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## **2007 BELLWETHER AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

ORLANDO, Fla.—The Community College Futures Assembly announced January 30 that LaGuardia Community College/City University of New York, N.Y., Austin Community College, Texas, and Temple College, Texas, were this year’s winners of the prestigious Bellwether Awards. The Bellwether Awards were established to recognize outstanding and innovative programs that are leading colleges in the 21st Century.

LaGuardia Community College/City University of New York won in the Instructional Programs and Services category, which recognizes programs and services that foster or support teaching and learning in the community college. “First-Year Academies: Facilitating Engagement and Success in the First Year of College” described the First Year Academy, which provides a comprehensive first-year experience for students focused around their chosen discipline areas. Placing all freshmen into one of three Academies based on choice of major, the Program contextualizes basic skills instruction through discipline-based learning communities. Other key aspects include ePortfolio development and discipline-focused, co-curricular activities.

Austin Community College won in the Planning, Governance and Finance category, which recognizes programs or activities that improve efficiency and effectiveness in the community college. “College Connection: Connecting Possibility to Expectation One Student at a Time” explained the College Connection’s innovative approach, which takes admission and enrollment services onto high school campuses and is increasing postsecondary enrollment rates (especially for minority and low-income students). All participating seniors receive an ACC District acceptance letter with their diplomas, resulting in increased college-going rates: 38% at ACC District and 9.8% during the first two years in overall Texas higher education enrollment.

Temple College won in the Workforce Development category, which recognizes strategic alliances that promote community and economic development. “The Central Texas Biotechnology Education-to-Employment Model: The Texas Bioscience Institute” explained how a community college partnered with a state-supported medical school, a major private teaching hospital, and public and private independent school districts to turn a declining degree into a program of study that enhances medical research and economic development through the development of a state-of-the-art bioscience institute.

The Community College Futures Assembly issued a call for Bellwether Award nominations in the fall of 2006, and 30 finalist colleges were competitively chosen from the applicants. Ten finalists were selected in each category: *Instructional Programs and Services*, cosponsored by the National Council of Instructional Administrators; *Planning, Governance and Finance*, cosponsored by the Council for Resource Development; and *Workforce Development*, cosponsored by the National Council for Continuing Education and Training. All finalists presented at the Assembly and one winner was then selected in each category.

The Community College Futures Assembly, now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, convenes annually as an independent national policy forum both for key opinion leaders to work as a “think tank” in identifying critical issues facing the future of community colleges, and to recognize Bellwether Finalist colleges as trend-setting institutions. For more information about the Bellwether Awards or Futures Assembly, consult the Community College Futures Assembly Web site at <http://www.coe.ufl.edu/futures>, e-mail [futures@coe.ufl.edu](mailto:futures@coe.ufl.edu) or call 352-392-0745 ext. 280. The 2008 Community College Futures Assembly will again be held in Orlando, Fla.

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