

## **Dr. Gail O. Mellow Biography**



Dr. Gail O. Mellow is President of LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, Queens, one of the most ethnically diverse campuses in the United States. A member of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, LaGuardia is a two-year institution serving students from over 160 different countries that speak 110 different native languages. Over 50,000 students attend the college on a full-time or part-time basis. The College offers over 50 degrees options and four certificate programs.

In December 2008, Dr. Mellow met with the Chilean Minister of Education Monica Jimenez de la Jara and officials from the Universidad Central in Santiago, to sign an agreement that will create a pilot community college in Chile under the auspices of Universidad Central. The new institution is designed for students in underserved communities with few resources, and will prepare students to enter the workforce or to transfer to a university with all credits earned eligible for transfer towards a future degree. Universidad Comunidad is scheduled to open in March 2010 and will emphasize engineering and computer science study initially, with health care majors to follow. The agreement also includes an exchange of students and professors between LaGuardia and Universidad Central.

A nationally recognized expert on the history, development and future of the American community college, as well as on the vital role community colleges play in educating the 21<sup>st</sup> century global workforce, Dr. Mellow is active as a keynote speaker on an international level.

Dr. Mellow was the keynote speaker at “Reviving the Delphic Ideal” in Delphi, Greece in 2006, and represented the United States at the first-ever US-China Community College Conference in Beijing in 2004. In the fall of 2008, Dr. Mellow attended the Council of Europe’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary educational conference that took place in Strasbourg, France. Dr. Mellow joined 100 educators from around the world gathered to explore higher education’s responsibility for democracy. In February 2008 she delivered the keynote address to 1,500 higher education leaders from around the nation at the Robert H. Atwell Lecture at the American

Council on Education Conference. Dr. Mellow was the second community college president to deliver this prestigious lecture in its 90-year history.

Dr. Mellow is the co-author of *Minding the Dream: The Process and Practice of the American Community College* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), which was praised by ACCT President J. Noah Brown as, "A must-read for anyone in a position to effect change within their communities and states, including higher education policymakers at all levels." Along with one other book, she is also the co-author of more than thirty articles on community colleges, economic development, diversity, faculty development, job training, and pedagogical innovation. She is a consulting editor for *Change Magazine*, the national magazine for higher education.

Since she joined LaGuardia in 2000, the college has won numerous awards and achievements. LaGuardia won the 2007 Bellwether Award for Exemplary Instructional Programs and Services. It was named one of the Top Three Large Community Colleges the National Survey of Student Engagement; cited as an Institution of Excellence by the National Policy Center for the First Year of College; the recipient of a Hesburgh Certificate of Excellence in Undergraduate Education by TIAA-CREF and named a Best Practice College by the MetLife Foundation.

Dr. Mellow's efforts spearheading economic development have resulted in such achievements as the establishment of the LaGuardia Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which provides business counseling in four languages. The SBDC has packaged over \$17 million in loans for small businesses since its inception just after September 11, 2001, and provided service to over 1,000 businesses through customized training and other workforce activities. Under Dr. Mellow's leadership, over \$15 million in external funding through grants and contracts is secured each year for workforce development, initiatives that support at-risk students and initiatives to help low income individuals transition to work and to education. The College received over \$6 million to create NY Designs, a business incubator that nurtures businesses in the design industries.

Dr. Mellow has served in various capacities at the national level, including serving on the boards of the American Association for Higher Education, National Commission for Cooperative Education, Community College Research Center at Columbia University, Council for the Advancement Of Adult Literacy, National Workforce Strategies Board, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience, Committee of Hispanic Families and Jobs for the Future. She has also served as a Commissioner and Chair of various commissions for the American Council on Education, and Presidential Ambassador for Phi Theta Kappa in the Southern District of NY.

An active participant in community affairs, Dr. Mellow currently serves on a variety of community boards, including Jobs for the Future and the Commission of Hispanic Families.

Dr. Mellow founded and chaired the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance, a non-profit economic development agency and has been a member of numerous other boards and commissions.

She received an A. A. from Jamestown Community College, a B.A. from SUNY Albany, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa, and her M.A. and Ph.D. from The George Washington University.