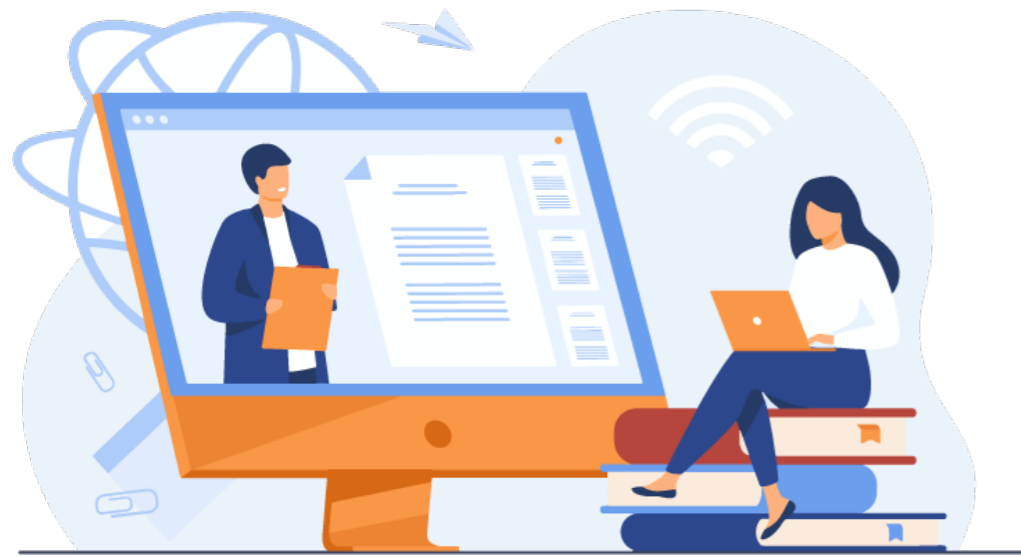




# CTL REFLECTIONS NEWSLETTER



**Fall 2022**  
**Vol.15**



# CONTENT

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# CTL TEAM



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“Creating better teachers to better serve our students.”

## CTL Mission

In keeping with Hostos tradition, the Center for Teaching and Learning promotes excellence in teaching and learning with innovative pedagogies and state-of-the-art technologies by fostering interdisciplinary and cross-divisional collaborations.

### Goals and Objectives:

In order to fulfill its mission, the Center for Teaching and Learning strives to accomplish the following goals and objectives:

- Provide faculty development to build a culture of teaching and learning excellence and transform faculty teaching experiences.
- Promote best practices of teaching excellence in both traditional and online pedagogy of teaching and learning.
- Provide faculty with opportunities for research, scholarship, service, and leadership development to create and use pedagogical innovations to improve student outcomes.
- Work with and support OAA and other offices to promote a culture of collaboration.
- Develop strategies to boost awareness and involvement in all CTL activities and initiatives.

Additional offerings by the Center for Teaching and Learning include: Support for student participation programs (honors programs, WAC, Study Abroad Program, etc.); collaboration with the Grants office to propose strategies to support faculty engagement in grantsmanship and provide development support for faculty research initiatives (assistance locating funding sources, grant writing workshops, etc.)



**IRIS MERCADO**

Associate Professor  
Education

## Nutrition in the Time of COVID

**F**eeding your body certain foods can strengthen your immune system, decrease the severity of symptoms, and shorten the duration of an infectious disease.

Okay. Let's get the bad news out of the way- When looking for ways to prevent infectious diseases like COVID, there's no magic pill or single food or supplement that is guaranteed to boost your immune system or protect you against any virus. Now for the good news: You can make nutrition a priority and help your immune system stay healthy by eating a variety of healthy foods. So, your next step should be buying the right groceries. You can easily secure a nice variety of healthy options, even with a limited budget, by choosing shelf-stable foods like canned goods, pasta, rice, and legumes; selecting some frozen foods like fruits and vegetables; and utilizing your freezer to store bread, meats, vegetables, and fruits. Nutrition can help boost your immune system with high nutrient-density foods. Let's begin by filling your plate with "immune-boosting nutrients." *One of the best ways to stay healthy is to eat healthy foods.* Our immune system relies on a continual supply of nutrients to work at its higher level. Some of the key nutrients that play a role in immunity are vitamins and minerals with antioxidant abilities, phytochemicals (a non-nutrient substance from plants with health benefits), proteins, and water. Here are some key nutrients and their food sources that play an essential role in your immune system and health:

**VITAMIN C** is an antioxidant that protects cells from oxidation, increases levels of antibodies in the blood, and may reduce the duration of colds. The best way to consume this vitamin is by eating a combination of fruits such as blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, cherries, mangoes, pineapples, oranges, grapefruit, kiwis, lemons, tangerines, clementine, tomatoes, and fresh vegetables like kale, cauliflower, broccoli, spinach, cabbage, brussels sprouts, and red and green peppers. Eating them raw is preferred since heat can destroy some of the vitamin C. However, many of these can be purchased frozen; frozen produce maintains its nutritional value well. They can also be bought and consumed fresh, then stored in your freezer to be used later for smoothies or soups.

Vitamin C is water-soluble, which means that the excess supplementation (over 2,000 mg/day) will be eliminated in your urine. If you take a vitamin C supplement, buy one with 200-500mg and take it 2 to 3

times a day in morning-midday-night intervals. It is a good strategy to maximize its absorption and battle infectious diseases.

**VITAMIN D** has essential functions beyond calcium and bone health, including helping our immune systems stay strong during the cold and flu season. Vitamin D alters the activity and number of white blood cells (T2 killer lymphocytes), reducing the spread of bacteria and viruses. The deficiency of this vitamin is associated with increased susceptibility to infection. Cod liver oil, a rich source of vitamin D, was employed as a treatment for tuberculosis and overall increased protection from infections many years ago before any scientific proof of its beneficial effects was available. Recent studies from the National Institute of Health warn that low vitamin D levels are associated with frequent colds and influenza.

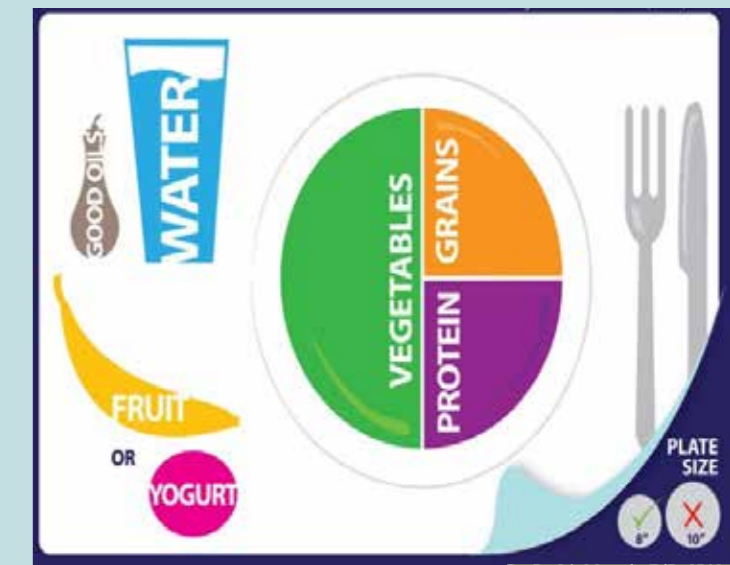
Good food sources of vitamin D include fatty fish like sardines, salmon, mackerel (canned or fresh); egg yolks, fortified milk, and plant milk products (almond milk); cheese, fortified cereal, and juice; tofu, mushrooms and, of course, sunlight (20min/day). Even though there is no evidence that vitamin D supplements will protect you from COVID-19, it's wise to consider them if you feel you are not getting enough of this vital vitamin through your diet. Also, choose supplements containing D3 (cholecalciferol) since it's better to raise your vitamin D blood levels.

**BETA-CAROTENE** has antioxidant properties that help neutralize free radicals and is a precursor of Vitamin A and the primary safe dietary source for it. Vitamin A is essential for normal growth and vision and vital for a robust immune system. In addition, many studies suggested that beta-carotene may enhance cell-mediated immune responses, particularly in the elderly, by helping antibodies respond to toxins and foreign substances.

Good beta-carotene sources include sweet potato, carrot, mango, apricot, dark leafy greens like spinach and kale, broccoli, butternut squash, romaine lettuce, and canta-



## The Latino Way Food Groups



By: Dr. Iris Mercado, EdD, CDN

## Nutrition in the Time of COVID

loupe. While eating a lot of Beta-Carotene in foods is considered harmless, supplementations of either beta-carotene or vitamin A is not recommended because it can suppress the immune system and cause toxic reactions in your body.

**ZINC** oral formulations, in combination with vitamin C, may shorten the duration of symptoms of the common cold and help cells in your immune system grow and differentiate properly, according to studies. Although the amount of zinc a person needs can change on a case-by-case basis, on average, an adult man needs 11 milligrams of zinc per day. This amount is naturally found in different foods and is also available as a dietary supplement. But beware! Excessive intake of this trace mineral by supplementation can interfere with absorbing other essential nutrients like Iron and inhibit immune system function.

Good food sources of zinc include oysters (fresh or canned), crab, lobster, shrimp, lean beef steak and pork chop, dark poultry meat, yogurt, fortified cereals, specific nuts (pine nuts, peanuts, cashews, and almonds), specific seeds (hemp, pumpkin, squash, and sesame seeds), wheat germ, chickpeas, lentils, and tofu.

**PROTEIN** is a crucial building block for immune cells and antibodies and is primarily responsible for helping the immune system work at its best. That is why a small portion of protein is essential in each meal and snack every day.

Protein comes from animal and plant-based sources, including fish, poultry, beef, milk, yogurt, eggs, cottage cheese, nuts, seeds, beans, legumes, and lentils.

**PREBIOTICS & PROBIOTICS** help boost the health of the microbiome in your gut, where 70% of your immune system resides and, in turn, supports your immune system. Prebiotics are the dietary fiber that acts as a fertilizer for the good bacteria in your gut. Plants

provide plenty of fiber, which helps feed the good bacteria and regularly flush your gastrointestinal (GI) tract of harmful bacteria looking to gain a foothold. Probiotics are live bacteria found in yogurt and other fermented foods. To be active and useful, they must be kept alive by controlling the temperature (refrigeration) and proper environment (avoid heat, stomach acid, and long shelf time).

Sources of probiotics include dairy foods such as yogurt, kefir, buttermilk, cottage cheese, and fermented foods such as kombucha, kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, tempeh, and sourdough bread. Sources of prebiotics include asparagus, whole grains, banana, onion, garlic, leeks, artichoke, legumes, and beans.

**WATER** is the most indispensable nutrient. About 60% of our body is water, incorporated into the cells, tissues, and organs. Water is needed for many chemical reactions as a solvent and is the body-cleansing agent. Drinking enough water every day is good for overall health; it can prevent dehydration, a condition that can cause unclear thinking, mood change, body overheat, constipation, and kidney stones, but how much is enough? The need for water is influenced by many factors such as body size, age, gender, alcohol consumption, cold or hot weather, heated environment, intake of protein, salt or sugar, and physical activities.

My grandmother always told me to drink 8 cups of water a day; was she right? Yes, because plain drinking water is one best way of getting fluids as it has zero calories. No, because the experts recommend about 12 to 15 cups of fluids a day. But, daily fluid intake (total water) is defined as the amount of water consumed from foods, plain drinking water, and other beverages like juices, milk, soda, or tea. On average, 20 percent of your water intake is from the foods you eat. Some solid foods like fruits and vegetables are surprisingly high in water, such as broccoli, cucumber, celery, strawberries, lettuce, and tomatoes, and they count as part of your water intake.

Remember that variety and balance are essential to follow-

ing a nutritious diet. Eating just one of these foods won't be enough to help you fight off the COVID or any other infectious disease, even if you eat it constantly. Instead, eat a variety of fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables every day and pay attention to serving sizes (at least 2 to 4 cups/day). If taking supplements, it is better to take a multivitamin with minerals once or twice a day with your morning and evening meals to avoid getting too much of a single vitamin and too little of others. Avoid eating junk and processed foods high in fat and sugar like chips and desserts and big portions of red meat and refined grains. They may weaken your immune system and make you susceptible to infectious diseases or other health problems. Your body works hard to keep you healthy and active, so make sure you do your part by giving it the foods needed to stay strong



*Remember that variety and balance are essential to following a nutritious diet. Eating just one of these foods won't be enough to help you fight off the COVID or any other infectious disease*

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**Dr. Eugena Griffin**  
Associate Professor  
Psychology

## Taking Care of My Health, While Living Through the Pandemic

Being a full-time academic remains rewarding, but should include methods to balance the demands of professorial responsibility. Prior to the pandemic, the task of teaching, conference presentations, an array of faculty meetings, office hours, and grading papers was much. Fast forward due to the pandemic and Remote Instruction, the drain on the optic nerve is taxing. Everything being facilitated by a computer and/or tablet in many instances increased the physical and emotional strain of professorial responsibilities

During the pandemic, to balance out my career demands, I embraced the need to be physically active daily. It allows for a cathartic release and provides opportunity to give my eye light and lungs fresh air. I typically start my day with my spiritual reading and meditation, then some form of physical exercise. I am a cyclist and participate in two organized Bike Teams; National Black Girls Do Bike (NY-Chapter, BGDB-NYC; 2016) and The Little Rascals Club (Queens, NY; 2019).

Thereby, I participate in a lot of organized bike tours from May Eugena K. Griffin 100 miles per tour. Because of this, during Bike Season, I typically cycle a minimum of 50 to 200 miles per week. During the off season my teammates and I, Zwift, which is a virtual online platform that allows us to cycle together by use of an indoor bicycle trainer and connecting sensors to a road bikes and laptop.



**Five Boro  
Bike Tour  
New York**

Additionally, since the pandemic, I resumed a love for walking. Being fully remote for the past two years, I needed air. Being in my home office all day started to get to me, including making the reality of the death of my adopted big sister/bestfriend more salient. Dr. LeKisha Edwards passed away December 30th 2019 due to Sickle Cell challenges at the tender age of 42. She was in my life for over 18 years. After her death, showing up to the college each day, huffing to the train and being physically present was in some ways minimizing my focus on such a significant physical loss.

However, once the pandemic resulted in a Mass Lockdown for the city that NEVER SLEEPS, grief became REAL. I started going through the different stages of grief, including anger. The reality of being a Licensed Psychologist, in addition to serving as a professor, made me use positive self talk, reflection, and emotion-focused coping strategies to help myself from staying in a down mood. Thus, walking became part of my therapy—removing myself from my home, getting air, and listening to uplifting spiritual music.

To date, after my spiritual devotion, before my work day starts during off season, I walk regardless of the weather. I even purchased wind and rain gear from Columbia Sportswear to support this catharsis. I started with walking a mile a day. Now there are days when I walk 7 miles, again regardless of the temperature. I also do 100 push-up (unmodified) a day and other calisthenics. To each their own, however, being physically active, along with my spiritual practices has protected my mind from a significant amount of negative emotions during this pandemic. I am most proud of myself for being able to guard my mind, but also I divorced a total of 32 lbs. being consistent with being active daily, changing what I eat, and I have maintained it for the past two years.

During my youth, I was a basketball player and received college scholarships to play ball. I am back at the weight and energy level I had at 18 and it feels AMAZING. No one tells youth, how important it is to remain active as you grow in age and career. It is interesting how your career platform can become such a focus that you begin to neglect your

physical health, which can indirectly compromise your mental health. I am back to drinking a homemade fruit and vegetable smoothie daily, a salad a day, and staying away from all fast and fried food. All of which impacts our quality of physical and mental health if considered from a Biopsychosocial Model, as I teach my college students. What we consume impacts brain chemistry, endocrinology, and overall quality of physical energy and cognitive processing. When we don't feel good physically, our mind, including ability to process information and recall, as well as variability of mood can be impacted. Knowing, but owning this is essential to continue to serve as a college professor, licensed psychologist, and mentor to the generations that come behind me.

My newly embraced motto is to be active each day, regardless of the weather to protect my mind, heart, and sow a seed into my future self.

“  
*My newly embraced motto is to be active each day, regardless of the weather to protect my mind, heart, and sow a seed into my future self*





**Rocio Rayo**

SDEM

Transfer Service Manager

## Building Community in a Virtual Classroom at an Urban Community College



Community building at a commuter school is hard. This has been written about, discussed and is not news to anyone who has ever taught at CUNY. It was something that I felt equipped to do – pre-pandemic. I had attended SPA Day workshops about community building – I even presented about how to build community in the classroom. I had a repertoire of tools and activities. However, they all required students to be physically present in a classroom. Last fall, as I was teaching my first online class, the added layer of building community with students commuting to a virtual classroom created what seemed at first like an impenetrable obstacle.

### A Box of Black Boxes

As I opened my zoom classroom for the first day of class, a day that is usually full of energy and nervous excitement, a day that I get to introduce myself and the material, I was not prepared for the gravitational pull of those black boxes. I felt my words and my energy being sucked into the vortex of zoom and had zero idea of who I was sharing space with or if anything I said was being heard by anyone. I remember closing the meeting room and feeling something, I never experienced before as a professor – defeated.

### Flipping the Classroom

For those of us who have survived poverty, defeat never lasts long. I reached out to my community of active students and asked for help. Almost everyone said that the online classes they felt most connected to the material AND the professor were the ones they felt compelled to turn their cameras on for. I could work with that.

I re-wrote my syllabus so that before I introduced any topic, I included an interesting (I hoped!) and accessible short video (less than 10 minutes) that familiarized the students with the content. Then instead of using the classroom time to lecture via my PowerPoints I recorded a voice over and uploaded them to YouTube so that

they could watch/listen to them. My son and wife provided me with an audience and questions so that during the voice over – I could make clarifications, add nuance – or dig deeper into some of the content – and hopefully not sound like a robot reading a script. The power points ended with critical thinking questions and short writing assignments that would be discussed in the next class together.

### Power of Emotion

Sara Ahmed wrote, “So while the experience of pain may be solitary, it is never private.” Last fall there were tremendous feelings that pulled so many of my different communities together and apart. As a professor, I felt estranged from my classroom. As a student, I felt a worldwide comradeship in the experience of learning online for the first time. The comradeships came mostly from strangers in Facebook groups, whatsapp chats and hashtags – and it was a lot of sharing pain and joy and our lives.

Since our classroom lectures were now outside of the classroom, we used the first 15 minutes of every class to simply check in about our lives. The first class I asked everyone for their thoughts and feelings before class started and all I got in response was crickets. Finally, one student unmuted herself and said in a quiet voice that her son had been sick but was starting to feel better and he turned 2 months old that day – you could feel her tired relief. Then another student said she was currently sick and that she was grateful for the hope that young mom shared. Immediately the mom’s box went from black to the curated golden gate bridge with her infant son in her arms waving happily and with each person sharing the boxes flipped from black to a community of tall stalks of green grass, swaying palm trees and the northern lights surrounding the faces, and families, and sometimes folks eating dinner.

After those first few classes, I suggested they make a whatsapp chat just for our class – and keep in touch with each other in between classes. They did and instantly it became a place for them to use the universal language gifs

and memes to build community with each other. Once class ended, they graciously invited me into the chat – and almost a year later we are still sending photos of graduation, our kids and our lives. HIS 210 thank you for reminding me of the invaluable power that only comes from community and challenging me to learn a different way that worked for us to create that in our class.



Photo By: Mimi Thian

## TEACHING TIDBITS

The Center for Teaching and Learning recognizes the challenges of finding time to research, plan, and execute new ideas. As a result, we created short videos that serve as a resource for tips, reflections, tools and new teaching strategies. The goal is to create an environment where faculty can watch, share and learn new teaching strategies. In each episode of Teaching Tidbits, faculty share pedagogy tips, hands-on activities, or other teaching strategies.

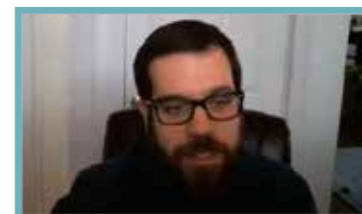
Similarly, the Teaching Moments series showcase reflections from faculty, staff and students about circumstances and moments that have changed their perspectives and offered the opportunity to try new approaches.



PROF. MARCELO VIANA NETO  
TEACHING TIDBITS



PROF. STACEY COOPER  
TEACHING TIDBITS



PROF. SEAN GERRITY  
TEACHING TIDBITS



I. PROVOST CHARLES DRAGO  
TEACHING TIDBITS

## TOUCHSTONE

This past year Touchstone has continued its mission of documenting and sharing the work and the ideas of the Hostos community. Touchstone accepts essays from faculty and staff on any aspect of academic life. Not only does publication in Touchstone help faculty move a project closer to publication in peer-reviewed journals, but it also helps faculty share their work with the rest of the community at Hostos.

The upcoming issue, for instance, represents a range of topics, from the use of language by native speakers to a lesson plan that uses the New York Times application. Along with the help of the entire Center for Teaching and Learning Council, Touchstone is grateful to its editorial board whose hard work has helped the upcoming issue come together.

This special edition will include a section that attempts to capture the impact and reinvention we have gone through during this process of transition. We would love to learn about the things that worked, and didn't work, for you inside and outside the (virtual) classroom, and how you are using this learning experience to shape your approach to teaching and learning in this new normal.

### About Touchstone:

In linking the power of teaching to a broadening of our vision, Eugenio María de Hostos affirmed the power of education. In honor of our namesake's belief, Touchstone, a journal devoted to the scholarship produced by the community of Hostos, was created. The journal is published yearly by the Magda Vasilov Center for Teaching and Learning.

The goals of Touchstone are to increase awareness of the scholarly and creative work of the faculty at Hostos and provide an outlet for work that is on its way to external publication. In accordance to these goals, Touchstone publishes a diverse range of scholarship from the Hostos Community. This diversity of imaginative and creative work represents the many talents of the faculty here at Hostos.

Touchstone accepts works in English or Spanish on any of the following:

- Original scholarship on teaching and learning
- Scholarly articles from any discipline
- Best practices
- Conference Presentations or Reports
- Classroom-based research
- Teaching challenges, experiences, and lessons
- Personal Essays or Editorials
- WAC and beyond
- Book reviews
- Creative works



For more information, contact CTL at [CTL@hostos.cuny.edu](mailto:CTL@hostos.cuny.edu)



# ACHIEVEMENTS

## Carlos Guevara

We are excited to share that Mr. Carlos Guevara, Director of Educational Technology and Co-Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning participated as a panelist for the EDUCAUSE Webinar [Exploring the 2022 Teaching and Learning Horizon Report](#) celebrated on Tuesday, May 3 at 1:00 pm.

## Sanjay Arya

The Office of Academic Affairs is pleased to congratulate Sanjay Arya, Assistant Professor of Radiologic Technology in the Allied Health Sciences Department, who was selected as a recipient of a RAD-AID ASRT Foundation Outreach Fellowship.

## PSC-CUNY Research Awards

Director of Grants and Research Administration Kelba M. Sosa, MPA, announced the names of the Hostos faculty members who received PSC-CUNY Research Awards (cycle 53 of 2022–2023) administered by the CUNY Research Foundation.

Humberto Ballesteros, Humanities	Thomas Beachdel, Humanities
Jason Buchanan, English	Helen Chang, Behavioral and Social Sciences
Charles Rice-González, English	Víctor M. Torres-Vélez, Humanities
Emmanuel Velayos Larrabure, Humanities	Elys Vasquez-Iscan, Education
Elizabeth Porter, English	

## 2022 ADELANTE Project Announces Winning Proposals

The Office of Research Programs at Hostos and the Hostos Research Center (HRC) Committee on Sponsored Programs and Grants (CSPG) Announces the ADVancing Excellence in Liberal Arts, scieNces, Technology and Engineering (ADELANTE) Winning Proposals. [Link](#)

Track 1	Track 2
Ms. Silvia Reyes	Dr. Asrat G. Amnie
Nelson Nuñez-Rodríguez	Dr. Maria del Carmen Inda
Sarah Brennan	Dr. Anna Ivanova
Sonia Maldonado	Dr. Flor Henderson
Mateo Sancho Cardiel	Marcelo D. Viana Neto
Debasish Roy	
Diana Macri	
Carlos Guevara	
Jacqueline DiSanto	
Inmaculada Lara Bonilla	

## Deep Salvage, by Charles Rice-Gonzalez

I had a short story published. This time in Big Other, and the story is titled “Deep Salvage.” It’s a queer story (of course) about love, fear, relationships and commitment. It came out in June. Check it out... <https://bigother.com/.../deep-salvage-by-charles-rice.../> So proud to be included in this online journal in a folio of Puerto Rican writers including Willie Perdomo, Ernesto Quiñones, Caridad de la Luz, Edwin Torres, Peggy Robles-Alvarado, Michele Carlo, Roberto F. Santiago, and Angel Lozada.

## S-STEM grant

We are thrilled to announce that the National Science Foundation has awarded Hostos a \$1,500,000 [S-STEM grant](#) in support of increasing the access and success of scholars in Mathematics and Computer Science at a Hispanic Serving Institution! The grant proposal was submitted by members of Hostos’ Mathematics Department: Professor Moise Koffi, Math Department Chair and Professor Nieves Angulo, and Ms. Diandra Jugmohan.

Hostos Professors Juno Morrow and Marcelo D. Viana Neto are members of the Digital Games Industry Council, and we couldn’t be prouder.

Hostos Community College Assistant Professors of Game Design Juno Morrow and Marcelo Viana Neto are members of New York City Mayor Eric Adams’ and MOME Game Development Industry Council. The new council will advise the city’s production policies and programs in the Digital Games industry and is made up of various leaders of New York City’s digital games sector. [Link](#)

## Hostos Selected One of Ten Finalist of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence

Eugenio María de Hostos Community College has been selected as one of 10 finalists for the 2023 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. The \$1 Million prize is awarded every two years and is the nation’s signature recognition for America’s community colleges. [Link](#)

## Global Scholars Achieving Career Success

The following Hostos Community College faculty were accepted as faculty fellows in Global Scholars Achieving Career Success (GSACS), a collaborative multi-campus program that foregrounds United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and career readiness competencies in class-to-class virtual exchanges between students from five colleges at the City University of New York (CUNY) including Hostos Community College and four institutions in the Middle East.

Faculty from CUNY and one of the Middle Eastern institutions collaborate to develop and implement virtual exchange modules for their students in credit-bearing courses. GSACS modules engage students, who work in bi-national teams, in collaborative comparative analysis activities... [Link](#)

## CTL ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Luz Rivera CTL Coordinator, OAA

Silvia Reyes Director of Special Projects and Student Engagement & CLIP, OAA

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Linda Miles Assistant Professor, Library

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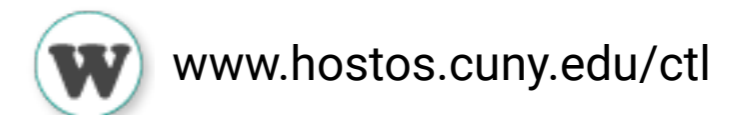
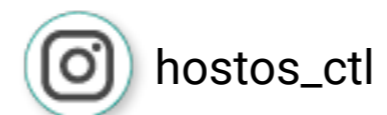
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