

# Boletín

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 **BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**ASSOCIATION**  
**OF LATINO FACULTY & STAFF**



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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Dear Readers,

As spring unfolds across our campus, I am filled with profound gratitude for the extraordinary women whose stories grace the pages of this edition. Our Women's HerStory Month celebration brings to light not just individual accomplishments, but the collective strength that forms the foundation of our Bronx Community College family.

From Dr. Prithi Kanakamedala's dedication to uncovering historically overlooked New Yorkers, to Professor Katherine Parsons' decades of library service; from Dr. Jacqueline Jiménez Polanco's scholarship on women's political representation to Luz Delgado's compassionate technology support – each profile reveals how women at BCC transform educational spaces through their unique talents and unwavering commitment.

The breadth of expertise and dedication is truly remarkable. Dr. Grisel Y. Acosta combines scholarly research with poetry and advocacy for inclusivity, while Dr. Laura Barberán Reinares creates spaces where students can develop critical thinking skills on complex social issues. Yinet Martínez's journey from BCC student to College Finance Specialist exemplifies how determination can lift entire communities. Dr. Bárbara



Flores Caballero's leadership in emotional intelligence transforms classrooms into spaces of personal growth, and Yarisa Colón Torres brings the powerful intersection of poetry and visual arts to our students at Bronx Community College.

What strikes me most powerfully in these narratives is the "village philosophy" that Tiffany Dubon-Yard so eloquently advocates. Our students are indeed everyone's students, requiring all of us to serve as guides, protectors, educators, and mentors. The tapestry of support these women have woven – spanning academic departments, student services, administration, and beyond – creates the inclusive community that defines BCC's distinctive character.

These stories remind us that behind every student success lies a network of dedicated individuals who believe in the transformative power of education. Whether it's Luis Méndez's extraordinary journey from trauma to triumph or Professor Nelson Santana's innovative approach to creating an inclusive library environment, our community thrives on the principle that everyone deserves champions who see their potential.



## Celebrating Our Community: Research, Recognition, and Leadership Excellence

Recent research highlighting the impact of Latino/a/x/e associations within Hispanic-Serving Institutions has drawn inspiration from our very own BCC Association of Latino Faculty and Staff. This groundbreaking study, a peer-reviewed article published in the Journal of Latinos and Education, titled “Pa’lante: How does a Latino Association “Serve” Latinos at a Hispanic-Serving institution,” and written by Association members, demonstrates how organizations like ours serve as vital structures for supporting Latino/a/x/e faculty, staff, and students, creating safe spaces that reduce isolation while fostering networking opportunities and improving campus climate. The significance of this research underscores the important work we continue to do in building a more inclusive and supportive campus environment.

We are proud to announce that at our annual ALFS Ceremony on May 23, 2025, the BCC Association of Latino Faculty and Staff presented awards recognizing faculty and staff for their outstanding leadership contributions to our campus community. Additionally, we celebrated several exceptional students with awards, acknowledging their academic achievements and commitment to excellence.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the exemplary leadership of our Association’s Chairperson, Assistant Vice President and Chief Information Officer Luisa “Luchy” Martich. When our previous Chair departed BCC to pursue new opportunities, Luchy stepped seamlessly into the role of Interim Chairperson. Since then, she has served with distinction as Chair, and her visionary leadership has not only sustained our Association but has elevated it to newer heights. Her dedication and commitment continue to strengthen our mission of supporting and advocating for the campus community at BCC. Gracias, Luchy, for your unwavering service and leadership.

This issue of *Boletín* was made possible through the generous collaboration of many individuals, including the colleagues whose work is featured within these pages. First, I want to thank the ALFS Cabinet for entrusting me with this task. I extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Salvador Salazar and Director Cynthia Suarez-Espinal for their invaluable editorial feedback. Special thanks go to Mr. Emmanuel Espinal, who not only contributed his editorial insights but also brought his graphic design expertise to bear, providing the finishing touches that bring this issue to life. To all who contributed: gracias.

As you read this issue, I invite you to consider your own role in our collective mission and to draw inspiration from these remarkable colleagues who embody service, scholarship, and unwavering support for our students.

Abrazos,

*Nelson Santana*

**Nelson Santana**  
Editor-in-Chief

LETTER  
FROM THE  
EDITOR



# MEET THE CABINET 2023 - 2025

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**Luisa (Luchy) Martich**

AVP & Chief Information Officer (IT)  
Chairperson of the Cabinet

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**Tiffany Dubbon-Yard**

Associate Director of Student Life  
Vice-Chairperson of the Cabinet

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**Jeannette Dávila**

Program Secretary (College Discovery Program)  
Treasurer of the Cabinet

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**Alixon Delgado**

Counselor (College Discovery Program)  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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# MEET THE CABINET 2023 - 2025

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## **Ana Molenaar**

Associate Director of Judicial Affairs  
Chairperson of Financial Community  
Outreach, Awards, and Grants

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## **Bárbara Flores-Caballero**

Associate Professor  
(Education & Academic Literacy)  
Chairperson of Student Life  
and Campus Community Engagement

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## **Nelson Santana**

Associate Professor (Library)  
Chairperson of Marketing, Communication,  
and Research

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## **Salvador Salazar**

Associate Professor (World Languages & Cultures)  
Chairperson of Faculty Staff Professional  
Development

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## **Cynthia Suarez-Espinal**

Director (College Discovery Program)  
Chairperson of Membership Recruitment  
and Retention

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# FROM TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH:

## Luis Méndez's Remarkable Journey at Bronx Community College

In a testament to human resilience and determination, Mr. Luis Méndez's extraordinary journey from interrupted studies to college graduate demonstrates how determination and resilience can overcome life's most challenging obstacles.

Mr. Méndez first attended Bronx Community College (BCC) in 2012 after completing his GED through the Future Now program. Like many first-generation students, he initially lacked clear direction, choosing Liberal Arts as his major primarily to fulfill his parents' expectations. During this period, music was his only academic interest while he struggled to find his passion.

His life took a devastating turn when, after pausing his education and experiencing difficult circumstances, Mr. Méndez suffered a life-altering injury—a gunshot wound to the head at point-blank range. The bullet entered the right side of his brain and exited through the back, causing severe damage to the neural pathways controlling the left side of his body.

"I couldn't talk, I couldn't walk, I couldn't sit down in a chair properly," Mr. Méndez recounted. "I was leaning to the side. I was greeted with an oxygen tank. It was very, very bad. My life completely just changed."

The road to recovery was arduous. Mr. Méndez had to relearn basic functions like speaking, walking, and even brushing his teeth. His support network proved crucial during this challenging period—his parents, siblings, extended family, and his faith provided the foundation for his remarkable comeback.

My mother, my brother, my younger sister, they would come visit me all the time," Mr. Méndez explained. His journey included transfers between multiple hospitals and even a stay in a nursing home where he eventually relearned to walk.

When Mr. Méndez decided to return to education, Future Now once again played a vital role, helping settle his outstanding balance at BCC and facilitating his re-enrollment. With renewed purpose and perspective, his academic interests shifted dramatically. Psychology, intensive writing, and speech courses became his favorites—a stark contrast to his previous academic indifference.



**Photo:** Mr. Luis Méndez poses at the podium in the BCC Library



His perseverance culminated in graduation in 2022, a decade after his initial enrollment. This achievement inspired his mother, Mrs. Jeannette Dávila, a cabinet member of the BCC Association of Latino Faculty and Staff, to establish the “Surviving Warrior Award” in his honor. This year, the Surviving Warrior Award will grant a \$250.00 award to a Bronx Community College student who has sustained a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or has been a victim of gun violence. You can learn more about the award, including criteria, by reading the application at the following link: <https://bcc.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/the-surviving-warrior-award-application-fillable-2025.pdf>

“This award can inspire students with or without disabilities. They’re graduating. It’s not impossible and not forcing their future,” Mr. Méndez said, clearly moved by the recognition.

His impact extended further when former BCC President Thomas Isekenegbe invited him to speak at BCC’s convocation. Mr. Méndez shared his story with current students, including a video documenting his journey. His message was simple yet powerful: “If I did it, they could too. No matter the issue. It’s not about the problem you’re facing. It’s about how you fight to succeed.” Mrs. Dávila wrote about her son’s experience in her book, *I Will Never Forsake You: A Testimony of The Mighty Power of God* (2023). [Follow the link below to watch an interview about Mr. Méndez’s experience and Mrs. Dávila’s book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVc2783yZkY>]

Now a student at Lehman College, Mr. Méndez graduated in January 2025 and will be marching at the May 2025 Commencement. He encourages young people hesitant about higher education to recognize their own readiness. “You have to fix the mindset, tunnel vision to one goal at a time,” he advises. “When the goal is getting an associate’s degree, you complete the mission, start a new mission and come back to it.” At Lehman College, Mr. Méndez was awarded the Latin Honor of summa cum laude, due to his academic achievements. Through his extraordinary journey, Luis Méndez embodies the transformative power of education and the indomitable human spirit.

## Luis Méndez, The Writer

In “The Surviving Warrior,” a narrative published in *Thesis: The Literary Journal of Bronx Community College*, Luis Méndez shares his remarkable story of recovery and personal transformation. At 22, he experienced a traumatic brain injury from a gunshot wound that rendered him comatose. Upon regaining consciousness, he confronted the challenge of having lost his abilities to communicate and move independently. The narrative culminates with his inspiring return to academic studies at Bronx Community College.

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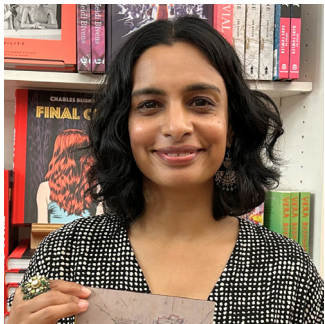
**Photo:** Mr. Luis Méndez giving a presentation at a Charter High School.



# Celebrating Women's HerStory Month: ALFS Honors BCC Women

The Bronx Community College (BCC) Association of Latino Faculty and Staff proudly celebrated Women's HerStory Month in March by highlighting the remarkable contributions of women who have dedicated their careers to student success and academic excellence at Bronx Community College. These women, from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, demonstrate extraordinary commitment to the BCC community through their leadership, mentorship, and service. Watch videos posted on social media at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6cFfQMP1Ok>

## Dr. Prithi Kanakamedala: Reclaiming Women's HerStory



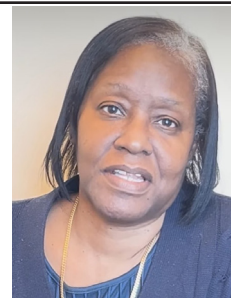
Dr. Prithi Kanakamedala, Professor of History, has dedicated her 13 years at BCC to honoring the lives of historically overlooked New Yorkers, particularly Black women who made extraordinary contributions to the city. Teaching U.S. History, African American History, and New York City History, she ensures that women like Susan Smith McKinney Stewart, Sarah Smith Tompkins Garnet, Victoria Earle Matthews, and Pura Belpré become household names. Her classroom becomes a space where the radical contributions of these historical figures are celebrated and remembered. Dr. Kanakamedala's research examines Brooklyn and New York's 19th-century free Black communities. An active public historian here in New York City, *Brooklynites: The Remarkable Story of the Free Black Communities that Shaped a Borough* (NYU Press: 2024) is her first full-length book and a Gotham Book Prize finalist. Among her many accolades, Dr. Kanakamedala is a 2021 Mellon/ACLS Community College Faculty Fellow.

## Professor Katherine Parsons: Decades of Library Service

Professor Katherine "Kathy" Parsons, Electronic Resources Librarian, exemplifies dedication with a career at Bronx Community College beginning in 1988. Starting as a college assistant, she worked her way up to her current position while also managing the library webpage.

"The best thing about being at Bronx Community College all of these years [are] the students"

--Professor Katherine Parsons



For Professor Parsons, the students remain her primary motivation: "The best thing about being at Bronx Community College all of these years is the students... I enjoy helping students locate information." She particularly values one-on-one interactions with students, finding joy in helping them learn to locate and use information effectively. Though she initially earned her bachelor's degree in accounting, thinking she wanted "to be in a class, not being around people," her experiences at BCC transformed her approach. As the first person in her family to attend college, Professor Parsons balanced obtaining her education while raising children, demonstrating the resilience she now encourages in BCC students.

# Celebrating Women's HerStory Month: ALFS Honors BCC Women

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## **Luz Delgado: Technology Support with Heart**

Luz Delgado's work at the IT Service Desk exemplifies how educational technology specialists can profoundly impact student success. Going beyond technical assistance, Delgado guides students through essential platforms like Blackboard and CUNYFirst, ensuring they have the technological foundation needed for academic success. Her approach to customer service stems from "a genuine desire to support students as they start their academic careers," creating a welcoming environment where students feel confident facing technological challenges.



## **Yinet Martínez: From Student to Finance Specialist**



Finance Specialist Yinet Martínez's 17-year journey at BCC began when she was a student herself. Her career progression in the business office, briefly interrupted by a position with the comptroller's office, culminated in her recent completion of a master's degree in Accounting. As a Latina woman in higher education, Martínez acknowledges the unique challenges faced but emphasizes the unmatched strength and spirit to overcome them. She sees her role extending beyond personal achievement to "lifting our entire community," serving as a role model for young women while supporting faculty, students, and staff in reaching their goals.



# Celebrating Women's HerStory Month: ALFS Honors BCC Women

## Dr. Bárbara Flores Caballero: A Leader in Education and Emotional Intelligence



Dr. Bárbara Flores Caballero, Associate Professor in the Department of Education and Academic Literacy, is the author of three books focused on educational leadership and emotional intelligence. She also serves as Chairperson of Student Life and Campus Community Engagement within the BCC Association of Latino Faculty and Staff. Dr. Flores Caballero's books are *Leadership with Vision and Heart: A Practical Guide that Integrates Emotions and Strategies as a Differentiator* (2024), *Educational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence in the Face of Social Crisis* (2014), and *EduLíder Emocional: La fórmula para convertirte en el líder que tu joven admira y respeta* (2024). Her constructivist teaching approach emphasizes critical thinking and practical application, transforming students through emotional intelligence and human leadership principles. Dr. Flores established the "Leadership and Emotional Intelligence Award" at BCC, recognizing students who demonstrate emotional intelligence and leadership potential, further extending her impact beyond the classroom.

Learn more about the The Leadership and Emotional Intelligence Award at the following link: <https://www.bcc.cuny.edu/campus-life/student-life/campus-diversity/association-of-latino-faculty-and-staff/scholarship/#1647456814303-8fcdc457-9e6c>

## Dr. Grisel Y. Acosta: Scholar, Poet, and Champion of Inclusion

Dr. Grisel Y. Acosta of BCC's English Department brings a rich multidisciplinary background to her teaching and campus leadership. Beginning her career as a journalist in Chicago, Dr. Acosta now teaches various forms of writing with a special focus on creative writing and Latino/a/x/e literature. Her own impressive body of work includes *Things to Pack on the Way to Everywhere* (2021), an Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize finalist; and the critically acclaimed anthology she edited, *Latina Outsiders Remaking Latina Identity* (2019), which earned recognition on multiple "best of " lists including NBC Latino.



Dr. Grisel Y. Acosta founded the Rev. Dr. Samuel Acosta Memorial Award, in honor of her father. Learn more at the following link: <https://www.bcc.cuny.edu/campus-life/student-life/campus-diversity/association-of-latino-faculty-and-staff/scholarship/#1647456948506-3d83a424-7f5c>

Dr. Acosta's commitment to diversity extends beyond her classroom—she authored the proposal for and now chairs BCC's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion.

Article continues on page 24

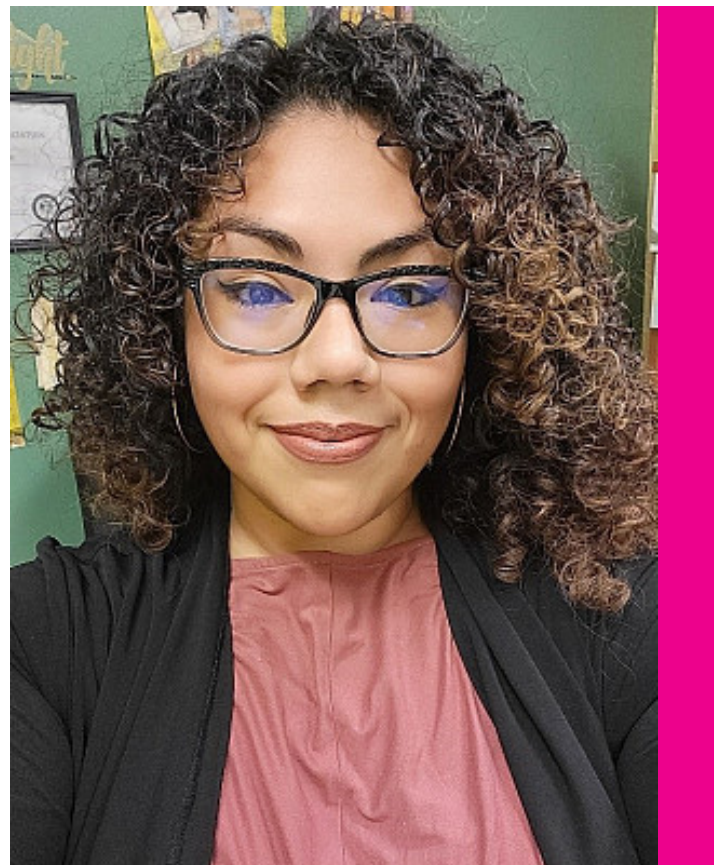
# Celebrating Women's HerStory Month: ALFS Honors BCC Women

## Professor Yarisa Colón Torres: Creative Arts and Cultural Heritage

Adjunct Lecturer Yarisa Colón Torres brings a unique blend of creative arts and cultural scholarship to Bronx Community College. The Puerto Rican poet, educator, and handmade book creator earned a bachelor's and master's degrees in Black & Puerto Rican Studies and Psychology and Puerto Rican and Caribbean Literature, respectively. Beyond her teaching in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, Professor Colón Torres organizes handmade book workshops and has worked together with various artists in the development of multidisciplinary projects. Her creative works include handmade poetry books *Enredadera y colmillo* (2019) and *Viento Abajo* (2022), which is a collaboration with Sofía del Mar Collins, Yolanda Velázquez and Miguel Ángel Rivera Reyes, enriching the cultural and literary landscape at BCC.

## Tiffany Dubon-Yard: Multi-Faceted Leadership

Associate Director for the Office of Student Life Tiffany Dubon-Yard embodies service-oriented leadership through her numerous roles on campus. She advises the Student Government Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society while serving as Vice Chair for the BCC Association of Latino Faculty and Staff. Dubon-Yard also contributes to the Women Up advisory board, co-chairs the Social Justice Network she helped found, and assists students with scholarship applications. Her career at BCC evolved from academic advising to her current leadership position, always driven by the desire to be someone students "can relate to... that another student can say, this person helped me, mentored me, got me through the finish line."





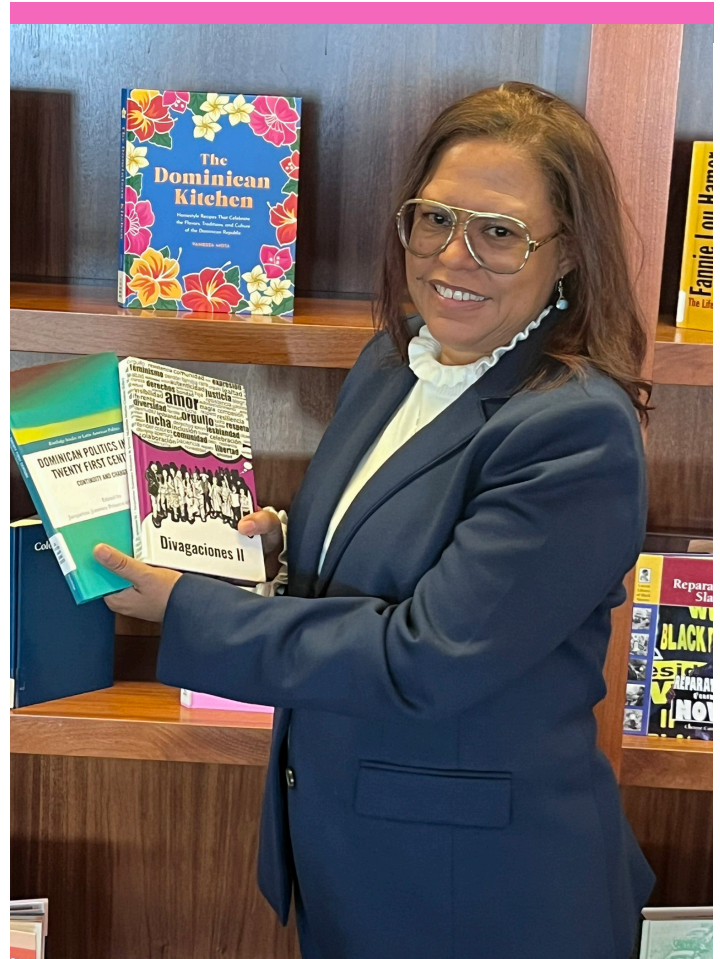
# Celebrating Women's HerStory Month: ALFS Honors BCC Women

## Dr. Jacqueline Jiménez Polanco: Advancing Political Representation for Women of Color

Dr. Jacqueline Jiménez Polanco is Associate Professor in the Department of Social Sciences. She brings scholarly insight to Women's HerStory Month with her publications on Latin American and Caribbean politics. Her research highlights how women representatives have improved socioeconomic conditions in Latin America, the Caribbean, and particularly in the Dominican Republic, inspiring students to explore women's historical contributions.

Her books, including *Dominican Politics in the Twenty First Century: Continuity and Change* (2023) and *Dominican American Politics: Immigrants, Activists and Politicians* (2024), specifically recognize the contributions of women of color in politics. She is also co-author of the anthology *Divagaciones II: An Anthology by Dominican Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women/ Divagaciones II: Una antología de mujeres dominicanas lesbianas, bisexuales y queer* (2023). Dr. Jiménez Polanco's recent book chapter, "Transgressing Social, Gender, and Sexual Norms in Colonial Santo Domingo (1716-1719)," was published in the book, *Transatlantic Bondage: Slavery and Freedom in Spain, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico* (2024), edited by Lissette Acosta Corniel.

This past academic year, Dr. Jiménez Polanco was awarded the 2024 "President's Award for Excellence in Research and Creative Activities" due to her scholarly contributions.



**Photo:** Dr. Jacqueline Jiménez Polanco at the Bronx Community College Library, posing with two of her books, *Dominican Politics in the Twenty First Century: Continuity and Change* (2023) and *Divagaciones II: An Anthology by Dominican Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women/ Divagaciones II: Una antología de mujeres dominicanas lesbianas, bisexuales y queer* (2023)



# Celebrating Women's HerStory Month: ALFS Honors BCC Women

## Dr. Laura Barberán Reinares: Scholar of Social Justice and Literary Ethics

Dr. Laura Barberán Reinares brings a profound commitment to social justice to her role as Professor of English and Literature at Bronx Community College. Her scholarly work addresses critical contemporary issues, particularly focusing on representations of racialized gender-based violence and human trafficking through both ethical and aesthetic lenses. This research not only contributes to important academic discourse but also informs her teaching approach.

In the classroom, Dr. Barberán Reinares creates spaces where students can develop their critical thinking skills while engaging with complex social issues through literature. Her dedication extends beyond academic rigor to a deeper mission: empowering students to discover and articulate their unique perspectives. By helping students “find their voice and their vision,” she equips them with tools for self-expression and advocacy that transcend the classroom. Dr. Barberán Reinares exemplifies how scholarly expertise can be channeled into transformative educational experiences that prepare students to engage thoughtfully with challenging social realities

## Building a Community of Support

The women featured in this Women's HerStory project collectively demonstrate the “village” philosophy that Tiffany Dubon-Yard advocates—creating a network of support where students can find mentorship, guidance, and inspiration. Their diverse contributions, spanning academic departments, student services, administration, and support functions, create a comprehensive support system for BCC's student population.



**Photo:** Dr. Laura Barberán Reinares. In addition to being Professor in the English Department, Dr. Barberán Reinares also serves as Program Coordinator for the Bronx Community College Associate & Assistant Professor Mentorship Program (BAMP).

The BCC Association of Latino Faculty and Staff honors these women not only for their individual achievements but for their collaborative spirit in building a stronger, more inclusive academic community. Their stories serve as powerful reminders of the impact women continue to make in higher education, particularly at institutions serving diverse student populations like Bronx Community College.

# POETRY IN HER HANDS:

## Yarisa Colón Torres on Art, Language, and Handmade Books

**- Can you share with us some basic information? For example, with what department are you affiliated? How long have you been at Bronx Community College? What is your area of interest? and/or specialty?**

I have worked as an Adjunct Lecturer at Bronx Community College since 2016, specifically at the Department of World Languages and Cultures. Currently, I am enrolled in the Puerto Rican and Caribbean literature doctoral program at Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe. I am interested in studying the intersection between poetry and the visual arts, particularly in the form of handmade books.

**- Can you explain the role that you play at Bronx Community College as a member of the faculty? What classes do you teach?**

I teach different levels of Spanish. For example, during the Spring 2023 semester I taught the hybrid course Advanced Spanish Composition (SPN-117) and the writing-intensive course Advanced Spanish Grammar and Creative Writing (SPN-120).

**- In December of 2022 you were announced as a Mellon and Flamboyant Foundations 2022 Letras Boricuas Fellow in the category of Poetry. First, how does it feel to be among 20 Puerto Rican writers recognized as part of the second cohort of this fellowship due to your impactful literary contributions? Second, can you share with us what project you expect will materialize by using this unrestricted grant of \$25,000?**

The Letras Boricuas Fellowship acknowledges the significance of literature as an inexhaustible artistic practice that has nurtured Puerto Rican



*As an Adjunct Lecturer, currently living and working in New York City, this unrestricted grant is an undeniable source of support, which will allow me to materialize some of my literary and academic endeavors. For example, the publication of a bilingual edition of *Viento Abajo*, my most recent poetry book.*

culture across time and space. It is an honor to be one of the 2022 fellows. I extend my gratitude to the selection committee, as well as the Flamboyant Foundation's Arts Fund and The Mellon Foundation.

**Interview continues on page 23**



# BUILDING THE VILLAGE:

## Tiffany Dubon-Yard's Impact at Bronx Community College

*We caught up Associate Director for the Office of Student Life Tiffany Dubon-Yard and interviewed her. You can watch the full interview on our official YouTube channel by following the link below:*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEc35QMrk3E>

As Associate Director for the Office of Student Life at Bronx Community College (BCC), Mrs. Tiffany Dubon-Yard understands the power of representation. A first-generation Honduran American from the Bronx, she's spent the past decade creating spaces where students can thrive, grow, and discover their potential.

"A lot of people don't really recognize that I am Honduran, let alone first generation," Mrs. Dubon-Yard explains. "When I do say that I'm Honduran, it gives me a sense of pride." This pride extends to students who see someone with a similar background succeeding professionally.

Mrs. Dubon-Yard's path to higher education administration wasn't straightforward. With undergraduate studies in journalism and sociology, she initially planned a different career. However, her experiences predominantly white institutions showed her the importance of administrators who reflected the student body.

"Having administrators, faculty, and staff that look like me and come from similar backgrounds was super important for my sense of belonging," she reflects. Her mentor, Dean Manny Santos, suggested pursuing a master's in higher education, inspiring her realization: "I can be a [Dean] Manny Santos for the next generation."

Ten years later, Mrs. Dubon-Yard remains at BCC, far exceeding her original three-year plan. "It's definitely the students that keep me here,"



she states firmly. "It's not the money... it's really because of the student body that feeds my passion."

Her journalism background proves invaluable in her current role, particularly the investigative skills. "Students aren't an open book," she notes. "When I start asking questions and diving deep with them, they self-reflect and realize, 'Wow, I have gone through stuff, I have persevered.'"

Mrs. Dubon-Yard advises both the Student Government Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, Lambda Nu chapter, noting that while both emphasize community-centered leadership, they operate differently. SGA focuses on civic engagement and campus community needs, while Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society encompasses academics, research, and connections with chapters nationwide.

**Interview continues on page 23**



# PROFESSOR NELSON SANTANA RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS

## “I Love My Librarian Award”

The Bronx Community College Library’s Associate Professor Nelson Santana has been honored with the 2025 “I Love My Librarian Award” from the American Library Association (ALA). The award is sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with additional support from the New York Public Library (NYPL). The award recognizes his exceptional contributions to the college library and broader campus community.

Selected from nearly 1,300 nominations nationwide, Professor Santana was one of ten librarians to receive this prestigious recognition. As Deputy Chief and Collection Development Librarian, Professor Santana has transformed the BCC Library through innovative programming, successful grant writing, and a deep commitment to creating an inclusive environment that reflects the diverse backgrounds of BCC students.

“Professor Nelson Santana represents the very best of what a modern librarian can be—innovative, inclusive, scholarly, and deeply committed to student success,” wrote his nominators. “His work has elevated the academic experience for our entire college community.”

Since joining BCC in 2017, Professor Santana has secured over \$62,000 in grant funding for library initiatives and to fund his research, including the exhibit *Transnational Dominican Activism: Documenting Grassroots Social Movements*, and the creation of an immersive BCC Library Virtual Tour. These projects earned recognition from organizations including honorable mention from the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) “Archives Section Award for Best Public Project for the exhibit—a digital humanities project.



His scholarly contributions include his most recent book chapter, “Decolonizing the Library: Building a Collection that Reflects the Student Body at Bronx Community College,” published in *Serving Hispanic, Latine, and Latinx Students in Academic Libraries* (2024), edited by Sommer Browning and Isabel Soto-Luna. The chapter details the work he has done at BCC—a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)—to create a more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible library collection.

Professor Santana’s achievement brings well-deserved recognition to the vital role that librarians play in academic communities, particularly at institutions serving diverse student populations. His work demonstrates how modern librarians can actively shape student success through innovative programming, inclusive collection development, and engaged mentorship.

**Links to watch Prof. Santana’s interviews are on page 24**

# FACULTY & STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS [LOGROS]

## PUBLICATIONS

[Note: publications are in citations in scholar's discipline]

**Jiménez Polanco, Jacqueline.** *Dominican American Politics Immigrants, Activists, and Politicians*. Routledge, 2024.

**Jiménez Polanco, Jacqueline.** "Transgressing Social, Gender, and Sexual Norms in Colonial Santo Domingo (1716–1719)." *Transatlantic Bondage: Slavery and Freedom in Spain, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico*, edited by Lissette Acosta-Corniel, State University of New York Press 2024, pp. 165–186.

**Kanakamedala, Prithi.** *Brooklynites The Remarkable Story of the Free Black Communities that Shaped a Borough*, New York University Press, 2024.

**Ortuño, Andrea M.** "A Source for William Welles Bosworth's Pen and Ink Sphinx," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 44, no. 1 (2024).

**Ortuño, Andrea M.** "German Brass Basins as a Source for Late 15th- and Early 16th-Century Valencian Lusterware Forms," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 42, no. 4 (2023): 250–260.

**Ortuño, Andrea M.** "An Early Etching by William Welles Bosworth," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 58 (2023): 107–115.

**Otheguy, Raquel.** *Black Freedom and Education in Nineteenth-Century Cuba*. University of Florida Press, 2025.

**Reynoso, Nelson.** *Promoting Resilience and Inspiration An Autoethnographic Study of Dominican-American Students*. Springer, 2025.

**Rodriguez, Crystal .C., Pichardo, Leidy., Flores-Caballero, Bárbara., Martich, Luisa.** (2025). *Pa'lante: How does a Latino Association "Serve" Latinos at a Hispanic-Serving institution*. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2025.2462207>

**Salazar, Salvador.** 2024. "La sanación pasa por el diálogo." [Healing comes through dialogue] *Cultura, comida y poder. Doce diálogos con artistas e intelectuales cubanos* [Food, and Power: Twelve Conversations with Cuban Artists and Intellectuals] North Haven: Hypermedia.

**Salazar, Salvador.** 2023. "El movimiento del nuevo cine latinoamericano en el foco de la diplomacia alternativa de la Revolución cubana" [The New Latin American Cinema on the Epicenter of the Alternative Diplomacy of the Cuban Revolution]. In González, Claudia & Sergio Angel (Eds) *Los mitos de la Revolución Cubana. Estancamiento y regresión de una utopía* [The Myths of the Cuban Revolution. Stagnation and Regression of a Utopia]. Bogotá: University Sergio Arboleda, pp. 199–218. <https://repository.usergioarboleda.edu.co/handle/11232/1937>

**Salazar, Salvador.** 2023. "Old and New Directions in the 20th Century Cuban Printed Press Historiography. A Cartography of the Press History Field." *Comunicación y Sociedad*, pp. 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.32870/cys.v2023.8516>

# FACULTY & STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS [LOGROS]

## PUBLICATIONS (Continued)

[Note: publications are in citations in scholar's discipline]

**Santana, Nelson.** (2024). Decolonizing the library: Building a collection that reflects the student body at Bronx Community College. In S. Browning & M.I. Soto-Luna (Eds.), *Serving Hispanic, Latine, and Latinx students in academic libraries* (pp.203–225). Litwin Books & Library Juice Press.

Santana, Nelson. (November 2023). [Review of *Siblings of soil: Dominicans and Haitians in the age of revolutions*, by Charlton Wesley Yingling]. Choice Reviews, 61(3), 61-0798. (Book review)

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## PRESENTATIONS

**Andrea M. Ortuño**, “Monkeys, Pumpkins, and Coral: The Iconography of Magdalena Ruiz, Liminal Lady of the Spanish Court,” paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Renaissance Society of America, Boston, MA, March 20–22, 2025.

**Andrea M. Ortuño**, “The Albufera, the Huerta, and an Overlooked Iconographical Program on a Series of Valencian Lusterware,” paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Renaissance Society of America, Chicago, IL, March 21–23, 2024.

**Andrea M. Ortuño**, “Disrupting the Renaissance in the Classroom,” roundtable session at the Sixteenth-Century Studies Conference, Baltimore, MD, October 26–29, 2023.

**Andrea M. Ortuño**, “Nuremberg Brass Basins as a Source for Sixteenth-Century Spanish Lusterware Types,” paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Renaissance Society of America in San Juan Puerto Rico, March 9–11, 2023.

**Salazar, Salvador.** “The Last Days of Cuban Republic Printed Press (1959–1965)”. Latin American Studies Association International Congress, Bogotá, Colombia. June 2024.

**Salazar, Salvador.** “The Printed Press in Cuba: The Final Years of the Republican Press (1959–1965)”. Fourteenth Conference on Cuban and Cuban American Studies, Miami. February 2024.

Conference presentation: **Salazar, Salvador.** “Latinxs in New York. Representation Strategies of Hispanic Communities Through the Analysis of the Films In the Heights and West Side Story.” Latin American Studies Association International Congress, Vancouver, Canada. May 2023.

Invited Lecture: **Salazar, Salvador.** “General History of the Cuban Republican Printed Journalism (1902–1959)”. Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center and the Florida International University Libraries. May 2023.



# FACULTY & STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS [LOGROS]

## PRESENTATIONS (Continued)

Conference presentation: **Salazar, Salvador**. “Journalistic Discourse of Republican Cuba (1902–1959)”. Tenth Annual BCC Faculty Day: Scholarship for the Public Good, Bronx Community College, Bronx, NY, hybrid. April 2023.

**Santana, Nelson**. (2024, November 7). Highlighting Your Accomplishments: Scholarly Presentations. Junior Faculty Roundtable: Highlighting Your Accomplishments: Scholarly Presentations, New York, NY, online.

**Santana, Nelson**. (2024, October 25). Duarte’s Children: Transnational Dominican Activism during the Balaguerato (1966–

**Santana, Nelson**. (2024, May 10). The Challenged Librarian’s Conundrum: Securing Grants to Fund Creative Student-Centered Initiatives. Library Association of The City University of New York LACUNY Institute 2024: Moving Beyond the Challenged Librarian: Then and Now, New York, NY, online. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sj5JLYoxHQ>

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## GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND MORE NEWS

**Salvador Salazar**. Cycle 56 PSC-CUNY Research Award. Research Foundation. Traditional A. 07/2025 to 09/2025.

**Dr. Salvador Salazar** was granted a 2023 Library Travel Grant to research in the Díaz-Ayala Cuban and Latin American Popular Music Collection on “General History of the Cuban Republican Printed Journalism (1902–1959)”. <https://cri.fiu.edu/extracurricular/diaz-ayala-library-travel-grants/>.

**Andrea M. Ortuño** Cycle 54 PSC-CUNY Grant for the project, “William Welles Bosworth’s Early Work for Religious and Social Reformers, 1888–1896.”

**Professor Nelson Santana** was elected president of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM)

**Professor Nelson Santana** was elected Chair of the Community and Junior College Library Section (CJCLS).

**Professor Nelson Santana** was named a “2025 I Love My Librarian Award” recipient.

# FACULTY & STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS [LOGROS]



**Photo:** Dr. Barbara Flores Caballero presented her second book, *EduLíder Emocional: La fórmula para convertirte en el líder que tu joven admira y respeta* (2024), which is only available in Spanish, in Barcelona, Spain. Below, you will find images of Dr. Flores Caballero at the Sant Jordi festival in Mataró, Spain.

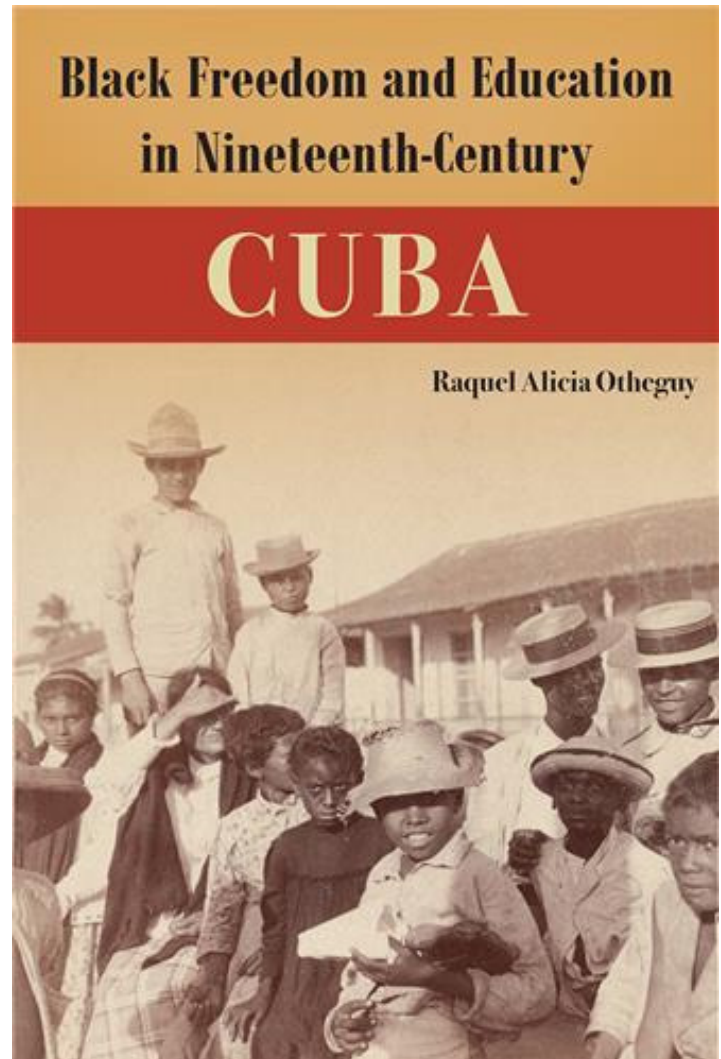




# FACULTY & STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS [LOGROS]

We are thrilled to highlight the recent accomplishments of Dr. Raquel Otheguy, Associate Professor of History at BCC. Dr. Otheguy, who teaches World History, History of the Caribbean, Latin American History, and History of Latinos in the US, has recently published her book *Black Freedom and Education in 19th Century Cuba* through the University of Florida Press. Her important work has gained significant recognition, including features on the University of Florida's Cuban Studies page, an interview on the "Rediscovering Latinidad" podcast in their special focus on Cuba, and multiple speaking engagements. These achievements not only showcase the caliber of scholarship at BCC but also demonstrate the exceptional learning opportunities available to our students who study with faculty engaged in cutting-edge research. Dr. Otheguy's expertise brings invaluable perspectives on Caribbean and Latin American history directly into our classrooms.

**Photo:** Dr. Raquel Otheguy's book *Black Freedom and Education in 19th Century Cuba* through the University of Florida Press.



Watch or Listen to Dr. Otheguy's interviews,  
podcast participation & reading of her book

**Rediscovering Latinidad Season 6 Episode 11 Cuba: La Perla de Las Antillas (Podcast):**

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/rediscovering-latinidad-season-6-episode-11-cuba-la-perla-de-las-antillas--65611860>

**Dr. Raquel Otheguy Reads from Black Freedom and Education in Nineteenth-Century Cuba::**

<https://cubanstudies.history.ufl.edu/ex-libris/dr-raquel-otheguy-reads-from-black-freedom-and-education-in-nineteenth-century-cuba/>

**Link to the interview:**

<https://cubanstudies.history.ufl.edu/conversatorio-cubano-2/conversatorio-cubano-with-dr-raquel-otheguy/>



# Interviews, Continued...

Continued from page 15

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## **“Poetry in Her Hands: Yarisa Colón Torres on Art, Language, and Handmade Book”**

**– Can you share what led you to pursue a career as a poet and educator? Also, can you explain your work as the creator of handmade books and what led you to explore this interesting journey?**

Led by my parents’ example, I learned to love the potent act of reading and writing. Both practices can elicit transformative personal and collective experiences. Furthermore, my relationship to poetry inspired me to pursue my graduate studies in literature, and a professional path as an educator.

The craft of handmade books has allowed me to present my work in an unconventional, intimate format. It has also led me to collaborate with writers, artisans, and visual artists that I admire. Creating handmade books has become an extension of my poetic practice.

**– Is there anything in this interview that we did not cover that you would like to share with our readers?**

I would like to pay respect to all the Puerto Rican writers who paved the way for us. ¡Infinitas gracias!

Continued from page 16

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## **“Building the Village: Tiffany Dubon-Yard’s Impact at Bronx Community College”**

Her most rewarding experiences come from witnessing students’ transformations. “Seeing that transition from the moment they stepped onto campus to walking across that stage as a completely different person with their confidence levels, with their future goals already lined up... knowing that I was part of that transformation is the most rewarding part.”

In 2020, following George Floyd’s murder, Mrs. Dubon-Yard co-founded the Social Justice Network, creating spaces for community healing and action. This initiative evolved into the Social Justice Student Leadership Certificate Series, now entering its fourth year.

When asked about her village-building approach, Mrs. Dubon-Yard emphasizes breaking down silos: “Our 6,000-plus students are everyone’s students. We all need to be the guides, protectors, educators, and developers for all students at BCC.” She believes collaborative efforts benefit everyone, increasing enrollment, retention, and completion rates.

Looking forward, Mrs. Dubon-Yard hopes to become a biological mother within five years while pursuing her doctorate and advancing to a dean-level position. Even as she climbs the career ladder, maintaining student connections remains paramount.

Her advice? “Do what you love, what you’re passionate about. If I’m going to spend eight hours anywhere, I don’t want to be miserable. Make time for what brings you joy. Be happy with who you are.”

# Continued...

Continued from page 11

## **Dr. Grisel Y. Acosta: Scholar, Poet, and Champion of Inclusion**

Her recent accomplishments include presenting her oral history project on Chicago's Latino/a/x/e population at the Center for Latin American and Latinx Literature, receiving a 2025 New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Mid-Atlantic Arts Fellowship Award, a recent appointment to the CUNY Graduate Center's Black, Race, and Ethnic Studies Ph.D. Program faculty, and securing a publishing contract with FlowerSong Press for her forthcoming book *Wild*. The intellectual hybridity that characterizes her teaching philosophy reflects her diverse professional background, creating rich learning experiences for BCC students.

Continued from page 17



Watch or read some of Professor Santana's interviews regarding the "I Love My Librarian Award":

**I Love Libraries:** <https://ilovelibraries.org/love-my-librarian/nelson-santana/>

**Bronx Times:** <https://www.bxtimes.com/librarian-at-bronx-community-college-wins-national-award/>

**CBS:** <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/video/bronx-community-college-librarian-wins-i-love-my-librarian-award/>

**Diálogo Abierto on BronxNet:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUllxfdy\\_U&list=PLBCSA3aE2m9x8u9ofDVOFYrdGGct4uX7S&index=12](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUllxfdy_U&list=PLBCSA3aE2m9x8u9ofDVOFYrdGGct4uX7S&index=12)

# ALFS AWARDS FOR BCC STUDENTS

The Bronx Community College Association of Latino Faculty & Staff have established several awards for Bronx Community College Students. These awards are given to students of Hispanic or Latino/a/x/e origin who have excelled academically in his/her/their chosen major at BCC, and has made a contribution to the College or the community.

**Funds can be used however you choose: to pay for tuition, travel expenses, books, or other expense.**

Please feel free to click the following link below to learn more about these opportunities and read the description for each award:

<https://www.bcc.cuny.edu/campus-life/student-life/campus-diversity/association-of-latino-faculty-and-staff/scholarship>

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# AWARDS

ALFS Student of the Year Award

DACA Student Award

Future Now Award

Renacimiento en Fortaleza Award

Scott Redhead Award

William Coss Award

BCC GRIT Award

Edelmira Alers Latinas in Nursing Award

Leadership & Emotional Intelligence Award

Rev. Dr. Samuel Acosta Memorial Award

The Surviving Warrior Award



# Celebrating Excellence: 2025 ALFS Awards and Leadership

As we honor the remarkable people featured in this edition's profiles, we are equally proud to recognize the outstanding leadership and achievements within our own Association of Latino Faculty and Staff community. The following individuals represent the very best of our commitment to academic excellence, student success, and community engagement.

Our newly elected 2025-2027 Cabinet brings together dedicated leaders who will guide our association's mission to support Bronx Community College faculty, staff, and students across campus. Additionally, our annual awards program celebrates the exceptional contributions of faculty, staff, and students who embody the values of scholarship, service, and resilience that define the BCC spirit.

These recognitions reflect the collaborative strength and shared dedication that make our association a vital force for positive change at Bronx Community College.

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## ALFS Faculty and Staff Awards

Faculty of the Year: **Dr. Salvador Salazar**  
Adjunct Faculty of the Year: **Jessica Cabrera**  
Staff of the Year: **Nancy De La Rosa**

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## ALFS Student Awards

BCC GRIT Award: **Karla Alvarez**  
Dr. Rev. Samuel Acosta Memorial Award: **Martha Ordoñez-Sarabia**  
Future Now Award: **Zarah Suraj**  
Leadership and Emotional Intelligence Award: **Orlenny Alvarez**  
Renacimiento en Fortaleza Award: **Yajaira Campos**  
Scott Redhead Award: **Elainy Rodríguez**  
William Coss Memorial Award: **Jose Paz Calderón**  
ALFS Student of the Year Award (1st Place): **Alicia Leon**  
ALFS Student of the Year Award (2nd Place): **Orlenny Alvarez**  
ALFS Student of the Year Award (3rd Place): **Yajaira Campos**

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*The following student awards were offered but no one applied this year.*

DACA  
The Edelmira Aler Fund for Latinas in Nursing  
Surviving Warrior Award

**AWARDS 2025**

# > THE NEW CABINET 2025-2027

## 2025-2027 Association of Latino Faculty & Staff Cabinet

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**Tiffany Dubon-Yard**  
Associate Director of Student Life  
**Chairperson of the Cabinet**



**Jessenia Paoli, Esq**  
Interim Assistant VP Student Success  
**Vice-Chairperson of the Cabinet**



**Dr. Nathan Aiken**  
Associate Director of College Discovery  
**Treasurer**



**Giselle Sanchez Huerta**  
Student Programming Coordinator  
**Secretary**



**Dr. Salvador Salazar**  
Associate Professor  
**Chairperson of Membership,  
Recruitment, and Retention**



**Nelson Santana**  
Associate Professor  
**Chairperson of Marketing,  
Communications and Research**



**Elaidy Almanzar**  
Administrative Coordinator  
Student Life and IOC Manager  
**Chairperson of Student Life and  
Campus Community Engagement**



**Bárbara Flores-Caballero**  
Associate Professor  
**Chairperson of Latino Faculty and  
Staff Professional Development**



**Luisa Martich**  
Associate Vice President  
**Chairperson of Financial  
Community Outreach**



# JOIN [ÚNASE]

BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
**ASSOCIATION**  
OF LATINO FACULTY & STAFF

Join us!  
Membership  
dues make a  
difference and  
sponsor BCC  
students.

*Check us out:*

<https://www.bcc.cuny.edu/campus-life/student-life/campus-diversity/association-of-latino-faculty-and-staff/membership/>



## JOIN THE BCC ASSOCIATION OF LATINO FACULTY & STAFF

The membership application for the 2024-2025 year is available.

Learn more about the Association and download the application by visiting the following link:  
<https://www.bcc.cuny.edu/campus-life/student-life/campus-diversity/association-of-latino-faculty-and-staff/membership/>

Yearly dues are as follows:

\$35 full-time employee

\$15 part-time employee

Please make your membership fee and/or donations to Association of Latino Faculty and Staff Fund online at Make a Gift – Bronx Community College (cuny.edu).

Current members are encouraged to sponsor a part-time faculty or staff member with membership. When paying for your own dues, add an additional \$15 to support one new member or an additional \$30 to sponsor two new members,

If you have any questions please email the Association of Latino Faculty and Staff at [Latino.Association@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:Latino.Association@bcc.cuny.edu).



# BCC ALFS INSPIRES ACADEMIC ARTICLE

Earlier this year, current and past cabinet members of the BCC Association of Latino Faculty and Staff, Dr. Crystal C. Rodriguez, Dr. Leidy Pichardo, Dr. Bárbara Flores-Caballero, and AVP Luisa Martich, published the peer-reviewed journal article, “Pa’lante: How Does a Latino Association “Serve” Latinos at a Hispanic-Serving Institution,” published in the *Journal of Latinos and Education*. This study builds upon the efforts of the BCC Association of Latino Faculty and Staff.

You can learn more about the article at the following link:  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15348431.2025.2462207>

## Abstract:

“The purpose of this paper is to understand how a Latino Association serves as a structure for supporting Latino/a/x/e faculty, staff, and students within the Hispanic-serving community college context. The Association was founded at a community college in 2003 by Latino/a/x/e faculty and staff in need of guidance and a vision to support the increasing Latino/a/x/e students attending the college. An anonymous survey was administered to Association members in March 2022. Benefits of participating in the Association include networking with colleagues, reducing feelings of isolation, improving campus climate and multicultural respect, and having a safe space. We provide recommendations on how HSIs can develop their own Association that can support, advocate, and retain Latino/a/x/e faculty, staff, and students.”



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