

# HEOP WORKS



## Marymount Manhattan College

Dear MMC Community,

My name is Anaya Bond and I am elated to provide you with Vol. 3 of the HEOP Works Newsletter!

As 2020 comes to an end, so is our first full semester of virtual learning. HEOP acknowledges and is proud of the great work accomplished by our students after a challenging summer and an experiential fall. COVID-19 has impacted so many people, particularly those of color, but our students are resilient and continue to navigate through these uncertain times.

Volume 3 of the HEOP Works Newsletter provides an exclusive look of HEOP during it's first full semester of virtual learning. Specifically, this issue highlights our virtual summer program; HEOP student engagement and accolades; the Leadership Council; the Young Men's Initiative and much more!

We are incredibly grateful for the HEOP staff and appreciate Harmony and Stephanie for always pushing us to go the extra mile! We are also thankful for the entire MMC community for supporting us throughout our collegiate journey! Thank you for reading and we hope you enjoy!

**-Anaya Bond '24**  
Public Relations Manager/Intern and Chief Editor

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# HEOP Summer Academic Institute 2020

The 2020 HEOP Summer Academic Institute (SAI) was the first-ever to be offered virtually! Before the program began students met with HEOP Counselor/Coordinator, Stephanie Nunez for several weeks to establish goals; assess strengths and areas of growth; build confidence, and to prepare for the program.

Zoom did not stop the “small but mighty” group of eight from building everlasting bonds with one another, as they quickly adapted to the new normal and used every opportunity to {virtually} bond with each other.

Moreover, students were met with an array of challenges but worked together to conquer them all! The now first-year cohort developed hard and soft skills that were applied academically, socially, and professionally during their first semester at MMC.



**Class of 24' (left to right)**  
**Janet Castillo**  
**Anaya Bond**  
**Ibrahim Bah**  
**Heylin Perez**  
**Emely Abrigo Barrera**  
**Lauren Bryant**  
**Nereida Alvarez**  
**Luisana Montero Santos**

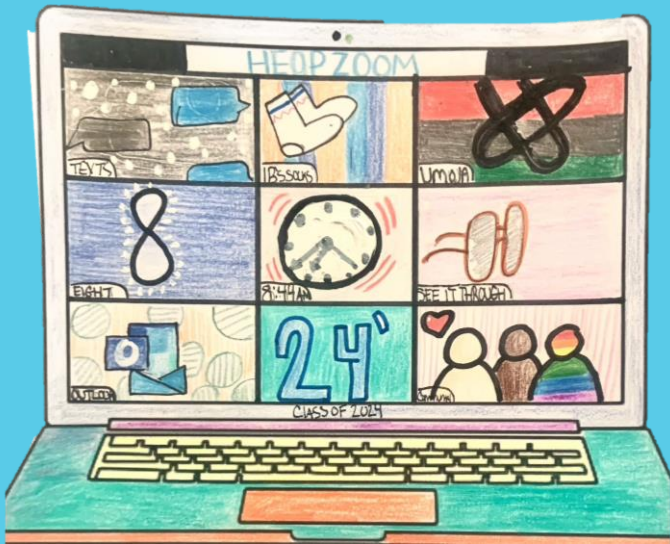
## 2020 Summer Theme

The theme during the 2020 Summer Academic Institute (SAI) was Aşę and HACE. Aşę is a philosophical concept from West Africa that means to create the power to make things happen and produce change. HACE is an acronym that stands for history, advocacy, community, and empowerment. HACE also translates as “to do” or “does” in Spanish. Both concepts are symbolic of creating and acting on change. During the SAI, the cohort attended workshops led by the HEOP staff, that discussed the components of HACE and its importance during today’s racial, political and social climate. The cohort frequently made connections and applied these concepts into their everyday lives, and the world around them. The cohort was able to draw connections with Aşę to their educational lives and discovered that the best way to make change is through education. The cohort also explored the HEOP program in totality and discussed its importance to them, and why Aşę resonated with HEOP.

“It made me really pay attention to the importance of history and advocacy. It made me want to vocalize, and be more transparent about my feelings towards social injustices”

The cohort was able to establish that HEOP’s goal aligned with Aşę because of its goal to produce change and fix the disparity between marginalized communities and higher education. Overall the cohort of 24’ grasped the concept of Aşę , and promised to practice it throughout their academic, professional, and personal endeavors.

# Class of 2024's Symbol



Symbol Drawn By: Anaya Bond

“As we know 2020 has been quite a year. It has affected us seniors in High School Tremendously. We missed the exciting part of senior year: these events being prom, senior trips and even our graduation. COVID-19 has also affected our freshmen year in college.

We wanted to emphasize everything we are going through and how we have connected digital platforms. We included principals we have learned through the summer program and how small we are with only 8 students. We connected through different platforms outlook, zoom, iMessage, and FaceTime.

Umoja was important to include because through our screens we connected and became a community although we had barriers, we made the effort to know one another.

These are small symbols that we will carry on and remember for the rest of our lives.”

-Janet Castillo from the HEOP Summer intensive ceremony

## Class of 2024's Pledge to HEOP

By Ibrahim Bah

Through the struggles

Through the rains

We shall continue to remain persistent

To overcome the puddles of pain.

The impossible is possible

The possibility will be what keeps us in the game

Unity shall be implemented like the great ones before us  
that came.

Continue marching,

Continue sparking

Better days are ahead

The ball is in our court because the future is student led.





Following the summer program, the HEOP department added an experimental, service-based, and collaborative learning class titled HEOP 101, which is now required for all first-year HEOP students and is led by HEOP Director, Harmony Cross. The class met on once a week and discussed various topics.



The **HEOP Leadership Council**, formed by current HEOP Director is a group of HEOP interns who have been appointed by the HEOP staff to lead specific projects. The purpose of the Leadership Council is to provide intentional professional development opportunities for students to gain practical experience and transferrable skills to encourage career-readiness. Council members are required to attend training each semester. The Leadership Council meets on a weekly basis with the HEOP Director to discuss project updates and to encourage collaboration and community amongst the group.



# HEOP Programming & Events

To adapt to the current climate and to keep the HEOP community informed and engaged on critical topics, the HEOP department has revamped its programming model. HEOP offers four programs/events per month- two of which are delivered via zoom and the other two are videos/articles that are sent via email to members of the HEOP community. Students are encouraged to complete the post-program surveys which test the retention of the digital content, but also allows the opportunity for community members to provide feedback. Programs fall under our four programming pillars, which are: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Advocacy (DEIA); Wellness Wednesday; Professional Development and Student Success; and Performing and Creative Arts Awareness. All programs are planned by the HEOPs Leadership Council programming committee, with the guidance of the HEOP Director, and often include an internal or external speaker.

## HEOP FA 20 Events

**HEOP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & STUDENT SUCCESS SERIES**

**VOLUME 3.**

**NOVEMBER 16, 20**  
**12:00 - 1:00 PM**



**HOSTED BY: CAREER SERVICES & HEOP STUDENT JANET CASTILLO**

**MarymountManhattan**

**THE HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM**  
*Young Men's Initiative*

**SECOND ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE SUMMIT** *Virtual!*

**WEDNESDAY, NOV. 18**  
**1:00 PM VIA ZOOM**

Learn about the opportunities that await you at MMC!

- Professional development
- Tuition Assistance
- Academic support
- Metro cards
- Meal plan

**Proveemos traducción en español!**



**RSVP**

*Heop Wellness Wednesday*



**HAIR & SKIN CARE VEGAN EDITION**


**SEPTEMBER 23, 2020**  
**12:00 PM**

**HOSTED BY: HEOP STUDENTS JERANDY, EMELY & NEREIDA**



**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Advocacy: Hispanic Heritage**

Hi, my name is Emely Perez and I am the chair of HEOP's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Advocacy Program Initiative. The purpose of this month's passive program is bring awareness to hispanic heritage month and its impact that hispanic culture has made on our society. Additionally, this program will bring awareness to diversity and ways we can dismantle this concept within our communities. Please watch the YouTube video and complete the survey on the information highlighted in the video. I look forward to seeing you all during next month's program!



**Heop Wellness Wednesday: Physical Health**

Hi, our names are Emely Arrigo and Nereida Alvarez. We are the co-chairs of HEOP's Wellness Wednesday Initiative. The purpose of this month's program is to inform our HEOP members on the importance of staying healthy and the positive impact that comes along with staying healthy. Please watch the YouTube videos and complete the survey. I look forward to seeing you all during next month's program!



**HEOP PERFORMING & CREATIVE ARTS AWARENESS**

Hi, my name is Lauren Bryant and I am the chair of HEOP's Performing and Creative Arts Programming. The purpose of this month's passive program is to educate HEOP members about the arts and its importance. Content will be sent via email!




**Heop Wellness Wednesday: Mental Health**

Hi, our names are Emely Arrigo and Nereida Alvarez. We are the co-chairs of HEOP's Wellness Wednesday Initiative. The purpose of this month's program is to inform our HEOP members on the importance of staying healthy. Please watch the YouTube videos and complete the survey. I look forward to seeing you all during next month's program!



**HEOP WORKS**



**HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM INFORMATION SESSION**

**DECEMBER 9TH**  
**1:00 - 2:00 PM**  
**VIA ZOOM**


**OPEN TO STUDENTS & GUIDANCE COUNSELORS**

CONTACT US VIA EMAIL AT HEOP@MMM.EDU FOR MORE INFORMATION

**HEOP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & STUDENT SUCCESS SERIES**

**VOLUME 1.**

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2020**  
**12:00 PM**

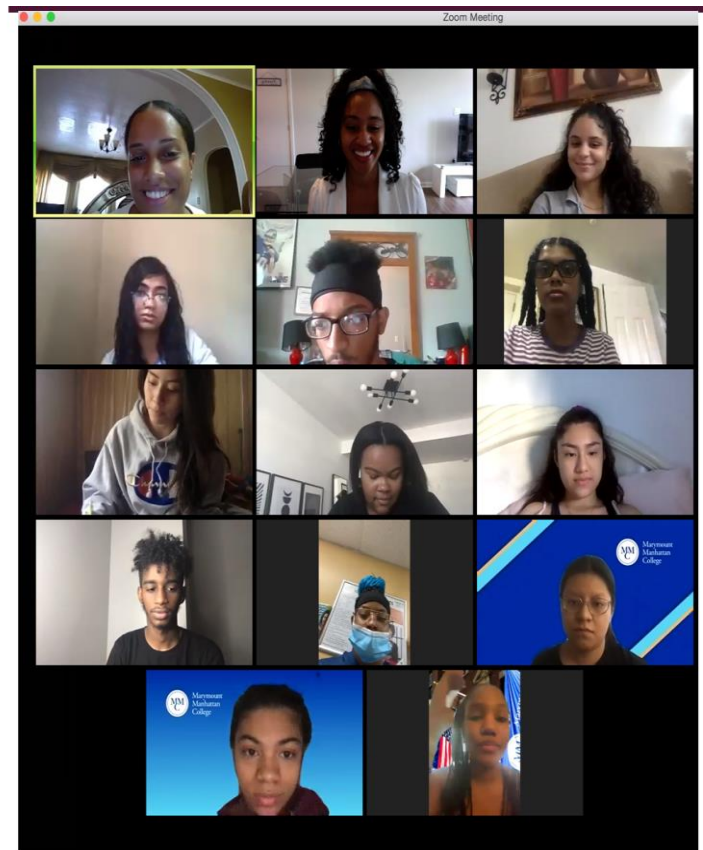


**HOSTED BY: CAREER SERVICES & HEOP STUDENT JANET CASTILLO**



# HEOP No Peer Left Behind Mentoring Program

The HEOP No Peer Left Behind Peer Mentoring (NPLB) Program was launched to provide an extra layer of support to the first-year HEOP students as they began their virtual collegiate journey. All FY students were paired with an upper-class student based on common majors and interests. Mentors meet with their mentees bi-weekly to provide guidance and support as needed. HEOP Counselor/Coordinator Stephanie Nunez serves as the primary advisor for the NPLB mentoring program.



## Fall 2020 Peer Mentors

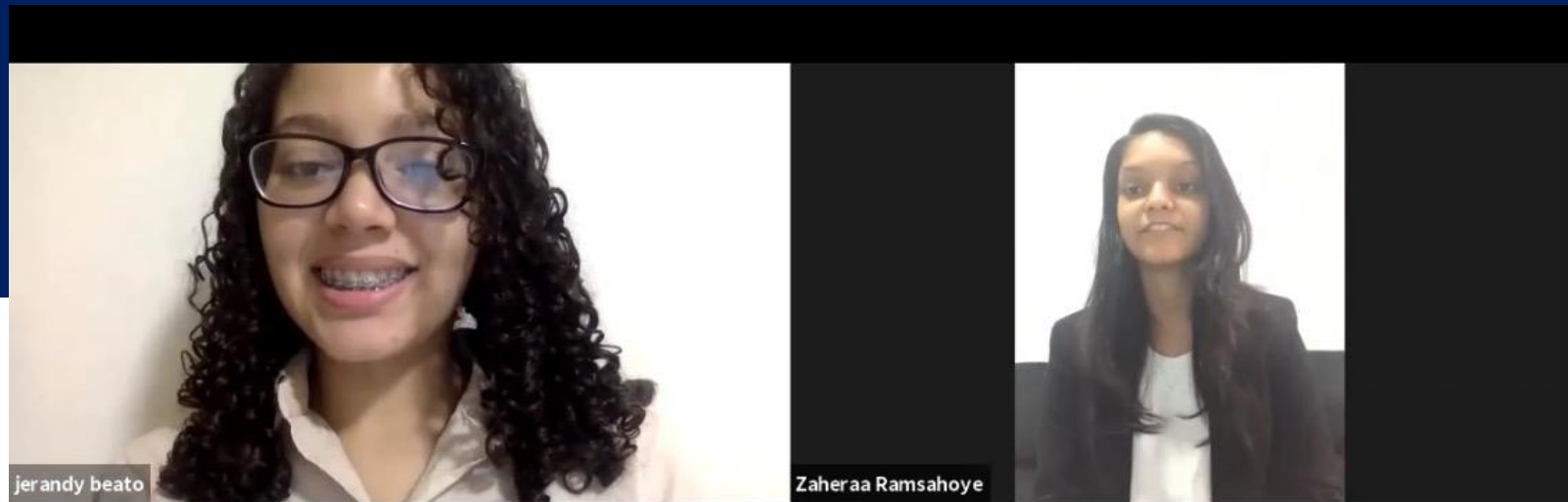
- Amy Fernandez Orellana '23
- Darlene Castillo '23
- Luznery Martinez '23
- Kayleen Cabrera '22
- Diana Camillo '22
- Jayzean Santillana '21
- Fahima Degia '21

"What I enjoy most about being a peer mentor is that it gives me the time to connect with my peers during a pandemic where there is a lack of social interaction. I also enjoy that being a mentor has allowed me to see my mentee's growth and just being a part of that is something to smile about." - Fahima D

"Even when we are put in difficult situations like right now with Covid-19 and online learning, HEOP does not let anything get in the way of seeing their students succeed! Instead, we persevere and make the most out of our situation." -Darlene C

# Homecoming

The HEOP Homecoming experience was celebrated virtually this year, but that didn't take away from the fun! HEOPs Homecoming Chairs, Jerandy Beato and Zaheraa Ramsahoye worked diligently to create a video for the MMC and HEOP Community, including students, parents and alumni. Jerandy and Zaheraa asked each HEOP cohort a question regarding their experiences as a HEOP student. Please visit the HEOP Instagram page at [HEOP\\_MMC](#) to view the video.



WHAT WAS A  
CHALLENGE THAT  
YOU FACED DURING  
YOUR FIRST YEAR  
OF COLLEGE?

HEOP 2020  
HOMECOMING VIDEO



## Young Men's Initiative

The Young Men's Initiative (YMI) was formed by former HEOP Counselor Keith Windsor to assist with recruitment for the Program. HEOP has since expanded the mission to include retention and graduation of the self-identified male population of HEOP. The YMI cohort meets on a regular basis to discuss various topics, which are led by [Stephanie Nunez](#), HEOP Counselor and Coordinator.

During the FA 20 semester, Stephanie and current YMI Manger/Intern- Ibrahim Bah, planned and hosted the 2nd annual High School to College Summit, which included partners from MMC, NYC College Based Organizations, and HEOP Alumni.

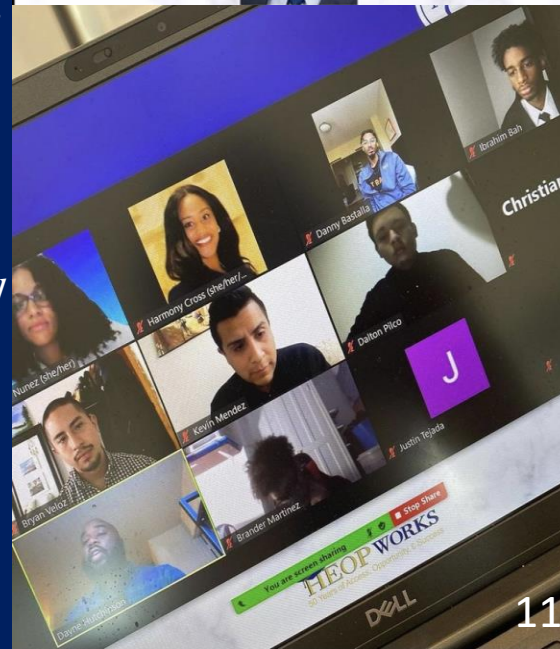
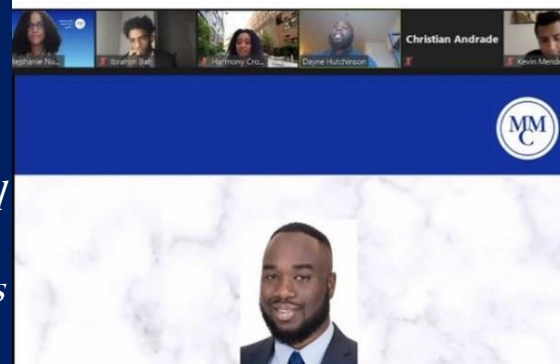
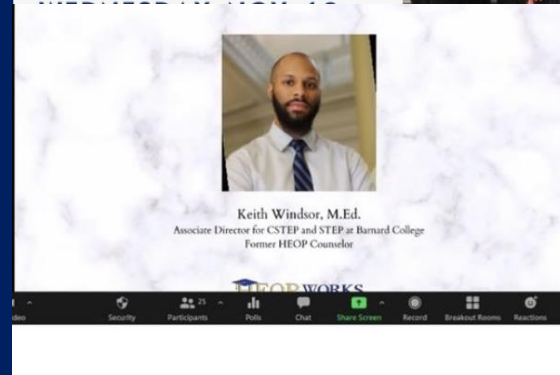
*“To me, YMI is a way of showing young men of color and others, that we can achieve more when we come together and support each other, especially in our educational and professional development.*

*It is a fact that young men of color are an endangered species within predominantly white colleges and universities. YMI is one way of helping to preserve and increase their presence in such institutions.*

*HEOP is a part of my DNA. Being a mentor and a role model for HEOP students comes naturally, and especially when it comes to supporting those who could have been my very own sons. I am a believer in the saying, "to whom much is given, much is expected." Being a mentor and a role model here is just my way of giving back”*

- Assistant Vice President/Dean of Academic Excellence and Senior Advisor to the President Michael Salmon

## Photos from the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual YMI Recruitment event



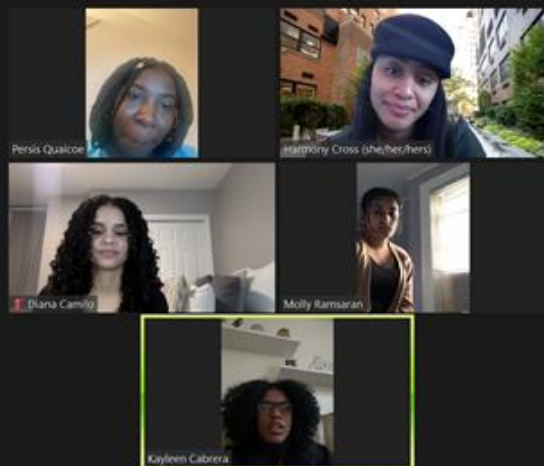


# Monthly Cohort Meetings

To provide support to HEOPs most vulnerable students during the transition to online learning in the SP 20 semester, the HEOP Director met with the first and second year student cohort once a week. In addition to meeting with students individually, HEOP has since expanded this practices during the FA 20 semester by meeting with each cohort, including the upper-class students on a monthly basis to discuss pertinent updates and to encourage community.



## Sophomore Success Group



## Junior Success Group



## Senior Success Group

# HEOP Student Involvement

 Congratulations to 



Amy Fernandez  
Orellana '23 :  
Research assistant with  
Dr. Lundquist Assistant  
Professor of Biology



Fahima Deiga '21:  
Communications  
Intern at NGO  
Scalabrini Immigration  
Migration Network



Marilyn Gonzalez '21:  
Assistant Director and  
Community Coordinator  
The Hunts Point Alliance for  
Children

- ★ Carmen Luna '24: Mentor at Free Arts NYC
- ★ Diana Camillo '22: Speech Pathology Club
- ★ Zaheraa Ramsahoye '23: MMC Admission team  
Tour Guide
- ★ Jerandy Beato '23: Speech Club Treasurer
- ★ Darlene Castillo '23: MMC's Media center  
Processor

# Our Fall 2020 Graduate: Congratulations to Carmen Luna



“As a first-generation college student, HEOP provided me with great guidance that allowed me to overcome many obstacles during my nine semesters at

Marymount. I continue to learn about myself and I am excited to see what’s in store for me. To the younger HEOP generation, appreciate where you are and how far you have come, you got this!”

HEOP Retention and  
Graduation rates

Retention: 86%  
Graduation: 92%

## Spring 2020 Dean List

### Congratulations to

- ★ Jerandy Beato
- ★ Zaheraa Ramsahoye
- ★ Ashley Alberto
- ★ Diana Camilo
- ★ Fahima Degia
- ★ Marilyn Gonzalez
- ★ Darlene Castillo
- ★ Amy Fernandez Orellana
- ★ Kayleen Cabrera
- ★ Persis Quaicoe
- ★ Yasmine Johnson
- ★ Stephanie Dugbartey
- ★ Luznery Martinez
- ★ Jennifer Hernandez
- ★ Rosaelena Torres
- ★ Jayzean Santillana
- ★ Evelyn Mares
- ★ Aolani Kendall



# In loving memory of Dean Eilene Keller Bertsch



We are incredibly sad to say farewell to Dean Eilene Bertsch!

Eilene Keller Bertsch was born in the December of 1937. She grew up during a segregated time in Parkchester Bronx. Eilene attended Marymount Manhattan and graduated in 1959, she studied sociology. She returned later returned to MMC to teach sociology, and then join the administration faculty

Dean Bertsch sat as one of the longest serving Chief Academic Officers at Marymount Manhattan College. Amongst all of Eilene's accomplishments, being the first to oversee HEOP at MMC during the program's inception in 1969, is our favorite and one that we will always be grateful for! Dean Bertsch wrote the first grant for MMCs HEOP and advocated for the sustainability of the program during her tenure at the College. Dean Bertsch was an advocate for social justice and worked tirelessly to fight for education equity.

Although Marymount's HEOP staff and students are saddened by this loss, we will continue to remember and continue Deans Bertsch's vision. Eilene is one of many leaders and change-agents who have paved the way for us, so we will continue to use our voices to advocate for our communities, while keeping Eilene's Bertsch's legacy alive.

On behalf of HEOP Alumni and students, we love you and you are forever in our hearts!

## Pictures of Eilene Bertsch at The HEOP 50TH ANNIVERSARY GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION



# LET'S ENGAGE

## The Higher Education Opportunity Program Parent and Alumni Reach Letter Volume. 1



Dear HEOP Alumni and Parents,

The HEOP Parent and Alumni Reach is an initiative aimed to increase collaboration and partnership between the current HEOP community members, our former MMC HEOP students, and the parents of HEOP!

As the Parent and Alumni Engagement Committee Managers, our immediate goals for the Spring 21 semester include:

- 1) reaching out to all HEOP Alumni in our database,**
- 2) hosting at least one virtual event and**
- 3) gathering on-going feedback that will assist us as we continue to develop the HEOP Parent and Alumni Reach initiative.**

Please visit the Alumni and Parent tab on the HEOP website where you will have the opportunity to let us know if you would like to be involved in future programming, update your contact information in the MMC Alumni database, and locate a copy of this bi-annual letter.

We look forward to connecting with all of you in the near future!

Sincerely,

Jerandy Beato '22 and Zaheraa Ramsahoye-Khan '23  
*HEOP Parent and Alumni Engagement Managers*



**STAY CONNECTED!**



**@HEOP\_MMC**



**HEOP@MMM.EDU**



# HEOP Professional Staff

Higher Education Opportunity Program  
(HEOP)

Nugent Hall 350  
(212) 517-0590  
heop@mmm.edu



Harmony Cross  
Director of HEOP  
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[hcross@mmm.edu](mailto:hcross@mmm.edu)



Stephanie Nunez  
HEOP Counselor/  
Coordinator  
(212)517-0591  
[snunez@mmm.edu](mailto:snunez@mmm.edu)

## HEOP Leadership Council Interns



Nereida Alvarez '24  
Wellness Wednesday Programming  
Manager



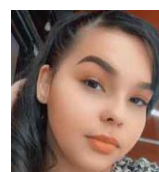
Ibrahim Bah '24  
Young Men's Initiative  
Manager



Anaya Bond '24  
Public Relations Manager and  
Chief Editor



Lauren Bryant '24  
Performing and Creative Arts  
Programming Manager



Luisana Montero Santos '24  
Recruitment Manager



Zaheraa Ramsahoye '23  
Alumni and Parent Engagement  
& Homecoming Manager



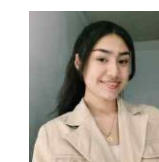
Janet Castillo '24  
Professional Development and  
Student Success Programming  
Manager



Stephanie Galvez '23  
HEOP Office Manager and FWS



Jerandy Beato '22  
Alumni and Parent Engagement  
& Homecoming Manager



Emely Abrigo Barrera '24  
Wellness Wednesday Programming  
Manager



Heilyn Perez '24  
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and  
Advocacy Programming  
Manager



HEOP thanks the entire  
MMC community for its  
support of the HEOP  
Works Newsletter !

Check out our social  
media platforms and  
website for updates !



heop\_mmc



Arthur O. Eve

HEOP Website



Marymount  
Manhattan  
College