

Frances B Sellers Award Bio:

Víctor A. Pérez Flores came to New Jersey in 2004 from the Dominican Republic and settled in his new hometown, Plainfield. While in high school, he had many caring and supportive teachers that encouraged him to continue onto higher education. One of them, Ms. Mary M. Banta, may she rest in peace, introduced and guided him onto the right path to the verdant and charming forest that is Drew University. Once on campus, the Educational Opportunity Scholars (EOS/EOF) further supported him academically, financially, and emotionally as he began and continued his trek through this educational forestry.

In his time on campus, Víctor majored in Psychology and Spanish; he is grateful for the support and guidance he received from his advisors and mentors, Drs. Cermele, Jennings, and Rosales. While earning his degrees, Víctor also held multiple roles, such as working as an instructional technology servicer for classroom equipment, tutor, peer counselor, peer mentor, interpreter, receptionist, transcriber, driver, and student staff for on-campus events. Moreover, he was a member of honor societies such as Chi Alpha Epsilon and Sigma Delta Pi.

There were many adventures outside the forest as well; Víctor participated in many international programs while at Drew University. During his four years there, he scaled from member to board member, and later co-chair of the Drew Honduras Project (DHP). While in DHP, Víctor was able to volunteer his time and energy, working with children of lower economic resources, both in Honduras and the Dominican Republic. He attended a semester abroad in Seville, Spain, and had the opportunity to travel to and learn about nearby European and African countries. He later participated in a Drew International Seminar (DIS) to Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

After graduating in 2013, Víctor went off to work as a community support service provider and senior case manager for Hope House, a division of Catholic Family and Community Services. There, he took on several roles assisting the communities within Morris County and adjacent. His primary role was working with individuals infected with HIV to remove barriers to care and achieve viral suppression. Víctor's desire to help and to become a competent provider led him to seek further training. In 2014, while working full-time, he started a Master's program in Counseling, with a focus in Clinical Mental Health.

Víctor completed his program from Kean University in 2017 and received his diploma in May 2018. Since then, Víctor has worked as a bilingual clinician in Morris County, and as an Intensive In-community Clinician, working with children, adolescents, and their families throughout New Jersey. At the time of this writing, Víctor is enrolled as a full-time doctoral student at Kean University for a Ph.D. program in Counseling and Supervision; there, he also works as a doctoral assistant and holds a co-teaching internship.

Since graduation at Drew, Víctor has maintained a strong connection with the forest; he has returned for intramural volleyball tournaments, guest presented for the EOS summer program, DHP events, and has maintained great friendships with fellow alumni.