

Strategic Plan Town Hall #3

December 4, 2020 - Featuring Curriculum and DEI

NOTES

1. What are the strengths, challenges, and opportunities facing QC?

- Curriculum-related
- DEI-related
- Feel free to address generally too (QC as a whole)

Town Hall Responses:

Curriculum-related

- Resistance to move away to (from?) Euro centric emphasis. White centric, what represent colonization, antiquated,
- Change to curriculum is hard, difficult, suggesting new courses - related to budget. No budget, faculty who are around a long time want to do the traditional way. Hard to know what works unless you try.
- Changes are not comfortable
- Adding a section to syllabi - need to go through curriculum committee
- Not truly understanding how the academic senate works
- Transparency is good
- Having unified understanding how the process works - A to Z
- Changes in curriculum - should serve students and take into account the administrative concerns
- Need more resources
- Required cross-collaboration courses within department
- Promote Queens College history as social justice movement
- **Relatable coursework for students**
- **Relatable writing**
- **Certain courses marketed at masters and PhD that need to be marketed at undergrad level**
- **Active community involvement - student and faculty mentorship started earlier so that by the time students get to QC - they're empowered at the college level**
- New course Psychology of Activism (Cross-Culture Courses)
- Classes should take advantage of using technology to encourage students to communicate with each other via Discord/slack/etc
- Issues with the LMS (Blackboard) can be improved
- The strengths of the Arts and cultural centers of Queens Community are broadening the exposure to arts, music, business to students.
- Do not know how the decisions are made
- Balancing each other's roles
- Representative from different areas
- Need guidance for how curriculum committee should be selected and operate
- Address the needs of evening students; most of the day services are not available to evening students. This has improved and could be better.
- Issues with diversity of curriculum

- Rather than new courses I think we just need to better deliver the topic to the students. Most of my classes are self thought and it's hard to teach a topic I don't understand.
- Data Science / Data Analytic skills are vital for students' success in a professional world .
- Students need more support in becoming writing proficient at a level required for advanced degrees, including Ph.Ds in all areas, especially with the goal of diversifying the higher education workforce.
- **Current State:**
 - A. Data Analytic for Accounting is elective
 - B. There is only one section (Acct 385 / Acct 791)
- **Future State:**
 - A. Data Analytic for Accounting should be " required"
 - B. " Beyond Data Series" can be offered at Bootcamp, Day Camp
 - C. Build " DATA Design Lab" and collaborate with private, public and NFP sector to Host " Data Expo" to demonstrate how data can be leveraged to design and build an efficient, sustainable and harmony community and restore and go beyond the theme of 1964/1965 World Fair
 - QC can play a key role in the global stage to develop the economic recovery.
- Cross curriculum participation for students
- Need for greater support for undergraduate students to develop writing skills that would position them

Lack of transparency

No broad discussion about overall goals & budget

Discuss different ways to hire, more inclusive, greater investment.

Very low percentage black

Curriculum is occurring in silos

Different departments are at different levels of diversity

No alternate preparation for students who get cut out of the sciences especially for BIPOC

Other ways to diversify beyond permanent faculty: Visiting Scholars

Skill levels need to be improved, counseling students

Teaching

Upload slides and do not pay attention to students. Need to deliver the topics.

Challenges of asynchronous teaching; no dialogue and no explanations

- DEI-related
- Need to be real intentional about D E I - three aspects - each need to be embedded in the curriculum

- Lack of cultural relevancy and responsiveness
- Current curriculum is theoretical
- What does upper mobility look like, use language that reflect them
- Educational leadership program start to consider DEI related matters - changing curriculum to reflect multicultural aspect
- Challenges with resources and staff to address all the issues

- Issue with equity and diversity
- Hard to hire minority faculty, because there are so few of them.
- Diverse in gender and Hispanics
- Promotion and salary, who calls the quits (shots?) - mostly white male
- Hard to be listened (to)
- It would be nice if there is action, beyond talking

- We need to reassess the transcripts - which classes students are doing well and which are not we do not do a good job hiring minorities - they are there - we are not reaching out
- It's a long hiring process, gate keeping process
- intentional to hire
 - Needs a lot care

All the areas are interconnected

Create specific cohort to help minority group students

- As a student, QC is proactive in encouraging students from different backgrounds to apply for different academic programs
 - (That) prides diversity in the student background
- The college is moving forward with making sure that the faculty body represents the diversity of the student body
- Addressing diversity is also a part of larger community of QC Alumni, allows students to connect with people beyond the 4 years
 - Would appreciate thoughts on whether or not affinity groups based off of demographic/ethnic/racial backgrounds improves engagement or commitment to the college community in order to strengthen our relationships with former and current students
- Perhaps creating a list or website that promotes
- Programs like Transitions to Teaching (TTT) are awesome programs that can be modeled per academic department
- CERRU: More collaboration of programming in terms of their extracurricular activities
 - Brings students knowledge and more understanding of what others are going through
 - Campus calendar can be updated and
 - THE CAMPUS Website needs to be updated!!!!
- Social media can be used to market to off campus business and improve communication with the current campus community

- Challenges:
 - lack of transparency about budget
 - More courses into core and being able to run those courses in order for students to finish in timely manner

- Expand curricular content to reflect society's diversity
- Evening and weekend students involved in the college community
- Integrate social issues DEI within the curriculum
- Bring back click points for cross collaboration
- Conservative (conservative?) faculty comfortable with the status quo and not willing to implement new DEI topics within existing curriculum

Challenge: QC is limited in the program/course offering. There could be other courses that could satisfy pathways. E.g. creative expression pathway—art classes could be incorporated. For world cultures there is no Africana Studies class. There are other classes that they could use to satisfy requirements.

Another example is that business students transfer to Baruch because there are better offerings there. Some students are excellent, but they don't stay because they have better career path options in other places.

There are a lot of courses that are requisite training, so people coming from under-resourced backgrounds who may not have the opportunity to receive music training, for example, will not be able to take advantage of these courses. Preparatory courses for students who may need a more "leveled playing field."

Nursing school has been discussed, but it would be a major endeavor as there are many things that are needed in terms of labs, training areas, etc.

Queens College can't do everything. It's good that this process is focusing on our strengths, because if there are budget cuts, we might want to focus on the strengths that already exist. Big efforts and great work happening in the arts and liberal arts departments that is not coordinated. There should be more and better communication among departments. Perhaps we should look at curriculum from a thematic point of view to provide a more coherent experiences for students who come with specific interests. Where can students find links of course offerings that may expand their portfolios and therefore their career prospects. Find linkages among departments and make them available to students. Provide a tailored experience to students/more interdisciplinary.

Decolonizing the curriculum will occur through the leadership of some departments, who could invite others to participate in the process—e.g. English takes the lead and works with Biology to explore decolonizing the curriculum as well as ways to offer students tailored experience.

There should be more collaboration among departments. Let's work really hard at the things we're already good at. If we are too dispersed, then we'll never be excellent in any one thing.

Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges

- The Music school has a rich history
- Music curriculum is clearly preparing students for the workplace (i.e. Music school alums have played at the White House and the Vatican)
- The Math department would like to update the curriculum to include data science which is where the workplace is trending

- In the Math department trying to build curriculum but serious budget issues impact the number of faculty in each department
- Faculty are overworked and student's needs are not met
- Some faculty have found it difficult to switch to online instruction
- Faculty should have training in how to teach virtually provided through Queens College
- Some teachers have received low evaluations for online teaching when they are excellent at in-person instruction
- Music classes cannot be replicated virtually
- Computer science department has a lot of students and students do not get into the classes that they need
- Can have 2 departments teach one course (i.e., co-teaching - medieval music and medieval history in a single course)
- There have been some innovations and platforms with online instruction
- The curriculum should dictate the format for classes. Where it has been effective, we should expand that
- Better to have in-person classes over online classes
- Generally speaking, graduate students or students who have to work full-time are more excited about online classes than undergraduate students
- Undergraduate students want to have in-person instruction along with the social component of college life
- The future is probably a hybrid or blended model: in-person classes augmented with technology

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- It is important for the Music curriculum to reflect music diversity and be culturally responsive to the QC community (i.e. more inclusive of the communities we serve and play non-Western forms of music)
- Women and BIPOC are underrepresented in Computer Science
- There are projects and initiatives to increase diversity in Computer Science
- We could add courses to PATHWAYS
- The National Science Foundation now looks at diversity as one component for awarding grants. Important for all faculty applying for grants to be aware of this requirement
- Language instructors feel that students should be required to take at least 2 classes in a foreign language rather than 1 class to improve foreign language skills
- Regardless of major, students should have a strong liberal arts background as a foundation

2. What top strategic priorities should the new 2021-2026 strategic plan address?

- **Curriculum-related**

- **DEI-related**
- **Feel free to address generally too (QC as a whole)**

Town Hall Responses:

Curriculum-related

- How do students bring in their experiences to the curriculum; students should be encouraged to connect with a student in a different discipline
- Try to focus the curriculum on where the jobs are or programs that will become important,
- Change course offerings based on employment and real world applications; weed out the courses that are less popular (convert them to minors rather than majors).
- Queens College could operate in a hybrid format - being strategic about who should come to campus
- Making websites a lot more student focused and engaged
- Continuing a hybrid model for education
- Online degrees would improve enrollment for the college; the exposure to more people on the campus through a virtual platform is an overall positive
- People have struggled with mental health issues due to isolation; by being proactive and going to events that will benefit students and keep them engaged
- Ex. Link Computer Science students with disadvantaged students
- Built-in student mentoring with faculty, staff and alumni based on common life experience, interests and diversity
- DEI-related integrated in the core curriculum
- Community partnerships through research and teaching initiatives for exposure to students from all backgrounds that represent NYC
- Zoom opportunities with schools in the local community ex. Computer Science, Music, etc. to introduce students to these curriculums

Resources into decolonizing the curriculum: DEI needs to be in the college experience in an integrated way, so that all students understand that the whole world is impacted by DEI issues. Why is learning related to the struggle of creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning experience. What resources do faculty, students, and staff need to make this happen.

Some faculty want to keep the status quo in terms of curriculum and learning methods.

Incentivizing faculty who adapt to decolonized curricula to their courses.

We need to be okay making people “uncomfortable” when discussing DEI issues. The College needs to stand for what’s right and accept that some groups are not going to be okay with it and push back.

All the above applies to people with disabilities as well, because our view of DEI is still very narrow. What is really diversity and inclusion?

If departments work together, students will know each other and other disciplines better, which will diversify their learning experience. Give students opportunities to experience difference.

3. What other advice or input would you like to share to ensure a better strategic planning process, product, and implementation?

Town Hall Responses:

- QC students and faculty/staff engagement in low-income communities to provide technology access, training and resources
- Evaluation of strategic planning processes - where are they? How can they be accessed?