



FOR TNIGHT

Volume 3, Issue 5

Mid November 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

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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

THE MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY INSTITUTE: A LOOK AHEAD TO 2011-2012

Associate Provost Susan Holak and Coordinator of Institutional Research and Assessment Warrick Bell attended the mandatory Middle States Self-Study Institute in Philadelphia from November 10 to 11, which marked the official start of the College’s decennial accreditation process. The purpose of the annual institute was to familiarize campus representatives with major accreditation milestone activities, expose them to changes in the higher education legislative landscape which are affecting accreditation and accountability, and share best practices. Only institutions from the Middle States region that are up for reaccreditation in 2011-2012 were invited to this year’s event.

The Middle States reaccreditation process has changed substantially since the College’s last decennial visit in 2001, and even since the shorter mid-term Periodic Review Report in 2005-2006. As we have been communicating in committees and department meetings, Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes) is a predominant focus of the self-study. Some very recent changes resulting from the Higher Education Act involve the oversight of distance education and offsite locations.

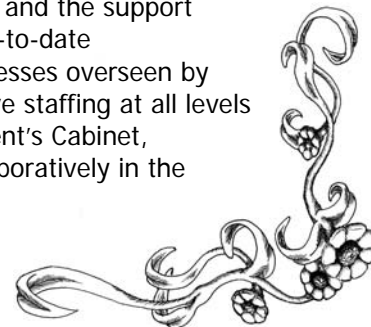
The Institute focused mainly on the critical role of early planning, including the selection of steering and subcommittee members, calendars, strategies for including all campus constituencies in the self-study effort, and the development of research questions that the final study will examine. To ensure that the self-study findings are useful to the institution and are the results of thorough, rational scrutiny, the Middle States Commission recommends that colleges take a minimum of two years to prepare their report. Faculty and administration speakers who had participated on the steering committees of institutions such as Shippensburg University (Pennsylvania) and Gloucester County Community College (New Jersey) affirmed that the process will take *at least* that long, and that it should touch on all aspects of a college’s operations; presenters also stated unequivocally that the benefits yielded by such rigorous self-analysis and peer review are well worth the time and resources that the campus invests.

PREPARING FOR THE MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY: STANDARD 5

Standard 5: Administration

The institution’s administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution’s organization and governance.

Standard 5 focuses on an organization’s structure, staffing, commensurate levels of resources, and the support necessary to carry out its mission. To help address this standard, the College maintains an up-to-date organizational chart which accurately reflects reporting relationships and responsibilities. Processes overseen by Ken Iwama’s Office of Diversity and Compliance can be used to demonstrate that administrative staffing at all levels results from appropriate, rigorous search processes. Minutes from the meetings of the President’s Cabinet, Provost’s Council, and other bodies at the College show that these groups exist and work collaboratively in the pursuit of the institution’s mission.



CLOSING THE LOOP: COMMUNICATING THE BENEFITS OF *DEGREEWORKS* TO THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

DegreeWorks is an advisement tool that has been available to CSI students since Fall 2007. With easy-to-follow menus, visually-pleasing displays, and up-to-date catalog information, *DegreeWorks* allows students, faculty, and staff to review a student's status and progress towards degree in a convenient, comprehensive way. The current version includes a Degree Audit, an Academic Planner, a GPA calculator, and a "What If" option that allows students and advisors to determine the extent to which completed courses would apply to a revised program in the event of a change of major. Advisors can make notations in the student record regarding advisement session information and recommendations.

The College's Advisement Task Force has had several discussions about *DegreeWorks*, its value in the advisement process, features, and the adoption of this tool on campus. Monthly usage data reflecting student and faculty access instances indicate that student use has been growing, in large part due to the presentation of *DegreeWorks* at all New Student Orientation sessions and students' appointments in Academic Advisement. Freshmen and sophomores, in particular, are exhibiting comfort with the tool and strong acceptance. Faculty adoption has been relatively slow.

As a result of Advisement Task Force discussion, data tracking, and information gleaned about *DegreeWorks* use on other campuses, an informational campaign was initiated at the College. A committee involving Design Services and Enrollment Management representatives began meeting during the summer to formulate a plan that features *DegreeWorks* promotion, revisions to the College website, and a tutorial. The campus's *DegreeWorks* "Chart Your Course(s)" tagline and compass image are being disseminated through various media.

Veronica DiMeglio, Curriculum Coordinator, is also the College's *DegreeWorks* Coordinator and representative to CUNY's *DegreeWorks* Council, a committee with representation from all campuses. The central group has been discussing the possibility of upgrading from CUNY's current version of *DegreeWorks* to modules that feature greater interactivity. Any upgrade will depend, in part, on usage levels and demand.

To access *DegreeWorks*, students, faculty, and staff first need a CUNY Portal account. Once that is established, Veronica DiMeglio can assist with initializing a *DegreeWorks* account. Information about *DegreeWorks* is available at www.csi.cuny.edu/degreeworks — be sure to view Veronica's tutorial on the website!

CAMPUS UPDATES

The newly-established Assessing Special Programs Committee (ASP) met for the first time on November 3. This committee complements the College-wide Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, in that it includes cross-division representation of support offices and programs that have articulated — or have the potential to establish — student learning outcomes. Student Government, Instructional Support, Disability Services, and learning communities (e.g., The Verrazano School and SEEK) are among the diverse areas represented.

CUNY NEWS AND EVENTS

Two other CUNY campuses will be preparing self-studies for their Middle States site visits on the same 2011-2012 calendar as CSI. Colleagues from LaGuardia Community College and Hostos Community College were also attending the Middle States Institute. As noted in previous issues, Brooklyn College, Hunter College and Lehman College just completed the process and hosted evaluation team visits last spring.

FOR TONIGHTLY NOTES

The 7th Belgian **Fortnight** of Women began on 10 November in Brussels. The events span the Belgian National Day of Women on 11 November and the UN-sponsored International Day for the elimination of violence against women on 25 November. Read more at www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm/5671

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by **November 23, 2009**, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué.

