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## Press Release

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# SANTANDER SUPPORTS PRESIDENT'S SOCIETY PROGRAM AT LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**BOSTON, July 2, 2015** – LaGuardia Community College and Santander Bank, N.A. today announced a three-year philanthropic collaboration for the Bank's Santander Universities program to support the President's Society Program at the College. President's Society students reflect the rich diversity of all LaGuardia students who come from more than 150 countries and speak over 125 languages. Alumni of the program are currently studying at schools such as Columbia, NYU, Smith and Georgetown.

"Together with LaGuardia, we can help students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college, improve their lives and build the confidence and experience they need to achieve their goals," said Josephine Moran, Santander region president for Metro New York and Northern New Jersey. "The students who participate in the President's Society at LaGuardia Community College are expanding their education beyond the classroom. At the event, we were able to experience firsthand the powerful impact the President's Society has had on the students at LaGuardia. It was a true testament to Santander's commitment to higher education."

The President's Society Program at LaGuardia Community College offers career and college planning for students as well as community service and leadership opportunities. The program prepares students who want to continue their education or enter the workforce. Through their participation in the program, students build a network of mentors and a cohort to support them in all aspects of their educational and professional endeavors. Many of the alumni who participate in the President's Society secure prestigious internships and go on to study at elite four-year colleges and universities.

The support from Santander Universities will help students in the President's Society receive a stipend and travel allowance to complete program activities, including attending networking events, completing study tours and internships, and participating in other activities specifically designed to help prepare them for the future.

"Santander's generosity will help support a unique program that offers leadership training and teaches very practical skills – public speaking, resume writing, how to interview, etiquette and how to dress for success – all designed to help our students build confidence to be able to navigate an outside world that is very unfamiliar to most of them," said LaGuardia Community College President Dr. Gail O. Mellow.

Earlier this year, a group of local Santander employees participated in a bilingual mock interview workshop with students from the College's Luce Heritage Language Scholarship Program that helped prepare the students to go on internships abroad where they will use their heritage language in professional settings.

Several current President's Society students recently joined members of the College community and Santander to celebrate the new partnership between LaGuardia Community College and Santander. It



was an opportunity to bring students together with successful professionals to not only practice the social skills they have developed in the program, but also to share how they have been helped by the supportive community at LaGuardia, as well as their exceptional experiences in President's Society.

Gisele Ganesh, a LaGuardia and President's Society alumna who now attends Baruch College as a Business major, shared the deep impact President's Society made on her self-esteem and her plans for the future.

"I struggled to find my place in the world," Ganesh told guests. "Although many people told me I was talented and smart, I had no idea how to make my skills work for me. President's Society showed me how. Being in President's Society was transformational and I experienced so many 'firsts': My first Broadway play, first opera, and first classical music concert. But the part I enjoyed most was the tours of the companies we went to; I'll never forget being on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor of the Viacom building meeting the star of MTV's top-rated show."

Olivia Feal, a 2014 alumna of the program who will be attending Smith College to study Art History in the fall, said both LaGuardia and Santander will benefit from the rich diversity of the College.

"This partnership will help show the world what community college students are capable of accomplishing," said Feal. "There are mixed messages out in the world about community colleges. It was so empowering to have successful professionals share their experiences with us in President's Society. Their support meant that they believed in our potential and in what LaGuardia was doing. It gave us confidence. By supporting this program, that's what Santander is saying, too."

"President's Society taught me how to overcome my fears and be able to network," said Business Administration major Wanjun Jin. "Even though it can be nerve wracking, social skills are very important," said the Columbia University transfer aspirant.

## About Us

**LaGuardia Community College** located in Long Island City, Queens, was founded in 1971 as a bold experiment in opening the doors of higher education to all, and we proudly carry forward that legacy today. LaGuardia educates students through over 50 degree, certificate and continuing education programs, providing an inspiring place for students to achieve their dreams. Upon graduation, LaGuardia students' lives are transformed as family income increases 17%, and students transfer to four-year colleges at three times the national average. Part of the City University of New York (CUNY), LaGuardia is a nationally recognized leader among community colleges for boundary-breaking success educating underserved students. At LaGuardia we imagine new ideas, create new curriculum and pioneer programs to make our community and our country stronger. Visit [www.laguardia.edu](http://www.laguardia.edu) to learn more.

**Santander Bank, N.A.** is one of the largest retail banks in the United States by deposits. Its main corporate offices are in Boston and it operates principally in Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. Santander's 9,703 employees serve its 1.8 million customers through the Bank's 703 branches, 2,092 ATMs, call centers, website and mobile app. Supervised by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Santander in the United States is a wholly-owned, financially



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**Santander Universities** was founded in 1996 to advance the Santander Group's commitment to its communities by supporting higher education. It provides funding for teaching and research, international cooperation, knowledge and technology transfer, entrepreneurial initiatives, student exchange and innovation. It maintains more than 1,100 agreements with universities and research centers worldwide, including 35 in the United States through Santander Bank. Since 1996, Santander Universities has provided funding for 4,100 university projects globally. Every year in the United States, Santander Universities funds more than 1,000 scholarships and supports over 70 initiatives. For more information about Santander Universities, visit [www.santanderbank.com/us/universities](http://www.santanderbank.com/us/universities).

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