

DR. JOSÉ L. CRUZ IS APPOINTED LEHMAN COLLEGE'S THIRD PRESIDENT ^[1]

Submitted by [Zulmarie Perez Horta](#) ^[2] on 7 June 2016 - 7:10pm



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Dr. José L. Cruz

The Board of Trustees of The City University of New York today appointed Dr. José L. Cruz, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at California State University, Fullerton, and a frequent speaker and writer on higher education issues, as the third president of Herbert H. Lehman College in the Bronx. Chancellor James B. Milliken recommended Cruz's appointment following a nationwide search.

The selection, approved unanimously by the Board's Executive Committee, is effective August 15, 2016. The search was conducted by a Board committee chaired by Trustee Valerie Beal that included trustees, faculty, students, an alumnus and a CUNY college president. Cruz replaces President Ricardo R. Fernández, who has led Lehman with great distinction for 26 years through a period of significant expansion and is CUNY's longest-serving among the University's current presidents.

Chancellor James B. Milliken called Cruz, an electrical engineer and inventor in addition to his administrative and other leadership roles, “an outstanding choice” to head Lehman, which has expanded degree programs, its technological infrastructure and science and research facilities in recent years. “Dr. Cruz is a proven academic leader who has accomplished much at one of the largest and most diverse public universities in the nation,” the Chancellor said. “He is an experienced and effective academic administrator with an impressive record of achievements. His dedication to high academic quality, to enhancing college access for low-income and underrepresented students, and improving graduation rates and achievement gaps, will serve Lehman College and CUNY well.”

Cruz became Cal State Fullerton’s Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Professor of Computer Engineering, in 2012. As provost of the 39,000-student university, he has been responsible for the strategic and operational initiatives of eight colleges and a variety of other academic and administrative units, and for managing an annual budget of approximately \$260 million, among many other responsibilities.

He previously served as Vice President of Higher Education Policy and Practice at The Education Trust in Washington, D.C., an advocacy and research organization dedicated to high academic achievement at all levels. There, Cruz oversaw the national Access to Success Initiative and was involved in efforts to regulate the for-profit college industry and protect the federal Pell Grant program. Cruz is also a former Vice President for Student Affairs of the 11-campus University of Puerto Rico system, where he also served as the coordinator of UPR’s strategic planning efforts. He is a former faculty member at UPR-Mayaguez, where he received early promotion to the rank of professor and chaired the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department and as Dean of Academic Affairs.

Fluent in English and Spanish, Cruz has published extensively in scientific journals and international conferences and his scientific work has been funded by federal and state agencies, private foundations, individual donors, private investors and corporations. He is a senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and a National Science Foundation Career Award recipient, serves on the boards of directors of The Education Trust and the national Association of Chief Academic Officers, and is a faculty member of the Western Academic Leadership Academy.

Cruz received his Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, and his master’s and Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology. He has a professional certification from the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education.

Founded in 1968, Lehman College is a senior college located on 37 acres in the northwest Bronx, offering 51 undergraduate majors and programs, 46 graduate degree programs, 17 graduate certificates, and 11 doctoral programs in conjunction with the CUNY Graduate Center. Its fall 2015 enrollment totaled 12,807, including 10,800 undergraduates and 2,007 graduate students.

During President Fernández’s tenure, Lehman has developed new majors and degree programs, including an undergraduate degree in business and graduate degrees in social work, public health and business. The college has also expanded its technological infrastructure and facilities,

including most recently a \$16 million Multimedia Center and the \$70 million, state-of-the-art Science Hall, the largest academic investment in Lehman's history and part of a three-phase complex dedicated to research and science.

Since the Spring 2013 semester, Lehman has seen a 40 percent growth in online/hybrid classes, and as of the Fall 2014 semester, nearly a quarter of all classes at the college were either online, hybrid or Web-enhanced. Lehman has also increased its level of grants and contracts, and become a major resource for the economic, cultural and educational development of the Bronx.

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