OUR MISSION:

• Strengthen Diversity, Innovative Pedagogy, and Interdisciplinarity
• Support and Train the New Majority of Students
• Develop the Next Generation of College Professors and Leaders
• Facilitate Intellectual and Technological Networks Across CUNY
• Advocate for Higher Education as a Public Good
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Dear Colleagues,

As we head into our sixth year of the Futures Initiative, now is a great time to thank the wonderful students, faculty, and administrators we have been fortunate to work with. At a time when so many of our students feel the pressures of earning a degree at this difficult moment in the history of higher education and American society more generally, at a time when all of higher education is stressed almost to the breaking point (not only the crisis for adjuncts but the threats against higher education from every quarter), the Futures Initiative has been a place for gathering, for learning together, for contributing, for proposing and enacting innovations in higher education that always are founded in the mission of contributing to a more equitable society.

This 2018-2019 Annual Report is the ideal way to showcase what all of that looks like in actual practice. It is an honor and a pleasure to be part of this remarkable collective. I will not repeat here what you will find in this superb report—prepared by Futures Initiative Fellows Christina Katopodis and Jessica Murray, under the leadership (as ever) of Futures Initiative Co-Director Dr. Katina Rogers. I simply thank and acknowledge all who contributed, both to the report and to all the events, research, teaching, and collaborations that are the basis of the report.

I do, however, want to single out two remarkable events that happened this year among our Futures Initiative leaders. First, congratulations to FI Co-Director Dr. Katina Rogers who so ably leads everything at FI. We are very excited that, in the course of this banner year, Dr. Rogers has also completed an invaluable book manuscript, *Putting the Humanities PhD to Work: Theory, Practice, and Models for Thriving Beyond the Classroom*, that is now in production and will be published in Fall 2020 by Duke University Press. Join me in congratulating Dr. Rogers! Inspired by her research, the Futures Initiative will be hosting an international conference, “Graduate Education at Work in the World,” on April 30-May 1, 2020.

Similarly, congratulations go to Ms. Lauren Melendez, Director of the Undergraduate Leadership and Peer Mentoring Program, and Administrative Specialist for FI. While working full time at FI and giving up many a Friday night to lead the CUNY Peer Leaders and Mentors, Ms. Melendez earned her Master’s of Science in School Counseling degree from Hunter College. Ms. Melendez exemplifies the life of so many CUNY students, working full time while also furthering her education. She is an inspiration to all.
I would also like to thank the administrators who have supported our work throughout CUNY and the Graduate Center and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their generosity. We thank Interim Chancellor Vita Rabinowitz and Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York and CUNY’s Promise and Perils of Democracy Program, for their support of the Undergraduate Leadership and Democracy Program.

Finally, we thank the citizens of New York for their support of public higher education and CUNY, one of the most important engines for social mobility in the nation and the single greatest economic engine in our city.

This Annual Report summarizes our year. It is also a call to all of us, together, to strive higher and with renewed purpose and commitment to the goals of equity and innovation in these turbulent times.

With appreciation and admiration,

Cathy N. Davidson  
Founding Director, The Futures Initiative  
Distinguished Professor of English and the MA in Digital Humanities and MS in Data Analysis and Visualization  
The Graduate Center, CUNY  
Co-Founder and Co-Director, HASTAC
The task of compiling our program’s work and accomplishments each year is at once daunting, humbling, and deeply gratifying. The creation of this report was a deeply collaborative effort; each fellow contributed a summary for their primary areas of work as well as a listing of their personal and professional accomplishments for the year. In addition to the collaborative writing, I would like to acknowledge the members of our team who took on special responsibilities related to the report and the programming that it describes:

**Jessica Murray**, Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD Candidate in Psychology, created the beautiful design. In addition to her graphic design and web development work, Murray also spearheaded a major redesign of the Futures Initiative website this year, working in close collaboration with Siqi Tu with consultation from Gustavo Jiménez. Spring 2019 marked the conclusion of Murray’s 3-year fellowship with the Futures Initiative, and while we are very sad to see her go, we all wait with great anticipation to see where her research and career take her in the future. As Murray works to complete her dissertation in mobility, disability, and psychology, her research is already being put to use through her role on the MTA’s mobility advisory board.

**Christina Katopodis**, Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD Candidate in English, served as content editor for the report, collating and streamlining contributions from many sources in the layout process and ensuring that every piece worked well as part of a cohesive whole. Katopodis works with Founding Director Cathy N. Davidson, offering research and pedagogical support. She led numerous events throughout the year and is one of the team’s experts in collaborative and student-centered teaching, and is co-authoring a textbook on the topic.

**Siqi Tu** and **Gustavo Jiménez** collaborated with Jessica Murray on the website redesign, taking into account the experiences of current and past fellows and other participants in considering how to make the website as clear and compelling as possible. In addition to the redesign, Tu worked with Murray throughout the year to keep the website working smoothly, while also developing her expertise in student-centered teaching methods. In his work as Communications Director, Jiménez has begun developing a comprehensive brand identity for the program, again based on the needs and perceptions of a range of FI audiences. That work has informed the style and creation of this report.
Beyond the report itself, we would like to express our appreciation to all who contributed to the program this year. We would like to thank the **FI Faculty Fellows, their graduate students, and the FI Graduate Fellows** for all of their hard work in FI’s team-taught courses this year, including their contributions to our fall and spring symposia. You will see all of them mentioned by name, their contributions and accomplishments identified in the pages to follow.

A highlight of our work this year was the HASTAC international conference, “Decolonizing Technologies, Reprogramming Education,” in the traditional, ancestral, and unceded land of the Musqueam people and hosted by the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC. We are thankful to Jentery Sayers, David Gaertner, and everyone on the programming committee for making the conference possible. Our biweekly phone calls made clear the depth of planning and care that went into the conference. From our local team, **Kashema Hutchinson** and **Lauren Melendez**, codirectors of the Leadership and Peer Mentoring Program, continued their exceptional leadership by developing a superb panel that included three of our undergraduate Leadership Fellows. FI Fellow and HASTAC Scholars Director **Adashima Oyo** brought together graduate and undergraduate students from all over the US and Canada for a face-to-face meeting that was truly historic and the culmination of a banner year at HASTAC.

Part of the international outreach of the Futures Initiative is co-leading and administering the HASTAC network. This year we successfully transitioned from our partnership with Arizona State University to a new partnership with Dartmouth College. We thank Jacqueline Wernimont, Elizabeth Grumbach, and Darmin Doliya for their hard work in ensuring a seamless transition. Wernimont will continue as codirector at Dartmouth, and we also thank our new partners at that institution, especially Brinker Ferguson, for their expertise and leadership.

In addition, this year’s Humanities Alliance conference, led by Director of Programs and Administration **Kaysi Holman**, brought together community college students, graduate students, faculty, and administrators from across the country; we are grateful for the time and expertise of so many brilliant and engaged participants. Postdoctoral Fellow **Sujung Kim** conducted thoughtful interviews and observations of the Humanities Alliance program, building a meaningful program evaluation that will shape the year ahead. We also thank the undergraduate CUNY Peer Leaders and the LaGuardia Community College Humanities Scholars for their participation throughout the year.

And of course, our team thanks our Founding Director, **Cathy N. Davidson**, for her leadership and guidance in all. I echo her thanks to the many administrators who have supported our work throughout CUNY and the Graduate Center, as well as the people of New York City who make CUNY the incredible institution that it is. It is a joy and an honor to do this work.

With appreciation,
Katina Rogers
Co-Director, The Futures Initiative
The Futures Initiative is a unique program at the Graduate Center (GC) that advances equity and innovation in research, teaching, and public service in higher education and makes overt the profound connections between the Graduate Center and the CUNY campuses—and beyond.

In its fifth year, the Futures Initiative sponsored an array of programs, beginning with several team-taught, interdisciplinary courses. Taught by Graduate Center faculty in partnership with CUNY faculty, these courses were designed to foster goals of diversity, active pedagogy, and public engagement. A series of public programs, “The University Worth Fighting For,” addressed urgent issues in higher education—both the need for public support of higher education and, within higher education, the need to redesign a more relevant, student- and public-serving, sustaining, and engaged form of higher education.

Futures Initiative graduate fellows designed and implemented the events and used a variety of open-source and low-cost tools to extend their reach beyond those able to participate in person. Fellows, for example, webcast and live-tweeted most of our events, made their slides publicly available, and also published event recaps so that others can continue to learn from the discussions. A leadership and peer mentoring program, supported this year by the Graduate Center and CUNY Central Office, trained advanced undergraduates to serve as mentors guiding others through the challenges of life and work.

The CUNY Humanities Alliance, a partnership between Graduate Center programs—including the Futures Initiative—and LaGuardia Community College, focused on training graduate students who are interested in community college teaching careers, thanks to support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This year, the Humanities Alliance organized a conference to bring together faculty, students, and administrators from institutions across the country to discuss the value of the humanities in a community college and graduate education context.

Finally, the Futures Initiative continues to co-direct the Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (hastac.org), the world’s first and oldest academic social network. This year, we transitioned to a new national collabora-

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Read recaps of events: futuresinitiative.org/event-recaps
tive partner, moving part of HASTAC from Arizona State University to Dartmouth College. This year’s international HASTAC conference took place at the University of British Columbia, on traditional, ancestral, and unceded Musqueam lands, with the theme “Decolonizing Technologies, Reprogramming Education.” The conference centered the voices of Indigenous scholars, performers, and students.

Together, all of these Futures Initiative programs, course offerings, projects, technologies, and networks advance the twin goals of “equity and innovation” in higher education, enabling us to design more equitable futures for all.
Following a competitive, CUNY-wide application process, five to seven courses are selected annually for support from the Futures Initiative, with faculty teaching these courses designated as Faculty Fellows. These courses are designed to exemplify equity and innovation. They promote the Futures Initiative goals of increasing faculty diversity. They emphasize innovative, student-centered pedagogy in their methods and interdisciplinarity as a form of knowledge. The co-teaching structure creates collaborations across the CUNY campuses and works toward a larger goal of public engagement. Futures Initiative courses are structured to support the connections between the three pillars of higher education: research, teaching, and service to society.

The 2018-2019 faculty and graduate students came together at the end of each semester for a participatory symposium that showcased the methods and content of each course. The fall symposium was called “Who Is Included? Restructuring Our Work and Our World,” while the spring event title was “Race and Its Futures: Teach, Research, Imagine.” Details from these compelling events are shared later in the report.

Team-Taught Interdisciplinary Graduate Courses

FALL 2018

Disability, Culture, and Society

Co-Taught by Professors Joseph Straus (The Graduate Center, Music) and Julia Miele Rodas (Bronx Community College, English/Disability Studies)

Like the fictions of gender and race, disability is a cultural and social formation that sorts bodies and minds into desirable (normal) and undesirable (abnormal, sick) categories. Drawing on examples from the arts and popular culture, this course interrogates the many ways disability identity has been confined to rigid and unproductive social, political, and aesthetic categories. It also explores a significant counter-tradition in which disability is seen as a significant artistic resource and a desirable way of being in the world. Topics include: the medical and social models of disability; narratives of disability; disability and performance; disability writing (memoir and fiction); narratives of overcoming; the histories and cultures of autism, deafness, blindness, intellectual disability, and madness. The course pays particular attention to the intersection of disability with other more familiar tropes of human disqualification, including race, gender, and sexuality. The course is complemented by a public lecture series.

To learn more, visit the public course website: futuresinitiative.org/disabilityculturesociety/
Environmental Psychology of Care

Co-Taught by Professors **David Chapin** (The Graduate Center, Environmental Psychology) and **Tomoaki Imamichi** (LaGuardia Community College, Social Sciences)

This course takes an interdisciplinary approach in exploring the relationship between care and the physical environment—how care (and the absence of it) is reflected in the physical environment and the physical environment can support care. Taking advantage of the diverse settings and opportunities of New York City, this course includes field trips (such as Roosevelt Island, a Japanese Tea Room, and a guerrilla garden), phenomenological experiments (e.g. traveling with a stroller or suitcase through different environments), and guest speakers. The course focuses on concepts of power and how they are actualized in issues such as racism, class distinctions and the like; techniques of exclusion, exploitation, deflection and distraction. Who benefits? Through readings, visual examples, and discussions, we explore and analyze how the built environment enables and disables people, and what caring environments entail. Some focus is on institutional settings, but we also look carefully at everyday environments—environments designed for diversity and inclusion which allow people with diverse abilities, different cultural backgrounds and possible conflicting needs to feel welcome and participate in society.


Taught by Professor **Ann Kirschner** (The Graduate Center), together with multiple guest lecturers

As we think about the range of possibilities surrounding new technologies — from the utopian to the dystopian — what are the policies, technologies, and social systems that should be anticipated today to ensure positive outcomes for the future? The course examines the historical role of work, the outcomes of previous technological shifts, and the ethical dimensions that should inform our planning for the future. The focus is not only on technology but on drivers for change, the context in which they are taking place, from changing demographics to globalization to climate change. The course assumes that technology is not created in a vacuum, that the future is a page not yet written, and that we have a window of time in which business, government, and the individual can proactively adapt and shape a better future. The course includes a public speaker series to discuss technologies, trends, and policies that shape the future of the work.

To learn more, visit the public course website: futuresinitiative.org/futureofwork

**SPRING 2019**

Afrofuturism—Race and Science Fiction

Co-Taught by Professors **Jonathan Gray** (The Graduate Center and John Jay College, English) and **Joy Sanchez-Taylor** (LaGuardia Community College, English)

In 1994 Mark Dery defined Afrofuturism as “speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the contexts of twentieth-century technoculture,” locating its origins in the early work of Samuel Delany (and O. Butler? and Sun Ra?). This seminar takes Dery’s definition as a point of departure to examine the fiction, films, graphic narratives and music videos produced in the sub-genre of Afrofuturism. The course problematizes our understandings of speculative fiction, question how the imbrication of technology into our lives transforms human subjectivity, and survey literary theory to arrive at an understanding of how Afrofuturism has developed since the mid-20th century and how it promises to propagate itself into the future.
Critical Race Scholarship: Theories and Pedagogies

Co-Taught by Professors Michelle Billies (The Graduate Center and Kingsborough Community College, Psychology) and Soniya Munshi (Borough of Manhattan Community College, Social Sciences, Human Services, and Criminal Justice)

The course addresses an ongoing need among students at the GC for a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to critical race theory. GC students seeking such analyses are often students of color coming from, and teaching in, communities deeply and historically impacted by systemic racism. In this interdisciplinary course, graduate students engage with critical race scholarship to build from and integrate this scholarship into their own research and pedagogy. This graduate course is a means of proliferating knowledge and critiques of race in and out of the academy while developing strategies for furthering this work in the undergraduate classroom.

To learn more, visit the public course website: futuresinitiative.org/criticalracescholarship

Mediating Race: Technology, Performance, Politics, and Aesthetics in Popular Culture

Co-Taught by Professors Cathy N. Davidson (The Graduate Center, English and the Futures Initiative) and Racquel Gates (College of Staten Island, Media Culture)

What does it mean to be “cool,” to be “fierce,” or to “slay”? This course focuses on technologies, techniques, performance, and style (including fashion) as components contributing to our ideas, representations, conventions, and stereotypes of race. More specifically, this course asks how cinematic and media aesthetics have contributed to how we identify and “read” blackness in popular media. Rather than treat film, television, and new media as straightforward reflections of social realities, this course analyzes how the media established, and continues to shape, our understandings of what blackness “looks” like. It asks how popular culture has created the aesthetic vocabulary for how media consumers “read” blackness in all of its various incarnations.

To learn more, visit the public course website: hastac.org/groups/mediating-race-technology-performance-politics-and-aesthetics-popular-culture

FALL 2019

Climate Change and Discursive Frames: From Scientific Discourse to the Public Sphere

Co-Taught by Professors José del Valle (The Graduate Center, LAILAC) and David Lindo Atichati (College of Staten Island and The Graduate Center; Engineering and EES)

This course examines how scientific literature on climate change is discursively framed, how it becomes reframed as it travels to the social spaces where public opinion is negotiated, and how those linguistic and textual strategies shape and are shaped by the political economy of climate debates, that is, by the specific
Interdisciplinary Topics in Law: Mothers in Law

Co-Taught by Professors Julie Suk (The Graduate Center, Dean of Master’s Programs, Professor of Sociology, Political Science, MALS) and Sara McDougall (John Jay College, Global History; The Graduate Center, French and History)

This course introduces students to central issues in the history and sociology of law through the study of motherhood. The lens of motherhood will open up broader themes in the study of law and society, including categories such as gender, constitutionalism, and criminal justice. Studying the socio-legal history of motherhood enables students to learn the skills of legal reasoning, utilize methods of legal-historical research, and pursue experiential learning through field studies, panel discussions open to the public, and the authoring of publicly available teaching materials on select topics. First, we explore how ideas of women as mothers have been enshrined in law, from the legal definition of the mother in civil law, to the legal treatment of pregnancy. Second, this course studies women as lawmakers, as “founding mothers” of twentieth-century constitutions, and laws more generally. We explore biographies of women lawyers and lawmakers. Third, we consider mothers as law-breakers, by engaging the history of mothers in prison, and the current legal issues arising from incarceration of mothers. This component of the course may include field trips to engage the criminal justice system.

Transformations of Modernity, 1914-Present

Co-Taught by Professors Karen Miller (The Graduate Center and LaGuardia CC, MALS and History) and Andrea Morrell (Guttman Community College)

This class puts colonial relations of power at the center of our study, exploring how claims about modernity have been used to both amplify and challenge inequalities on both intimate and global scales. It interrogates the widely held assumption that “modernity” is linked to liberty, freedom, and state-protected equality. Instead, it examines the multiple, contested, and conflicting meanings that people have used to understand the concept of modernity from the early 20th century into the present. How, we ask, have various people used the moniker “modern” and to what end? How have modernity’s opposites – primitivity / backwardness / tradition – also been used to characterize spaces, people, institutions, states, “cultures,” geogra-
Voices of the City: Accessibility, Reciprocity, and Self-Representation in Place-Based Community Research

Co-Taught by Professors Tarry Hum (Queens College and The Graduate Center, Environmental Psychology) and Prithi Kanakamedala (Bronx Community College, History)

Scholars active in place-based or participatory action research are committed to documenting community narratives and neighborhoods. It is central to our work, rooted in social justice, that these communities are not just represented, but that they have equitable stake in the project. Yet practitioners across the city struggle with core issues of accessibility, reciprocity, self-representation, and equity within the communities they work with. Who do place-based researchers represent, and does our work empower communities to tell their own stories? What histories do we contest and perpetuate with this work? And, who gets to participate? This interdisciplinary course combines best or effective practices in Public History, Oral History, and Urban Planning to consider a number of projects in New York City that seek to document communities and narratives about the city that are not traditionally represented.

SPRING 2020

Introduction to Engaged Teaching for Transformative Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Co-Taught by Professors Cathy N. Davidson (The Graduate Center, English and the Futures Initiative) and Eduardo Vianna (LaGuardia CC, Social Sciences, and The Graduate Center, Psychology)

What does it mean to “introduce” a student to a field? This course is intended for any graduate student in the humanities or social sciences who is thinking seriously about the deepest “why” and “how” questions about their discipline and how those apply to their own research and teaching. We begin with theoretical questions about disciplines, fields, foundations, pedagogy, research, aesthetics, and institutional structures alongside issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, social justice, engagement, and transformation. In each class and in final projects, we encourage students to transform critique into engaged practice. Students work collaboratively on analyzing and then designing: (1) a standard anthology or textbook in their field; (2) key articles or critical texts in their field; (3) standard syllabi of introductory or “core” courses in their field; (4) keywords in their field. Students leave the course with a deeper understanding of the assumptions of their field and new methods for transformative learning that support diversity, inclusion, and a more equitable form of higher education. Our aim is to work toward “research with a transformative activist agenda” and teaching and mentoring as a “collaborative learning community project” that, in the end, contributes to education as a public good and a more just and eq-
suitable society. Selected readings from: Lev Vygotsky, Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Frantz Fanon, Audre Lorde, Anna Stetsenko, Michelle Fine, Ira Shor, Stuart Hall, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, José Munoz, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, Peter Galison, Sara Ahmed, Alfie Kohn, Christopher Newfield, John Warner, Kandice Chuh, Roderick Ferguson, Kurt Lewin, Lisa Lowe, Tressie McMillan Cottom, Sara Goldrick-Rab, Michael Fabricant, Stephen Brier, Cathy Davidson, Eduardo Vianna, as well as authors included in the crowdsourced “Progressive Pedagogy” bibliography being developed on HASTAC.org.

Psychological Dis-ease Swelling in Contentious Times: Contributors, Sustainers, and Resisters

Co-Taught by Professors Michelle Fine (The Graduate Center, Psychology, Urban Education, MALS, Women’s and Gender Studies) and Desiree Byrd (Queens College, Psychology)

The lived experience of mental health in the US, and in NYC in particular, reveals systemic inequities that result in disparate levels of navigational burden for cultural minorities and other marginalized citizens living with mental illness. This introductory graduate course shifts the framework of pathological analysis from age old psychological theories to applied socio-political realities that critically interrogate literatures on anxiety, paranoia, immigration, trauma, crime, violence and mental health and deconstructs how psychopathology varies by race/ethnicity, immigration status, income level, religion, sexuality and gender. As this course traverses through mood, anxiety and thought disorders, students read, critique and create interdisciplinary “documents” and performances at the intersection of research, law, policy and analysis to connect individual level “mental health” concerns with the sociopolitical realities of modern day NYC. Working in interdisciplinary groups, students select an “angle” for critical analysis, blending scholarly reviews, popular media and participant observation/interviews with respect to a range of issues, including the racialized criminalization of mental health and police violence against women of color suffering from mental illness. This course also involves lectures from/visits with activists as well as organizers involved with interpersonal violence, mass incarceration, addiction communities, immigration justice groups, and community leaders who have cultivated unique interventions at the grass roots level to counter the impact of mental health disparities within varied neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs. Our analysis moves between pain and resistance; individual and structural enactments of dis-ease; prevention; and healing.
The Futures Initiative strives to make greater connection between the Graduate Center and the other CUNY campuses and to recognize the distinctive character of CUNY’s undergraduate students. Most graduate students at the Graduate Center teach courses at one of the CUNY campuses. The program aims to translate the specialized research of our graduate faculty and graduate students into exceptional teaching in undergraduate classrooms.

CUNY Humanities Alliance: Humanities Teaching and Learning

(Supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation)

Co-Directors: Cathy N. Davidson (The Graduate Center) Bret Eynon (LaGuardia Community College) David Olan (The Graduate Center)

The Futures Initiative serves as a partner in the CUNY Humanities Alliance, a program supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The program has a dual goal: to prepare graduate students to teach student-centered humanities courses in community colleges and to broaden and strengthen interest in the humanities among community college students. Through the program, Futures Initiative works with Teaching and Learning Centers, faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate student at The Graduate Center and LaGuardia Community College.

The 2018-2019 academic year was the third of this four-year program. Each year, the program welcomes a new cohort of graduate teaching fellows who work with faculty mentors at LaGuardia Community College and participate in professional development workshops in the fall, before teaching their own courses in the Spring. Meanwhile, the second cohort of teaching fellows completed their second year in the program, teaching independently at LaGuardia Community College in both semesters while serving as peer mentors for the third cohort of fellows. Developing, implementing and iterating innovative, student-driven, engaged, critical pedagogy is a crucial part of graduate fellows’ experience. LaGuardia’s students are particularly diverse, representing over 100 native languages, and yet some seventy percent of the students, a majority of whom are first-generation college students, have family incomes below $25,000 a year. Translating specialized graduate research into general course requirements, and engaging community college students who are fighting for their education against enormous challenges and obstacles is at the heart of this program.

Each year, the program also works to expand access to and opportunities in the humanities for LaGuardia students through the LaGuardia Mellon Humanities Scholars extracurricular program. Through the program, scholars gain further opportunities to engage in the humanities in biweekly meetings and cultural enrichment activities, receive additional mentorship from faculty and graduate students, and are encouraged and assisted in transferring to four-year colleges and ultimately graduate school. Scholars design and

Visit the online community: cunyhumanitiesalliance.org
create a year-long project that is meaningful to them as individuals, and to the community at large. They refine and change their project with the feedback of their peers and faculty mentors throughout the year, and then the program culminates each year in a public showcase, designed and created by the students, that highlights their work and allows the community to experience and interact with their work. To see this year’s work, please visit: http://cunyhumanitiesalliance.org/2018-2019-showcase.

This year, on October 18-19, 2018, the CUNY Humanities Alliance hosted a special, national, two-day conference: “Community College and the Futures of the Humanities.” Taking place at both the Graduate Center and LaGuardia Community College, the conference was deeply collaborative and participatory, with small working sessions designed to help participants develop concrete takeaways that are useful in their home institutions—whether at CUNY or at other colleges around the country, in urban or rural settings. With a deep focus on equity and diversity, the conference explored how the humanities are taught in community colleges and how the humanities affect the daily lives and career choices of the “new majority” students enrolled in community colleges.

The conference offered a unique opportunity to assess nationwide opinions about community college teaching and humanities education. To learn more about participants’ views, postdoctoral fellow Sujung Kim developed an online survey for conference attendees. Her analysis suggests that some of the most significant themes among conference attendees were (1) the significance of humanities and humanistic social sciences at community colleges; (2) collaborations among institutions, and students and institutional personnel including community college and doctoral students, faculty and administrators/staff; and (4) the conference as an arena of critical pedagogy.

CUNY Humanities Alliance
Program Staff

Kaysi L. Holman, JD, is the Director of Programs and Administration of the CUNY Humanities Alliance. With the CUNY Humanities Alliance, Holman developed and launched an online communications and publication platform, supervised three cohorts of graduate teaching fellows, and co-facilitated the LaGuardia Mellon Humanities Scholars program for LaGuardia students interested in pursuing Humanities scholarship and careers (culminating in year-end undergraduate Showcases each year). Before coming to the CUNY Humanities Alliance, Holman directed programming and administration for HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) and the PhD Lab in Digital Knowledge in the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University. She has spent nearly 20 years working with nonprofits and educational organizations dedicated to equity and social justice, both within higher education and achieved through access to higher education.

Luis Henao Uribe, PhD, is the Mellon Humanities Scholar for the CUNY Humanities Alliance (2018-2020) and the Assistant Director of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) at the Graduate Center. In this role, he provides support for the teaching fellows and helps pivot the lessons of the Humanities

Visit the conference website: http://cunyhumanitiesalliance.org/conference/
Alliance to broader audiences through a variety of programs and projects at the TLC. He is a graduate of the PhD program in Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Cultures at The Graduate Center, CUNY. His recent research explores the role of novels in the establishment of national imaginaries and the legitimization of the State in Mexico and Colombia. He also writes about how Latin American cultural objects circulate in the United States. He has been teaching both language and literature courses at CUNY since 2009, most recently at LaGuardia Community College as a Humanities Alliance Fellow.

_Suyung Kim, PhD_, is the Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow for the CUNY Humanities Alliance (2018-2020), and is based in the Futures Initiative at the Graduate Center. In this role, she designs and conducts qualitative research to understand the communities served by the Humanities Alliance and contributes these insights and strategic thinking to program development. Dr. Kim is an interdisciplinary scholar whose research addresses the critical pedagogy of higher education and community colleges for the public good and educating students as critical public intellectuals. Her research and teaching interests are located at the intersection of class, race, citizenship, power, and subjectivity, and how these intersecting conditions affect vulnerable college students’ sense of institutional and social belonging. Dr. Kim earned her PhD from the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

### Research by Postdoctoral Fellow Sujung Kim

As Futures Initiative and Humanities Alliance postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Sujung Kim is continuing the excellent work of her predecessor, Dr. Kitana Ananda. From now through the conclusion of the Humanities Alliance grant in Spring 2020, Dr. Kim will manage and design the program’s research and evaluation work as lead researcher. In her first year, she has conducted interviews with the program’s Graduate Teaching Fellows, faculty mentors, and undergraduate participants in the LaGuardia Mellon Humanities Scholars program. In addition, as part of her ethnographic research, Dr. Kim observed the LaGuardia faculty mentors’ classes and the classes of every member of the 2017 and 2018 doctoral fellows’ cohorts. She also observed extracurricular activities of four doctoral fellows’ classes. In addition to these classes and extracurricular activities, Dr. Kim attended and observed most of the professional development sessions and other meetings for faculty mentors, doctoral fellows, LaGuardia Humanities Scholars, and Futures Initiative Undergraduate Leadership Fellows, as well as numerous public events.

One key finding from Dr. Kim’s fieldwork was that the Humanities Alliance program had a significant impact on participating doctoral fellows and faculty mentors. Both the doctoral fellows and faculty mentors stressed the significance of opportunities to explore, employ, and continuously revise and advance student-centered critical pedagogy through collaboration with each other as well as through professional developments regardless of whether or not they had experience to teach in community colleges. Furthermore, the doctoral fellows pointed out that the fellowship provides a more concrete understanding of community college students and class environments. LaGuardia Community College students, who were in the doctoral fellows’ classes, and/or were LaGuardia Humanities Scholars, pointed out the significance of recognizing themselves as partners in classes where their diverse working and other living experiences as well as ideas were valued and connected to their class topics and activities.

Following the Fall 2018 Humanities Alliance conference, Dr. Kim conducted a post-conference survey with the participants to examine the significance of developing deeper humanities engagement in community colleges, promising teaching and administrative
practices, ways to empower students and faculty, the important takeaways from the conference, and suggestions for topics for future conferences. Her report was circulated to conference attendees and published on the Futures Initiative and Humanities Alliance websites.

Dr. Kim discovered that conference participants found humanities teaching in a community college context to be essential for cultivating informed, critical, active citizenship and bringing about social change. Participants described the most important components as (a) student-centered pedagogy, which also emphasizes democratic relationships between students and instructors; (b) interactive multidisciplinary dialogue and research; (c) the awareness of white colonialist narratives in the default curriculum and teaching style; and (d) revision of the dominant narrative of community colleges as vocational schools, which situates community college students mainly as a source of labor.

Participants suggested giving faculty members and administrators more agency and autonomy, establishing mentor/mentee programs between senior and junior faculty members, and providing time and opportunities to reflect upon and experiment with new pedagogical approaches.

To share her findings about the Humanities Alliance Program, Dr. Kim presented a paper related to the results of the post-conference survey of the Humanities Alliance at the Comparative International Education Society in April, 2019. In addition, she served as lead organizer for two collaborative projects: (a) a symposium proposal for the 2019 Association of Studies of Higher Education conference; and (b) an edited book project, which focuses on critical pedagogy of humanities within the community college setting (in process). Both projects include Humanities Alliance fellows, faculty, students, and staff as collaborators. Dr. Kim also led a workshop session entitled Cultures and Languages in the Classroom, and served as one of the liaisons for one of the co-teaching courses and one of the coordinators for the Futures Initiative Fall 2018 symposium.

**Key Accomplishments:**


Kim, S. (2019, April). “The critical pedagogy of human-
ities and the empowerment of students and instructors in community college settings in the US.” Paper presented at the meeting of the Comparative International Education Society, San Francisco, CA.


The Futures Initiative, University Worth Fighting For, “Cultures & Languages in the Classroom,” March 7, 2019, The Graduate Center, CUNY. Kim presented the relationships between linguistic stigmatization and Korean international and 1.5 generation of Korean American students’ locations on a community college campus.

Mara Valderrama, Theatre and Performance

Graduate Teaching Fellows, Second Cohort, 2017-2019

Jonathan Kwan, Philosophy
Khadeidra Monét Martin, Urban Education
Chaya R. Nove, Linguistics
Hansol Oh, Theatre
Micheal Angelo Rumore, English
Jacob Sachs-Mishalanie, Music
Patryk Tomaszewski, Art History
Inés Vañó García, Latin American, Iberian and Latino Cultures
Alison Walls, Theatre

Past and Current Humanities Alliance Fellows

Graduate Teaching Fellows, Third Cohort, 2018-2020

Tanzeem Ajmiri, Critical Social/Personality Psychology
Francine Almash, Urban Education
Arita Balaram, Critical Social Psychology
Davide Giuseppe Colasanto, Modern European History
Jadelle McPherson, Anthropology
Mike Rifino, Developmental Psychology
Oliver Sage, French
Lynne Turner, Sociology

Graduate Teaching Fellows, Inaugural Cohort, 2016-2018

Emily Brooks, History
Deshonay Dozier, Environmental Psychology
Cory Greene, Critical Psychology (Fall 2016)
Luis Henao Uribe, Latin American, Iberian and Latino Cultures
Anton Kociolek, Cultural Anthropology (2016-2017)
Makeba Lavan, English (2016-2017)
José Alfredo Menjívar, Urban Education (2016-2017)
Jennifer Polish, English
Rojo Robles Mejías, Latin American, Iberian and Latino Cultures
Undergraduate Leadership, Peer Mentoring, and Student Success: Liberal Arts for the New Majority

The Futures Initiative directs the Undergraduate Leadership Program, funded by the CUNY Graduate Center and CUNY Central, in which exemplary undergraduates nominated by graduate students and faculty in Futures Initiative courses learn mentoring, leadership, professional skills and how to be leaders within their colleges and within their communities. The program, directed by Lauren Melendez, Director of the Undergraduate Leadership Program, and Co-Director Kashema Hutchinson, PhD Candidate in Urban Education, believes that great leadership means representing and responding to one’s peers in a way that supports everyone’s success.

This year the program welcomed thirty Undergraduate Leadership Fellows across twelve different CUNY campuses to learn leadership and mentoring skills and to participate in Futures Initiative programs, such as the University Worth Fighting For series. Participants build meaningful relationships with graduate students and faculty members at the Graduate Center, and participate in high-level programming on key issues in higher education. Following a day-long Leadership Institute in August 2018, undergraduate Leadership Fellows from twelve CUNY campuses worked with their peers to learn about leadership and student-centered learning practices. The goal of the Leadership Institute was for the fellows to learn and develop leadership skills for their personal and professional lives. Activities focused on the fellows building rapport with one another, reflecting on challenges, and successes fellows had experienced as students, learning about writing on a public academic space online and working together to locate and share campus-based resources that could help aid others on their academic journeys at their campuses.

Throughout the year, program directors facilitated meet-ups housed at the Graduate Center where leadership fellows collaboratively reflected on their semester and discussed ways in which they could build and strengthen their leadership skills during their participation in the program and at their respective colleges. These meetings also serve as a safe space and offer a time for students to share personal occurrences that have and are taking place in their lives. These meet-ups give the students a chance to have therapeutic and community-building opportunities with their fellow peers. Leadership Fellows also publish on a dedicated website (http://futuresinitiative.org/mentors) where they share resources and respond to blog prompts on topics including race, and racism, pop culture, social and political issues, education, challenges college students encounter, career readiness and more. Selected posts are featured in the Futures Initiative’s monthly newsletter.

In addition, the leadership fellows had joint meet-ups with the LaGuardia Mellon Humanities Scholars (part of the CUNY Humanities Alliance) to engage
in student-centered activities, career readiness and enrichment outings. One of the highlighted enrichment outings both the leadership fellows and the humanities scholars were able to attend together was to a Broadway musical, Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations. The Leadership Fellows and scholars were extremely excited to go on this enrichment outing since many had never been to a Broadway show before and felt fortunate for the opportunity because of the high cost of tickets.

Key Events

Leadership fellows had numerous opportunities to participate in Futures Initiative events, such as Hip-Hop Pedagogy, which featured the Directors of the Undergraduate Leadership Program Lauren Melendez, Kashema Hutchinson and Leadership Fellows, Steven Pacheco, Kia Thomas, and Yadira Vargas. Topics included relationships between the elements of hip-hop culture and pedagogy in traditional and non-traditional educative spaces, and featured narratives and infographics about the various kinds of interpretive lenses applied to hip-hop pedagogy.

At the FI Spring Symposium (Race and Its Futures: Teach, Research, Imagine), Leadership Fellows presented a panel session entitled: “Reality Pedagogy and Peer to Peer Learning in Higher Education.” This session included Melendez and Hutchinson with Leadership Fellows Monami Nagai, Kia Thomas, Tahamina Hossain, and former Fellow Jenny Perez Bruno. The panel session examined leadership in higher education and the role of educators to strive to be culturally responsive change agents who implement best practices that are equitable for all students. The panel focused on the question of how we can make education inclusive so that educators can learn that everyone present in a classroom or space is an asset to the group as a whole.

The leadership fellows who participated shared how this program has helped them be more assertive and

“Being a part of Futures Initiative gave me the opportunity to be part of such an amazing supportive community! I'm thankful and proud that I was able to learn so much during the workshops and [Humanities Alliance] conference at The Graduate Center. I was able to better understand the CUNY system and navigate through college. ... I'm really proud to have been a part of this program (a community that gave me so much) and I talk about it in all interviews!”

—Jocelin De Leon

“My biggest takeaway from this program is really understanding what a leader is and the different types of leadership approaches. ... When I first started this program, my idea of an efficient leader was of someone who is naturally born with the gift of delegating, holding accountability, making decisions and knowing how to navigate through tough situations. But as the program continued, I learned that leaders can also be taught and molded into powerful public figures. As a Leadership fellow, I feel my armory being better equipped to take on anything whether it is academically, morally, socially or personally alarming.”

—Yadira Vargas

“Being part of the Futures Initiative ... will forever remain a monumental experience in my life. After participating in the Leadership Institute to start the program off, I was sure that I'd be presented with opportunities that would add value to my leadership qualities – but presenting at the HASTAC 2019 certainly exceeded my expectations! The conference was an experience that I will cherish forever.”

—Steven Pacheco
find their voice to engage more efficiently in their home campus and outside the classroom, share their experiences presenting within Futures Initiative related events, working collaboratively with their peers and how it relates to reality pedagogy and their current studies.

To conclude the year, Melendez and Hutchinson worked with a small group of leadership fellows to present at the HASTAC 2019 conference at the University of British Columbia. The session, titled “Decolonizing Leadership: A Session on New Models of Agency for the ‘New Majority’ of Students,” featured Leadership Fellows Kia Thomas, Yadira Vargas and Steven Pacheco, and was moderated by Kashema Hutchinson. This panel explored the term “decolonizing leadership,” and where it breaks down traditional, hierarchical models and practices of leadership in western education. This engaged, interactive session focused both on theories of critical leadership and how to apply it in working with diverse undergraduate students. Fi’s Leadership Fellows program is collective, community-based, and social justice-oriented; it differs from other leadership programs that can perpetuate a model that centralizes power. The focus of this panel worked to examine decolonized leadership, which works to ensure that everyone participates in virtual and physical spaces where they grow, think, and learn as a community with goals that strive toward social change. The leadership fellows also described ways the program has contributed to strengthening their academic, professional, and personal growth followed by an interactive leadership exercise about “leading up” and “leading horizontally,” within the classroom and beyond.

2018-2019 Leadership Fellows

Maryam Asker, Hunter College
Jacquelin Bautista, The City College of New York
Fauzia Choudhury, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Cherishe Cumma, New York City College of Technology
Jocelin DeLeon, John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Jesse Delacruz, LaGuardia Community College
Bernarda DeOliveira, Baruch College
Margaret Fyfe, LaGuardia Community College
Sholom Gutleizer, Kingsborough Community College
Jermaine Hall, John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Calvin Herman, Hunter College
Tahamina Hossain, The City College of New York
Jahir Lazaro, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Frantzy Luzincourt, The City College of New York
Monami Nagai, LaGuardia Community College
Steven Pacheco, John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Yosanny Perez, Lehman College
Joseph Portelli, Macaulay Honors College at The City College of New York
Kyle Reid, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Vasiliki Savvides, Baruch College
Rahsaan Seabury, LaGuardia Community College
Ky’Naisha Severe, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Kia Thomas, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Tasmin Ullah, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Claudio Valdez, Bronx Community College
Jham Valenzuela, LaGuardia Community College
Christina Valeros, Hunter College
Yadira Vargas, LaGuardia Community College
Mashaya Williams, College of Staten Island
Yana Zheng, Queens College
Professional Development of Futures Initiative Graduate Fellows and Beyond

The Futures Initiative considers doctoral education to be the hub of our work from which many spokes radiate and believes that understanding how institutions work helps graduate students succeed in academe and beyond. We empower Futures Initiative Fellows as the program’s leaders, inviting their contributions as we determine each year’s programmatic plans and encouraging them to connect their work within the program to the research and training that are core to their doctoral programs. Graduate Fellows lead the Futures Initiative’s weekly meetings, literally setting the agenda for our program. They serve as “network fellows” in the team-taught courses, forging connections among faculty members and other graduate students. With scaffolding from the leadership team, the graduate fellows plan and execute our public events, such as the University Worth Fighting For series, and develop online records of these events (video, webcasts, social media, photographs, and blogs) for the larger public.

Louise Lennihan Arts & Science Grants

In 2016 the Futures Initiative established the Louise Lennihan Arts and Sciences Grants, thanks to the generosity of Curtis Wong, a recent recipient of an honorary doctoral degree from the Graduate Center, as well as contributions from anonymous members of the Graduate Center faculty and staff. The competition honors Dr. Lennihan for her extraordinary service on behalf of students and faculty at the Graduate Center. Seven micro-grants in the amount of $500 for research or travel were awarded to doctoral students working on the intersections of humanities, arts, science, and technology. This year’s seven grant recipients were chosen by a selection committee of graduate students, staff, and faculty, from a pool of highly competitive applications across many fields. 2018-2019 recipients of Lennihan Grants are:

**Julia Fuller**, English
“Visualizing the Victorian Sportswoman” (digital dissertation component)

Julia Fuller (Julie) is a PhD candidate in the English Program, with a certificate in Interactive Technology and Pedagogy. Her dissertation looks at how Victorian-era representations of athleticized women—which are surprisingly plentiful in the period—introduced a new category of identity for women that was distinct from the roles that society created for them as daughters, wives, and mothers. She demonstrates how depictions of the Sportswoman in nineteenth-century media expanded the Victorians’ understanding of the form and function of the female body beyond its marital or maternal capacity. Combining long-form textual analysis with digital components that explore athletic womanhood in visual culture, Fuller highlights an overlooked figure who is key to bridging the gap between the mid-Victorian ideal of delicate, domesticated femininity and the sturdy, capable women who enter universities, professions, and public spaces in...
mass just before the turn of the century. As a part of this multimodal project, her dissertation includes a non-linear digital chapter that utilizes Digital Humanities research methods to produce interactive networks and visualizations which assist us in noticing representational conventions and drawing analytical connections. The Louise Lennihan Arts and Sciences Grant enables her to attend an upcoming conference to present her digital dissertation work as a model of non-traditional scholarship and a pedagogical tool for teaching close analysis.

Austin Miller, Anthropology
Austin Miller is a fourth-year anthropology PhD student in Cultural Anthropology writing a dissertation on HIV prevention strategies in Barcelona. The mutual influence of technology and culture has guided his previous research on smartphone apps in Brooklyn and auto-mobility in Buenos Aires. The Louise Lennihan Arts & Sciences Grant allows him to conduct research while volunteering at a non-profit health center that provides outreach and education campaigns, free HIV/STI testing and counseling as well as conducting clinical trials. His research will allow him to engage in public debates currently happening in Spain around access to health care, immigration, and privatization.

Stefano Morello, English
“The Lung Block: A New York City Slum & Its Forgotten Italian Immigrant Community”
Stefano Morello is a fourth-year PhD candidate in English. His academic interests include American Studies, pop culture, poetics, and archive theory. As a digital humanist, Morello focuses on archival practices, with a knack for archival pedagogy and public facing initiatives. His dissertation, “Let’s Make A Scene: East Bay Punk and Subcultural Worlding” explores the heterotopic space of the East-Bay punk scene, its modes of resistance and (dis-)association, and the clashes between its politics and aesthetics. He is also co-curating an exhibition based on his yet unpublished M.A. thesis: “The Lung Block: A New York City Slum & Its Forgotten Italian Immigrant Community,” the study of a neighborhood on the Lower East Side subject to a process of slum-making during the Progressive Era. The Louise Lennihan Arts & Sciences Grant allows Morello to travel to several archives in Sicily to further his research.

Patricia Sanchez, Psychology
“Documentaries vs dramas: Influences of crime media”
Patricia Sanchez is a fourth-year PhD student in the Psychology and Law program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Graduate Center, CUNY. She is also an adjunct professor in Psychology at John Jay and has received grants funding the research that launched her dissertation topic. Her dissertation studies focus on how people seek out and interpret crime media. Specifically, she is interested in what causes people to be receptive or resistant to empirically-based information critiquing our criminal justice system. The Louise Lennihan Arts & Sciences Grant allows Sanchez to begin the first study in this project where she will create and organize research materials to be used in her dissertation experiments. This project bridges the arts and sciences by using different artistic styles of presenting crime as independent variables in traditional psychology research methods. Further, Sanchez is applying classic psychological theory such as Just World Belief in an effort to explain the educational effectiveness of different styles of crime media.

Scott Schwartz, Anthropology
“The Material Culture of Temperature: Measurement, Capital, and Semiotics”
Scott W. Schwartz is a PhD candidate in the Anthropology Program writing a dissertation on the material culture of knowledge production. His work traces the history of quantification through the measuring devices and instruments developed over the past few centuries that see the world in numbers. Schwartz draws on works of early modern literature and painting to illustrate contemporaneous attitudes toward the quantification process. To understand the legacy of this history he examines the work of climatologists attempting to project and visualize the temperatures of the deep future and deep past. His work serves to
problematize the epistemology of data accumulation that rose to prominence with modernity. The Louise Lennihan Arts & Sciences Grant allows Schwartz to present this research at interdisciplinary conferences throughout the year.

Patrick Sweeney, Psychology
“Justice and Ethics Decision Tool for Social Media Research”
Patrick Sweeney is a PhD candidate in the Critical Social Psychology program writing a dissertation on the ethics and justice challenges emerging from the use of social media data in humanities and social science research. The Louise Lennihan Arts & Sciences Grant allows Sweeney to develop and host an online interactive ethics decision making tool which will guide researchers through questions about their use of social media data in order to create more ethical and just digital projects. The tool will build on his experience developing Digital Research Ethics workshop curriculum and Resource Guides for the GC Digital Fellows, and his research and publications related to critical analyses of social media data use. His dissertation project makes a striking connection between two seemingly disparate controversies: the psychological study of “facial gaydar,” and the use of psychographic targeting in the 2016 presidential election. Sweeney reveals the surprising similarities in their data sources, reliance on theoretical paradigms, and potential for harm as he explores the historical antecedents of social categorization and the future possibilities of practicing a more valid, just, and ethical social media research.

Mercedes Vega Villar, Psychology
“Associative learning requires experience-dependent changes in nucleus accumbens activity”
Mercedes Vega Villar is a student of the Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience PhD program. Her research focuses on the changes in synaptic transmission that underlie abrupt changes in acquisition of appetitive behaviors. When we are trying to solve a problem that requires associating several pieces of information, we often experience an “aha” moment. This constitutes an abrupt transition between poor performance and mastery, and it is also seen in animals that are being trained in a task that requires them to associate neutral stimuli with biologically relevant events (e.g. food, water, etc.). The goal of her project is to try to understand what physical changes in the brain give rise to that moment of insight. This is central to our understanding of the human experience and the way we learn. This question has been the focus of intense debate by those who study epistemology and the creative process. The Louise Lennihan Arts & Sciences Grant allows Vega Villar to present her research at the XIIIth International Basal Ganglia Society Meeting at Biarritz (France).
Technology with a Purpose

The Futures Initiative uses websites, online collaborative tools, webcasts, video, livetweeting, and other forms of social media to make our teaching, research, and programming accessible to a wide range of publics and to connect students and faculty across the diverse and vast CUNY system. With an awareness that many of our students cannot afford home wifi or expensive computers and are connected only via mobile devices, designing accessible, low cost technologies is another part of our commitment to equity. On a national and global level, the Futures Initiative co-directs the world’s first and oldest academic social network, HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory, hastac.org). HASTAC is an open, collaborative online community with no dues (and no sharing of data to commercial vendors). HASTAC has two mottos: “Changing the Way We Teach and Learn” and “Difference is our operating system.”

This year, FI Graduate Fellows Jessica Murray and Siqi Tu redesigned the Futures Initiative website. The redesign process was initiated by a desire to improve accessibility for screen readers, reduce the need for dropdown menus, which can be difficult for keyboard navigation, remove resource-heavy and inaccessible features like image sliders, and improve site speed for students on the network who may have slow internet connections at home or on campus. Murray spent much of the summer working in...
the Student Affairs office testing out assistive technology, creating simplified user guides for staff who provide support for students, and providing recommendations. She became immersed in learning about digital accessibility, including designing for people with cognitive disabilities. Murray and Tu worked closely with Katina Rogers and Gustavo Jiménez, and solicited input from other FI team members to simplify greatly the site architecture and help clarify the Futures Initiative mission. In the process, fresh perspectives from new Graduate Fellows highlighted areas of the mission and work that needed more clarity in order to quickly communicate the Futures Initiative’s diverse objectives to website visitors. Check out the new redesign at futuresinitiative.org.

The University Worth Fighting For event series asks tough questions of the academy and pushes for change.

One of the Futures Initiative’s key program areas is a unique set of interdisciplinary, inter-institutional team-taught courses.

We research matters related to equity, diversity, technology, and public support in higher education.

Our leadership and peer mentoring program reconnects liberal arts teaching and learning with the “new majority” of undergraduate college students.

Our Fellows gain experience in collaboration and creative problem-solving through our work.

We partner with HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) and the CUNY Humanities Alliance.

WHAT WE VALUE
Through our team-taught courses, our undergraduate Leadership Fellows program, and the CUNY Humanities Alliance, we have collaborated with fifteen colleges across the CUNY system: Baruch College, Borough of Manhattan Community College, Brooklyn College, City College of New York, Hunter College, John Jay College, Kingsborough Community College, LaGuardia Community College, Lehman College, Medgar Evers College, New York City College of Technology, Queens College, the College of Staten Island, York College, and the School of Public Health.

Within the Graduate Center, our collaborative efforts center on grant programs, public programming, strategic planning, and course development. We collaborate with programs such as the Humanities Alliance, the Teaching and Learning Center, the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development, the Pipeline Program, GC Digital Initiatives, and more. We also collaborate with a number of academic programs, including Anthropology; Art History; Earth and Environmental Sciences; English; the Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Cultures program (LAILAC); Psychology; Sociology; Urban Education; the Women’s and Gender Studies certificate program; the M.A. in Liberal Studies Program (MALS); and more.

Building on the technology of CBOX, developed at the Graduate Center under the direction of Matthew K. Gold, the Futures Initiative website provides a space for the program to share information and archive materials, while also creating the possibility for network members to connect with one another, create their own websites for their courses or research, and more.

Today, the Futures Initiative’s website is in its fifth year of use by the greater CUNY community and hosts nearly 80 sites and over 1,000 users across 18 CUNY campuses (as of June 2019).

Collaborating Across the Country and Around the World: HASTAC

Together with Dartmouth College, The Graduate Center directs the 17,000+ member HASTAC network. While most of the content on HASTAC is created by members, the Futures Initiative’s programming is a prominent element of the network’s content and a major contributor to its monthly newsletters.

HASTAC is dedicated to “Changing the Way We Teach and Learn” and with “Diversity as Our Operating System.” In 2019, Arizona State University concluded its partnership, and Dartmouth College became CUNY’s joint partner in directing the network. HASTAC is now co-administered by the Futures Initiative at the Graduate Center, under Prof. Cathy N. Davidson, and by the Digital Humanities and Social Engagement cluster at Dartmouth College, under Prof. Jacqueline Wernimont.

HASTAC 2019 Conference: Decolonizing Technologies, Reprogramming Education (May 16-18, 2019; Musqueam Territory, University of British Columbia)

The HASTAC 2019 Conference, Decolonizing Technologies, Reprogramming Education, was an extraordinary gathering that centered Indigenous voices on topics of futurities, education, and technology. Hosted by the University of British Columbia’s Center for Critical Indigenous Studies and the University of Victoria’s English Department, and with the welcome of the Musqueam community on whose land UBC is located, this international conference was truly an inspiring event for all involved, from local students and faculty members at UBC and UVic to scholars, artists, and activists from around the world.
Thanks to the efforts of HASTAC Executive Board member Prof. Jentery Sayers (UVic), together with Prof. David Gaertner (UBC), as well as the guidance, planning and hard work of the program committee, over 400 participants were able to explore issues of technology, culture, education, and creativity.

Plenary speakers included:

- **Marisa Elena Duarte** (Pascua Yaqui/Chicana; Arizona State University);
- **Jules Arita Koostachin** (MoshKeKo Cree, Attawapiskat First Nation; Social Justice Institute, University of British Columbia);
- **Elizabeth LaPensée** (Anishinaabe and Métis; Michigan State University);
- **Melody McKiver** (Anishinaabe musician, media artist, traditional powwow dancer and artist, and arts educator);
- **Karyn Recollet** (Cree; Women and Gender Studies Institute, University of Toronto);
- **Alana Sayers** (Hupacasath and Alexander First Nations; University of Victoria);
- **Leanne Betasamosake Simpson** (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg; Alderville First Nation); and
- **Kim van der Woerd** (‘NAMGIS First Nation; Reciprocal Consulting; Simon Fraser University)

The sessions surrounding these included roundtables, soapbox talks, demos, maker sessions, workshops, media art projects, and posters.

Two upcoming HASTAC conferences were approved by the Steering Committee and are in the planning process:
HASTAC 2020: Hindsight, Foresight, Insight
School of Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication at the University of Texas at Dallas
October 15-18, 2020

Led by Dean Anne Balsamo, one of HASTAC’s original founders, HASTAC 2020 will play on the idea of hindsight as twenty-twenty vision. The goal of the conference will be to think about where HASTAC began in 2002, and where technology in general was at that time. We will think forward while also meditating on the path we have taken. The conference will include final workshops where, together, we plan new projects, new actions, new forms of collective engagement.

HASTAC 2022: Design Thinking and Social Justice
Pratt Institute, NYC
May 26-28, 2022 (tentative)

Led by Chris Alen Sula, this conference will draw on the Pratt Institute’s specializations in art, architecture, and design education to make vital and creative use of technology in solving contemporary problems. The conference will bring together artists, designers, humanists, and technologists to address current issues in education and social justice.

HASTAC Scholars

The HASTAC Scholars fellowship program is an innovative student-driven community of graduate and undergraduate students. Directed by Adashima Oyo, Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD candidate in Social Welfare, the program accepts some 200+ graduate and undergraduate students each year. More than 1,400 HASTAC Scholars in dozens of disciplines have been sponsored by 220 colleges and universities—including community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and large research-intensive public and private institutions.

Visit the online community: hastac.org

2018-2019 HASTAC Scholars Highlights

Digital Fridays

This year, many HASTAC Scholars expressed interest (via a survey with 70+ responses) in creating digital workshops and discussions for their peers. In March 2019, we worked with Scholars to kick off a new, free, online workshop series called Digital Fridays. Each Digital Fridays session is conceptualized and hosted by HASTAC Scholars who have an opportunity to present on their research topics, pedagogy approaches or professional development strategies. Each hour-long Digital Friday session serves as great practice for conference presentations and HASTAC Scholars may add Digital Fridays presentations to their CV. Most of the presentations are recorded and HASTAC Scholars write a recap blog post on hastac.org, which allows HASTAC Scholars who were unavailable to participate in the live streaming to view content at their convenience.

During the first round of Digital Fridays (2019 Spring/Summer), HASTAC Scholars presented on the following topics:

3/26 Mental Health & Self-Care in Grad School
HASTAC Scholar: Frankie Mastrangelo
Collaborative Book Discussion

*Numbered Lives: Life and Death in Quantum Media* by HASTAC Co-Director *Jacqueline Wernimont*

This year, we also facilitated a collaborative book discussion of HASTAC Co-Director Jacqueline Wernimont’s book, *Numbered Lives: Life and Death in Quantum Media*. All HASTAC Scholars were invited to participate if they wished, and were given the option to discuss the entire book, a specific chapter or to conduct an interview with Wernimont. Fifteen HASTAC Scholars agreed to participate and MIT Press generously sent hard copies of the book to all collaborators. After each HASTAC Scholar submitted a discussion post on their chapters, each participant was paired with another to complete peer reviews. Three Scholars also completed interviews with Wernimont. The posts were published as a collection on HASTAC, and are available to all readers on the HASTAC website [https://www.hastac.org/collections/collaborative-discussion-numbered-lives-jacqueline-wernimont]. This was a wonderful project that allowed HASTAC Scholars from various disciplines and universities the opportunity to collectively share their ideas with each other and the larger HASTAC community.

The following HASTAC Scholars participated: Nehal El-Hadi, Jon Heggestad, Rebecca Uliasz, Sarah Richardson, Rachel V. Willis, Ashley Hemm, Molly Mann, Linda Luu, Leelan Farhan, John Murray, Lia Tarachansky and Sarah Ciston.
The University Worth Fighting For

The University Worth Fighting For series brings the Futures Initiative’s mission for inclusion, equity, and social justice in higher education to life within the Graduate Center and for a broader public. The title is based on the conviction that, as a society, we should be supporting higher education as a public good but that goal comes with a responsibility to make higher education responsive and relevant to the demands of a changing society. All of our events are student-led, with Futures Initiative graduate fellows designing topics, inviting speakers, live tweeting and webcasting events, and then providing a full online recap for the larger public at futuresinitiative.org.

2018-2019 University Worth Fighting For Series

Classrooms and Social Justice: Why Start with Pedagogy?
September 13, 2018
Co-organized by Christina Katopodis, Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD Candidate, English
Speakers: Cathy N. Davidson, Racquel Gates, Siqi Tu, and Christina Katopodis

This workshop looked at the relationship between classroom participation and democracy, focusing on active, engaged learning methods that instructors inside and outside of the academy can use. It attracted a wide range of audiences, including college students, graduate students, adjunct instructors at community colleges and four-year colleges, future and current K-12 teachers, administrators, and a high school counselor. Cathy N. Davidson, Christina Katopodis, Siqi Tu, and Racquel Gates shared their pedagogical philosophies and practices to democratize classrooms and center students’ voices.

Equity, Health, and Learning; Social Determinants of Academic Success
November 1, 2018
Co-organized by Jessica Murray, Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD Candidate, Developmental Psychology, and Adashima Oyo, Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD Candidate, Social Welfare
Speakers: Nicholas Freudenberg, Chris Palmedo, Peggy Groce, and Jesse Rice-Evans

This panel offered attendees a high-energy discussion about disparities outside the classroom that impact student performance. Panelists included Professors Nicholas Freudenberg and Chris Palmedo from CUNY School of Public Health, Peggy Groce, former Director of Travel Training for District 75 (NYC DOE), and Jesse Rice-Evans, PhD Student at The Graduate Center. The
room was packed with a lively audience of students, faculty, administrators and individuals interested in the topic. Freudenberg and Palmedo spoke about the Healthy CUNY Initiative, aimed at improving health and academic success for over 500,000 degree-seeking students and continuing ed students at CUNY. Their 2015 survey showed that nearly half of CUNY undergraduates faced issues that affected their performance, including barriers to health insurance, and mental, sexual, or reproductive healthcare, as well as housing instability, intimate partner violence or food insecurity. Both spoke about interventions that have started to move the needle, including outreach to students to help them sign up for health insurance, and adding food pantries to Single Stop programs on community college campuses. The second segment focused on the impact of disability and transportation access on student success. Both Rice Evans and Groce commented on the prevalence of anxiety and depression, and how students with severe mental health disabilities may be perceived by teachers. The discussion highlighted the struggles that exist, but it also highlighted ideas for a path forward. For example, research revealed CUNY students are often unaware of opportunities for health insurance enrollment. Other panelists and audience members spoke about the availability of social support services that are available on and off campus, including Single Stop, a national program that connects individuals with resources for food, housing, finance and other obstacles to academic success. Freudenberg called for a “culture of caring” to support students and faculty to be healthy and successful.

Who Is Included? Restructuring Our Work and Our World

December 6, 2018
Organized by Jessica Murray (Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD Candidate, Psychology) with collaboration from Siqi Tu (Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD Candidate, Sociology) and Sujung Kim (Postdoctoral Fellow, Humanities Alliance and Futures Initiative)
With our Fall Symposium, “Who Is Included? Restructuring Our Work and Our World,” The Futures Initiative wrapped up the semester with faculty and students from our Fall 2018 Team-Taught Courses. They all took the stage in what was the culmination of a fruitful series of courses aimed at supporting diversity, equity, and student-centered interdisciplinary learning at the graduate level. This timely event included discussion, hands-on workshop sessions, and even an opera performance—all with the aim of considering the ways in which the structures that surround us do or do not contribute to a sense of belonging and agency. As educators, students, and practitioners, we have an opportunity to help design more equitable futures.

The symposium highlighted the work of students in three interdisciplinary courses. Murray helped to coordinate the session for Disability, Culture, and Society, co-taught by Joseph Straus (The Graduate Center, CUNY, Music), and Julia Miele Rodas (Bronx Community College, English). Straus and Miele Rodas organized a speaker series to accompany the course, co-hosted by the CUNY School of Professional Studies Disability Studies program. The course focused on representations of disability in the arts and popular culture and understandings of nonconforming identities and bodies. Murray and Miele Rodas co-chair the CUNY Disability Scholars, an informal network of faculty and students who are teaching and doing scholarly work in disability studies. After an introduction of the course and the group, Murray shared an announcement about the Journal of Teaching Disability Studies, an online open-access journal hosted on the CUNY Academic Commons jtds.commons.gc.cuny.edu.

Siqi Tu helped to coordinate a course presentation for Mind the Gap: The Future of Work, taught by Ann Kirschner; Tyson Scott Hymes, a student in the class, also presented. The course dealt with the policies, technologies, and social systems that should be anticipated today to ensure positive outcomes for the future. Sujung Kim helped to coordinate a presentation by students in Environmental Psychology of Care, co-taught by David Chapin and Tomoaki Imamichi. Student presenters included Vanita Naidoo, Chinere Okafor, and Shayna Vercillo. The course focused on the relationships between care and the physical environment. Students from both courses shared their works with the audience.

**Hip-Hop Pedagogy**

February 14, 2019

Organized by **Kashema Hutchinson**, Futures Initiative Fellow, PhD Candidate, Urban Education

Speakers: Undergraduate Leaders Kia Thomas, Yadira Vargas, and Steven Pacheco; Lauren Melendez, Undergraduate Leadership Program Director; and Kashema Hutchinson, Undergraduate Leadership Program Co-Director

Futures Initiative Fellow Kashema Hutchinson put this University Worth Fighting For event in the hands of
hip-hop’s creators: the youth. Hutchinson was inspired by a video clip of James Baldwin conveying that the least recognized stakeholders in education are the children. As the co-director of the Undergraduate Leaders Fellowship, Hutchinson contacted the Undergraduate Leaders to see who was interested. Then she sent participants readings from Marc Lamont Hill’s Beats Rhymes and Classroom Life about the three hip-hop pedagogies. At the event, Lauren Melendez, the program’s director, the Leaders and Hutchinson discussed the elements of the program including alignment, purpose, timing, the value of experiential knowledge and most importantly, knowledge of self. It was important to have the students bring their truths and realities about their education into a space where they are usually dismissed, ignored and/or penalized. This event was conducted as a cypher which in the hip-hop culture takes place in a circle, with rappers, MC’s, etc. battle, freestyle and share their lyrics, poetry and artistic expression without interruption. The cypher format was used for this event in addition to restructuring the room to be in a circular configuration to foster inclusivity, student-centered learning and to step away from the hierarchical structured panels that are often the format found in most higher educational settings. The cypher began with Lauren Melendez’s opening remarks and introductions. She welcomed the leadership fellows who participated in the cypher: Kia Thomas, a student at City College majoring in Black Studies and minoring in Journalism; Yadira Vargas, a student at LaGuardia Community College majoring in Travel Tourism and Hospitality Management; and Steven Pacheco, a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice majoring in Social Thought. Topics discussed at the event were relationships between the elements of hip-hop culture and pedagogy in traditional and non-traditional educative spaces, in addition to narratives and infographics which were used to examine the various kinds and lens hip-hop pedagogy can be interpreted through.

Revolutionizing Wikipedia: A Queer and Feminist Edit-a-Thon
February 28, 2019
Organized by Christina Katopodis, Futures Initiative Fellow and PhD Candidate, English

At this interactive workshop and edit-a-thon, Christina Katopodis introduced Megan Wacha from Wikimedia NYC (and a CUNY librarian), who led a workshop on
Wikipedia, how to edit articles, and best practices for contributing to the Wikipedia community. Several CUNY librarians in attendance shared upcoming Edit-a-Thons and gave advice about how to get more educators involved in editing Wikipedia and teaching their students to become contributors as well. Throughout the workshop, Katopodis engaged on Twitter with participants watching via livestream to make sure all questions were answered before moving on to editing. After the workshop, participants drank coffee, ate lunch and snacks, and worked on Wikipedia articles throughout the Edit-a-Thon. Laurie Hurson, an Open Educational Technologist with the Teaching and Learning Center led us in a presentation and discussion about teaching with Wikipedia after the open editing hours.

The workshop was designed to guide participants to be more interactive in sharing their own interests, experiences, and thoughts on the topic—to be active participants rather than a passive audience. The panelists, Susana Alvis, Luis Henao Uribe, Kahdeidra Martin, and Sujung Kim presented the cultures and languages from different angles. Overall, this public workshop was one of the Futures Initiative’s efforts to respond to the existing cultural and linguistic diversity at CUNY and in New York, and to change our image of the public language from English-only to multiple languages spoken by students, their families and communities. This is also one of the critical ways to appreciate diverse forms and contents of knowledge and cultures in the classroom.

Cultures and Languages in the Classroom
March 7, 2019
Organized by Sujung Kim, Postdoctoral Fellow for the Futures Initiative and the Humanities Alliance
Speakers: Susana Alvis, Luis Henao Uribe, Kahdeidra Martin, and Sujung Kim

This workshop focused on cultural and linguistic diversity, especially in higher education settings. Considering that colleges and universities in global cities are at the forefront of a gigantic wave of linguistic and cultural diversity due to the continuously increasing presence of immigrants and international students as well as native-born ethnic minority and working-class students, we as educators are called upon to respond inclusively and responsibly to the diversity of cultures and languages in the classroom and in our everyday campus life.

Race and Its Futures: Teach, Research, Imagine
April 9, 2019
Co-organized by Katina Rogers, Director, Programs and Administration; Gustavo Jiménez, Futures Initiative Fellow, PhD Candidate, LAI Alec; and Christina Katopodis, Futures Initiative Fellow, PhD Candidate, English
This mini-conference explored race, education, democracy, aesthetics, and other imagined futures, bringing together CUNY faculty and students from different campuses to engage in meaningful conversations, interactive activities, panels, and a reception. Sessions were organized by Futures Initiative faculty and students, including Profs. Cathy Davidson, Racquel Gates, Jonathan Gray, Joy Sanchez-Taylor, and the Undergraduate Leadership Fellows and their program co-directors, Lauren Melendez and Kashema Hutchinson.

In “Reality Pedagogy and Peer to Peer Learning in Higher Education,” the Undergraduate Leaders shared their stories about how the Futures Initiative has helped them find their voices to engage more efficiently in their home campuses and communities. Leaders reflected on presenting their work in public spaces, improving their communication skills and their comfort with navigating different spaces, working collaboratively with their peers, and the importance of educating and leading others to strive for equity in higher education and beyond.

Graduate students in Professors Cathy N. Davidson and Racquel Gates’s class, “Mediating Race,” explored the link between media representations of race and examples of social and institutional racism, including in higher education. Students led conference attendees in several interactive activities, including a Think-Pair-Share to deconstruct the common messages conveyed by white savior films. Several students gave their talks in Critical Karaoke format—first introduced by Joshua Clover at the Experience Music Project (now MoPOP) annual Pop Conference—in which they presented short analyses of music videos while the music played in the backdrop to guide the audience in hearing and thinking through the role(s) listening plays in selfhood, race and gender discrimination, citizenship, and sexuality across space, time, genre, and medium.

In “Shaping Worlds, Warping Futures: Afrofuturism as Queer Time, Critical Making, and Curriculum Design,” graduate students from Professors Jonathan Gray and Joy Sanchez-Taylor’s Spring Futures Initiative course, “Afrofuturism,” presented on Afrofuturism’s engagement with gender, sexuality, disability, and education to position Afrofuturism as a vital means of sustaining Black life and enacting radical futures. They discussed how artist Janelle Monae and historian C. Riley Snorton use queer time in ways that open up identities and threaten anti-Blackness; Octavia Butler’s blueprints for critical making which contribute to afrofuturistic praxis and world-building; and the Black Studies Movement’s legacy of culturally reconstructing the past to situate it as the foundation for culturally engineering the future using Afrofuturism as a transdisciplinary framework for education.

Audience members engaged in fruitful discussions amongst themselves and with panelists throughout the conference and afterward in a reception hosted by the Futures Initiative.
Futures Initiative: 2018-2019
Achievements

Administrators

**Cathy N. Davidson**, PhD, is Founding Director of the Futures Initiative and Distinguished Professor in the Program in English and the M.A. in Digital Humanities and M.S. in Data Analysis and Visualization at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is co-PI of the CUNY Humanities Alliance, an innovative program designed to prepare graduate students to teach in community college. She teaches interdisciplinary, team-taught courses each year as part of the Futures Initiative program. She is also co-founder and co-director of HASTAC. Davidson was appointed by President Obama, and confirmed by the Senate, to the National Council on the Humanities (2011-2017) and served on the Board of Directors of Mozilla (2012-2018). In 2017, Davidson published *The New Education: How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux* (Basic Books), which won the AAC&U Frederic W. Ness Book Award for 2019.

Davidson publishes widely in scholarly and popular forums, lectures extensively, and serves as a consultant for institutions around the world on the future of higher education and the role of technology in society and, with Christina Katopodis, is currently writing a textbook (tentatively titled “Pedagogy for Success”) designed to facilitate engaged, student-centered learning in any classroom, in any field, and at any kind of institution. In January 2019, Davidson was a keynote speaker and served on three panels at the Nobel Prize Committee Forum on the Future of Education in Santiago, Chile, and in 2019-2020 will serve as Senior Fellow at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

**Katina Rogers**, PhD, Futures Initiative Co-Director and affiliate faculty member for the Master’s Program in Digital Humanities, coordinates the overall strategy for outreach, communications, and programming. With a deep understanding of technology, publishing, and education, Rogers ensures that each of these elements complements the other, from the Futures Initiative’s website infrastructure to our social media strategy. In 2018-2019, Rogers completed *Putting the Humanities PhD to Work: Theory, Practice, and Models for Thriving Beyond the Classroom*; it is now in production with Duke University Press, with an anticipated release date of Fall 2020. Intended for graduate students in the humanities and for the faculty members who guide them, the book grounds practical career advice in a nuanced consideration of the current landscape of the academic workforce and an emphasis on reaffirming humanities education as a public good. It explores how rhetoric and practices related to career preparation are evolving, and how those changes intersect with admissions practices, scholarly reward structures, and academic labor practices—especially the increasing reliance on contingent labor. The book also examines the ways that current practices perpetuate systems of inequality that result in the continued underrepresentation of women and minorities in the academy.

Rogers speaks frequently on matters related to higher education reform, graduate training, career preparation, and new modes of scholarly publishing; 2018-2019 speaking engagements included keynoting the Big XII Teaching and Learning Conference at the University of Texas at Austin (jointly with FI Fellow Adashima Oyo), as well as invited talks at Stony Brook University, the University of Edinburgh (hosted by Cornell Tech), the HASTAC 2019 conference, and the Modern Language Association Annual Convention.
Lauren Melendez, MSEd, Director of the Undergraduate Leadership Program and Administrative Specialist, directs and oversees a program that brings together 30 undergraduate students annually from across 12 CUNY campuses as Leadership Fellows. As the program’s director, she creates and implements activities, blog prompts, skill shares, tracks resources and coordinates meetings and enrichment outings. Melendez consults with fellows on how to develop their mentoring and leadership skills in addition to helping students learn how to navigate spaces inside and outside their college campuses. The fellows in turn learn about opportunities within and outside their campuses that will help shape, strengthen and prepare them for not only their academic paths but more importantly their life paths.

In her role as administrative specialist, Melendez provides academic and administrative support to the Futures Initiative. She oversees department operations, manages workshop planning and scheduling, conducts research, and organizes and processes materials for all administrative documentation. Melendez manages the program’s budget and coordinates purchasing, accounting, and payroll for the department. She also stewards and facilitates confidential communication on behalf of FI Founding Director Cathy Davidson in which she acts as liaison with government representatives maintaining and adhering to legal and privacy regulations.

In addition to her role with the Futures Initiative, Melendez has recently completed her course work as a graduate student at CUNY’s Hunter College. Melendez has graduated Magna cum laude this past May 2019 with a Master of Science in Education degree with a concentration in School Counseling. As a School Counselor and College Advisor, Melendez works with high school students who are primarily persons of color from underrepresented communities within the New York City area including recent work with students from the James Baldwin School in Chelsea.

Key achievements last year include:

- Melendez completed her internship and coursework and graduated Magna cum laude with a Master of Science in Education degree from Hunter College, City University of New York. May 28-29, 2019.
- Melendez moderated a panel under the University Worth Fighting For Series entitled: “Hip-Hop Pedagogy” alongside her colleague Kashema Hutchinson, co-director of the Undergraduate Leadership Program (ULP), and with leadership fellows from the ULP, Steven Pacheco, Kia Thomas, and Yadira Vargas. February 14, 2019.
- Planned and participated in a panel entitled, “Reality Pedagogy and Peer to Peer Learning in Higher Education,” at the The Futures Initiative’s Spring Symposium, “Race and Its Futures: Teach, Research, Imagine: Race Studies Across the Curriculum.” Participants included were Kashema Hutchinson, co-director of the Undergraduate Leadership Program (ULP) and leadership fellows Monami Nagai, Kia Thomas, Tahamina Hossain, and alum leadership fellow Jenny Perez Bruno. April 9, 2019.

Celi Lebron, Budget Analyst, received a BE in Computer Engineering and a minor in Creative Writing from City College of New York’s Computer Engineering Program and is now working toward a second degree in Finance and Accounting from Baruch College, in hopes of later pursuing a Master’s degree in Finance. She is integral to the Futures Initiative’s op
erations, and does everything from working with the Accounts Payable and Procurement Departments to processing reimbursements and travel authorizations to provide monthly financial reports for the program. In the year ahead, Lebron will increasingly take on a more deeply programmatic role, including the mentorship of our undergraduate science and engineering students.

**Graduate Fellows**

**Kashema Hutchinson**
Futures Initiative Fellow 2017 - present

Kashema Hutchinson is a doctoral candidate in the Urban Education program at the Graduate Center, CUNY, and the Co-Director of the Undergraduate Leadership Program. She has facilitated discussion groups with incarcerated populations in New York. Kashema creates and uses infographics to facilitate discussions on the role of women and history; philosophy; behavioral economics; class; and crime. Her research interests include the socialization of Black girls and women, zero-tolerance policies, mattering and marginalization, mindfulness and hip-hop pedagogy.

**Key achievements last year include:**
- Built community with Undergraduate Fellows through planning events, facilitating meet-ups, and various forms of communications.

**Gustavo Jiménez**
Futures Initiative Fellow, Fall 2018 - present

Gustavo Jiménez is a current doctoral candidate in Latin American, Iberian and Latino Cultures at The Graduate Center, CUNY. His doctoral work is on the significance of Latin America in the formation of modern Basque literary identity in the context of contemporary debates in World Literature. He is interested in postcolonial discourses, both from a theoretical perspective, and as a way to create decolonized learning environments for undergraduate students. He has taught courses and workshops in Spanish and Cinema at CUNY campuses, Fordham University, and The Instituto Cervantes. As an undergraduate, he studied Advertising & Public Relations and throughout has remained interested in the field including holding various positions as Communications Manager, Editor, and contributing author. In 2015, he received the Basque Literary Prize Finalist award for his short novel “Moradero.”

**Key achievements last year include:**
- In his role as Futures Initiative Communications Director, Jiménez manages FI’s external communications. He also curates, edits, and writes the editorial for the FI monthly newsletter. He has collaborated on the FI’s website project, helping come up with a new website concept.
- In connection with this, Jiménez is coordinating the ongoing FI rebranding project. Once completed, the new branding will ensure communication strategy is consistent and reflects the organization’s strategic vision.
- Jiménez, Gustavo. “‘Realismo mágico’ vasco y la obra de Juan Rulfo.” XXIV Congreso de Literatura
Christina Katopodis, MA, MPhil
Futures Initiative Fellow
2017 - present

Christina Katopodis is a doctoral candidate in English at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is the winner of the 2019 Diana Colbert Innovative Teaching Prize. Her dissertation, “Vibrational Epistemologies: Music and Ecology in American Transcendentalism,” examines the influence that human and nonhuman sounds and sonic vibrations had on American thought and literature in the nineteenth century. Katopodis records sounds at Walden Pond for her digital humanities project, The Walden Soundscape, an award-winning website that makes the soundscape at Walden Pond accessible to a wide audience. She is currently writing a textbook with Cathy Davidson, tentatively titled “Pedagogy for Success,” designed to facilitate active, student-centered learning in classrooms of all sizes and in any field or kind of institution. Katopodis presented at numerous conferences in the last academic year, including: Modern Language Association (MLA) in Chicago; HASTAC 2019 at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver; Digital Democracies at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver; and American Literature Association (ALA) in Boston.

Key achievements last year include:
- Awarded the 2019 Diana Colbert Innovative Teaching Prize.
- Davidson, Cathy, and Christina Katopodis, “Changing Our Classrooms to Prepare Students for a Challenging World,” Profession (October 2019).

Jessica Murray, MA
Futures Initiative Fellow
2016 - present

Jessica Murray is a doctoral candidate in developmental psychology at The Graduate Center, CUNY. She co-chairs a cross-campus group, the CUNY Disability Scholars. She had an early career in design (B.F.A., UT Austin, 2003) before attending CUNY. She completed her M.A. at The Graduate Center in 2014 with a thesis titled, Work-Life Experiences for People with Mobility Disabilities Living in New York City, which examined structural and environmental issues impacting the daily lives of wheelchair users. Her doctoral research focuses on transportation and takes a universal approach to understanding information, communication, and psychological barriers in transportation that impact people with all kinds of disabilities. She is a vocal advocate for improving the accessibility of New York City Transit subways, buses, and paratransit. Her dissertation project, OurMobility.org is a multi-part study of factors in transportation that impact motivation and self-determination for people with disabilities.

Key achievements last year include:
- Named to the first cohort of the Advisory Committee for Transit Accessibility (ACTA) for the MTA in May 2019. As she completes her dissertation, she plans to continue her advocacy working directly with MTA leadership along with other advocates from the disability community.
- Received a second round of funding through the Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation and Work (ARDRAW) Small Grant Program. Project title: “Understanding transportation challenges for people with disabilities returning to
Adashima Oyo, MPH  
Futures Initiative Fellow, 2018 - present

Adashima Oyo is a doctoral candidate in the Social Welfare program at The Graduate Center, CUNY. She earned both a Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Brooklyn College, CUNY. Her research interests explore the impact of the “minority-majority” demographic shift on health disparities. Adashima is also interested in examining the impact of the glaring lack of racial diversity among doctoral students, faculty and executive-level leadership in higher education. In addition to working as the Director of HASTAC Scholars, she is part of the adjunct faculty at New York University (NYU) and Brooklyn College, CUNY, where she teaches courses about healthcare and developing research papers. Adashima is also a Silberman Doctoral Fellow. #BlackScholarsMatter

Key achievements last year include:
• Passed her second level doctoral exam (dissertation proposal). Her dissertation proposal is titled, “Workforce Diversity and Health Equity: The Role of Schools of Public Health”
• Awarded Doctoral Student Research Grant (DSRG), Lost & Found Archival Research Grant, Silberman Travel/Conference Grant, and an Open Pedagogy Fellowship.
• Gave a keynote at the Big XII Teaching & Learning Conference at the University of Texas at Austin (jointly with FI Co-Director Katina Rogers)
• Spoke at several sessions at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting: “Will the health disparities gap widen with unethical policies under the Trump administration?,” “#DiversityMatters among research scientists investigating health disparities,” and “Mentoring a new generation of health disparities researchers: The role of MSW/MPH programs.” (Nov 2018)

Siqi Tu  
Futures Initiative Fellow, 2018 - present

Siqi Tu is a doctoral candidate in Sociology at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Her work focuses on the areas of urban sociology, immigration, education, elites, and contemporary Chinese societies. Tu was born and raised in Shanghai, China and moved to New York City in 2012. She developed her interest in immigration and urban neighborhoods as a keen observer of diverse communities in different metropolitan areas. Her dissertation, “Destination Diploma: How Chinese Upper-Middle Class Families ‘Outsource’ Secondary Education to the United States”, investigates why and how Chinese upper-middle-class families make decisions to send their children to the United States to attend private high schools, some as young as 14 years of age, and it analyzes the actual lived experiences of the students of this “parachute-generation”. She has been teaching sociology at Brooklyn College since 2014, and was a Writing-Across-Curriculum Fellow at Kingsborough Community College.

Key achievements last year include:

The Futures Initiative is proud of the ongoing work of our former Fellows:

**Kitana Ananda**, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow for the Futures Initiative and the Humanities Alliance, 2016-2018
Kitana Ananda is a writer, researcher and educator committed to advancing racial, gender, and economic justice. From 2016-2018, she was the Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow for the CUNY Humanities Alliance, and the Futures Initiative at the Graduate Center. In this role, she conducted qualitative research to understand the communities served by the Humanities Alliance, contributed to program development, and communicated the project’s lessons to wider audiences. Ananda’s scholarship and teaching examines the culture and politics of race and ethnicity, migration and diaspora in North America and South Asia, with a focus on Tamil refugees and immigrants from Sri Lanka. She earned a PhD in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from Columbia University.

**Michael Dorsch**, Futures Initiative Fellow 2014-2016; Program Evaluator, 2017-2018
Michael Dorsch is a doctoral candidate in Earth and Environmental Sciences. The research on sociodemographic patterns around CUNY campuses that Dorsch conducted with the Futures Initiative has recently been used by Matt Brim, Associate Professor of Queer Studies and English at the College of Staten Island, as a foundation for work exploring the college attendance patterns among queer students of color. This ongoing work examines why and how some queer students choose longer commutes to distant CUNY campuses to approximate going away to school while living with their families in order to establish their queer independence. Professor Brim’s book, Poor Queer Studies, will be published in Spring 2020 by Duke University Press. Dorsch is currently Data and Visualization Analyst in Institutional Assessment & Research at California State University, Monterey Bay.

**Allison Guess**, Futures Initiative Fellow, 2015-2018
Allison Guess is a doctoral student in the program of Earth and Environmental Sciences (Geography), a Communication Fellow at Baruch College’s Schwartz Institute, and a Co-Chair of the Africana Studies Group at the Graduate Center at CUNY. Guess’s research looks at Black geographies, Black peoples’ relationships with land in the Western Hemisphere and (Black) productions of place. Some of Guess’ scholarly work can be found published in the edited volume titled “Deter- ritorializing/Reterritorializing: Critical Geography of Educational Reform” (2017), *American Quarterly* (2016), “Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society” (2014), “Departures in Critical Qualitative Research” (2014). Aside from academia Guess has been a member of the Black/Land Project since 2011, a public community research/interview project that amplifies Black peoples’ relationships to land and place.

**Michelle Morales**, PhD, Futures Initiative Fellow, 2016-2018
Michelle recently completed her PhD in Computational Linguistics from the Graduate Center, CUNY. Her dissertation work focused on building automated systems for mental health assessment using linguistic features. She currently works at IBM’s Chief Analytics Office as a Senior Data Scientist and Strategy Consultant.

**Mike Rifino**, Futures Initiative Fellow, 2015-2018
Mike Rifino is a doctoral student in the Developmental Psychology program at The Graduate Center, CUNY. His interest in pursuing an academic career started
when he was a LaGuardia Community College (LaGCC) student and participated in the Peer Activist Learning Community (PALC), a transformative activist research project organized with and for LaGCC students. He is currently interested in the processes of emotional development and learning among community college students to better understand how transformations in both processes play a role in promoting student agency. Rifino recently gave a presentation titled, “Mo-bilizing emotions to critically engage resistance and passivity within a peer-based learning community” at the New England Educational Research Organization (NEERO). In 2018-2019, Rifino served as a Humanities Alliance Teaching Fellow, a position he will continue in the upcoming year.

Danica Savonick, PhD, Futures Initiative Fellow, 2014–2017 and PhD in English
Danica Savonick completed her PhD in English at the Graduate Center, CUNY, in Spring 2018, and is now an Assistant Professor of English at SUNY Cortland. Savonick’s research analyzes the relationships among pedagogy, aesthetics, and social justice. More specifically, her book project examines how aesthetics fundamentally shaped classroom practices in the late twentieth century and how teaching in CUNY’s free and open classrooms inspired important feminist and antiracist authors to produce some of the most powerful literature of the 1960s and 1970s. In 2017–2018, Savonick was selected to serve on HASTAC’s Steering Committee; received a 2018 Digital Pedagogy Lab Fellowship; presented with former FI Fellow Lisa Tagliaferri at the 2018 Digital Humanities conference in Mexico City; and successfully defended her dissertation, “Insurgent Knowledge: The Poetics and Pedagogy of Toni Cade Bambara, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, and Adrienne Rich in the Era of Open Admissions.”

Lisa Tagliaferri, PhD, Futures Initiative Fellow 2014–2016 and PhD in Comparative Literature
Lisa Tagliaferri successfully defended her dissertation, “Lyrical Mysticism: The Writing and Reception of Catherine of Siena,” in Spring 2017. Last year, Tagliaferri published an open educational resource for programming in Python entitled How To Code in Python 3. The book has been downloaded over 15,000 times. Tagliaferri presented at the MLA, the Renaissance Society of America, and at Digital Humanities 2018, and led tech workshops for Women Who Code, NYCDH, Geekettes, and the Bronx Science Programming Club. She has served as an Engineering Technical Writer at DigitalOcean and a postdoctoral fellow in Digital Humanities at MIT.

Frances Tran, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow and Interim Associate Director, 2017–2018
Frances Tran served as a postdoctoral fellow with the Futures Initiative at the Graduate Center, CUNY, and is now an assistant professor of English at Florida State University. Her scholarship engages Asian American and multiethnic science and speculative fictions to explore the practices and pedagogies they illuminate for critiquing persistent forms of institutionalized racism and social and material inequity. Attending to the speculative as variously a literary genre, research method, and theoretical approach, her work aims to proliferate minoritized subjects and knowledges to re-think the possibilities of the humanities and aesthetic education in the present. She has articles published in the Journal of Asian American Studies and American Quarterly. At present, she is working on a book project, tentatively titled “Minor Universes: On Speculative Aesthetics and Other Humanities.”

Kalle Westerling, Futures Initiative Fellow, 2014–2018
Kalle Westerling is a doctoral candidate in Theatre and Performance at the Graduate Center, CUNY, who served for four years as the Director of HASTAC Scholars, a vibrant student network within The Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC). Currently, he is completing his dissertation on the history and aesthetics of male-identified bodies in 20th-century burlesque and 21st-century boy-lesque. In 2018–2019, Westerling served as a Macaulay Instructional Technology Fellow, based at Queens College. He also coordinates the Digital Humanities Research Institute, funded by the National Endowment of the Humanities.
Faculty Fellows and Advisory Board

_Cathy N. Davidson,_ Founding Director and Faculty Fellow, 2014–Present (The Graduate Center)
Prof. Davidson leads each cohort of faculty fellows.

2018-2019 Faculty Fellows

**Michelle Billies**, The Graduate Center and Kingsborough Community College, Psychology

**David Chapin**, The Graduate Center, Environmental Psychology

**Racquel Gates**, College of Staten Island, Media Culture

**Jonathan Gray**, The Graduate Center and John Jay College, English

**Tomoaki Imamichi**, LaGuardia Community College, Social Science

**Ann Kirschner**, University Professor, The Graduate Center and Dean Emeritus, Macaulay Honors College

**Soniya Munshi**, Borough of Manhattan Community College, Social Sciences, Human Services, and Criminal Justice

**Joseph Straus**, The Graduate Center, Music

**Julia Miele Rodas**, Bronx Community College, English/Disability Studies

**Joy Sanchez-Taylor**, LaGuardia Community College, English

2019-2020 Faculty Fellows

**Tarry Hum**, Queens College and the Graduate Center, Urban Studies

**Prithi Kanakamedala**, Bronx Community College, History

**David Linda Atichati**, College of Staten Island, Engineering and Environmental Science

**José del Valle**, The Graduate Center, Latin American and Iberian Languages and Cultures

**Sara McDougall**, John Jay College and the Graduate Center, History

**Julie Suh**, The Graduate Center, Dean of Master’s Programs and Professor of Sociology

**Karen Miller**, LaGuardia Community College and the Graduate Center, History and M.A.L.S.

**Andrea Morrell**, Guttman Community College

Futures Initiative Advisory Board, 2018-2019

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