

## Making it to the Finish Line

LaGuardia Leads National Dialogue to Better Basic Skills Instruction



➔ LARA MOON

**W**hat's the secret to elevating the basic skills pass rate at community colleges nationwide? It's examining what happens in the classroom. By focusing on teaching, faculty can get the resources they need to help students achieve an 80% nationwide pass rate, and LaGuardia's legendary drive to experiment could be the key that unlocks the door to success.

"The Global Skills for College Completion project brings the creative vision of

faculty to shine a bright light on the pedagogical issues in teaching the too often ignored basic skills classes," said President Gail O. Mellow. "Effective teaching methods - what are they and how can we refine and share them - will make all the difference in improving student success in basic skills classes"

Global Skills for College Completion (GSCC) is a collaborative project that teams LaGuardia with the League for Innovation in the Community College and Knowledge in the Public Interest to develop a breakthrough curriculum that will

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## OPENING SESSIONS SPRING 2011

➔ LARA MOON

**PRESIDENT MELLOW** welcomed faculty and staff back to the College during the Spring 2011 Opening Sessions gathering held in the Mainstage Theatre on March 3.

President Mellow lauded ongoing College projects such as Achieving the Dream, Global Skills for College Completion and the Willets Point worker retraining initiative. She acknowledged student success in ACE's GED Bridge programs, improved math scores for students participating in the College's Project Quantum Leap, as well as faculty research across a variety of disciplines taking place in LaGuardia's new faculty lab.

"With all these exciting initiatives, we have an impact on how community colleges are perceived in this country," said Dr. Mellow, "and every day, we see the impact of all you do to help students."

Good news included the acquisition of 106,00 square feet of space from DeVry in the B-building, making available 18 classrooms and labs. President Mellow reminded the College community of LaGuardia's approaching 40th anniversary  
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# DARING TO DO MORE

## Making a Personal Loss Her Growing Company's Mission

◆ LIESL FORES

**A** one-time movie publicist thought she could do something to make a difference in people's lives—and she has. Believing that her grandmother died from years of exposure to harmful chemicals doing janitorial work, Saudia Davis started a business that would potentially spare others her own loved one's fate. GreenHouse Eco-Cleaning, a Brooklyn-based eco-friendly cleaning company, was founded in 2006, just a few months after Ms. Davis' loss. The business, which provides commercial and residential cleaning, also offers eco-consulting.

Four years later, having survived the economic downturn and grown her business, Ms. Davis was looking to drive her company to a higher level of success. She applied to the first cohort of 10,000 Small Businesses, a Goldman Sachs national initiative launched at the College that helps small businesses grow and create jobs. Business owners engage in a rigorous curriculum that includes accounting and financing, negotiation, marketing and operations, and meet regularly with advisors and mentors from Goldman Sachs to develop individual growth plans.

As a result of the knowledge and experience gained and connections made in the program, which Ms. Davis completed in September 2010, she has been able to hire eight new employees and get a loan from Seedco Financial for \$65,000. She's focusing on strengthening her company's branding and perfecting operations in hopes of eventually expanding to other locations. A green cleaning products line is also in the company's future. "We're interested in protecting the health and well-being of our clients as well as our staff," says Ms. Davis.

This conscientious approach also manifests itself in company activities, such as donating house cleanings for women undergoing chemotherapy. "It encourages our staff to understand the seriousness of what they do—that it makes a difference," she explains. "And it's a way to honor my grandmother. Caring for a sick family member takes its toll. We can contribute in some way to a family experiencing that." Ms. Davis also purchases janitorial products from companies like Industries for the Blind of New York State, a non-profit corporation that provides meaningful employment to the blind and visually impaired.

"At the end of the day, we're a service company. But we can provide good service while being socially and environmentally responsible," she says.



SAUDIA DAVIS (LEFT), OWNER OF GREENHOUSE ECO-CLEANING, WITH LAGUARDIA FOUNDATION HONORARY BOARD MEMBER LILY GAVIN AFTER THE 10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES GRADUATION THIS FALL.

As for 10,000 Small Businesses, Ms. Davis notes that, despite having finished the program, her fellow participants are still a wonderful source for feedback on the business issues many of them share. "And the continued support from Goldman Sachs and LaGuardia has been just great. It feels like an extended family," she notes. "I plan to continue participating in any way I can."

*Liesl Fores is the Director of Communications for ACE.*

Who wants to know?



the **Inquiring Photographer**

The Inquiring Photographer takes the College community's pulse on all things LaGuardia. To view more faculty, staff and student responses, and add your own, visit: <http://lagccphotographer.wordpress.com/>

To submit suggestions for future questions, please email Randy Fader-Smith at [randyfs@lagcc.cuny.edu](mailto:randyfs@lagcc.cuny.edu)



**Question: As an incoming freshman, how did you benefit from the new student orientation that was held on March 2?**

"The orientation was very helpful. The most important thing I learned was the importance of using the LaGuardia Live email account, which will provide me with information on classes and everything that is going on at the College."

**Brenda Ervin, Liberal Arts major**