



# 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](http://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.

## UPDATED ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY ANALYZES COLLEGE'S BENEFIT TO THE BOROUGH AND REGION

In Volume 6, Issue 1, **FORTNIGHT** discussed the estimated impact of the College of Staten Island's alumni base on the borough and the region. In the same issue, it was noted that a more comprehensive economic impact study of the College was being planned as a follow-up to the last analysis completed in 2004. During summer 2011, Hanover Research worked with Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness Susan Holak to re-evaluate the institution's economic presence and impact on the borough in terms of jobs, spending, and other measures.

There are many ways in which a higher education institution can contribute to its community. Among the more quantitative economic measures are the jobs created by the institution, and the number of individuals and businesses supported by the expenditures of faculty, staff, and students. In addition, vendors and contractors who supply goods and services to the institution benefit from these business relationships. Capital expenditures or campus improvements provide construction or trade jobs.

A college or university also provides other valuable experiences that contribute to the community in ways that are somewhat more difficult to quantify. Educational experiences, degree completion, and job attainment create opportunities that support individuals, households, and benefit the borough and region. The College of Staten Island, for example, educates many of the teaching, nursing, allied medical, and accounting professionals in the borough. Community partnerships, service learning, internships, and volunteerism fostered by the institution improve the borough and region for all residents. While audience members and ticket sales can be tracked and calculated, the personal growth, intrinsic pleasure, and contributions to quality of life that result from arts and cultural events centered on a college campus may not be quantifiable.

Using College data from 2010 and standard economic modeling software, Hanover Research analysis indicated that the College of Staten Island's estimated economic impact on Richmond County totaled \$64.2 million. The College supported an estimated 2,642 jobs – 2,094 represent individuals directly employed by the institution, while the remaining 539 are created and supported by employee and student spending in the community.

## COUNTDOWN TO THE MIDDLE STATES SITE VISIT: FOUR MONTHS REMAINING

As work continues on editing the Middle States self-study draft (available at [www.csi.cuny.edu/middlestates](http://www.csi.cuny.edu/middlestates)), the College is awaiting information from Team Chair, Dr. Carlos Vargas-Aburto, and the Middle States Commission about the other team members who will be on campus with Dr. Vargas next April. Colleagues from other CUNY campuses or colleges in our immediate vicinity are not likely to be selected for this assignment; rather, the team will be selected from peer institutions in other states.

Once selections are announced, Dr. Vargas will begin working with his team to facilitate aspects of the visit. The College has a Special Resources Committee comprising representatives from key functional areas across campus (including OIT, Dining Services, Campus Planning, Buildings & Grounds, Special Events, and Institutional Research &



Assessment) which has been meeting since the beginning of the self-study process. The responsibilities of this Committee are now ramping up quickly. We have already noted the work of the campus beautification group in previous issues of **FORTNIGHT**. Members of the Special Resources Committee are familiar with the 14 Middle States Standards of Excellence through the same materials provided to the Working Groups. In addition, they have materials related to hosting Middle States accreditation visits to assist them in this work.

## CLOSING THE LOOP: COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT REVISES CURRICULUM TO INCLUDE EARLY EXPLORATION

Following careful analysis of enrollment data and considering student preferences and career interests, the Computer Science Department revised its curriculum to allow for career/specialization exploration at earlier stages. Previously, students were able to gain exposure to advanced topics at the 400 course level, near the end of the undergraduate program. By introducing several new 200-level electives, students are able to sample electives early in their academic sequence. Preliminary data indicates increased student persistence and satisfaction.

Several constituencies (computing professionals, alumni, graduating seniors) were consulted, and recommended introducing new topics such as Network Security and Game Development, to keep pace with the rapidly changing computing field. They also suggested requiring more than two electives.

As a result of this feedback, in 2007 several new electives were introduced. These 200 level electives require only Introductory Computing as a prerequisite, but they introduce advanced and applied topics early in the major. The first of these new electives were Web Development and Hacking Revealed; three more have since been developed: Introduction to High Performance Computing, Web Database Applications and Introductory Game Development. These advanced topics would ordinarily require strong theoretical foundations, but the coursework was modified to make greater use of pre-built code, resulting in courses that are practically oriented and have fewer barriers to entry. Since their introduction in the fall 2007 semester, these early electives have drawn students in the Computer Science major as well as from other disciplines.

The restructuring of the elective sequence has led to several positive outcomes. All surveyed seniors either agreed or strongly agreed that the early electives are a valuable option in the major and were taught at the right level for a 200-level course. Despite not necessarily contributing to the major, many students opt to take more than two electives out of interest. Further study is ongoing to determine whether exposure to these early electives leads to increased retention and graduation rates.

## CAMPUS UPDATES

The CSI Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) met on November 28, and after updates on the Middle States self-study process, the group discussed the many surveying initiatives in use in offices across the divisions. Continuing a topic raised at the group's last meeting in August in a discussion with Dr. Sam Michalowski, Director of OIRA, the conversation turned to possible ways of streamlining data collection, including the use of omnibus surveys. The IEC was also particularly pleased to learn that members Neila Green, Wandy Tse, and Veronica DiMeglio, early adopters of the Institutional Effectiveness materials available on the Associate Provost's website, were scheduled to present on their assessment practices at the Middle States Association of Collegiate Registrars and Officers of Admission (MSACROA) Conference on December 1. Wandy Tse gave a preview of that presentation, explaining what the Registrar's Office had been doing to build upon its assessment plan since it debuted at the April 2011 Day of Assessment. In addition, Peggy Fuller, representing the Division of Finance & Administration, provided information about last semester's classroom conditions survey, and another survey endeavor planned in Human Resources.

## FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

Vangobot is an artificially intelligent painting robot that is capable of mixing its own paints, interpreting reference images, and making "artistic" decisions and comments as well as putting brush to canvas. Its original compositions include the work *Fortnight Winter Landscape*, shown at the lower right of this issue of **FORTNIGHT**. More information can be found at [www.popartmachine.com](http://www.popartmachine.com).

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by **December 21, 2011**, for consideration to appear in the final issue of **FORTNIGHT** for 2011.

