



FORTNIGHT

Volume 2, Issue 8

Late May 2009

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

www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment

WHAT IS FORTNIGHT?

A **fortnight** is a unit of time equivalent to 14 days. The term derives 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. Prior issues are available on the Office of the Associate Provost website, at www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment.

EXPANDING UPON OUR ASSESSMENT INITIATIVES: PROGRESS TO DATE AND A LOOK AHEAD TO FALL 2009

Administrative transitions at CSI during 2008-2009 brought renewed focus to activities related to institutional effectiveness and assessment. Beginning with the redefinition of the Associate Provost's portfolio to include institutional effectiveness, efforts to ascertain outcomes and evaluate the need for improvements have been initiated and/or heightened by academic departments, support offices, and service providers on campus.

Fall 2008 saw the launch of this communiqué, with the purpose of updating the College community on institutional effectiveness, sharing best practices, and providing information on assessment activities from other CUNY campuses and beyond. Also during the fall semester, close collaboration between the Office of the Associate Provost and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment was instituted. Since fall 2008, Associate Provost Susan Holak and OIRA Coordinator Warrick Bell were invited to visit several academic departments during their monthly departmental meetings, including Business, Psychology, PCA and Chemistry. Topics of discussion included approaches to assessment, and the determination of what assessment-related activities were already taking place. Assessment schematics, which diagram programs and courses, were developed for most departments during the fall. Department assessment committee representatives found these visuals useful when communicating to fellow faculty about assessment initiatives, progress, and unaddressed issues.

As we have noted in many issues of **FORTNIGHT**, individual meetings were conducted during both fall and spring semesters with department representatives to: review progress on assessment initiatives, respond to specific questions, discuss measures, and disseminate information about Middle States standards. Those academic departments include Biology, Business (Marketing), Education, English, Mathematics, PEP (Economics), Psychology, and SASW. Additionally, department-specific information was distributed to Media Culture and Modern Languages. The Library was the focus of several meetings about data collection instruments and information literacy documentation. Representatives of The Verrazano School and the Center for International Service have met with Susan Holak, Warrick Bell, and Barbara Cohen to discuss program assessment and revisions to their respective survey instruments.

The College-wide Assessment Committee, with representation from each academic department, began meeting during the spring 2009 semester. Central to this group's discussion has been a developing checklist of suggested milestones, which includes a department mission statement and program goals. Once completed and ratified by a department, checklist items have been included in The Assessment Matrix, a compendium of department activities that appears on the Office of the Associate Provost website at www.csi.cuny.edu/assessment. Members of the group were introduced to Bloom's Taxonomy as one typology for establishing goals; curriculum mapping was suggested as way to ensure that the offerings of a program or department align with desired outcomes. Conversations also turned to assessing information literacy in coursework and projects, as well as incentives and reward structures for initiatives related to assessment.



While the **FORTNIGHT** staff focused much attention on the progress that academic departments are making in assessing student learning, a fall visit to the Division of Student Affairs Directors' Meeting brought discussion of learning in student government activities, Disability Services and Career & Scholarship functions, among other divisional offices. Susan Holak's presentation to the division included suggestions for self-studies, data collection, and frequent and rapid campus pulse surveys, to ascertain student opinions about varied topics, using commercial service providers.

Transportation access, sustainability, and service delivery were among the institutional effectiveness areas receiving attention this academic year. The Office of the Associate Provost, in conjunction with OIRA, surveyed the campus community several times with regard to use of the ferry shuttle. In a major collaboration with Professor Jonathan Peters of the Business Department, the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and the High Performance Computing Center staff, a ridership survey was conducted to demonstrate the shuttle's contribution to workforce accessibility.

While much has been accomplished this year, we are well into planning initiatives for 2009-2010. CSI has just received its invitation to the fall 2009 preparatory Middle States workshop, for campuses scheduled to undergo reaccreditation self-study visits in 2011-2012. New information from Middle States via CUNY central, informs our approach to satisfy Standard 14. Program-level assessment including completed studies (or at least projected dates of completion), samples of student work, and rubrics aligned with goals, are just some of the items that external evaluators will be expecting during our site visit. The College-wide Assessment Committee, representing department working groups, will be meeting in early fall with an agenda to address these expectations. During the summer, our visits with staff offices will continue as we ramp up the assessment of institutional effectiveness. A more detailed calendar for the preparation of the Middle States self-study will be finalized in early fall.

CAMPUS UPDATES

Department of Mathematics

Dr. Allen Tesdall met with Susan Holak, Warrick Bell, and Barbara Cohen on May 14, to provide an update of the assessment activities in the Math Department. The Department has drafted a mission statement and is working at the course level to align learning goals for three programs (mathematics, math education, and math/computer science) with program goals. Dr. Tesdall reported that curriculum mapping is already underway for the mathematics major. Following on from the focused assignments undertaken by members of the College-wide Assessment Committee on which Dr. Tesdall sits, the group discussed library and information literacy activities in the department. The Middle States evaluation process, the accreditation site visit, and major changes in the math department since 2000 were also among the topics of interest.

Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work

Progress on the assessment of student learning and other issues were discussed by Dr. Rafael de la Dehesa and Dr. Grace Cho, with Warrick Bell and Barbara Cohen, during a meeting on May 15. The SASW faculty representatives were pleased to report that a mission statement draft was awaiting department approval. During the meeting, the group focused much of the conversation on the process of developing course learning objectives, and on the use of qualitative data for assessment. Professors de la Dehesa and Cho reported that the department is considering the addition of a capstone course in the Sociology/Anthropology major, which would provide ideal opportunities for assessment of the major.

FOR TIGHTLY NOTES

According to Wikipedia, a garden snail has a top speed of about 78 furlongs per **fortnight**. One furlong per **fortnight** is approximately equal to one centimeter per minute.

FORTNIGHT will resume publication after a hiatus over the summer break. We will return in September 2009.

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

