

**Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
City University of New York City College
New York, New York 10031**

by

**An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

**Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report
and a visit to the campus on April 13 – 16, 2008**

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair, and it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission.

It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist City University of New York City College. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/CEO:

Dr. Gregory H. Williams

Chief Academic Officer:

Professor Zeev Dagan, Provost

Chair of the Board of Trustees:

Benno C. Schmidt, Chairman, CUNY Board of Trustees
545 East 80th Street, New York NY 10021

Context and Nature of the Visit

The City College of New York (“CCNY” or the “institution”) has been a member of the Middle States Association since 1921. The institution’s accreditation was last reaffirmed on November 19, 2003. At that time, the Commission requested a progress letter by April 1, 2005, documenting (1) implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan, with identified priorities, assigned responsibilities, and timelines; (2) development of an enrollment management plan; (3) implementation of a comprehensive plan for the assessment of student learning outcomes; and (4) development of a policy regarding computer and information literacy standards for students. The next evaluation visit was scheduled for 2007-08.

In June, 2005 the Commission accepted the progress letter and requested that the self-study, in preparation for the 2007-2008 evaluation visit, document the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan for the assessment of student learning and evidence that student learning assessment information is used to improve teaching and learning.

Given the scope of its academic offerings, changes in administrative leadership and the transition from an open admissions policy, the institution selected a Comprehensive Self-Study Model and the Team reviewed the institution under all of the Standards.

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Standards 1: Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, it is clear that the institution is in the process of rediscovering its mission.

The Mission Statement defines the purpose of CCNY. Historically, the institution has provided “access to excellence” to a diverse student body and took a leadership role in the immediate community and across the nation. The various constituent groups at the institution are committed to returning the institution to academic prominence.

Significant accomplishments

The Team notes, among other accomplishments and practices that the institution has:

- a) Designated Architecture, Engineering, and Science as ‘flagship’ programs; and
- b) Established the Colin Powell Institute; Established the Charles Rangel Center

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The institution meets these standards

Summary of evidence and findings

It is clear in a variety of ways that the faculty, senior administration, and staff have taken planning resource allocation and institutional review seriously and have acted in substantive and significant ways to continue to meet the Middle States Standards. While there are suggestions for continued improvement, they in no way diminish the significant accomplishments made at the institution.

The institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals. There are clear objectives and assessment activities for institutional renewal. In large part, the process for resource allocation is driven and prescribed by CUNY. There are goals of maintaining or developing flagship and premier programs within the institution in such areas as Engineering, Architecture and Science. There are resources associated with these goals that come directly through CUNY from Cluster Hiring funding and through the COMPACT. In addition, CUNY funds the master facilities plan for the institution.

The institution has been achieving its goals. There are measurements for achieving both CUNY goals and the objectives and strategies of individual units to help carry out the goals of CUNY and the institution.

Most impressive for the institution is its planning and extraordinary success in philanthropy. In just five years, philanthropic contributions have grown over 400% from \$15M to over \$60M. Both the original goal of \$100M set in 2002 and a new goal of \$150M set in 2004 have been surpassed by over \$100M. This has allowed the institution to broaden its revenue base and achieve goals not funded by CUNY and not within the context of the institution’s budget.

Also impressive are the grounds and the beautification efforts, building maintenance and new construction that has and is currently occurring at the institution. Beautification efforts are important to recruit prospective students, create an atmosphere that is conducive to student, faculty and staff retention as well as engender good will among alumni and potential donors.

Significant steps have been made to enhance the culture of planning since 1997. Planning is done in a participatory manner within divisions and departments. Planning is related back to the goals of the institution and CUNY. Goals are written, reviewed periodically and assessed with appropriate measurements.

The institution is not without its fiscal challenges. Some of those include retaining students, faculty and staff. The institution is attempting to address these challenges and they are certainly a noted priority with every unit. Another challenge is hiring faculty in a geographic area where housing costs are out of the reach of the salary as defined by CUNY. The institution is considering ways this might be addressed, e.g. exploration of providing housing for faculty. Finally, the institution is purposefully trying to increase the admissions requirements for its freshman students, which could result in a short-term decrease in student enrollment, and thereby CUTRA funding. As these funds decrease the institution will have to find other revenue sources if it is to continue to advance its mission at the same rate.

Suggestions

1. Make the links between the planning and budget process more transparent for faculty and staff and more clearly define the internal (non-CUNY) budget process.
2. Link enrollment and fiscal management. Currently, there are no clear links between the University's budget and its enrollments, which generate directly or indirectly the largest portion of the University's revenue.
3. The financial and enrollment management offices have already identified that they need to work more closely. It is further suggested that they consider:
 - § Jointly developing multi-year enrollment and budget projections for planning purposes both at the institutional level and for recruitment.
 - § Include in those models the retention goals of the institution and the impact goals will have on revenue.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

The institution is a part of the City University system (CUNY) which includes four year and two year colleges and a graduate center. CUNY is governed by a 17 member Board of Trustees, appointed by the governor and the mayor of the city of New York. The CUNY Board of Trustees has administrative oversight and authority over the governance and operations of all institutions within the system through the Office of the Chancellor. Approval by the Chancellor is required for most administrative and curricular actions at the institutional level. The Faculty Senate, its Faculty Councils in the professional schools and the college of liberal arts and sciences, and the institution wide Personnel and Budget committee work together with the President and his designees in the governance of the institution.

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, and is responsible for leadership and implementation of the mission and for carrying out the goals of CUNY, determining overall institutional direction, strategic planning and positioning, and for establishing the climate for moving the institution forward.

The institution has a governance plan that is comprehensive and detailed. It describes the roles and responsibilities of faculty, students, administrators and staff in the governance of the institution. The plan delineates the work of the faculty through the Faculty Senate and its councils in order to ensure full participation in decision making on matters of curriculum, standards, academic activities, including the selection and evaluation of new faculty and the President, and in the implementation of new and revised programs. The plan was written in 1972 and revised in 1995.

The institutional constituent groups appear to be aware of the CUNY governance plan as well as the CCNY governance plan. Both are available in print and on line. The governance plan is used in routine deliberations and is fully operational as institutional constituent groups carry out and exercise their individual and collective responsibilities. The governance plan is the vehicle for participation in matters of the college and includes provisions for undergraduate and graduate student participation. The CUNY system governance plan specifies the role of the Chancellor in evaluating the performance of the institution and for the President in evaluating the performance of the institution and administrative and instructional staffs.

Significant accomplishments

1. The institution has been able to develop a strategic planning process that is consonant with the plans of CUNY and which will aid in establishing a more prominent future for the College.
2. The Self Study document and process exemplifies the effectiveness of the governance process and participation of all constituent groups on campus.

Suggestions

1. More work needs to be done to ensure undergraduate and graduate student participation in the governance structure and its processes.
2. The institution may want to periodically report to the faculty on progress of the ad hoc committee set up to review college governance and faculty and student participation in the process
3. The institution may want to review the orientation and socialization of new and junior faculty.
4. The institution may want to re-visit the faculty workload of teaching, research, scholarship and service as it relates to the retention, tenure, and promotion processes.
5. The institution may want to fully explore the tensions among junior and senior faculty and between faculty and administration and seek to facilitate better communication regarding governance, decision making, tenure and promotion processes, and mission.

Standard 5: Administration

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

President Williams has led the institution during a major transition from its open admission policy to its attempt to become a university with a number of flagship programs and attractive to students with a choice of where to attend college. President Williams has sought to "change the conversation" about the institution. In that regard, the President has led the institution to enhance academic quality and standards, expand and create new graduate degree programs (including receiving authority to grant Ph.D degrees in some areas), focus on retention and graduate rates for students and build and renovate the physical plant. In addition, the President is an astute fundraiser and has raised over \$250 million during his tenure.

The administrative structure of the institution appears to function smoothly and collegially. In spring 2006, the President reorganized his administrative team and reconstituted his cabinet. The position of Chief Operating Officer was split into two senior vice presidents--one for finance and the other for facilities. In addition, other senior positions were created, including an Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management, a Chief Information Officer and a Comptroller. These new positions and the other restructuring which has occurred has provided greater clarity of functions and reporting at the top administrative levels.

Two important bodies report and provide counsel to the President: the Cabinet (Vice Presidents, Directors reporting directly to the President, several Deans and a number of other key administrators); and the Review Committee (Provost, Deans, Vice Presidents and faculty representatives). Although there is some overlap in membership, these two bodies appear to function collegially and provide valuable and wide-ranging insights on significant issues and policy determinations.

Effective communication is always a challenge in any organization but it is especially difficult in a large urban university campus. In a survey conducted by the University Faculty Senate, the institution ranked lowest among all CUNY colleges in the area of respect shown by college administrators to faculty. Other surveys have shown similar levels of dissatisfaction. In response and in an attempt to be more transparent, the administrative leaders have scheduled more frequent meetings between faculty and staff and administrators. In addition, the web site has been enhanced to provide more information on budgets, policies and planning.

Significant accomplishment

The administrative leadership and, in particular its President, are to be commended for "changing the conversation" about the institution and leading the institution through its transition away from an open admission policy.

Suggestion

The significant number of new administrators offers the opportunity to provide greater transparency and enhanced communication with campus constituent groups, particularly around budget issues.

Standard 6: Integrity

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

In the conduct of its programs and activities, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and

intellectual freedom.

One of the primary hallmarks of managing a successful institution of higher learning in today's environment is the degree to which institutional management is able to successfully implement and adhere to acceptable principles of integrity. To this end, the institution has been successful in developing and implementing policies that address and help to facilitate the diversity which exist on the college campus. The institution maintains updated policies relative to the following issues:

1. Policies and guidelines regarding plagiarism and use of copyrighted material.
2. Policies on conflict of interest and research ethics.
3. Policies related to academic freedom.
4. Policies regarding intellectual property rights.
5. Policies and procedures in regards to the Institutional Review Board.
6. Policies and procedures relative to Affirmative Action.

Through its Office of Affirmative Action and Compliance, a cadre of policies, procedures, and training sessions have evolved which create an environment of fairness and compliance for persons at all levels (from students to administrators). At least 53 workshops have been either implemented and/or planned for this calendar year that specifically deal with the issue of sexual harassment. Given the number of workshop and the requisite number of people attending these workshops, the institution has also experienced an increase in the number of complaints filed as related to sexual harassment; most have been resolved internally through the Office of the Director of Affirmative Action and Compliance. The Office also attempted to disseminate information related to sexual harassment through the various media, including the internet, hands-on workshops, and the printed medium. Finally, the Office has held sensitivity training sessions for groups and individuals which dealt with cultural issues.

The Office of Affirmative Action and Compliance is also intricately involved in the recruitment of faculty and staff at the institution. To this end, the Office shared with the evaluator a printed guide called the Recruitment and Search Guide that is used as a model for position searches throughout the institution. Major position recommendations are made to this Office for final sign-off by the appropriate institution officials.

In conclusion, the institution has a well organized and fair procedure for dealing with issues of integrity. Other than the fact that the budget appears small for implementing key elements of the affirmative action program, the Office is operating efficiently.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

In light of its mission, and as part of CUNY, the institution has defined its institution-wide and unit-levels goals and has begun to implement strategies to achieve those goals as noted in previous sections of this report. Although institutional assessment of goals at

the time of the visit varied among units, the Team found interview and documentary evidence of periodic assessment of institutional effectiveness. The development of common reporting templates across units appears to have aided in the collection of institutional assessment activities for the purposes of this reaccreditation visit, as well as for the sharing of information across areas of the institution through the Review Committee.

The Team found evidence of careful planning and organized presentation of assessment activities, and believes that the processes have yielded results that are truthful and reasonably accurate. For example, the institution is approaching the somewhat painful realities of its retention and graduation rates with honesty, resources, and energy. In the absence of significant discretionary resources and in order to sustain assessment processes, the Team cautions the institution to attend to the most useful and cost-effective activities to assist in institutional decision-making. Systematic institutional assessment must be regular but does not imply that every unit must assess every program every year. The tremendous, institution-wide efforts that resulted in the evidence provided in the document room and the website establishes the base from which the institution can proceed with a thoughtful, streamlined, and feasible approach to institutional assessment that takes advantage of the engagement and dedication of the campus community.

The institution finds itself at an important juncture with the arrival of the draft CUNY Master Plan and the self-reflection required of the Middle States process. As the institution begins its own strategic planning process, the Team urges the institution through the Review Committee to align its processes where appropriate to reduce duplication of effort for reporting, to link identified and potential resources to initiatives, and to embed appropriate institutional assessment measures, processes, and resources toward the achievement of the institution's mission and goals.

In the broadest sense, assessment is increasingly becoming a part of the institution's culture. The Team concurs with the Self-Study plan that the assessment process include wider participation across campus and that assessment permeate throughout all units of the institution. In light of the institution's ambitious vision, there is a need for planning, resource allocation, and assessment to be integrated and communicated to help everyone on campus focus attention on achieving institutional and unit-level goals. At the same time, it is necessary that the institution stay abreast of the changing political, higher education, and demographic landscape. The institution would be well served by further formalizing the communication of assessment results and the recognition of individual and collective assessment efforts. Assessment results, whether positive or negative, always inform conversations of how the institution is realizing its mission. For purposes of continuous improvement, integrity, and accountability, the institution should determine what level of assessment data will be transparent among the campus community and what assessment data will be available to the public.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

The institution seeks to admit students whose interest, goals and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the student's educational goals.

The institution has experienced growth in student enrollment over the past several years.

This growth has continued the institution's tradition of educating a highly diverse and comprehensive student body. The growth is even more pertinent considering that the institution increased its admission standards and terminated the offering of remedial courses nearly eight years ago. Part of the stabilizing effect could be attributed to the overall CUNY system policy of having each institution within the system offer select professional degree programs.

In addressing the issue of enrollment, the administration organized, in 2004, the Office of Enrollment Management in the Office of Academic Affairs, working in close collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs. This office has as one of its primary goals the key responsibility of "retention".

According to the description given in the Self Study, the institution ranks fifth among the seven CUNY institutions in terms of retaining its students after 6-years of study. The administration, through the implementation of programs such as, Benchmarks Math, Mid-Term Intervention, End of Semester Grade Review, New Student Orientation, New Student Seminar, SEEK, Gateway Academy, and others is attempting to address the issue of retention.

From conversations with the various constituencies, it is clear that the institution has not developed a formalized system for assessing reasons why students leave the institution prior to graduation. Some individual units appear to be implementing some informal system for evaluating performance; however, the more centralized focus expected of the administration is lacking. When beginning this process the institution may want to distinguish the "drop-outs" from the so called "stop-outs".

Further, from conversations with the various departments organized to address retention, it is clear that the resources currently allocated to this problem are not sufficient. Currently more than 1500 students are advised through the Gateway Academy which has only one director, two full-time advisors, and one support staff. If the institution is serious about the business of retaining this special population of students, more resources will need to be allocated to the Academy.

It is very clear that the institution recognizes student attrition as a grave concern. They have devoted considerable energy across Academic and Student Affairs to address this issue.

Examples of actions taken to address retention issues include: the Retention Committee; the design and evolution of the First Year Inquiry Writing Seminar (FIQWS) course; continued studies by the Director of Institutional Research with targeted information flowing to academic departments; and many other efforts.

The FIQWS course and the attendant assessment efforts surrounding it have prompted impacts on retention of first-year students. More specifically: 1) the fact that the Senior Faculty Advisor to the Provost for Undergraduate Education reviews all FIQWS syllabi, interviews all faculty, and interviews all students considering dropping the course; 2) CCNY initiated an End-Of Course Survey in fall 2007 to gather useful information about the course; 3) a student is contacted if they miss a class; and 4) in spring 2008 initiated a Midterm Progress Report completed by the two FIQWS instructors and returned to each student to provide personalized feedback on their current standing in the two components of the course. These actions speak directly to the commitment of CCNY to the growth and development of their students.

Almost every CCNY staff and faculty interviewed identified retention as the most important issue for the school to resolve. It is a multi-faceted issue and is mentioned here because of the potential effect retention has on the budget and the ability to meet CCNY's stated goals. A modest increase in retention will generate funds for important initiatives. In addition, as students are retained, fewer students need to be brought in as freshmen. As fewer freshmen are brought in the quality of the student body can be enhanced. As the quality is enhanced and the retention rate improves, the institution will have an enhanced reputation. This enhanced reputation assists with the positive impact it has with alumni and again, helps attract quality students.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

Meetings occurred with various constituencies of the institution including faculty, administrators, staff, and students. It is apparent that the institution provides a wide array of student services designed to enhance the overall educational experiences of students from entry to graduation.

In response to the type of student population served and the need to retain students, academic advising is a part of all major divisions on the campus. While the process of advising is not consistent across division, one thing is obviously clear, students require additional assistance in working through their educational experience at the institution. The extent to which advising functions deliver services to students is not consistent across the board. Some departments appear to be doing a little more than others. Additionally, having good data to make advisement decision is not clear, nor apparent. One great impediment to good advisement is the current student information system. It appears that students can register for courses without having the approval of an academic advisor. In speaking with the advisors, the current software has various glitches which mitigate the successful advising of students. To this end, it was understood that a new software package created by the PeopleSoft/Oracle company will be installed and implemented over the next 5 year period beginning with the financial package.

As in the previous standard, it is noted in this section that good and accurate data are needed to make concrete decisions about students and their experience at the institution. In this light, the institution may want to provide serious resources in assessment and testing and thus use the results of these surveys to make serious decisions about students.

Some students complained about the quality of adjunct faculty. While adjunct faculty can be a tremendous asset in light of the kinds of experiences that these personnel bring to our institution, they can also be an impediment if careful oversight is not given to qualification for teaching, especially theory courses, credentials and preparation, and enthusiasm for teaching diverse students. It was a good feeling to hear many of the students praise the caliber of full-time faculty teaching at the college. It was also a breath of fresh air to hear students indicate that faculty were accessible and showed very good interpersonal skills. The students indicated that the quality and quantity of student support experiences was adequate on the campus. Some did have complaints about the library; but not to the extent that this evaluator felt it should be a serious problem.

Significant accomplishment

The commitment to students is admirable. The institution needs to continue to explore ways to increase retention, improve advising, and expand the level of student services.

Standard 10: Faculty

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, and students, the Team has reached the following conclusions on this standard:

The institution has a long tradition of faculty excellence in scholarship and research. The excitement of being in the forefront of intellectual exploration has led to the faculty's having high expectations for student achievement. Pursuit of high student achievement was complicated beginning in the 1970's by the goal of open enrollment. The tension between these two goals long proved vexing to both the institution and its alumni and friends.

The institution entered a new period at the end of the twentieth century when students requiring broad remediation were directed away from the senior colleges toward CUNY's community colleges to prepare them for baccalaureate level work and standards for admission to the institution were raised. This shift again raised tensions in the faculty between those who saw excellence and access as mutually exclusive goals.

But nearly a decade has passed since the new standards took effect and in that time over 50% of the faculty has been replaced by new hires. The institution's judicious hiring has brought to the campus a vigorous and talented cohort to complement the talented older faculty. In the process, most faculty, senior and junior, seem to have become willing to pursue both goals simultaneously.

The publication *Faculty Awards and Achievements 2006-2007*, for example, lists 137 pages of honors, grants, awards, and publications. At the same time, the faculty supports, mentors, and inspires what is said to be the second most diverse student body in the United States. While many of these students continue to struggle with issues that threaten their ultimate graduation, others have thrived, and the College can point with pride to its first Truman and Rhodes scholars since the 1930s, as well as a growing honors program that target high-achieving students.

The next academic year projects hiring 24 new full-time faculty beyond the replacements for departing faculty. This presents the College with its first opportunity to begin increasing the number of professorial lines to meet the needs of the growing, and more gifted student body.

The institution places great reliance on lecturers and adjuncts. While many of the latter are superb teachers, they rarely take on the research, advising, and governance duties of a growing college. The Ph.D. granting authority that the institution has been given will require the addition of new tenure track faculty, particularly for programs to achieve flagship status.

In the meantime, as new faculty continues to be hired, the Team suggests that the institution explore ways to integrate new faculty more effectively into all aspects of college life. While many departments do an exemplary job in this regard, the process is

hit-and-miss when looked at institution-wide. The Team would also make a similar suggestion concerning adjuncts. Training and orientation of new adjuncts is again thoughtful and thorough in some departments, but seems casual and incomplete in others. The institution should explore ways to assure that all new adjunct faculty demonstrate the same excellence in teaching as their full-time peers, as required by Standard number 10 of the *Characteristics of Excellence*.

Faculty groups several times voiced the concern that support staff was minimal, that there were insufficient numbers of administrative assistants for academic departments and programs and that technical staff was lacking to care for the large number of expensive new scientific instruments recently bought for or acquired by the college. While faculty understands that this is a resource issue that will require creative funding, they consciously award it a high priority because of its importance to the proper functioning and continuing development of the institution.

Finally, the Team questioned many faculty members on the issues of trust and communication between them and the administration. Unanimously, they gave the Deans, Provost, and President high marks for the initiatives undertaken in this regard and most seemed quite satisfied with the current situation, though one faculty member remarked that he was withholding judgment until he saw how the administration concretely reacted to what they heard in these open venues.

On the whole, the team encountered a hard-working, creative, committed faculty sensitive to the College's unusual double mission of demanding excellence while providing access to the traditionally underserved. While not unaware of the difficulties that may lie in their new path, they are eager to participate in the building of the new City College currently envisioned.

The commitment of faculty and staff to the institution is both admirable and contagious. As the institution continues to strengthen its General Education program and expand graduate degrees, even more attention needs to be paid to faculty support and development.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

1. There is a high level of learning resource offerings that enhance the educational experience of students. There are six libraries on campus that house an impressive array of collections and holdings, archives and special collections. Technology is emerging rapidly to support classroom teaching and information technology as well as academic computing facilities. Computer labs may be found throughout the campus to support instruction, research, and communications. Learning laboratories and science facilities and resources enhance instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
2. The mandate by CUNY to remove remediation from four year institutions to two year institutions has had an impact on admissions requirements and standards and enrollment. It has also forced the institution to rethink current course offerings and programs, as well as modes of delivery. This process has created some tensions among faculty and administrators as the institution fulfills the CUNY mission, and at the same time maintains its commitment to its students.

Commendations

1. The high caliber of the faculty is demonstrated in faculty background, credentials and expertise. Combined with learning resources and learning support programs enables the institution to fulfill its mission of access and excellence and maintain its position as a flagship institution of the CUNY.
2. Recent CUNY Board approval has been obtained allowing the institution to award the Ph. D in engineering on the campus from the school of engineering.

Suggestions

1. The institution should maintain the periodic review of current programs and educational offerings and curricula and continually explore new and additional programs and educational offerings that emphasize faculty strengths, increase the competitiveness of academic programs and are responsive to student needs
2. The institution may want to more fully explore the make-up of its student body and determine the needs of the students who bring different and non traditional values to a traditional college setting.

Standards 12: General Education

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions with respect to this standard.

A “Core Curriculum” was introduced in 1986. When it became clear that this curriculum was no longer fulfilling its original purpose, the Provost appointed a faculty committee to recommend a new general education curriculum. This new requirement was initiated for B.A. students in Fall 2007 and was recently approved for B.S. students.

Significant accomplishment

The new program was developed with close attention to educational objectives, course objectives and assessment tools.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

The institution offers traditional courses and programs as well as programs and activities for non traditional college students in credit and non-credit formats. In addition, co-curricular programs such as study abroad enhance the student experience. Outreach to middle and high school students in college preparation and enrichment activities complement the curriculum.

The institution has attempted to provide a quality educational experience with the appropriate supports to enhance that experience to a wide range of students and student interests. The array of these programs is extensive and range from the Gateway

Academy, designed to promote first year student retention to career services for graduating seniors to placement and mentoring activities in the BA/MD program.

The Division for Worker Education, an off campus site, delivers undergraduate education to working adults. The curricular, co-curricular, and student, meets all of the standards for the BA degree.

Commendation

The Division for Worker Education is an exemplary program for working adult students.

Suggestions

1. The institution may want to consider the models of the various academic and student support programs on campus that are successful to re-focus student retention strategies and activities.
2. The institution may want to consider recognizing “Centers of Excellence” in educational offerings that enhance the quality of education for all students and provide incentives for replication on campus.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The institution meets this standard

Summary of evidence and findings

The institution is undergoing a transformation. While the transformation that is taking place is institution-wide, it is also evidenced in new and bold initiatives toward development and enhancement of assessment of student learning. It appears that considerable prodding was necessary from external stakeholders (MSCHE, 1998, 2003) to help stimulate long awaited and expected progress in student assessment. However, recent events make it clear that the institution is declaring ownership of assessment activities and has embarked on a quite ambitious assessment implementation plan that spans General Education, undergraduate majors, and graduate programs. Resources have been allocated to fuel task achievement.

A very talented and committed team of professionals has been recruited to guide a very difficult process. The Provost has played a leadership role in gathering and resourcing this team comprised of the Senior Faculty Advisor to the Provost for Undergraduate Education, new Director of Assessment, the Director of Institutional Research (IR), and the Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). This core team is also supplemented by new assistants recent hired or to be hired in Assessment, IR, and CETL. In addition to these full-time employees, the institution has relied on many faculty members from across the undergraduate and graduate departments to conduct the tasks of beginning assessment practice in their home programs. This is not an easy task, even with guidance from experts.

The institution also relied on their many professional programs that had successfully achieved accreditation through their engagement in assessment practices. The Director of Assessment had worked with the assessment of the institution’s Engineering programs and recently assumed her new role. After only one year, considerable progress has been attained. Current activities are generally focused on the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). The institution acknowledges that they started a bit late, and it will take time to get it right. The early years of assessment practice will set the tone for whether or not the desired assessment culture can begin and flourish.

Assessment of General Education:

This is truly a work in progress. The institution is just implementing their new General Education program. They have been monitoring closely the course offerings, and with the exception of the CUNY Proficiency Examination (CPE), no formal direct measures of student learning are currently in place. The CPE would only serve as an assessment method for the first three General Education learning objectives (A, B, and C). The Faculty General Education Implementation Committee had hoped to implement some form of portfolio assessment via BlackBoard but was disappointed that it did not function as advertised. Plans are underway for the initiation of ePortfolios for next year. A team of faculty members are attending monthly workshops that are guiding their thinking and planning.

What is currently in place are two measures of student engagement and performance. The first, enacted in fall 2007, is an End-Of Course Survey that enables students to report on their learning experiences and accomplishments in the FIQWS 10100 course. The instrument was delivered in paper and pencil format previously but will be migrated to an electronic data collection procedure next year. The institution has purchased electronic clickers that will allow students to submit their responses to the survey in class and anonymously. This will be a much more efficient data collection procedure. The second measure is the Midterm Progress Report, which was put in place in spring 2008. This effort involves both instructors providing ratings on student participation, and performances on assignments and exams. The instructors meet together to discuss student ratings and also meet with the students during class time to discuss their midterm progress. It is hoped that this arduous process will promote student retention. One additional action of special note is that when a student is absent from class, they are contacted by the instructor. This action may also promote student retention.

The FQUANT course and the other courses associated with the remaining General Education learning outcomes currently have no assessment methodologies in place. Given the controlled and carefully prescribed number of courses that are approved for the General Education program, it may indeed be feasible to enact a portfolio system that can assess each of the remaining learning objectives. As stated above, the General Education program is truly a work in progress.

Assessment in the major

The institution has witnessed sustained and substantive progress with the assessment of student learning in the majors. The work, thus far, is much better demonstrated in the undergraduate majors than the graduate programs. During the meeting of the Division Coordinators and Department Coordinators, it was immediately evident that many programs had already gleaned unexpected and useful information about their students, curriculum, and instructional delivery. For example, one department stated progress in student gains in critical thinking; another program indicated that the rubrics designed for assessment were now adopted for use in courses; yet another program is developing a new course as a result of what was learned. One other noted two benefits: the process had required faculty to “Think about why we do what we do and to think about what we do.” The change has required us to be more thoughtful. Due to the intensive efforts of the last two years, most major programs have completed at least one wave of assessment reporting, and these results are encouraging.

There was also considerable recognition by Division Coordinators for the excellent contributions of Departmental Coordinators and vice versa. In short, collegiality was evident. Of course, there were a few concerns expressed. Primarily, the largest concern relates to sustainability of these efforts. It was observed that the same ‘good citizens’

consistently appear when the institution needs such extra effort. There is need for recognition and reward for substantive service to the institution. Many faculty members believe that such work should be counted for promotion and tenure decisions. While this is an important policy decision beyond the scope of this visit, it speaks to the sustainability of these efforts over time. It is very clear that considerable work and effort has been expended to achieve progress. It is also clear that continued effort will be necessary to realize the institution's goals for systematic and credible assessment.

Commendation

The institution continues to move forward with their assessment work. The Team commends the institution for their progress with their assessment plan and reporting to date. It is obvious by the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment that continued work will result in achievement of CCNY's stated goals.

Recommendation

The institution submit a Periodic Review Report, due June 1, 2010, that presents the assessment plan, assessment methods, and results for General Education, undergraduate programs, programs and graduate. For many programs, use of assessment results for program improvement will be warranted.