Chapter 7
Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities
“The institution’s programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards” (Characteristics of Excellence 51).

Within separate sections of this chapter, we examine the following areas of the College: basic skills, non-credit offerings, certificate programs and contractual relationships, experiential learning, and distance learning. We conclude by discussing LaGuardia’s high school programs and the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. (Parenthetical references to the Fundamental Elements follow the order of sections listed under Standard 13 in Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education. For example, FE 13.1.1 refers to section one (Basic Skills), first Fundamental Element.)

Introductory Overview of Basic Skills
LaGuardia Community College participates in CUNY’s systematic entrance testing systems and placement policies. Every entering CUNY student is assessed for college-level proficiency and, if needed, is required to enroll in appropriate basic skills courses. LaGuardia as a whole, and departments that teach basic skills in particular, adapt to our students’ needs by developing targeted programs based on strong research, including evaluation of students’ progress following their transition into college-level skill courses.

LaGuardia has pioneered at the University and national levels innovative strategies for improved student success in each of the four core basic skills areas (English, Reading, ESL, and Mathematics) and is committed to increasing the rate at which its basic skills students achieve proficiency, progress to credit-bearing courses, graduate, and transfer to senior colleges.

Within this section of Standard 13, we examined how the College identifies students not fully prepared for college level study and refers them to relevant courses, how the basic skills programs and related support services in writing, mathematics, reading, and ESL help students transition to credit bearing courses and graduate, and how the College’s innovations since 2007 have improved student progress from basic skills to gateway courses.

Findings for Basic Skills
Our research confirmed that the College employs systematic procedures for identifying incoming students who are not fully prepared for college level study (FE 13.1.1), as expected by Middle States. Moreover, these students are referred into an extensive program of basic skills courses and have access to college-wide academic support services (FE 13.1.2). (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) Readiness for college-level work is assessed when students apply to the College and they may demonstrate proficiency by attaining benchmark scores in Reading, Writing, and Math on external assessments such as the New York State Regents, ACT, or the SAT I. Students who have never taken these tests or who have failed to attain identified threshold scores for proficiency are required to take CUNY’s comprehensive Assessment Tests in Reading, Writing, and Math before they can enroll in credit-bearing courses (Appendix 7.1). Transfer students from another CUNY school must prove proficiency by having passed CUNY
assessments or by using an external assessment. Transfers from other colleges must either have proven proficiency through prior college-level coursework or externally administered exams, such as the Regents, ACT, or SAT I ([13.1.16 CUNY Testing Website]). The College does outreach to ensure that all students are aware of and comply with these policies ([13.1.11 Admissions Letter Testing Handout Spring 2011]). In addition, the departments, college, and university work together to provide clear information on student placement protocols and profiles ([13.1.16 CUNY Testing Website, 13.1.12 ESL Placement Profiles, 13.1.13 Testing Placement Guide 12-2010, 13.1.14 Writing Program Placement Profiles 11-2010]).

Students who transfer into LaGuardia from CUNY or non-CUNY colleges and have not passed the CUNY writing test are referred for ESL testing. If ESL coursework is needed, students are placed into either a traditional ESL or skilled ESL reader track. The ELA Department also offers an ESL alternative (ESA 099) to the English department’s basic writing course that develops students’ composition skills and prepares them to take the CAT-W writing exam ([14.1.07 ESL PPR]). Appendix 7.1 provides complete ESL placement information.

Entering students who have not placed out of basic skills mathematics in some other fashion take the comprehensive COMPASS (a commercially developed and nationally normed ACT product), which tests individually for pre-algebra (M1) and algebra skills (M2). Students may test as proficient, or be placed into either the lowest-level basic skills course (MAT 095) or the next basic skills course (MAT 096).

A LaGuardia study of new students for fall terms in 2006-2008 determined that 27% of new students needed reading basic skills, 45% needed math basic skills, and 50% needed writing basic skills. Within the cohort requiring writing basic skills, 36% were found to need ESL preparation ([13.1.10 AtD Intro 2009 Basic Skill-Gateway Analysis]).

We also determined that the College provides an extensive array of pre-collegiate level courses that do not carry academic degree credit ([FE 13.1.3]), as detailed in Appendix 7.1. Students who succeed in basic skills courses perform nearly as well as those who were initially found proficient, suggesting that the College’s developmental curricula are effective at helping students transition to credit bearing courses ([13.1.10 AtD Intro 2009 Basic Skill-Gateway Analysis]).

The English Department supports success in basic skills with a rigorous diagnostic test to evaluate which students are fully prepared to move from pre-collegiate coursework into gateway courses. As part of a CUNY-wide effort, the department helped evaluate and eventually replace the former CUNY/ACT Writing Sample with the new CUNY Aligned Test in Writing (CAT-W). This process began with the 2005 Task Force on Reading and Writing, continued through 2009 with the Task Force on Writing Assessment, and culminated in the creation of a writing test better suited to determine “whether students were ready for the demands of college-level writing at the conclusion of their developmental or top-level” ESL writing courses. ([13.1.08 Task Force on Writing 6-2009]). The new test, inaugurated in fall 2010, is now used “to assess reading, thinking and writing skills in a manner consistent with the curricular goals of developmental writing courses, and to accurately and appropriately assess student readiness for introductory level courses” ([13.1.04 Faculty Handbook CAAW]). Early results are positive, reflecting improved pass rates in ENG099 and ENZ099 courses ([13.1.21 Preliminary Report on Spring 1 CAT]).
In fall 2011, the English department introduced two pilots in an effort to improve basic skills pass rates. In the current configuration of Basic Writing 099 classes, faculty teach four classroom hours and a writing tutor instructs a fifth lab hour. The first pilot calls for the faculty teaching the classroom hours to also teach the labs (rather than a tutor). A preliminary iteration of this pilot, covering 13 sections, ran in fall 2008. Across those sections, 53.2% of students passed, compared to 42.7% in all sections \textit{(13.1.20 Email from Sandra Hanson 2011, 05.1.25 Performance Indicators Exec Council)}. The fall 2011 pilot was conducted in 13 sections. In addition, the department launched the “Accelerated Learning Project.” Based on a successful program at Baltimore Community College, this pilot combines small, select cohorts of students who pass the CAT-W and place into ENG101 with students who would normally place into ENG099 in a seven-hour, three-credit course. Both groups of students meet together for four hours per week in a small-enrollment capped ENG101 course; the students in the developmental section (ENA101) meet with the instructor for an extra three hours per week to receive support in completing their assignments and in preparing to retake the CAT-W, which they do at midterm and, for those who do not pass, at the end of the term \textit{(CCRC ALP Project Description, 13.1.20 Email from Dr. Hanson 2011)}. 

In the Department of Math, Engineering, & Computer Science, the most visible effort to serve Basic Skills students has been Project Quantum Leap (PQL), a federal grant-funded initiative that applies the nationally-recognized Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities (SENCER) approach to teaching mathematics in context. SENCER links the study of math to complex, unsolved social issues in an effort to make math more meaningful and engaging for students. Begun in 2007, PQL provides rigorous professional development for math faculty to support new approaches to teaching math and re-thinking classroom pedagogies. In fall 2010, the PQL seminar developed a modularized PQL curriculum to better integrate assignments and emphasize student centered pedagogy. The modular approach was piloted in spring 2011. Although grant funding ceased on September 30, 2011, the department continues to use PQL techniques in MAT095, MAT096, and MAT115. Most of the full-time faculty have been trained in the methodology and continue to use it in their classes. The MAT095 and MAT096 curricula were re-written to incorporate PQL projects, and are now standard, having been approved by the curriculum committee.

Students enrolled in PQL courses have higher levels of student engagement and confidence, decreased course attrition rates, and higher course and COMPASS pass rates. See Appendix 7.2 for survey data. PQL courses have also achieved substantially reduced attrition rates, as noted in the Evaluator’s Report. PQL also addresses the most important measure of developmental math success: exit from basic skills math courses. By fall 2010, the exit rate for students in PQL sections of MAT095 was 48.7%, compared to 40.4% for non-PQL sections. In MAT096 the exit rate in PQL sections was 46.7%, compared to 36.8% for non-PQL sections \textit{(13.1.02 CTL Report Summary 2-1-10)}. 

To best serve LaGuardia’s ESL students, the Department of Education and Language Acquisition (ELA) emphasizes a learning community model. The College’s Six-Year Graduation Rate Study found that “the more credits attempted in the first semester, the higher the proportion of students graduating in six years or less” \textit{(06.2.03 Six-Year Graduation Rate Study Overview)}. Accordingly, ELA collaborates with other departments to offer paired courses and learning
communities that allow ESL students “to earn credits while completing their [non-credit] ESL requirements,” because “pairing or linking an ESL class with a basic skill, or an elective or an introductory level course in a discipline, produces higher pass rates for students than for those enrolled in stand-alone courses.” ELA recommends pursuing “new partnerships” with emerging programs and departments, such as Engineering and Business, to maximize student success. Appendix 7.3 shows significantly improved outcomes for basic skills students enrolled in learning community structures over stand-alone courses. Like the English Department, ELA is piloting new classes based on the “Accelerated Learning Model,” which identifies students with high reading scores to take accelerated writing courses (ESR 097 and ESC 099). Findings from ESC 099 show a pass rate of 78.9% (14.1.07 ESL PPR 2009).

Beginning in spring 2009, however, an increasing number of ESL learning communities have been cancelled due to low enrollment, including ones that play critical roles in the Liberal Arts and Childhood and Bilingual Education programs (see Appendix 7.4). Believing that the fragmentation of student advisement may be a contributing factor, ESL coordinators and faculty have attempted to resolve this issue with Student Affairs. The ELA Chair has urged more proactive academic advisement to foster student participation in ESL pairs and clusters.

The Communication Skills Department has enhanced its efforts to prepare students for college level study and for passing high stakes exams through a custom publishing partnership with Pearson Learning Solutions. The department has introduced several new custom textbooks, including College Knowledge and Reading Strategy, ACT Reading Preparation Manual, and InterAct with ACT: A Methodical Approach to the COMPASS/ACT Exam (13.1.3.05 Lau - Communication Skills Innovations - 12-20-10). The department also revamped its Reading Lab website to include more current practice materials for students preparing for the exit COMPASS/ACT (13.1.3.07 Communication Skills Department Reading Lab Website).

Pass rates for reading basic skills courses from spring 2004 to spring 2006 were 80% for CSE095 and 76% CSE099. See 14.1.08 Communication Skills PPR June 07 for more data.

LaGuardia has also participated in university-wide innovations to assist its basic skills population. For example, LaGuardia’s CUNY Start Program, funded by CUNY’s Office of Academic Affairs, is an intensive, post-secondary preparatory program that aims “to minimize or eliminate the need for basic skills coursework and further prepare students to succeed in college” (08.6.01 Collaboration Award). CUNY Start offers both a full-time and part-time option and targets students whose CUNY assessment scores indicate a need for basic skills in one or more areas: math (pre-algebra and algebra) and/or reading/writing. These students are able to spend less time in basic skills courses and make a stronger transition to credit-bearing courses (13.1.3.10 CTI Website). Outcomes data are available at 08.6.01 Collaboration Award and 13.2.78 CUNY Start Outcomes.

LaGuardia’s innovative approach to student success in basic skills also extends to two major national initiatives. From 2009 to 2011, LaGuardia participated in Achieving the Dream (AtD), a multiyear, collaborative project that aims to build success rates for community college students nationwide (13.1.3.08 AtD Website). (See also Chapters 2 and 4). The College declined the invitation to continue because of the higher cost for continuation, as well as concerns about the AtD tendency to advocate fragmented projects when the College wished to undertake more systemic initiatives, which it is currently pursuing with its “Destination Graduation” project.
Institutional Research (IR&A) conducted a study of 11,725 new students between 2006 and 2008 that provides data on developmental climb, success in credit-bearing gateway courses, and graduation rates of students who begin in developmental English and Math. This study also surveyed success by initial placement. Students who took Basic Writing succeeded in Composition I at 70%, similar to the 74% pass rate of those who initially tested as proficient. Students who took basic math performed less well in gateway courses, though those who took MAT 096 had success rates of 62% in comparison to 67% of those who initially tested as proficient (13.1.10 Dream Intro 2009-Basic Skill-Gateway Analysis).

LaGuardia is also participating in the Global Skills for College Completion (GSCC), an ongoing 28-month project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which seeks to improve the historically low pass rates of basic skills students in U.S. colleges. President Mellow is serving as Co-Principal Investigator (13.1.5 Gates Summary).

Introductory Overview of Non-Credit Offerings
Since LaGuardia’s inception in 1971, the Division of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) has carried out the College’s mission with non-credit educational offerings designed, administered and evaluated by qualified professionals. ACE is the largest such division in CUNY (13.2.4.02 2009-10 Annual Enrollment 10-4-10) and has a reputation for innovation, entrepreneurship, and diversification. Careful planning has allowed the division to grow, including environmental scans of community needs, fostering internal and external partnerships, and remaining knowledgeable about business trends, educational opportunities, and community needs. ACE has become expert in program development and has created discrete revenue strands, including grant-based, tuition-based, tax levy, and contract-based offerings (13.2.79 Slides for Retreat 1-24-11). Appendix 7.5 gives more detail on the success and operation of the division.

ACE is a leader in workforce development. In 2009, the Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center was created to respond to New York City’s growing demand for healthcare industry workers. In 2009-10, the Center placed 229 individuals into jobs; 475 are projected for 2010-11 (13.2.50 Department Overview). ACE created New York’s first Design Incubator, NYDesigns, and in 2010 LaGuardia was the first community college to pilot the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, a national initiative to grow small businesses. As of June 2011, 101 new employees have been hired by 51 participating businesses and $4,769,504 has been awarded in new contracts (13.2.4.05 Goldman Sachs Interview, 13.2.4.01 10kSB Cohort).

Within this section of Standard 13, we examined how non-credit offerings are aligned with the College’s mission and goals, how non-credit courses are created and evaluated to ensure clear student learning objectives, the compatibility and transferability of non-credit courses to degree programs, and how the increasing integration of the non-credit and credit areas has affected the College’s ability to evaluate the impact of non-credit offerings on institutional resources.

Findings for Non-Credit Offerings
We confirmed that LaGuardia’s 2000 mission statement is clearly reflected in ACE’s non-credit offerings (FE 13.4.1). ACE courses are consistent with the College’s 2000 mission statement that it provides “opportunities for the needs of a highly diverse population,” cultivates partnerships with the Western Queens community that enhance its development, and responds “creatively to changes in student population, technology and the global economy” (Appendix 1.0). Appendix 7.6 illustrates the correlation between the College’s mission and ACE
departments. However, the Working Group found that there is no explicit mention of the mission on the ACE Curriculum Committee application for new courses, although this relationship is implicit in the approval process through Curriculum Committee discussions.

In addition, our research established that **ACE programs have clearly articulated course goals, objectives, and expectations of student learning that are designed, approved, administered, and periodically evaluated under established institutional procedures** (FE 13.4.2). Systems that monitor program development, program outcomes, and program improvement are in place through nine ACE committees (Appendix 7.5). Grant-funded programs are reviewed and evaluated on a continuing basis both externally and internally. There are internal and external procedures for the creation and approval of curricula, guided by transparent objectives across ACE programs. In 2011, ACE began reviewing instruction, curriculum, and customer service standards as part of the CUNY Program Quality Working Group of the Continuing Education 2010 Task Force. Appendix 7.7 provides the rubric created by this Task Force, as well as procedures for developing and evaluating grant-funded and tuition-based programs (13.2.81 QWG UsersManual 5-13-11).

Three programs in ACE provide coursework in which credit is transferable to degree programs: EMT/Paramedic, the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to Registered Nurse (RN) transition program, and the ASL-English Interpretation Program. Appendix 7.8 describes the **academic oversight to assure the comparability and transferability of these courses** (FE 13.4.3).

While the majority of ACE students do not earn college credit for their coursework, ACE is a leader in providing students with basic skills, contextualized knowledge, and ESL training in preparation for college studies. A recent example is ACE’s groundbreaking curriculum to align GED completion with college preparedness. Since 2007, LaGuardia garnered support from the MetLife and Robin Hood Foundations to go beyond traditional GED classes and provide contextualized GED classes with career guidance and support services including financial aid workshops and college application advisement (13.2.80 GED Article).

Further, we found that **the College periodically assesses the impact of non-credit programs on the institution’s resources and its ability to fulfill its mission** (FE 13.4.4). In 2010, ACE served approximately 40,000 adults and children. Its 2010 revenue was approximately $20 million from a variety of sources that included tax levy programs, grants, contracts, and tuition (13.2.38 ACE Facts, 8-10 Latest). ACE also prepares students for credit studies. In spring 2010 nearly 20% of LaGuardia’s incoming new students entered credit studies through ACE, principally from pre-academic programs such as ESL, GED, and certificate classes (13.2.43 ACE To LaGCC Mega Rec).

Since 2009, the ACE Partnership Committee has overseen the transition of non-credit students into credit studies. Ongoing studies indicate that the partnership has helped increase the number of non-credit students who enter degree studies, up 25% from 2008-09 to 2009-10 (13.2.43 ACE To LaGCC Mega Rec, also see Appendix 7.9). Moreover, since 2007 IR&A has begun to review the performance of former ACE students in their degree studies (13.2.57 Studies Cohort and 13.2.58 Cohort Study Tables).
Introductory Overview of Certificate Programs and Contractual Relationships

LaGuardia offers three certificate programs in the Division of Academic Affairs, thirteen allied health certificates in ACE, and 32 industry and trade certificates in ACE. Program oversight is detailed in Appendix 7.10; the 13 non-credit allied health certificates are shown in Appendix 7.11; and the 32 ACE certificate programs providing practical training and license preparation are detailed in Appendix 7.12.

The College maintains contractual relationships with a variety of service providers, as well as with outside entities that use our educational workshop and training services. These contracts support the educational objectives of the allied health programs, ACE, and the Center for Corporate Education and are clearly a manifestation of LaGuardia’s institutional mission (FE 13.7.2).

In this section of Standard 13, we examined how certificate programs align with the College’s mission; how these programs are administered and evaluated to ensure clear objectives, expectations of student learning, and curricular sequences; whether these programs are comparable and transferable to degree programs and consistent with national criteria; whether student support services are available; and how student competency is measured. We also investigated how programs and services offered through contractual relationships are aligned with the College’s mission, and how proper oversight and the College’s integrity are ensured.

Findings for Certificate Programs and Contractual Relationships

Through a wide range of credit and non-credit certificate programs, LaGuardia provides learning opportunities in career preparation, personal growth, and academic development. These certificate programs are clearly a manifestation of LaGuardia's institutional mission (FE 13.2.1) to offer “career and continuing education classes” in order to prepare “students to become full participants in the economic and civic life of the city” (Appendix 1.0). Many programs are developed in collaboration with community partners, tying LaGuardia and its students directly to the populations, commerce, and needs of the city.

We found that the College’s certificate programs have clearly articulated program goals, objectives, and expectations of student learning, and are designed, approved, administered, and periodically evaluated (FE 13.2.1). LaGuardia certificate programs, as indicated in Appendices 7.8, 7.9 and 7.10, measure student skills, knowledge, and competency levels through written exams or the practical evaluation of competencies.

In addition to clinical evaluations and practical exams, the Practical Nursing certificate program uses an assessment and review program created by the Assessment Technologies Institute to receive immediate self-directed remediation assistance (13.3.3.04 LPN Handbook). The Commercial Photography certificate program evaluates students in the Intermediate Photography class in oral communication and quantitative reasoning (13.3.3.01 Commercial Photography email).

The Digital Media Arts Certificate program measures the skills, knowledge, and competency levels of students according to the performance objectives and evaluation methods and standards articulated in the course proposals for individual program courses (13.3.3.02 New Media Certificate Assessment).
Further, we determined that the College’s certificate programs possess published program objectives, requirements, and curricular sequence (FE 13.2.2). Moreover, program learning goals are consistent with national criteria (FE 13.2.3). Industry-specific curriculum is provided by a number of agencies. Appendix 7.12 provides information on curriculum development, oversight, instructor review, and qualifying exams. ACE certificate programs that do not follow any industry-specific curriculum require review and approval by the ACE Curriculum Committee (13.3.1.02 Certificate Program-Curriculum Survey 2-14-2011, 13.3.1.07 Directors’ answers-Certification, Fall 2010).

Each allied health program has written goals and objectives and has a standard curriculum on file with the curriculum committee and/or the department. Public and private agencies fund these allied health programs (13.2.50 Department Overview), initiated not only to meet the high demand for jobs in the health care sector but also to serve low-income and educationally disadvantaged populations (13.3.06 Certificate program check list, 13.3.1.02 Certificate Program-Curriculum Survey 2-14-2011, 13.3.1.04 Dietary Managers Self-study 10-16-08).

We found as well that the College provides a range of services that offer academic, career, and personal support to students enrolled in both ACE and Academic Affairs certificate programs (FE 13.2.4). All certificate students are required to attend advisement sessions in which they learn about the curriculum sequence of a program, certification requirements, and licensing/certification exam procedures. Information about degree programs, complementary continuing education programs, and other College resources is also distributed (13.3.3.03 Certificate Programs-Outcome Survey 2-14-11).

The Career Development Center (CDC) provides support services for students in ACE certificate programs (13.3.12 Track EMT.MOCT Fa09 Enrollment). The CDC has also created generic materials for the intake and vestibule phases of several programs, such as EMT, HC, Telecommunications, and Electronic Health Records (13.3.09 Interview CDC).

In the Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center, students who participate in training programs funded by New York City’s Small Business Services are mandated to participate in comprehensive and intensive support services delivered in the same CDC-developed phases: intake, vestibule, training, and placement (13.3.10 Sample Spreadsheet on Mandatory Services for SBS Funded Programs). Students who have participated in 2010-11 SBS-funded training programs have an 89% retention rate (13.3.10 Sample Spreadsheet on Mandatory Services for SBS Funded Programs).

Additional support services available to credit and non-credit certificate students are described in Appendix 7.13. The Career Development Center, Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center, and the Construction certificate program have documented the effectiveness of their support services. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that other support services for these students are effective, these services should implement formal data-based assessment.

The majority of LaGuardia’s continuing education (ACE) certificate programs are not transferable to any of its degree programs. In those offered by or in cooperation with degree programs, however, academic oversight assures the comparability and appropriate transferability of coursework (FE 13.2.5). Commercial Photography students may apply their 33 credits toward the AAS degree in Commercial Photography. Students completing the Media
Arts Certificate Program courses with a grade of "C" or better may apply for admission to the Media Studies AA or New Media Technology AAS degree programs, applying those courses to fulfill graduation requirements. Practical Nursing Certificate recipients may apply for LaGuardia’s Pathway Program that leads into the final year of the Nursing Program for the AAS degree (13.3.03 ACE Interviews).

Our research also confirmed that the College’s contractual relationships protect its integrity and assure that the College has appropriate oversight of and responsibility for all activities carried out on its behalf (FE 13.7.1). Contracts with healthcare providers for the allied health programs are constructed to facilitate a maximum learning experience for the intern within an authentic, legally licensed clinical setting. Regular forms of assessment are conducted, as mandated, to protect the College’s and clinical institution’s integrity and legal accountability. Appendix 7.14 provides an overview of the College’s contractual relationships.

The College provides regular oversight of all on-site clinical activities of interns placed by allied health programs. Fieldwork assessment reports in the form of surveys, workbooks, and manuals indicate student compliance with the terms of the contracts. All course syllabi spell out the terms of contract performance and assessment. Moreover, the College reviews and approves work performed by contracted parties (FE 13.7.3). Programs that place students in outside institutions have devised workbooks and manuals to guide student interns through an effective learning experience that is conducted according to the legal agreements detailed in the contracts.

The College follows procedures refined over the years to guarantee timely enactment of contracts and attention to detail in revising contracts. The CUNY Office of General Counsel manages the creation of the legal document and must approve all contracts. (13.4.09 Contractual Relationships and Affiliated Providers, 13.4.10 Memo of Understanding, 13.4.11 ACE Contract-MTA, 13.4.12 ACE Agreement Harvard Club, 13.4.13 ACE Contract Insurance).

Overview and Findings for Experiential Learning
Within this section of Standard 13, we examined how the College grants credit for experiential learning and determines whether students given experiential credit have achieved the learning goals of their programs. We also investigated how assessment of student learning has been used to improve Cooperative Education curricula.

Our research established that the College awards credit for experiential learning based on evaluations of the level, quality, and quantity of that learning (FE 13.3.1). The Cooperative Education Department (Co-op) helps students apply their classroom learning by offering a work experience over the course of a semester that is guided and monitored by a department counselor and an appointed mentor/supervisor at the workplace location. Additionally, students are required to participate in a seminar class, concurrent to their internship experience, where they reflect on the skills, knowledge, and overall experience of the internship.

In its 2010 Periodic Program Review (PPR) (13.5.06 Co-op Dept PPR 2010), the Co-op Department commits itself to improving the use of data on progress made toward career goals among students placed in its internships. The PPR includes a plan to collect and examine data on students who have taken Fundamentals of Professional Development (CEP 121). As a prerequisite to internships, CEP 121 is designed “to help students evaluate career and educational
plans, develop professional literacy, and synthesize connections between coursework and professional opportunities” (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, p. 102). Appendix 7.15 provides information on the department’s current methods of assessing the FPA course, which is done principally by gauging student awareness of experiential learning acquired through FPA coursework and advisement, plus analysis of student ePortfolios, which have recently been added to the FPA curriculum. The 2010 External Consultant Review of Co-op recommended that it should “conduct ongoing reviews of assessment data to identify ways to improve” the program and “evaluate all of the methods of assessment being used to better determine which ones will be most effective.” Although this report commended the department for doing “a great deal more” assessment “than other co-op departments nationally,” it also urged the department to develop “specific proof or evidence other than numbers of participants” so as to “document program effectiveness” (13.5.18 Co-op External Consult 2010). In a follow-up to the PPR, the Co-op Chair reported that the department has developed a new research course for Liberal Arts students and is in the process of resolving technical problems with new software to improve data collection (13.5.1.01 Francine White Interview).

Many students also enter LaGuardia with prior learning experiences that may be applicable to college-equivalent education, including students with military backgrounds, adults with accredited certifications and corporate experience, students fluent in foreign languages, and individuals already in established professions such as Emergency Medical Technicians. The College has therefore established a Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) team that assesses student knowledge and skills acquired from work and life experiences to determine whether college credit may be applicable to a particular course (FE 13.3.1). Two LaGuardia faculty provide academic advisement to these students and decide whether to grant credit based on the standards of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (13.5.17 Credit for Prior Learning Website).

We also found that the College’s policies and procedures for awarding credit for prior learning are based on its curricula and standards (FE 13.3.3), credit is awarded appropriate to the subject and degree context (FE 13.3.5), and procedures for recording evaluated prior learning are published and implemented (FE 13.3.4). Experiential credit is granted for individual courses (not programs) on a case by case review. Students present documentation to a faculty member who compares it to course learning goals. If experiential credit is recommended, the department chair must grant approval. Policies for granting exemption credit are published in the college catalogue (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, p. 11). Appendix 7.16 provides a breakdown of CPL credit for 2009-10.

In addition, we determined that the College’s policies and procedures define the methods by which prior learning can be evaluated and the level and amount of credit available by evaluation (FE 13.3.2). To assess prior learning, the CPL team uses national standardized tests, including the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), published guides (see Appendix 7.17), or challenge examinations offered by academic departments. Minimum acceptable scores on the CLEP are based on the American Council on Education recommendations (13.5.05 College Level Examination Program-Courses). Students may also submit a portfolio of prior learning experience to a CPL coordinator and a faculty member. For assistance with the portfolio, students may register for a one credit 13-week course (IND100) that helps students reflect critically on their prior learning experiences, gather relevant data, and develop an ePortfolio.
In May 2006, an ePortfolio course was approved by college governance that helps students develop an online portfolio of work/life experiences and learning accomplishments as they relate to college course learning goals (13.5.13 Interim Report May 2006). The ePortfolio requires students to reflect on their experience and provide evidence of their learning that justifies the granting of experiential credit (13.5.08 Course Proposal-Portfolio Development 5-12).

Finally, we found that the College’s evaluators of experiential learning are knowledgeable about the subject matter and about the College’s criteria for granting college credit (FE 13.3.6). While some standards for awarding credit are programmed, such as test scores, most decisions are made by faculty and approved by department chairs, ensuring that credit is granted by those who have developed and taught the courses in question.

**Overview and Findings for Distance Learning**

CUNY has identified online education as a strategic direction, and the College has appointed a coordinator to help guide it toward supporting distance learning. To date, the College offers no online degree programs and fewer than 1% of its fall 2010 student credit hours are offered partially or totally online (01.2.16 2010-11 Final PMP Report, p. 1). In 2010-11, the College developed a strategy for increasing support for faculty and students teaching and learning in online and hybrid classes. Five initiatives have been successfully implemented including a year-long faculty development seminar, workshops for faculty, a Blackboard site with resources for faculty and a website for communicating with and supporting students (13.5.20 Hybrid Initiative 2010-11 Progress Report).

LaGuardia faculty who wish to teach an online or hybrid class must participate either as leaders, mentors, or students in professional development activities focused on online learning. The year-long seminar for faculty new to online/hybrid teaching includes mentoring by faculty experienced in the modality. We also insure that faculty teaching these courses will do so in smart classrooms. Students are given an assessment questionnaire to measure their ability or readiness to successfully participate in online courses and the College carefully monitors pass/fail rates in these courses. The College has also established procedures to verify that the student who registers in a distance education course is the same student who participates and completes the program.

**Additional Related Educational Activities**

The LaGuardia and Wagner Archives was established in 1982 to collect, preserve, and make available primary materials documenting the social and political history of New York City (13.6.06 LaGuardia and Wagner Archives). The Archives serves a broad array of researchers including journalists, students, scholars, exhibit planners and policy makers examining the history of Greater New York. The Archives also collaborates with faculty from four departments to develop thematic courses and assignments that integrate primary documents from their collection, coupled with class visits to the Archives. In 2009-10, 24 faculty members worked with the Archives, involving more than 2,500 students in research. In 2010 more than 900,000 documents and 40,000 photos became searchable on the Archive website, and online use of the Archives has increased dramatically (Appendix 7.18, 13.6.03 Archives 2010 Report and 13.6.04 Archives Addendum to 2010 Report). Funding for the Archives is provided through tax levy allocations and funds from the Mayor’s Office and the City Council. Archives activities and publications are reviewed annually by the College President, the CUNY Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations, the Mayor’s Office, and the City Council.
LaGuardia High School Programs provide the opportunity to attend either of two high schools run by the New York City Department of Education on a college campus. The International High School, a multicultural alternative educational environment for recent arrivals, serves students with varying degrees of limited English proficiency and offers a high school/college curriculum with intensive study of English. In 2008-09, 59% of the graduating class earned 12 or more college credits upon graduation. Middle College High School accepts 125 ninth and tenth graders from middle schools. All students graduating from Middle College High School are guaranteed admission to LaGuardia and are expected to graduate with a minimum of 24 college credits (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, p. 197). In addition, the LaGuardia Youth Center for Engineering Excellence is an after school program that helps high school students develop their interest in engineering and science (13.6.05 LYCEE website). Appendix 7.19 describes other school-college collaborative programs, including College Now!, College Connection, the Liberty Partnership, and Project Upward Bound.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 13

Basic Skills
1. LaGuardia effectively identifies incoming students who need pre-college level coursework and offers them a broad range of basic skills classes in English, Reading, ESL, and Mathematics as well as appropriate support services. In later credit-bearing courses, students who have passed basic skills courses tend to perform comparably to those entering college-level courses directly, suggesting that these programs do an excellent job of preparing students for credit-bearing college coursework.

2. Rather than target these students from a single angle or with a one-size-fits-all approach, the College offers multi-faceted, dynamic support. Recent initiatives like Achieving the Dream, Project Quantum Leap, and Global Skills for College Completion have propelled LaGuardia into national discussions about basic skills education. Regular assessment shows quantifiable gains in basic skills instruction at the College.

Non-Credit Offerings
3. The programs offered by the Division of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) are consistent with the College’s mission. Many assessment methods are used to evaluate these offerings, and in 2011, ACE began reviewing instruction, curriculum, and customer service standards as part of the CUNY Program Quality Working Group of the Continuing Education 2010 Task Force. There are internal and external procedures for the creation and approval of curricula, guided by transparent objectives across ACE programs.

4. While the majority of ACE students do not earn college credit for their coursework, ACE is a leader in providing students with basic skills, contextualized knowledge, and ESL training in preparation for college studies.

5. The College’s non-credit programs have had a positive impact on the institution’s resources and its ability to fulfill its mission. The ACE Partnership Committee has helped increase the number of non-credit students who enter degree studies.

Certificate Programs and Contractual Relationships
6. Each certificate program maintains clear and published goals, objectives, expectations of student learning, and curricular sequences to insure consistency with the College’s mission.
7. The College provides support services to address the needs of certificate students and prepare them for professional success. The Career Development Center, Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center, and the Construction certificate program have documented the effectiveness of these services. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that other support services for these students are effective, these services should implement formal data-based assessment.

8. The College follows best practices to ensure that it has appropriate oversight and responsibility regarding interns, students placed in contractual relationships with health care providers, and other contracts with outside institutions. Records are readily available and provide an orderly history of the College’s legal relationships with outside agencies.

Experiential Learning
9. The College has established procedures for awarding credit for experiential and prior learning through the Cooperative Education Department (Co-op) and the Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) team.

Recommendations for Standard 13

Basic Skills
1. In order to facilitate enrollment in ESL Learning Communities, the College should provide targeted advisement for ESL students who have declared specific majors.

Non-Credit Offerings
2. The ACE Curriculum Committee should add a preamble or more explicit mission-related criteria to its application documentation for new courses.

Certificate Programs and Contractual Relationships
3. The College should establish periodic assessment procedures for certificate program student support services.