Karina Davila

Karina is currently a senior studying Forensic Psychology with a minor in Latin American Studies. She served as the President of JJDREAMers club at John Jay College from 2018–2019. Karina is originally from Morelos, Mexico and immigrated to New York at the age of two. Since then has lived in Yonkers, New York where she has established roots within her community through organizing and pushing policies to protect undocumented individuals and families. Karina hopes to get her Master Degree after she graduates in 2020 to continue helping undocumented communities and families.
Mauricio Mino
(Forefront center in the picture)

Mauricio is a cycling enthusiast, with a passion for the aerospace industry. He is currently a Mechanical Engineer student at the City College of New York. Beyond his learning experiences in the classroom, Mauricio has pursued internships with organizations like ImmSchools and Delta airlines. His role as an Education Intern with ImmSchools has granted him the chance to develop close ties with his community and the students he helps mentor. In his role as a Liaison Engineering Intern he developed his skill set related to his major and the experience further cemented his love for aviation. Mauricio is also a member of the New York City chapter of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHEP), where he works as a mentorship director. Mauricio hopes to encourage more students in his community to pursue their passions and aims to one day help the next generation of space transportation/exploration.
Isabel is currently in her second year of law school at CUNY School of Law. She was born in Mexico and came to the United States at the age of 6. She grew up in a small town in North Carolina and later moved to New York City in 2008. She then graduated from The City College of New York in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Jewish Studies. In 2012, Isabel co-founded the CCNY Dream Team, serving as vice-president in 2014, and today she is currently working as a paralegal for an immigration attorney. She hopes to one day become a lawyer to continue her passion and dedication in advocating for immigrant rights for the Mexican community.
Susana Alvis is currently a student at LaGuardia Community College, majoring in English-Spanish Translation. She currently serves as a Student Success Mentor, mentoring over a hundred freshmen students per semester as they transition into the college culture through the First Year Seminar. Susana is also a LaGuardia Mellon Humanities Scholar. Through this program, she deepens her understanding of the Humanities as well as develops her personal projects around language learning and cultures through research and field trips. In her efforts to foment culture and languages she is also working on the re-opening of the French Club on campus. Outside of campus, Susana, is an intern at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, where she assists in planning networking events with businesses, government agencies, financial institutions and media companies for the chamber’s members and the community. She is also an intern at CREA, teaching English to adults. Susana is soon to transfer to a 4 year college to continue her studies in Translation and Interpretation, she hopes to one day be an interpreter at the United Nations.
Montserrat Lopez is a Sophomore in the Roosevelt Scholars Honors program at Hunter College. She is majoring in Political Science with a concentration in American Government and a minor in Public Policy. Born in Oaxaca, Mexico, Montserrat moved to Queens, New York when she was five years old. She grew up as a DREAMer and is currently a DACA recipient; the undocumented experience has fueled her drive for activism and social justice. She is demonstrating her passion for helping her community as a Senior Health Educator for the nonprofit Peer Health Exchange which is dedicated to providing public high schools with adequate health science education. Montserrat spent the summer working at El Puente de Williamsburg, where she bridged the worlds of health, education, and the arts with activism and community empowerment as a youth development counselor. She also interned at LatinoJustice, a not for profit civil rights law firm. After graduating, Montserrat hopes to attend law school and one-day join state government or work in another area in public interest.
Yessenia Benitez is a senior at the City College of New York with a double major in Psychology and Political Science. This past year Yessenia was a proud Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership Partners for Change Fellow and a NYIC DREAM Fellow the year prior. She completed her community service hours this past summer working for the non-profit, Lawyers for Children. There Yessenia worked alongside social workers, and lawyers representing children in court where she had the opportunity to work on cases involving SIJS (Special Immigrant Juvenile Status) applicants. Also, serving as a Spanish translator for Spanish-speaking families. After graduating Yessenia plans on working full-time in a non-profit organization that serves the immigrant community before she continues her journey to graduate school.
Sugey Orea received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Queens College in 2018. She is currently enrolled in the Experimental Psychology Master's program at Brooklyn College. She attributes her academic success to her hard-working parents who journeyed with her from her birth place in Morelos, Mexico to New York City in the U.S. Throughout her graduate career at Brooklyn College she plans to gain valuable research experience working to investigate cultural differences among psychological diagnostic assessments. She is greatly interested in the mental health field and cognitive neuroscience. Sugey hopes to one day graduate with a PhD in Clinical Psychology and have her research contribute to the overall well-being of her community.
Yarazet is a very outgoing and optimistic individual. She can be very persistent when pursuing things she's passionate about. At the moment her interest lies in helping youth cope with depression, anxiety and other concerning issues that have steered her towards a career in the mental health field; one day she hopes to become a mental health therapist. For the time-being she has begun to pursue her interests in the mental health field by pursuing a major in social work, along with a minor in psychology at Lehman College.
Maritza Bonola is currently a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, majoring in Law and Society. She was a former Student Success Mentor at La Guardia Community College and an active participant of the Model New York State Senate Project. Through her participation in the Model NYS Senate Project she honed her organizational, research and public speaking skills by working on a legislative agenda with her peers and taking a “hands-on” approach in the political and policy processes that affect her community.

As a first-generation college student, Maritza understands the hurdles that come with being the first in your family to get a degree and striving to open a path towards social mobility for your family. Maritza is an immigrant from Puebla, Mexico, and the proud mother of a little baby boy; she thanks the CUNY Mexican Studies Institute for helping her work towards her academic and professional goals and for allowing her to be active on campus while juggling her familial responsibilities and her heavy course load. In the years to come Maritza hopes to continue her graduate studies in public policy, and continue advocating for the immigrant community.
Moises Quintero is a 4th year architecture student at City College. His interests include spending time outdoors, cycling long distances around the city, volunteering in his community and drawing. Moises is a hardworking student who likes to challenge himself to learn new things everyday. He found himself leaning towards the architecture program at City College because it encompasses many areas of study such as art, science, and human psychology to name a few. He firmly believes his undergraduate career in architecture has helped him grow professionally as well, in his line of study having great communication skills and problem-solving skills is crucial. Eventually, Moises plans to become a licensed Architect and later on open up his own practice.
Meet Ana Galeana, a long-time New York City resident and proud 2019 Mexican Studies scholarship recipient. Ana is currently a pre-health student studying Biochemistry at Hunter College. She dreams of one day becoming a doctor and helping her community receive affordable health care. Ana is currently a volunteer at Weill Cornell Heart-to-Heart mobile clinic and an intern for MIDA (Mexican Initiative for Deferred Action). While working for the mobile clinic Ana has noticed the underwhelming number of hispanics in the medical field and hopes to see more hispanics pursue careers in the medical field in the nearby future. Ana believes it is really important to show children the importance of seeking higher education in order for the immigrant community to move forward and have more hispanics enroll in higher education institutions. Ana thanks the CUNY Mexican Studies Institute for believing in her and helping her work towards her goals and dreams!
Meet Maria Isabel, she is currently a student at Lehman College majoring in Anthropology with a minor in Spanish. Outside the classroom Maria has sought to grow professionally by seeking internship opportunities related to the medical field and to her community. She has taken part in the MonteHOP program (Montefiore Health Opportunity Program) and she has interned with the Fresh Air Fund. After being a part of the MonteHOP program and Fresh Air Fund organization, she quickly realized the value of knowing a second language; being bilingual allows for more people to have access to the numerous services available around the city and in an ideal world language wouldn't be a barrier. Maria continues to seek impactful work experiences to further her growth as a student and to increase her social awareness; she is currently leading the Lehman Dream Team on campus and taking part in a community project that will assist undocumented youth interested in pursuing a college education in Westchester County.
Meet Jesus Cabrera, he's currently a junior at the City College of New York pursuing a degree in Environmental Earth System Science. Jesus is an easy-going person who likes to take joy in the small things in life. He has always been very self-aware of his cultural identity and at a young age understood that his undocumented status would greatly influence who he'd become. Being undocumented comes with its challenges, but Jesus pushes himself to use his own experiences as a way to help others out. For instance, being a part of the CCNY Dream Team he has been able to create a safe space for undocumented youth on campus. Jesus has also recently worked for the Educational Opportunities Initiative with the CUNY Mexican Studies Institute to make college more accessible to undocumented students in New York City.

Aside from the work he has done to serve his community, Jesus is interested in tackling anthropogenic environmental issues like climate change. One thing he has come to realize is how interconnected the earth’s ecosystems are with our daily activities and social issues; because of this, he has big dreams of what the future holds for this generation of scientists who will have a bigger platform on social media to bring up social issues and environmental challenges.
Miguel is currently a pre-med student in his senior year at the City College of New York. His interest in biochemistry led him to participate in the clinical research being conducted with the Stem Cell Laboratory at the Columbia University Vanderbilt Clinic. There Miguel had the opportunity to learn how to bio-engineer cardiac tissue used to study diseases such as lupus. In addition to his major-related work experience Miguel enjoys working as a freelance music producer and audio engineer for Focus-Sounds Inc., and volunteering his time at an Immigration office in Chinatown. On campus, he is also involved in student government and the music production club. His goal after graduation is to apply to medical school and later complete his surgical residency!
Laura Garcia is a commuter student from Upstate New York. She is a senior at Lehman College where she is majoring in Political Science with a minor in History and Mexican and Mexican-American Studies. Laura was selected to be a participant of the CUNY Service Corps volunteer program in Puerto Rico this past summer. There she spent a couple of weeks working alongside locals and CUNY Service Corps participants to clean the debris that had made its way onto the beautiful trails of El Yunque rainforest, and other small parks (green spaces) in the area. She also spent some time working with local organizations to repair the damaged roofs in people's homes. Laura was able to connect with many of the Puerto Rican natives and got to hear them share stories about the resilience of their community. Laura describes her experience in Puerto Rico as a "trans-formative moment in her life" where she had the pleasure of meeting many like-minded individuals. Her trip to Puerto Rico was one of a kind and she urges more students to seek similar opportunities!