



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 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 Associate Provost’s website at www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment

MIDDLE STATES REACCREDITATION MILESTONES: RECAP OF 2009-2010 AND SUMMER PLANS

Dr. Barbara Loftus, the College’s Middle States Vice Presidential liaison, visited campus on April 14, marking the initial milestone in our reaccreditation process. She had the opportunity to meet with Self-Study Co-Chairs Susan Holak and Richard Powers; the Self-Study Steering Committee; leadership of the Executive Committees of the Faculty Senate and College Council, HEO Steering Committee, PSC leadership, and Student Government representatives; the President and Provost. An overflowing audience of more than 70 people attended the Working Group session during which they heard Dr. Loftus describe how challenging the reaccreditation visits are getting; almost a decade has passed since the 2002 change in the Middle States Standards, thus an institution is less likely to be given “the benefit of the doubt” than might have been the case a few years ago.

Work will continue on our accreditation efforts during the summer months, in large part to enable the campus to get a rapid start on the process in September. Summer activities will include 1] finalizing the self-study questions for each Working Group, 2] performing a “gap analysis,” in order to make certain that the information necessary to address each standard and question is available (or is able to be produced), and 3] building the repository of digitized resources on the SharePoint site that is being used to store information and facilitate group communication. As of this week, the SharePoint repository contains more than 550 documents and is growing rapidly.

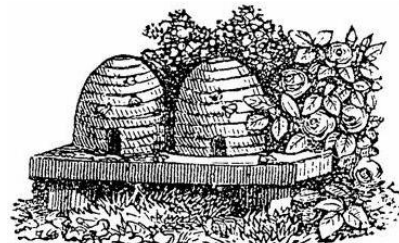
PREPARING FOR THE MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY: STANDARD 14

Standard 14: Assessment of Student learning

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

The final Middle States standard in our year-long series, Assessment of Student Learning, is reportedly one of the most challenging – according to evidence presented at Middle States events and feedback provided by other CUNY campuses. We have been making consistent and significant progress in our campus-wide efforts to gather historical information, assess Academic Department information needs, assist with data collection, and expand our resource repository.

During academic year 2009-2010, the College-wide Assessment Committee, with representatives from each department and a growing number of interdisciplinary programs, met regularly to discuss best practices, College needs, and assessment-related resources available through the Office of the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. A new committee devoted to the Assessment of Special Programs was initiated to address the growing number of cross-divisional special initiatives that involve student-learning outcomes (e.g., special internships in Career and Scholarship Office, Student Government participation, learning communities, and leadership programs).



Several academic departments and programs directed significant effort towards maintaining their discipline specific accreditation: accreditation team visits were hosted by Computer Science (ABET), Education (NCATE), Engineering Science & Physics (ABET), Nursing (NLNAC), and Physical Therapy (CAPTE). These accreditors all require substantial evidence of learning outcomes. Other departments completed the rigorous Academic Program Reviews that are required by CUNY at least every 10 years. For these reviews, Biology (BS and MS), History (MA), and PEP (Geography minor) all hosted external colleagues who served as evaluators. In an effort to streamline and better organize the entire academic program review process, the Office of the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness in conjunction with the OIRA undertook a major initiative to systematize the process and calendar. A summary of this information and the calendar of reviews will soon appear on the Associate Provost's website at www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment.

CLOSING THE LOOP: MODERN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT COMBINES TESTING WITH ASSESSMENT IN ONLINE PROJECT OPTIONS

Recognizing the need to evaluate students' oral competency in spoken languages and fluency in American Sign Language, the Department of Modern Languages made use of advances in hardware and software technologies when redesigning the Modern Languages Media Center last summer. Students in language classes at all levels are now generating audio and video recordings, short films, interviews, and media-rich online projects, often with associated discussion boards. Using this primary evidence, instructors are able to simultaneously grade students and assess course-specific learning goals according to pre-developed rubrics. Electronic work is also being archived and stripped of identifiers for further use in the Department's outcomes assessment plans.

CAMPUS UPDATES

English Department: On May 12, Associate Provost Susan Holak, Office of Institutional Research Coordinator Warrick Bell, OIRA Coordinator of Surveys Barbara Cohen, and Humanities and Social Sciences Dean Christine Flynn Saulnier met with Dr. Janet Dudley, Chair, and Dr. Alyson Bardsley, assessment representative, from the English Department. As a department that hosts baccalaureate and master's degree programs, and is also responsible for developmental instruction, the two required freshman composition courses, and many courses that fulfill other General Education requirements, English faces extremely complex assessment challenges.

Political Science, Economics, and Philosophy Department (PEP): Susan Holak and Warrick Bell also met with acting chair Dr. Rich Flanagan and members of PEP including Professors Barbara Montero, Alexandru Voicu, and Anat Niv-Solomon on May 20, to discuss progress and future plans for assessment. The department is pursuing assessment from the mission statement down in four distinct areas, rather than grouping their separate disciplines under a single umbrella.

Institutional Effectiveness Committee: Representatives from a wide range of divisions and offices met on May 20 to discuss progress on our Middle States self-study since this committee was last convened, see the draft design elements, and learn how each area represented might contribute information to the growing SharePoint resource list. Suzy Shepardson, Interim Director of Advisement, presented a case study which focused on changes made in office processes and procedures and the redesign of forms, initiated by discussions in the Course & Standing Committee. The case is a wonderful example of the collaboration by a Faculty Senate Committee, faculty, and representatives from many offices improving student services and outcomes.

FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

Not confined to the United States, assessment in education is widespread across the globe. Sheffield Hallam University in South Yorkshire, UK, holds a Student Engagement **Fortnight** each June. The Stoke Newington School, a media and arts college in Greater London, devotes a **fortnight** to assessment in late May.

FORTNIGHT will resume publication after a hiatus over the summer break. We will return in September 2010.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by **September 7, 2010**, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué. Enjoy the summer!

