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### Celebrating Academic Excellence in Research at Kingsborough Community College

BY DR. CLAUDIA SCHRADER

For Nawel Messaoudi, a biology major at Kingsborough Community College (KCC), the opportunity to research the role of gut microbiota in the progression of COVID-19 disease severity was an important part of her academic journey at KCC and her aspiration to become a biomedical researcher.

And she wasn't alone. One of the highlights of KCC's spring semester this year was our CUNY Research Scholars Program (CRSP) presentations. Our MAC Rotunda was filled with students and mentors sharing the amazing projects they have worked on together throughout the year. Creative and groundbreaking topic presentations ranged from the effect of social media engagement on users to post-recovery impacts of COVID-19 on the body.

I'm proud that KCC received funding to enroll 18 students in this year's CRSP. It's a rigorous program that aims to increase the participation of CUNY community college students in faculty-mentored research. Students are required to attend career development seminars, give oral and poster presenta-



CRSP students highlight KCC's research at LaGuardia Community College.

tions, attend career development seminars, and produce a publication-quality research poster or PowerPoint presentation.

Funding for programs like this is essential for the growth of STEM and non-STEM education, that will enable students to explore new ideas and technology.

"More importantly, it represents the development of a new generation of researchers who will ultimately become leaders in their own particular disciplines and potentially make a great impact in academia, industry, and beyond,"

noted Dr. Farshad Tamari, a KCC professor, mentor since the program's inception and now as director. He and Frances Samuel have tirelessly guided students for several years. "Our students have chosen a worthwhile journey! My hope is that they all continue this path," said Dr. Tamari.

Our CRSP program culminated in a CUNY-wide presentation at the CRSP Symposium held at LaGuardia Community College last month. KCC students, scholars, and faculty mentors shared with their peers from other CUNY CRSP programs



KCC CRSP student Nawel Messaoudi explains her poster presentation at the CRSP Symposium at LaGuardia Community College.



KCC CRSP student and selected featured speaker Celeste McKenzie presents her poster at LaGuardia Community College.

the research they completed in fall 2022 and spring 2023. And, Celeste McKenzie represented KCC as a featured speaker.

We had three poster winners, which were presented by four student scholars Nawel, Dimitra Gkioula, and the duo Stefan Valdez and Ani Iremashvili.

In addition, eight Kingsborough students were selected to participate in the CUNY Undergraduate Research Conference (CURC) at Borough of Manhattan Community College, which included students from two- and four-year colleges.

Congratulations to all the scholars and mentors; they did a great job!

*To encourage undergraduate participation in authentic scientific research and increase persistence in STEM disciplines, CUNY is funding mentored laboratory experiences for CUNY community college students over one year. Funding for next year has been confirmed, and KCC will begin its recruitment soon. For more information: <https://www.cuny.edu/research/research-development-programs/student-programs/undergraduate-programs/cuny-research-scholars-program/>.*