



ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION



April 24, 2025.

CCNY wins half million-dollar grant for fellowships program directed by CMLL Professor Isabel M. Estrada. Congratulations for the achievement!

The CCNY grant announcement follows.

Half million-dollar grant to CCNY paves pathway to STEM graduate education

The City College of New York received a three-year, \$500,000 grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's Exemplary Pathways to STEM Graduate Program to create a CCNY-based program to guide CUNY community college students to CUNY STEM graduate education. The program will be known as "CUNY STEM And Research Scholars Bridge Program," or CUNY STARS.

The brainchild of [Karin A. Block-Cora](#), professor of Earth and Atmospheric Science in CCNY's Division of Science, CUNY STARS will be incorporated under the City College Fellowships Program, which is directed by Professor of Iberian and Latin American Cultures [Isabel M. Estrada](#). CCFELL, as it is known, aims to support and retain these students in the STEM pathway to graduate school, and to achieve enduring procedural, institutional, and cultural change. The program will be evaluated for its impact on student career trajectories and self-perception in STEM, as well as cultural change in faculty.

To support the fellows throughout the duration of their involvement, CUNY STARS will provide mentoring by peers, alumni, faculty, and program

coordinators. Fellows will have access to a wide network of alumni who are either current CUNY doctoral students or those who hold faculty positions elsewhere in the U.S.

Students will participate in cohort activities for community support, professional development and networking sessions. They will also conduct research-focused curriculum at community colleges before and after transferring to four-year colleges.

Recruitment and selection of the first three cohorts of 10 student fellows (five each from Borough of Manhattan Community College and Queensborough Community College) for September 2025 commenced in April.

“This program would integrate community college students into growth-oriented multi-institutional pathways within the CUNY system to foster their access to graduate education, and to effect systemic change,” said Estrada. “This robust bridge program, designed to support students starting in the last year of community college through their completion at CCNY, should result in at least half of the fellows transferring to CCNY, and at least one quarter enrolling in graduate degree programs.”

“Our community college students come in with the incredible social capital that is very important and contributes a lot to our community,” said Block-Cora. “We need to harness that talent, not just because it's the right thing, but also because it's a huge source of our diversity and our identity as CUNY. Part of what we're trying to do is to change attitudes that see community college students as not as capable as their four-year counterparts. CUNY STARS places these students where they belong: right in the stream with these elite scholars that go on to graduate school and do really great things.”