JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Leadership & Innovation in Public Service Symposium

Resiliency in Times of Crisis

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Symposium proceedings 2026
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT, JJAY
Sponsored by the International Journal of Faculty and Leadership Development

Leadership & Innovation in Public Service Symposium

Resiliency in Times of Crisis

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

Moot Room 6.68 NB

John Jay College, 524 West 59th Street, New York, NY 10019

Conference: 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Thursday, April 23, 2026 (Virtual)

Conference: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Virtual Sessions will be broadcasted at

www.facebook.com/publicadministration.jjay

and

www.facebook.com/dowlingIA

THANKS TO

Department of Public Management at John Jay College

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Dowling International Institute:

Michelle Gantt, Co-founder

Hamid Ikram, Co-founder

Our Sponsors

Our annual conference aims to provide insights and explore the processes, actions, challenges, and outcomes faced by underrepresented leaders. Our goal is to establish a global network of leaders who can navigate these challenges, opening opportunities and providing access to others, while initiating changes within our workforce that foster a sense of acceptance among leaders.

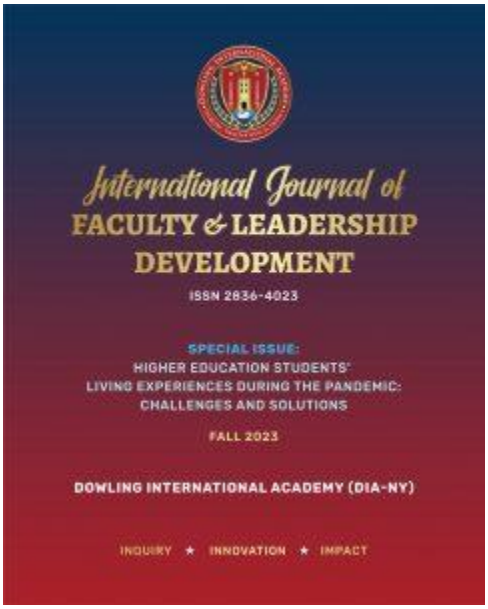
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Public Management Department at John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Learn about our undergraduate and graduate programs

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You can enjoy our interviews with our alumni and professors:

https://www.youtube.com/@JohnJayPublicManagement

Conference Goals

The goals of the annual conference call for "Underrepresented Leaders in Public Organizations" renamed this year as "Leadership in Public Administrators and Social agencies Leaders – Closing the Gap" with the theme of Closing the Gap are to:

- Foster a supportive and inclusive environment for underrepresented leaders in public education organizations.
- Provide a platform for sharing experiences, insights, and best practices among underrepresented leaders to promote professional development and advancement.
- Explore strategies and solutions to address challenges faced by underrepresented leaders in education, including issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Highlight the importance of diverse leadership in driving innovation, fostering collaboration, and achieving organizational excellence in educational institutions.
- Facilitate networking opportunities for underrepresented leaders to build connections, alliances, and partnerships for collective impact and advocacy.
- Promote awareness and understanding of the unique perspectives, contributions, and needs of underrepresented leaders in public education organizations.
- Inspire and empower underrepresented leaders to take on leadership roles, pursue career advancement opportunities, and make meaningful contributions to the field of education.
- Encourage ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and action to create more equitable and inclusive environments for underrepresented leaders and stakeholders in education.

Overall, the conference aims to empower, support, and elevate underrepresented leaders in public organizations, with a specific focus on advancing education-related initiatives and promoting positive change within the sector.

PROGRAM AGENDA

DAY 1 – APRIL 21, 2026 | 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM
LOCATION: Moot Room 6.68 NB

1:30 – 1:50 PM

Networking & Poster Presentation
Facilitated by:
Lucia Velotti, Ph.D.
Associate Professor & Director, MS Emergency Management

POSTERS: CASE STUDIES

Posters Exhibit:

- Mohammad Syedfazlayrabbe. Student at John Jay College

Politics Over Safety: Why It Happens - Case Study: Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the Comprehensive List of Bloomberg's Bans

- Fredericka Walker. Student at John Jay College

Legionnaires' disease and exposure outbreaks during the Flint Water Crisis in 2014.

- Sophia Mancusi

The COVID-19 pandemic has created long-standing pressures and burnout for much of the US nursing workforce

1:50 – 2:00 PM

Welcome Remarks & Introduction
Elsa-Sofia Morote, Ed.D., Ph.D.
Professor, Public Management
Deputy Chair of Enrollment & Retention
Chair of the Symposium

2:00 – 2:25 PM

Keynote Address
Christina Farrell
Deputy Commissioner
New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM)

PANEL I: CRISIS, RESILIENCY & LEADERSHIP

2:30 – 3:20 PM

Moderator: Sara Belligoni, Ph.D. , Assistant Professor, Emergency Management

Panelists:
• Dora Mendez, MPA (she/her/ella)
Founder & CEO, Coach Dora LLC
Coaching Through Crisis: Building Resilient Leadership for Gender Equity in Local Government

• Lynette Garcia-Johnson, MS, CHC
Chief Administrative Officer, Andrus's Sanctuary Institute Promoting Safety and Healing through the

	Sanctuary Model • Sheying Chen, Ph.D. Professor, Pace University Resilient Leadership and the Role of Social Policy: Navigating the Crisis of Public Administration • Sardia Anderson, M.S.Ed. Founder, Scholarly Quarters, LLC Beyond Stability: Leading Educational Systems in Times of Crisis
3:20-3:25 PM	**Break**
3:25 – 3:35 PM	Javonia Smith, Wellness strategist, facilitator, and Co-founder of ReForum Consulting

PANEL II: FUTURE LEADERS REFLECT ON RELATIONSHIPS IN CORRECTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

3:35 – 4:25 PM

Moderator: Michelle Gantt, Ed.D. President, Dowling International Academy; Founder & CEO, Good Morning Parents

Panelists: Good Morning Parents Research Team

- Shermarke Thomas
  John Jay College Alum – NYC Substitute Teacher
  Good Morning Parents – Communication & Marketing Committee Peer Support Leader
  Goal: Becoming an Associate Professor & Ending Felony Disenfranchisement

- Becky Shi
  Criminal Justice Major, Emergency Management Minor – John Jay College
  Good Morning Parents – Event Planning & Community Outreach Peer Support Leader
  Goal: Advancing impact in the criminal justice field

- Camila Amador
  Criminology Student – John Jay College
  Good Morning Parents – Communication & Marketing Intern
  Goal: Aspiring Child Advocacy Specialist

- Kristine Kalu
  Psychology Student, Fordham University
  Good Morning Parents – Event Planning & Community Outreach Intern
  Goal: Aspiring Child Psychologist focused on incarceration's impact on families

4:25 – 4:30 PM **Closing Remarks**- Prof Hunglung Wei, Interim Director, MS Emergency Management

JJAY MPA Alumni Connections Dinner & Networking (Special Invitation From MPA)
5:00 – 8:30 PM: Join us for continued conversation, collaboration, and community building.

DAY 2 – APRIL 23, 2026 | 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Day 2 - Virtual Platform: StreamYard

VIEWERS CAN WATCH IT LIVE FROM

- https://www.facebook.com/publicmanagement.jjay -
- youtube.com@JohnJayPublicManagement

6:00 – 6:10 PM	**Welcome Remarks** Jason Rivera, Ph.D. Chair, Department of Public Management

PANEL III: LEADERSHIP WHEN IT MATTERS MOST: NAVIGATING CRISIS, BUILDING RESILIENCE, AND SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

6:15 – 7:15 PM	**Moderator**: David Shapiro, Professor, Public Administration Director, MPA-IO Program **Featured Presentations** • Mariama Diallo, M.A. – CCNY Examining the Experiences of African Immigrant College Students in NYC: Challenges & Resilience • Jyoti Aggarwal – Ph.D. Candidate, University of Texas at Dallas Evolving Administrative Leadership: Linking Core Competencies to Outcomes • Rev. Dr. Deborah D. Jenkins President/Founder, Pressley Family Institute Majority Power, Minority Obligation: Resilient Leadership Across Political Difference ● Denise Colon, M.P.A., Founder, Grace & Grit by Precious Stones Industries Operational Risk and Workforce Stabilization (ORWS) Framework
7:15 – 7:20 PM	**Closing Remarks**: Dr. Elsa-Sofia Morote, Symposium Chair

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CHRISTINA FARRELL



CHRISTINA FARRELL

First Deputy Commissioner, New York City Emergency Management

Christina Farrell is a lifelong public servant with more than 23 years of experience working to improve the lives of New Yorkers before, during, and after emergencies. As First Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Emergency Management Department (NYCEM), she helps lead the City's emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts while coordinating with city leadership and regional, state, and federal partners on critical emergency management matters. Farrell joined NYCEM in 2003 as the department's first director of grants and later created the agency's external affairs division, serving as assistant commissioner and deputy commissioner before becoming First Deputy Commissioner.

Farrell began her public service career with the City of New York in 1994 in the Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator. She later served as deputy director of the NYC High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and held leadership roles in the Mayor's Office of Grants Administration, where she helped establish the Twin Towers Fund following the September 11 attacks. Her decades of service have included leadership through some of the city's most significant emergencies, including Hurricane Sandy, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other major crisis response efforts.

CONFERENCE CHAIR: ELSA-SOFIA MOROTE, ED.D., PH.D



ELSA-SOFIA MOROTE, ED.D., PH.D.

Conference Chair

Public Policy Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Elsa-Sofia Morote, Ed.D., Ph.D., Public Policy Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and co-founder of Dowling International Academy (DIA-NY), a non-profit dedicated to advancing leaders and scholars towards Inquiry, Innovation, and Impact for societal well-being. With dual doctoral degrees and senior postdoctoral experience at MIT, she boasts over 30 years of experience in higher education, holding leadership roles spanning from pre-college to doctoral levels. She was a Founder Director of the International & Diversity Institute at Dowling College, Dean at Farmingdale State College, and Dean of Graduate Studies at John Jay College, In which organizations drove enrollment and retention, secured nearly $3.7 million in funding, and enhanced diversity. With over 50 publications and having mentored 200 dissertations, she has received more than 20 honors for her mentoring, research, and advocacy.

MODERATORS: MICHELLE GANTT, ED.D., DAVID SHAPIRO, AND SARA BELLIGONI



Michelle Gantt, Ed.D., President of Dowling International Academy (DIA), is also CEO and founder of Good Morning Parents, focusing on parenting and leadership. With 23 years in the federal prison system, she rose from a correctional officer to a national supervisor, specializing in parenting, education, and leadership, particularly regarding parental incarceration effects. Gantt earned national recognition for pioneering policies and programs that enhanced staff and inmate development. Co-author of "Raising Scholars from Infancy to Adulthood," she serves on the NY Zero to Three Network board. Leveraging her authorship, educational, auditing, and supervisory roles, she aids leaders in fostering cultural growth. Dedicated to amplifying opportunities for underrepresented educators and leaders, Gantt champions education and professionalism.



David Shapiro, David M. Shapiro serves as Director of the MPA-Inspection-& Oversight program at John Jay College. David provides instruction in fraud examination, financial forensics, and managerial inspection and oversight-related courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels under the Department of Public Management. Among his published works is a special chapter for the book How They

Got Away with It: White Collar Criminals and the Financial Meltdown. Also of special note, he co-authored (with Javier Ortega) a book on how citizens and the public interest are being shortchanged in the global economy (viz., Global Enterprise and Private Profits), published in October 2023.



Sara Belligoni, Dr. Belligoni is a disaster scientist and Assistant Professor of Emergency Management at CUNY–John Jay College. Her research explores the physical, social, and policy dimensions of disasters, examining how climate change intensifies storms and hurricanes, and how seismic hazards and tsunamis threaten communities. She develops early warning systems and evacuation planning while focusing on flood risk, floodplain management, and post-disaster energy security for medically vulnerable populations. Centered on Puerto Rico and other small islands, she partners with local stakeholders to integrate lived experiences and co-create practical resilience solutions. She collaborates across disciplines to support communities and practitioners while training future emergency management leaders.

CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: JASON RIVERA

DAY 1 – IN-PERSON SESSION – APRIL 21, 2026

Panel I: Crisis, Resiliency & Leadership



Dora Mendez, Mpa (She/Her/Ella)

Founder & CEO, Coach Dora LLC

Coaching Through Crisis: Building Resilient Leadership for Gender Equity in Local Government Dora Mendez, MPA | Founder & CEO, Coach Dora LLC

When federal policies shift, the consequences land hardest in city halls and county offices, where public servants must translate abstract mandates into decisions that affect real families and communities. Drawing on executive coaching practice with local and state government leaders, this presentation examines how public administrators can sustain gender equity commitments amid federal uncertainty.

Two practitioner-developed frameworks anchor the discussion. *Adaptive equity intelligence* describes a leader's capacity to navigate a volatile political landscape while remaining grounded in core equity values — building unlikely coalitions and refusing to treat inequity as inevitable. *Equity insurance* addresses the structural dimension of resilience: diversifying funding streams and building redundant support systems so that no single federal policy shift can dismantle locally designed equity infrastructure.

The presentation argues that gender equity must function as a governing lens — not a standalone initiative — prompting leaders to ask who is differentially affected by every budget cut and service decision. It also foregrounds the coaching imperative: the emotional labor of this work demands intentional leadership development to prevent burnout. The session closes by calling for new public administration training models that prepare practitioners to advance justice even in environments that resist it.

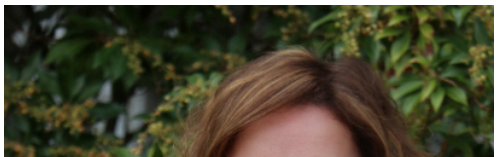
Dora Mendez Bio

Dora Mendez, MPA (she/her/ella) is the Founder & CEO of Coach Dora LLC and an Affiliate Practitioner at the Initiative for Gender Equity in the Public Sector (IGEPS). A seasoned Fractional Chief Human Resources Officer, she brings more than 12 years of C-suite leadership experience across nonprofit, public sector, and technology-adjacent organizations.

Dora's expertise spans talent strategy, organizational design, leadership development, and DEI integration, grounded in a decade of public service investigating workplace discrimination. This rare blend of compliance rigor and strategic HR leadership shapes her approach to advancing gender equity in local government.

An adjunct professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice for 15 years, she is a contributing author to *Latinas Rising Up in HR Vol. 3: Executive Edition* and *Extraordinary Latinas Vol. IV*. She hosts the *Building Leadership Community* podcast and writes the weekly Substack *Coach Dora's Beyond Heritage Months: Sunday Reflections*.

Learn more at www.coachdoramendez.com.



Lynette Garcia-Johnson, Ms, Chc

Chief Administrative Officer, Andrus's Sanctuary Institute

Promoting Safety and Healing through the Sanctuary Model

The Sanctuary Model is like a blueprint for turning an organization into a place where safety is not just a rule, it is the atmosphere. It is a trauma-informed, evidence-supported framework that helps organizations understand how trauma affects people and systems, and then intentionally build cultures that promote healing, resilience, and healthy relationships.

At its heart, the Sanctuary Model answers one powerful question:

"How do we create environments that do not re-traumatize, but instead help people and staff feel safe, seen, and supported?"

🌱 What is the Sanctuary Model?

It is an organizational change model that focuses on:

Understanding trauma and its impact on individuals and systems

Creating a shared language and structure for emotional intelligence

Building a culture of safety, collaboration, and accountability

Supporting both those receiving services and those providing them

It is not a program you "run." It is a way you be as an organization.

Think of it as emotional architecture. Just like buildings need strong foundations, trauma-responsive organizations need structures that support psychological safety and trust.

Organizations use the model to transform daily practice, leadership, and culture through the use of 4 tools, including: 4 Pillars, 7 Commitments, SELF framework and the Sanctuary Toolkit.

🌟 Benefits of the Sanctuary Model

For individuals served:

Increased emotional and physical safety

Reduced re-traumatization

Stronger relationships with caregivers and staff

Greater emotional regulation and resilience

A sense of belonging and voice

For staff:

Lower burnout and secondary trauma

Increased support and emotional awareness

Clear expectations and shared values

Improved teamwork and morale

A culture where accountability is compassionate, not punitive

For organizations:

Stronger, healthier workplace culture

Improved outcomes and service quality

Reduced crisis incidents

Greater consistency in decision-making

Alignment between mission, values, and daily practice

✨ In simple terms

The Sanctuary Model helps organizations move:

From control → to connection

From reaction → to reflection
From survival mode → to growth mode
It transforms workplaces into ecosystems of care, where safety grows like sunlight through windows, relationships become the roots, and accountability becomes the water that helps everyone thrive.

Lynette Garcia-Johnson Bio

Lynette Garcia-Johnson, MS, CHC, serves as Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer at Andrus in Yonkers, New York. She is also an Adjunct Faculty member at the College of Westchester in White Plains, New York. An executive leader with over 20 years of experience in nonprofit human services and healthcare management, Lynette brings extensive expertise in organizational operations, compliance, and strategic leadership.

Lynette earned her master's degree from Stony Brook University in New York and holds an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Health Care Management, as well as an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Health Care Quality Management. She is Certified in Healthcare Compliance (CHC) and is recognized for her strong commitment to quality, accountability, and continuous improvement across mission-driven organizations.

Bilingual in Spanish and a Notary Public, Lynette is known for her ability to lead with professionalism, cultural awareness, and a deep understanding of the communities she serves. In 2021, she received the Power Woman of Long Island Award and is a founding board member of the 100 Hispanic Women of Long Island Chapter, reflecting her dedication to leadership development and community impact.



SHEYING CHEN, PH.D.

Professor, Pace University

Resiliency Leadership and the Role of Social Policy: Navigating the Crisis of Public Administration

The search for "resiliency leadership" often overlooks the very discipline that provided the profession's foundational stability: social policy. This presentation argues that the current crises shaking public administration—ranging from geopolitical fragmentation to the erosion of social welfare in favor of securitization—stem from a fundamental imbalance in General Public Policy (GPP).

Drawing on decades of research into a politicalized "Economic State" and the transition toward a "Post-Economic State," Dr. Chen posits that the "heyday" of public administration was characterized by a synergistic relationship between economic growth and social progress. However, contemporary leadership often falls into the trap of "extremism"—either through over-economicization, or a reactive turn toward re-politicization, or even a tendency toward "warfare state"—which undermines peace, justice, and long-term resiliency.

The central argument is that social policy research must be reclaimed as the guiding discipline for public service. By utilizing the "Problem-GPP-ism" triple prism and advocating for balanced development based on a systems framework in public policy analysis, resiliency leadership can move beyond mere crisis management. True leadership in times of crisis requires a commitment to peace and justice through a "dynamic balance" of GPP, ensuring that social equity is not sacrificed for security. The speech concludes that restoring social policy to its rightful place in the administrative hierarchy is the only viable path to sustainable governance and a truly resilient public sector.

Sheying Chen Bio

Professor Sheying Chen holds a Ph.D. and MSW from UCLA and is a tenured professor of Public Policy at Pace University. He is a former dean of business and public administration, with extensive research on social work, healthcare, aging, national development, and global leadership.



Sardia L. Anderson, M.S.Ed.

Founder, Scholarly Quarters, LLC

Beyond Stability: Leading Educational Systems in Times of Crisis

Periods of crisis such as public health emergencies economic instability and social upheaval place extraordinary pressure on educational systems and the leaders who sustain them. This presentation examines how resilient educational leadership within public and higher education settings supports continuity learning and community trust during times of disruption. Grounded in lived experience practitioner insight and applied research the presenter explores leadership practices that prioritize equity adaptability and student centered decision making.

The session highlights how values driven leadership cross sector collaboration and culturally responsive pedagogy strengthen institutional resilience in schools colleges and universities. Particular attention is given to how educational leaders support educators and staff maintain student engagement and respond to the needs of historically marginalized communities during crisis conditions. Through case based examples and reflective analysis participants will gain practical strategies for fostering resilience at both the classroom and institutional levels.

This presentation contributes to broader conversations about leadership and innovation in public service by centering education as a critical site for crisis response and long term transformation. It offers actionable insights for educators administrators policymakers and community partners committed to equitable and sustainable educational systems.

Sardia L. Anderson Bio

Sardia L. Anderson, M.S.Ed: Award-winning author, guest speaker, business owner, and educator. Founder of Scholarly Quarters, LLC, Sardia Anderson is a thought leader with nearly two decades of experience spanning public education, higher education, and community-based learning. Her work centers on leadership, equity, and systemic transformation in education, empowering learners, educators, and communities to thrive.



JAVONIA SMITH

Wellness Strategist, Facilitator, and Co-founder of ReForum Consulting

Resilience in the Room: An Interactive Pre-Panel Engagement

Javonia Smith is a wellness strategist, facilitator, and Co-founder of ReForum Consulting, a firm specializing in curated experiences that center wellness, community engagement, and meaningful connections through interactive and reflective workshops. Through this pre-panel engagement, Smith will help participants reflect on resilience, connection, and the importance of intentional wellness practices in leadership and public service.

Javonia Smith Bio

Javonia Smith is a wellness strategist, facilitator, and Co-founder of ReForum Consulting, a firm specializing in curated experiences that center wellness, community engagement, and meaningful connections through interactive and reflective workshops. Her work focuses on creating spaces that support reflection, well-being, and authentic connection, helping individuals and organizations strengthen resilience and foster healthier communities.

Panel II: Future Leaders Reflect on The Importance of Relationships in Correctional Environments



Shermarke Thomas

John Jay College Alum | NYC Substitute Teacher

Future Leaders Reflect on The Importance of Relationships in Correctional Environments

Strong relationships are essential to effective and humane correctional environments. Future leaders explore the importance of relationships between correctional staff, incarcerated individuals, families, and the surrounding community. As future professionals prepare to enter leadership roles, they must also examine the gap that can exist between institutional expectations and the lived experiences of correctional staff, particularly in areas such as communication, trust-building, and community engagement.

This session highlights how the Good Morning Parents (GMP) 6 Pillar Model can serve as a framework for preparing future leaders to strengthen relationships and promote positive institutional culture. The model emphasizes leadership development, family engagement, community partnerships, personal growth, accountability, and communication as essential elements for creating supportive correctional environments.

Participants will explore how applying the 6 Pillars can enhance collaboration among correctional staff, support the rehabilitation and reintegration of incarcerated individuals, and strengthen connections with families and communities. By fostering trust, mutual respect, and shared responsibility, the model encourages a more productive and balanced correctional culture.

Through discussion and reflection, this workshop equips future leaders with practical strategies to promote relationship-centered leadership that supports safety, productivity, and long-term community impact.

Shermarke Thomas Bio

My name is Shermarke Thomas, and I am an Alum from John Jay College of Criminal Justice twice over. Currently, I am a NYC Sub- Teacher and help out in my community. I have two goals: to become an associate professor and end Felony Disenfranchisement.

BECKY SHI



Student, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Becky Shi is a Criminal Justice major with a minor in Emergency Management. She interns as an Event Planning & Community Outreach Peer Support Leader at Good Morning Parents. She aims to create meaningful impact through her future work in the criminal justice field.

CAMILA AMADOR



Student, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Camila Amador is a criminology student. She is also a Good Morning Parents Communication & Marketing Intern. Camila is an aspiring child advocacy specialist dedicated to improving outcomes for vulnerable children.

KRISTINE KALU



Student, Fordham University

Kristine Kalu is a psychology student with a minor in marketing. She is also a Good Morning Parents Event Planning & Community Outreach Intern. Kristine is an aspiring child psychologist with a strong interest in how incarceration affects children and family systems.

DAY 2 – VIRTUAL SESSION – APRIL 23, 2026

6:00 PM – 6:10 PM

Jason Rivera, Ph.D, Opening Remarks.

Chair, Department of Public Management
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Dr. Rivera will welcome participants to the virtual session and reflect on the importance of resilient leadership in times of crisis. He will highlight the symposium's goals of advancing dialogue, innovation, and collaboration in public service.

Panel III: Leadership When It Matters Most

6:10 PM – 7:15 PM

Moderator: David Shapiro, Ph.D

- **Mariama Diallo, M.A.**
  Examining the Experiences of African Immigrant College Students in New York City: Challenges and Resilience
- **Jyoti Aggarwal**
  Evolving Administrative Leadership: Linking Core Competencies to Outcomes
- **Rev. Dr. Deborah D. Jenkins**
  Majority Power, Minority Obligation: Resilient Leadership Across Political Difference
- **Denise Colon**
  Operational Risk and Workforce Stabilization (ORWS) Framework



MARIAMA DIALLO, M.A.

City College of New York (CCNY)

Examining the Experiences of African Immigrant College Students in New York City: Challenges and Resilience

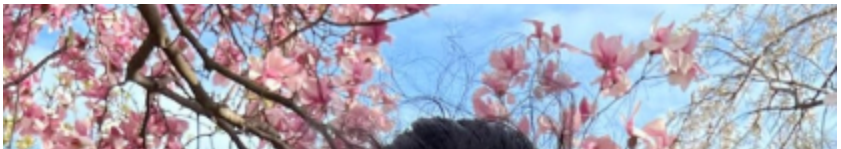
study examined the challenges and resilience of African immigrant college students in New York City, including how they adapt, cope, and succeed within the complexity of higher education. Using resilience theory and acculturation theory, a mixed-method approach was employed to capture both the psychological and social aspects of their experiences. Interviews with five participants (N = 5) documented themes of financial stress, cultural adaptation challenges, academic pressure, and social isolation, as well as strong coping mechanisms such as faith, community support, and cultural pride. Quantitative analyses, based on survey data from 25 students (N = 25) using validated measures including the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS), and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) confirmed the close relationship between psychological distress and acculturative stress. A significant positive correlation was found between distress and acculturative stress ($r = .695$, $p < .001$). Together, the results show how these students overcome systemic challenges and personal conflicts while developing resilience based on cultural identification and social support networks. The study highlights the need for colleges and universities to offer culturally relevant counseling, mentorship programs, and institutional practices that validate African centered immigrant identities and encourage inclusion. This study adds to the existing psychological literature on immigrant mental health by drawing on the rarely included perspectives of African immigrant students. It also underscores the importance of resilience as an approach for understanding success and well-being in diverse educational settings.

Key words: African immigrants, college students, acculturative stress, resilience, mental health, higher education, cultural adaptation, mixed-method, NYC

Mariama Diallo Bio

MARIAMA DIALLO, M.A, first generation student, completed her Master's of Arts in Psychology in December 2025. Her academic interests include immigrant mental health, trauma, resilience, and culturally relevant treatment. During her undergraduate studies, she conducted a study on the experiences of African immigrant college students in New York City, focusing on the challenges they encounter as well as the coping techniques and strengths that contribute to their wellness.

Mariama is now preparing her study for publication, with the objective of contributing to literature that prioritizes underrepresented backgrounds and supports immigrant community resilience. She is passionate about establishing inclusive treatment practices and aspires to further her study and work experience in psychology and education



JYOTI AGGARWAL

Ph.D. Candidate, University of Texas at Dallas

Evolving Administrative Leadership: Linking Core Competencies to Outcomes

This article offers an evidence-based understanding of the strategic administrative leadership framework in public organizations by presenting the results of a systematic literature review of 183 peer-reviewed studies published between 2003 and 2025 in the field of public administration. Notably, it focuses on two primary research questions: How can administrative leadership in public organizations be more clearly defined and operationalized to enhance its analytic and practical utility? What key leadership dimensions or competencies are missing from existing administrative leadership frameworks, such as Van Wart's, and how do these omissions limit our understanding of outcome achievement in public agencies? Findings reveal five strategic administrative leadership competencies and five categories of organizational outcomes, highlighting underrepresented dimensions such as digital adaptation, equity-centered leadership, and innovation capacity. This article contributes to theory and practice by providing an augmented framework that connects leadership competencies to organizational performance, governance capacity, and the achievement of strategic outcomes.

Jyoti Aggarwal Bio

Jyoti Aggarwal is a forth-year PhD student at the University of Texas at Dallas in Public Administration. Her research includes work on leadership, human resources, regulations, public management, policy analysis, and performance. She serves as a graduate teaching associate at the University of Texas at Dallas. Her dissertation is focused on examining the role of administrative leadership in regulatory processes. Her recent paper From Pawn to King: Leveraging Chess for Leadership Development through Creative Education was published in the Journal of Public Affairs Education in 2025. She has a master's degree in science education and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Lynchburg.



REV. DR. DEBORAH D. JENKINS

President / Founder, Pressley Family Institute / Faith at Work Christian Church

Majority Power, Minority Obligation: Resilient Leadership Across Political Difference

In periods of political polarization and institutional strain, public leaders face a critical test of democratic resilience: how to govern responsibly when electoral power does not reflect unanimous public support. This presentation explores how governing parties can exercise authority

without isolating or marginalizing communities that did not align politically with those in power, particularly during moments of crisis.

Drawing on lived experience, public ethics, and case-based analysis, the presentation argues that democratic resilience is sustained not solely through majority rule, but through the intentional inclusion of political minorities in governance processes. When disagreement is conflated with disloyalty or civic unworthiness, public institutions risk eroding trust, legitimacy, and social cohesion—outcomes that weaken crisis response rather than strengthen it.

The presentation introduces a practical leadership framework centered on five principles: representation as a duty rather than a reward; separation of policy disagreement from civic belonging; equity-based impact analysis that accounts for politically marginalized groups; protection of institutional safeguards that outlast partisan power; and moral humility as a leadership practice. Particular attention is given to how marginalized communities experience exclusion when shifts in political power lead to policy neglect, symbolic erasure, or disengagement from public decision-making.

By reframing inclusion as a governance obligation rather than a partisan concession, this session contributes to conversations on leadership and innovation in the public sector. It positions resilient leadership as the capacity to govern across political difference without converting dissent into civic exile—especially in times of crisis.

Rev. Dr. Deborah D. Jenkins Bio

Rev. Dr. Deborah D. Jenkins is a public theologian, educator, and community advocate whose work centers on democratic ethics, reparative justice, and the protection of marginalized communities. She is the Founder of the Pressley Family Institute and Senior Pastor of Faith at Work Christian Church, where she leads education-focused initiatives at the intersection of faith, public policy, and social justice. Dr. Jenkins previously served as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Public Management at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, bringing academic and practitioner perspectives to public-sector leadership and governance. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies and has extensive experience facilitating civic engagement, public dialogue, and community-based policy education. Her scholarship and praxis focus on institutional legitimacy, moral authority, and public trust during periods of political and social crisis.



DENIS COLON

Founder of Grace & Grit by Precious Stones Industries, and author of Beauty after the breakdown

Denise Colón, M.P.A., is an author, founder, and transformational leader with over a decade of experience driving systems-level change across correctional, healthcare, nonprofit, and supply chain environments. As a Former Correction Officer for the New York City Department of Correction, she developed foundational insight into workforce dynamics within high-risk environments. As a graduate of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, she integrates public administration expertise with operational strategy, automation, and robotics to improve workforce performance and expand healthcare access. She has held leadership roles at Hackensack

Meridian Health, the Food Bank for New York City, and HelloFresh, advancing data-informed strategies that strengthen workforce stability and reduce operational risk.

Presentation: Operational Risk and Workforce Stabilization (ORWS) Framework

This presentation introduces the Operational Risk and Workforce Stabilization (ORWS) Framework, an innovative, data-informed model designed to identify early warning signals and stabilize high-risk workforce environments. Developed through cross-sector experience in corrections, healthcare, and large-scale operations, ORWS integrates key operational indicators including workforce attendance patterns, use-of-force trends, incident frequency, and variability in performance to detect disruption before escalation occurs.

Traditional approaches to operational risk often rely on reactive interventions. In contrast, the ORWS Framework emphasizes proactive identification and prevention through systems thinking and Lean Six Sigma principles. By analyzing patterns across both individual and facility-level data, the model enables leadership to recognize emerging risks tied to workforce fatigue, behavioral shifts, and environmental stressors.

Grounded in both lived experience and data analytics, this framework bridges the gap between frontline insight and executive decision-making. It offers a structured methodology for improving workforce stability, enhancing safety, and supporting sustainable operational performance in complex institutional settings.

This work is particularly relevant for high-demand environments such as correctional facilities, healthcare systems, and public sector organizations, where workforce instability directly impacts outcomes. The ORWS Framework is positioned as a scalable and adaptable solution, with potential for pilot implementation through a minimum viable product (MVP) model. Ultimately, this approach aims to strengthen organizational resilience while centering the well-being and effectiveness of the workforce.

Virtual Closing Remarks: Elsa-Sofia Morote, Symposium Chair

7:15 PM – 7:30 PM

Virtual Closing Remarks- Elsa-Sofia Morote, Chair of the Symposium

Participants will be thanked for their engagement and contributions to the symposium. Closing reflections will reinforce the themes of resilience, innovation, and leadership in public service.

Poster Presentations (on Day 1)

MOHAMMAD SYEDFAZLAYRABBE

Poster: Politics Over Safety: Why It Happens - Case Study: Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the Comprehensive List of Bloomberg's Bans



Mohammad Syedfazlayrabbe, a dedicated Security Management student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY), minoring in Public Administration, with a 4.00 GPA and expected graduation in 2026. I earned an AAS in Business Management from BMCC in 2023 with a 3.967 GPA. I have hands-on experience in public safety, customer service, and community engagement through roles with NYPD Auxiliary Police, airport operations, and college programs. I bring strong communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills, and I am seeking opportunities in security management, public administration, and government to grow
professionally and contribute effectively.

The poster examines the soda prohibition in New York City under Michael Bloomberg as a case study to investigate how political considerations can take precedence over public safety in government decision-making. The goal of the 2012–2014 strategy was to minimize obesity and related disorders by limiting the size of sugary drinks. The strategy faced strong criticism from stakeholders, including business associations, civil rights campaigners, and the public, despite substantial public health research supporting it. The conflict between political reality and public health goals is the main topic of this research. It demonstrates how civil liberties organizations contended that the legislation limited individual freedom, while corporate organizations voiced concerns about financial losses. The majority of New Yorkers were against prohibition, according to public opinion surveys, making it challenging for lawmakers to maintain support. Additionally, the courts overturned the policy because of legal challenges.
The research paper examines how known and unknown hazards were managed using the Rumsfeld Matrix. Policymakers were aware of the health hazards associated with sugar-filled beverages, but they failed to account for public outcry, legal obstacles, and political opposition. Studies show that evidence is insufficient for effective public policy. Effective communication, stakeholder participation, and political viability are all equally crucial. The study suggests that for public health policies to be successful over the long run, they must strike a balance between scientific data and social and political reality.

Keywords: public health, soda ban, stakeholder conflict, political influence, Rumsfeld
Matrix, decision-making.

FREDERICKA WALKER

Poster: Legionnaires' disease and exposure outbreaks during the Flint Water Crisis
Crisis in 2014.



Fredericka Walker is a junior at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, studying Public Administration. Her interests include the intersection of education, government, and the private sector. Specifically, their implications on public policy. She has conducted independent research on racial inequality in the U.S. penal system, the Federal Reserve's responsibility for intervention, and the consequences of insular democratic practices under Presidents John F. Kennedy and George W. Bush. Her work at the symposium
provides a case study and public policy analysis of the administrative leadership failures of local and state officials that contributed to the 2014 water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

Her poster examines Legionnaires' disease and lead exposure outbreaks during the Flint Water Crisis in 2014. The water crisis reveals the critical socio-economic vulnerabilities facing marginalized communities. Findings demonstrate budgetary means overshadowed the humanitarian focus associated with Flint's local pipeline construction. Emergency Manager Darnell Earley's prioritization of Flint's fiscal recovery resulted in improper procedural decisions regarding the city's water supply change. Insufficient transparency by state and local government undermined the efficacy of response efforts eroding residents' trust in local leadership. Using a case study and policy analysis approach, this paper argues the interconnection between Flint's fiscal crisis and subsequent public health outbreak. Transactional leadership strategies delegated by Emergency Manager Earley prioritized Flint's financial crisis, issuing poor oversight on precautionary measures when transitioning the city's water supply. In addition, the paper suggests greater efficiency through an alternative adaptive leadership approach by local officials. Moreover, a situational leadership approach was required for addressing the water crisis. The leadership style promotes adaptivity and collaboration needed across state and local agencies to expedite decision-making processes to stabilize Flint's water treatment infrastructure.
Failed leadership strategies and evasive response measures by Emergency Manager Earley and other public officials remain the legacy of the water crisis. In conclusion, the public health epidemic in Flint exemplifies the responsibilities of public managers to possess the accountability and dynamic leadership required in times of crisis.

SOPHIA MANCUSI

Poster: The COVID-19 pandemic has created long-standing pressures and burnout for much of the US nursing workforce

My name is Sophia Mancusi, and I am interested in human and animal rights. I'm a current WCS employee with 4 years of experience and counting! Have received five academic honors as a student of John Jay (CUNY). I strive for academic excellence and a balance of time with my personal interests. Engaging with and learning about the world around me not only enriches my life but also the lives of those I share my learning with. I am grateful for every opportunity I have and am always willing to use them to enrich the lives of those around me. Every day is a new opportunity for you and me; it is up to us to make the best of it. Currently on my journey to secure both a Criminology Bachelor's degree and a Public Administration Master's! Traveling the boroughs to share a bit of history with everyone walking through the crossroads of the world

Poster Description: The COVID-19 pandemic has created long-standing pressures and burnout for much of the US nursing workforce. Currently, in America, it has been 7 years since the pandemic, but the field has changed as a result. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, at least 1500 nurses passed away from COVID-19 exposure. Many nurses felt burnt out due to a lack of support from the government and communities fighting COVID-19.

The pandemic created a drought of nurses and medical professionals throughout all 50 states as many could not put up with the workday. It was a troubling experience for all nurses and medical staff who were deemed essential workers by the state yet felt mistreated by those around them. Many nurses felt the pressure to quit; many did, and the hospital beds that they serviced were never empty. Understaffing and long shifts were a catastrophic problem for hospitals. Intensive care was compromised by the number of people being rushed in and out of the hospital.

One report stated "In this large, nationally representative survey of licensed nurses, approximately 50% of respondents reported feeling emotionally drained (50.8%), used up (56.4%), fatigued (49.7%), or burned out (45.1%) "a few times a week" or "every day." More than a quarter of the workforce also reported feeling at the end of their rope (29.4%) at a similar frequency. This analysis confirms some of the potential drivers of these trends, such as significant increases in nurses' workload during the pandemic (62%)." (J Nurs Regul, 2023 Apr 5)Smiley, R. A., Leresche, L., West, C. D., et al. (2023). Examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on burnout and retention of the nursing workforce. Journal of Nursing Regulation, 14(1), 4–15. doi.

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