



# LaGuardia Community College

31-10 Thomson Avenue • Long Island City, New York 11101 • Voice: (718) 482-7200

For more information, please contact  
Randy Fader-Smith at (718) 482-5985  
Susan Lyddon at (718) 482-5061

[Randyfs@lagcc.cuny.edu](mailto:Randyfs@lagcc.cuny.edu)  
[Slyddon@lagcc.cuny.edu](mailto:Slyddon@lagcc.cuny.edu)

## **LaGuardia Community College Project to Improve the Graduation Rate Wins Support of the Gates Foundation**

*Grant Supports a Project Developed by LaGuardia Community College to Improve Teaching*

Long Island City, NY—December 16, 2009—Global Skills for College Completion (GSCC), a collaboration between LaGuardia Community College, the League for Innovation in the Community College, and Knowledge in the Public Interest, received \$3.6 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop a breakthrough curriculum and improve instruction in the teaching of math and writing basic skills. The project is part of a Gates-funded effort to increase community college students' graduation rate.

To achieve its goals, the GSCC project, which was conceptualized by [Dr. Gail O. Mellow, President of LaGuardia Community College](#), and Dr. Diana Woolis, co-founder, Knowledge in the Public Interest, will establish an online community of 26 highly successful basic skills faculty from 16 community colleges in 14 different states nationwide to develop a breakthrough teaching approach using Web 2.0 tools.

“By bringing together on-the-ground faculty who are experts in basic skills instruction, and having them share their own course designs and teaching techniques, we hope to innovate teaching methods and curriculum that help basic skills students complete their development skills courses and go on to successfully obtain an associate degree,” said Dr. Mellow.

Today, about 75% of community college students need to take a basic skills class in reading, writing or math since they are not yet prepared for college-level work. Too many students never make it out of these classes. “The goal is to double the number of young adults with post-secondary credentials by raising the basic skills pass rate of community colleges students to 80%,” Dr. Mellow added.

GSCC will convene faculty and outside experts to participate in the faculty dialogue, use video to capture classroom pedagogy, and will include an online student group, which will meet periodically to provide students' perspectives on the effectiveness of certain pedagogical practices and on changes in their own learning.



The project was among four technology-related programs funded by the Foundation's \$12.9 million award. Each of the programs is designed to increase the role of technology at community colleges while improving graduation rates.

The Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Success initiative aims to double the number of low-income students who earn a valued postsecondary degree or credential by age 26. Since 2000, the Foundation has invested nearly \$4 billion in grants and scholarships to improve opportunity in the U.S. by improving schools, raising college-ready graduation rates and increasing college completion rates.



### **LaGuardia Community College (CUNY)**

LaGuardia Community College in metropolitan New York City serves over 60,000 credit and noncredit students of significant diversity. LaGuardia graduates almost twice the national average of students in eight years, even though the large immigrant and New York City public school students come to college with severe academic deficits. LaGuardia has a thirty-year history of developing and implementing innovative programs for basic skills students.

<http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/home/>

### **Knowledge in the Public Interest (KPI)**

*Knowledge in the Public Interest* (KPI) designs strategic web-based collaboration for social innovation, including online communities of practice that connect people, information, and ideas for effective action. KPI services enable clients to capitalize on networks and create diverse knowledge and resource bases.

<http://kpublic.com/>

### **The League for Innovation in the Community College**

The League for Innovation in the Community College is an international organization dedicated to catalyzing the community college movement. The League for Innovation hosts conferences and institutes, develops Web resources, conducts research, produces publications, provides services, and leads projects and initiatives with more than 900 member colleges, 150 corporate partners, and a host of other government and nonprofit agencies in a continuing effort to make a positive difference for students and communities.

[www.league.org](http://www.league.org).

**The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** and its partners are working to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared for college and go on to successfully earn a postsecondary credential with real value in the labor market, with a focus on low-income and minority students. Since 2000, the foundation has invested more than \$2 billion to this end, supporting more than 2,600 schools in 45 states and the District of Columbia. Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org)

