



LaGuardia Community College

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Community College Education Expert Promotes the Benefits of Two-Year Colleges to a Global Audience

*LaGuardia Community College President Dr. Gail O. Mellow to Host
Roundtable Discussion on How to Create a Community College System in Chile*

Long Island City, NY— November 13, 2008—Dr. Gail O. Mellow, president of LaGuardia Community College, and a respected expert on the vital role community colleges play in educating the 21st century global workforce, will mark the end of 2008 as the keynote speaker at a forum that will examine the creation and societal impact of a community college system in Santiago, Chile. Dr. Mellow has been in demand increasingly as a speaker at a panoply of prestigious national and international colleges and universities, as well as educational conferences and community and professional organizations.

Dr. Mellow has been invited by the Rector of the Universidad Central of Santiago, Chile, Dr. Luis Lucero Alday to present her speech, “Connecting the Heart to the Hand: Chile and Community Colleges, La Universidad de Comunidad,” before an audience of academics, government officials and leaders of the Chilean business community, the week of December 15, 2008.

The introduction of a community college program with an emphasis on a two-year transferable associate’s degree in Chile would be a radical change; Chile’s higher education system consists of four- and five-year degree programs for the most wealthy sector of the population, and a system of technical colleges that train workers for specific industries. Community colleges would bridge this gap, opening higher education to an underserved sector of the population.

Prior to Dr. Mellow’s visit to Chile, LaGuardia will host a Roundtable Discussion regarding the idea entitled, “A Dialogue on A Community College System in Chile,” on Monday, November 17, 2008 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in room E-503, in the E-Building of the College. The Roundtable will include prominent Chilean-Americans, academics and students, including:

Cecilia Briones
Director of Wealth Management
UBS AG

Gaston Briones



President
SOIMEX Corp.

Rodrigo Sotomayor
President of Rosot Enterprise, Inc.

Michael R. Davids
Former Airline Executive

Dr. Gail O. Mellow
President
LaGuardia Community College

Professor Ana Maria Hernandez
Education and Language Acquisition Department
LaGuardia Community College

Professor Jorge L. Perez
Mathematics Department
LaGuardia Community College

Rector Alday and Academic Dean Quesada from Universidad Central will join the panelists via teleconference from Chile.

LaGuardia is currently hosting nine Chilean exchange students from the Universidad Central of Santiago, Chile. The students, all of whom are on track to become English teachers, are taking intensive English-as-a-Second Language courses. Visit the LaGuardia website www.laguardia.edu/expert to watch videos of LaGuardia Communication Studies students interviewing these Chilean students, other LaGuardia students from Spanish-speaking countries, and Dr. Mellow about the potential role of community colleges in these countries. LaGuardia's Marketing and Communications Office will update this page weekly with new videos and other multimedia resources.

As co-author with Cynthia Heelan of *Minding the Dream: The Process and Practice of the American Community College* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), Dr. Mellow is a recognized expert on the history, development and future of the American community college. Dr. Mellow is active as a keynote speaker on an international level: in 2006, Dr. Mellow was the keynote speaker at "Reviving the Delphic Ideal" in Delphi, Greece, and represented the United States at the first-ever US-China Community College Conference in Beijing in 2004. She is the keynote speaker for the League for Innovations in the Community College's 2009 conference.

"The American community college's philosophical commitment to universal education holds great potential as a contributor to worldwide economic growth

and promotion of democracy,” Dr. Mellow says in the chapter of her book dealing with global adaptation of the American community college system model. “The dream is that countries that have not tried to bring large segments of their citizenry to college will begin to do so.”

A social psychologist with extensive experience in higher education, Dr. Mellow became president of LaGuardia Community College in August 2000. The Long Island City institution is one of the most ethnically diverse campuses in the nation, with more than 50,000 students from over 160 different countries. LaGuardia has the lowest tuition of the schools within the City University of New York system.

Located in Long Island City, Queens in New York City, LaGuardia Community College, part of the City University of New York, is a nationally recognized leader among community colleges. Founded in 1971, LaGuardia has been recognized as an innovator in educating students who are under prepared for college work and/or are not primary English speakers. LaGuardia students go on to baccalaureate education at over three times the national average, and the College supports such activity through its innovative joint programs with Vassar College and Barnard College in Exploring Transfer. To learn about LaGuardia Community College, please go to www.laguardia.edu.