

**Identifying and Developing Leaders in House:  
The LaGuardia Community College Leadership Development Program**

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Training is only successful if it supports the organization's attainment of its strategic goals. Training begins as a response to a need or opportunity in an organization. In addition, when training is integrated into the organization's strategic plan, it is more than likely to receive the required support and resources. The key is to plan training strategically and implement efficiently.

Since 2004, the Human Resources Staff Development and Training Program has been aligned with the College Strategic Plan and built on the targeted goals to enhance Financial and Management effectiveness and foster a creative and supportive environment for faculty and staff. The Human Resources Staff Development and Training Program is a targeted, comprehensive effort to meet the professional development needs of faculty and staff. It provides opportunity for staff to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities thereby allowing them to return to their job responsibilities with tools to increase their effectiveness and efficiency. The workshops provide a networking opportunity, allow working relationships to evolve and provide a positive impact on the motivation of the workforce. The program, with top down support, emphasizes the College's commitment to professional development and contributes to reduced turnover and increased recruitment and retention while improving service delivery and reducing costs. As a recipient of the City University of New York Senior Vice Chancellor's Productivity Award, the program represents a "best practice" for Human Resources and demonstrates added value for the College and University. The program has been acknowledged by the CUPA-HR by its selection for presentation at the National, Eastern and Southern Region conferences in 2006

The highlight of the Staff Development and Training Program is the presentation of the Leadership Development component. This professional development program is unique in that participants, nominated by their respective Divisional Vice Presidents and the President's Office, are committed to complete the program as a group. The goal of the program is to provide comprehensive leadership development skills, knowledge and abilities to senior level faculty and staff based on active learning and results based leadership principles. The program is geared to individuals who are either serving in, or are considered to have the potential to serve in, leadership positions within their division or department.

Participants join senior level managers, program directors and faculty who aspire to serve in administrative roles within the department or in the College. This year, for the first time, invitations were extended to members of community

based organizations and other partners of LaGuardia Community College who wish to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities in leadership. We had four participants representing a CUNY community college, private industry and a not-for profit community based organization join our Leadership Program.

The American Association of Community Colleges, in their Competencies for Community College Leaders, have stated; *“Leadership can be learned. While it can be enhanced immeasurably by natural aptitude and experience, supporting leaders [and future leaders] with exposure to theory, concepts, cases, guided experiences, and other practical information and learning methodologies is essential”*.

LaGuardia’s Leadership Development Program is modeled on this premise. The program’s goal is to develop participants so that they can serve as a “leader among peers”, and become effective managers of people and processes. The program involves formal seminars, training workshops, interaction with College leaders, project planning and development, and final project presentations.

Developing and presenting a project is an experience for all participants in the program. For all in-house participants, the project must be aligned with the department goals and the College Strategic plan and serve as a resource to the College community. External participants develop projects, aligned with the goals/strategic plan of their respective organization. Projects must be determined after consultation with their supervisor and/or head of their respective organization. Projects may be developed and presented individually or in partnership with one other group participant.

All participants are given the opportunity to present their projects and demonstrate their public speaking skills to the President of the college and her Executive Staff, their supervisors and co-workers. Participants are prepared for the presentation by attending a daylong workshop on “Delivering Powerful Presentations”, hands-on PowerPoint training and a dress rehearsal before their classmates and the Project planning instructors. The completed leadership projects represent a diverse range of topics and come from varied Departments across Divisions.

The Leadership Development Program provided these value added benefits for the participants:

- Opportunity for Professional Growth;
- Development of an individual Project for the College;
- A Networking Opportunity within the College;
- Development of Long-term Relationships across Divisions/Departments;
- Future Promotional Opportunities;
- Visibility with the President, Vice Presidents and Executive Staff.

In order to successfully administer a program of this magnitude, partnerships were formed with various national, regional and local organizations.

- \* Citywide Training Center, City of New York, NY
- \* Cornell University School of Industrial & Labor Relations, NY
- \* SKILLPATH Seminars
- \* Private Consultants
- \* CUNY Experts
- \* LaGuardia Faculty
- \* Internal HR Staff

The program met approximately twice a month between October and May when it concluded with the presentation of projects and graduation. Graduates of the Leadership Development Program receive a certificate of completion at the graduation ceremony. The experience was appreciated and received high praise from the graduates as noted below;

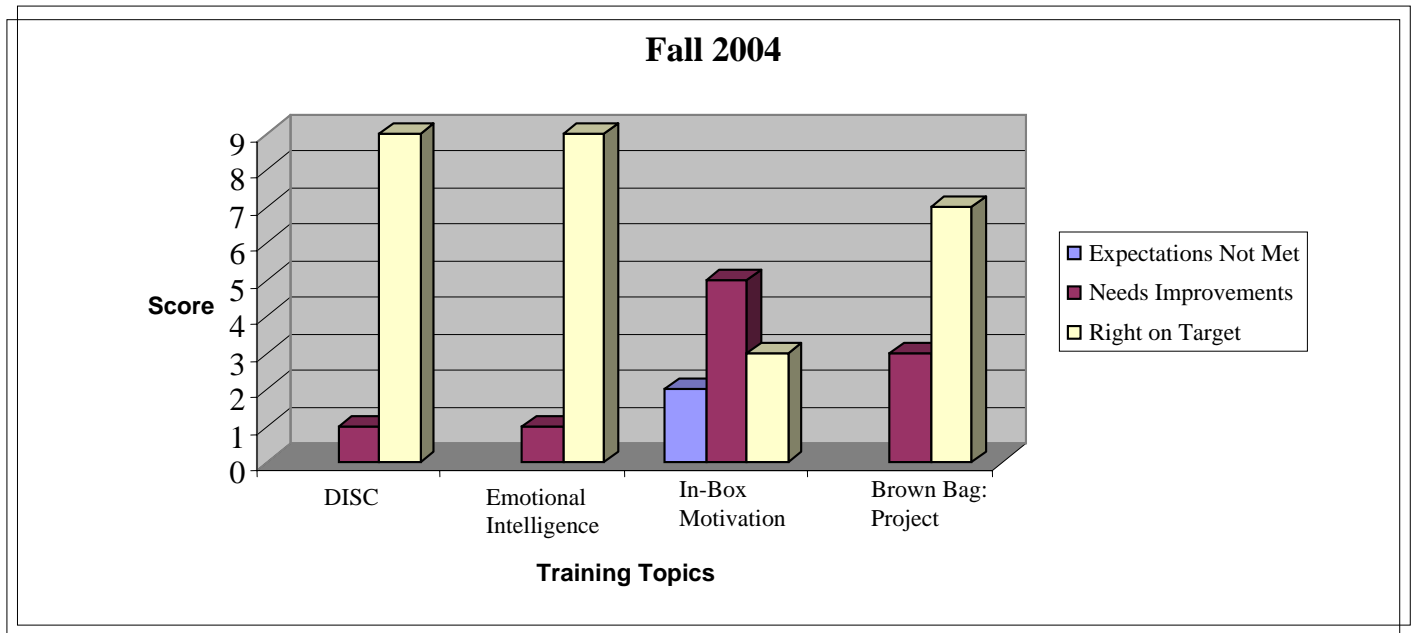
- \* *“Rewarding and Challenging Experience”*
- \* *“Journey of Discovery”*
- \* *“Stimulating and Empowering”*
- \* *“Opportunity to meet the best and the brightest”*
- \* *“Program helped me conduct a soul-search to the lowest depths.*
- \* *“Digging deep inside and discovering parts of me that I didn’t realize existed before”*

### **EVALUATION**

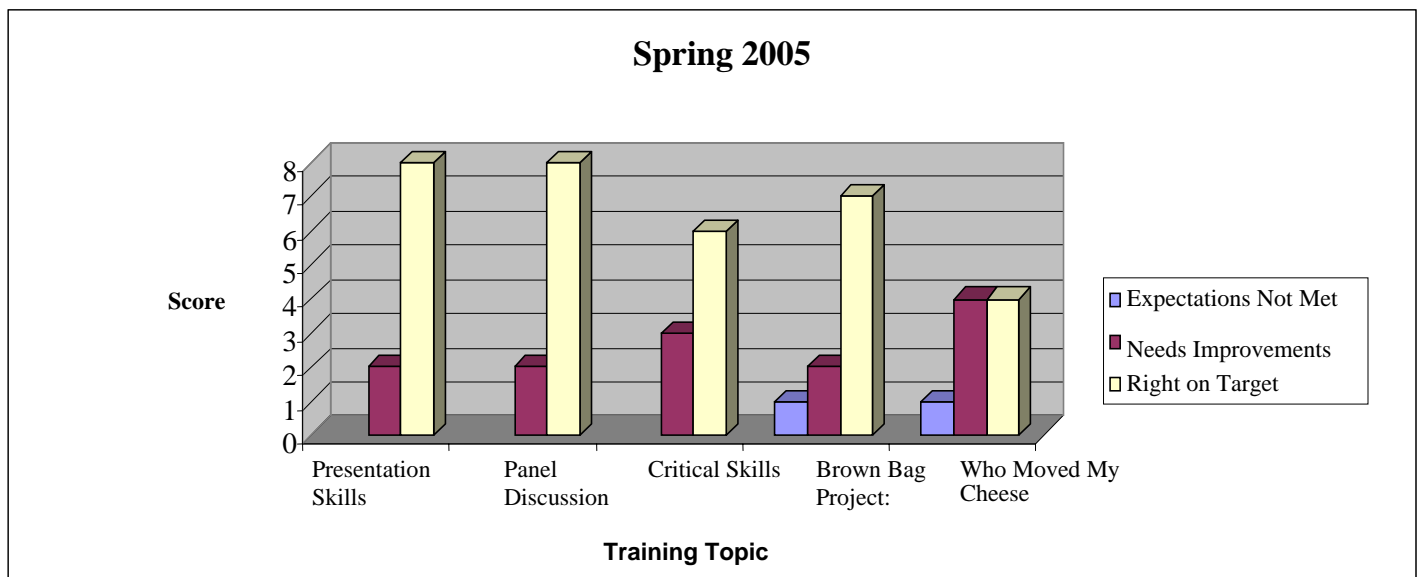
The participants completed a formal evaluation of the Leadership Development Program after their graduation. The results revealed that most workshop topics were “right on target” and rated highly beneficial by the group. Among the highlights were presentations on Leadership Style, Emotional Intelligence, Presentation Skills and Panel Discussions. These results correlate well with our prior needs analysis that indicated a strong preference for these types of workshops.

In reviewing the evaluations from 2004-2005 that received ratings of “Needs Improvement”, changes were incorporated for the 2005-2006 sessions. For example; “In-Box Motivation” (Fall 2004 semester) is taken out and replaced by an entirely new session on “Team Building and Motivation” in Fall 2005 and “Who Moved My Cheese” (Spring 2005 semester) is replaced by “Leading and Adapting to Change” in Spring 2006. In both cases the workshop content and the presenter were replaced. The evaluations from 2005-2006 reflect the positive impact of this action.

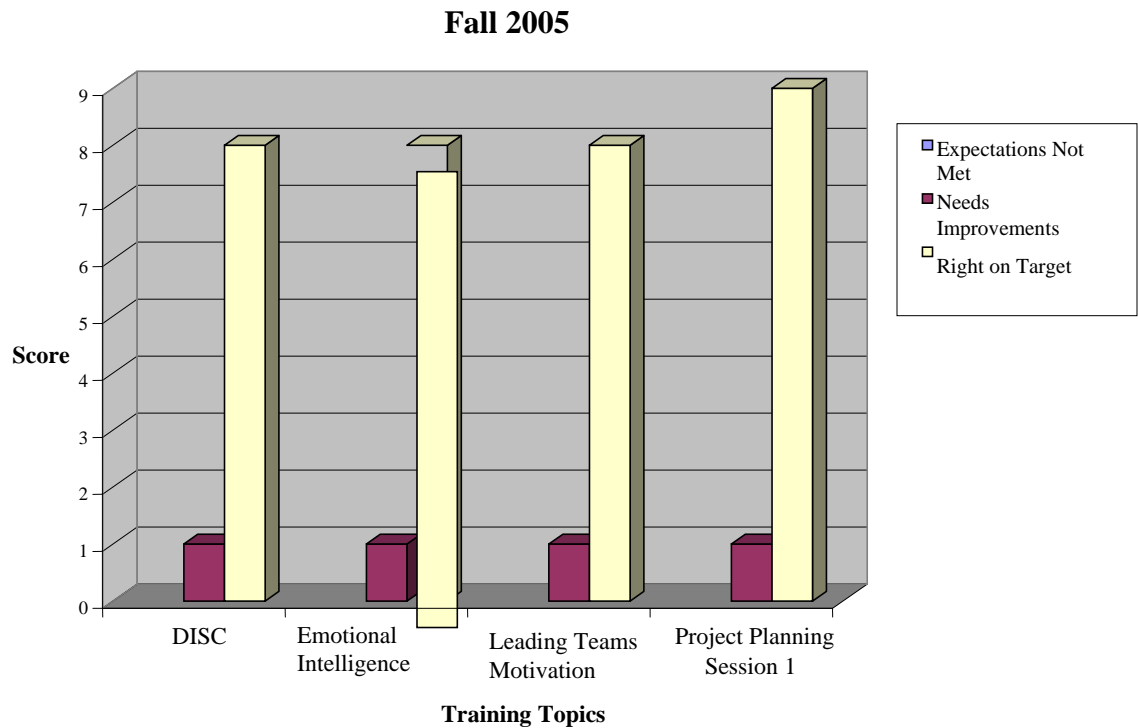
**Graph 1 – Leadership Program Evaluation**



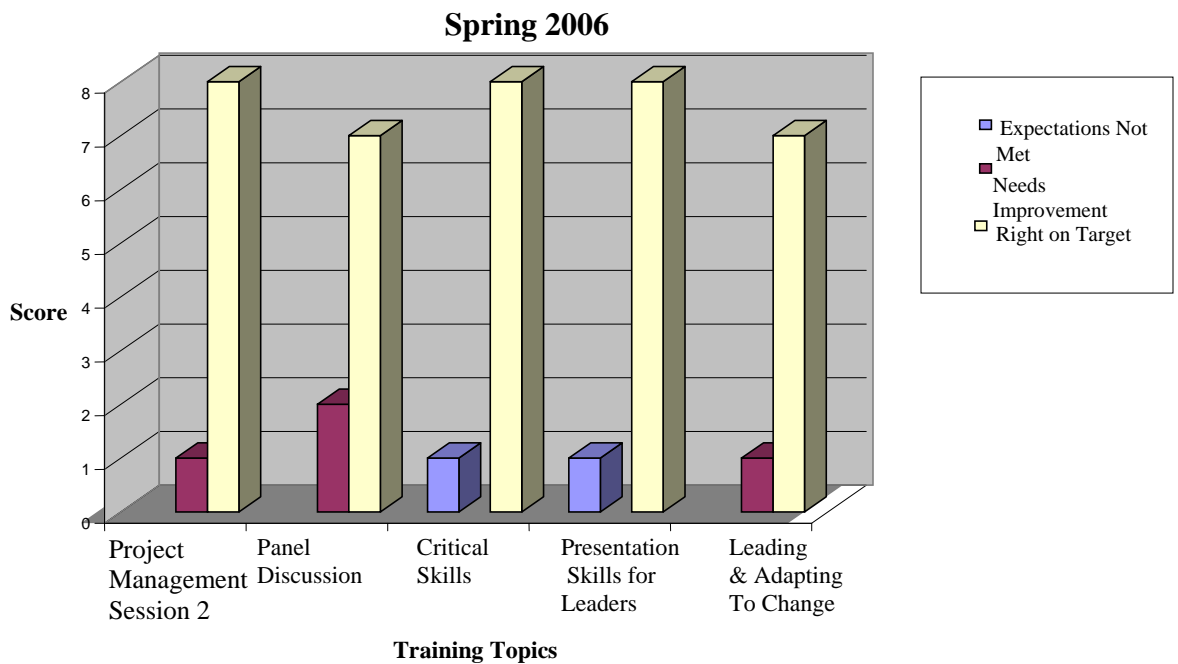
**Graph 2 Leadership Program Evaluation**



**Graph 3 - Leadership Program Evaluation**



**Graph 4 - Leadership Program Evaluation**



The College Strategic plan has always focused on the importance of professional development in creating a supportive environment for its faculty and staff. The current College Strategic Plan 2006-2007 states as Goal V, Supportive Environment, “the College remains deeply committed to providing and financially supporting professional development opportunities...” In order to strengthen support for faculty and staff, one target is to evaluate the impact of the Leadership Development Program and revise as necessary for future classes. The second target is to provide additional leadership development opportunities for front-line supervisors.

In response to the first target of measuring the impact of training, the Human Resources Department implemented a survey tool “Feedback Request for Leadership Behaviors”. This evaluation tool was sent to the Vice Presidents and supervisors of graduates of the 2005 and 2006 Leadership Development Program. The purpose of the survey was to determine if there has been any observed change in the leadership behaviors of these individuals since graduating from this program.

A total of 80 evaluations were sent out to both the respective divisional Vice President and supervisor of the 2005 and 2006 graduates. 23 evaluations (29%) were returned to the Human Resources Department. The Vice President and the supervisor were asked to rate the graduate on a scale of 1-3 with 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = most of the time by observing their leadership behavior demonstrated in the following categories:

1. **Inspires a shared vision**
2. **Delivers results**
3. **Adaptability to change**
4. **Values People**
5. **Develops self and others**
6. **Communication**
7. **Acts in the best interest of the organization**

The Vice President and the supervisor were also encouraged to add comments and clearly explain two or more behaviors seen differently since the person attended the Leadership Development Program and the biggest impact of training on the graduate.

The following conclusions may be drawn from the analysis:

- 18 graduates received an overall average score of 3 which illustrate that their evaluators felt that they demonstrated all of the above leadership behaviors most of the time.
- 4 graduates received overall average scores between 2.0 and 2.9 thereby indicating that they demonstrated all of the leadership behaviors sometimes to most of the time.

- Of the 17 evaluations completed by the immediate supervisors of the graduates, all but two had an overall average score of 3 most of the time.

The evaluators' comments also indicated that since attending the program, candidates demonstrated a significant positive change in their leadership behaviors. Some of the comments are as follows:

- *The graduate has taken on a visible role in the department and College.*
- *The candidate has grown professionally and personally since participation and has been willing to take more risks.*
- *The graduate has shown greater willingness to speak before groups and seems more self confident when making decisions.*
- *New network of contacts has given the graduate a broader view of the College landscape and resulted in new projects and opportunities for enrichment.*
- *The program has increased the graduate's appetite for learning and has made her confident in her ability to meet challenges head on and set goals for herself*
- *Instead of being resistant to change, the graduate embraces it. She understands personality styles and is able to work more effectively within a team.*
- *The graduate has shown initiative in taking on new projects and his confidence in delegating responsibilities has increased.*

It should be noted that the Leadership Survey was not administered prior to the implementation of the program; therefore, a direct correlation could not be ascertained. For the current Leadership Development Program the Survey will be implemented both pre and post training. This method will allow a baseline to be established and more accurate measurement of training effectiveness.

Based on the successful model of the Leadership Development Program, and in compliance with the second target of providing leadership development opportunity for the administrative staff, the ***Leadership Essentials for Administrative Assistant Development (LEAD) Program*** debuted in January 2007. This was an opportunity to provide a comprehensive training program specifically directed at Administrative and Office Assistants, several of whom who had been recently promoted. The LEAD program was fully supported by the local union as a training effort to provide much needed professional development to the administrative support staff. The program incorporated four full day and three half day sessions encompassing supervisory skills such as; time management and organization, interpersonal skills, written and oral communication skills.

The Human Resources Department has also engaged the Executive Assistant Group, Administrative Assistants to the President and Vice Presidents. A needs analysis was conducted to determine the topics to be presented. The Executive Assistant Group has been invited to participate in any of the workshops of the LEAD program. In addition, they will be attending an Administrative Assistants Conference held off campus in the spring of 2007 designed specifically to meet their training needs.

For the past three years the Leadership Development Program has produced over 60 graduates. We wanted to continue the learning relationship with these graduates by providing additional leadership learning opportunity. To this end, a creative approach was developed to engage the graduates in a continuous dialogue. In the fall of 2007, an Advanced Leadership Development Program will be launched available to all graduates of the previous Leadership Development Programs.

We are currently working on creating a discussion board linked to the Human Resources website that will allow our graduates to post and exchange ideas and have ongoing conversations on leadership and related issues. Topical articles and select readings may be linked to the website forum to encourage discussion among participants. Additional leadership professional development training and/or seminars may be made available through this link.

The objective of the Advanced Leadership Development Program is to focus on individual development plans using e-portfolios, provide enhanced presentation skills incorporating both written and public speaking knowledge, and organize seminars on current "hot topics" around leadership. The goal of this Advanced Leadership Development Program is to invest in the growth of our future leaders who will be positioned to represent the College in the outside community and professional organizations.

In closing, LaGuardia's Leadership Development Program has been tremendously successful in developing a new cadre of future leaders for the college. A direct impact has been demonstrated with increased visibility and promotional opportunity for the graduates. Increased recognition, retention and recruitment are all by-products of this innovative professional development program. The College has produced a model program for the University.

To paraphrase the words of President Mellow in speaking about pluralism and diversity, our hope is that we become more active in recruitment and training of a diverse workforce. The leadership work of the Center for Teaching and Learning, as well as the LaGuardia Leadership Development Program, have been supporting the development of new leaders and encouraging the explicit development of a diverse set of institutional leaders.

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**Raymond J. Carozza**, MA, MPA, is currently Executive Director of Human Resources for LaGuardia Community College of The City University of New York. With over 20 years of experience as a human resources professional in higher education, he has held leadership positions at City College and Hunter College, CUNY and The Fashion Institute of Technology, SUNY.

He is interested in organizational change management and has devoted his career to designing and implementing best practices in human resources. Ray has brought professionalism and credibility to each human resource department he has led and continues to add value to his organization as a strategic business partner. Ray considers himself a "specialized-generalist" and has provided leadership in human resources functions in employee/labor relations, recruitment, professional development and technology. He has made several presentations within CUNY and SUNY and recently at the CUPA-HR National, Southern and Eastern Region conferences.

**Nila Bhaumik** is currently the Professional Development and Training Consultant for LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York. With over twelve years of experience as a human resources professional, Nila's areas of expertise include program development, planning and implementation of professional development courses and general human resource management. Nila has been with the College since 1995 serving initially as the College Equal Employment Opportunity Officer and then moving on to mainstream HR to the position of the Associate Director of Human Resources. Since August 2005, Nila has been working as Training and Professional Development consultant for educational institutions such as LaGuardia Community College and the University Training Office of the City University of New York and other non-profit institutions.

Nila holds a M.A. in Political Science from Northeastern University, Boston and an M.S. in Management and Policy from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. She has a Certificate in Human Resources Studies and an additional certificate in Equal Employment Studies from the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, New York.