

November 14, 2024

Education Industry Summit: Exploring Careers, Curriculum Innovations, Achievements, and Opportunities

On November 14, 2024, Hostos Community College held its fifth Industry Summit, focusing on the Education Program and its vital role in shaping future educators to meet the evolving needs of diverse communities. The summit brought together faculty, CUNY four-year colleges, government officials, alumni, the New York City Department of Education, K-12 schools, and students to discuss transfer and workforce opportunities, curriculum innovation, and challenges facing the education sector. The event was sponsored by Hostos President Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis, the Hostos Community Advisory Council (CAC), and the Divisions



(Left to Right) President Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Chairman Elias Alcántara, NYS Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Principal Luis Torres

of Academic Affairs (OAA) and Continuing Education & Workforce Development (CEWD). Presenters shared their insights and recommendations on recruiting, retaining, and preparing high-quality teachers for New York City. The event began with a warm welcome from Elias Alcántara, Chair of the Hostos Community Advisory Council, who set the tone for a day of collaboration and exchange. President Daisy Cocco De Filippis delivered a heartfelt speech emphasizing Hostos' commitment to equity, inclusion, and support for students, sharing inspiring stories of student success and transformative partnerships. "Our

students are our priority," said President De Filippis, underscoring Hostos' holistic approach to education, addressing both academic and personal challenges faced by students.

NYC Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz delivered remarks highlighting the importance of civic education in fostering informed decision-making and active participation in democracy. He urged educators to prioritize teaching students about government processes, the power of voting, and the impact of civic responsibility on societal progress. The keynote speaker, Principal Luis Torres, a Hostos alumnus, shared his inspiring journey from being discouraged from pursuing college to earning multiple degrees and becoming a trailblazer in educational leadership. Reflecting on his time at Hostos, Principal Torres emphasized the college's role in nurturing his success and spoke passionately about addressing educational inequities and fostering community-focused leadership.



(Left to Right) Professors Nancy Dubetz (Lehman), Euisuk (Sung City Tech), Andrei Jitianu (Lehman) and Interim Dean Wesley Pitts (Lehman)

The summit featured several engaging panels led by Hostos faculty and education professionals. Professor Jacqueline DiSanto, Chair of the Education Department, along with Professor Madeline Ford (Chief Librarian at Hostos), Professor Sherese Mitchell, and Dr. Samuel Byrd (Director of Prior Learning), highlighted Hostos' leadership in integrating Open Educational Resources (OER) into its curriculum, significantly reducing textbook costs for students. They discussed ongoing efforts to expand bilingual education and special education programs, ensuring that graduates are well-equipped to meet the needs of diverse classrooms. The panel also focused on innovations in teaching practices, emphasizing the development of professional and soft skills such as adaptability, empathy, and interpersonal communication, which are critical for educators navigating challenges and fostering inclusive classroom environments. The conversation will continue in 2025 with roundtable discussions led by Professors Denise Cummings-Clay and Sonia Maldonado, Directors Carlos Guevara and Lisanette Rosario, and NYC Men Teach Liaison Ade Cox. They also presented initiatives that recognize students' professional experiences through credits for prior learning, enabling faster degree completion and reduced financial burdens.

Interim Dean of Education at Lehman College, Professor Wesley Pitts, along with his colleagues, Professors Nancy Dubetz and Andrei Jitianu, and Professor Euisuk Sung from City Tech, shared their collaborative efforts with Hostos to establish articulation agreements as pathways for seamless transfer and advanced teacher certifications. Collaborations with CUNY Lehman College, City Tech, and the NYC Department of Education were highlighted as instrumental in expanding opportunities for Hostos students. Lehman College's "Minor to Master's" program was showcased as an essential pathway for aspiring educators to attain advanced degrees and certifications, particularly in bilingual and special education, addressing critical workforce needs in these fields. A future A.S. degree in Instructional Technology will articulate to City Tech for Computer Science Education.



(Left to Right) Director Sam Byrd, Professor Sherese Mitchell, Chief Librarian Madline Ford

CUNY Central University Dean Ashleigh Thompson and Mr. Chimere Stephens, Senior Director of Recruitment and Diversity Recruitment at New York City Public Schools and NYC Men Teach, led the plenary session, delivering powerful insights on innovation and diversity in education. Dean Thompson commended Hostos' Education Department for its groundbreaking programs and unwavering commitment to equity, highlighting the critical role of faculty in preparing students to meet the workforce's evolving demands. Chimere Stephens emphasized the importance of diversifying the teacher pipeline and shared strategies from NYC Men Teach to support educators of color. Their presentations inspired attendees to champion inclusivity and foster collaboration to build a more dynamic and representative education system.

The Education Summit was expertly organized by the Planning Committee, chaired by Provost Shiang-Kwei Wang, with the support of Vice President Evelyn Fernández-Ketcham, Professor Jacqueline DiSanto, Assistant Vice President Babette Audant, Dean Andrea Fabrizio, and Ms. Sarah Brennan. This team worked collaboratively to create a platform that facilitated meaningful dialogue and fostered partnerships to advance the field of education. Special thanks are extended to Hostos faculty, staff, DOE partners, the CUNY Central Office, CUNY four-year colleges, and students, whose participation and insights enriched the discussions throughout the day.



(Left to Right) Director Carlos Guevara (Ed Tech), Adj Lecturer Miguel Balbuena, Principal Abeku Hayes (Choice Charter), Dr. Sara Vogel (CUNY), Dr. Jacqueline DiSanto



(Left to Right) Senior Director Chimere Stephens (NYC Men Teach), CUNY Dean of Education Ashleigh Thompson

The Education Summit is the fifth Industry Summit convened under President Daisy Cocco De Filippis' leadership, continuing Hostos' tradition of addressing workforce needs through collaboration and innovation. This latest summit on Education underscored the importance of preparing future teachers to thrive in diverse, dynamic classrooms, addressing both workforce demands and the evolving needs of New York City communities.

Our faculty and students have greatly benefited from the Education Summit and the opportunity to engage directly with industry leaders and partners. Faculty and staff are now collaborating with Career Services to strategically integrate professional and soft skills into the education curriculum, ensuring alignment with current workforce needs. These summits not only provide actionable insights for program improvement but also open doors to experiential learning and career opportunities for our students. For details about this and previous summits, please visit the [Hostos Industry Summits webpage](#).