

Strategic Plan Town Hall #2

December 1, 2020 - Featuring DEI and Student Success and Student Life

NOTES

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

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

Town Hall Responses:

Strengths - diversity

Strength - Social Mobility

Strength - Campus

Diversity, social mobility to middle class

We have a good college, small classes, good access to professors (unlike in Ivy league schools where classes are lecture halls and students don't have as much access to professors).

Students have the drive to succeed

Strength - Being located in Queens, we're in one of the most diverse locations in the country

Admissions perspective - be able to communicate quickly and effectively

School of Education- There is a great number of graduate programs

Over 80+ languages spoken by our students, representing many cultures and countries

Intentional eye towards diversity- NYC Men Teach and others;

ACT/SAT not required for this coming year

Blackstone Launch Pad - 3-year grant as a potential opportunity for QC students

Diversity of clubs

Facilities which can be revenue-generating

Challenge - Advising is not consistent or non-existent

Challenge - Students not having the means to pay for tuition, housing, food. Need a better way to support students, so not having to choose between going to college and having to work to pay bills.

Challenge - Faced with the reality of lack of technology and WIFI. We should be doing more to identify the needs of those who lack funding and support to be successful during a pandemic. We should be doing more to identify those in need.

Challenge - Need more empathy from faculty when students are faced with issues during exams and during class or the course of the semester. Professors tend to require "proof".

Challenge - How do we diversify faculty. When you have not experienced hardship, how do you show empathy.

Challenge - How do we make QC more accessible; provide more online learning when we return to face-to-face. Campus is not commuter friendly; majority of students rely on public transportation, long commute.

Challenge - How can we get students to understand all that we have to offer. Some QC students who registered this past fall did so because of the pandemic. How can we keep them? Attract high school students as well.

Challenge- Market a campaign to attract a more diverse campus. The college is not very inclusive as a welcoming place for students with diverse backgrounds. QC is in a unique position to grapple with this and struggles with the idea of the campus being more heterogeneous. How do we market and sell QC and its surrounding community. We need a better communication plan to make QC more appealing to students and faculty of different racial backgrounds.

Challenge - during pandemic, need a better way for students to get support and speak to a person.

Challenge- staff to faculty tension, Staff not included in decision making causing the inability to effectively assist students when they can and this can cause friction. Perhaps staff can be included in department meetings to be more aligned with the agenda of the department to ease the tension that may be reflected unintentionally to students.

Challenges

Concerned for our student body. Curriculum needs to be changed.

Still see students who are not prepared for the workplace

Immigrant perspective – recent immigrants are having trouble to afford college

Diversity doesn't reflect the socio-demographics of Queens

Students are not getting adequate advising, taking 200 level courses without being prepared for it, get discouraged and drop out.

Challenges - Availability for students and tools to be available remotely

Challenges - Transferability of courses

Opportunities - Providing more counselors for student support to speak about their experiences and issues

Opportunities - Allow and facilitate and provide support groups for groups that may have differing viewpoints for a common ground or understanding each other

Opportunities - having a business school

Opportunities -- looking at new program offerings, construction management

Opportunities - building upon international student population, as no other county is as diverse as Queens county; leverage the US Open to market Queens College

Opportunity to maintain some kind of virtual educational presence even once things go back to "normal"

The student body is a real strength in terms of diversity they bring and their motivation for pursuing their degrees.

Yes, we have a very diverse student body but our faculty doesn't reflect that diversity. It's a concern that we are not doing full time hiring for faculty this year while we are hiring a Dean for Diversity which is important, but the faculty are the ones who are working in most contact with students. Students are struggling to be in touch with administration and faculty members during this time. We are not giving students enough support and there is not sufficient representation.

How do we ensure that whatever we determine as the issues are needed to address actually translate to action?

Advisement is a real concern. Some pockets of students get really good advising, while others fall through the cracks.

Departments are trying to implement systems to make sure that we are responsive to student needs in terms of advisement. This was designed within departments, but doesn't seem to be school-wide.

An alignment within advisement and departments could be really helpful.

Faculty hiring and advisement are budgetary issues; are we doing this exercise without the budgetary changes that will be necessary to make changes.

Lack of transparency with the budget. Why are we in constant fiscal crisis?

New York City is one of our strengths. We have amazing access to resources. We would love to grow our programs, but do we have the resources at QC to support our students?

Academic departments are contracting not expanding. This is a reflection of the budget. We are told that we need student enrollment, but we still may not be able to support an increased enrollment level in terms of classes or advisement.

Some students have better support systems while others need more help to navigate college. What does that mean for who we retain as students and who falls through the cracks?

What has happened to the disability office during the pandemic? Have they had the resources to help people out during this shift?

Opportunity for a Dean of Diversity – could offer programming and more support for all students and to understand more holistically where the gaps are in DEI. The Dean could also coordinate efforts across disciplines and student populations.

CUNY Rising Alliance – student organization that is calling for a New Deal for CUNY; one of their explicit demands is more mental health counselors across CUNY. QC has one of the best counseling centers in all of CUNY.

Could we be collaborating more with outside organizations? Is it a way to expand resources and opportunities for students? Could this be done in an organized way across the college?

Internship opportunities in NYC are great resources for our students. Can the virtual environment help with that?

Important to know why we're all here:

DEI is important for all aspects of campus life, but crucial for student success

Gain greater insights on the challenges that students face on campus every day

Need to diversify the arts collections on campus (Godwin-Ternbach Museum), also in programming and exhibition we need to present multi-voices. How can we engage students further and give them more/better platforms.

Curiosity: didn't have a great experience while being a QC student, but very committed to continue to learn and being involved in campus life. Wants to know how things are being taught and continue to develop towards giving students a good experience at QC.

The arts need to be more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible. Curious to hear these conversations.

Students (mostly students of color and students with disabilities) are struggling to fulfill their basic needs, so there's an interest on how these conversations can be less performative and more leading to action.

Challenge/opportunity: We need to better define what diversity, equity, and inclusion really mean, so we can take real action and not continue to use them as buzz words. What do we mean when we say these words? Opportunity to share resources that can better inform our community on these definitions.

Opportunity: how do we link these words to very specific actions. Is it pay disparity? Is it diversity in leadership positions? Etc. We'd need to look at different groups within the campus: full-time and adjunct faculty, students, staff.

There are students who can only take classes during weekends, and seems that weekend college has been absorbed into the larger QC curriculum, making into "weekend classes" as opposed to weekend college, which would allow students to get their degree by just attending during weekends. Does weekend college still exist? Weekend college used to be attended mainly by minority students. Is this still an opportunity? It's very much needed.

We're talking about many measures of diversity—we often talk about QC being diverse, but that's not being reflected on Black student admissions. This doesn't reflect the demographics of the borough, especially South East Queens. These numbers haven't changed much over the years, so they're issues that continue to plague the QC admissions process/campus community. There are specific programs that are facing cuts (SEEK/CERRU) that were created to provide support to students of color, but if their budgets get cut, then they can't fulfill their task. These programs are underfunded and overworked and this should be looked into in face of student matriculation.

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

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

Town Hall Responses:

Diversify Curriculum

Recruiting students

Student retention, both freshman and transfer students.

Incorporating more supportive services for graduate students

Create a plan for a successful online program.

Make the curriculum diverse and more attractive for students of different backgrounds. Incorporate work experience or internships for credit. Make students ready for the job market. We need to figure out how we can move forward when the pandemic is behind us. How will students be able to adapt to the changes that have come about as a result of the pandemic.

Housing

Provide more customer service for staff training. This could be applied for faculty as well and will be helpful to retention. Or, at most bringing this about to awareness of it being a possible reflection and provide a negative image on student experiences.

Resources for faculty research

Internship Funding so students can participate in internships both on QC campus and off campus.

Branding of College and Departments - advertisement, brochures, website

Mandate that each dept (faculty and staff) do undoing racism training.

Provide financial and staffing support for the Academic Programs at the college (Africana Studies, Asian Studies, Irish Studies, Hispanic Studies). Transfer the programs into Departments.

Affordable housing for students - and a way to support students in a housing emergency

Priority to maintain a level of shared governance

Make more services available on weekends to accommodate working-student/graduate student schedules

Attract more students of color into graduate programs

Have a dedicated graduate leader (preferably at the Dean level) to steer graduate initiatives

Signage in bathrooms, in Depts. in advising center about resources available at QC - Food Pantry, housing, scholarships, mental health, sexual harassment, etc..

Diversity of curriculum. Training on diversity for staff on how to identify or look for

Online courses/programs to help non-traditional students

Provide support for professors in teaching online courses

Consistent training to be up to date with technology

Research in most recent technology for instructing courses

Weaving in diversity in curriculum. This can be facilitated through media or readings utilized in courses

Provide outreach from all support services pertaining to student success

Define what equity, diversity, and inclusion really mean. Provide the campus community with the appropriate resources to be better informed and understand that these are not just buzz words and need to be linked to actions.

Understanding pandemic-related stresses on students and being able to mitigate those.

There have been some surveys done, but we should understand better what students are losing, especially our marginalized students who were struggling before, but now are facing even more difficult conditions due to the pandemic.

Be more proactive and less reactive. QC waits until it's almost too late/a crisis to take actions. Try to prevent critical situations for our students and provide them with resources that will support them before it's too late. Many students are barely hanging on and need more/better resources. We need to find a way to help them, as STUDENTS SHOULD BE OUR MAIN PRIORITY. We have to do better at letting our students know of the existing resources as well. Seems that most of the students who are affected by these issues are minority students.

Co-signed: better resources for students, especially in Bursar's Office during the pandemic. Students (many international students) can't pay for their classes or can't get employment to support themselves. How's the bursar taking responsibility for students? Students should have the same type of access to student aid regardless of their ethnic background, national origin, immigration status, etc.

In terms of academics: are advisers/professors treating students who don't have the necessary technology for virtual classes the same as they do students who do have it? Are students who are homeless or need to keep their cameras off being discriminated against because of their conditions? Are they failing classes? The system that we're sending our students to is broken and has been broken for some time—discrimination, xenophobia, lack of transparency, disparity of justice (complaint system). Students don't trust the system and many times choose to leave QC. The majority who are affected are darker skin students whose first language may not be English.

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

Town Hall Responses:

Implementing these town halls to get the feedback from all parties.

Advising and mentoring is key

We need more advisors.

Need more programs to support students, support related to housing, food etc. – basic resources

Need support to prepare students for college courses

Work on pipeline programs with high schools

Programs/resources need to be communicated to students and faculty

Need periodic orientation for faculty and staff – as refresher on resources and programs available

Need for basic resources – housing, food insecurity, mental health – should be destigmatized.

Signage across campus to promote awareness.

Create and build campus community and shared experience, problem solving.