

Early History: 1960s and 1970s

According to a December 1973 article in *The Journal of Teacher Education*, by Hilda Hidalgo, Chairman of the Department of Urban Studies and Community Development at Livingston College:



- “Livingston College ... opened its doors in 1969 with a freshman class of about 600 men and women” (Hidalgo, 1973).
- “Dr. Ernest A. Lynton, a physicist, scholar and humanist, has been the College’s main ideological architect; he was appointed dean by former Rutgers University President Mason W. Gross in 1965, when the College was just an idea” (Hidalgo, 1973).
- According the college catalog for 1971-1972, *This Is Livingston* (quoted in Hidalgo, 1973), Livingston College students had formed “multiple ethnical and special interest groups, including the Black Student Union, the United Puerto Rican Students, The Foreign Students Group, the Third World Coalition, Women’s Liberation Group, and the Commuters’ Association. In addition, students may join the Philosophy Club, Psychology Association, Student Employment Service, Peer Counseling Group, and others. Any group of at least fifteen students may start a club; they may then apply to the Club Finance Board for funding.”
- “Livingston College’s message can best be summarized by quoting excerpts of Dean Ernest Lynton’s commencement address to our first full graduating class of 500 seniors on May 20, 1973” (quoted in Hidalgo, 1973):

 *We have shown, unmistakably that a College within a university can contribute to the highest levels of scholarship, research, and instruction of a university, while at the same time it can meet the educational needs of a broadly heterogeneous student body – the needs of black and Puerto Rican, the needs of the poor as well as the rich, the needs of the sons and daughters of working-class parents as much as those of the progeny of merchants and bankers – the needs as well of older and of part-time students as much as those of younger, and full-time ones.*

There are two common threads running through this multifaceted educational enterprise. One is a universal commitment to quality – and that is something which we have had to learn from each other slowly and sometimes painfully. It is only in a truly multiracial institution like ours that the white liberal can learn, from his black and Puerto Rican colleagues and critics, that the greatest arrogance of whites is their low expectation with regard to the performance of minority students – and gradually the lesson is being learned that high expectations and demanding goals are what each of us owes to every one of our students.

And this common emphasis on quality makes possible the second common thread of our effort – the refusal to accept any track system of education in which

students are channelled and boxed in according to their background. The most important feature of Livingston's fascinating educational mix is that it provides for all students the full range of opportunities – and encourages each to explore the very limits of his or her potential and aspirations, regardless of background and prior training. You who graduate here today have come from many different societal groups, many races and classes, many backgrounds. You go from here into a wide variety of occupations – further graduate and professional education, medical and law schools, jobs in private and public agencies, teaching and – inevitably – some with no jobs at all. A great diversity – but the achievement of the College is that there is no correlation between where you are going and where you came from.

To be many things to many people, to provide a broad spectrum of education and career opportunities, to serve the needs of a heterogeneous student body – such achievements should, indeed must, be the ultimate aims of all colleges and all universities – but as yet Livingston stands nearly alone in this.

TABLE 2: Racial Distribution – Livingston College 1972-73 ("Statistics provided by Livingston College registrar and office of the Dean," as quoted in Hidalgo, 1973)

Categories	White		Black		P.R. [Puerto Rican]		Asian		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Students	2409	80	448	15	72	3	59	2	2988	100
Faculty	173	72	52	22	8	3	7	3	240	100
Administrators*	10	40	12	48	3	12	0	0	25	100

* Administrators – Under this category we have included only administrators listed by name and function in the Livingston catalog, representing only key positions with considerable responsibility and authority. Clerical staff has been omitted.

Hidalgo, H. (1973). No one model American: A collegiate case in point. *The Journal of Teacher Education*, 24(4), 294-301.