

**Lisette Nieves \*01 (SPIA)**  
Brooklyn, New York

*Graduate Alumni Trustee Candidate*

Lisette Nieves, who is a proud first-generation college graduate and often shares that she “is from Brooklyn via Puerto Rico,” has been the president of the Fund for the City of New York (FCNY) since 2020. FCNY is charged with developing and helping to implement innovations in policy, programs, practices, and technology in order to advance the functioning of government and nonprofit organizations in the city and beyond.

Nieves grew up in the 1970s in a household that was a hub for family and friends who needed support when they were going through tough times. She learned early on that “all of us have a responsibility to support each other.” When it was time for college, Nieves took a gap year and joined the City Volunteer Corps in NYC, serving on the first publicly funded AIDS ward in NYC as well as with a youth crisis hotline in East Harlem. Her experience led her to CUNY Brooklyn College, where a service scholarship covered the tuition for her bachelor’s degree. She was later named a Truman Scholar and subsequently became the first Brooklyn College student and first Puerto Rican woman to win a Rhodes Scholarship.

After Oxford, she joined the Clinton administration as a planning team member for the creation of the Corporation for National Service, leading the launch of programs across the Northeast and Puerto Rico. After earning her MPA at the Woodrow Wilson School (now known as SPIA) in 2001, she joined the administration of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg as chief of

staff for the Department of Youth and Community Development, overseeing the merger of youth employment programs and the creation of a city-wide strategy for Out-of-School Time programs.

Those leadership positions allowed Nieves to witness the power of scale for new and innovative opportunities, inspiring her to found Year Up NY, an innovative workforce development program. As founding Executive Director from 2006 to 2011, she grew the organization from a \$250,000 seed grant to a \$6 million operation with over 20 corporate partnerships serving over 250 young adults annually.

Recognized as a policy expert on workforce development and education, Nieves was appointed by President Barack Obama to the White House Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, where she co-chaired the Higher Education committee. For two years she was the Belle Zeller Distinguished Visiting Professor in Public Policy at her undergraduate alma mater, CUNY Brooklyn College. In that role, she supported many first-generation and immigrant students who were seeking opportunities but also wanted to work in public service, just as she had done.

Nieves is also widely recognized as a social entrepreneur and public sector leader. Through her work with Lingo Ventures—founded in 2014 and focused on growth, talent recruitment and retention, and change management—she has supported other social entrepreneurs, educators, and organizational leaders nationally. She has also been a member of SPIA's Advisory Council.

Nieves received her doctorate, with distinction, in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania in 2016. After receiving her doctorate, Nieves became the first Latina to serve as Director of Educational Leadership in the Department of Administration Leadership and Technology at the NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. She also co-founded the Doctorate in Leadership and Innovation, the only cross-sectoral online leadership doctorate at NYU. She is now a Distinguished Clinical Professor at NYU, overseeing doctoral students and supporting research initiatives in the program she co-founded.

Throughout her notable career, Nieves has received numerous awards. Perhaps the one most cherished was SPIA's Edward P. Bullard Distinguished Alumnus Award, presented in 2008. She has also held many board positions, including as a current trustee of the New York Public Library. She was nominated to the AmeriCorps Board of Directors by President Biden in 2021 and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2022.