

News Release

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Contact: Kristal Griffith

Email: kgriffith@naspa.org

Phone: (202) 265-7500 ext. 1177



LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow Honored with 2016 NASPA President's Award

*National award given annually to a higher education professional doing
extraordinary work in student affairs*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — [Gail Mellow](#), president of [LaGuardia Community College](#) in New York, was selected to receive the 2016 NASPA President's Award. The award gives special recognition to a college or university president who has, over a sustained period of time, advanced the quality of student life on campus by supporting student affairs staff and programs. The award is part of honors given annually by NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, to members doing outstanding work in the student affairs profession.

Dr. Mellow was selected for her commitment to ensuring that the vision and unique knowledge of student affairs professionals guides LaGuardia in its focused efforts to improve student success. Under Dr. Mellow's leadership, the college has made major investments to increase student affairs staffing, enhance professional development and launch new programs that help LaGuardia's students stay in school and graduate. A [Single Stop](#) office – a central hub where students can go when life struggles arise – was established on campus, where highly trained staff help students sign up for public benefits, provide financial literacy counseling, housing placement services, access to an on-campus food pantry, and more. In the past four years, LaGuardia's Single Stop program has helped more than 10,000 students receive nearly \$20 million in benefits.

"I'm honored to be selected for this prestigious NASPA award," says Dr. Mellow. "A majority of our students have family incomes of less than \$25,000 per year; we've seen firsthand how a student's academic performance can suffer when they're worried about how to pay for their next meal or subway ride home from class. Investing in our student affairs staff has enabled more students to tap their expertise to help pay for school, find jobs, get properly advised or obtain health services. Our staff are essential to student success and are helping us build better lives for our students, their families and our community."

"I can think of no better individual to act as a leading voice for community colleges," says James Milliken, chancellor of The City University of New York, "Dr. Mellow is the strongest advocate for student success and is wholly dedicated to the students who most need her leadership."

In 2012, Dr. Mellow initiated a unique leadership development program, the President's Society at LaGuardia, to mentor students in the "middle" – not the high academic achievers– who often have little or no access to mentoring opportunities.

"Whether they're interested in transferring to a four-year college or getting a job in their chosen field, the President's Society aims to give students the skills and guidance they need from successful professionals in all walks of life," says Michael Baston, vice president for student affairs and associate provost at LaGuardia Community College. "Dr. Mellow is dedicated to ensuring that our students have access to all the tools and resources they need to successfully pursue their education, and so this award could not go to a finer professional."

Dr. Mellow, a national expert on the topic of student success, is frequently quoted in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, as well as other publications. She is co-author of ["Taking College Teaching Seriously: Pedagogy Matters!"](#) a book exploring the connection between effective higher education teaching and student success. Additionally, she co-authored ["Minding the Dream: The Process and Practice of the American Community College,"](#) a book about the role of community colleges in America's success.

Dr. Mellow and the other National Award winners will be honored in March at the 2016 NASPA Annual Conference in Indianapolis, Ind.

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