



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

## **Senate Celebrates a Successful 2013 Unidad Latina Conference**

Dean G. Skelos

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*College Scholarships Awarded to Young Leaders,  
Informative Workshops Among the Highlights of the Two-Day Event*

The New York State Senate today celebrated the conclusion of the third annual Unidad Latina conference, which brought hundreds of community, business, and elected leaders together to help increase economic opportunities for the growing Hispanic community in New York State. The conference was held on September 27th and 28th, 2013, in Manhattan.

“I would like to thank the Hispanic Federation and the hundreds of participants and partners who helped make this year’s Unidad Latina a tremendously successful event,” Senate Majority Co-Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “The input we received will help set the agenda for next year’s Legislative session. We will fight to do everything we can to help Hispanic businesses grow and prosper, provide children with a quality education, and strengthen families.”

The conference included policy workshops, networking opportunities, and presentations featuring prominent speakers from the private and public sectors. Senator Skelos was joined by state elected officials including Senators Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk), Catharine Young (R-I-C, Olean), John Flanagan (R-C-I, East Northport), Martin Golden (R-C, Brooklyn), Kemp Hannon (R, Nassau), Jack Martins (R-C-I, Mineola), Lee Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley), and Brad Hoylman (D -Manhattan), Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis (R-C-I, East Shore), and Assemblyman Peter Lopez (R-C-I, Schoharie).

Saturday’s Líderes Luncheon included an awards presentation for the second annual Unidad Latina scholarships to college-bound high school seniors. Each of the students was nominated by Senators and Assembly Members to receive \$2,000 for college. The awardees were chosen by an independent committee upon demonstrating academic achievement and community service.

The \$2,000 scholarship winners were: William Torres, West Hempstead; Krystal Rosado, Elmont; Camila Bueno, Valley Stream; Hugo Sanchez, North Bellmore;

Jasmine Kapamas, Massapequa; Yasmine Koutsivos, Elmont; Gabrielle Batista, Hicksville; Natalie Aurea Santiago, Elmont; Michael Pereira, West Babylon; Adriana Sealey, Brentwood; Priscilla Torres, Staten Island; Erika Gonzalez, Levittown; Jason Laguna, Thiells; Elizabeth Mosquera, Shirley; Stephanie Torres, Mastic Beach; Samantha Rivera, Brooklyn; Jesus U. Cruz-Gonzalez, Medford; Ashley Abreu, Staten Island; and Alexandria Velazquez, Bronx.

In addition, special awards were presented throughout the conference to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Hispanic community, including:

- \* The Unidad Latina Legacy Award: Jay Hershenson, City University of New York's Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations and Secretary of the Board of Trustees;
- \* The Unidad Latina Businessman of the Year Award: Jaime Lucero, President of Gold and Silver, Inc., and Casa Puebla;
- \* The Unidad Latina Businesswoman of the Year Award: Patricia Turker, Independent National Sales Director with Mary Kay Cosmetics;
- \* The Unidad Latina Humanitarian Award: Jorge A. Borda, Senior Vice President, Universal Views TV Productions;
- \* The Unidad Latina Community Advocate Award: Suleika Cabrera Drinane, MSW, President and CEO, Institute for the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly, Inc.; and
- \* The Unidad Latina Excellence in Public Service Award: Robert F. Mujica, New York State Senate Republican Conference Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Finance Committee.

Unidad Latina's workshops were held on Saturday morning and afternoon. They brought together recognized experts in the areas of business, media, education, health care, and government, as well as students from CUNY colleges to share ideas about ways to address the challenges facing Hispanic communities.

Panelists and moderators included: Carlos Barba of Buenavision and CNN Latino; Francisco Cortes, Fox News Latino; Cynthia López, PBS; Ramón Pineda, Univision; José Luis Rodríguez, HITN; Jorge Martinez, Village of Freeport Trustee; Dr. Edwin Meléndez, Center for Puerto Rican Studies-Hunter College-CUNY; Catalina Rosales, New York State Department of Labor; Denise Rosario, Coalition for Hispanic Family Services; Dr. Eli Avila, Orange County Health Commissioner; Guillermo Chacón, Latino Commission on AIDS; Dr. Rosa Gil, Communilife; Dr. Anderson Torres, Hispanic Counseling Center; Rita DiMartino, Jay Hershenson and several student leaders from CUNY; Robert Mujica, New York State Senate; Samantha Paz, Hispanic Federation; Ruth Villalonga, Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cira Angeles, NYC Taxi Alliance; Nancy Hernandez, New York State Office of the Comptroller; Alfredo Placeres, New York State Federation of Hispanic Chambers of Commerce; and Patricia Turker, Mary Kay Cosmetics.

The featured speaker for Saturday's luncheon was Sergio Fernández de Córdova, an internationally recognized entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist. He spoke about the importance of lowering taxes and creating a more business-friendly environment, and increasing support for education and training in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields in promoting Hispanic business ownership in New York.

Sponsors of the event through their support of Unidad Latina and the Hispanic Federation included: Time Warner Cable, Inc, Walmart, Greater New York Hospital Association, Altria, Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Molloy College, City University of New York, Rent-a-Center, Waste Management, Coca-Cola, AT&T, Cablevision, Resorts World Casino, Con Edison, Baruch College, Catholic Charities, and Airstream.

Photos, videos and other information from the conference is available at [www.SenateUnidad.com](http://www.SenateUnidad.com).

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