

CAMPUS NEWS

College Paper

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LaGuardia raises \$15M for students

LaGuardia Community College has raised \$15 million to assist students whose educational progress was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The college foundation surpassed its \$10 million goal for the Tomorrow Campaign in late March, unlocking a \$5 million gift from an anonymous donor and setting a fundraising record for the institution.

LaGuardia will deploy the \$15 million to help students stay in school and complete their degrees. Many LaGuardia students come from low-income, immigrant families in Queens that were particularly hard hit by the pandemic. Proceeds of the campaign will benefit as many as 20,000 degree-seeking and workforce-training students through scholarships, paid internships, emergency aid, and other awards.

LaGuardia is among the few com-

munity colleges in the country that provide scholarships to students in non-credit workforce-training programs. Campaign funds will enable NYC residents who lost their jobs during the pandemic to take industry certification courses in construction, healthcare, and technology.

“With \$15 million in new resources, LaGuardia Community College can help lead an equitable economic recovery in Queens. For students whose college dreams were derailed by the pandemic, LaGuardia is the place to get back on track,” said LaGuardia Community College President Kenneth Adams.

“We launched this campaign to help our students reap the benefits of earning a college degree or professional certificate, which is more important than ever during these difficult times,” said LaGuardia Com-

munity College Foundation Chair Suzie Scanlon Rabinowitz, Esq.

Students who receive aid from the LaGuardia Community College Foundation are three times more likely to graduate. The Foundation supports students regardless of immigration or citizenship status, full-time or part-time enrollment, or if they’re in a degree or non-degree program. This broad accessibility bridges gaps in federal and state financial aid programs.

“After I was laid off from my waitressing job during the pandemic, I wanted to get trained as an EMT but didn’t know how I could afford tuition. Thankfully, I qualified for a scholarship that covered 80 percent of my tuition for LaGuardia’s four-month EMT training program,” said Jennifer Rufrano, a Foundation scholarship recipient now working as

an EMT.

“I’ve watched LaGuardia students struggle and persevere. I’m so happy to be able to support them and help them stay in school,” said Priscilla Alexander, a LaGuardia Community College Foundation Board member since 2016.

Many Tomorrow Campaign supporters include people who see their personal histories reflected in LaGuardia students, a majority of whom are low-income, first in their family to go to college, or recent immigrant. In addition to financial support, a good number give their time as well—meeting with students to provide career advice and motivation.

“I was raised by immigrant parents in Queens and saw first-hand what resiliency means,” said Dipak Patel, founder and CEO of Alight