

HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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# Teaching and Learning Symposium on Social Justice in Higher Education

February 24–28, 2025

**Engage, Empower, Educate!**

Every action counts!

Ready to make an impact in higher education?



Join us at the virtual Teaching and Learning Symposium on Social Justice in Higher Education 2025.

<https://tinyurl.com/HCCC-Symposium>

# Monday, February 24, 2025

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9:15 a.m.

**Welcome Roll Call**

Attending Representatives

9:30 a.m.

**Opening Remarks**

Paula Roberson, Ed.D.  
*Director, Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation  
Hudson County Community College*

**Mayoral Introduction**

Darryl Jones, Ph.D.  
*Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Hudson County Community College*

**Welcome Address**

Ras J. Baraka  
*Mayor, City of Newark, New Jersey*

**Symposium Charge**

Cory A. Booker  
*U.S. Senator, New Jersey*

**Keynote Introduction**

Christopher Reber, Ph.D.  
*President, Hudson County Community College*



10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

**Keynote Address:  
The “Cost” of Leadership in  
Higher Education**

**Presenter**

Larry D. Johnson Jr., Ph.D.  
*President  
Guttman Community College,  
CUNY*

**Session Host**

Paula Roberson, Ed.D.  
*Director, Center for Teaching,  
Learning, and Innovation,  
HCCC*

Higher education leaders, faculty, and staff are facing uncharted territories leading or teaching after the novel coronavirus. After surviving a global shutdown and political and social unrest, individuals find themselves rethinking their place in the academy. This presentation invites the audience to ascertain the “cost” of leadership, while gaining tangible strategies that can reinvigorate and inspire one to rededicate to a profession that continues to transform lives.

At the conclusion of this presentation, attendees will be able to:

- Ascertain the notion of “cost” of leadership in relationship to their respective role in the academy
- Employ strategies that will support introspection, which can ultimately lead to reimagining one’s role in higher education
- Embrace higher education as an ever-changing landscape that continues to inspire change in the lives of its students, faculty, staff, and leadership



**11:20 a.m. - 12:10 p.m**  
**Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)**

**Culinary Conference Center, Scott Ring Room**

Antonio R. Flores, Ph.D.  
*President and CEO  
 Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities*

Yeurys Pujols, Ed.D.  
*Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, HCCC*



Christopher Reber, Ph.D.  
*President, Hudson County Community College*

A discussion on how HACU's origin and mission, which are grounded in championing Hispanic success in higher education, launched the Association's remarkable 37-year history. This foundational commitment to social justice through advancing higher education success for students at Hispanic-Serving Institutions is the force that propels HACU's journey towards meeting its strategic priorities.

**12:20 p.m. - 1:20 p.m.**

**Kick-off Luncheon**

Culinary Conference Center, Scott Ring Room

This hour-long break allows Symposium in-person participants to engage with one another in a communal setting, while breaking bread.



**1:30 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.**  
***The Pursuit of Happiness: Awareness, Advocacy, and Inclusion of People with ID in Higher Education***

Kenne Evans, Ed.D.  
*Registrar | Admissions & Registrar,  
 Tarrant County Community College, TX*

Danielle Lopez  
*Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Accessibility Services, HCCC*

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has identified diversity, equity, and inclusion as important initiatives in redesigning American community colleges. One area of focus is having accessible resources for students with identified disabilities. However, intellectual disability (ID) is not as readily observable and often goes unnoticed. This presentation is the result of a study of the nature of ID and offers information to help create similar programs.



**2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**  
***We Are Still Here: On Native Identity and Activism***

Megan Red Shirt-Shaw  
*Director of Native Student Services,  
 University of South Dakota*

Denise Knapp  
*Coordinator/Associate Professor,  
 Human Services, HCCC*

This presentation discusses the contemporary, and often forgotten, presence of Native people in social justice conversations through a personal lens. The conversation is not expected to define what it means to be Indigenous in America, but is an opportunity to share one perspective, as an urban Lakota woman, about the importance of hearing our voices and our stories.

# Tuesday, February 25, 2025

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**10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.**

***Justice Is a Bridge:  
How Community-Centered  
Approaches to Governance  
Engenders Social Change***

Michael Iasilli, Ph.D.  
*St. John's University  
Councilman,  
Southampton Town, NY*

Christopher Cody, Ph.D.  
*Instructor, History  
HCCC*

Achieving social change as an activist can be challenging due to organizing outside the institutional framework of government. Fostering transformation within government can be equally difficult. However, by employing community-centered approaches and developing educational programs that actively engage with community groups, we can create policy changes that promote greater justice in municipal efforts. My work in cultivating an understanding of the Shinnecock Nation's sovereign status as a federally recognized Indigenous tribe and filling resource gaps for the differently-abled community through direct government intervention exemplify effective strategies for fostering cross-cultural understanding and deepening municipal awareness of the fundamental nature of civil rights in America.



**11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.**

***Social Justice Studies***

Harold A. McDougall III  
*Professor,  
Howard University*

Kade Thurman, Ph.D.  
*Instructor, Sociology  
HCCC*

Professor Harold A. McDougall III and his student assistants developed an Internet-based platform to deliver a social justice studies curriculum for high school-age youth. This curriculum highlights the need to respond to discrimination by preparing for present encounters, repairing damage done in the past, and rebuilding community agency for the future. A teacher's manual is currently being developed for this course.



12:30 p.m. - 1:20 p.m.

**Immigrant Justice**

Michael Wildes, Esq.  
*Mayor, Englewood, NJ*

Jose Lowe, Ph.D.  
*Director, Educational  
Opportunity Fund (EOF)  
HCCC*

A contemporary rendition of the rights of foreign nationals on U.S. soil and how to protect their rights.



1:30 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.

**Course & Curricular Reform Across  
STEM Disciplines with Equity and  
Justice as the Guiding Principle:  
A Case Study at Bates College**

Katherine Ott, Ph.D.  
*Professor, Chair of the  
Mathematics Department  
Bates College, ME*

Daniel Ondieki  
*Instructor, Mathematics  
HCCC*



April L. Horton, Ph.D.  
*Professor of Equity and  
Inclusion, STEM  
Bates College, ME*

Strategies for building capacity for inclusion to address our own disparities in delivering an equitable and inclusive learning experience for our students are needed nationwide. This webinar will present strategies we use to engage faculty and staff in robust and ongoing professional development in both racial equity and inclusive pedagogies. We will discuss how we built capacity for inclusion through changing mindsets and skill sets while we supported STEM departments and programs as they changed courses, curricula, and practices in ways that were informed by their own data and student experiences.



2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**The Black Woman Leader:  
Being Safe, Seen, and Successful  
Is a Right Not a Privilege**

Michelle Cromwell, Ph.D.  
*Cromwell Group LLC*

Sharon Daughtry  
*Instructor, Business, HCCC*

This session will provide the revolutionary tools that are at the intersection of high performance and well-being. These tools will support you to excel as a Black woman leader\* using integrative strategies to stay energized and empowered and thrive at the top. It is a blueprint to make you safe, seen and successful without burning out or compromising yourself or your integrity.

\*non-Black love warriors and advocates welcomed and included

# Wednesday, February 26, 2025

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10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

***Words on Fire:***  
**The Power of Incendiary Language**

Helio Fred Garcia  
*President/CEO,*  
*Logos Consulting, NY*

Natalia Vazquez-Bodkin,  
*Instructor, Research*  
*and Technology,*  
*Kean University, NJ*

Join us for a transformative session with renowned guest speaker Professor Helio Fred Garcia, author of *Words on Fire: The Power of Incendiary Language* and *How to Confront It*. This thought-provoking dialogue will explore key themes from Garcia's groundbreaking book, delving into "Communication and Consequences" and "A Call to Action." Attendees will be immersed in discussions centered around language's power, its intersection with social justice in higher education, and practical tools for confronting incendiary language. Mark your calendars for an enriching dialogue that transcends boundaries and cultivates change.



11:30 a.m. - 12:25 p.m.

**Disability Advocacy in Higher Education**

Sarah Todd Hammer  
*Disability Advocate*

Danielle Lopez  
*Director of Diversity, Equity,*  
*and Inclusion for*  
*Accessibility Services, HCCC*

Heading off to college is a big deal for every student, particularly so for disabled students. Disabled students have to learn how to advocate for themselves to get their academic and housing accommodations met, and it can be difficult to adjust to a new environment that is not inclusive to disabled students. There are more disabled students enrolled in higher education now than ever before, so now more than ever, colleges and universities around the country need to improve their disability inclusion practices.



12:30 p.m. - 1:20 p.m.

**Governor Murphy's Clemency Initiative**

Justin Dews, Esq.  
*Counsel,*  
*King & Spaulding LLC*

Heather DeVries, Ph.D.  
*Associate Vice President*  
*for Academic Affairs*  
*and Assessment, HCCC*

Join Justin Dews in a dynamic discussion regarding Governor Phil Murphy's clemency initiative.



**1:30 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.**

***New Jersey  
Reparations Council:  
Charting a Path Towards  
Racial and Reparative Justice  
in New Jersey***

Jean-Pierre Brutus, Esq.  
*New Jersey Institute for  
Social Justice*

Jerry Lamb, Ed.D.  
*Associate Professor,  
Criminal Justice, HCCC*

In this unique collaboration between leading experts from various disciplines, the New Jersey Reparations Council is the first-of-its-kind commission to finally confront and repair New Jersey's deep and often overlooked involvement in slavery and its lasting impact on the contemporary life of Black people in our state. The Council's work can be used as a foundational roadmap for reparative justice in New Jersey.



**2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

***Ballroom Has Something to Say  
about Democracy and Justice***

Professor Michael Roberson  
*The New School  
New York, NY*

Stev Lewis  
*Academic Coach,  
Academic Support Services,  
HCCC*

This lecture will explore the history of the House | Ballroom community as a Black Trans-Womanist theological discourse, a freedom movement, and its spiritual formation responses to race, class, sexuality, and gender oppression. It will further examine the community's ability to use the art of performance as a hermeneutics of the body and situate its history in mobilizing as a resistance to these oppressions, place it in conversation with other historical struggles, and illuminate the community's prophetic gift of truth-telling, its ethical gift of archiving suffering and allowing it to speak, being on intimate terms with death and annihilation, yet through the trifacta of the philosophical, theological, and the political, Ballroom has something to say about democracy.

# Thursday, February 27, 2025

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10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

## Presidents' Panel

L. Marshall Washington, Ph.D.  
*President, Kalamazoo Valley  
Community College  
Kalamazoo, MI*

Lovell Pugh-Bassett, Ph.D.  
*President,  
Camden County College, NJ*



Rosalyn Clark Artis, Ph.D.  
*President, Benedict College  
Columbia, SC*



Andrés Acebo, Esq.  
*Interim President,  
New Jersey City University  
Jersey City, NJ*

Sonya Christian, Ph.D.  
*Chancellor, California Community  
Colleges, Sacramento, CA*



In this panel discussion, institutional leaders will discuss contemporary social and racial justice issues that impact the college community and their role as governing agents.



11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.

## ***Your Vote = Your Voice:*** **Energizing Voters in Times Like These**

Lauren Nance  
*League of Women Voters, NJ*

Paula Roberson, Ed.D.  
*Director, Center for Teaching,  
Learning, and Innovation,  
HCCC*

In this engaging session, we will journey through the rich, nonpartisan history of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey and the state's pivotal role in the women's suffrage movement. We'll tackle the pressing issue of voter apathy, explore its roots, and the profound impact it has on New Jersey's communities. Together, we'll discover the power of voting as a tool for change, urging everyone to find their voice in New Jersey's civic arena. Join us in reigniting the spirit of civic engagement and empowering the next generation of New Jersey voters.





12:30 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.

**Faith Leaders' Panel**



Rabbi Mordechai Kanelsky  
*Bris Avrohom Center, Hillside, NJ*

Royal Ross  
*Admissions Recruiter/Business & Accounting Adjunct, HCCC  
Pastor,  
Heart for People Ministry, Inc.*



Imam Waseem A. Malik  
*Khatoon-e Jannat Center,  
Jersey City, NJ*

Reverend Lester W. Taylor Jr., D.Min  
*Community Baptist Church,  
Englewood, NJ*

Antionette Ellis-Williams, Ph.D.  
*Bethany Baptist Church, Newark, NJ*



Faith leaders discuss their respective roles, expectations and meeting the needs of their congregants in mediating current social justice issues.



1:30 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.

***Operationalizing Love:*  
Utilizing a Critical Theory of  
Love in Our Pursuit of Social  
Justice Lecture**

Durryle Brooks, Ph.D.  
*Love and Justice Consulting*

Lilisa J. Williams, MBA  
*Adjunct, HCCC*

This session interrogates the Westernized construction of love, analyzing how common perceptions of love can act as a tool of oppression, exposing the dangers associated with adopting general "Ethic of Care" approaches within the educational space. The approaches in the educational space often lack an anti-oppressive analysis, which negatively impacts students, faculty, and staff as they focus only on the individual level and fail to adapt a structural analysis.

2:30 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.

***Operationalizing Love:*  
Practical Application Lab**

Participants will practice how love must function to meet the demands of justice, act as a healing agent against dehumanization, and be utilized as a force for our individual and collective good.



3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

**Social Justice in  
the Constitution**

Dr. Jim Twombly, Ph.D.  
*Author*

Christopher Cody, Ph.D.  
*Instructor, History, HCCC*

This presentation examines the role of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution in shaping how we approach the development of public policy. Based largely on the book *The Preamble as Policy: A Guidebook to Governance and Civic Duty* by Jim Twombly and Robert Irons. The talk explores how the concept of social justice is at the very heart of our nation's second founding. We often refer to the words "We the People"; but what do they really mean? What comes after those three words is just as important for shaping what John Meachum and President Biden refer to as the Soul of America. This talk (and the book) develop the idea that perfection is not a state, but a journey and a key part of that journey is the search for social justice.

# Friday, February 28, 2025

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**10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.**

## **WE ACT**

Sarah Z. Salem  
*Director of Community  
Engagement, Thriving  
Communities  
Harlem, NY*

Nadia Hedhli, Ph.D.  
*Professor, Biology, HCCC*

WE ACT for Environmental Justice is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 1988 to address environmental racism in West Harlem. Our mission is to build healthy communities by ensuring that people of color and/or low-income residents participate meaningfully in the creation of sound and fair environmental health and protection policies and practices.

WE ACT for Environmental Justice has launched the EPA Region 2 Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC) serving New York and New Jersey. The WE ACT TCTAC can help underserved communities gain access to grant and funding opportunities so that they're better positioned to advance and address environmental, climate, and energy justice issues. We offer training and TA to build capacity for navigating grant application systems, writing strong grant proposals, effectively managing grants, and engaging in environmental and energy justice decision-making.



**11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.**

## **The Haitian Immigrant Injustice Experience**

Jonathan Marcellus, Ph.D.

Velino Joasil, M.D.  
*Professor, Biology, HCCC*

In this session, I will present on the topic of social injustice that many Haitian immigrants have faced upon coming to the United States. I will also discuss the challenges that they have endured when trying to adjust to the American culture. At the end of my presentation, I hope the audience will have an in-depth understanding of what it is like to be a Haitian immigrant facing social injustice. I hope to share some recommendations on how Haitian immigrants can overcome social injustice.



**12:30 p.m. - 1:20 p.m.**

## **Immigration in the News**

Jude Nelson, Esq.

Diana Galvez  
*Associate Director,  
North Hudson Campus, HCCC*

Critically analyze and learn about the current trends and issues in immigrant justice in the news.



**1:30 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.**

**HCCC Student Reflections Symposium Sessions**

Nina Resurrecion  
*Student Government Association, President*

Sonny Tungala  
*President, Model United Nations Club*

Pedro Moranchel  
*Alumni, Class of 2021*

John Acosta  
*Phi Theta Kappa, President*

HCCC students from various College clubs share their thoughts about the Symposium sessions.



**2:30 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.**

**Northeast NJ Legal Services: How to Get Your Record Expunged Information Session**

Khansa Ahmed  
*Community Outreach & Engagement Associate*

Anita Belle  
*Assistant Vice President, School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development, HCCC*

Participants will be able to know and apply steps to get a record expunged.



**3:20 p.m. - 4:20 p.m.**

**Coordinating Community Engagement, Policy Advocacy and Partnerships for Environmental Restoration**

Nancy Zak  
*Community Outreach Coordinator The Ironbound Community Corporation Newark, NJ*

Dr. Burl Yearwood  
*Dean of the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), HCCC*

The Ironbound Community Corporation will share their strategies for involving students and local stakeholders, challenges of advocating for sustainable policies, and the lessons learned from the Passaic River cleanup project. Attendees will gain insights into how higher education institutions can support environmental justice through hands-on activism and interdisciplinary collaboration.

*The Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation Planning Committee is grateful to our sponsors, advisory board, and colleagues who have contributed their time and energy to make our Symposium a continued success in this very important national discourse. We appreciate our state officials and deans for joining us. I am especially grateful to all of my work-study students and the valuable contribution of the core planning committee. Together we are a light on the hill!*

- Paula Roberson, Ed.D.

Director, Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation

Dr. Paula Roberson  
Dr. Jeanne Baptiste  
Joseph Caniglia  
Dr. Christopher Cody  
Sharon Daughtry  
Linda Guastini  
Dr. Darryl Jones  
Denise Knapp

Willie Shirer  
Sarah Teichman  
Dr. Kade Thurman  
Angela Tuzzo  
Richard Walker  
Urimala Chawaria  
Mabinty Mansaray  
Darnel Laureore B. Theard



*Hudson County Community College provides its diverse communities with inclusive, high-quality educational programs and services that promote student success and upward social and economic mobility.*

*Hudson County Community College is committed to providing access and accommodation in all its services, programs, and activities. If at any point you have a need or concern related to access, please contact us. For accommodation requests related to a disability or health condition, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services by calling (201) 360-4157 or emailing AS@hccc.edu.*

