



# FORTNIGHT

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A Communiqué focusing on topics related to Outcomes Assessment, Institutional Effectiveness, and Institutional Research produced jointly by the Office of the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and the Office of Institutional Research (OIRA) at the College of Staten Island/The City University of New York

## WHAT IS FORTNIGHT?

A **fortnight** is a unit of time equivalent to 14 days. According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, the term is derived from the Old English *feorwertyne niht*, meaning "fourteen nights."

Inspired by the opportunities and challenges of Middle States Standard 14 and the desire to share information and best practices, **FORTNIGHT** is a communication vehicle which is distributed online and via hard copy to the campus community. As we revise the College web presence devoted to assessment topics and develop our graphics, **FORTNIGHT** will be archived on the website.

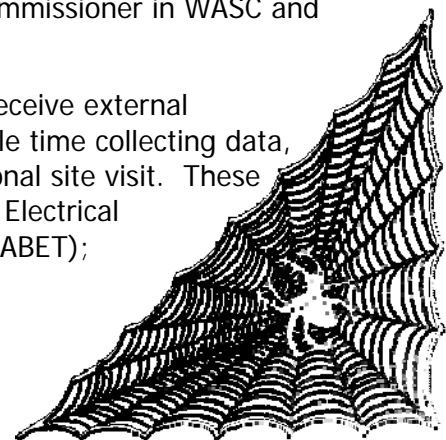
In the meantime, we keep expanding our distribution list as we receive more requests and recommendations from our readers. Please continue to suggest faculty, staff, and administrative colleagues who are forming committees, interested in assessment, and/or occupy leadership roles on campus. If you missed earlier issues, we would be happy to forward copies to you.

## ACCREDITING AGENCIES: NATIONAL AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

As was mentioned in the last issue of **FORTNIGHT**, there are regional accrediting bodies that evaluate institutions in their entirety and national organizations that have oversight over disciplines. We wanted to take this opportunity to present a bit more detail about accrediting organizations, particularly in the wake of a recent CSI site visit.

Colleges and universities are accredited within six geographic regions in the United States. We described the Middle States territory in our first issue. Colleges located in states to our north are part of New England Association of Schools and College's (NEASC) Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Other regions include North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA), Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS), Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), and Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCC). While similar in their endeavors to uphold quality and foster continuous self-study and improvement, it is interesting to note that the commissions do not follow identical procedures. CSI's senior administration brings us valuable experience from other regions: President Morales was a commissioner in WASC and Provost Fritz's former institution, Georgia State, was part of SACS.

Several programs housed within departments at the College of Staten Island receive external accreditation by professional organizations. As such, faculty spend considerable time collecting data, meeting discipline-based standards, preparing reports, and hosting the occasional site visit. These departments include Chemistry (ACS); Education (NCATE); Computer Science, Electrical Engineering Technology, and Engineering Science & Physics (all accredited by ABET); Nursing (NLNAC); and Physical Therapy (CAPTE).



## COLLEGE UPDATES

The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) was on campus from October 19-21 for a site visit related to the reaccreditation of the Bachelor of Science in Engineering Program. We wish to acknowledge the major efforts of Dr. Syed Rizvi (Chair) and the department committee, particularly Professors Connie Li and José Torres, in preparing the comprehensive documents for the visit.

## CUNY NEWS AND EVENTS

We have more details on the Joint Council Retreat announced in the first issue of **FORTNIGHT**. On Friday, November 14, members of the University's Assessment, Testing, and Institutional Research offices will be holding an all-day event from 9am-4pm at Hostos Community College ([www.hostos.cuny.edu/](http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/)).

Following greetings from Hostos President Dolores M. Fernandez, the plenary and break-out sessions will focus on assessment within and outside of CUNY; rubric development; the structure of Gen Ed across CUNY; essentials of testing and measurement; CPE rubrics and Gen Ed; software for obtaining, organizing, and reporting assessment data. Featured presenters include University Dean for Institutional Research and Assessment, Dr. David Crook; Director of the CUNY Performance Management Process, Dr. Sherri Ondrus; and Director of Assessment at Brooklyn College, Dr. Michael Anderson.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

You may recall seeing the colorful diagrams that we have been developing for some departments which include an overview of missions, programs, and courses (samples were distributed at Divisional Chairs meetings). We started with the Business Department and have been working on drafts for Mathematics, History, and Psychology. Feedback that we have received indicates that these "Departmental Assessment Schematics" can be helpful in framing a department's assessment process. We have found that it is very beneficial to have a department representative actively consult with us in the development of a schematic. We anticipate that the schematics will appear, along with archived issues of **FORTNIGHT**, on our Assessment website which is now in the planning stage. Please contact us if you would like to begin a Department Assessment Schematic for your area.

## FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

In keeping with the season, we invite you to explore the works of Edgar Allan Poe, in particular, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. <http://www.poestories.com/text.php?file=houseofusher>

*I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when, one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment,) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building.*

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by **November 10, 2008**, for consideration to appear in a future communiqué.

The **FORTNIGHT** staff is off to the IUPUI Assessment Institute in Indianapolis. We look forward to reporting on the experience in future issues.

