

3. An excerpt from a very large Federal grant for credit programs:

INSTITUTIONAL NARRATIVE

(2004) SAMPLE

Fiorello H. LaGuardia Community College, located in Western Queens, New York is a part of the City University of New York (CUNY), the largest public urban university in the country. The University contains ten senior colleges, six community colleges, a four-year technical college, a doctoral-granting graduate school, a law school, an accelerated medical program and a medical school. CUNY is governed by a 17-member board of trustees appointed by the governor and the mayor and is directed by the CUNY system Chancellor. The President of LaGuardia Community College reports to the CUNY Board of Trustees through the Chancellor.

Since enrolling its first class of students in 1971, LaGuardia Community College has established itself as a leading institution of community education. With one of the highest enrollments of international students of any community college, it graduates a higher proportion of minorities than most community colleges. College facilities, renovated in the last ten years, incorporate state-of-the-art computers. LaGuardia's staff specializes in career preparation programs and implements grant programs of more than \$14 million. LaGuardia offers three degrees in 31 different programs: Associate in Applied Science (AAS), Associate in Arts (AA) and Associate in Science (AS). Programs in health-related fields include training in pre-hospital emergency medical care, nursing, dietetics, physical and occupational therapy, and veterinary technology. The College degree curricula include accounting, business management, paralegal studies, travel and tourism, computer science, new media, programming, systems, operations, and telecommunications. The college also offers certificate programs in word processing and

commercial photography. Many of these programs are transferable to Bachelor of Arts and Sciences at many colleges in the state, with bridge and transfer agreements with 50 senior CUNY and private colleges. Intensive, computer-based review courses in writing and mathematics enable students to acquire more quickly the basic skills they need to move into their chosen programs of study.

LaGuardia is CUNY's only **Cooperative Education** college, offering all day students two mandatory work experiences as part of their program of study for an Associate's degree. LaGuardia is also home to the **Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)**. Founded in Fall 2001 as a center for professional collaboration, reflection and exchange, the Center provides programs and support for faculty who wish to work together to advance learning and teaching. The on-campus **Middle College High School** —an alternative high school for students more likely to drop out—was the first of its kind in the nation, and has received numerous awards, including an A+ Break the Mold Award from the U.S. Department of Education. It has become a model for similar collaborations nationwide. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recently awarded a \$7.6 million grant to LaGuardia to support the Middle College High School National Consortium. Collaborating funding agencies are the Kellogg Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation and the Ford Foundation. LaGuardia has an extensive College Now program serving over 3000 students in 15 high schools in Queens

The student body at LaGuardia is richly diverse. Its nearly 12,000 credit students are economically disadvantaged and must juggle the demands of work and family along with their academic work. Our students come from all over the world, and many have arrived in New York relatively recently. In fact, in the 2000 entering class, 66% of these students

are immigrants; nearly half had immigrated to the U.S. less than five years before, representing 159 countries, 110 different languages spoken natively. Besides its 12,000-degree students, the College serves about 23,000 students in non-credit programs annually in its **Adult and Continuing Education Division**. A critical part of the College's mission is to assist in the overall economic development in the region, working in partnership with area businesses.

For several consecutive years, LaGuardia Community College has ranked among the top community colleges in the country in graduating minority students. So many students come from so many different places to study together that we call ourselves The World's Community College. LaGuardia's leadership position in the academic world has frequently been recognized, being one of two community colleges nationally recognized this year as an "Institution of Excellence" by the Policy Center on the First Year of College. More recently, the College has been named one of three top large (8,000-14,999 students) community colleges in the country. This award is based on national benchmarks of quality evaluated by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, funded in part by Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lumina Foundation and MetLife Foundation. Yet to be formally announced is LaGuardia's receipt of mention at the prestigious TIAA-CREF Hesburgh, Award for undergraduate education.

One of the critical problems encountered by most community colleges is the poor preparation of many of their freshmen. LaGuardia's most recent "Institutional Profile" indicates that 91% of first-time, degree-seeking students need preparatory courses in at least one basic skills area. Retention and completion are accomplished with high student management advisement, consulting and support services. Independent studies of student

barriers to completion and levels of engagement with college activities indicate that many of our students have the stamina to complete their degree when they believe that it will almost immediately result in job placement.

This optimism is not misplaced. Throughout Queens there is an extensive network of community agencies, local neighborhood groups and businesses that serve and utilize the talents of particular ethnic communities within the borough and within New City as a whole. In a recent survey, LaGuardia Community College identified over 100 large, medium and small agencies and groups that dedicate themselves to helping their own ethnic group. In addition to these “gateway” resource to economic advancement, a number of current grant-funded projects specifically for the small business community have been developed at LaGuardia, including: the **Small Business Development Center (SBDC)** ;**PREP** — a training program targeted to help small, minority and women-business owners; **LaGuardia Urban Center for Economic Development (LUCED)** — a training center for employers; **Planning Access to Careers in Telecommunication through Training (PACTT)**, a workforce consortium funded by the US Department of Labor; and, finally this year the beginning of **LaGuardia’s Design Incubator**, dedicated to supporting the growth of design businesses in New York.

Although the College has strong partnerships with economic and community agencies, there is clearly an untapped opportunity to partner with many more and to link them to the academic and workforce needs of LaGuardia’s students. In the past three years, the College, under new leadership from President Gail Mellow, has engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning effort that has identified seven major goals that focus all College efforts. One of those top goals is to increase our linkages with the external community. LaGuardia Community College is committed to developing the a hub or interface that will connect us in a formal, systematic way to these community resources and ensure that we work together to reinforce each other’s missions, motivate our

LaGuardia Student Body Profile 2001	
Enrolled Students	11,427
Median Age	22
Part Time Students	40%
Female Students	63%
Foreign Born Students	67%
Evening Students	22%
Race and Ethnic Origin	
Asian	16%
Black	15%
Hispanic	33%
White	14%
Other	5%
Ethnic origin Unknown	18%

students, help retain them to complete their programs of study, enlarge their chances of finding employment, and fostering leadership in the changing cities of metropolitan NYC.

Student Profile

LaGuardia Community College has had moderate success with its three Associate degree programs and utilizes many supplemental services and courses to further student success. Student outcomes mirror those of most community colleges — only about half of community college students continue after their freshman year; five-year graduation rates hover around 26%, higher than the national average of 20%. Called the “immigrant destination borough,”

Queens accounts for 35% of the 1.2 million new immigrants to the New York metropolitan area. Currently, Hispanic residents make up 25% of the population, Asians

17.5%, Blacks, 19%, whites 32.9%, with over 53% speaking a language other than English in their homes.

Unfortunately, economic privation has also been characteristic of a significant proportion of the target area population. There was only a slight decrease in the number of those living below 150% of the poverty level in the 2000 Census, reflecting a decade of adversity for the target communities. Adding to the economic hardship of our students is the fact that they share the economic characteristics of the most expensive city in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, New York City and Northern New Jersey have the highest cost of living in the nation.

With a preponderance of students from Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near and Middle East, many students are also from Africa, the far East and Oceania. In

2001 two thirds of students were first time students. Of these, 91% who were degree seeking students required preparatory courses, over 70% of students had high school scholastic averages of less than 80 and more than that (74%) needed help with math skills; 50% with reading and writing and 31% with ESL (Institutional Profile, LaGuardia Community College, 2001). These initial deficits contribute significantly to the prolonged study and disappointing graduation rates of entering freshmen after five years.

<i>LaGuardia Quick Facts for 2001</i>
The 1,432 graduates in the class of 2001 represent a 6.6% increase from the 1346 graduates in 2000.
68% of the graduates are female.
The average age of a LaGuardia graduate is 28.8.
The average length of time to graduation was four years.
82% of the graduates took 5 years or less to graduate.
Actual time attended, adjusted for stop-out periods, was 3.3 years.
The percentage of graduates reported transferring to a senior college is 59.7%.
CUNY schools accounted for 80% of all transfers.
Male graduates transfer at a higher rate (67%) than female graduates do (56%).
64% of the graduates who transferred indicated that they were planning to pursue a bachelor's degree when they entered LaGuardia.

Faculty Profile

The 281 faculty members at LaGuardia compose 37% of all full time employees. An additional 502 faculty members teach part-time. Nearly half (45%) of the full time faculty has a doctorate, an unusually large proportion in the community college sector. The college is committed to the principles and spirit of affirmative action and equal opportunity. This is particularly important for LaGuardia with its racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse student population. Fifty five percent of LaGuardia's full-time teaching faculty is Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American. For the last few years LaGuardia has ranked in the top tier of community colleges in the nation in total Hispanic and Black faculty (Community College Week Vol. 11, No. 11, 12/28/98). Additionally, 48% of current full-time faculty is female, reflecting College policy to recruit, employ, and promote employees on the basis of equal opportunity.

The College estimates that over 80% of its students are first-generation college students. In response, the college has offered support services designed to teach college success strategies, assist in career planning, provide academic tutoring and guidance and prepare students not only for the demands of college-level work, but clear guidance in seeking careers and work opportunities. However, the College has recently come to a clear consensus that the struggles of our largely immigrant students are also assets. Their ethnic and racial backgrounds can foster their educational success, their job worthiness, their leadership potential and their abilities to form community bonds, progress economically and become citizens. Rightly conceived, diversity is actually an advantage in a city committed to and sustained by diversity, in a nation riding a decades long increase in immigration, and within a world moving towards globalization.