



# 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

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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.

## THE COLLEGE'S EIGHTH “DAY OF ASSESSMENT” FOCUSED ON VARIED INFORMATION AND DATA-COLLECTION OPTIONS

Interest and activities related to assessment and institutional effectiveness have increased dramatically at the College of Staten Island during the past several years. Nowhere was this more apparent than at the College's eighth “Day of Assessment,” held on Friday, April 8. Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, Dr. Susan Holak, reflected on the campus' engagement in her welcoming remarks: “As a College community, we have been immersed in Strategic Planning, academic program review, discussions about PMP goals, and data collection for Noel-Levitz. We have attended conferences, workshops, and institutes. We distribute issues of **FORTNIGHT** and now recognize a cuboctahedron, which symbolizes our Middle States effort. At this moment, we are just about one year away from our campus visit for our Middle States reaccreditation. We have more than 200 hundred people from all functional areas in the College directly serving on Middle States Working Groups and strategic planning teams, while so many more participated in providing information, data, and feedback. With all of this activity, we have become our own learning organization around assessment. This annual event showcasing the many efforts across campus has grown in size, following, and breadth of topics.”

Presentations for the 2011 Day of Assessment event highlighted many varied ways in which information for evaluation and reflection can be collected. The day's first presentation by Professors Gerry Milligan, Jill Jegerski and Dorey Houle from the Department of Modern Languages brought together three forms of assessment activity. They illustrated how direct evaluation of student responses, using interactive software and language prompts, has benefited the department in terms of placement levels for foreign language courses, and how assessment of advancements in technology have led to improvements in faculty members' ability to evaluate students' competence in both the Spanish and American Sign Language programs.

In the second session, Vice President of Finance and Administration Milton Santiago presented an overview of assessment in his Division; Ira Persky and Jodi Merendino focused on the use of survey data in their chronology of space and menu changes in the Bits & Bytes Café and the Student Center Dining Area. Paul Murtha, Director of Campus Security, illustrated the use of observational research in assessment, describing changes made in traffic routing and bus security on campus. Peggy Fuller, who coordinated the presentation, orchestrated the visuals and text that demonstrated these campus improvements.

Guest speaker Diane Phillips, the Director of Institutional Research at the Macaulay Honors College, provided insights and examples of content analysis as a means of analyzing qualitative data, which can be used to interpret many different types of source material.

Afternoon sessions included an overview of the development of an Assessment Plan for the Registrar's Office, and examples of their assessment-related activities. Presenters Neila Green, Wandy Tse, and Veronica DiMeglio described their work with the OIRA to develop a sustainable plan that will help them make improvements on an ongoing basis. Forms of data collection used by the Registrar's Office include record counts, surveys, and transaction logs.

The final presentation of the day focused on General Education assessment at CSI. History Professor Richard Powers took the audience through CSI's participation in last summer's AAC&U



General Education Assessment Institute at the University of Vermont, and through the continuing work on refining the College's General Education goals. Lastly, CSI Assessment Coordinator Warrick Bell presented some preliminary results from the ongoing project studying how the existing General Education curriculum structure addresses the new goals. The analysis makes use of information provided by faculty about their General Education courses, and examines the transcripts of graduated students to find out what courses they actually took during their time at CSI.

This year's Day of Assessment also included a new element, a poster session. Presentations by Roseann Ragone and Mark Rivera from BMCC, and Louise Levine, William Bernhardt, and Warrick Bell from CSI offered assessment research relating to student financial aid, ePortfolios, and undergraduate research. And as always, the College's own Alan Hoffner provided a unique viewpoint during a lunchtime segment, this year speaking about precepts and concepts relating to longitudinal assessment, noting that "it could be worse."

## MIDDLE STATES EVALUATION TEAM CHAIR NAMED

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the College of Staten Island have agreed upon the selection of Dr. Carlos Varga-Aburto, Provost of Kutztown University, as the chair of the evaluation team that will visit CSI next year. Dr. Varga-Aburto, a physicist by training, has been in his current role at Kutztown since 2006. The University has many similarities to the College of Staten Island: a member of the PASSHE System, located on 326 acres less than 20 miles from the city of Allentown, Kutztown has around 10,500 students in both undergraduate and graduate programs. The team visit has been scheduled for Sunday, April 1 through Wednesday, April 4, 2012.

## CAMPUS UPDATES

**Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work** – The SASW Department was pleased to host two external evaluators on Monday, April 4, for a review of the Sociology and Anthropology program. Dr. Leigh Binford, Department Chair, led the program's self-study effort, which included significant surveying of students.

**English** – Professor Ashley Dawson, Department Chair, along with members of the English Department, hosted two external evaluators on Monday, April 11. The visiting team had the opportunity to meet with full-time as well as adjunct faculty, who are essential to the operations of the Department.

**Hybrid Initiative Team** – Representatives from CSI's Hybrid Initiative Team participated in a CUNY central office session on hybrid course efforts across the university, which was held at Macaulay Honors College on Wednesday, April 6. Associate Provost Susan Holak, Professor William Bernhardt, Scheduler Kerri Gerson, and Gloria Gianoulis, Adjunct Lecturer in English, described the functional integration of faculty, technology support, assessment, and scheduling for classroom conservation in participating English 151 hybrid courses sections.

## CLOSING THE LOOP

Having observed that students' pass rates on oral language tests were out of alignment with their written performance, the Department of Modern Languages piloted OWL Testing Software in Fall 2010 for Spanish 114, to great success. The new software allows faculty a great degree of control over the testing environment, including randomized question order, timed responses, single-attempt answering, and the use of customizable evaluation rubrics built into the process. Rubric scores and responses to individual questions can be easily aggregated for assessment purposes, allowing for much more accurate determination of students' areas of need.

## CUNY NEWS AND EVENTS

On 29 April, the CUNY Assessment Council held a professional development seminar on assessment of General Education. Faculty and administrative speakers from NYC College of Technology, Hostos Community College and Brooklyn College spoke about their approaches to evaluating the impact and operations of their Gen Ed programs.

## FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

To help undergraduate students decide on the concentrations they will pursue in their academic careers, Harvard University offers seminars and information sessions as part of an Advising [Fortnight](#), running this year from Monday, April 4 to Friday, April 15.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by **May 13, 2011**, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué.

