live its mission in generous and talented ways. Let me just affirm the six pillars of our HCC Mission Statement:

- Provide access to higher education.
- Serve as a community resource.
- Celebrate diversity and multiculturalism.
- Facilitate socio-economic mobility.
- Develop linguistic, mathematical, technological and critical thinking proficiencies.
- Foster intellectual growth and lifelong learning.

These pillars are enhanced by the work taking place to support our Institutional Self-Study Priorities:

- **Systems Alignment:** Enhance our coordinated efforts to better support student academic momentum and completion.
- **Academic Competencies:** Foster student development of General Education competencies and language and math skills to support success in subsequent academic steps and in the job market.
- **Community Resource Hub:** Sustain and strengthen Hostos' role as a resource hub for our community.

To that end, you will be hearing more from us about academic assessment alignment, the work of OAA and of OIERA and the creation of a Task Force on General Education being constituted as I speak. Additionally, we should be ready in October to hold the first meeting of the HCC Community Advisory Council which will include members of the college community and a number of leaders in different community, industry, educational and governmental sectors.

Additionally, the 2020-2021 Priorities and activities are being finalized, basing ourselves on the recommendations of a group convened by then President David Gómez and the advice of Cabinet members working with their respective teams. Assistant Dean Babette Audant is working on the final touches, and we will distribute it college-wide before the end of September, updates in December, March and May. The work is framed on the following priorities:

- Ensuring a re-opening that is safe, and puts at the forefront the health of the college community, and at the same time it is also focused on quality instruction and academic and student support;
- Strengthen student advisement for all-incoming, transfer, and target populations, identified in need of additional support;
- Accelerate application to registration process;
- Clearly communicate graduate requirements and deadlines; and
- Promote a culture of “College Going” with First Year Experiences.

Finally, I end my brief remarks with a quote you will hear me bring up often from Pablo Neruda's Nobel Laureate speech: “All paths lead to the same goal; to convey to others what we are...but in this dance or in this song there are fulfilled the most ancient rites of our conscience in the awareness of being human and of believing in a common destiny.”

I believe that our common destiny is that of a community of purpose; an academic community that partners with multiple stakeholders and works closely together in harmony and in concert, to ensure that Eugenio María de Hostos Community College will live up to the promise made in our mission to embrace diversity and opportunity as the birthright of all.

Thank you for your support.

Mil gracias y bendiciones.

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.
Interim President