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LaGuardia President Gail O. Mellow to Participate in a Brookings Institution Forum on Community Colleges on May 7

Long Island City, NY—May 1, 2009--Dr. Gail O. Mellow, president of LaGuardia Community College and a leader in community college education, has been invited by the Brookings Institution to participate in a forum that will exam the vital role community colleges play in educating the country's future workforce. The forum will be held in Washington, D.C. on May 7.

Dr. Mellow will be joining a panel to discuss a new report entitled, "Transforming America's Community Colleges: A Proposal to Expand Opportunity and Promote Economic Prosperity," which argues that in order to renew America's status as the global leader in college attainment, the federal government must transform America's community colleges and equip them for the 21st century. University of Wisconsin Assistant Professor Sara Goldrick-Rab and co-authors from the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings wrote the paper.

"It's an honor to contribute to this important discussion," said Dr. Mellow. "This is an excellent opportunity to explore the crucial role community colleges play in educating a global population at a time when more people are seeking a college degree that will help them transform their lives."

Dr. Mellow, along with Senior Officer Tom Dawson of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will discuss the paper's findings and implications. Russ Whitehurst, senior fellow and director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings, will moderate the discussion.



The paper calls for the federal government to update its role in supporting the public two-year sector, commensurate with President Obama's bold higher education goals. The report states that the investment should establish national goals and a related performance measurement system; provide resources to drive college performance towards those goals; stimulate greater innovation in community college policies and practices to enhance the quality of sub-baccalaureate education; and generate data systems that can track student progress.

Dr. Mellow has been an active voice for community college education. In her speeches before national and international audience, and in her book, *"Minding the Dream: The Process and Practice of the American Community College,"* Dr. Mellow touches upon similar themes. She explains that the contributions of community colleges have been hidden in plain sight, and that they do not receive a fair share of the pie when it comes to funding. The U.S. spends almost three times more to educate each four-year college student than it does for each community college student.

She explains that this is happening at a time when community colleges enroll almost half of all undergraduates, and nearly 700,000 of the 1.5 million annual baccalaureate graduates have used community colleges for some part of their educational pathway.

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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, the College is recognized as an innovator in educating students who are under prepared for college work and/or are not primary English speakers. A catalyst for development in western Queens and beyond, LaGuardia serves New Yorkers and immigrants from 160 countries through 50 majors and certificate programs, enabling career advancement and transfer to four-year colleges at twice the national average. Visit www.laguardia.edu to learn more.