



A MESSAGE FROM INTERIM PRESIDENT

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.

To the Hostos Community College Family,

As the Fall 2020 semester approaches, we find ourselves in a changed – and still changing – world. Our normal routines have been broken, our assumptions about the future have been shaken, and we are all wondering what the days and months ahead will bring.

By acknowledging the worries and fears we share in this uneasy time, we must not forget that we also possess the means to solve them. Change can be unsettling, but we have it in us to successfully meet any challenges the world presents. We will accomplish this by working together and looking out for each other.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hostos has taken every conceivable step to insure the continuing health and safety of its students, faculty and staff, as well as our friends in the community and our friends from every corner of New York City and the world. We have closely monitored (and put into effect on campus) the rules and regulations developed by Governor Cuomo and others.

Sheltering in place, wearing face coverings and physical distancing have proven effective in limiting risks relating to the coronavirus and so, in conjunction with state officials and CUNY Central, Hostos can now join other institutions in participating in Phase 4 of New York City's reopening.

This decision was reached after much thought and deliberation. As we've seen in other states, reopening too quickly and without proper planning only leads to increased illness and death. We have all seen enough of both of those things in months past, and we have no desire to see any more. This is why Hostos classes have been taught online and the campus itself shut down since mid-March. We will never gamble with the lives of any of the Hostos family – that is a solemn promise.

What does reopening mean for Hostos?

- Classes will continue to be conducted online
- The physical campus will be open on a very limited basis: students, faculty, staff, and any visitors will be required to make an appointment or receive permission prior to entering any of the buildings
- Temperatures will be taken and a brief COVID-19 health check will be required before entry is allowed
- Masks or other face coverings will be required at all times, and the 6-foot physical distancing principle will be rigorously enforced

- Access to the Library, open computer lab, Food Pantry, Financial Aid Office, and the Counseling Center will also be limited; please check the Hostos website for further information and to plan your visit

For now, any activity that can be conducted online is preferable to in-person activity. This will continue until the pandemic is under greater control and further decisions can be made about the College's hours and services. Of course, this will require a great deal of patience and collaboration on everyone's part, but the sooner we heed common sense measures that have proven effective, the sooner things will return to "normal."

In truth, there may not be a "normal" to which things return. Lives have been lost; we weep for those who have left us and for the loved ones left behind. Many jobs have disappeared in a hard-hit economy, and they may not be restored. There is no way yet to assimilate all the changes that have occurred and keep occurring – or to determine when they will end.

But I do know this: Hostos has played a critical role in the life of the South Bronx and its diverse communities since 1968. We are not going anywhere. We are here for you, as you have been and are here today for us.

When the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda accepted the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1971, he said, in part:

"Todos los caminos llevan al mismo objetivo: transmitir a los demás lo que somos. Y debemos atravesar la soledad y la dificultad, el aislamiento y el silencio para llegar al lugar encantado donde podemos bailar nuestra danza torpe y cantar nuestra canción triste, pero en esta danza o en esta canción se cumplen los ritos más antiguos de nuestra conciencia en la conciencia de ser humano y de creer en un destino común."

"All paths lead to the same goal: to convey to others what we are. And we must pass through solitude and difficulty, isolation and silence in order to reach forth to the enchanted place where we can dance our clumsy dance and sing our sorrowful song – 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."

As we begin this Fall 2020 semester, it is wise to remember our common destiny.

We will make it through this. We will weather this storm together.

Mil gracias y bendiciones,

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.
Interim President

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