



LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

LONG ISLAND CITY
QUEENS, NEW YORK

54TH ANNUAL
COMMENCEMENT
CEREMONY
2026

THE EIGHTEENTH OF JUNE
AT NINE IN THE MORNING

THE QUAD
AT QUEENS COLLEGE
65-30 KISSENA BOULEVARD
FLUSHING, NEW YORK





THE CEREMONIAL MACE

The history of the ceremonial mace dates back to the 13th century, at which time it was borne by the sergeant at arms, a royal bodyguard established in France by Phillip II and in England by Richard I. When used in a commencement ceremony, the mace symbolizes the dignity and authority of the university and leads the academic procession. Its placement and removal from a place of honor signifies the opening and closing of ceremonial sessions. The Grand Marshal carries the LaGuardia Community College mace during the processional and recessional march.

LaGuardia's mace is made of solid African rosewood, and the metal units are bronze with heavy gold plating. The three-unit node consists of the College's seal, the "Little Flower," representing Mayor LaGuardia; the seal of The City University of New York; and excerpts from the "Oath of the Young Men of Athens," which Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia used in his Inaugural Address in January 1934.

THE TRADITION OF ACADEMIC ATTIRE

The caps, gowns, and hoods worn at college and university functions originated during the Middle Ages when monks and students used them to keep warm in medieval castles and halls of learning. From these practical origins, they have evolved into the academic costumes that today symbolize scholarly achievement.

Standard form requires that all gowns be black. The associate and bachelor gowns have long, pointed sleeves and are designed to be worn closed. The master gown is distinguished by an oblong sleeve which is square cut at the base, while the doctoral gown is faced with black velvet and has three velvet bars on the full, round sleeves. Both the master and doctoral gowns may be worn either open or closed. Hoods consist of a black shell trimmed in a color of velvet that indicates the field of learning. The silk lining of the hood is the color representing the institution at which the degree was earned. A wider velvet rim and broad flat panel at the back also distinguishes the larger doctoral hood.

Faculty members and guests in the processional are robed in gowns and hoods, which represent the institutions from which they earned their degrees. The colors representing some of the disciplines you will see in today's ceremony are as follows:

Arts, Letters & Humanities – *White*
Accountancy, Business – *Drab*
Education – *Light Blue*
Fine Arts – *Brown*
Law – *Purple*

Library Science – *Lemon*
Music – *Pink*
Philosophy – *Dark Blue*
Science – *Golden Yellow*
Social Science – *Citron Yellow*

During commencement exercises at LaGuardia, it is traditional for members of the graduating class to rise as a unit immediately following the conferring of degrees. At this time, they turn their tassels from the right front corner of the mortarboard to the corresponding left corner. This symbolizes their official attainment of the degree-holding status.



THE ACADEMIC PROCESSION

The Commencement exercises begin with the academic procession, a traditional ceremony in which college dignitaries and graduating students march together wearing traditional academic dress.

Each party of the academic procession will be represented by marshals carrying a gonfalon, a banner that hangs from a crosspiece or frame. Gonfalons originated in the medieval republics of Italy as an ensign of state or office and are used by many colleges and universities around the world during graduation ceremonies.

The LaGuardia Community College Academic Procession will march as follows:

- The Grand Marshal
- The Graduating Class of 2026
- LaGuardia Community College Faculty, Professors Emeriti, Staff and Alumni
- LaGuardia Community College Vice Presidents, Deans and Chairpersons
- Special Guests
- President Kenneth Adams

ORDER OF THE GRADUATING CLASS

BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Marchessa Aguillon

- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Business Administration: Facilities Management
- Business Administration: Healthcare Management
- Hospitality, Tourism & Events Management
- Paralegal Studies

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Custodio "Bush" Cardoniga

- Communication Studies
- Film & Television
- Fine Arts
- Fine Arts: Design Studies
- Industrial Design
- Music Performance
- Music Recording Technology
- New Media Technology
- Philosophy
- Photography
- Theater

COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Daniel Campozano

- Human Services: Mental Health
- Nutrition & Culinary Management: Culinary Option
- Nutrition & Culinary Management: Nutrition Option
- Public and Community Health
- Therapeutic Recreation

LIBERAL ARTS PROGRAMS

Student Marshal: Genesis Cartagena

- Ethnic Studies Option
- Health Humanities Option
- Liberal Arts: Math & Science
- Liberal Arts: Social Science & Humanities
- Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies

EDUCATION & LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Lalan Sah

- Deaf Studies Option
- Education Associate: The Bilingual Child
- Education: Childhood Track
- Education: Early Childhood Track
- Education: Secondary Education Track
- International Studies
- Japanese Studies
- Latin American Studies
- Spanish-English Translation
- TESOL/Linguistics Option

MATH, ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Thinhinane Zadi

- Applied Math Option
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Science
- Computer Technology
- Cybersecurity
- Electrical Engineering
- Energy Technician: Mechanical Concentration
- Energy Technician: Electrical Concentration
- Mechanical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering: Earth System Science and Environmental Engineering
- Programming and Software Development

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Asia-Marie Charles

- English
- English: Creative Writing
- Journalism Option

NATURAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Thilleli Mehrazi

- Biology
- Biology: Biotechnology
- Environmental Science
- Environmental Science: Animal Science
- Environmental Science: Sustainable Urban Agriculture
- Physical Science: Chemistry Track
- Physical Science: Physics Track

HEALTH SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Elizabeth Gilmartin

- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Physical Therapist Assistant
- Practical Nursing (LPN)
- Radiologic Technology
- Veterinary Technology

SOCIAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Student Marshal: Kenny Lin

- Criminal Justice
- History Option
- Political Science Option
- Psychology

Special thanks to Faculty Marshals

Dr. Małgorzata Marciniak and Dr. John Toland

PROGRAM

PRESIDING	Kenneth Adams, BA, MA, EdD HONORIS CAUSA <i>President of LaGuardia Community College</i>
PROCESSIONAL	Pomp and Circumstance, March No. 1 by Sir Edward Elgar (1901)
WELCOME	Sarada Rauch, BFA, MFA <i>Grand Marshal</i>
PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS	CUNY Public Safety Color Guard Star Spangled Banner by Francis Scott Key (1814) <i>Performed by the LaGuardia Vocal Ensemble under the direction of Prof. Lisa DeSpain, BMus, MMus</i>
<i>The audience is requested to remain standing until the National Anthem is performed, and the colors are retired.</i>	
INTRODUCTIONS	Billie Gastic Rosado, BA, MA, EdM, PhD <i>Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs</i>
SPECIAL GUESTS	Félix V. Matos Rodriguez, BA, PhD <i>Chancellor, The City University of New York</i> Denise B. Maybank, BA, MA, PhD <i>Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, The City University of New York</i>
UNIVERSITY HONORARY DEGREE	Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodriguez Mitchell Draizin <i>Recipient</i>
GREETINGS	Henry T. Berger, BS, JD <i>Trustee, The City University of New York Board of Trustees</i> Ebony Young, BS, MA <i>Deputy Borough President, Borough of Queens</i> Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez, BA, MA <i>New York's 7th District, United States House of Representatives</i> Senator Kristen Gonzalez, BA <i>59th Senate District, New York State Senate</i> Mia Gonzalez Lozado and Michael Todd Hall <i>Class of 2026 Representatives</i>
PRESENTATION OF THE GRADUATES	Alexis J. McLean, BS, MA, EdD <i>Vice President for Student Affairs</i> President Adams and Provost Gastic Rosado <i>Readers</i> Thomas Cleary, BA, MLIS, MA Silvia Lin Hanick, BA, MLIS, MS Arthur Lau, BA, MA, MEd, EdD Michelle Lugones, DVM
CONFERRING OF DEGREES	President Adams and Provost Gastic Rosado
RECESSIONAL	<i>Musical Medley</i>

The audience is requested to remain seated until the Recessional is complete.



CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE OF

Associate of Applied Science

Computer Technology	7
Cybersecurity	7
Energy Technician: Electrical	7
Energy Technician: Mechanical	7
Industrial Design Technology	7
Music Recording Technology	7
New Media Technology: Digital Media	7
New Media Technology: Entrepreneurship	7
Nursing	7
Nutrition & Culinary Management: Culinary Management	8
Nutrition & Culinary Management: Nutrition	8
Occupational Therapy Assistant	8
Paralegal Studies	8
Photography	9
Photography: Fine Art Option	9
Physical Therapist Assistant	9
Programming and Software Development	9
Radiologic Technology	9
Veterinary Technology	9

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

Mudirat A. Ajisafe
Md T. Ali
Victor Alexis Baez
Shajuti Bhowmik
Felix Castillo
Justin Cunningham
Justen Quinn Gallagher
Warren Gardner
Binay Ghimire *
Sk Nazrul Islam *
Kevin Martinez
Fernando Mexca
Tatiana Cecibel Moina Zabala
Olyvier Monteau
Carlos Alias Paguay
Albert Rafael Pena Regalado
Rabjul Rabbi
Melvin Schwartzbart
Rodrigo Serrano
David Torres

CYBERSECURITY

Faisal Ahmed
Khaled Ahmed
Sabbir Ahmed
Daniel Balthazar
Shishir Baral
Ahmed Rifat Bipul
Himendra Bohara
Elijah Borel
Christian Chacon
Diego Erasmo Cisneros I
Johan Manuel Cruz
Ousmane Diagne
Faizaan Mohamed Ashraf Doria
Ahmed Elmadany
Bibek Ghimire
Aminata Gueye
Kunga Gurung
Mahfuzul Haque
Kyaw Zin Hein
Md Shirajul Islam *
Zabir Hossain Jissan
Jannatul F. Jui
Peter H. Kang
Muneeb Khalid *
Shafin Khan
Amish Khimdung Rai
Mst Janifa Amin Khushbu
Puja Malla
John Mcdonald
Katriel Morales
Hamza Naveed
Daniel A. Netzel *

Addrita Haque Ohona
Anubhab Mathew Peris
Zamir Alejandro Polanco
Shiva Prajapati
Md Naimur Rahman
Kenny Reynoso
Hifza Riaz
Tahmidur Ricky
Basem Moustafa Shadad
Antonio Rafael Soto
Vinicios Souza
Tashi Dolma Tamang
Giovanni Tatempa
Khant Min Thant
Henry F. Vicuna
Jackie Wu

ENERGY TECHNICIAN: ELECTRICAL

Oumar Moussa Toure
Damian A. Velasquez
Youssef Ziouali

ENERGY TECHNICIAN: MECHANICAL

Alessandro Garcia
Jesus Garcia-Vargas

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Micaela Natalia Acuna De Farias
Helen Gabriela Bernales
Jared Clark
Daniel Ernesto Coronado
Leslie Cuji-Angamarca
Tianna M. Devore
Justin Forrester
Brandon Gonzalez **
Tyreke Kassim
Asucena Lazaro
Lourdes Josefina Manzanilla
Ojeda **
Sofia Perez Palacios
Gretchen Pietschman
Guadalupe Vargas

MUSIC RECORDING TECHNOLOGY

Erick Aucapina
Michael R. Beckford
Jesse Boitel
Daniel Bustos
Emmanuel Bienvenido Cabrera
Natalia Castillo *
Teresa Victoria Cruz
Raul Delgado
Amelia Diaz
Brandyn Noel Forbes-Nyirenda
Nancy Garcia Diaz
Youssef Khiari
Joo Hyeok Kim
Liaowei Lan
Timothy Lockett
Amelia Weronika Marczenia
Brian J. Mendoza
Fatima Salgado-Montiel
Joel Soto
Tayquan J. Street
Jael C. Vasconez-Vega

NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGY: DIGITAL MEDIA

Brandon Ahuatl
Flavia Botas
Elison Wen Chen
Ruofeng Chen *
Ekaterina A. Cherepova
Dean Clarke
Christopher H. Cruz
Johann Joseph Duran
Akiko Hirayama
Saeed M. Khan
Ariella Lak
Kareem Mayfield
Erica Medina Velez
Janet Nibra
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NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGY: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Samantha Gabriela Calle
Mckean Darius

NURSING

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Shaneeza Azeez *
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Samten Bista
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Sandy E. Bonilla
Pia Michelle Caduhada
Yuanhong Cai
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Kalpana Darji
Tonita Nichelle Davis
Baishaly Dey
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Chime Dolka
Lobsang Dolkar
Pema Dolkar
Ugen Dolma
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Tsering Gurung
Anaum Hameed
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Tenzin Jampel *
Tenzing Kalsang
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Tenzin Sherpa Lama
Tsering Kunsang Lama

* With Honors — Cumulative Grade Point Average 3.50 – 3.89

** With High Honors — Cumulative Grade Point Average 3.90 – 4.00



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PHOTOGRAPHY

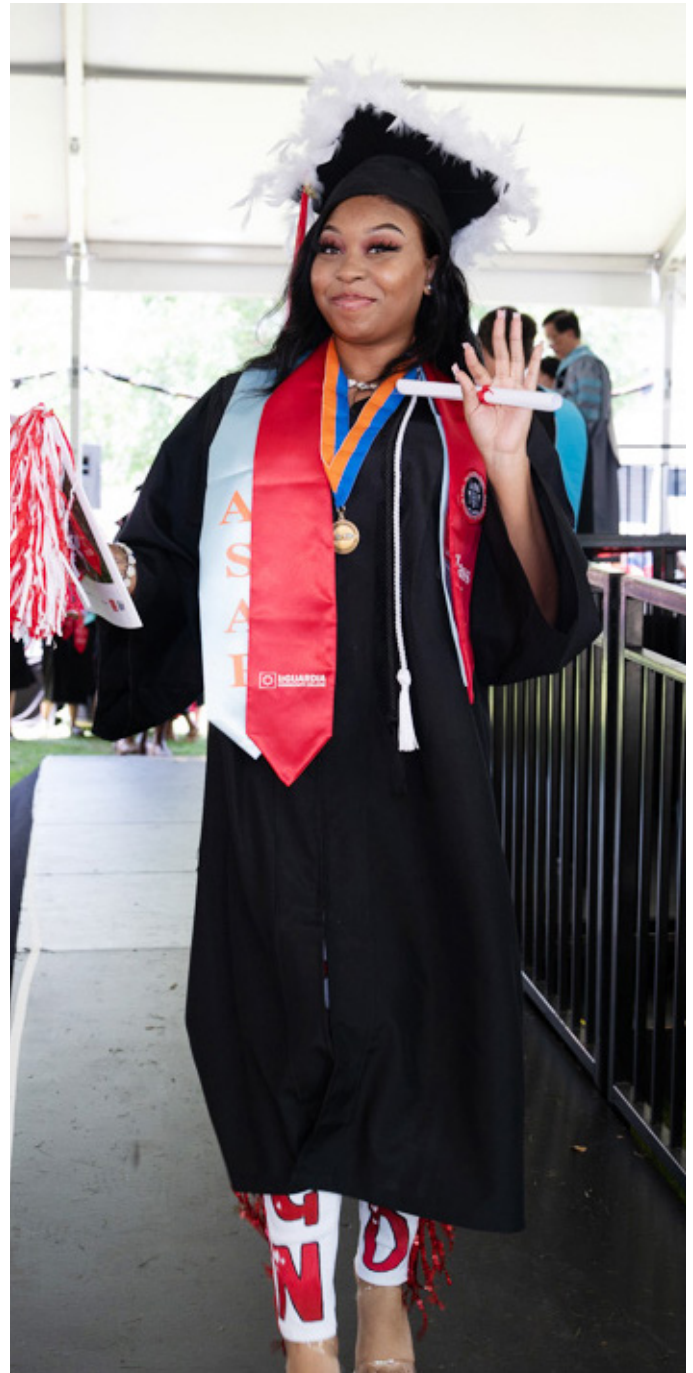
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* With Honors — Cumulative Grade Point Average 3.50 – 3.89

** With High Honors — Cumulative Grade Point Average 3.90 – 4.00

PROGRAMMING AND SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

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Junaid Hasan Sabbir
Pratima Shrestha
Minar Ahmad Siddique
Anusuya Thapa
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Muhammad Waqas
Cindy Williams Urena
Meiyan Ye *
Changrong Yin
Karla Maria Zaldana

RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY

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Sabina Djokic
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Tanjina Sultana
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VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY

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Charlize J. Brignol
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Brian Dwyer
Raquel Escobar
Aleixa Maria Freire
Michelle Gangone
Jordan Hagood
Han-Yueh Hsiao
Oliwia Jankowska
Brittany Kehoe
Vanessa Marie Lagreca
Mohagani Lauria
Carlos Meza
Cecilia Victoria Musto
Ayodele Myers
Amy J. Pantoja
Anastasia T. Parks
Camila Pillajo
Qingling Quan *
Itzel Ramos
Nashalee Rivera
Paola Itzel Salgado
Christa S. Sankar
Brianna Esabella Sealey
Scott Seo
Johan Tamayo
Geraldine Torres Pena **
Kimberly Zaragoza





CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE OF

Associate of Arts

Communication Studies	12
Communication Studies: Public Relations	12
Communication Studies: Speech Pathology	12
Education: Childhood Education	12
Education: Early Childhood Education	12
Education: Secondary Education – English	13
Education: Secondary Education – Math	13
Education: Secondary Education – Social Science	13
Education: Secondary Education – Spanish	13
English	13
English: Creative Writing	13
Film and Television	13
Human Services: Mental Health	13
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities	13
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – Deaf Studies	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – Health Humanities	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – History	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – International Studies	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – Japanese	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – Journalism	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – Latin American Studies	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – Political Science	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – TESOL/ Linguistics	14
Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities – Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies	14
Philosophy	14
Psychology	14
Spanish-English Translation	15

* With Honors — Cumulative Grade Point Average 3.50 – 3.89

** With High Honors — Cumulative Grade Point Average 3.90 – 4.00

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Jocelynn Sophia Acevedo
Kaelah Antoine
Tanyah Kamryn Archer-Brown
Caramia Castillo
Fernando D. Correa
Denisse De La Rosa
Eman Fatima
Ahmad Wayne Fletcher
Aracely Yolanda Flores
Calvin E. Graham
Agustin Iglesias
Emily Regina Jones
Joshua P. Jordan
Stephanie Lozada
Dhamar Montiel
Victoria Mary Oliveira
Karen Mitchell Peguero *
Jamal I. Pierre
Bertha Yessenia Quito
Kelvi Lenin Teneganay

COMMUNICATION STUDIES: PUBLIC RELATIONS

Jeommar Yuquilima

COMMUNICATION STUDIES: SPEECH PATHOLOGY

Amirah Abdool
Sariyah Destiny Fuentes
Shakana N. George
Tatiana C. Infante
Michelle Medvedeva

EDUCATION: CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ouiam Achahbar **
Jusia Afrin
Ariadna Aguilar **
Sayendy Alexandra Baez
Mohammed M. Diab
Miah Duran
Justin Faican
Lesly Fonseca
Anthony Gomez
Shayla Tiana Gray
Ronny Guerrero
Leila Janae Hendricks
Zhicheng Huang
Bintou Jallow
Parvez M. Kanok
Jameiri Ladino Tejada
Sherley Arianna Lema
Jeffrey Brandon Long
Kelly Martinez
Maylin Michelle Matute *
Adriana McCoy
Mauro J. Mejia
Rosee Mero
Melany Minchala
Alexa Dashelle Ortiz Castillo
Jarin S. Pathan *
Tanya Lizbeth Pelaez
Bissoondaye Ramlal
Esther E. Rodriguez
Jhesly Rodriguez
Shelsy Rodriguez
Kimberly Yazmin Rojas
Leo Rojas
Kevin Romero
Lalan Sah

Nayza Tejada
Ashley Nouvel Toribio
Layza M. Vargas
Zaquiathia T. Welch

EDUCATION: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Aya Ahmed Abdelhamid
Saradjine Ady
Jarlyn Almonte
Nara Daybeth Andrade Leiva
Aissatou Bah I
Monica Patricia Buckley **
Deivid Alexander Cadmen
Nitsa Campos
Giovanna Celini
Jacqueline Lissete Cisne *
Adzaira Coyotecatl-Tepale
Sweety Das
Shakeema Davis
Nicole Diaz
Sofia Diaz
Rita Espinal Tellez
Yanuri Trinidad Espinoza
Ashley Flores
Daisy Flores
Gizell Hazel Foggie
Leah E. Ford
Shirlise Gant
Sarah E. Garcia
Denise Giron
Jason Glover
Ashley G. Godoy
Ashly Gonzalez Gualpa
Yesenia Granda
Aaron J. Griffith

Martha Lucia Guaman
Marcella E. Gutierrez
Zahilly Herrera
Songida Islam *
Tania Elisabeth Japa Loja
Rupinder Kaur
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Kenneth Adams, BA, MA, EdD HONORIS CAUSA
PRESIDENT, LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Kenneth Adams is the fourth president of LaGuardia Community College. LaGuardia is one of seven community colleges of the City University of New York. Founded in 1971 in Long Island City, Queens, the college serves approximately 25,000 students per year.

Since joining LaGuardia in 2020, President Adams has led efforts to increase enrollment, improve student outcomes, increase government and philanthropic support, and reinforce the college's commitment to Queens.

In 2021, President Adams launched a campaign to raise funds to help LaGuardia students and Queens residents recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The "Tomorrow Campaign" reached its \$15 million goal in April 2022, enabling the LaGuardia Foundation to offer scholarships, stipends for internships, and emergency aid to thousands of low-income students from across the borough.

In March 2024, President Adams announced that LaGuardia had received \$116.2 million from the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation, led by philanthropist and New York Mets owner Alex Cohen, to build the Cohen Career Collective, a state-of-the-art workforce training center that will ensure economic mobility for New Yorkers while providing skilled workers for local employers. This extraordinary gift is the largest ever to a community college in the US, and the largest donation in the history of the City University of New York.*



Billie Gastic Rosado, BA, MA, EdM, PhD
PROVOST AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS,
LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

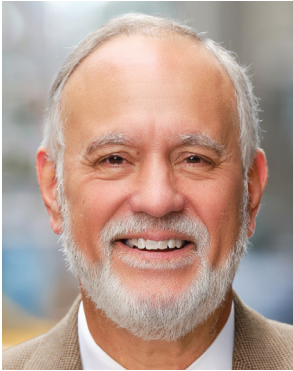
Dr. Billie Gastic Rosado is the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs of CUNY's LaGuardia Community College. Prior to joining CUNY, Dr. Gastic Rosado was an Associate Dean at the NYU School of Professional Studies, the inaugural Chief Research Officer at the Relay Graduate School of Education, served on the New York State Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching, and on faculty at UMass Boston and Temple University. She serves on the board of directors of the Domestic Violence Crisis Center (CT) and the advisory board of Connecticut CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Dr. Gastic Rosado earned a PhD in the Sociology of Education and an MA in Sociology from Stanford University, an EdM from Harvard University, and a BA in Economics from Yale University.*



Alexis J. McLean, BS, MA, EdD
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS, LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Alexis J. McLean, Ed.D. is the Vice President of Student Affairs at LaGuardia Community College, part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system. Dr. McLean's work centers on cultivating a campus environment that promotes students' personal, social, and intellectual development, with a particular emphasis on addressing non-academic challenges. Dr. McLean's research examines access and success in higher education, the role of institutional agents, and race and ethnicity in the collegiate experience, with a focus on the experiences of Black students. Her scholarly interests also explore hip-hop pedagogy in counseling education and the doctoral journey of Black women in higher education. She has shared her expertise through numerous workshops, conference presentations, and invited talks at the local, state, and national levels, and has been a guest lecturer and panel facilitator for discussions on equity and access in higher education. Actively engaged in the academic and professional community, Dr. McLean holds memberships in the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). She is also a member of the SUNY Conduct Institute and serves as an External Reviewer for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Dr. McLean earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from The Pennsylvania State University, and both her Master's in Mental Health and Wellness and Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from New York University.*

* Read more about LaGuardia's Commencement Speakers at
www.laguardia.edu/about/commencement/speakers



Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, BA, PhD

CHANCELLOR, THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez is the eighth chancellor of The City University of New York, serving 247,000 degree-seeking students across 26 New York City colleges with an operating budget of \$4.1 billion. As Chancellor, he has focused on advancing systemwide career opportunities through industry partnerships, eliminating barriers in the transfer process and reducing costs to improve retention and graduation rates for students. These priorities feature prominently in the University's strategic roadmap, CUNY Lifting New York, adopted in 2023.

His historic appointment in May 2019 made him the first educator of color and the first Latino to lead the nation's largest urban university. He is also one of a select few U.S. education leaders who has led both a baccalaureate and a community college: Matos Rodríguez previously served as president of CUNY's Queens College and Hostos Community College.

He has made it a key priority to build and advocate for career pipelines for students and graduates. During his tenure CUNY has launched a series of new public-private partnerships, including the New York Jobs CEO Council, a coalition of CEOs from 28 of New York's largest employers, and CUNY Futures in Finance, part of the University's goal of connecting all CUNY graduates to careers by 2030. Additional efforts include placing students in public and nonprofit sector summer jobs via CUNY Career Launch and providing in-demand skills training through CUNY Upskilling.*



Sascha Owen, BA, JD

SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STRATEGY & POLICY IMPLEMENTATION,
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Sascha Owen is the senior vice chancellor for strategy and policy implementation at The City University of New York, supervising projects that require interdepartmental coordination. Appointed to the role in August 2024, she also oversees the Office of the Chancellor, along with the offices of Government Affairs, University Advancement, and Executive Search & Evaluation.

Owen brings an accomplished record of leadership in the public, private and nonprofit sectors, including high-level positions in the offices of the New York City Comptroller and Manhattan Borough President.

At the office of the New York City Comptroller, where she served as chief of staff from 2014 to 2021, Owen provided direction, strategy and oversight across 16 bureaus. She oversaw public and external affairs, managing executive office operations, advocacy, communications and government relations at the city, state and federal levels. Owen developed strategy for legislative and policy initiatives related to housing, health care, education, finance and sustainability. She led advocacy that resulted in the overhaul of NYCHA's inventory management; city funding to expand arts education in city public schools; a successful ballot proposal to place a chief diversity officer in every city agency; and the passage of a law to prohibit discrimination against women-, minority- and LGBTQ-owned firms bidding on city contracts. She also drove negotiations for a historic overhaul of the decision-making process guiding investments for the city's \$260 billion pension system.*



Denise B. Maybank, BA, MA, PhD

VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS, THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Denise B. Maybank is the vice chancellor for student affairs at The City University of New York. In this role, she assumes responsibility for coordinating the functions of the University's Central Office to guide the work of supporting student development from recruitment to completion. Under her leadership, Student Affairs facilitates the academic progress and success of students through holistic approaches to engagement beyond the classroom, addressing areas such as health and wellbeing, essential needs, student government and leadership development.

Throughout her career, she has been a member of professional associations representing the disciplines and contexts in which she serves. She is a member of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Board of Directors, representing the Council on Student Affairs; she values the opportunities to have her voice and expertise included in national initiatives on higher education. As an active member of the communities in which she lives, she has served on various boards of directors for civic and social service organizations, often being elected to leadership positions. She is also an active member of her church community and sorority.*

* Read more about LaGuardia's Commencement Speakers at www.laguardia.edu/about/commencement/speakers



Henry T. Berger, BS, JD

TRUSTEE, THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Henry T. Berger was appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio as a Trustee of The City University of New York on June 20, 2017. Trustee Berger was reappointed on July 1, 2021 for a term to expire on June 30, 2028.

Mr. Berger served as Special Counsel and Advisor to Mayor de Blasio and previously, as an attorney in private practice, he worked on legal issues related to election law, such as campaign finance compliance and ballot access regulations, and labor relations and civil litigation. From 1995 to 2000 Mr. Berger was a partner with Fisher, Fisher & Berger, working on commercial litigation, election law and labor relations for clients including health care professional unions, university professors' associations and major state, county and city political candidates.

Mr. Berger serves as Chair of the Board's Finance and Administration Committee, Vice Chair of the Education Policy Committee, Vice Chair of the Governance Committee, Chair of the Subcommittee Technology Planning, and a is member of the Executive Committee.



Mitchell Draizin

UNIVERSITY HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENT

Mitchell Draizin is the retired founder of Longview Capital Advisors, a company which offered real estate mortgage banking services to mid-sized NYC focused developers. He has and continues to serve on various private-public and nonprofit Boards, Councils and Advisory Bodies, including The Congressional Award Foundation, New York Economic Development Corporation and The Williams Institute at UCLA. In addition, he is a founding member of the NYC-based American LGBTQ Museum, which will open in 2027. His association with CUNY began in 2015 as a volunteer teacher of Personal Finance to students at Manhattan Hunter Science High School, and grew to include teaching various CUNY undergraduate Leadership Groups and LAGCC's Adult Education. In 2015 he created the CUNY LGBT Advisory Council to support CUNY's LGBT students. The Council is composed of LGBT professionals in the private, public and non-profit sectors. In partnership with CUNY, he has developed a portfolio of Leadership, Fellowship, Career Mentorship programs and Speakers programs. He has been the recipient of several Humanitarian, Advocacy and Public Service awards.



Ebony Young, BS, MA

DEPUTY BOROUGH PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

Appointed as Deputy Queens Borough President in 2022, Ebony Young brings more than 25 years of distinguished leadership across the nonprofit, corporate, and government sectors, with executive roles at prominent institutions including the City of New York, YMCA of Greater New York, TF Cornerstone, Incarceration Reform and the Black Entrepreneur Initiative.

Her expertise spans organizational strategy, operational excellence, leadership development, wellbeing, technology, youth advancement, and social justice reform.

Most notably, Deputy Borough President Young has spearheaded the office's creation of New York City's first global tech and innovation center in Long Island City, fostering innovation and access for global entrepreneurs.

Her career reflects a deep commitment to creating sustainable solutions that elevate global communities, from youth and seniors to athletes, artists, and environmental advocates.

She has served on numerous global boards, task forces, and advisory committees, shaping initiatives that bridge policy, innovation, and community impact.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Communications from Indiana State University and a master's degree in organizational leadership from Indiana Tech. In addition to her formal education, she is a certified life coach and public speaker.

She resides in Queens with her husband and three children.



Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez, BA, MA

NEW YORK'S 7TH DISTRICT, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez is currently serving her seventeenth term as Representative for New York's 7th Congressional District. In the 119th Congress, she is the Ranking Member of the House Small Business Committee, a senior member of the Financial Services Committee, and a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

She has made history several times during her tenure in Congress. In 1992, she was the first Puerto Rican woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. In February 1998, she was named Ranking Democratic Member of the House Small Business Committee, making her the first Hispanic woman to serve as Ranking Member of a full House committee. Most recently, in 2006, she was named Chairwoman of the House Small Business Committee, making her the first Latina to chair a full Congressional committee.

As a fighter for equal rights of the underrepresented and a proponent of economic opportunity for the working class and poor, Congresswoman Velázquez combines sensibility and compassion, as she works to encourage economic development, protect community health and the environment, combat crime and worker abuses, and secure access to affordable housing, quality education and health care for all New York City families.

As the top Democrat on the House Small Business Committee, which oversees federal programs and contracts totaling \$200 billion annually, Congresswoman Velázquez has been a vocal advocate of American small business and entrepreneurship. She has established numerous small business legislative priorities, encompassing the areas of tax, regulations, access to capital, federal contracting opportunities, trade, technology, health care and pension reform, among others. Congresswoman Velázquez was named as the inaugural "Woman of the Year" by Hispanic Business Magazine in recognition of her national influence in both the political and business sectors and for her longtime support of minority enterprise.

Although her work on the Small Business Committee and the House Financial Services Committee keeps her busy, Congresswoman Velázquez can often be found close to home, working for the residents of her district.



Senator Kristen Gonzalez, BA

59TH SENATE DISTRICT, NEW YORK STATE SENATE

Kristen Gonzalez is a former tech worker and community organizer, born and raised in a working-class family in Queens. She represents District 59, covering parts of Western Queens, Northern Brooklyn, and the East Side of Manhattan. As the youngest woman ever elected to the NYS Senate and Chair of both the Internet and Technology and the Elections Committees, she's passed legislation helping safeguard the right to an abortion by protecting private health data, regulating the government's use of AI, and protecting our elections from deceptive media amongst others. She believes every New Yorker deserves a dignified life, which is why she champions workers' rights, a Green New York, deeply affordable housing, and tenant protections. Before being elected to the NYS Senate, Senator Gonzalez worked in the New York City Council, the Obama White House, and Senator Chuck Schumer's office. She graduated from Columbia University and organized her community with the Western Queens Community Land Trust, served on her community board, and helped launch a citywide campaign for public internet.

STUDENT SPEAKERS



Mia Gonzalez Lozado

CLASS OF 2026 REPRESENTATIVE

Mia Gonzalez Lozado, 19, a Brooklyn resident who was raised in Ecuador, graduates with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Paralegal Studies, earning a 3.8 GPA.

Just three years after arriving in New York City with limited English proficiency, she has emerged as a student leader, scholar, and aspiring attorney.

Mia began her journey at LaGuardia in the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), where she built the language skills that allowed her to thrive academically. After completing CLIP, she enrolled at LaGuardia as a degree-seeking student.

While studying, she worked part-time and quickly became involved in Student Life, serving as a peer leader for New Student Orientation and supporting student engagement initiatives.

Her academic achievements and leadership are wide-ranging: Mia served as Vice President of Leadership for Phi Theta Kappa, became an ambassador for the President's Society, and was named a semifinalist for the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. She also completed an internship with Hunger Free America and participated in a study abroad program in Sorrento, Italy, where she studied human rights—an experience that broadened her global perspective.

Mia has been accepted to New York University, where she plans to continue her studies with an eye toward a future career in law, inspired by her father.

As Class Representative, Mia honors the resilience of her fellow graduates—many of whom balance work, family, and education—while celebrating the power of ambition and hard work to shape a brighter future.



Michael Todd Hall

CLASS OF 2026 REPRESENTATIVE

Michael Todd Hall, 67, graduates with an Associate of Arts degree in Human Services: Mental Health, earning a 3.97 GPA.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, Michael credits his upbringing and the influence of his grandmother for instilling the values of service, perseverance, and compassion that guide his work today. He served eight years in the United States Marine Corps, rising to sergeant and earning multiple commendations, including a White House Commendation and Navy Achievement Medals.

After completing his military service, Michael developed a four-decade long career in accounting, financial operations, and consulting, before enrolling at LaGuardia with the aim of a new career in addiction counseling, shaped by both professional experience and personal resilience.

At LaGuardia, Michael distinguished himself as a Dean's List student and leader. He served as a Student Success Mentor and President of the Human Services Student Club and was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa and Delta Alpha Pi honor societies. A participant in the ASAP program, he embraced education as a pathway not only to new career opportunities, but also to personal growth.

Michael has already completed an Addiction Studies certificate at Kingsborough Community College, where he received an Addiction Professionals Scholarship, and will continue his studies at SUNY Empire State as he works toward becoming a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC).

As Class Representative, Michael speaks for a graduating class defined by perseverance and transformation. His message reflects a belief that education can be a powerful force for renewal—and that it is never too late to begin again.



Congratulations, Graduate!

I am pleased to salute you on your graduation from LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York.

As LaGuardia's 54th graduating class you join thousands of our alumni who have transformed their lives thanks to their LaGuardia educations. Your new LaGuardia Associate degrees are an important step toward your Baccalaureate degrees, or perhaps new jobs or promotions. We are confident that your LaGuardia experiences have prepared you for success – whatever comes next.

I urge you to continue on your educational journeys to prepare yourselves for rewarding careers, active citizenship, meaningful participation in your communities, and service to others. Your LaGuardia professors, advisors, staff, and administrators expect no less of you. Indeed, mindful of all you have accomplished in order to receive your degrees today, we are confident that you will succeed and contribute to creating the just, equitable, and prosperous society we all seek.

Best wishes,

Kenneth Adams
President



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OATH OF THE YOUNG MEN OF ATHENS

“We will never bring disgrace to this, our city, by any act of dishonesty or cowardice nor ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks. We will fight for our ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many. We will revere and obey the city’s laws and do our best to incite a like respect in those above us who are prone to annul them and set them to naught. We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public sense of duty. Thus in all these ways we will transmit this city not only not less but far greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.”

— Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia
Inaugural Address, January 1, 1934

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