



# FORTNIGHT

Volume 1, Issue 6

Mid December 2008

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 and Assessment (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 to the campus community. Our prior issues will soon be archived on a new Assessment website now under construction. If you missed earlier communiqués, we would be happy to forward copies to you.

## MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2008: INSIGHTS ON EVALUATION

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) held its annual conference from December 7-9 in Baltimore, MD. Representatives from many of its 535 membership institutions were in attendance, including more than 40 participants from the CUNY System. The College of Staten Island was represented by President Tomás Morales, Provost William Fritz, Interim Associate Provost Susan Holak, and Coordinator of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, Warrick Bell.

The full-day pre-conference workshop, "A Basic Toolbox for Assessing Institutional Effectiveness," offered by Michael Middaugh, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning at the University of Delaware, provided Susan and Warrick with an in-depth look at institutional effectiveness measures, and survey instruments useful at many different stages of the enrollment management process. Surveys to assess student perceptions, expectations, and satisfaction, as well as faculty and employee satisfaction were presented in terms of their usefulness and advantages. A product of the work that Dr. Middaugh and his colleagues at the University of Delaware have engaged in over the years is The Delaware Project, an information system which allows participating institutions to make comparisons on institutional effectiveness indicators by academic discipline. We plan to return to these topics in future issues of **FORTNIGHT**.

Some provocative insights about the experiences of "millennials" (Generation Y – those born at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), their use of technology, and implications for higher education were presented by Dr. Mark David Milliron, President and CEO of Catalyze Learning International (formerly of UT-Austin), in his plenary address entitled, "A New Generation of Learning: Diverse Students, Emerging Technologies, and Sustainability Challenges." Digital game-based learning, holographic games, and the importance of oases on campus (e.g., having WiFi in a café housed in a college library) are changing the way students learn and experience campus life.

Susan Holak was also able to learn more about the Middle States evaluation process by participating in two sessions devoted to evaluator training. During a Middle States visit, a team of 6-8 evaluators chosen from similar out-of-state institutions is sent to corroborate the self-study document and supporting materials submitted by the institution, note changes since the previous visit, and interview campus constituents. Usually, this team has expertise in key areas including administration, finance, the library, academic areas, student affairs, outcomes assessment, and information technology. We will return to the topic of Middle States evaluations in future issues of **FORTNIGHT**.



## COLLEGE UPDATES

### The Academic Departments

**Chemistry** – Susan Holak and Warrick Bell were invited to meet with the department during its December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, to discuss its department assessment schematic, the progress made on evaluating Gen Ed classes, and the department's mission statement.

**Education** – Dr. El Samuels, Assessment Coordinator, and Professor Brian Carolan met with Susan Holak, Warrick Bell, and Barbara Cohen, Survey Coordinator in the OIRA, to discuss NCATE accreditation requirements and electronic data collection of education student portfolio materials. The group noted that NCATE's requirements for SPA (Specialty Professional Association) documentation necessitate close collaboration between Education and other departments that provide courses for education students (SLS courses as well as courses on content like math, English, history, etc.).

**English** – Professor Mary Reda, Chair, reports that Professor Alyson Bardsley will represent English on the College-wide Assessment Committee. The Department's Outcomes Assessment Committee, which has broad representation, is comprised of its Curriculum Committee and COMMA (Committee on the Masters and Major). The English Department is well-along in its development and use of rubrics for assessing ENG 111 and ENG 151.

### Staff Offices

**Alumni Relations** - Jennifer Lynch, Associate Director of Alumni Relations, met with Susan Holak, Warrick Bell, and Barbara Cohen to discuss results from the most recent OIRA alumni survey, which was directed to the graduating classes of 1989, 1994, and 1999. Changes to office procedures for locating alumni and future data needs were also discussed. In the course of the conversation, we discovered that the Alumni office had been revising procedures for finding lost alumni in recent years. Documenting process changes like this is one of the keys to evaluating institutional effectiveness.

## CUNY NEWS AND EVENTS

Many of you are familiar with CUNY's Performance Management Process (PMP), the system which is used to assess institutional effectiveness across the campuses. The comprehensive process focuses on many aspects of the institutions under the auspices of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administration & Finance. Dr. Sherri Ondrus, CUNY PMP Director, chaired a meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup> to which all campuses were invited. CSI was represented by Provost Fritz, Susan Holak, and Warrick Bell. In addition to introducing the process to those new to the system, Dr. Ondrus chaired a discussion on the relevance of proposed and existing measures.

## FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

In the spirit of the season, we hope that you enjoy the following...

"The oldest recipes [for figgy pudding] contain references to infusing this culinary concoction with animal fat. .... The pudding, when steamed for the requisite hour or three days or a **fortnight**, would be unveiled at the end of the holiday meal."

Kevin Trotter, *The Concord Insider*, Concord NH, December 9, 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/6e2qcj>

**FORTNIGHT** will resume publication after a brief hiatus for the semester break. We will return in mid-February 2009. We wish Warrick Bell a wonderful trip to Hamilton, New Zealand. Happy Holidays and best wishes to all in the New Year 2009.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by **February 8, 2009**, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué.

