CHAPTER FIFTEEN

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND CHANGE
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I. A Focus on Assessment

Like many other colleges in the country, Queens has been searching for ways to improve the assessment of student learning outcomes as part of the focus on assessment and quality improvement throughout the College. The Middle States Evaluation Team made it clear in 1986 that it found the College wanting with respect to systematic academic program review and the team was critical of the budget process as "not a programmatic process which considers new initiatives or examines an array of options." It recommended that the new president consider "much more overt planning" in many areas. The College has embraced these criticisms and has made great strides toward institutionalization and integration of assessment and planning processes. The most recent evidence, perhaps, is that a separate sub-committee on Outcomes Assessment was established for the Planning Committee that produced the 1994-1999 Five Year Plan. Their report was the basis on which much of this current chapter was built. Their recommendations led to the identification of outcomes assessment as one of the five top priorities for the College in the next five years.

The focus of this chapter is to describe and analyze the mechanisms now in place that help the College measure its effectiveness and judge the coherence of its efforts--its institutional integrity. Suggestions will be offered as to how the present systems of assessment can be improved. The following chapter will discuss the achievements made with respect to planning processes and point the way for further enhancements of present practice.

II. Student Learning

A. Institutional Level

In 1986, the Middle States team wrote "The aggregate of these reviews showed a College with a highly suitable curriculum in each academic area and a faculty very strongly committed to high quality teaching. Students overwhelmingly expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their courses and academic endeavors." Yet the team also found that "there are very few outcome measures by which to assess the instructional program....There is no regularly scheduled review of each academic program."

In 1995 a very different situation exists. The following sections detail progress made in academic program review and other efforts to assess program quality, and identify where there are still gaps in outcomes assessment processes. In the final section of this chapter, specific recommendations are presented to fill the gap, provide the College with a
multi-dimensional assessment process insuring that the College knows how its students and
alumni/ae fare and that the assessment data are used constructively for continuous
improvement.

1. Academic Program Review

In fall 1988, the College instituted an Academic Program Review process. Initiated by the Office of the Provost and modified in 1992, the College’s first cycle of academic program reviews is close to complete. All academic departments and programs, as well as academic support units follow a common process. Administrative units also undergo comparable reviews. As described in CHAPTER FIVE: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, the purpose of Academic Program Review is to encourage these units to review critically all of their activities and their effectiveness vis-a-vis available current resources in relation to their individual goals and the goals of the College and CUNY. The expectation is that strengths and weaknesses will be identified and needed changes in program, organization and resources will be suggested. CHAPTER FIVE: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS provides more information on the process and an analysis of the program’s effectiveness and short-comings.

The College has benefitted greatly from this investment in academic program review. In addition to the examples cited in CHAPTER FIVE: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, recent outcomes of the review of School of Music are instructive. After meeting with the senior administration in May 1995, the School wrote a new Statement of Mission and Goals that articulates clearly the inter-relatedness of the components of their undergraduate program. The School has also made contact with Townsend Harris High School to plan a number of joint activities in music performance.

The process could be strengthened by more systematic collection of survey data across all departments. Further, as noted in CHAPTER FIVE, the elements of follow-up, reinforcement and feedback are presently missing from the process. Implementation of the recommendations in CHAPTER FIVE regarding the Academic Program Review process should be a priority for the College.

Other programs offered by the college such as LEAP and ACE, Honors in the Western Tradition and minors such as Business and Liberal Arts (BALA) and Journalism are not currently included in this Academic Program Review process. (BALA and Journalism minors have been subject to review through their advisory boards, a process independent of the College’s Academic Program Review.) Review of all programs according to a common format is needed to assess student learning outcomes.

2. Surveys of Graduates

The Dean of Students has begun systematic surveys of students at graduation. The questionnaire asked recent graduates about their employer and intentions for future
study. For the 1993-94 graduating class, approximately 900 recent graduates responded to the first request. This survey will be repeated for the 1994-95 graduating class. To date, the Office of Development has used the information to update their files on graduates. The Dean of Students and his staff will be analyzing the data; they hope to glean information which will be useful to both academic and administrative offices. Six months after graduation, a pilot graduation and placement survey was sent to those who responded to the 1993-94 graduate survey. Surveys were sent out in February 1995 and are currently being returned by mail. The Office of Institutional Research will summarize the results and make them known to appropriate offices on campus.

3. General Education Requirements

Formal ongoing assessment of the general education requirements of the college has been lacking. The College adopted a set of general education requirements in 1980—Basic and Advanced Learning Skills and LASAR. LASAR has been evaluated once by a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The Committee chose to maintain the current structure of LASAR offerings. To make these requirements, especially LASAR, meaningful to students, one needs to know what each is meant to accomplish: What areas of learning does each cover? What are the stated objectives of LASAR? Who evaluates it? What skills are meant to be built or enhanced in each area?

There is growing desire among the faculty to reexamine the concept of LASAR itself. LASAR, like other portions of the curriculum, needs to have its aims (re)stated and its accomplishments tested against those aims. A serious evaluation of LASAR would attempt to answer the following questions: Are the courses taught in a manner consistent with the reason they have been included in a LASAR category? Are they monitored for compliance with the needs of their LASAR category? It would be useful for the College to evaluate periodically the general educational requirements as departments evaluate the academic program, through a review process. At the current time, there is no ongoing evaluation process in place for LASAR requirements.

4. The Freshman Year Initiative and Freshman Survey

In fall 1993, Queens College received funding from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE) to expand the Freshman Year Initiative program which had been begun with University funding the year before. As part of the evaluation process, a consultant was brought in to advise the Provost’s Office and the Office of Institutional Research on the design of a complete assessment plan for the project. The Office of Institutional Research is tracking student grade point averages, pass rates and rates of withdrawal for all students in the program. Surveys to elicit quantitative and qualitative information are also being used. In fall 1994, the College began participating in the Cooperative Institutional Research Freshmen Survey of UCLA and the American
Council on Education. From this, the College will have data on how Queens College students view themselves academically and socially. The College will have a national database on freshmen as well as a Queens College database which will be useful for designing special programs for freshmen, and following changes over time.

5. Developmental Courses

The College recognizes that a portion of the student body enters without sufficient basic skills to fulfill curricular requirements. The existence of remediation and developmental education in mathematics, reading and writing is expensive for the College, using resources that limit course offerings elsewhere. In addition to remediation, there are a number of courses in College English as a Second Language offered through the CESL program that, while not remedial, are configured in a comparably expensive way. The College’s responsibility is to determine whether the outcomes from these courses are assessed and adjustments made where necessary. Currently, success is measured through pass rates of the CUNY Assessment Tests: what percent of students taking a particular remedial course pass the CUNY test. While completion of the CESL sequence has been the basic prerequisite for most “regular” college courses, there has been no “hard stop” on CESL students registering for courses for which they may not have the skills required. The educational outcome of these remedial/developmental courses can be measured best by looking regularly at success rates in subsequent courses. A study done recently by the University of all college ESL has done this and has led to some reconsideration of how ESL courses are structured. Further thought and planning in this area are underway.

6. Quality of Teaching

Systematic assessment of the quality of the student academic experience also occurs through monitoring teaching quality. The College currently measures teaching quality through the use of Course and Faculty Evaluation forms and department peer observations, as well as by recognition through Presidential Awards for Teaching Excellence. Further information on these procedures is provided below (section V).

As discussed in CHAPTER ELEVEN: FACULTY, there has been widespread perception that quality teaching per se has not been considered a high priority in the College's faculty reward system. The College needs to work harder to assure that successful teaching is, and is seen as, a major component in the reward system. There has been significant movement on this score during 1994-95; it is to be hoped that the recent motion approved by the College P & B Committee (see CHAPTER ELEVEN) will result in improved processes for the evaluation of teaching and in the development of a new culture more supportive of achievement in teaching and student learning.

\[1\text{ Data from the fall 1994 survey are summarized in CHAPTER TEN: STUDENTS.}\]
7. Institutional Research's Fact Book

The Office of Institutional Research has completed revising and expanding the College's Fact Book. The current Five-Year Plan observed that the previous Data Book had not been widely distributed on campus, and plans are to make copies of the revised and expanded Fact Book available to academic and administrative offices all across campus. The new Fact Book will be a great resource for departments and programs undertaking an Academic Program Review, for student service personnel interested in retention rates and enrollment trends and for faculty and staff writing institutional grants.

8. Faculty Research Productivity

The Office of Institutional Research has just received the database on faculty who responded to a CUNY Faculty Research Survey. This includes the area of their scholarship or creative activity and lists publications within the past five years. Information can be extracted in various forms.

B. Departmental and Course Level

1. Student Participation in Departmental "Honors" Programs

One measure of students' learning outcomes is their participation in department "honors" programs. There are many models of honors curricula in place. However, it is not always easy to identify "honors programs" from reading the College Bulletin, since departments do not describe honors curricula uniformly. Detail about the major, including honors curricula and requirements, is usually provided in departmental handbooks for majors. Students need clarification on whether honors are given for the completion of a series of specialized courses or as a result of a capstone experience such as a senior thesis, or some combination of these.

The Task Force discussed whether the College should devise a uniform set of criteria for all honors programs in order to assure some consistency, or whether the current practice of department autonomy is sufficient. More discussion is needed. It is clear, however, that understanding the differences between a regular and an honors curriculum is essential, and honors curricula require ongoing monitoring.

2. Student-Faculty Interchange

Both formal and informal interchange of students and faculty are seen as invaluable aspects of College life that contribute to student learning. Only informal assessment currently exists in this area through the Academic Program Review process. Some questions that need to be asked include: To what extent do departments reach out to student organizations, especially major interest clubs? To what extent do faculty members speak at club meetings? Are students invited to attend presentations by guest lecturers?
Does the College administration do enough to encourage such interchange? Do departments and divisions exchange information on the success of these events? That these events are scheduled is clear; however, further information is needed to determine how people are informed about them and how widely students and faculty participate in them.

Another measure of student-faculty relations is the extent to which students work as lab assistants, tutors or teaching assistants or participate with faculty members on grant projects. This is an area where there are many exceptional models across the College. It would be useful for departments and divisions to codify information on what exists and share it with colleagues. Creative relationships between students and faculty in one department may serve as a stimulus or model to others.

Often faculty-student relationships extend beyond the confines of the College to the community. Internships serve to enhance the reality of subject matter, relating the work of the instructor/student team to the external world. While internships exist, either directly through departments, through Cooperative Education courses and placements or through focused programs such as the Business and Liberal Arts minor, there is little information available to the College community at large. The specific intent of these programs and courses, and the measurements used to evaluate their success need to be articulated and shared more widely within the campus community.

3. **Departmental Curriculum**

Almost all departments structure courses in some hierarchical manner. The course numbering system of the College, overhauled about ten years ago, assigns numerical ranges based on course level. A review of the Undergraduate Bulletin, however, shows clearly that a number of departments, primarily in the social sciences, have a relatively flat structure, offering access to 200-level courses without prerequisites or to 300-level courses with no more than one prerequisite. While there is no reason why all departments need be highly structured, each department's course inventory should be reviewed to determine what types of prior knowledge or levels of skill need to be accomplished before the major is fulfilled.

4. **Other Department Procedures**

The Task Force developed a survey of academic departments to determine what departmental and course level activities were occurring to measure student learning outcomes. Responses from over 75% of the department chairs provide the assessment data. This survey revealed that in addition to the required institutional and departmental measures (e.g., Academic Program Review, Course and Faculty Evaluations, observation of faculty), several other means are used by them to assess overall program quality. These methods include review by the departmental curriculum committee of course content, relevance and effectiveness; and review by faculty at monthly departmental meetings. Curriculum guidelines of professional associations are also employed as reference points within the
discipline. About a third of the departments require an integrative or capstone course at the end of the regular course sequence to consolidate student learning in the major, and another third of the departments require some other culminating experience, generally a senior thesis or some type of research paper or project. A clear majority of departments do not require students to take a comprehensive exam prior to graduation. Monitoring students toward completion of the major is carried out through faculty advising, but departments differ in how systematically this is done. Finally, about two-thirds of the departments collect syllabi and final exams from faculty and adjuncts on a regular basis.

Aside from Academic Program Review, most departments do not have a formal process to evaluate the success of student learning in their major. They rely on a variety of informal measures, and are often reactive, responding to problems or issues brought to them by individuals or groups. Formal procedures do exist to respond to problems and generally follow a process of submission to the curriculum committee for evaluation and then to the full faculty. It is not clear how information, when gathered, is used to improve teaching and learning.

III. Students' Ethical and Personal Development

The Mission Statement adopted by the College in 1986² clearly identifies students' ethical and personal development as an important outcome of their Queens College experience. Specifically, this refers to the extent to which students have an understanding of themselves, other individuals, and their environment, and participate in activities related to those concerns. How the College provides opportunities for students to acquire this understanding and encourages and facilitates their participation is an important component of outcomes assessment.³

A. Students' Understanding of Themselves

There is no accepted measure or central record-keeping on the extent to which students are exposed to experiences that promote self-understanding, or on the extent to which students' self-understanding grows as a function of their exposure to the College. Research suggests that students' self-understanding generally does grow with exposure to college, but that it is difficult to pinpoint specific experiences associated with this growth.⁴ Therefore, attempts to measure the contribution of specific Queens College programs to students' self-understanding will probably provide little information.

In order to identify formal College activities having as an objective the enhancement

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² Reproduced in CHAPTER FOUR: THE MISSION AND GOALS OF QUEENS COLLEGE.
³ As a revised Mission Statement is adopted through this Self Study process, the College must plan for assessment of the goals put forth therein.
of students' self-understanding, Assistant Provost M. Hratch Zadoian, Dean of Students Burton Backner, and LEAP Assistant Director Suzanne Paul were interviewed. Activities meeting this description are generally found in special programs, many serving students with special needs. These include LEAP, SEEK, and Fresh Start. Each of these programs provide group and individual counseling, and in some cases, courses that help students to increase their self-understanding. An example of the latter is LEAP 6 (Work, Life, and Culture). In this course students have an opportunity to study the role of their own ethnic group (and others) in the world of work and in society. They are also encouraged to consider their own role in work and society.

B. Students' Understanding of Others

An index of the extent to which the College enables students to understand others is a description of formal college entities that focus on specific cultures or ethnicities. Described below are three types of entities: academic programs in ethnic and area studies; development of a college-wide course requirement with a multicultural emphasis; and extracurricular activities with a multicultural component. The information provided is based on an interview with Assistant Provost M. Hratch Zadoian, whose administrative responsibilities include interdisciplinary and special studies. Additional information is contained in former President Kenny's July 20, 1994, response to the Board of Trustees' request for a description of College efforts to combat bigotry and in the 1993 Revision of the Affirmative Action Program Plan.

1. Academic Programs

The College offers five interdisciplinary majors (Africana Studies, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, East Asian Studies, Jewish Studies, and Latin American Area Studies) and three minors (Irish Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, and Italian-American Studies) in ethnic and area studies. Each program offers several of its own courses and "cross-references" courses from other departments. Collectively, a very large number of Queens College courses are listed by the ethnic and area studies programs (see 1993:1995 Undergraduate Bulletin, pp. 151-158). The extent to which these courses are reaching the student body is monitored by Mr. Zadoian's office each semester.

2. Development of a Course Requirement in Cultural Diversity

A sub-committee on curriculum of the Presidential Committee on Multiculturalism has functioned at the College for a number of years. One of its goals was development of a curricular requirement for all students. A proposal was submitted to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee several years ago that would require students to select one course from a list of approximately six courses. The designated courses dealt with more than one identified group and emphasized intergroup relations and/or comparative studies. An example is Ethnic Studies 310: Six Ethnic Groups in New York City. An alternative requirement was also submitted. Both have been discussed in
preliminary ways by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Academic Senate. Neither approach elicited substantial support. Definitive action is likely to be delayed pending the complete review of LASAR.

3. Extracurricular Activities

There are many college structures and organizations with an ethnic or cultural focus. These include centers for ethnic studies, such as the Asian/American Center, the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, the Center for Jewish Studies, and the John D. Calandra Italian-American Institute. There are also many official student organizations and activities (a list is appended to the Task Force’s report). Clubs are encouraged to sponsor joint events, leading to a number of multicultural opportunities. The College chaplains and religious organizations sponsor many public events with multicultural and multiethnic themes.

C. Students' Understanding of Their Environment

According to the mission statement, a desired objective for students is to have enhanced understanding of their urban environment and the ecology and biology of the larger natural environment. Levels of student participation could be measured by their involvement in public-spirited activities such as College blood drives, charitable organizations, campus elections, etc. The Dean of Students and the Director of Student Activities maintain a list of student organizations (clubs) most of which are service-oriented.

One source of data on level of student participation in campus-based extracurricular activities is a student survey conducted in fall 1992 by students enrolled in a class on multicultural center design. A non-random sample of approximately 600 students was surveyed: the response rate is not indicated. In response to a question regarding involvement in campus-based co-curricular activities, 66% responded that they were not involved. Another question revealed that approximately 70% of students who responded spent 6 or fewer hours on campus when they were not in class. These data confirm the observation of Dean Backner that students at this commuter campus have (or take) little time for campus-based extracurricular activities.

A measure of the extent to which the College encourages public-spirited activities can be gleaned from descriptions of the formal awards granted to students by the College. Among college-wide undergraduate awards, 17 of 34 awards specify service as a criterion, 2 of 14 program awards require service, as do 7 of 27 departments listing awards. In addition, service is rewarded through the Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund, created by the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY to encourage and recognize excellence among the students of the City University of New York. Candidates for this scholarship must have a minimum GPA of 3.75. They must also demonstrate "a strong commitment to college
and/or community services and those qualities of individual character that show their potential for leadership and future achievement." At least one Queens College student has been the recipient of this prestigious scholarship every year since 1984.

Another measure of the College's encouragement of public-spirited activities is the existence of programs such as the Big Buddy Program (Dr. Arthur Salz, Elementary and Early Childhood Education), QC Ambassadors (Admissions), and Golden Key Honor Society, in which service is a primary component. Dr. Salz, Mr. Hayes, and Dr. Backner agreed that more campus-wide documentation and recognition for such programs would be valuable.

IV. Students after Graduation

In its report, the 1986 Middle States team noted a deficiency in the College's efforts in the area of alumni relations, writing that "The College is far behind in identifying and communicating with its alumni, because of long inattention to maintaining adequate alumni records." The report noted, as well, that the alumni/ae were not being used in academic assessment: "An extensive survey of alumni undertaken recently contained virtually no questions about the educational program of the College." The 1991 Periodic Review noted a number of improvements in the area of alumni/ae relations, but no mention was made of using the alumni/ae in outcomes assessment. The 1993 Follow-Up Report to the Periodic Review, however, commented on one action of the College to redress this situation: "All academic program reviews require a survey of alumni perceptions about: the quality of their education in the major department and how it has served them in their post-graduation careers; the intellectual atmosphere within the department; how well students feel welcomed into the departmental community." In addition, "Many departments sample their alumni so as to include populations that have been out of college for varying amounts of time. This permits them to identify trends in departmental offerings and practices." The 1993 Planning Committee on Outcomes Assessment recommended an alumni/ae survey assessing the benefits of a Queens College education, a recommendation endorsed in the 1994-99 Five-Year Plan (item 47). In response to these reports, Queens College has attempted to incorporate alumni/ae assessment more fully into its measure of institutional effectiveness.

A. Institutional Level

The Alumni Office keeps names, addresses, phone numbers, and where possible, business addresses. Previous questionnaires elicited some basic information. A revised questionnaire will be sent out to all alumni/ae in the near future by an outside firm. The results of this second survey will be published in a directory, which will include occupational and geographical cross-listings. This survey will result in a resource of outstanding value. However, it is still more rudimentary than the one envisioned by the Planning Committee. For important reunions, the Alumni Office prepares booklets, which contain brief essays by class members on their experiences after college. These booklets are a rich source of information but have not been systematically analyzed or used by the
College. The Alumni Office also publishes the Queens College Report, which includes alumni/ae notes, as well as occasional extensive profiles of notable alumni/ae. These publications provide good material, which is not being systematically used. Also, the Director of Alumni Affairs collects books written by alumni/ae.

The College invites distinguished alumni/ae to serve on four advisory boards: Queens College Foundation, Arts, Corporate, and Journalism. Their participation can be thought of as part of a systematic effort of assessment. The Pre-Health Professions Advisor keeps files on acceptances to medical school. These files are not computerized, however, and students are not tracked beyond admission. As noted earlier, the Dean of Students Office has begun to survey graduating seniors. These data will be shared with the Offices of Development and Alumni Affairs and will be used to guide programmatic planning for academic programs and student activities.

B. Departmental

As part of the Academic Program Review process, departments have recently conducted alumni/ae surveys. Alumni/ae, as well as students and faculty, are asked to fill out the ETS Standardized Questionnaire on Perceptions of the Department. Departments then assess answers to questions in a number of categories, e.g. Environment for Learning, Quality of Teaching, Faculty Concern for Students, Curriculum, Departmental Procedures, Available Resources, Employment Assistance, and Program Purpose. Alumni/ae are also asked to report on their career choices, providing a sketch of career possibilities of the major. This report includes much excellent information, and departments have been able to gain valuable knowledge about themselves. Unlike the survey recommended by the Planning Committee, however, this is a periodic project, not an ongoing one built into the program. Furthermore, it concentrates almost purely on attitudes towards the department and does not, except in the item on career choice, address a basic question envisioned by the Planning Committee: what kind of graduates, as workers, as citizens, and as people, is the College turning out?

C. Research Findings of Professor Dean Savage

Professor Dean Savage, Sociology, has conducted extensive independent research on Queens College alumni/ae, specifically a longitudinal survey of seniors of the class of 1989. This survey, "Queens College and Beyond," and its "Follow-Up Study" are appended to the Task Force's report. The results include valuable information on what jobs graduates took, how they found their jobs, how long it took, how hard it was, how much they earned in their first post-graduation job, whether they pursued further education, where and in what fields they did so, what kinds of skills they need in their jobs and how well the College trained them in these needed skills. The surveys also asked questions about graduates' opinions of the College and the education they received there, how they liked their majors and whether they would major in the same department again. These excellent surveys could serve as models for future, on-going alumni/ae questionnaires. It should be noted that they
cover two out of the three general areas envisioned for such future surveys: graduate study and employment, and attitudes towards the College. Except for three questions on the first study about religious and political beliefs and one multi-part question on the "Follow-Up Study" about social awareness and social attitudes, they do not include questions about citizenship and cultural participation.

Professor Savage has also searched the National Research Council's Doctorate Records File to compile a list of alumni/ae who have earned doctorates and prepared tables based upon his findings. His data testify to the College's success in preparing its graduates to succeed in graduate school. Overall, the College ranks 35th in the number of its graduates who go on to receive the Ph.D. In certain fields, the College record is particularly good, ranking fifth in the number of graduates who have earned Ph.D.'s in foreign languages and in psychology, eighteenth in sociology and anthropology and 24th in education. Yet the College ranks 103rd in graduates earning life science doctorates. More work needs to be done to discern some of the reasons behind the differences among disciplines.

Using various sources such as Dissertation Abstracts and faculty listings in college catalogs, he has compiled a list of the names, majors, years of graduation, graduate schools, and present positions and institutions of alumni/ae who have earned doctorates or who hold academic positions. He estimates that he has thus far located half of the 3500 alumni/ae who have earned doctorates. He has compiled lists for individual departments and sent them to those departments. Some results and his discussion of this research are appended to the Task Force's report. This is exceptionally good material that can be of great use to the College both in the Middle States review and in the future.

V. Faculty Development and Achievement

Faculty achievement in teaching, scholarship, creative activity and service enhances the intellectual and psychological climate of the college. There are a number of systematic, formal procedures in place at the College to evaluate faculty accomplishments. A review of processes currently used to promote faculty mentoring and development is indicative of support for faculty. Also of importance is to consider the prevailing recognition/reward system with a view toward recommending change, when desirable.

A. Teaching Evaluation Procedures

A range of processes and procedures for the systematic assessment of teaching practices is currently in effect, including those mandated by the PSC-CUNY Contract and the College's Academic Senate. For a fuller description and discussion, see CHAPTER ELEVEN: FACULTY. For most departments, no standardized observation report form

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exists. Usually the chair, in consultation with the departmental P&B Committee, assigns
the faculty observer and determines the time and date of the observation. The observee is
notified and requested to supply course syllabi and other supporting teaching materials to
the observer prior to the visit. Subsequent to the observation, the observer prepares a
report that the chair and observee both receive. In case of disagreement, the observee may
contest it in writing and/or during a special conference, if he/she so desires. After a faculty
member receives tenure, no requirement exists for class observation. A chair can,
however, recommend that a tenured faculty member request class observation prior to
commencing the promotion process.

Courses and faculty members undergo student evaluation using a form constructed
by the Academic Senate. It is scheduled to be administered every third semester for the
entire faculty, and it is now being done each semester for untenured full time faculty.
Administered by the Office of Institutional Research, the questionnaire consists of an
objective and a subjective section. Findings of the objective component are organized and
summarized by department and by course, including the name of the instructor, in a
separate booklet distributed to the campus community through the Bookstore. Copies are
also available in the Benjamin Rosenthal Library and in departmental offices. Some
departments have developed their own evaluation instruments as an addition to the uniform
Academic Senate questionnaire. Their regular use assures the availability of student input
on a more frequent basis.

B. Procedures to Evaluate Scholarship and Creative Activity

Departments collect this information regularly from non-tenured faculty and from
faculty members below the full professor rank as part of the tenure/promotion process and
they assemble it as part of the Academic Program Review process. Data from the
questionnaire indicate that about half of the departments maintain lists of individual faculty
publications, grant applications, oral presentations and/or other professional activities (other
than vitae). The faculty-staff newsletter, EXIT, periodic newsletters from the Dean of the
Arts and Humanities, the Dean of the School of Education and from the Graduate School of
Library and Information Studies chronicle some of the activities of some of the faculty. As
noted earlier, the Office of Institutional Research now has access to the University database
on faculty research interests and recent publications. While this is a useful resource, it is
not comprehensive since participation was optional. At present, no system is in place to
collect and analyze information from the entire faculty regarding scholarly and creative
achievement.

The type of measurable activities in which faculty engage varies greatly but clearly
each enhances and enriches their roles as teachers. The number of grants, either
PSC-CUNY or external ones, applied for and received demonstrate an active and ongoing
research agenda. Even if funding is not obtained, the time and effort required for preparing
and submitting a proposal are valuable factors in assessment. The Office of Research &
Sponsored Programs in its periodic newsletter Grants Bulletin publicizes the availability of
funding and application deadlines from a wide range of national and local agencies, including PSC-CUNY. Award recipients are also announced. In an annual publication, annual statistics on the distribution of funding received by individuals and the College as a whole are presented. CUNY also regularly announces grant recipients, as does the Clarion, the PSC-CUNY newsletter.

C. Service Evaluation Procedures

A widespread perception prevails on campus about the undervaluing of service in the College’s reward system. The only aspect of service identified in the Faculty section of the Guidelines for Academic Program Review is participation on College committees. The 1992 Report of the President’s Advisory Committee on Teaching and Service is the first official document where formal recognition has been given to this aspect of academic responsibility, and recommendations have been offered to improve the system. In furtherance of these recommendations, the Provost held a retreat for the College P&B in November 1994. The group analyzed the current system and examined available options with a view toward identifying possible avenues for change. A fuller description of faculty roles in service may be found in CHAPTER ELEVEN: FACULTY.

D. Institutional Reward System

The College’s foremost reward for faculty is the granting of tenure and promotion. The review process consists of several layers and is detailed in CHAPTER ELEVEN: FACULTY. The amount of care, time, effort and quality control involved in these processes is staggering. The process is deeply rooted and protected by the faculty who want to have a major share in the decision making to assure that high standards and the reputation of the institution are maintained.

Distinguished professorships are considered a promotion for full professors who are judged deserving of this honor because of their achievements and reputation in their field. These awards are few and while they are renewed annually, they carry no term limit. Departmental candidates’ dossiers are forwarded to the Executive Committee of the College P & B which reviews and evaluates them, invites reviews from outside experts and makes recommendations to the President. The decision to submit one or more names (or not to submit any candidates) to the Chancellor and the CUNY Board of Trustees is made by the President.

As has been noted earlier, former President Kenny created several awards to recognize outstanding teachers and to encourage research. These include the annual President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, several annual mini-grants for innovative teaching and the annual President’s Award for Research. Each of these carries a stipend

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6 Currently the College has ten Distinguished Professors whose names and areas of expertise are given in CHAPTER ELEVEN: FACULTY.
and each has been presented on ceremonial occasions. A substantial number of institutional awards is now in place to recognize teaching and research, two of the three prongs of academic activities of faculty. It is hoped that service, the third prong, will eventually also be recognized.

E. Faculty Development and Mentoring

Administration and faculty agree that mentoring and development of new and junior faculty have received attention during the last several years. Newly hired full-time faculty have recently received released time from their teaching assignments during the first year at the College in order to aid them in the development of their short and long term research agendas. Funding for this effort originates from the Provost’s Office. It is believed that this practice helps departmental recruitment efforts and promotes research and publication after hiring. A series of new faculty orientation meetings organized by the Provost’s Office affords a chance for new faculty to meet each other and a wide range of administrative and academic support staff. They are briefed by the Provost about the College’s expectations with regard to teaching, scholarship and service, and about the processes involved in the tenure and promotion decisions. Other sessions are devoted to teaching and to issues having to do with student conduct.

Traditionally, department chairs and/or senior faculty bear the primary responsibility for the advising and mentoring of junior faculty. This is usually taken seriously since the future of the individual and the department are intertwined. Recently a more formal program has been established whereby the Provost’s Office ensures that each new faculty member is assigned a mentor. Mentors and mentees are invited to various welcoming events, and mentors are given opportunities to meet and discuss the mentoring process. The Affirmative Action Committee, which developed the original mentoring plan, is now involved in the longitudinal assessment of the new faculty orientation program, including its mentoring component.

Interdisciplinary faculty interaction on campus is fostered both by the institution and by the faculty. The Freshman Year Initiative and the Asian/American Center, for example, are products of joint faculty/administration initiatives. The long-standing gathering of the Monday Lunch Club of the Social Sciences Division has been organized through faculty efforts.

As the technology revolution occurs, the Academic Computer Center has increasingly involved itself in professional development and in-service training for both faculty and staff. Under institutional sponsorship, it has developed mini-courses for staff in basic computer literacy. Faculty development also began on this level, but has in time been expanded to include Internet, e-mail and other now basic technology related activities. Both formal and informal grant writing workshops have been offered recently by the staff of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the Development Office. This is part of an institutional effort to encourage faculty to obtain external funding in light of decreasing
internal funds. Everyone recognizes the present and future value of faculty development and mentoring and the College's significant progress in these areas.

VI. Administrative and Staff Contributions to Institutional Effectiveness

A. Administration

Administrators facilitate the effective operation of the College through their leadership. An important new assessment procedure has been established for administrative effectiveness: a process for regular review of administrative offices in 1988 comparable to the Academic Program Review. A number of offices have been through the process, although it is not yet clear how these evaluative findings have been used for improvement.

The assessment of academic administrators (e.g., Provost, Chief Librarian and Deans) follows policies developed by the Academic Senate. The President is evaluated every 5 years by the CUNY Board of Trustees. Other administrators (e.g., Higher Education Officers and Registrars) are evaluated annually by the person to whom they report. Department chairs are elected by department members. There are no formal evaluations of their leadership. The College provides occasional retreats for chairs in order to assist them in administering a department.

B. Staff

The Office of Human Resources monitors the evaluations of all classified staff, including clerical and buildings and grounds personnel. Provisional staff are supposed to be evaluated every 3 months; more realistically, all staff are evaluated once a year on their work performance. The evaluation is done by the supervisor of the staff member (e.g., department chair or unit head). The Director of Human Resources indicated that when a staff member is performing poorly, she works with them individually.

Several years ago, the staff was identified as needing improvement in working with students in general and specifically in working with students from diverse backgrounds. In response, the Office of Human Resources sponsored a training program for all staff, "Connections." This is a "customer service"-oriented program geared toward the college campus; it includes vignettes to analyze. Included in the five sessions is "Valuing Diversity," which deals with multicultural issues. This training addressed the need to improve sensitivity to others on campus, particularly those new to New York and unfamiliar with American higher education. Another training program provided by Human Resources was "Telephone Techniques." It is a generic program to improve interactions on the telephone. While there is perception that staff sensitivity and cooperation have improved across the campus, there have been no formal procedures to assess success of these programs or to evaluate staff behavior. Staff sensitivity is an important part of college climate, and might be included in assessment in that area. These sessions have had a
positive effect in another regard—getting staff together in small groups from different offices, giving them opportunities to get [better] acquainted and to become appreciative of the roles played by others on campus.

VII. Quality of Campus Life

There have been a number of occasional efforts that include partial assessment of campus climate. These include the original "Queens College and Beyond" survey of 2,500 seniors in 1989, a representative sample of 400 undergraduates done in 1988 to measure undergraduate employment and spending patterns, and a 600 person survey done by Latin American Area Studies in 1993 on diversity on campus. Furthermore, in 1989, the Office of Institutional Research for CUNY conducted a survey of Undergraduate Experience at all CUNY campuses; this survey is scheduled to be repeated next year. On the departmental level, many departments have conducted surveys of current students and recent graduates as part of the Academic Program Review process; aggregate data from the departmental use of Educational Testing Service's PSAS questionnaires are now available, and can be updated as more departments complete their reviews.

Although research on outcomes indicates that the most effective predictors of outcomes are student input attributes, there is still a strong case to be made for improving the campus environment in which students learn. A lack of involvement in one's education is a major cause of attrition, perhaps the most important one on commuter campuses like Queens. One of the principal aims of efforts to improve education and reduce attrition should be to create a campus climate that is engaging and welcoming, one to which more students will want to commit themselves. The underlying assumption here is that education is more effective when students invest more effort and are more integrated into campus life. Graduation rates are also higher under these conditions. There is strong support in the literature for both claims.

What works? The literature makes some pretty clear suggestions: good teaching (which needs to be emphasized and rewarded), informal faculty-student interaction outside of class, provision of spaces where students come to feel at home (this is especially important on commuter campuses, especially during the first two years), student participation in extracurricular activities, living on or near campus, attending a private college, strong orientation and advisement programs, on-campus employment (such as work-study), student involvement in research, and supportive and welcoming organizational and interpersonal climate of individual departments.

It is not possible to change some things—Queens College is going to remain a public college and a commuter campus—but others offer possibilities for improvement. Some have

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8 Ibid.
already been recognized, and in some instances programs are already under way. The College is placing more emphasis on good teaching, and there are important initiatives in place to increase freshman integration and faculty-mentored student research, to cite two examples. These two projects, funded by separate FIPSE grants, are conducting evaluation studies as part of the grants.

An outcomes assessment committee's contribution might be to specify the dimensions of campus climate—the relevant ones are those believed to enhance integration, improve commitment to education, and increase graduation rates—and propose ways of measuring changes over time. To evaluate the results, it is important to decide whether to make comparisons across campuses, which would imply using measures employed in ongoing major national studies, or simply establish a baseline and track changes over time locally. Doing both is possible, and would only require that some measures that are already used in larger studies (such as the National Educational Longitudinal Study currently underway) are included.

VIII. Summary and Recommendations

Since the last Middle States review, Queens College has made considerable progress in its acquisition of data from outcomes assessment and other measures of institutional effectiveness. The Academic Program Review process has been cited repeatedly by department chairs and others interviewed as the primary systematic means of assessing the extent and quality of the student learning experience. The review process for administrative offices and units has also contributed to the evaluation of institutional effectiveness. Other formal measures discussed above (Course and Faculty Evaluation Forms, the Cooperative Institutional Research Freshmen Survey, the "Queens College and Beyond" survey, the Alumni Office questionnaire, the ETS standardized questionnaires, and mandated teaching evaluation procedures) are sources of important data. These measures emanate from a variety of campus sites including the Office of Institutional Research, the Academic Senate, and the Alumni Office. In addition, a very wide array of informal processes and procedures and proxy-measures provide further data on the extent to which Queens College achieves the goals and objectives set forth in its mission statement. The procedures in place are clearly multidimensional as is recommended in Framework for Outcomes Assessment.

Now with several years of experience in formal academic program review, there is the opportunity to evaluate the program itself. As noted above, the program is well accepted and has resulted in many significant changes in curriculum and departmental practices. There are, however, ways to expand and improve the process. Therefore,

RECOMMENDATION: The Academic Program Review process should be amended to include interim progress reports following the completion of each major review. <15-1>
RECOMMENDATION: The Academic Program Review process should be broadened to cover any academic unit offering courses. <15-2>

While there is clear evidence of continuing improvement in the systematic collection of information, there are three major issues that need to be addressed to strengthen College efforts to evaluate institutional effectiveness. These are a) analyzing and expanding the use to which assessment findings are put, b) the assignment of responsibility of the evaluation of effectiveness, and c) the need for additional procedures for the collection of information.

A. Use of Assessment Findings

It is stated in Characteristics of Excellence that "An institution should be able to demonstrate that the information obtained is used as a basis for ongoing self-renewal." Framework for Outcomes Assessment describes assessment as one part of a feedback loop that links outcome results with actions. The dissemination of assessment data to the College community needs to be broadened, and a closer look needs to be taken at how to establish better links between assessment and intervention. Thus,

RECOMMENDATION: The President and senior administration should strengthen the association between assessment, planning and implementation, and should make assessment data more generally known within the campus community. <15-3>

Assessment requires a strong commitment to institutional research. In recent years, the Office of Institutional Research has been extremely short on staff and other resources. If the College is to make significant advances in its assessment and planning, it must invest more in institutional research. Therefore,

RECOMMENDATION: The administration should review the resources available to the Office of Institutional Research and should develop a plan to expand its capacity to support institutional assessment and planning. <15-4>

B. Assignment of Responsibility

The Task Force's difficulty in gathering information for this report reveals a second issue of concern. There is no person coordinating the efforts to evaluate institutional effectiveness, which results in duplication and/or overlap, lack of coverage of some information, and often haphazard, irregular administration of measures. It is difficult to know where to go to retrieve these data. It seems imperative that a central person or group be placed "in charge" of planning and coordinating the efforts to facilitate assessment. Many offices and persons would be involved in carrying out the plan including chairs, deans, the Provost's Office, the Alumni Affairs Office, the Office of Institutional Research, the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, faculty, and students, but leadership in this
enterprise is required. Thus,

**RECOMMENDATION:** The President should vest responsibility for coordinating the College's efforts in outcomes assessment and review of institutional effectiveness in an individual. <15-5>

C. Additional Assessment Procedures

Additional assessment procedures to enhance current data collection are needed. The following elements represent possible components of a general plan for outcomes assessment.

1. Longitudinal Survey

It is important to obtain college-wide data on students in a systematic and organized manner. Information on students is currently collected by several offices, but there is limited coordination of the research activities and no longitudinal perspective. The centerpiece of the proposed plan is the use of a national longitudinal survey (e.g., the National Educational Longitudinal Survey [NELS] or the Beginning Post-secondary Student Longitudinal Study [BPS]) to be administered to a sample of students every two years. The College can also incorporate additional questions on student ethical and personal development and/or campus climate in a survey of this type.

A distinct advantage of using a longitudinal study is that the College will be sampling all students, not only those who stay until graduation. This will provide data not currently collected on stop-outs and drop-outs as well as those who graduate. If resources permit, the College should consider use of a survey and data files since these provide extensive longitudinal information on students and graduates. This survey would not replace the CIRP survey for freshmen currently being administered.

2. Graduating Student Survey

In addition to the longitudinal survey, it is recommended that a multiple choice Exit or Senior Survey be given to all graduating students at the time they receive their diploma card to gather quantitative data on the nature of their experiences at the College and their degree of satisfaction. [This would build upon the recent efforts by the Dean of Students to sample the opinion of graduating seniors and recent graduates.] The survey might include questions about courses they would recommend, future plans (e.g., graduate or professional school) and highest degree to which they aspire. Also important is information about the nature of their courses and their academic experience (in how many courses did they write papers and/or essay exams, do field research, do library research, make oral presentations, do laboratory work, produce creative or artistic works?). Among other possible questions: In what departments beside your major did you take courses at the 300 (advanced) level?
3. Essays

Qualitative data provide another means of assessing institutional effectiveness (Characteristics of Excellence). A sample of about 100 seniors, either a sub-sample of the longitudinal study or others, should be asked to write descriptive essays reflecting on either their learning experience at the College or what influence the College has had on their personal development. A core of faculty would review the student essays to assess how well the College is meeting its mission. Student reflections will provide qualitative data that can be studied further and discussed by the faculty.

RECOMMENDATION: The College should adopt an integrated, multi-dimensional program of student outcomes assessment including elements such as longitudinal surveys, surveys of graduating seniors and student essays. <15-6>

4. Additional Approaches

More systematic data collection and analysis in the following areas should be considered. For the Academic Program Review process:

RECOMMENDATION: The Provost, deans and departments should work together to establish additional procedures for the assessment of program quality and outcomes. <15-7>

For the benefit of informing students about their options and attracting superior students to the College:

RECOMMENDATION: The College should maintain an inventory of honors programs to be included in official College publications and recruiting material. <15-8>

Students' general intellectual skills can be assessed upon entry to the College through the General Intellectual Skills test (ETS) or another general educational test developed by The College. Therefore,

RECOMMENDATION: The Academic Senate, in undertaking periodic review of the LASAR general educational requirements, should develop a strategy that will assess course offerings in relation to the general intellectual skills students will learn. <15-9>

The absence of a Dean for Graduate Studies has resulted in lack of assessment procedures for Graduate Programs other than the Academic Review Process. Therefore,
RECOMMENDATION: *The College should include measures of its effectiveness with graduate students when planning outcomes assessment.*  
<15-10>

Awareness of diversity is strong among the numerous courses, programs, and activities that bring heterogeneous groups together on campus. The sharing of that information is not what it might be. The valuable information contained in former President Kenny's report to the Board of Trustees is the kind of document that could have helped to increase participation in multicultural activities had it been more widely available.

RECOMMENDATION: *The College should collect data on level of student participation in the impressive array of activities available to learn about cultures and ethnicities that differ from their own.*  
<15-11>

Other aspects of the College's Mission Statement need to be looked at and analyzed systematically. For example, the 1986 Mission Statement speaks of aims to expand students' self-understanding and understanding of their environment. No attempts have been made to assess such goals. As a revised Mission Statement is adopted through this Self Study.

RECOMMENDATION: *The College should develop a process whereby the goals for student development and attainment of its Mission Statement are assessed.*  
<15-12>

There is a substantial resource of existing material related to alumni/ae—the aggregate data from questionnaires used in departmental self-studies, the results of the two surveys conducted by the Alumni Office, the reunion booklets, the Queens College Reports, and the results of the several Savage surveys. Yet regular surveys of alumni/ae that include a significant number of questions on the academic programs of the College are not current practice. The College also has no standardized way to assess how its graduates meet its own mission-based goals, such as citizenship and cultural participation. The usefulness of essays written by alumni/ae at intervals of about twenty years is suggested by the rich and informative narratives in the reunion booklets. An essay would complement the short-answer and multiple-choice responses of a more routine survey by providing more detailed, more complex, and more reflective answers; by providing information and assessments that go beyond the questionnaire or that are unpredictable; providing a source of quotations and anecdotes that might be useful in a variety of ways, and in general providing a sense of the full person behind the statistics.

RECOMMENDATION: *Existing material on alumni/ae achievements and experience should be collected and systematically studied; expanded alumni/ae surveys should be administered at regular intervals to assist in assessment of the goals set by the College and its*
departments; and alumni/ae should be asked to write about the value and effects of their Queens experience at ten year intervals. <15-13>

RECOMMENDATION: Departments should be encouraged to undertake their own initiatives to maintain records on alumni/ae and keep in contact with them. <15-14>

Recommendations on issues relating to teaching and faculty are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION: The Provost should develop and publicize descriptive and evaluative information about the types of institutional support for faculty development and mentoring. <15-15>

RECOMMENDATION: The College should broaden the scope of teaching assessment measures by recognizing the importance of innovation in teaching techniques and methodology, new course development, and increased application of technology and media. <15-16>

RECOMMENDATION: The College should give serious consideration to the introduction of the teaching dossier as a mechanism for documenting and evaluating teaching. <15-17>

RECOMMENDATION: The College should develop a systematic centralized information system for documenting faculty achievements in research, scholarship and creative activity as is recommended in the College's 1994-1999 Five Year Plan. <15-18>

RECOMMENDATION: The College should increase the recognition given to "service" in faculty evaluation by broadening the scope of service assessment to measure faculty participation in leadership roles within professional organizations; representation of the institution on external committees, task forces, and commissions; and work with government agencies, business and industry. The College should seriously consider the introduction of a service dossier. <15-19>

Additional recommendations on training of staff and administrators:

RECOMMENDATION: The College should develop a systematic mechanism to assess perceptions concerning the quality of service by staff, with special attention to assessing perceptions of students. <15-20>
RECOMMENDATION: The College should develop programs to improve the training and performance of department chairs and administrators and should evaluate the effectiveness of the training through interview and performance measures. <15-21>

XIV. Summary List of Recommendations on Institutional Effectiveness and Change

RECOMMENDATION: The Academic Program Review process should be amended to include interim progress reports following the completion of each major review. <15-1>

RECOMMENDATION: The Academic Program Review process should be broadened to cover any academic unit offering courses. <15-2>

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RECOMMENDATION: The administration should review the resources available to the Office of Institutional Research and should develop a plan to expand its capacity to support institutional assessment and planning. <15-4>

RECOMMENDATION: The President should vest responsibility for coordinating the College’s efforts in outcomes assessment and review of institutional effectiveness in an individual. <15-5>

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