



HSAC NEWS

Be the
Change You
Want To See

adigitalstruggles.com

LAGUARDIAHONORS.COM

HONORS STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FB.ME/LAGUARDIAHONORS

WHY EDUCATION MATTERS:



BETTER JOB
OPPORTUNITIES



LESS
POVERTY



BETTER HEALTH
OUTCOMES



BETTER
RELATIONSHIPS



STRONGER
COMMUNITIES

The Value of Community College

The Role of Community College By Kenny Pesantez

It has been often said that finishing college does not produce the most intelligent graduates, but rather the most disciplined of them. Yet, when considering nationwide graduation and retention rates of community colleges, it appears students often decide college is not of great value to them or they simply cannot maintain stability between academics and making a living. In light of President Obama's ambitious proposal to make community college tuition free, the talk about two-year institutions has centered on reform that would encourage greater student success. In his 2015 State of The Union address, President Obama highlighted the importance of securing financial stability for the middle class and stated, "By the end of this decade 2 in 3 job openings will require some higher education. And yet we still live in a country where too many bright, striving Americans are priced out of the education they need. It's not fair to them and it's sure not smart for our future." Students who wish to benefit from this proposal would have to maintain a 2.5 GPA and demonstrate financial need. Ideally, these conditions would allow greater student enrollment in the pursuit of higher academic standards for themselves. In order to break down the complexity of such an ambitious goal, the state of community college needs to be addressed. Community colleges have numerous objectives, including labor training, student remediation and preparation for higher education. Students attending two-year institutions hold significant weight on the accumulation of debt they can afford to acquire when deciding what career to pursue.

The Value of Community College

Furthermore, a national poll of attendance conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) found that 61% of students attend school part-time in comparison to the 39% of full-time student status. The AACC also found that of the part time students, 41% are employed full-time while 32% are employed part time. Meanwhile, 22% of full-time students are also working full-time, while 40% of part-time students are employed part-time. There is no doubt community college students recognize the importance of receiving a quality education, even if many find themselves needing to balance work in the midst of their academic road. Although community colleges offer students in need with various forms of financial aid, their ability to invest their time and effort in maximizing their academic potential fall dependent on their capability to live comfortably while doing so. Therefore, in order to raise graduation rates, financial assistance would certainly allow more students to pursue their academic interests.

Two-year colleges intend to guide their students' toward graduation. To do so, aid is expected fit the needs of their students. Given that there are nearly 7.4 million students, according to an AACC analysis in 2013, it should come as no surprise that community college students vary in both skills and culture. The AACC analyzed the percentage of low-income, minority, and first-time college students who attend community colleges. The same analysis found that 50 percent of Hispanic students start at a community college, along with 31 percent of African American students, and 28 percent of white students beginning at community colleges. Students attending community colleges are drawn to lower tuition rates and open door policies that allow entrance and assistance toward earning an associate's degree, transfer opportunities, or entrance into the workforce after graduation. Despite their differences, students seek an affordable, quality education that remains imperative to build human capital within a global market and resulting in a higher salary, a dream job, or greater opportunities. The end result in any case is economic prosperity after graduation. And as President Obama pointed out, it is vital for this generation to be well-trained for a competitive workforce.

Community colleges have undergone plenty of criticism regarding the quality of the education their students earn. The value of America's community colleges is demonstrated in their students success. Community college students added \$809 billion in income to the U.S. economy within the past year, nearly 5.4% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product, and generated a return on investment for students, society, and taxpayers. However, students have often felt it necessary to prove they received a credible education in comparison to four-year or private institutions with lower, competitive acceptance rates. Despite controversial discussions, many students are consistently choosing to pursue an associate's degree at these two-year institutions. Helping underserved students earn a valuable education allows community colleges to succeed in training the workforce of this generation. The Community College Research Center at Columbia University has stated that institutions tasked with educating students with some of the biggest needs are given the fewest resources. As students from working class families attempt to further their education the personal and financial challenges, they face can often lead them to question their priority towards obtaining a degree.

While community college can seem attractive for many students to enroll in, the most recent national data indicate that 13% of students with the lowest income who started at a two-year college in 2003-04 completed an associate's degree by Spring, 2009. Although many students are choosing community college, they often need extra support and resources to help them realize their potential. Several programs have been introduced to help students such as Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, or ASAP, initiatives within the City University of New York that seek to guide community college students to earn their degrees faster than usual. ASAP assists students in earning associate's degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal support including academic and career advisement, tutoring, tuition waivers, MTA MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to cover the cost of textbooks. College Discovery is another CUNY initiative that has been established to provide academic support to assist capable students who otherwise might not be able to attend college due to their educational and financial circumstances.

Among many CUNY initiatives, LaGuardia Community College has also established a unique student-driven collective--the

The Value of Community College

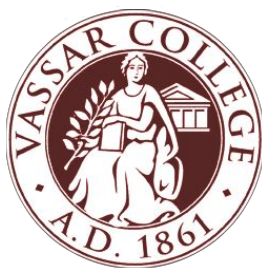
Honors Student Advisory Committee (HSAC)--that originates from The Honors Program, and emphasizes the importance of community building, developing leadership skills, and maximizing the experience of fellow peers. Students also enroll in rigorous Honors courses that promote critical thinking and analytical writing. A cornerstone of this Honors community is support to students to successfully transfer to four-year schools. As a student-driven group, HSAC provides plenty of peer support and alumni networking to help students as they navigate challenges during their time at LaGuardia.

Understanding the role of community colleges provides a clearer outlook for necessary reform. It has been argued that allowing college to be tuition-free would devalue the degrees earned by student consumers. However, this idea disregards that amount of extra work and effort required by students from underserved communities and families to comprehensively focus on school. There is no doubt that earning a college degree leads to more opportunities. Yet, there are still people in the U.S. who are unable to benefit due to their financial circumstances. Providing the right guidance and aid to students allows them to gain marketable skills that are crucial, and not only improves graduation rates, but also gives students the opportunity to maximize ideal returns on educational investments, thereby dipping more money into the U.S. economy.



My Summer Summer Program experiences By Steven Garcia

The transfer process can be a very daunting experience, especially when creating a college list. Visiting colleges for a brief time gives you a glimpse of what the campus community is like, but it's a totally different experience when you dorm as a student. I wanted to know what it was like to live in a residential university, to be immersed in a student community, and to be able to create long lasting relationships. Luckily for me, I was informed of the Exploring Transfer (ET) program at Vassar College. This program selects 30 community college students from different states who want to live the college student experience at a 4-year university. Every student selected had a thirst for knowledge and every professor had a thirst for seeing each student's success. The ET program offers three specially designed courses, each taught by a Vassar professor and a community college professor. Each of these courses, which are usually interdisciplinary in focus, carries one unit of Vassar credit and matches the expectations for 100-level courses during the regular academic year. ET students, all of



The Value of Community College

whom are drawn from populations underrepresented in higher education, are encouraged by program counselors to form a learning cohort to promote intellectual sharing and to provide mutual academic and personal support.

Each accepted student receives a scholarship that covers all tuition, room, board, books, and all other supplies. At the end of the program, students have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with college admission representatives from other colleges and receive information about the transfer process. Lastly, Vassar College has a beautiful 1000 acre campus. Walking on campus is the equivalent to walking through Brooklyn's botanical garden, but on a larger scale. So if you are looking for a nice outdoor summer experience but still want to be academically productive, I strongly recommend the ET program at Vassar College.

After my experience at Vassar, I had the pleasure of being nominated as a scholar for Santander Bank's symposium for entrepreneurship education program at Babson College. This two-week program places a strong emphasis on cultivating the mindset necessary for engaging in entrepreneurship of all kinds. Babson is world-renowned for their entrepreneurship program. The faculty teaching entrepreneurship is unparalleled and makes the classroom experience exciting. The students participating in the program are from various parts of the world such as Germany, Poland, Spain, Chile, Uruguay, and Peru, just to name a few. Of the thirty students in attendance, half of the class was on track to finishing their 4-year degrees, and the rest of the class was a mix of master degree students and PhD candidates. Each student was either creating, developing, or part of a startup company. The focus of the program was to expose the student to an entrepreneurial culture with the goal of learning to become a better entrepreneur. My experience at Babson solidified my interest in entrepreneurship, but also made me realize the importance of having a background in finance and economics. Cumulatively, my experience at Vassar College and Babson College gave me the confidence and assurance I needed to transfer to colleges outside of NYC. To the students who are on the tipping point about choosing to go away for college, but aren't sure: take that leap of faith. Scour the internet for information, ask questions, look for summer.



**Babson College, Undergraduate School of Business
Vassar College Founded in 1861 Poughkeepsie, NY Liberal Art College**

My Experience at LaGuardia By Wenhui Fang

For me, college is the portal to self-exploration and discovery. Community college students often find it difficult to find stability between their academic journey and social life. I myself have realized that balancing my priorities can be particularly challenging in the midst of unanticipated chaos that occurs outside the classroom. Moreover, the lack of information that results from insufficient social interaction on campus causes overwhelming confusion for me and many of my peers. Despite all the obstacles I have personally faced, I did not allow myself to be discouraged. Instead I asked myself, how can I get the most out of my own college experience? I have transferred to LaGuardia Community College this year after deciding to pursue a degree in business. However, during a freshman seminar course, I realized I have made a terrible mistake. As it turned out, business is a major I could not enjoy because it did not highlight my strengths or interests. Unfortunately, this major reduced my ability to pursue a different path because many selective private four year colleges, particularly liberal arts colleges, do not offer an undergraduate business major. Regardless, I realized changing my major at LaGuardia or at a future college would likely result in a loss of earned credits that can transfer for the requirements of another major. I spoke to professors, mentors, peers about my dilemma, and did countless research on my own. Finally, I learned about interdisciplinary studies programs. I discovered that many established four-year colleges offer such unique programs, allowing students to keep pursuing wide ranging interests, and to tailor their courses to implement a unique concentration. As a result, I learned I could continue to pursue a business major and avoid losing too many credits while simultaneously pursuing what I am most passionate about. What surprised me most was to realize that CUNY actually offers such a program, the CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies program.

The Value of Community College

Looking back, if I had not stepped out my comfort zone, I would have never discovered so many opportunities that are suited my interests and ambitions perfectly. Rediscovering yourself is the first step towards immersing yourself into a productive college experience, allowing you to take advantage of your resources. I often found myself taking the resources CUNY offers students for granted, dismissing the fact that students have been able to thrive with these particular resources. Therefore as an active student, you should be aware of the advantages community colleges can offer you. Another key element toward your personal enlightenment is achieved by reaching out to students with success stories to gain compelling insight. I was able to learn from HSAC alumni who managed to transfer to top-tier universities. I had several questions such as: what are their stories and how do they stand out? By seeking the answers to these questions, I felt empowered to gain a competitive edge. Prior to attending LaGuardia Community College, I had a fixed mindset to transfer to Baruch. After thoroughly looking into websites and newsletters, I learned about a number of LaGuardia alumni who shared my goals, and transferred to the elite four-year colleges I could never have imagined possible for myself. Due to their success stories, I started to challenge myself with Honors courses, seeking opportunities offered by professors and staff, and by looking to apply to colleges outside of CUNY as well. It is incredible to feel that students I have never met can exert such a tremendous power upon myself. Their experiences have significantly shifted my perspective and expectations for myself. College can be an enlightening journey if you learn to take advantage of your opportunities. During this journey, being curious and open-minded is likely to enrich your journey with unexpected excitements. As a community college student, your two-year experience is such a transient period that leaves you no time to linger. Therefore, it is important to begin reflecting what we want out of college and how to get there. Steve Jobs once said, “The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking.” By following your curiosity and rediscovering ourselves, students can expect to grow academically, socially and spiritually.

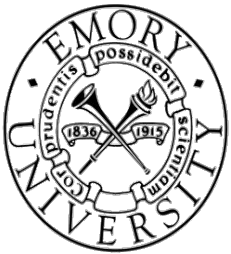
Alumni Interview with Jaqueline Veliz By Imran Huhn

1-How did you feel about LaGuardia Community College before H.S.A.C?

For about a year I was always in between ashamed and proud to be attending LaGuardia. I was hypersensitive about the connotations that attending LaGuardia entailed, and felt the need to explain to people how I came to end up at LaGuardia rather than boasting about my decision to pursue a higher education after failing miserably in high school. I felt extremely stumped because I knew I had the grades to transfer, but I did not know where to begin or if transferring to a school outside of CUNY was even an option for community college students. I had taken an honors Intro to Poetry class with Professor Noam Scheindlin my second semester when I first heard about the Honors Student Advisory Committee. After a few HSAC meetings I heard stories about past members and current members getting into the school of their dreams, and it was then that I truly made an effort to tell friends and family the tremendous work LaGuardia’s faculty does for the larger student body.

2-Did you face any obstacles at LaGuardia?

My biggest obstacle was not believing transfer was an option for me even if my grades and extracurricular activities were intact. I, like countless other students at CUNY, struggled with making time for my many responsibilities. Last winter I was working two jobs, one in Bryant Park’s winter village and one as a receptionist for my church. I had my extracurricular activities like being a delegate of my church group and an Executive Member of HSAC. I was taking three Honors classes and it was a lot to handle. There were days when I would forget to eat or think I could escape sleep!



Emory University, Founded 1836
Location: Atlanta, Georgia



Jaqueline Veliz, LaGuardia Alumnus
LaGuardia Alumnus at Emory University

The Value of Community College

3-What was your transfer process like? Stressful or smooth?

Fortunately, my transfer process was not too stressful! During my transfer process I was juggling extracurricular activities, work, classes, and trying to maintain a social life. It was definitely stressful to balance all these parts of my life that didn't just stop because I was applying for transfer. For me the most nerve-racking aspect of the transfer process was choosing a school. There are so many aspects of creating a college list that comes into play like location, financial aid, acceptance rate, majors, and size, just to name a few. To all students looking to transfer, I would tell you to be sure to start your list at least 3 months before beginning the transfer process. You should be able to answer specifically why you want to go to that school in particular, both to anyone who asks and especially in the school's supplemental essays.

4-What are your goals now?

This Fall, I am attending Emory University as an English major, so I hope that I will be able to have a smooth transition and not be too overwhelmed by the change in location and the workload. One of my biggest goals as a transfer student from LaGuardia's Honors Program is to be able to give back the knowledge that I accumulated from the many events and opportunities I was fortunate to be involved in. HSAC members are always working hard to better themselves and LaGuardia so I hope to make myself fully accessible to the following cohort and to any students interested in transferring or very specifically in the Emory transfer experience.



5- Any advice you want to give to the current students of LaGuardia?

I would advise students to take advantage of all of CUNY's resources and opportunities, especially LaGuardia's. It can be overwhelming trying to navigate LaGuardia, but the best way to start making the most of your time in school is to ask a professor in your major if there are any research opportunities, programs, or even scholarships that you can prepare for. Visit the Honors House in M-222 to find out what volunteer opportunities or events are coming up that could help you prepare for transfer or help with scholarships! All these opportunities are out there, just be sure to take the first step by asking questions and taking action.

- Imran Huhn, Sophomore at LaGuardia Community College

THE WORD AT LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"Every college has great benefits that students should look forward to taking advantage of. For instance, LaGuardia Community College, where I'm currently a student, offers amazing opportunities such as internships, volunteer events, computer seminars, and extracurricular activities—all of which add up experience that can be used to improve a college or scholarship application essay. One great learning activity that I'm involved in is the National Model United Nations, where I and a small group of talented students act as delegates representing a particular country. This year it's Canada! I am always enthusiastic about participating in this event, as it is a great opportunity to meet other students from other colleges and universities, such as Princeton, Colorado Boulder, and many more." **-Jhon Ortiz, Model UN Delegate**



"Networking has opened a lot of doors for me during my years at LaGuardia. When I take a class, meet an administrator, or simply have the opportunity to meet someone whose interests align with my career goals, I make sure I follow up with them via email. During my summer program at Vassar College, I expressed an interest in community development and policy making as a career interest. After doing very well in my summer courses, I kept in touch with my political science professor, Sidney Plotkin. Several months later after updating Prof. Plotkin about my achievements and successes, he presented me with an amazing



The Value of Community College

opportunity. I will be meeting with Judge Acosta, a judge in the New York State Supreme Courts within the next week. Judge Acosta was heavily involved in policy making and community development--exactly the mentorship I need to be able to successfully follow my career interests. Always advocate your interest to professors or administrators because you never know what opportunities can come your way if you keep in touch".-**Steven Garcia, CREAR Futuros Peer Mentor**

"I had the pleasure of visiting Uber's corporate offices in NY this past Thursday as part of an event that LaGuardia's Institutional Advancement office organized for students. We were taken on a detailed tour of the premises, getting an inside look of Uber's creative process, and after which we were afforded a Q&A session with some of Uber's most senior executives. The candid answers we received, along with the literal free roam we were given of Uber's offices, really highlighted how transparent their business is and allowed us to experience the culture of a 50 billion dollar company for ourselves. To me Uber is much more than a transportation business. With their proprietary algorithms, novel business model, and plans to incorporate deep learning AI into their platform, Uber is primed to contribute a meaningful change in our future social landscapes. Community college is not the first place people think of for these opportunities, but it is just one example of the many ways community colleges can and do contribute to its students' professional and personal growth. And without LaGuardia, I would have never had the chance." -**Ray Cortez, HSAC Member**



"Being part of this leadership program, President Society, helped me to apply their teachings to other areas in my life. Leadership is an important element that can always be honed and shouldn't be overlooked. I strongly recommend this life-changing program to everyone because you will learn through simulations--which is the best way to learn, I believe. If you are the kind of student who is highly motivated and wants to be surrounded by highly-motivated individuals, then this is the right program for you no matter what major you are focusing on."

-**Imran Huhn, Member of President Society**

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Faculty Fireside Research Chat: Wed., October 28, 2:30pm @E147

Learn about professor's research project in an informal setting, and get insights into how to conduct research of your own.

The Transfer Peer Support Network (TPSN) Brought to you by the Honors Student Advisory Committee (HSAC)

The TPSN is an HSAC initiative supporting Honors students through the process of applying to selective colleges and universities. In addition to providing peer, alumni and faculty support to transfer applicants, we have partnered with the Transfer Services Office & incorporated their transfer workshop series into our schedule. We meet twice a month to go over everyone's individual transfer process.

The Value of Community College

October	<i>10/7 – The College Search</i> <i>10/21 – Writing the Competitive College and Scholarship Essay</i> <i>10/28 - Fireside Research Chat (E-147)</i>
November	<i>11/4 – TPSN (Computer Lab E-141)</i> <i>11/18 – TPSN (E-147)</i>

GET INVOLVED WITH HSAC BY GOING TO

ROOM M-222 THE HONORS HOUSE

HSAC TEAM



[FB.ME/LAGUARDIAHONORS](https://fb.me/LAGUARDIAHONORS)



WWW.LAGUARDIAHONORS.COM



[TWITTER.COM/LAGUARDIAHONORS](https://twitter.com/LAGUARDIAHONORS)



NEWSLETTER STAFF

KENNYA PESANTEZ
EDITOR

RAY CORTEZ
EDITOR

STEVEN GARCIA
EDITOR/GRAPHIC DESIGNER