



# Dean's Distinction

*Faculty of Arts and Sciences*

# 2023 Dean's Distinction Community Celebration Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction by Dean of Administration and Finance Scott Jordan
- Announcement of Dean's Distinction Recipients by Edgerley Family Dean Claudine Gay
- Musical Performance by Veronica Leahy on saxophone and Toussaint Miller on trumpet
- Concluding remarks by Dean Jordan

# 2023 Dean's Distinction Individual Recipients

- Velma Dupont, Hutchins Center for African and African American Studies
- Clarisse Hart, Harvard Forest
- Eva Kim, Music
- Taylor Maurice, History
- Lauren O'Brien, Division of Continuing Education
- Camila Ossa, Molecular and Cellular Biology
- Joel Ramos, Division of Continuing Education
- Nekesa Straker, Residential Life
- Meredith Vasta, Peabody Museum
- Angel Velarde, Administrative Operations
- Teresa Wu, Classics

# 2023 Dean's Distinction Team Recipients

## ➤ **DCE Innovation Team**

- Christian Franco
- Christian Wisecarver
- Joshua Casoni
- Gregory Aimo
- Red Kasu
- Alexandra Seckar-Bandow
- Cameron Seymour-Hawkins

## ➤ **The Harvard Foundation for Intercultural & Race Relations**

- Sade Abraham
- Matias Ramos
- Marvin Baclig
- Hugo Cardona



# Velma Dupont

Hutchins Center for African and African  
American Research

“Velma DuPont’s title at the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research is Staff Assistant III—but she is so much more than that! She is famous for saying she ‘keeps the Hutchins Center humming.’ I would add that she is also the heart and soul of the Hutchins Center community. Whether it is the nice touches she adds to any event or the hands-on knowledge she possesses of every inch of our facility, she cultivates a community at the Hutchins Center that is both collegial and familial.”

*Nominated by Abby Wolf*





# Clarisse Hart

## Harvard Forest

“I admire Clarisse’s unceasing commitment to authentic long-term engagement and collaboration between Harvard Forest and the Indigenous Nipmuc People. In order to go further than signaling good intentions, organizations need a leader like Clarisse who is thoughtful, vigilant, humble, and does not let a fear of making mistakes get in the way of action. In

all aspects of her work leading outreach and education at Harvard Forest, Clarisse is always asking - how can we involve and honor Nipmuc community members in this work? I am constantly learning new things from Clarisse about leadership, responsibility, and kindness, and it is a privilege to work with her!”

*Nominated by Katharine Hinkle, Benjamin Goulet-Scott, Noel Holbrook, and Emily Johnson*





# Eva Kim

## Music

“Her empathy and knowledge of individuals—Eva’s office is Grand Central Station for the department, and faculty and graduate students are regularly to be found on the couches there—means that she is always looking out for the best interests of the community. She is particularly attentive to the needs of the diverse populations in the department, the many students and faculty from underrepresented groups, and is a quiet ethical lodestar in this regard.”

*Nominated by Carolyn Abbate*





# Taylor Maurice

## History

“Taylor is deeply caring, truly concerned with doing her job well, and has utmost in her mind ensuring the integrity and success of a search. She is incredibly efficient. Basically, she knows what you need before you have to ask for it. IF you do ask, she quickly responds in clear terms. She has a very keen sense of judgement. AND she goes very much beyond the call of duty. She is never flustered and despite a heavy workload, chairing two searches at once, she does so always with a smile.”

*Nominated by Lisa McGirr, Mary McConnell,  
Michelle Cicerano, and Kimberly O'Hagan*





## Lauren O'Brien

### Division of Continuing Education

“For the past two years, Lauren has helped staff approach sensitive and difficult topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Lauren’s presentation on pronouns exemplifies her commitment to DEI missions at Harvard as well as her changemaking ability. It covered the importance of using a person’s correct pronouns, the pitfalls of assumptions, how to locate pronouns for students so that we may address them appropriately, and how to approach less commonly used pronoun series.”

*Nominated by Ashley Wilcox*



## **Camila Ossa**

### **Molecular and Cellular Biology**

“As MCB Events Coordinator, Camila kept the community of about 1,000 members, including faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and undergraduates connected scientifically and socially throughout the pandemic. She organized the department’s first-ever virtual scientific retreat, BIOpalooza 2020, which enabled the whole community to come together and bond over the viewing of the documentary ‘Picture a Scientist’ and discuss issues faced by women in STEM. She brainstormed how to best deliver scientific activities from an in person to virtual platform and organized team-building events.”

***Nominated by Jessica Manning***





## Joel Ramos

### Division of Continuing Education

“Joel saw the challenges that our videographers face in setting up our cameras and live streaming laptops in as little as 15 minutes between classes and considered how to simplify the process. It is a complex setup, involving many cables, adapters, power cords, and technical components, in addition to the computer. Joel’s RIO (Rapid Input/Output) box combines all equipment other than the camera and mics, into one compact box. During Fall 2022, the DCE production department has built 10 additional RIO boxes based on Joel’s prototype and will be using them for almost all live streamed classes during 2023.”

*Nominated by Christine Barnhart*



## **Nekesa Straker** **Division of Continuing Education**

“The last two years have been hard, especially in the First-Year Experience (FYE) Office. When COVID-19 turned everything upside down, the FYE had to pivot especially hard to accommodate the new parameters around what it meant to be a first-year student. Dean Nekesa Straker was our office's stalwart leader throughout these tumultuous times.”

*Nominated by Abby Cohen*





## **Meredith Vasta** **Peabody Museum**

“Meredith has consistently gone above and beyond in service of her work and the Harvard community. This past year, Meredith took on the additional challenging task of inventorying the Woodbury hair collection held by Harvard. These samples primarily consist of hair taken from Native Americans in the 1930s as part of a gross and misguided anthropological study. Meredith has ensured that the project to bring initial order to the collection was conducted with the respect that was denied to these individuals, painfully her own family members among them.”

*Nominated by Meredith Bissett, Cassy Cutulle,  
Stephanie Mach, Jane Pickering, Sarah Clunis, and  
Laura Costello*



## **Angel Velarde**

### **Administrative Operations**

“Angel is a tireless advocate for fostering diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging in the FAS and across the entire University. Over the course of the last two years, I have witnessed Angel exceeds his regular everyday responsibilities and expectations to organize, host, and attend a vast number of professional development events on behalf of the Harvard Latinx Employee Resource Group (ERG).”

***Nominated by Dominique Bocanegra***





## Teresa Wu

### Classics

“In 2020, Teresa was instrumental in forming the Department’s Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Committee, our first committee dedicated to the mission of making our department as well as our field more inclusive. From the beginning, Teresa has been a driving force and guiding intelligence behind the Committee’s work and has served with distinction as the Committee’s Co-Chair.”

*Nominated by David Elmer*



# DCE Innovation Team

**Christian Franco**

**Christian Wisecarver**

**Joshua Casoni**

**Greg Aimo**

**Red Kasu**

**Alexandra Seckar-Bandow**

**Cameron Seymour-Hawkins**

“The DCE Innovation Team is exceptionally creative. They have accomplished a great deal in supporting the FAS mission, with a willingness to work beyond the scope of their responsibilities, and a consistent aim to achieve student equity. Among their achievements was designing the HELIX portable classroom, supporting the FAS Blended Learning Pilot, supporting GSD’s Executive Education flagship program, pioneering the HELIX forum, and designing and operating the One Brattle Square Studio. Dr. Rena Fonseca said of the team, ‘thanks to this team’s dedication, innovative spirit, and really close attention every step of the way it worked flawlessly. This is where the spirit of One Harvard becomes real.’ The DCE Innovation team came to represent ‘remote excellence’ at Harvard.”

*Nominated by Henry Leitner*





# DCE Innovation Team



# The Harvard Foundation for Intercultural & Race Relations

**Sade Abraham**

**Matias Ramos**

**Marvin Baclic**

**Hugo Cardona**

**Alejandra Rincon**

“2022 witnessed the renaissance of the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations. The completely new team has reinvigorated DEIB work with a renewed spirit and set a progressive tone for affirming and supporting historically marginalized students. The Foundation has revived languishing partnerships, boosted the College’s capacity, and launched timely new initiatives, all toward honoring the unit’s storied history and traditions.”

***Nominated by Alta Mauro***



A group of five diverse young adults (three men and two women) are standing outdoors in front of a brick building with dark shutters and trees with yellow autumn leaves. The group is smiling and looking towards the camera. The man on the far left is wearing a grey polo shirt. The man next to him is wearing a white t-shirt and glasses. The woman in the center is wearing a black top, a grey vest, and glasses. The woman next to her is wearing a black top and large hoop earrings. The man on the far right is wearing a white and blue striped polo shirt and has his arms crossed.

# The Harvard Foundation for Intercultural & Race Relations