

LaGuardia Community College  
Division of Continuing Education

General Statement

I. Philosophy and Focus

The 1972 Master Plan committed the City University of New York to broaden its service to the adult population of the city. Since its inception in 1971, LaGuardia Community College has had as a primary focus meeting the educational needs of the many adult learners in its constituency, especially those often excluded from the mainstream of higher education. Toward this end the college's career education emphasis has served as a powerful vehicle for working with the adult learner. The first group of students entering LaGuardia in 1971 were adults: education assistants intent on upgrading their job skills and salaries. Starting with over 500 students in the fall of 1971, credit enrollment had grown to over 7,000 by fall 1985. Likewise, Continuing Education enrollments grew from 450 adults per quarter to over 2,500 per quarter in the same time period.

The Division of Continuing Education's priority has been first to serve its immediate constituents in Queens and, resources permitting, to serve adults in other areas in which the College has unique capabilities to meet demonstrated educational needs. Providing educational services to groups in Queens has often stimulated the development of a metropolitan-wide capability where such services are sorely lacking. This has been the case in our academic offerings for deaf adults.

LaGuardia is viewed among the deaf community as a key educational resource for both credit and non-credit study. In the fall of 1985, for example, over 65 deaf students enrolled in the non-credit guided independent study program, focusing on basic education and preparation for high school equivalency, while an additional 40 students enrolled as degree students in various curricula. In order to assure equal opportunity for student success, the college has had to make significant resource commitments including the provision of interpreter services and tutors fluent in American Sign Language. Similarly the uniqueness of the college's career education focus has brought many adults and groups seeking to expand their career knowledge and opportunities. In this arena, during 1985 managers from Long Island City-based companies enrolled in a series of supervisory skills workshops to enhance their own job performance and potential for advancement. In addition, every quarter non-credit enrollments increase in the areas of word processing training, micro-computer training and real estate operations.

The Division has sought, as far as possible, to bring the resources of the college to adults in a variety of community settings including parish halls, factory cafeterias, executive board rooms, community centers and school buildings. Cost to students has been as low as possible and, whenever feasible, programs have been offered as a community service.

This outreach effort during 1985 included the continuation of adult basic education classes at a local church, the expansion of programs in city correctional facilities, the offering of English Language instruction to Hispanic and Korean immigrants in Queens and Chinese

immigrants in Chinatown, career training for homeless adults, and the continuation of course offerings to senior citizens at community centers throughout Queens.

A major concern for the Division has been the adult who never completed high school and the recent immigrant in need of English Language skills to successfully cope with his/her new environment. To this end, the Division continues to offer credit courses to:

- Hispanic adults at Solidaridad Humana (a community organization on Manhattan's lower east side) each quarter with 30-40 students usually enrolled.
- Chinese adults living and working in Manhattan's Chinatown - 80-90 adults enrolled each quarter.
- Guided Independent Study for growing numbers of deaf students who are recent immigrants.

Other recent programs serving significant numbers of immigrants include:

- over 300 adults enrolled in ESL, business skills, and personal enrichment classes at the LaGuardia Astoria Adult Center.
- 60 home attendants and senior citizens enrolled in ESL classes jointly sponsored with community services centers in Queens and Manhattan.

In addition to these off-campus efforts, the Division serves over 800 students each quarter through an array of ESL programs on campus. Student diversity continues to expand with large numbers of students from South & Central America, Greece and other mid-East countries as well as from the Far East, especially Korea and mainland China.

Each of these efforts demonstrates the college's commitment, as a publicly funded institution, to close the widening social and economic gap between adults who are well educated and adults who have been excluded from educational opportunity.