

Strategic Plan Town Hall #4

December 7, 2020 - Featuring Faculty Scholarship and Creativity and Financial Sustainability

NOTES

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

- **Faculty-Scholarship and Sustainability-related**
- **Financial Sustainability-related**
- **Feel free to address generally too (QC as a whole)**

Town Hall Responses:

Strengths:

- Diversity, especially of our students! As professors, we can listen and have the ability to listen to our students connect with us and with one another and see this diversity in action - we all benefit from this
- Freedom to create here at QC for faculty and for the students
- Location here in NYC (both for its resources and the closeness of other higher education institutions for collaboration)
- Collaboration potential is quite high across departments here in QC, at CUNY, and in general
- From a fiscal sustainability perspective, there are a lot of very generous alumni who have supported the College and will continue to do so
- There is also a lot of good will among politicians [jumping in to say that Cuomo could be more generous towards CUNY] and others here locally
- Several departments are really doing a very good job of checking in with their faculty members, offering guidance and mentorship
- First rate faculty, scholars, and teachers
- As a community we pull together
- QC cares about its students

Opportunities:

- leverage web-based teaching to launch new Masters' Programs for lucrative careers (e.g . Genetic Counseling)
- Digital Humanities - as a way to prepare our students for the 21st century
- Opportunity - sell off equipment not be used (\$\$\$)

Challenges:

- Fear about trying to figure out what is next given pandemic**
- Better guidance about trying to shift to a larger funding source, resource for helping with this?**
- Not being asked to complete administrative work while on sabbatical**
- Challenge of teaching load**
- Need to negotiate better with faculty about contracts**
- Challenge- student retention**

-A major challenge I see is in our IT infrastructure, despite very few people attending the campus, our infrastructure ages day by day. How is the college going to face this challenge where our infrastructure needs a major upgrade.

-A challenge in Economics is having the databases to do top level scholarship. Not enough OTPS

-Challenge - Student enrollment

-Over the past years there have been changes in software platforms as well as programs, and the learning curve is high. Can there be less reinvention of the wheel and/or more training for the faculty and staff in the new programs and software.

-Invest more funds in the advising office as well as SEEK and college now, so better equipped to advise students. Advising puts a lot of extra work for faculty in covering the nuts and bolts for students.

-Smaller class sizes so faculty can have a better quality of engagement with students.

-When you give us less resources as faculty and staff, we are doing less, because faculty and staff workload has increased, but the support has not increased.

-The loss of 3 hours of sponsored research after the last contract was a serious blow to faculty morale -- if we want QC to maintain its excellent research profile this should be a priority. Many of us faculty members were under the impression that we would transition to a 3-2 teaching load at the time, and view the loss of those 3 hours of sponsored research as a very concerning signal about the way in which the college regards faculty productivity. [I second this]

-Effects of current economic strain from increased teaching loads and the PSC-CUNY grants? How sustainable are these internal sources of funding?

-The current economic policy of "non-replacement" for faculty members actively discourages highly-paid older faculty from retiring. In many departments a large number of older faculty (some well into their 80s) are still working; these members have less energy for departmental administrative tasks, but are often reluctant to retire for fear of leaving the department in the lurch without any faculty whatsoever. Yet these faculty receive the highest salaries. If the non-replacement clause was removed and replacement was guaranteed, it would be a huge boost for departments: the university would actually save money, as new hires are far cheaper and (with the prospect of tenure luring them on) can do a great deal of departmental administration.

-The college needs a genuine plan for hiring and retaining full-time tenure-track faculty. Too many courses are being taught by adjunct faculty--who do not have real opportunities to do their own research and creative work, do not contribute to the departmental administrative tasks, and cannot put time into building the university.

-The buyout cost for those in humanities and social sciences is not sustainable and creates a disincentive to apply for grants.

-Needing to “buy our time” when working on external grants makes it a problem in obtaining the grants; this makes QC less competitive, because other institutions do not require this; this is a new policy too, which makes it even harder for faculty, who remember their levels of productivity before this change was implemented

-Overhead on grants but there do not seem to be enough administrators helping with the administrating

-We are receiving classes with increasing numbers of students during a period for even more difficult teaching conditions (given the virtual nature of teaching during a pandemic)

-Financial aid is not efficiently processed, leading to holds and lower enrollment

-Here at QC, there is a concern because things are implemented during “crisis mode” but then they get kept around when the crisis ends and these work during a crisis but they really aren’t tenable in the long term [YES! I second this]

-In the medium-term, the state and local budgets largely affect QC and CUNY as a whole and this affects our ability to do research

-Not all tenure faculty work on scholar research, without necessarily compensating with teaching or service. Those who produce are working at least $\frac{1}{3}$ more. Prolific faculty need to be protected because there is a limit to how much they can handle.

-Online teaching has increased our work and to increase class size is even worse.

-We ought to start thinking outside the box to be more efficient. Having 2 hours to be advising students weekly (any student on any topic, not class related is not effective. We could have 2 faculty to specialize on credit requirements, etc.

-When you give us less, we do less because we are already pressed to the limit. Enough with the free labor.

-Enough of probono.

-Creativity, scholarship is virtually (pardon the pun) impossible during the pandemic. The time it takes to restructure everything for online teaching is a huge burden that needs to be addressed.

-Faculty with school-aged children have been particularly burdened by the current situation.

-Workload: research and creativity requires time, and the teaching and administrative load is very high at Queens College

-Fiscal -- college doing a good job w/ limited resources from State and City, especially with providing PPE to get thru pandemic.

-Entire university must rethink what positions need to be filled. (Like Bill Keller’s VP job.)

-For research -- biggest question is time and workload. Humanities can't buyout teaching, unlike in sciences. Requirements for tenure and promotion can be hefty vis-a-vis research. Un-sponsored research time lost, which would have brought courseload down to 3-2 instead of its current level, which has created low morale. More time for research needed. Should be more in the forefront of the higher-ups concerns. Lack of appreciation for relationship between teaching and scholarship, and how the latter enhanced the former. Ties in with funding. State doesn't really take into account the importance of research in enhancing students' upward mobility. Similar challenges faced by State schools, but CUNY is a special case with its system of community colleges but faculty in all colleges are subject to the same contract and likely the same tenure expectations. Hard to have that while having different missions from campus to campus, college to college. Don't have very differentiated faculty structure -- don't have a teaching profession w/in faculty ranks. QC needs to define its mission and what it wants the college to be. Allow rewards for faculty who no longer do research but who love teaching. Does it make it more challenging to get funding for a liberal arts college like QC as compared to tech./professional institutions? Sciences are a big part of the college's identity, as well. QC is behind helping people seeing the connections between liberal arts classes and career preparation/readiness outcomes. Faculty find it hard to make those connections because they are embedded in academia, but the connections can serve people in other areas and careers. Data is becoming more readily available to bolster knowledge of these connections. We must be able to discuss this with parents and students and also emphasize the importance of learning other languages and discourses. Consider the demographics of the parents of QC students.

-Competitive market; we're all vying for students because enrollments are down across the board. "Affordability" is relative when people are going through hard economic times in the pandemic. The challenge of fiscal sustainability has to take into account homeless students, students without wifi let alone technology. They have lost so much time because of this. Bimodal distribution of students -- middle-class and low-income. Macaulay College needs a rethink.

What are the strengths, challenges, and opportunities facing QC:

-Strengths are great education for the cost. Always rates very high lists of education for the costs. Opportunities- Grow the student body, even in this environment. Accessibility to diverse cohort of students. Untapped base of alumnus for contributions. TAPPING INTO GRANT OPPORTUNITIES. Although, we can't get grants if there isn't support and faculty and departments to research for those grants. Third vote for securing grants. Staff to do alumni outreach. Specifically, college wide large grants. More incentivisation to write grants. Queens College as a destination campus. What does Queens College want to be? This could be redefined and given more thought. Do we want to rely on tuition or outside sources? What does QC want it's faculty to do? Grant writing? Teaching?

-Curriculum streamlining. This could both help redefine the school and reallocate resources.

-Generating revenue vs. making cuts

-Faculty doing more and increasingly pro bono. Class size increase,

-Multiple position reports, should be reexamined. Needs to acknowledge that faculty in different depts do outside work that cannot be reported, must underreport. Work that goes into tenure/performance takes longer, outside QC.

-Support is siim, teaching load is heavy, low research funding, distance learning adds to burden,
Grim picture - as not enough time to focus on scholarship during academic year. Squeezing into Summer, evening and weekends when possible.

-Weight between teaching load and research is not realistic.

-Need for more mentoring, BETTER mentoring

-Need for better information flow about faculty scholarship/creativity. Difficult to communicate to donors & alumni. We have a central location for info about students but not about faculty research.

-How do you get more donors?

-Need for more financial support for students.

-Financial sustainability during the pandemic -- many opportunities have disappeared. No summer camp. Parking and advertising as possibilities for bringing in more revenue.

-Institutional inertia, advising burden,

-Sustaining the shuttle bus? Needed b/c students need to get to campus. Popular when not a pandemic! (paid from activity fee)

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities:

- Queens College is facing budget cuts at the state level
- Concern around funding for adjunct faculty
- Students have had to wait days to get a new professor to teach a class
- College is oriented around distance-learning; there are challenges with distance-learning
- Undergraduate students prefer in-person instruction
- Meeting with faculty virtually is not the same as meeting in-person
- SEEK students continue to have challenges with virtual instruction
- Will QC continue to use Zoom for remote learning or will there be a new virtual learning platform either from CUNY or QC?
- Will remote learning create another barrier for students learning?
- Anticipate more discussions around the role of virtual learning technology
- Virtual learning could increase flexibility for students taking classes
- Challenge around how to support students with tutoring, academic support, and advising in a virtual environment
- When enrolling at QC students signed up for in-person classes and not online learning

- Need to ensure ecosystem for students finding jobs through the career office and recruiters on campus
- Virtual learning has allowed students to have the flexibility to take a part-time job or internship outside of school
- Focus on mental health and wellness for students

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

- **Faculty-Scholarship and Sustainability-related**
- **Financial Sustainability-related**
- **Feel free to address generally too (QC as a whole)**

Town Hall Responses:

-More full time faculty so there are more people to share the administrative and service work for the Dept and College.

-Generating revenue

-Reduce teaching load (make more manageable)

-Backup plan if we can't get back our sources of revenue! What's filling those gaps? Are we planning to add more sources of revenue? More opportunities once the campus is open -- depends on when that happens. (lack of revenue from Kupferberg, bus, etc etc). Cuts unavoidable at this point. Funding streams being hit hard. Tuition pushback? Increases not improved. Issues with our budget targets. Can cross-CUNY collaboration help here? Big corporations as donors?

-More respect for collaborative projects, more weight to be given

-Clarity about tenure process, what really counts? Expectations should be in keeping with all duties

-Chairs should only be full professors as they understand process

-Chairs should also have some level of HR training to understand guidelines for safe and respectful work environment

-Similar answers from #1 for #2.

-Important to have a great QC website which will help with fundraising

-Important to build out the QC communications team which will help with alumni outreach and fundraising

-Alumni are excited to donate to student scholarships and endowed chairs

-Important to have strong public relations to the community

-Need to build on QC's strong academic legacy and education

-Important to highlight QC's historic role in educating students who are the first in their family to go to college

-There is a lot of potential with our existing alumni network for fundraising

-Some IT systems and databases are out-of-date which impacts alumni outreach
We should encourage more students to participate in campus events such as town halls

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

-Put money in an account that rolls over from year to year. (COUTRA) -- meeting or exceeding revenue target.

-Increase enrollment

-Online courses -- does this save the college money? --Yes, much reduced energy usage.

-Should we keep some classes online?

-Losing money in the Summit

-Transparency and updates throughout the process.

-Evaluation of previous strategic plan? What did learn from outcomes? Need for a report.

-Create new savings from retiring staff. FT time faculty delaying retirement b/c of administrative load on others. Not able to retire. Student loses because other faculty longevity lack enthusiasm (union). High salary. Savings (lost generation) NO new hires since 2008-2009.

-Not being able to replace retiring faculty. More adjuncts not responsible for admin.

-Education faculty can't do research b/c of not being able to use schools. Closed due to covid. NO research or sparse research. No population

-Bursar, lots more students needing financial aid due to lack of work and resources

-Grants dried up due to pandemic

-No work study or resources for students

-Student fees CUNY decision

-Income from private companies on campus?

- Implementation: This probably isn't at the level that you're thinking of, but how about heavily marketing adult education virtual courses? On all sorts of topics, e.g., singing, drawing, acting, politics, economics, health, exercise, etc. It might bring in a decent amount.