

WELCOME BACK SPRING 2024

Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 9:22 AM

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome back to each one of you. Your commitment and resilience are the driving forces that keep our academic community thriving. The Spring 2024 semester presents new opportunities and challenges, and I am confident that together, we will continue to enhance the educational experience for our students. This semester, we are focusing on several key areas:

- **Student Engagement:** Let's continue to create an inclusive and supportive environment that fosters student success both in and out of the classroom.
- **Academic Excellence:** I urge you to explore the recommended syllabus template, which includes information to guide you in sharing with students the policy for adopting Generative AI technology in the classroom. CTL will provide many professional development opportunities to further your commitment to academic excellence starting with Day Zero: Designing Effective and Inclusive Courses: Exploring the Art of Syllabus Crafting, Wednesday, January 24th 10-1; check email for Zoom registration information.
- **Community Collaboration:** Our role in the community is more vital than ever. I encourage you and your students to engage in initiatives that strengthen our sense of community.
- **Wellness and Balance:** Remember to take care of yourselves. A balanced approach to work and personal life is crucial for our collective well-being.

Please see the following for specific information on these initiatives:

- **Update on the Transition to Brightspace:** You can access Brightspace Resource Courses for Instructors using this link: <https://brightspace.cuny.edu/>. The [Office of Educational Technology](#) (EdTech) has been diligently working to expand the resources in the dedicated [Brightspace Hub](#) to include training materials and guides to help faculty (and soon students) become familiar with the features and new environment as we begin the Spring semester and get closer to the launch of the new LMS, Brightspace, in Summer 2024. The January PD sessions were attended by more than forty faculty members, and during the spring semester, further opportunities for professional development will be available. Check out the [workshop calendar](#) to find a workshop that fits your schedule. Additional trainings provided by the CUNY LMS Transition team are available on the [LMS Transition Website](#). Faculty scheduled to teach during the summer semester of 2024 are highly encouraged to arrange a one-on-one consultation with an instructional designer to assist them in getting their course materials ready. The appointment can be setup via email at EdTechSupport@hostos.cuny.edu, phone at 718.319.7915, or by visiting C-559.
- **Support Students with Disabilities:** CUNY Central has implemented a policy to support student with disabilities starting last fall. Please be aware of these obligations under law and CUNY policy for spring semester: In accordance with state law and existing CUNY policy, textbook and course materials information must be entered in Akademos or CUNYfirst at least two weeks *prior to the date the schedule of classes is made available*. **Textbook information for spring 2024 not previously entered must be entered immediately. Courses which do not require a textbook must also be identified as such.** This information is necessary to ensure that course materials are accessible to students with disabilities by the first day of class to the greatest extent possible. **We strongly recommend that instructors upload your course materials in the University-supported LMS (Blackboard) for each class regardless of modality.** A Blackboard course site has been created for every CUNY class scheduled for spring 2024. This action will help you identify accessibility problems using Ally, a tool within Blackboard, and work with technical experts to improve accessibility of course materials. Ally generates alternative formats that enable students to choose how to engage with the course's digital content. In accordance with the ADA, NYS IT Accessibility Policy, and other laws, you should consider the accessibility of course

materials, online learning products, platforms, and applications, including content they created, prior to use in the course. Ally will assist with this determination for content uploaded to Blackboard. Please refer to the 'Accessibility Resource Center' on the [syllabus template](#) and adopt the language on your own syllabi.

- **Syllabus Template (Policy to Adopt Generative AI):** To guide faculty in adopting or prohibiting the use of Generative AI technology in the classroom, we have developed a [template](#) to help you discuss the policy with your students. We strongly encourage you to adopt the recommended syllabus templates to ensure that all necessary information is included in your syllabi.
- **[Academic Implementation Plan \(AIP\)](#):** The Academic Implementation plan is developed to support the College's Strategic Plan, and guides us for the next five years in teaching excellence, curriculum innovation, and student support. The AIP is a living document, designed to evolve, reflecting our collective vision and hard work. It will be revised each fall by the three working groups, based on implementation results and institutional priorities. This iterative process ensures that our plan remains responsive to our changing environment and the needs of our community. Please use the AIP website for the update. If you would like to participate in the AIP working groups, please email me at Provost@hostos.cuny.edu.
- **[Student Symposia](#):** Applications for the Second Hostos Student Symposium, made possible with the support of the Ms. Mackenzie Scott's Gift, President's Initiatives, are due March 1st. The Symposium will take place on Thursday, April 18th from 9 am to 3 pm. Students can work with a faculty mentor to submit an abstract for any project from their Fall 23 or Spring 24 semesters. Students will receive a \$50 stipend, certificates, swag, and professional conference experience. Faculty mentors and students will be honored at a luncheon to be held during the Symposium. Please work with your students and encourage them to apply (click [here](#) to submit entries).
- **[Scholarly Activities Recognition](#):** The Office of Academic Affairs is committed to recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of our faculty and staff. This website will serve as a repository for achievements across disciplines in our division. If you have scholarly achievements you would like to share here, including but not limited to publications, presentations, performances, creative works, or undergraduate student research, please submit the information along with your name, department, and title, in APA or MLA style to scholarship@hostos.cuny.edu. Please allow 3-4 business days for your entry to appear.
- **[Succeed@Hostos](#)** progress surveys will launch twice during the Spring 2024 semester. The first early alert survey will help catch students who are not showing up regularly to class and incentivize them to get on track and connect with faculty, advisors, and peers. The second mid-term alert is generated for students enrolled in difficult classes. If you are teaching a hard-to-pass class, take a moment to complete mid-term progress surveys for your students and help connect them with our campus supports and services.

Reminders of important Dates:

- Faculty and staff welcome back gathering is scheduled for Tuesday, January 30 from 12:30pm-2:30pm in B401, the Academic Affairs Conference Room.
- Verification of Enrollment Rosters (VOE): Due from faculty on Feb 14th
- Last day to file for June 2024 Graduation: Apr 5th, please encourage your students to do so prior to the deadline
- Deadline for completion of incompletes (INC) grades for Fall 2023: May 15th
- Grades due: May 28th

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email me at Provost@hostos.cuny.edu. If we, or any member of the [Academic Affairs team](#), can be of assistance to you, don't hesitate to reach out.

Your dedication to our students and to each other is what makes Hostos a remarkable place. I am eager to see the accomplishments and progress we will achieve together this spring. Thank you for your continued hard work and dedication.

Sincerely,

Shiang-Kwei Wang
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost