

# How COLLEGE CHANGED MY LIFE



**Name:** Gregg Gudelinis  
**Institution:** Graduate! Suffolk County Community College,  
St. Joseph's College, and Long Island University,  
Long Island, NY  
**Major:** Elementary Education

Gregg Gudelinis graduated high school in the summer of 2000. He always wanted to be a teacher and knew that he wanted to stay on Long Island. Gregg chose to attend a community college because of the cost, smaller classes, and more personalized help. "I chose Suffolk County Community College because it was right around the corner from my home and many of my friends were already attending and had a great deal of positive feedback about the college and its professors."

Gregg knew that it was important for him to stay in college because he would need a degree for his career choice. He took a freshman seminar course in his first semester at Suffolk and believes the class is what helped motivate him to start working on his goals. "Freshman Seminar gave me the tools necessary for success, such as time management, study skills, transitioning from high school to college, and learning about all of the recourses my college had to offer. The course also helped me to grow up and prepare for my future."

Gregg believes that because all of his classes at the college were smaller, he received the individual attention

he needed to stay in school and work toward his goal of becoming a teacher. Once Gregg graduated from SCCC, he went on to continue his studies at St. Joseph's on Long Island, where he received his BA in elementary education, and then his Master's degree in Literacy from LIU. In the fall of 2008, I was going through resumes to find adjunct teaching faculty for my developmental reading and freshman seminar courses. Gregg Gudelinis was one of the faculty members I interviewed and then hired part time. He told me he got his start at Suffolk and was happy to be back, now in the capacity of teacher.

After Gregg was at the college for a few weeks, he came to me to discuss his classes and his students. He told me that he was surprised at how many students had to overcome great obstacles in order to attend college. They shared stories with him about their struggles and the lack of support from family and friends, and the many other hardships they had to endure. Gregg was truly touched by these students and realized just how lucky he had been. He had the support of his family, and never had to deal with any of the hardships that some of his students have shared with him. It was at that point Gregg realized that he needed to give back to his students.

"I realized how lucky I was to have such a supportive family, and it was because of this support and guidance that I was able to achieve my goals. So many of my students don't have that support or guidance and are desperately looking for someone to care."



An interview conducted and written by Nancy Gerli, Instructor, SUNY Suffolk County Community College, Long Island, NY