

Strategic Plan Town Hall #1

November 30, 2020 - Featuring Curriculum and Student Success and Student Life

NOTES

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

- Curriculum-related
- Student Success and Student Life-related
- Feel free to address generally too (QC as a whole)

Town Hall Responses:

Need for diversity in curriculum

Finding balance between feeling college is career-oriented and allowing career issues to over-determine curriculum

Create a required college transition class for all students (1 credit)

Create a required experiential learning for upper tier students (1-3 credits)

How is the Gen-Ed curriculum connected to the majors and should it be? / How do we articulate the purpose of gen ed classes in a liberal arts education in a way that connects to their future aspirations without abandoning holistic education?

How valuable is the four-year graduation benchmark in evaluating student success?

More clearly articulate what we expect students to get out of the curriculum/QC experience

There needs to be a first-year course that orients students to campus and the curriculum

Strength - Interaction between some professors and students. Understanding and supportive.

Challenge- Trying to make a coherent schedule in a timely manner (more advisement?) Clearer communication between professors and those in "Jefferson" in terms of helping to guide the student in their course choices and timing.

Courses that students need to complete are not always available. Students are accepted at the last minute, no classes available.

Students need more guidance (evidence from over the years), a lot of them are lost. Students don't know who to go to and obtain answers (especially for international students).

International students (especially) need better orientation. Currently they only receive a folder with instructions on what courses to take. Immigrant students do not know about filing taxes, etc. Also students need more than 9am-5pm access. The concern is the finances available at QC to provide such services. Years ago, orientation was well-offered to students and parents with representation from different depts and admin offices. This was expensive (bkfast, lunch) so it was suspended.

To invest in our students coming in, QC needs to do an outreach BEFORE students come in. Check where the best students come from and recruit from there. Most public colleges do not do this, but those that succeed are the ones who are driven.

Recruit from public schools, work with guidance counselors. Involve parent, extended families. It does not cost anything to mentor a high school student (this is how colleges recruit and build relationships).

Also every student should take a college prep or transition (1 credit) as a freshman/transfer to get oriented with all resources. With Juniors/Seniors add a mandatory career course (1 credit). This also builds relationships with career opportunities.

Dreamers and others need more support to understand how financial aid works and other types of institutional “mysteries” that some may take for granted as easy to understand. Demystify.

QC needs to bridge administration and students. For example, with the QC Counseling Center, students are unaware or do not use resources. They need more guidance. Assumptions about what students know and do not know. Most students have no parent or adult to guide them (first gen student) so they are not instructed well on resources.

More support for transfer students. They have a relatively high dropout rate, lower graduate rate.

Student Success: Need Navigate to be more widely adopted by students and teachers in order for it to be effective.

Student-Driven culture could be enhanced. Student-created clubs.

Student Success: Need unified front for students who are seeking tutoring support and ease for access and using.

Curriculum in English revamped recently to be more reflective of the student population. Extremely diverse students so curriculum is being looked at as well as the hiring of faculty. (Gender, racial and cultural lines, also within types of staff and faculty.) Identity, race, particularly now, faculty should practice scholarship and teaching reflecting what exists in our space. The Chancellor is promoting this through the Mellon Foundation to specifically go towards ethnic and black studies.

Strengths: Great to be a part of the City of New York, affordable, public institution, and second largest in the country. Wide variety of programs here. Most diverse borough. We are a great choice for students through the pandemic as QC offers quality education for a lower tuition rate than private institutions.

Strengths: Beautiful suburban campus in the middle of NYC. Apartments on campus. Programs in Education, Computer Science, Accounting, Psych, etc.

Advising Issues: Differentiate Faculty Advisors (Departmental Advisors or Major Advisors) and Academic Support Advisors. Faculty Advisors should be later on the career, while the Academic Support Advisors should talk about more general degree requirements. Encouraged at the beginning to recognize that the Academic Advising is the place for general ed questions, while when students get closer to taking their major courses, see the Faculty Advisors.

Transfer Students: Better coordination needed between QC and community colleges so that those transfer students know what they have to do if they transfer to Queens. Departments need to recognize where their students are coming from. Better coordination between community colleges and QC. More ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS may help.

Strengths:

- Diversity: area surrounding Queens College is a diverse community
- Doing a great job lifting students out of the middle class (ex. 10 years out, Biology Students are making 2X starting salary)

Weaknesses:

- Financial challenges: little support from faculty to do research, improve equipment
- Losing students to other schools where majors/schools may be more popular (ex. St. John's Business)
- Response time/Customer service: students and alumni do not know where to go to get questions answered
- Need improvements to website (Tech Incubator has students that could be helping with this)

Opportunities

- Have more opportunities for students to help local businesses, get professional experience
- Online learning can engage new types of students
- Volunteer Program for students to gain experience at the college and gain mentors at QC

QC diversity is one of the biggest strengths. Our community really reflects the borough's demographic.

The above is true for the student population, but we may want to check the faculty because seems that it's mostly white.

Should there be a question re: diversity on this sheet?

During president's search, it was brought up that faculty was mostly anglophone and that Italian Americans, for example, weren't listed as part of the diversity needs. Need to be careful and granular when it comes to include groups that have traditionally been overlooked.

We should also get granular re: diversity: if we look at faculty, we need to differentiate between full-time faculty/adjuncts/full-time staff, etc.

From the student perspective: although there's a lot of diversity on campus, our student population only includes 8% black and though we have 28% Latinx, we do really need to increase our Black enrollment, since a lot of companies are looking for candidates from these demographics, as well as Native American, which is less than 1% at QC. This came up in one of the meetings with President Wu. There were Black and Latinx groups that were vocal about this and were speaking to the fact that within CUNY Queens is sometimes considered a "white college" and is not inviting for students of color.

Other universities (Purdue, for example) established a policy that allowed duplicate hires if there were candidates that were equally qualified but one was a person of color and one wasn't.

What are we hearing from current and prospective students? They feel we're under-resourced, though not much different from other public schools. During COVID students haven't been as engaged as we'd like to. In terms of student success, the career office could use more money for the mentoring program and other career resources. What would it take? More staff, more faculty, more employment opportunities for students on campus.

Since the campus has been operating virtually, what's the plan for bringing students back to campus post-COVID and after vaccine.

Curriculum-related

- Strengths: online courses offer flexibility moving forward
- Challenges: mechanisms by which the courses are integrated
- Opportunities: Cohort model (Time 2000 program – mathematics)

Student Success and Student Life-related

- Strengths:
- Challenges: distance learning during emergency situations, outlet for student struggles; many transfer students (discussed in regards to Education dept) get lost in the system, don't have enough guidance.
- Opportunities: Cohort model (Time 2000 program – mathematics)

If we want to have an international presence, build a Business School or recruit from overseas, then we need to add globalized curriculums/connections to the Strategic Plan. This not only benefits students who cannot leave campus, but also benefits faculty through international partnerships and, subsequently, scholarly research.

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

- **Curriculum-related**
- **Student Success and Student Life-related**
- **Feel free to address beyond these 2 areas too**

Town Hall Responses:

The Strategic Plan committees do not include Global Connections. This expands QC's international presence through internationalizing curriculums without students leaving campus. Also, faculty builds international partnerships.

Macaulay Honors students receive laptops etc. These are driven students. Other students cannot afford a laptop. Give students the option to pay for a laptop over 4 years. Especially with this pandemic, students should have had devices with basic MS Office, cameras, and programs. QC should be able to buy in bulk to issue this to students.

Student Development Office and Student Association should work together - regarding funding, orientation.

Focus on retention and student support.

Support transfer students more.

Advising Issues: Differentiate Faculty Advisors (Departmental Advisors or Major Advisors) and Academic Support Advisors. Faculty Advisors should be later on the career, while the Academic Support Advisors should talk about more general degree requirements. Encouraged at the beginning to recognize that the Academic Advising is the place for general ed questions, while when students get closer to taking their major courses, see the Faculty Advisors.

Retention for students and faculty

Targeted programs for Students

Class size

- Group breakouts for online classes

Innovation: new ways to create quality programs

Clinical Advisors: have a specific person to touch base with students if they have missed classes, assignments or projects

Student Support and Tutoring

Career Support

Customer Service

Volunteer Programs/Curriculum for students to interact with different departments to gain professional experience and gain connections

Ex. LEAD program

Diversity: this should be an ongoing discussion in all working groups.

Student success: a lot of students are complaining that they're not able to get appointments with academic advisors, so there has to be more/better structure in terms of how academic advisors are assigned to students.

Curriculum: some programs (accounting/computer science) are "archaic." There should be more curriculum added/updated. To get anything through the curriculum committee is "pulling teeth."

Compared to other places, bureaucracy runs very slow in CUNY. Responses to very basic administrative inquiries have to go through various departments and take too long to get through the system, which produces loss of opportunities. Curriculum committees may not be up to speed with the curriculum/subjects/areas they have to decide on. Sometimes it's clear that the curriculum committee doesn't understand what they're being asked in terms of curriculum development/additions.

What do we know about students who transfer out or drop out? Do we need more resources to make sure students stay at QC? We have very specific competitors (e.g. Baruch for accounting/business students).

Should all colleges be everything for everybody, or should X college be known for Y area?
Maybe QC should be known/focus on specific programs?

There are programs that have a lot of potential but need updates and redesigning of their curricula.

Assess what programs are the strongest/have the most potential and focus on those, so that QC can be known for those. Computer science program is particularly strong, music as well. Advertise this better.

QC is a really pretty campus, which also should be noted and advertised.

Employers should give us their feedback so that we know what curriculum we should be teaching.

Curriculum-related: students complain a lot about not enough sections, that classes fill up quickly which means that students have to spend longer time at the school to complete degrees; depts should take a look at student enrollment numbers and open up sections as needed; look into ways to get projections as to how many students in lower level courses are going to need which higher level courses; guidance and tools for Major advisors to help them advise students to help guide students toward graduation. Campaign to let students know that help is there – Major advisors, peer groups, etc. Foster relationships with the students to guide academically & professionally; Cohort model (Time 2000 program – mathematics)

Student Success and Student Life-related: look into advisement on an individual/localized level, even before getting into specific departments

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