



**For Immediate Release**

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**America Needs You Partners with LaGuardia Community College to Improve Graduation Rates for First-Generation College Students**

*The school-based partner program will launch in July with a cohort of 50 students*

**NEW YORK, May 5, 2017** – Today, America Needs You (ANY) announced a three-year program partnership with LaGuardia Community College. The school-based program will provide mentorship, intensive career development training and transfer support to full-time enrolled students who are the first in their families to go to college. Of current freshman attending LaGuardia Community College, over 12,000 are low-income, first-generation college students.

The Partner Fellows Program at LaGuardia Community College uses ANY’s research-based curriculum and aligns with the College’s services and calendars. The program trains students in key career readiness competencies, including critical thinking, communications, leadership and professionalism and compliments current campus offerings. It is funded, in part, by the Aronson Family Foundation, Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust.

Initial conversations about bringing ANY’s model to campus were driven by Jessica Perez, Director, Center for Career & Professional Development at LaGuardia Community College, who witnessed ANY’s impact when she started volunteering for the organization in 2015.

“As a first-generation college graduate, I was excited to become a Mentor Coach to empower young people to fulfill their highest potential. Serving as a mentor has been rewarding and I am eager to launch the inaugural program at LaGuardia,” said Jessica. “Our students will benefit immensely from the continuous engagement and professional growth provided through the workshops and dynamic mentors.”

The Partner Fellows Program at LaGuardia Community College is part of the first phase of implementation of ANY’s five year strategic plan. In 2016, ANY worked with a pro bono consulting partner to determine goals for the next five years, including a priority to triple its national impact in response to the growing demand for career readiness training for first-generation college students.

“We are thrilled to deepen our relationship with LaGuardia Community College,” said Kim Harris, ANY’s CEO. “Our goals for student retention, transfer and graduation rates are strongly aligned. We look forward to learning from LaGuardia and sharing our expertise in career development.”

**About America Needs You**

ANY is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that fights for the economic mobility of ambitious, first-generation college students by providing transformative mentorship and intensive career development. On average, 96% of students served by ANY graduate from college and 91% of graduates secure employment or enroll in graduate school. ANY was founded in 2009 and has served nearly 1,000 students. The non-profit operates in New York, New Jersey, Illinois and California and was a 2015 New York Community Trust Nonprofit Excellence Award winner. Visit [www.americaneedsyou.org](http://www.americaneedsyou.org) to learn more.

**About LaGuardia Community College**

LaGuardia Community College located in Long Island City, Queens, educates more than 50,000 New Yorkers annually through degree, certificate, and continuing education programs. Our guiding principle Dare to Do More reflects our belief in the transformative power of education---not just for individuals, but for our community and our country—creating pathways for achievement and safeguarding the middle class. LaGuardia is a national voice on behalf of community colleges, where half of all US college students study. Part of the City University of New York (CUNY), the College reflects the legacy of our namesake, Fiorello H. LaGuardia, the former NYC mayor beloved for his championing the underserved. Since our doors opened in 1971, our programs regularly become national models for pushing boundaries to give people of all backgrounds access to a high quality, affordable college education. We invite you to join us in imagining what our students, our community, and our country can become. Visit [www.laguardia.edu](http://www.laguardia.edu) to learn more.

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