

Cassandra Vega

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EDUCATION

Rutgers University

New Brunswick, NJ

B.A. in Political Science, Minor in Caribbean and Latino Studies, Women and Gender Studies

Grad. May 2024

- GPA: 3.9/4.0 (Dean's List)
- Standout courses: Political Campaigning, Law and Politics, Latino History, Democracy and Democratic Revolution, Latino Politics in the US, Feminist Advocacy and Human Rights, Rutgers Scarlet Service in Washington, DC

EXPERIENCE

Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice

May 2022 – Present

Co-Founder of the Fellows in Racial Justice Learning Community

New Brunswick, NJ

- Collaborated with ISGRJ leadership to create the Fellows in Racial Justice Learning Community (RAJU), the first tri-campus undergraduate program at Rutgers dedicated to activism and advocacy.
- Interviewed, evaluated, and selected applicants for RAJU through a rigorous multi-step selection process.
- Hand-picked student leaders for the Student Advisory Board and lead weekly team meetings.
- Planned and executed the 2023 Racial Justice Summit, the first tri-campus student-run event in Rutgers history.

House of Representatives, Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez

June 2023 - July 2023

Legislative Intern

Washington, DC

- Attended hearings and briefings relevant to the Congresswoman and wrote memos for the respective staffers.
- Worked with our staffer assigned to Puerto Rican issues to write memos on pressing issues facing Puerto Ricans and researched current legislation to improve the island's conditions.
- Sorted and assigned bills to be considered for co-sponsorship to staffers.
- Documented and responded to constituent concerns.

Henry Clay Center

May 2023 - May 2023

New Jersey Representative

Lexington, KY

- Selected as the New Jersey representative at the 2023 College Student Congress, an intensive two-week program dedicated to bipartisanship and compromise, accepting one student per state and DC.
- Created a policy proposal on loan debt restructuring with other students interested in improving higher education finance and presented to a panel of policy experts.

Institute for Women's Leadership

May 2022 - November 2022

Media Intern

New Brunswick, NJ

- Transcribed and captioned the Transforming Lives Documentary Film Project video playlist and videos created by former IWL Scholars for the IWL YouTube channel.
- Provided recommendations on which films to incorporate into the IWL Scholars curriculum.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

June 2022 – Aug. 2022

Pioneer Intern

Princeton, NJ

- Researched, reviewed, and discussed grant proposals with the Pioneering Ideas for an Equitable Future team.
- Attended meetings with current and prospective grantees and voted on funding viability.
- Worked with the Vice President of Equity and Culture to research and compare public-facing equity initiatives from different philanthropic organizations.

Center for Hispanic Research, Policy, and Development

May 2022 – July 2022

NJ Governor's Hispanic Fellow

Trenton, NJ

- Discussed issues of intersectionality, housing discrimination, and other relevant issues faced by Latine youth with program leadership and guest speakers.
- Led a team of fellows to create a hypothetical nonprofit dedicated to Latine educational equity in New Jersey.
- Hosted public speaking and leadership seminars for our cohort.

House of Representatives, Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman

June 2021 – Aug. 2021

Congressional Intern

Ewing, NJ

- Assessed and assigned issues and inquiries to caseworkers.
- Documented and responded to constituent concerns.
- Wrote press clips, town topics, and briefing memos for the DC and DO offices.
- Researched policies and current events relevant to the Black Women and Girls Caucus and the CROWN Act.

CERTIFICATES

- Political Science, Eagleton Institute of Politics** January 2023 - May 2024
2024 Eagleton Undergraduate Associate New Brunswick, NJ
- Highly selective, interdisciplinary three-semester program for students passionate about politics, government, and how its study can be applied in the real world.
 - Courses: Practice of Politics, Internship Seminar, Process of Politics
- Feminist Leadership, Institute of Women's Leadership** May 2021 - May 2023
2023 Leadership Scholar New Brunswick, NJ
- Highly selective, 19-credit, interdisciplinary two-year program dedicated to producing informed, innovative, and socially responsible feminist leaders. Concentrations in law and advocacy, and politics and government.
 - Created "Ambition: Trailblazers on Campus," a social action project focused on uplifting women and nonbinary students of color on campus in leadership roles dedicated to community and social justice.
 - Courses: Knowledge and Power, Women and Leadership, Internship Course, Women, Work, and Community, Social Action Project Seminar, Feminist Advocacy and Women's Rights in the United Nations, Capstone Cluster

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Lloyd C. Gardner Fellowship** May 2022 - May 2023
2023 Lloyd C. Gardner Fellow New Brunswick, NJ
- Highly competitive, year-long program for juniors interested in tackling global issues through policy and law.
 - Researched Puerto Rican history since becoming a US territory to create a 40 page paper under the guidance of Dr. Darius Echeverría entitled, "The Case for an Independent Puerto Rico: Creating a Future by Studying the Past," and presented my work at the 2023 Gardner Symposium.
- Women's Pre-Law Society** December 2020 - May 2022
Co-Founder, Membership Chair New Brunswick, NJ
- Worked with seven other women to create the Women's Pre-Law Society, the first pre-law organization at Rutgers with a focus on identity.
 - Served as Membership Chair for our first year of activity, welcoming over 200 women and nonbinary students as members and creating programming based on their unique interests within the field of law.
- Rutgers University Student Assembly** January 2021 - May 2022
Chief of Staff, Assistant Director of Cultural Outreach New Brunswick, NJ
- Ran and won the 2021 Rutgers People's Party presidential campaign, and served as the Chief of Staff for the 2021-22 school year, working with school-specific governing councils, campus police, administration, and other elected officials in RUSA.
 - Created and presented a bill requiring DEI training for all school-funded organizations and clubs on campus as the youngest leadership member in the assembly.
- Human Rights House** September 2021 - May 2022
Global Village Ambassador New Brunswick, NJ
- Selected by classmates and Global Village administrators to represent the Human Rights House in the larger Douglass Residential College community.
 - Organized a fundraiser for the Palestinian Children's Relief Fund, presented research on the sterilization of women of color in the US to the class, and compiled and distributed a list of mental health resources available to students on campus and in New Jersey.
- Center for Youth Political Participation** January 2021 - May 2021
Darien Civic Engagement Project Student New Brunswick, NJ
- Accepted into a semester-long program dedicated to providing students with the tools necessary to improve civic engagement in their communities, and took a joint class about youth political participation.
 - Created a lesson plan and taught two high school classes about what civic engagement means, how to become civically engaged, and how politics impacts their daily lives.
- First-Year Fellowship** January 2021 - May 2021
First-Year Leadership Fellow New Brunswick, NJ
- Selected as one of 100 first-year students from the class of 2024 to develop our leadership, communication, and management skills with student mentors during a semester-long program.
 - Led our class project to make cultural campus resources accessible to international and commuter students.

Douglass Residential College

May 2021 - Present

Douglass Welcome Ambassador

New Brunswick, NJ

- Brainstorm, plan, organize, and execute annual Douglass Welcome Days with other ambassadors.
- Lead Q and A sessions about Douglass with incoming students and their families, give tours of the campus, promote DWA on Douglass social media, and assign roles to younger ambassadors.

Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN)

November 2020 - Present

PLEN Ambassador

New Brunswick, NJ

- Promote the PLEN program at Douglass through social media, email blasts, and on-campus events.
- Guide and mentor PLEN students during the application process and after their program concludes.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Distinguished Negotiator, Henry Clay Center, May 2023
- Social Justice Award, Douglass Residential College, May 2023
- Frank T. Gorman, Jr. Scholarship, SAS Scholarship Office, May 2023
- Richard M. Hale Memorial Scholarship, Cap and Skull Society, December 2022
- SAS Excellence Award, SAS Scholarship Office, June 2022
- Victor R. Kramer Scholarship, Rutgers Alumni Association, November 2020

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Phi Beta Kappa, National Liberal Arts and Sciences Honor Society
- Pi Sigma Alpha, National Political Science Honor Society
- Iota Iota Iota, National Women and Gender Studies Honor Society
- Cap and Skull, the most prestigious Rutgers honor society, selecting 18 rising seniors for membership each year

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AND MEDIA

- Rutgers University Stakeholder Address, Rutgers University Foundation, October 2023
- Author Roxane Gay, Student Activists Convened at Global Racial Justice Summit, Rutgers Today, September 2023
- U. community reflects on recent SCOTUS decisions about college admissions, LGBTQ+ protections, The Daily Targum, July 2023
- Becoming Feminist Leaders Through Social Action: A Roundtable with IWL Leadership Scholars, Institute for Women's Leadership, May 2023
- The Douglass Difference: A Documentary, Douglass Residential College, May 2023
- Graduation Speaker, Institute for Women's Leadership, May 2023
- Signs of optimism through Rutgers strike's third day, WNYC New York Public Radio, April 2023
- New Jersey Young Democrats and Women's Caucus: Breaking the Glass Ceiling Panel, March 2023
- Student Spotlight: Cassandra Vega DRC'24, Douglass Residential College, August 2021
- Rutgers orgs host event to honor Black women, femme, transgender individuals, The Daily Targum, April 2021

VOLUNTEERING

- Role Model Volunteer, Hispanics Inspiring Students' Performance and Achievement (HISPA), February 2023
- Poll Worker, Middlesex County Board of Elections, November 2020, June 2022, November 2022
- Community Organizer, Black Lives Matter, May 2020 - August 2020

SKILLS

- Excellent writing, editing, and proofreading skills.
- Outstanding leadership, communication, and public speaking ability.
- Fast learner, great in collaborative environments, detail-oriented, and responsible.
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Teams, Google Drive, Canva, and social media platforms.