

## INTRODUCTION

### A Self Study Process to be Proud Of

In 2010, when Hostos embarked on its Middle States Self Study review, it did so with the intention of developing a model process of collaborative reflection and inquiry. The Steering Committee members selected by the President recognized that an inclusive process was likely to yield a more holistic and candid picture of the college. They also knew their peers would want to be involved because Hostos has always been an actively engaged campus.

How right they were. Since the beginning of 2010, more than 100 students, faculty, and staff served on seven Working Groups assembled for this process. With guidance from the Steering Committee, and multiple opportunities to give and get feedback, Working Group participants conducted the analysis presented in the following pages, each analyzing the extent to which Hostos meets the elements of particular Middle States standards. Working Groups kept the self study process focused on the college's ideals, while examining the ways in which the college serves such a high need community. Their commitment of time, energy, and insights ensured that what was written represented a rigorous, college-wide inquiry.

A strong process like this brings what is most true and real to the fore. The following pages provide the context, essential facts, stories and unanswered issues to understand before delving into the Working Group reports.

### Strong Roots Yield Transformation at Hostos

Hostos has always been college on a mission. One of 24 units of The City University of New York (CUNY), Eugenio María de Hostos Community College was established in 1968 when a diverse group of community leaders, students, educators, activists and elected officials demanded the creation of a higher education space to meet the needs of the South Bronx. Its founding constituted the first occasion in New York that a two-year, public, open admissions, transitional language learning college was deliberately sited in a neighborhood like the South Bronx, then, as now, the nation's poorest congressional district.

Incredible responsibility comes with being an institution established to make higher education accessible in one of New York City's most neglected communities. This influences everything that happens on campus, including the determination with which faculty and staff adhere to the college-wide mission. Hostos' mission is a forthright description of what it sees as its charge. It sheds light on the complex challenges its students face in their pursuit of higher education. It guides the way in which it helps students achieve success on their diverse learning paths. Perhaps most importantly, it helps faculty, staff, and administrators bridge the past, present, and future so that the college remains grounded in its historical roots but also a dynamic and transformative institution. How does Hostos know its mission still stands? The college undertook strategic planning simultaneously with its Middle States Self Study, so that future planning could benefit from rigorous

#### How has Hostos Framed its Process?

Working Group participants have described Hostos' Self Study process as:

- Self-reflective
- Participatory
- Ground-breaking
- Exhaustive
- Collaborative
- Inclusive
- Data driven
- Engaged
- Fostered community
- Respectful
- Honest but not pretentious
- Innovative

Source: Excerpted from Middle States meeting notes, Nov 17, 2011

analysis of what makes the college strong and where it needs to grow. These concurrent processes put the mission to the test, distilling its words into six underlying themes that illuminate the mission's essence:

1. Access to higher education for traditionally excluded – in South Bronx and beyond
2. Diversity and multiculturalism – language, race/ethnicity, and other demographic dimensions
3. English language/Mathematics skills development
4. Intellectual growth
5. Socioeconomic mobility
6. Community service –a resource to the communities served

The conclusion of this distillation – Hostos' mission remains as relevant today as when the college was founded over forty years ago.

### **Hostos Facts**

A Self Study requires empirical analysis. The following summarizes essential facts to consider.

**Institutional Profile:** With 6 buildings at East 149<sup>th</sup> Street and the Grand Concourse, and shared sites in Washington Heights (CUNY in the Heights) and the Grand Concourse and Fordham Road (CUNY on the Concourse), Hostos offers 27 degree options and certificate programs, including academic transfer, and vocational/technical training, as well as numerous non-credit continuing education offerings. A CUNY system college, its academic programs are accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, as well as other accrediting bodies for its professional programs.

Hostos also serves as a hub for numerous community and cultural events. Community groups and government agencies frequently use its hallways, classrooms, and lecture halls to present their programs to the neighboring community. The Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture, which first opened its doors in 1982, is a premier events venue for cultural experiences that affirm and nurture the ethnic heritages of the communities the college serves.

**Student Profile:** Over the past 10 years, enrollment at Hostos has almost doubled. According to Fall 2010 data, Hostos' unduplicated headcount was 6,499, with 4,651 FTEs. The number of adult and continuing education students has grown by 440% since 1999-2000, from 1,999 to 10,802 in 2009-10. Students are predominantly Hispanic and Black, and speak a language other than English at home. While upwards of 90% of students indicate their home language is other than English, the same percent indicate that they are equally comfortable in both English and their home language. An important student demographic trend to note is the growing percentage of incoming freshmen with U.S. high school diplomas. Hostos is increasingly serving 1.5 generation students: children of immigrants who speak a language other than English, who may identify with their 'home country,' but were born in the U.S. and attended a U.S. high school. Still, many students still enter Hostos with GEDs or foreign high school diplomas. Over 50 countries and 77 languages are represented on campus.

Hostos students face serious economic and educational challenges to their pursuit of higher education. The large majority (over 80%) have household incomes below \$30,000 and are eligible for financial aid. Nearly all students require remediation or developmental education in reading, writing, or math, and one third require it in all three areas (aka are triple remedial). Hostos has the highest percentage of remedial/developmental students in CUNY, and educates about half of CUNY's triple remedial/developmental student population. Given these tremendous hurdles to higher education, nearly 40% of Hostos students drop out after their first year. However, the students that remain do well. Those that graduate demonstrate the same level of preparedness as students at other CUNY two-year and many four-year colleges. (D-Crook and Gampert).

**Faculty/Staff Profile:** In Fall 2010, Hostos employed 402 faculty (181 full-time faculty, 221 adjuncts), and over 525 staff members. Fifty-three percent of full-time faculty hold a Ph.D. or Ed.D. and 47% have earned master's degrees. Ninety-two percent are tenured or tenure track faculty. More than 50% of full-time faculty represent racial/ethnic minority groups (32% Hispanic Latino, 11% African American, 8% Asian), with an almost even balance between male and female faculty.

The faculty and staff profile would be incomplete without noting the high caliber of professionals who work at the college. Hostos' mission and students demand enormous commitment. Faculty and staff choose Hostos and stay because of the tremendous rewards and satisfaction that come with being part of such a dedicated academic community.

**Community Profile:** A majority of Hostos students come from the South Bronx. This community has served as a historical entry-point for many waves of New York City migrants, welcoming people of a diverse range of ethnicities, including those of German, Irish, Jewish, Scandinavian, African, and Asian descent. Its rich racial and ethnic mix has made it a vibrant hub of political, cultural, and entertainment activity in the Bronx and for the city. Its many artists and musicians (salsa, hip hop and others) have achieved national and international recognition, putting this community on the map for its creative capital.

Unfortunately, the South Bronx holds another reputation that is far less uplifting. The South Bronx is located in the 16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, the poorest of the nation's 435 Congressional Districts, with 42.2% of residents living below the poverty line and households earning less than half of the New York City median household income. More than 34% of residents have less than an 11<sup>th</sup> grade education, as compared with about 16% of New York City residents. Only about 11% of residents of working age possess a higher education degree (associates degree or higher), compared to nearly 40% of New York City residents. Unemployment is almost double that for the city as a whole. And

Gender	68.3% female, 31.7% male
Average Age	25.7
FT/PT	58% FT, 42% PT
Day/Eve.	91% day, 9% evening
Race/Ethnicity	56.9% Hispanic 22.2% Black 3.4% White 3.2% Asian/P.I. .4% Am. Ind./Al. Nat. 13.9% Other/Unknown
Language Issues	76% speak language other than English at home
Economic Status	72% have < \$30K in household income  Over 95% are eligible for aid
Where the live	64.9% live in the Bronx
Entering freshmen – college readiness	87.5% in 1 remedial/development'l 1/3 triple remedial/development'l (reading, writing, mathematics)
Programs of Highest Enrollment	A.A. Liberal Arts & Sciences Nursing Teacher Education Business Management Dental Hygiene

Source: Hostos Office of Institutional Research, Fall 2010 Student Profile

more than two-thirds of residents speak a language other than English at home, which often translates into levels of limited English proficiency that make it difficult to find consistent employment.

	New York City	S. Bronx/ 16 <sup>th</sup> Cong. District
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	28% Hispanic	66% Hispanic
<b>Home Language</b>	24% Spanish	61% Spanish
<b>Med. Household Income</b>	\$50,403	\$23,270
<b>Poverty Level</b>	16% families below	37% families below
<b>Education</b>	48% h.s. diploma/ GED or less	69% h.s. diploma/ GED or less

Source: 2006-08 American Community Survey 3-Year Est.

Hostos has been part of the Bronx rebirth story since the 1970's, connecting higher education with the many community building and revitalization initiatives intended to spur increased business and education investment, tourism, and support for cultural institutions. Hostos has been a partner in and advocate for these urban renewal efforts since its founding, to ensure that this community receives the support it deserves.

## Hostos Stories

Data illuminate certain dimensions of institutions, but stories humanize them. The following are just a few examples that shed light on the contributions Hostos makes to students' lives.

**Breathing life into dreams intergenerationally.** When Celina Sotomayor wanted to pursue higher education, she realized she did not have many options. As a widow and mother of two, she saw college as a means to improve the life of her family, but she needed to work and take care of her children while in school. Although a high school graduate, English was her second language, so she needed to find a college that offered courses in two languages. Then Hostos was created. In 1970 she enrolled in Hostos, juggling family, work, and school, and doing homework together with her children. With Hostos' support, Celina realized her dream, graduating in one of the first registered nursing classes at Hostos. Her example is cited as one of the biggest inspirations for her two children: the nation's first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, and her brother, Dr. Juan Sotomayor, a practicing physician in Syracuse, New York. (D - Sotomayor Making Good on a Commitment to a Scrappy College With a Family, June 3, 2010, *New York Times*)

**Nurturing the next generation of higher education leaders.** When Geraldine Perri received her associate degree in dental hygiene from Hostos in 1979, it was clear she was going places. Awarded the Stevenson Gold Medal Award of the Dental Society of New York for outstanding academic achievement, she was selected as the student commencement speaker. She has served as a community college educator for 29 years, with the last 10 as the President of two community colleges. She has been President of Citrus College in Glendale, California since 2008. Citrus College has over 13,000 credit students and close to 1,000 employees.

**Serving students with "true grit."** In November 2001, Melissa Díaz' father was killed in the Flight 587 plane crash in Belle Harbor, Queens. Instead of being broken by this tragedy, she cultivated her strong desire to contribute to society. Melissa chose to attend Hostos because her parents met and fell in love on this campus. At Hostos she immersed herself in all aspects of campus life. She served on the Hostos Student Leadership Academy for two years, first in the Emerging Leaders Program and then as a Hostos Student Ambassador where she became one of fourteen student-delegates to represent the Dominican Republic at the 2010 Model United Nations. Melissa participated in the 2010 New York State Model Senate Session Project in Albany, where she sat in the seat Senator William J. Larkin Jr. and debated on the issue of term limits. She was a part of the 2009-2010 Global

Scholars Program, became Vice President for Leadership in Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society, and was a member of the Women's Empowerment Organization and the Puerto Rican Club. In 2010, Melissa served as class valedictorian, graduating with a 3.939 GPA. She is now attending Columbia University on a full scholarship.

**Cultivating diverse talent against the odds.** You would never know that Liliete López has a disability by what she has achieved at Hostos. She started her education later in life than most people, because she was not allowed to attend school in her home country due to her vision impairment. She chose Hostos because she felt it offered her opportunities she could not find elsewhere. Her many achievements on campus have made Hostos proud. She was a two-time participant in the New York State Model Senate Session Project, a chair of a committee on accessibility options as part of the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities (CCSD) and former Chair of the Committee on Leadership Forums for the Hostos Student Leadership Academy. She represented Hostos and CUNY at a variety of conferences including the CUNY Women's Leadership Conference, and the first ever Disability Summit at NYU. She was the winner of the La Prensa Speech Competition, which led to her being featured in an article in *El Diario* Newspaper. As a member of the Hostos Student Leadership Academy, she helped organize "Open Eyes, Open Minds," a community service activity sponsored by the Greater New York Council of the Blind. Liliete was the winner of the 2008-2009 Bronx CUNY Scholarship, a 2008 Essay Award winner of for the Model Senate Session Project, The Leadership Academy Service Award Winner for 2008 and a CUNY Leadership Award Winner for 2009. Her GPA upon graduation from Hostos was 3.7. She is currently studying at Queens College and is serving in the Student Government Association and as a representative in the University Student Senate.

**Educating returning veterans.** Gael Georges moved to the United States and New York City in 2000 to pursue his college education and explore better options for his life. After coming to an understanding about the cost of a college education, Gael joined the United States Army. Over the course of his three years on active duty, Gael served his new home country in South Korea, Kuwait, Iraq and then back in Fort Riley, Kansas. Upon retiring from military service, he returned to New York City, seeking an educational environment where he could study with people from all over the world. He found himself on Hostos' doorstep. Gael is currently studying Liberal Arts and Science and hopes to pursue a career in Physical Therapy. He is the Treasurer for the Muslim Student Association, a member of the Hostos Veterans and Reservists Club, an active member of the French, Francophone and Italian Club, and he has served as the Chair of the Leadership Forum Committee. Gael represented Hostos at City Hall at a hearing on the Black Male Initiative, and he represented CUNY at the SOMOS El Futuro Conference in Albany. He was one of two CUNY students selected to participate in the 24th National Conference on Ethics in America at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

**Remaining committed to the needs of ESL learners.** Many students have come to Hostos with virtually no English skills and have gone on to great academic and career success. Three recent stories of students who participated in Hostos' Language and Cognition department's ESL intensive program demonstrate the heights achieved.

- Mirkeya Capellán came to Hostos in 1987 and graduated in 1990. In 2008 she earned her doctorate in Professional Studies in Computing from Pace University. She now works for the Sogeti Corporation as a quality assurance manager.

- Fénix Arias came to Hostos in 1993 and graduated in 1996. She earned her doctorate in Urban Education from the CUNY Graduate Center in 2011. She now works for York College in the CUNY system as Director of Assessment.
- Ling Li came to Hostos in 2007 and graduated in 2009 after just five semesters. She finished with a 3.99 GPA. She is now completing her doctorate in Mathematics at Indiana University on a full scholarship.

### **Highlights Since the Last Middles States Visit**

Since its last ten year visit in December 2001, Middle States has noted some areas where the campus has needed to make improvements. The following describes the tremendous strides Hostos has made on almost every issue identified.

**Strategic planning.** When Middle States visited in 2001, Hostos had no institution-wide strategic plan. Post-visit, Hostos moved quickly to develop a 2003-08 Strategic Plan (extended to 2010), which was implemented through annual operational planning processes in each division. This planning and implementation process represented a step forward for the college, while also showing areas where improvements could be made. When Hostos undertook strategic planning for its 2011-2016 Strategic Plan, it approached the task more inclusively and holistically. Through a multi-faceted participatory process that engaged more than 525 students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders, Hostos developed a plan that represents a reaffirmation of Hostos' founding principles, and translates these principles into goals, initiatives, and outcomes designed to make the college an even more relevant, responsive, and accessible institution to the multiple constituencies it serves. This plan, which was introduced in Fall 2011, reflects Hostos' mission in action, and provides a common understanding for priorities the campus community will undertake over the next five years. Hostos is currently working on ensuring successful implementation of the plan through the creation of common templates and reporting processes, so that divisions are working together to bring about the changes envisioned.

**Enrollment management.** In 2000-01, the college's enrollment was inching back, and there was no plan for recruiting new students. Since then, the college has developed and implemented annual enrollment management plans, as well as strengthened systems to not only recruit but also facilitate registration and enrollment (e.g., designing improved registration systems, creating annual online college catalogs and promotion materials, etc). CUNY now also annually reviews and approves enrollment targets for its constituent colleges.

**Institutional and Student Learning Assessment.** When Middle States visited in 2001, assessment activities were very limited at Hostos. Immediately following the 2002 reaffirmation of accreditation, the college developed and implemented a comprehensive outcomes assessment plan to address course and program assessment. To-date, 95 courses have undergone assessment and all academic programs have undertaken some level of assessment. An assessment committee now exists to oversee these and other assessment activities, including Academic Program Review (APR). Two departments/programs have undergone APR in the last several years, 2 more are underway, and a clear template, timeline, and plan exists for all programs to undergo review in the next five years. Gen Ed assessment is also in full force. The college has moved to incorporate assessment of general education across the curriculum using the Gen Ed Mapping Tool as well as e-portfolios.

**Liberal Arts.** Hostos' liberal arts curriculum needed serious revision ten years ago. Since then, the college has created liberal arts clusters and a clear Liberal Arts core curriculum that includes English, college-level Mathematics, Science, and Humanities. The college has also created the Gen Ed committee, to ensure that students in all programs have exposure to a rigorous general education core and general education competencies. The increased number of articulations between Hostos and four-year college liberal arts programs evidences the strength of its liberal arts curriculum.

**Library.** Since its last ten-year Middle States visit, the Hostos Library has gone from near closure to award winning, as the recipient of the 2007 Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Excellence in Academic Libraries Award. ACRL, which is dedicated to the advancement of learning and scholarship among librarians, presents these awards to an outstanding community college, a college, and a university library each year, thereby honoring the accomplishments of librarians and library staff as members of a team that supports the mission of their institution. The ACRL issued a press release indicating that the Hostos Library was being recognized for putting the “community” into community college, for its commitment to preserving unique collections about Eugenio María de Hostos, and for creating and preserving records about the founding of the college. (D-Hostos press release, ACRL press release.) The excellent work of library faculty and staff has also led to the incorporation of information literacy into the requirements of many courses, including *Freshmen Composition*.

## The Road Ahead

Hostos has been accredited by Middle States since 1975. Now in its fifth decade, the college has achieved a new level of institutional development and stability. Still, the road ahead is peppered with challenges, and many issues must be addressed to successfully navigate its way forward.

Hostos' Self Study could not have come at a better time. This analysis on how Hostos fares in accordance with each of the Middle States standards directly informed the setting of five goals and twenty priorities for the 2011-16 college-wide Strategic Plan. Of course a plan is just words on paper if people do not bring them to life. Hostos expects to continue with the same level of participation and dialogue that shaped the Self Study and Strategic Plan so that it can ensure its effective implementation and reinterpretation as the world changes around it.

### Major Issues Facing Hostos Today

- Approving a more effective Charter of Governance and better aligned governance systems
- Creating more interconnected, data-informed decision-making processes and systems that link planning, assessment and resource allocation
- Addressing the needs of future remedial/developmental students
- Improving retention – especially first year
- Balancing CUNY and Hostos-specific interests/issues
- Deepening the culture of assessment
- Achieving consensus on how to balance historical roots with changing demand for services, including transitional language instruction and bilingual education
- Maintaining current, state-of-the-art programs that meet student education and employment interests and needs
- Reframing and recasting liberal arts for community college students today
- Navigating budget uncertainty in these economic times