



HISPANIC EDUCATION SUMMIT

PRESENTED BY HISPANIC FEDERATION

May 21, 2026 | **CUNY Graduate Center**





HISPANIC EDUCATION SUMMIT

PRESENTED BY HISPANIC FEDERATION

Thursday, May 21, 2026

8:30 AM – 4:15 PM

The Graduate Center, City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016
Concourse/Lower Level

ABOUT HISPANIC EDUCATION SUMMIT

Each year, Hispanic Federation hosts the largest community-wide gathering focused on Latino education. The Hispanic Education Summit brings together community advocates, educators, students, parents and policymakers to share best practices and needed reforms aimed at improving Latino educational achievements.

AGENDA OUTLINE

- 8:30 AM – 9:00 AM** | **Registration / Breakfast**
- 9:00 AM – 9:15 AM** | **Welcome & Opening Remarks**
- 9:15 AM – 10:00 AM** | **Opening Plenary Session**
- 10:10 AM – 11:10 AM** | **Concurrent Workshops 1**
- 11:20 AM – 12:20 PM** | **Concurrent Workshops 2**
- 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM** | **Keynote Luncheon & Networking**
- 1:40 PM – 2:40 PM** | **Concurrent Workshops 3**
- 2:50 PM – 3:50 PM** | **Concurrent Workshops 4**
- 4:00 PM – 04:15 PM** | **Closing Remarks & Next Steps**



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MORNING AGENDA

- 8:30 AM – 9:00 AM** | **REGISTRATION / BREAKFAST**
CONCOURSE LOBBY
- 9:00 AM – 9:15 AM** | **WELCOME REMARKS**
AUDITORIUM
- ▶ **Perla Rodriguez**, National Director for Education Programs, Hispanic Federation
 - ▶ **Doris B. González**, Acting President, New York State Higher Education Services Corporation
- 9:15 AM – 10:00 AM** | **OPENING PLENARY SESSION:**
AUDITORIUM
Navigating Shifting Federal Priorities
MODERATOR:
- ▶ **Damaris Díaz**, Journalist, Univision
- PANELISTS:
- ▶ **Frankie Miranda**, President and CEO, Hispanic Federation
 - ▶ **Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**, Chancellor of The City University of New York
 - ▶ **Dr. Havidán Rodríguez**, President of the University at Albany
- 10:10 AM – 11:10 AM** | **CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS**
AUDITORIUM
Celebrating Year 2 of the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI): Lessons and Knowledge Building for Teaching About Latinidad
- SALON A**
Expanding Equitable Access to Early College Pathways for Latine and Multilingual Learners
- SALON B**
College Access at Risk: How Financial Aid, Student Debt, and Emergency Aid Shape Economic Mobility for New York's Students
- 11:20 AM – 12:20 PM** | **CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS**
AUDITORIUM
The Growing Influence of AI in Education
- SALON A**
Career-Connected Learning for Postsecondary Success for Multilingual Learners: The Internationals Approach
- SALON B**
An Update on NYSED's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Initiative



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AFTERNOON AGENDA

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

| KEYNOTE LUNCHEON & NETWORKING

CONCOURSE LOBBY

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

- ▶ **Jessica Orozco-Guttlein**, Senior Vice President for Policy and Communications
- ▶ **Kamar Samuels**, Chancellor of New York City Public Schools

1:40 PM – 2:40 PM

| CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

AUDITORIUM

Beyond Crisis: Building Culturally Responsive School Mental Health Systems to Improve Academic Outcomes for Latino and BIPOC Students

SALON A

Talleres en Comunidad: Designing a Latinidad Curriculum with Students and Teachers

SALON B

Literacy Equity for New York's Multilingual Learners

2:50 PM – 3:50 PM

| CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

AUDITORIUM

Bridging the Gap: Career Pathways for Latino Students Through Partnerships

SALON A

Latino College Success: Strengthening the Path to College Completion for First-Generation Students Through Student Support Programming

SALON B

Bridging the Gap: Practical Strategies for Parents and Teachers to Support Multilingual Learners

4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

| CLOSING REMARKS

AUDITORIUM

- ▶ **Ingrid Alvarez**, Vice President for Policy and Strategic Engagement



HISPANIC EDUCATION SUMMIT

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Registration / Breakfast

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM | CONCOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

Welcome Remarks

9:00 AM – 9:15 AM | AUDITORIUM



Perla Rodriguez

National Director for Education Programs, Hispanic Federation

Perla Rodriguez is a lifelong educator, reader, and writer who serves as the National Director for Education Programs at the Hispanic Federation (HF), the nation's premier Latino nonprofit membership organization. With decades of experience in education and community development, she is dedicated to expanding opportunity and advancing educational equity for Latino and underserved students.

In her role, Perla leads a national portfolio of initiatives that strengthen pathways to higher education, support first-generation students, and build partnerships with schools, colleges, and community organizations. Her expertise includes program development, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement, and she has led numerous initiatives that address educational disparities and promote student success. Perla holds a Master's in Secondary English Education from the City College of New York (CUNY) and an MFA in Creative Writing from The New School. She was named City & State's Higher Education Power 100 in 2022 and 2023.



Doris B. González

Acting President, New York State Higher Education Services Corporation

Doris B. González serves as the Acting President of HESC, bringing her extensive leadership experience to the role. Originally joining HESC as the Executive Vice President in August 2023, Doris has overseen the administration and delivery of critical New York State financial aid programs that expand college access across the state.

A proud Dominican immigrant and graduate of New York City public schools, Doris brings both professional expertise and personal commitment to advancing educational opportunity for historically underserved communities. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Baruch College, City University of New York and prior to joining HESC, she held leadership roles at Kyndryl and IBM, as well as in public sector agencies including the New York City Board of Education and MTA.

Opening Plenary Session

9:15 AM – 10:00 AM | AUDITORIUM

Navigating Shifting Federal Priorities

MODERATOR

Damaris Díaz

Journalist, Univision



Damaris Díaz is an award-winning journalist and broadcast anchor at WXTVUnivision New York, and a national correspondent for Univision's flagship morning program, *Despierta América*. With more than two decades in Spanish language media, Díaz is a trusted voice for Latino communities nationwide.

She began her career at WXTV as a producer and entertainment reporter before transitioning on-air as a correspondent in 2011. Since then, she has covered a wide range of local, national, and human-interest stories, earning special recognitions and two Emmy nominations for her work. Throughout her career, Díaz has interviewed prominent figures across entertainment, sports, and culture, including Marc Anthony, Celia Cruz, Oscar De La Hoya, Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro, and Adam Sandler.

Díaz joined Univision after winning a nationwide competition and being named *Miss República Deportiva*, an experience she has credited with helping launch her broadcast career. Beyond reporting, she is deeply committed to elevating Latino stories, increasing representation in media, and using journalism as a tool for information access, inspiration, and community empowerment.

PANELISTS

Frankie Miranda

President and CEO, Hispanic Federation

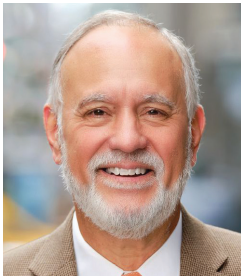


Frankie Miranda is the first openly gay President and CEO of the Hispanic Federation (HF), the nation's premier Latino nonprofit membership organization representing hundreds of community-based organizations focused on education, health, economic mobility, and civic engagement. He assumed leadership in December 2019 at a pivotal moment and has since strengthened HF's role as a national advocate for equitable education access and systems change.

Under Frankie's leadership, HF has made significant investments in education access and student success, particularly for low-income Latino students and families disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, HF distributed more than \$33.5 million in relief funding to over 500 nonprofits nationwide, many of which provide critical college access, K12 supports, digital equity, and family engagement services. HF continues to advance policy and funding solutions that expand postsecondary access, close opportunity gaps, and support undocumented and mixed-status students.

Frankie first joined HF in 1998 and has held multiple leadership roles, helping expand the organization's national footprint and build programs that serve hundreds of thousands of Latinos annually. His work includes launching initiatives that strengthen organizational capacity, promote educational equity, and uplift historically marginalized communities, including Latinx LGBTQ+ youth. Frankie brings a background in media and public advocacy, holds degrees from the University of Puerto Rico and New York University, and lives in Queens with his husband Ricardo and their cat, Valentina.





Félix V. Matos Rodríguez

Chancellor of The City University of New York

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez is the eighth Chancellor of The City University of New York (CUNY), the nation's largest urban public university system, serving 247,000 degree seeking students across 26 colleges. Appointed in 2019, he is the first Latino and first educator of color to lead CUNY, and one of the few U.S. higher education leaders to have led both a community college and a senior college, previously serving as president of Hostos Community College and Queens College.

As Chancellor, Matos Rodríguez has prioritized expanding educational access, affordability, and student success through systemwide reforms. His leadership has focused on eliminating transfer barriers, reducing costs, and strengthening career pathways through industry and public-sector partnerships. These priorities are central to CUNY Lifting New York, the University's 2023 strategic roadmap, which advances workforce alignment, equitable student outcomes, and economic mobility.

Under his tenure, CUNY overhauled its transfer system to ensure seamless credit mobility for students moving from associate to bachelor's degrees, saving time and money for thousands. He has expanded online degree offerings, strengthened programs in Black, Race, and Ethnic Studies, and led historic efforts to forgive student debt and release transcripts previously withheld due to unpaid balances.

A scholar and educator by training, Matos Rodríguez holds degrees from Yale University and Columbia University and is a national leader in higher education policy, equity, and access.



Dr. Havidán Rodríguez

President of the University at Albany

Dr. Havidán Rodríguez is the 20th President of the University at Albany (UAlbany), one of the nation's most diverse R1 research universities. Appointed in 2017, he became the first Hispanic president of a four-year SUNY institution. Under his leadership, UAlbany has strengthened its national profile in research excellence, educational equity, and social mobility, while advancing initiatives that expand access and support student success.

Dr. Rodríguez has positioned UAlbany as a leader in inclusive excellence, including earning the Seal of Excelencia for its commitment to Latina and Latino student outcomes—the first R1 institution in the Northeast to do so. He has championed initiatives that align higher education with workforce needs, including the return of the College of Nanoscale Science & Engineering and UAlbany's role in New York's semiconductor and advanced technology ecosystem. His administration has also emphasized health, well-being, and community impact, with UAlbany becoming an early adopter of the Okanagan Charter.

A national voice on education policy, Dr. Rodríguez serves on the American Council on Education, Excelencia in Education, and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. In 2022, he was appointed to President Biden's Advisory Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics and played a key role in establishing the President's Board of Advisors on Hispanic-Serving Institutions.



CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

10:10 AM – 11:10 AM | AUDITORIUM

Celebrating Year 2 of the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI): Lessons and Knowledge Building for Teaching About Latinidad

As the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI) enters its second year, this workshop celebrates key lessons learned and advances collective knowledge for teaching about Latinidad in K–12 education. Drawing on collaborative work between the Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study at Teachers College, Columbia University, NYC teachers, and district leaders, presenters will share a dynamic framework that defines Latinidad as diverse, evolving, and intersectional. Through interactive presentations, participants will explore sample lesson plans and classroom activities developed for grades 6–9 that integrate Latinidad across subject areas. The workshop will highlight how these lessons support critical thinking, identity development, and culturally responsive teaching. Participants will be invited to provide feedback, reflect with peers, and discuss concrete strategies for adapting lesson topics and activities for K–12 classrooms, community-based organization programming, and other educational settings. This session centers practitioner voices, shared learning, and the ongoing work of curriculum transformation.



Dr. Regina Cortina

Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

Regina Cortina, Professor of Education in the Department of International and Transcultural Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University, served as President of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) in 2018–2019. Her Presidential Address, “‘The Passion for What Is Possible’ in Comparative and International Education,” was published in the *Comparative Education Review* (2019). Professor Cortina edited a Special Issue of *Teachers College Record* on “Teachers College and the Rise of Public Education in Latin America” (2022). Her other areas of expertise are gender and education, the education and employment of teachers, and the schooling of Latinx students in the United States.

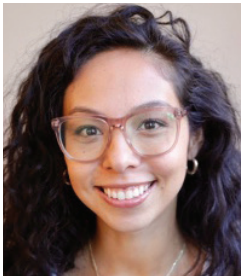


Dr. Amanda Earl

Lecturer, Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Amanda K. Earl is a Lecturer in the International and Comparative Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research examines the relationships between schooling and the maintenance of nondominant and heritage languages, cultures, and ways of knowing. Dr. Earl is currently conducting research projects in New York City and rural Mexico. She has also worked as a middle and high school teacher in Philadelphia and a college access professional in New York City. She holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Comparative and International Education from Teachers College and a B.A. in Greek and Latin from Brown University.





Dr. Samantha Chung

Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, Lehman College, City University of New York (CUNY)

Dr. Samantha Chung is an Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator of Educational Leadership at Lehman College. With a doctorate in Curriculum and Teaching from TC, Columbia University, and extensive experience in the NYC public school system, Dr. Chung's research interests include culturally relevant leadership, literacy, and the intersections of race and language. She aims to empower educators to foster school communities that celebrate and uplift diverse student identities. Dr. Chung is co-PI of LUTE-MULTI, where she leads the leadership fellows programming.



Jonathan Beltrán Alvarado

Doctoral Student, Teachers College, Columbia University

Jonathan Beltrán is a Comparative and International Education doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University. He holds a B.A. in Literature, a B.A. in Philosophy, and an M.A. in History from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia, and an M.A. in Economics and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. He has experience as a teacher, teacher's coach, curriculum writer, and researcher in education and social sciences projects. He is interested in contextualized and actionable research to help practitioners and policymakers expand educational opportunities. His research program revolves around teachers, crucial actors in all education systems.



Shari Wejsa-Stewart

Doctoral Student, Teachers College, Columbia University

Shari Wejsa-Stewart is a PhD student in the Teaching of Social Studies program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research explores the intersections of citizenship, belonging, and care ethics for Spanish and Portuguese-speaking immigrant-origin youth. She is a former public high school Spanish and social studies teacher and taught Latin American migration history at Emory University. She researched the experiences of refugees from Angola who sought refuge in Brazil during the decolonization of Portuguese Africa. She also received a Fulbright research grant to examine how culturally-relevant curriculum influences educational attainment for Afro-Brazilian girls in Salvador da Bahia.



CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

10:10 AM – 11:10 AM

| CONOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

| SALON A

Expanding Equitable Access to Early College Pathways for Latine and Multilingual Learners

Early college pathways, including dual enrollment and college-in-high-school programs, offer powerful opportunities for students to earn college credit, accelerate degree completion, and reduce the cost of postsecondary education. While New York is a national leader in early college models, access remains deeply inequitable. Latine and multilingual learners are significantly underrepresented in these programs despite comprising a large share of the state's public school population. This workshop examines the current early college pathways landscape in New York and highlights critical data demonstrating persistent access gaps. Panelists will explore how the rollout of the new state dual enrollment policy and the College in High School Opportunity Fund present timely opportunities to remove barriers and redesign systems with equity at the center. The session will highlight promising strategies, implementation considerations, and recommendations for institutions of higher education and school systems to better serve Latine and multilingual learners, centering student experience, policy alignment, and cross-sector collaboration.



MODERATOR

Alexandra Wilcox

Alexandra Wilcox is the Deputy Director of the New York Alliance for Early College Pathways (NY4ECP). Alexandra brings over a decade of experience in education policy at the federal, state, and local levels and a deep commitment to educational equity. From 2020-2025, Alexandra was a legislative staffer in the U.S. Senate, where she advised on appropriations, education, science, technology, and other issues. Previously, Alexandra served as a policy staffer on the Warren for President campaign, where she supported policy development in a broad array of areas ranging from education to housing, and as a Deputy Director at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials

(NALEO) Educational Fund. Alexandra holds a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and an undergraduate degree from Harvard University.

PANELISTS



Milagros Moreno

Early College Pathways Alumni Fellow

Milagros's transformative experience in an early college program built a foundation for her to transition seamlessly into undergraduate studies, where Milagros is studying Psychology. Her ultimate goal is to earn a Master's Degree in School Counseling, and she is driven by a mission to support future students, ensuring they have the tools and confidence to reach milestones they once thought were out of reach.





Edwin Rivadeneyra

Director of Secondary and Post Secondary Initiatives and Partnerships at Dutchess Community College

Edwin Javier Rivadeneyra is Director of Secondary and Post Secondary Initiatives and Partnerships at Dutchess Community College, in Poughkeepsie, New York. He leads the College Connection program, a concurrent enrollment program designed to help students start college early, save money, and identify pathways that connect educational opportunities to a meaningful career.

Born in Caracas, Venezuela, and the first in his family to attend college in the U.S., Edwin draws from his personal experience to help his community understand how higher education can serve as a powerful launchpad to in-demand, family-sustaining jobs. Throughout his career, he has advanced financial education and economic mobility initiatives, including the creation of a nationally recognized financial literacy program that empowered more than 500 students to build long-term financial stability.

Edwin has led student success efforts at multiple Hispanic-Serving Institutes and is a frequent speaker at conferences, including: the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Programs Conference (NACEP Conference), the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and the National Conference on Workforce Education. He is a bilingual advocate for equity-centered higher education policy and student-focused pathway design.



Sugeni Pérez-Sadler

Senior Director of Student Pathways Policy and Evaluation at NYC Public Schools

Dr. Sugeni Pérez-Sadler is a social impact leader with over 20 years of experience driving systemic change at the intersection of education, workforce development, and economic mobility. Raised in a low-income NYC community as the daughter of Dominican immigrants, Sugeni's personal journey as a first-generation college graduate drives her commitment to creating equitable pathways to economic mobility for historically excluded communities.

As Senior Director of Student Pathways Policy and Evaluation at NYC Public Schools, she leads efforts to ensure more than 500,000 high school students across 500 high schools gain the skills, experiences, and networks necessary to achieve long-term economic security. Previously, Sugeni served as Senior Director of School Counseling Policy, overseeing K-12 career development integration for 850,000 students across 1,600 NYC schools. She has successfully managed multi-million-dollar budgets, built cross-sector partnerships, and developed data-driven systems to improve student outcomes. Her leadership and impact have been recognized with honors such as being named one of *El Diario's* Mujeres Destacadas in 2024 and receiving the New York State School Counselor Association's 2021 State Administrator of the Year award.

Sugeni earned her Doctorate in Education from St. John's University, where her dissertation examined the college pathways of racially and economically minoritized students. She also holds dual master's degrees from Princeton University and a Bachelor of Arts from Barnard College, Columbia University.



CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

10:10 AM – 11:10 AM

| CONCOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

| SALON B

College Access at Risk: How Financial Aid, Student Debt, and Emergency Aid Shape Economic Mobility for New York's Students

Focusing on New York's largest public college systems, this workshop examines how financial aid policies, student debt, and emergency aid shape college access, completion, and long-term economic mobility. Presenters will share on-the-ground insights into rising college costs, mounting student loan debt, and basic needs insecurity, highlighting their implications for equity and the racial wealth gap. The session will provide participants with a practical overview of college affordability, including how to read and compare financial aid award letters and assess true out-of-pocket costs. Panelists will explore strategies to address funding gaps through federal student loans, Parent PLUS loans, private loans, and emergency assistance, with attention to recent federal policy changes. The workshop will also discuss options available when college affordability remains a barrier, such as appealing aid offers or considering alternative pathways. Designed for educators, counselors, and advocates, this session equips participants with actionable knowledge to better support informed decision-making and student success.



Carolina Rodriguez

Director, Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program, Community Service Society of New York

Carolina Rodriguez is the director of the Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP), a program that helps student loan debt borrowers in New York State. Prior to this position, Carolina was the associate supervising attorney of the Health Initiatives Department at CSS, where she oversaw a statewide network of community-based organizations and small businesses counseling consumers on health insurance and health care access issues. She also managed the largest health insurance enrollment network in NYS. Carolina has a Master's in social work from Columbia University and a

J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley.



Sean Miller

Sean is a former teacher and swim coach whose commitment to education began as a high school volunteer tutor in Trenton and through work with YaLa Young Leaders, a Middle East and North Africa youth peace movement. He later taught fifth-grade English and Social Studies in Baltimore, where he developed a strong belief in equity and inclusion across education and health care. Sean spent four years at Princeton University in administration and communications, supporting students, faculty, and research within East Asian Studies and the School of Public and International Affairs. He most recently worked at the Harlem Children's Zone, co-leading innovative college and career success programs. His prior research with Bellwether Education Partners and former Obama

administration advisors examined barriers to postsecondary attainment for marginalized students. He has served on mayoral committees and civil rights commissions and currently serves as Liaison at the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice.

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

11:20 AM – 12:20 PM | AUDITORIUM

The Growing Influence of AI in Education

As artificial intelligence increasingly shapes teaching and learning, this workshop explores how AI can be leveraged responsibly to expand opportunity, personalize learning, and support student success across the K–16 pipeline. Presenters will outline an ethical, student-centered framework for AI in education that emphasizes human-centered design, equitable access, and strong guardrails ensuring AI tools serve learning—not replace it. The session will highlight how thoughtfully implemented AI can help bridge academic gaps, amplify student strengths, and support multilingual and first-generation learners through accessible, user-friendly platforms. Participants will explore how AI can be integrated with early college strategies such as micro-credentials, dual-credit opportunities, and credit for prior learning to accelerate academic and career pathways. The workshop will also examine the role of educators in using AI efficiently to support transitions into college, careers, and lifelong learning—preparing students to thrive with confidence in a rapidly evolving world.



MODERATOR

Dr. Ezekiel Dixon-Román

Professor of Critical Race, Media, and Educational Studies and Director, Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Urban and Minority Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

Ezekiel Dixon-Román is Professor of Critical Race, Media, & Educational Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University, where he is the Director of the Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study (formerly the Institute for Urban and Minority Education). He's co-founder of the Institute in Critical Quantitative, Computation, & Mixed Methodologies and co-founder of the Critical Computation Bureau. His research seeks to make cultural and critical theoretical interventions toward rethinking and reconceptualizing the technologies and practices of quantification as mediums and agencies of systems of sociopolitical relations whereby race and other assemblages of difference are byproducts. He is the author of *Inheriting Possibility: Social Reproduction & Quantification in Education* (2017, University of Minnesota Press). He also co-guest edited "Alternative Ontologies of Number: Rethinking the Quantitative in Computational Culture" (2016, *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies*), "Control Societies @30: Technopolitical Forces and Ontologies of Difference" (2020, *Social Text Online*), and most recently "Dialogues on Recursive Colonialism, Speculative Computation, and the Techno-Social" (2021, *e-flux journal*). He is also a co-editor of the Duke University Press book series, "Anima: Critical Race Studies Otherwise", a member of the *Social Text* Editorial Collective and the *Communication, Culture & Critique* Editorial Collective, and associate editor of the 2023 and 2025 volumes of the *Review of Research in Education*. He is currently working on a book project that examines the haunting formations of the transparent subject in algorithmic governance and the potential for transformative technopolitical systems.



Steven Nunez

Director, Office of Apprenticeships and The Department of IT Programs. The Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY

Steve Nunez, is a transformational leader with over a decade of experience advancing workforce innovation, academic partnerships, and economic mobility across K–12, higher education, and nonprofit sectors. Recognized as a "Workforce Development Hero," by the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, he specializes in building ecosystems that align academia, industry, and community to bridge the digital divide and



expand equitable access to technology careers. He is the co-founder and chair of the BMCC Technology Advisory Board, established in 2017, where he co-led the creation with faculty of early-college pathways for high school CTE students in computer networking through CompTIA and the Cisco Academy. Under his leadership, the board is now expanding into Cybersecurity, Cloud, and AI pathways that prepare learners with stackable credits to high-demand careers. He is a proud CUNY undergraduate, who went on to earn his Master's in Organizational Leadership and is currently a doctoral candidate scheduled to defend his dissertation in the fall of 2027. A lifelong learner with a passion for coaching people toward educational and career success in a rapidly evolving, AI-driven workforce.



Evan Silberman, Ed.D

Senior University Dean of Academic Innovation, The City University of New York

Dr. Evan Silberman serves as the Interim Senior University Dean of Academic Innovation and Interim Chief Academic Technology Officer at the City University of New York (CUNY). In this role, he leads strategic initiatives to strengthen academic technology infrastructure and advance the effective integration of digital tools across CUNY's diverse academic programs. Previously, Dr. Silberman was the University Executive Director of CUNY Online, where he expanded access to high-quality online learning across the university system. He also served as Chief Information Officer and Associate Vice President of Information Technology at Hunter College, overseeing all IT operations for one of CUNY's largest campuses.

Dr. Silberman brings extensive experience from New York University, where he held senior leadership roles at the Stern School of Business and the Silver School of Social Work. During his tenure at NYU, he founded a grassroots network of more than 900 IT professionals to promote collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Earlier in his career, he led academic computing initiatives at Yeshiva University and consulted for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. He holds a doctorate in higher education administration and a master's degree in educational technology.



Samuel Boehms

AI & Digital Access Specialist, Hispanic Federation

Sam Boehms is the AI & Digital Access Specialist at Hispanic Federation, where he works at the intersection of technology policy, civil rights, and digital equity on behalf of Latino communities across the United States. Based in Washington, D.C., Sam leads HF's federal advocacy on AI governance, digital rights, media diversity, and digital access — engaging Congress, federal agencies, and the private sector to advance policies that protect Latino communities in an era of rapidly evolving AI systems. Prior to joining HF, Sam worked on international democracy assistance and human rights advocacy with extensive experience in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Western Europe. He holds a Master of

Human Rights from Sciences Po in Paris and is completing a second master's in technology policy at George Washington University, where his research focuses on the impact of emerging technologies on democracy and human rights.



CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

11:20 AM – 12:20 PM

| CONCOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

| SALON A

Career-Connected Learning for Postsecondary Success for Multilingual Learners: The Internationals Approach

Career-connected learning (CCL) can serve as a powerful equity and language-development strategy for multilingual learners when it is intentionally designed to center students' multilingualism, identities, and lived experiences. This workshop highlights the Internationals approach to career-connected learning and its role in supporting postsecondary success for immigrant and multilingual youth. Participants will explore how structured career pathways, pre-professional preparation, and opportunities to apprentice in real-world settings can open doors to college, careers, and entrepreneurship for students who are often excluded from these opportunities. Drawing on concrete examples from Internationals Network schools, presenters will share how CCL programs integrate academic learning, practical skill development, college credit, and paid experiences. Voices from school leaders, educators, and students will illuminate the impact of equity-driven CCL on engagement, economic mobility, and workforce development. Participants will leave with actionable insights for designing inclusive, school-based career pathways.



Dr. Marguerite Lukes

Director of Research, Internationals Network for Public Schools

Dr. Marguerite Lukes works at the intersection of research, policy, and practice in the field of immigration education. For more than 25 years, she has focused on improving public schools and community-based programs serving migrant and refugee children, youth, and adults. She is Director of Research and Innovation at the Internationals Network for Public Schools, the only U.S.-based national network of public schools dedicated to designing innovative programs for immigrant youth. Marguerite's professional experience spans roles as a classroom teacher, program director, curriculum developer, evaluator, researcher, and university faculty member. She has taught at public and private

institutions including the University of California, City University of New York, New York University, the University of Bremen, and community colleges. Her applied research focuses on educational pathways for migrant youth and the intersections of race, language, and migration. She serves on multiple nonprofit and research boards and is fluent in Spanish, German, Italian, and English.



Nedda de Castro

Manager of Advancement and Advocacy, Internationals Network

Nedda de Castro is the Manager of Advancement and Advocacy at Internationals Network for Public Schools. She has over 30 years of experience as an educator and Social Worker and was the principal of the International High School@ Prospect Heights for 13 years. She holds an M.S. in Policy and Management from SUNY Stony Brook, a Master's of Social Work from NYU and an advanced certificate in Education Administration from Baruch College.

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

11:20 AM – 12:20 PM

| CONCOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

| SALON B

An Update on NYSED's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Initiative

This workshop provides an update on New York State Education Department's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) initiative and its role in strengthening data-informed decision-making across the education and workforce continuum. The New York SLDS is a centralized, secure repository that integrates cross-agency data from early learning, K–12 education, postsecondary systems, and the workforce to better understand student pathways over time. Designed to meet the highest standards of data privacy and security, the SLDS supports agencies, practitioners, policymakers, and the public in evaluating the impact of programs, supports, and opportunities on educational and economic outcomes. During this session, participants will gain an introduction to the core components of an SLDS, key system design principles, and current updates on New York's system development and implementation. This workshop is intended to build shared understanding of how longitudinal data can inform policy, improve practice, and promote more equitable student outcomes statewide.



Dr. Yufan Huang

Assistant Commissioner / Lead Data Officer, NYS Education Department

Dr. Yufan Huang is a member of the leadership team to support New York State Education Department (NYSED) P20 Operation and serves as the Assistant Commissioner / Lead Data Officer. He oversees the NYS education data ecosystem, and his leadership efforts have been essential to the ongoing development of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) in collaboration with the Governor's Office and multiple partnering state agencies. Prior to joining NYSED, Dr. Huang spent 15 years in the NYS Office of Children and Family Services where he led teams in child protective services, foster care, and adoption services. His responsibilities included federal and fiscal reporting, predictive analytics, and the development of actuarial tools. Dr. Huang has deep expertise in program evaluation, data management, and statistical modeling. He has led and contributed to numerous impactful projects, such as the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act, Raise the Age legislation, and studies on financial exploitation and juvenile justice risk assessments. Known for his analytical rigor and ability to manage complex projects, Dr. Huang is a respected leader who mentors teams and delivers data-driven insights to inform policy and practice. He is committed to public service and advancing evidence-based decision-making. He holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Criminal Justice from the University at Albany and a B.A. in Law from Sun Yat-Sen University.



HISPANIC EDUCATION SUMMIT

PRESENTED BY HISPANIC FEDERATION

Keynote Luncheon & Networking

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

| Dining Area/Concourse Level

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Jessica Orozco-Guttlein

Senior Vice President for Policy and Communications

Jessica Orozco-Guttlein is Senior Vice President for Policy and Communications at Hispanic Federation (HF), the nation's premier Latino nonprofit membership organization. Ms. Orozco-Guttlein has been a member of Hispanic Federation's team since 2011 and has previously served HF as Chief of Staff, Assistant Vice President for Policy, and Director of Immigration and Civic Engagement.

Prior to joining the Hispanic Federation, Ms. Orozco-Guttlein briefly served as an associate attorney at a small business immigration practice. She has also interned with various legal entities, such as the Legal Aid Society of San Diego and NYC's Human Resources Administration Research and Policy Development Division.

Ms. Orozco-Guttlein has volunteered her legal services for New York Law School's Safe Passage Project. Ms. Orozco-Guttlein has also appeared on several media outlets as an immigration and community engagement expert. Jessica has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of California at Los Angeles and a Juris Doctorate from New York Law School. She is a member of the State Bar of California.



Kamar Samuels

Chancellor of New York City Public Schools

Kamar H. Samuels is the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), the nation's largest public school system, serving more than one million students. Appointed in 2026, Chancellor Samuels brings over two decades of experience as an educator, school leader, and district administrator, as well as the perspective of an NYCPS parent. His work is centered on improving student achievement, strengthening instruction, and ensuring schools are safe, inclusive, and academically rigorous.

Chancellor Samuels began his career as an elementary school teacher in the Bronx through the NYC Teaching Fellows program, experiences that shaped his deep commitment to high expectations, meaningful supports, and strong family partnerships. He later served as principal of the Bronx Writing Academy and held several senior leadership roles across the NYCPS central office, including Executive Director of District School Design.

As a superintendent in Brooklyn and Manhattan (Districts 13 and 3), he led major literacy reforms through the NYC Reads initiative, contributing to improved literacy outcomes, and advanced school integration efforts through admissions, rezoning, and culturally responsive practices. He also oversaw the launch of 17 International Baccalaureate programs.

Born in Jamaica and educated in New York City, Chancellor Samuels holds degrees from Baruch and Lehman Colleges and leads with the belief that all students deserve equitable access to high-quality education that prepares them for college, careers, and life.

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

1:40 PM – 2:40 PM | AUDITORIUM

Beyond Crisis: Building Culturally Responsive School Mental Health Systems to Improve Academic Outcomes for Latino and BIPOC Students

Latino and BIPOC students in New York City experience disproportionately high levels of unmet mental health needs, with direct consequences for attendance, academic achievement, and graduation outcomes. This workshop moves beyond crisis response to explore how schools can build culturally responsive, trauma-informed mental health systems that promote student wellbeing and academic success. Presenters will share evidence-informed strategies for integrating mental health supports into school environments serving historically marginalized communities. The session will examine how culturally responsive approaches to school mental health improve student engagement, emotional regulation, and learning outcomes while addressing systemic barriers to care. Participants will also learn about the essential role of partnerships between schools and community-based mental health providers in creating sustainable, coordinated support systems. Attendees will leave with actionable tools and frameworks to implement equity-centered mental health practices that strengthen both student wellness and educational outcomes across schools and districts.



Yurilka Hernandez, LCSW

Yurilka Hernandez, LCSW is a bilingual, bicultural licensed clinical social worker, founder, and mental health leader with over 17 years of experience advancing culturally responsive care for underserved communities. She is the Founder and Clinical Director of Psychotherapy & Consultation Group Services PLLC and the Founder of Alta Vida Wellness, an initiative dedicated to reimagining accessible, community-centered mental health systems. Yurilka specializes in working with children, adolescents, and families navigating trauma, cultural transitions, and systemic barriers to care. Her work integrates psychodynamic theory, CBT, DBT, and trauma-informed approaches, with a strong emphasis on building trust within Latino and immigrant communities. In addition to her

clinical practice, Yurilka has led program development and community-based mental health initiatives within large nonprofit systems, partnering with schools and community organizations to expand equitable access to care. She is passionate about bridging mental health and education systems to improve student outcomes and is committed to developing sustainable, culturally grounded models that support both youth and the professionals who serve them.

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

1:40 PM – 2:40 PM

| CONCOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

| SALON A

Talleres en Comunidad: Designing a Latinidad Curriculum with Students and Teachers

Talleres en Comunidad: Designing a Latinidad Curriculum with Students and Teachers highlights the participatory approach behind the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI), which aims to provide educators with curriculum resources that reflect students' identities and the diverse communities they belong to. This interactive session will introduce participants to newly developed Latinidad elective course modules and high school lessons designed for use across New York City public schools. Presenters will share how the LCI team collaborated directly with students and teachers from schools across NYC to co-create curriculum grounded in lived experience, cultural knowledge, and local contexts. Participants will engage in select activities originally developed by students and educators and explore how these lessons foster identity reflection, critical inquiry, and community connection. The session will also invite participant feedback to help shape future iterations of the curriculum and expand the impact of collaborative, student-centered curriculum design.



Dr. Limarys Caraballo

Associate Professor of English Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

Limarys Caraballo is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Arts and Humanities and Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Doctoral Consortium Faculty in Urban Education at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her research, which has been recognized by organizations such as the American Educational Research Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the American Association of Teaching and Curriculum, documents students' and educators' multiple identities as learners and agents of change in academic and nonacademic contexts, and also explores how minoritized youth leverage their multiple identities and literacies in classrooms and

beyond. She is also the co-founder and director of Cyphers for Justice, a youth-engaged research organization that supports intergenerational participatory inquiry. In her 30th year as an educator, she is deeply committed to scholarship-in-praxis and is currently co-directing and developing the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative of the Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study at Teachers College.



Katie Caster

Doctoral Student, Teachers College, Columbia University

Kathryn (Katie) Caster is a doctoral candidate in English Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and an experienced educator with over 15 years in K-12 classrooms. Her work spans special education, literacy, and TESOL, as well as leadership roles in organizations such as Latinos for Education and Leadership for Educational Equity. Her research centers on Latina mentor-mentee relationships, exploring how mentorship shapes identity, teaching practice, and career pathways. Katie is committed to advancing culturally sustaining, community-centered approaches to education that uplift the voices and experiences of Latinx communities.





Carolina Gómez

Doctoral Student, Teachers College, Columbia University

Carolina Gómez (she/her) is a doctoral fellow in the Curriculum and Teaching Department at Teachers College, Columbia University. Before pursuing her doctoral studies, she spent seven years as a middle school teacher in Queens, New York, and she is now an adjunct lecturer at Queens College. Her experience working with students with disabilities led to her current research, which focuses on Disability Studies, Critical Race Theory (DisCrit), and settler colonialism. She is particularly interested in how inclusion is shaped by colonial legacies and how educators work to create inclusive practices within their school communities.



Fabiola Quiñones

Doctoral Student, Teachers College, Columbia University

Fabiola Quiñones is a doctoral student in the Curriculum and Teaching department. Her research centers on the inclusion and representation of current colonies in US History, the co-development of curricula with youth using Youth Participatory Action Research and Latino Critical Race Theory, and the use of multimedia as teaching tools. She works as a Research Assistant at the Gordon Institute for Advanced Study and is an educational consultant working with District 7 in the Bronx. Previously, she has been an instructional coach, leadership coach, middle school STEM teacher, department head, curriculum developer, and instructional fellow. Fabiola identifies as Puerto Rican and Panamanian, and her personal experiences drive her to create opportunities for other Latinx students. She holds a BA in Psychology from the University of Notre Dame, a MAM in Arts Management from Columbia College, and a MsEd from Hunter College. Go Irish!



CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

1:40 PM – 2:40 PM

| CONCOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

| SALON B

Literacy Equity for New York’s Multilingual Learners

This workshop centers literacy equity for New York’s multilingual learners by examining recent statewide data on literacy achievement and proficiency. Presented by EdTrust–NY, the session will analyze trends across language and literacy measures that reveal persistent and urgent challenges facing multilingual learners, including limited access to high-quality, culturally and linguistically sustaining instructional systems. As New York moves to align literacy instruction with evidence-based practices grounded in the science of reading, this workshop emphasizes why multilingual learners must be at the center, not the margins, of this work. Panelists will explore how current data point to system-level and instructional gaps that require coordinated action across classrooms, schools, districts, and state policy. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of the barriers multilingual learners face in reading and writing development and the strategic considerations necessary to advance more equitable literacy outcomes statewide.



Joanna Yip 葉天恩

Joanna Yip 葉天恩 is a policy lead at EdTrust-New York, focused on advancing education equity for multilingual learners and immigrant students. Joanna previously served as the Director of State and District Engagements at the English Learners Success Forum, leading programming for state agencies, districts, and professional learning organizations to advance a shared understanding of multilingual learner inclusion in curriculum adoption and implementation. She supported network-wide instructional initiatives at New Visions for Public Schools and the Internationals Network for Public Schools. She is the co-author of *Schoolwide Systems for Multilingual Learner Success* with Lisa Auslander, and *Sentence Strategies for Multilingual Learners: Advancing Academic Literacy through Combinations*

with Nell Panero. She also teaches at educator and school administrator preparation programs.

Joanna holds a Ph.D. in education policy from the CUNY Graduate Center, a master’s in TESOL from Hunter College, and a bachelor’s in English from Barnard College. She received her school leadership training at The Leadership Academy and professional coaching certification through the Co-Active Training Institute and New York University’s School for Professional Studies.



CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

2:50 PM – 3:50 PM | AUDITORIUM

Bridging the Gap: Career Pathways for Latino Students Through Partnerships

Latino students represent one of the fastest-growing populations in U.S. schools, yet many lack access to career-connected learning experiences that translate aspirations into clear pathways to economic mobility. This interactive workshop examines how cross-sector partnerships among K–12 schools, community-based organizations, workforce providers, and employers can expand access to career exploration, advising, and work-based learning opportunities for Latino students. Participants will review key data highlighting workforce access gaps and learn from effective partnership models that support student success. Through a guided, hands-on activity, attendees will map a student's journey from early career exposure to workforce entry, identifying the roles and responsibilities of partners at each stage. The session will highlight practical strategies for aligning systems, strengthening collaboration, and building sustainable career pathways. Participants will leave with a clear framework to advance equitable, career-connected learning opportunities aligned with New York State's Portrait of a Graduate.



Cindy Concepcion

She/Her/Hers/Herself Director College Access Center New Settlement

Cindy Concepción is a seasoned nonprofit leader with over 15 years of experience, currently serving as the Director of the College Access Center at New Settlement. She is dedicated to expanding equitable pathways to higher education for underserved youth and young adults, with a relentless commitment to ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has the opportunity to succeed in their postsecondary journey.

A passionate advocate for college access and success, Cindy brings deep expertise in community engagement, strategic planning, and the design of innovative, impact-driven initiatives. Her leadership is grounded in a strong understanding of community needs, and she is known for cultivating sustainable partnerships with organizations, stakeholders, and community leaders. Through her strategic approach, she has led numerous initiatives aimed at increasing college enrollment, retention, and completion. Cindy's commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive environments is both professional and personal. As a former participant of the College Access Center, she experienced the transformative power of education and remains dedicated to creating those same opportunities for the next generation.



Maggie Pimentel

Director of Programs & Partnerships, Shared Lane

Maggie Pimentel is a dynamic leader and innovator in college and career readiness, youth development and workforce development, with over a decade of experience designing and scaling programs that expand access to economic mobility. As Director of Programs & Partnerships at Shared Lane, she leads cross-sector initiatives, cultivating partnerships with community-based organizations, high schools, workforce providers, and the Office of Student Pathways to build system capacity and align stakeholders around equitable, career-connected pathways for students. She spearheads the Workforce Gateway Internship (WGI), a groundbreaking initiative that bridges the gap between K–12 education

and non-degree career pathways through hands-on learning, industry partnerships, and streamlined admissions pipelines. Known for turning big ideas into actionable systems, Maggie's work focuses on dismantling systemic



barriers, strengthening school-to-workforce ecosystems, and equipping educators with the tools and strategies to guide students toward informed, viable futures. A proud first-generation Latina from the Bronx, Maggie brings both lived experience and professional expertise to her work, centering equity, access, and opportunity in everything she builds.



Latiqua Washington

*Deputy Director & Director of Postsecondary Access and Success Counseling.
Goddard Riverside Options Center*

Latiqua Washington has over 14+ years of experience providing college access and retention programming. She has previously worked for CUNY and several nonprofit organizations, including serving on the board of the College Access Consortium of New York (CACNY) Inc. Latiqua is passionate about professional development and advocating for policy changes that remove systemic and institutional barriers.

Latiqua holds a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership (MSOL) from CUNY Lehman, a B.A. in Social Justice from Hobart and William Smith Colleges and is a proud alum of PASE's Emerging Leaders and Landit Women's Leadership Programs.



CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

2:50 PM – 3:50 PM

| CONCOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

| SALON A

Latino College Success: Strengthening the Path to College Completion for First-Generation Students Through Student Support Programming

First-generation Latino college students often navigate higher education while facing academic, financial, and emotional barriers that can threaten persistence and completion. This workshop explores how targeted student support programming strengthens the path to college success and degree attainment for first-generation students. Drawing on lived experience and practice, presenters will examine common challenges Latino students face as they navigate college systems for the first time and share strategies for building resilience and self-advocacy. The session will highlight the impact of mentorship and community-based support programs—including CREAR Futuros, Urban Male Leadership initiatives, academic departments, and Hispanic Federation efforts—that provide guidance, belonging, and academic navigation. Participants will also engage in a discussion of how institutions can better coordinate supports, increase transparency, and strengthen policies to improve retention and student success. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to enhance student support structures that promote persistence, confidence, and long-term academic achievement.



MODERATOR Fatima Aviles

Fatima Aviles, a proud graduate of Western Connecticut State University, serves as the Director of CREAR Futuros and College Initiatives, where she leads with purpose, vision, and an unwavering commitment to student success. Born and raised in Mexico, she brings a lived understanding of the barriers first-generation students often face and channels that experience into building pathways that expand educational access and opportunity. In her role, Fatima functions as the central point of contact for CREAR Futuros, providing strategic leadership across all program areas. She oversees daily operations, including logistics, curriculum development, communications, and digital engagement strategies

that strengthen student connection and participation. Under her guidance, the initiative has broadened its reach, improved student outcomes, and earned recognition as a finalist for the Excelencia in Education Award—a testament to its impact on advancing Latino student success and equity in higher education.



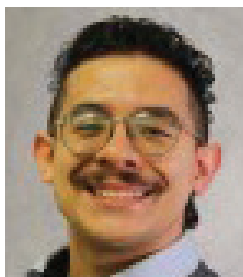
Irma Cruz

College Discovery Counselor. Bronx Community College

Irma Cruz graduated from New York City College of Technology, CUNY, with a Bachelor of Science in Human Services and later earned her Master of Social Work from the Silberman School of Social Work. As a first-generation college graduate, her pursuit of higher education was deeply inspired by witnessing the sacrifices and resilience of her family. Born in Mexico, Irma immigrated to the United States at the age of four with her mother and brother. This personal journey has shaped her strong commitment to education, advocacy, and student success. She currently serves as a College Discovery Counselor at Bronx Community College, where she is dedicated to supporting students

in overcoming barriers, achieving their academic goals, and pursuing higher education opportunities.





Joshua Amador

Undergraduate Foundations Community Lead

Joshua Amador is the ¡Adelante! Leadership Program Coordinator and the CREAR Futuros Liaison at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where he leads a two-year academic community dedicated to advancing the success, belonging, and professional development of Latine students. A proud CUNY alumnus, Joshua began his journey at John Jay College, where his early experiences shaped his commitment to supporting students in navigating higher education. He went on to earn his Master's degree in Higher Education Administration from the Marx School of Public and International Affairs at Baruch College, deepening his focus on equitable student success and institutional

practice. In his role, Joshua has supported over 400 students through the ¡Adelante! Leadership Program/CREAR Futuros and Undergraduate Foundations initiatives, designing and implementing programs that strengthen academic achievement, retention, and a sense of community. His work is grounded in research on student belonging, highlighting the critical role culturally responsive; community-based support systems play in fostering persistence and college completion for Latine students. Joshua is dedicated to building spaces where students feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed both during college and beyond.



Lola Chávez

CREAR Futuros Mentor - CREAR Futuros at SUNY Old Westbury

SUNY Old Westbury Psychology student, Lola Chávez, has made her presence known through leadership, mentorship, and service. During her undergraduate career, she was an active member of the NCAA Women's Soccer team. At the end of her first year, she was awarded the Prestigious Panther Award, an honor recognizing student-athletes who exemplify excellence in academics, athletics, and leadership.

Beyond athletics, Lola serves as a peer mentor for CREAR Futuros, supporting first-generation undergraduates as they navigate academic, financial, and personal challenges throughout college. Additionally, Lola played an active role in CREAR Futuros programming, helping coordinate events ranging from large-scale celebrations like their CREAR Friendsgiving event to career-planning workshops. She managed social media outreach and designed promotional flyers for CREAR Futuros and the Neuropsychology Club, where she served on the executive board as the Public Relations Chair.

Additionally, Lola interned with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, where she advocated for students with disabilities, promoting accessibility, awareness, and inclusion across campus. After graduation in late May, Lola plans to pursue a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling.



Gabriel Bencosme

CREAR Futuros Mentor – Lehman College

Gabriel Bencosme is a proud Dominican scholar raised in Washington Heights, New York, often known as Little Dominican Republic, where his community and culture shaped his commitment to education and leadership. A graduate of Bronx Community College, Gabriel earned his Associate's degree in June 2023, demonstrating academic excellence and perseverance. He continued his educational journey at Lehman College in Spring 2024, majoring in Latin American & Caribbean Studies with minors in English Literature and Latino Studies.

Gabriel's leadership and advocacy have been recognized beyond the classroom. He was selected as a model for Macy's Hispanic Heritage Month campaign in partnership with the Hispanic Federation and later chosen as a CREAR Futuros mentor at Lehman College, supporting and uplifting fellow first-generation students. In Winter 2025, he was selected for the competitive *Winter in Puerto Rico* study abroad program. Gabriel will graduate from Lehman College in May 2026 and will begin his master's studies at the CUNY Graduate Center in Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Cultures in Fall 2026.

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

2:50 PM – 3:50 PM

| CONCOURSE / LOWER LEVEL

| SALON A

Bridging the Gap: Practical Strategies for Parents and Teachers to Support Multilingual Learners

This workshop presents *Bridging the Gap: A Guide for Parents and Teachers to Navigate Language, Culture, and Education Together*, a practical resource developed through the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) at Columbia University to strengthen support for multilingual learners. Designed for both families and educators, the session focuses on concrete, culturally responsive strategies that promote collaboration between home and school. Participants will explore ways parents—especially those who do not speak English—can actively support their children’s learning at home while honoring language, culture, and identity. The workshop also highlights instructional practices that help teachers deepen engagement with multilingual students and their families. Drawing from lived experiences with Venezuelan, Colombian, and Haitian communities in New York and New Jersey, presenters will share adaptable activities that bridge language, culture, and academic learning. Attendees will leave with practical tools to strengthen school-family relationships and support multilingual learner success across educational and community settings.



Mizael Bercerra Toro

ESL Teacher | Multilingual Learner, Specialist. West New York School District

Mizael Bercerra Toro is an ESL teacher in the West New York School District with over a decade of experience in language education across the United States and Latin America. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in Education at Universidad de Los Andes (Venezuela), focusing on multilingual education and language ideologies in migratory contexts. He holds a Master of Arts in International Educational Development from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a Master of Science in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning from Universidad de Los Andes. Mizael is the author of *Bridging the Gap: A Guide for Parents and Teachers to Navigate Language, Culture, and Education Together*, developed

through the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) at Columbia University, as well as several research articles. His work centers on supporting multilingual learners and their families through practical, culturally responsive approaches that strengthen connections between home, schools, and communities.



Natasha Quiroga

Director of Education Policy & InsideSchools. InsideSchools - The New School

Natasha Quiroga is Director of Education Policy and InsideSchools at the New School's Center for New York City Affairs and is a nationally recognized expert on immigrant family and community engagement. She brings almost 20 years of experience advocating for children, youth, and families and provides professional development trainings to school staff, administrators, and educators in New York and across the country on supporting immigrant students and families. Natasha received her J.D. from American University's Washington College of Law and her Master's in International Politics with a concentration in Children and Youth Development from American University's School of International

Service. She received her B.B.A. in Marketing and B.A. in Plan II Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Austin.

Closing Remarks

4:00 PM – 4:15 PM | AUDITORIUM



Ingrid Alvarez

Vice President for Policy and Strategic Engagement

Ingrid Álvarez is Vice President for Policy and Strategic Engagement at the Hispanic Federation (HF) — the nation's leading Latino nonprofit membership organization — where she drives the organization's public policy agenda and advocacy strategies across state and regional offices nationwide.

Having grown with HF since 2013, Ingrid has shaped the organization's growth from the ground up, including as New England Regional Director, where she led capacity-building, grantmaking, and policy advocacy across Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.

Today, she operates at the national and states level, translating community needs into systemic change for Latino families across the country.

Her leadership extends well beyond HF. Ingrid serves on the Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and is a Fellow of the Connecticut Health Foundation's Academy for Health Equity and Adaptive Leadership — recognitions that reflect both her expertise and her peers' trust. She has been honored as Connecticut's Latino de Oro (2022) and Latina of the Year (2016).

Ingrid holds an M.A. in Education Policy from Columbia University and dual B.A.s in Political Science and Spanish Language, Literature and Culture from Syracuse University.

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