



**Middle States Commission on Higher Education**  
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**Team Report to the Commission on Higher Education**

**QUEENS COLLEGE - CUNY**

**Dates of Evaluation: April 2-5, 2017**

**The Evaluation Team Representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

*Section A: Team Members, Titles, and Institutional Affiliation*

Dr. Jose Jaime Rivera, University of the Sacred Heart, Retired President – Team Chair

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*Section B: Institutional Representatives at the Time of Visit*

**Officers of the Institution at the time of the visit:**

**President/CEO**

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Ph.D.

**Chief Academic Officer**

Elizabeth Hendrey, Ph.D. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Chair of the Board of Trustees**

William C. Thompson, Jr.

## **I. Institutional Overview: Context and Nature of the Visit**

Queens College (QC) is one of 24 CUNY institutions in New York City. QC is a traditional liberal arts senior college that also includes programs in the fine and performing arts and in teacher education. It is in Flushing, NY ten miles east of midtown Manhattan, and it features an attractive, tree-lined, 80-acre campus, comprising 36 buildings and playing fields, in the center of the most diverse county in the United States. It was established in 1937 to offer a strong liberal arts education to working-class people and was first accredited in 1941. Its students come from more than 140 different countries and speak more than 85 different languages.

As of 2015, the top undergraduate majors were psychology, accounting, computer science, economics, and elementary and early childhood education. QC enrolls more computer science students than any university in the city, ranks third statewide in the number of accounting and business students, and graduates more teachers, counselors, and principals than any other institution in the metropolitan area.

The College enrolls 19,632 [20,993 in Fall 2011] students in bachelor's, master's and certificate programs. Close to 60% of their students come as transfers; 28% enroll part-time; 34% are first generation to attend college; 56% female; 45% receive Pell Grants. About 3,300 of them are graduate students. The ethnic/racial composition is very diverse – a majority minority college—with 29% white; 28% Hispanic; 28% Asian or Pacific islanders and 9% Black or African-American. 33% of the students were born outside of the US Mainland and 43% have a native language other than English.

QC has received multiple recognitions for its successful results in supporting student achievement: The Education Trust [2011] selected them as one of only five colleges in the U.S. that do a good job serving low-income students (based on graduation rate and cost). The Washington Monthly ranked Queens College second among 1,540 U.S. colleges as “best bang for the buck” in 2013 and again in 2014. More recently, the *Equality of Opportunity Project* published mobility report cards that ranked Queens College in the top 1% of U.S. institutions that move students from the bottom economic quintile to the top. QC is the only institution in CUNY with NCAA Division II athletic programs.

QC has no branch campuses nor does it offer distance or correspondence programs. Their 2020 Strategic Plan has defined as one of its goals, to increase hybrid and fully online course offering.

### **QC's Self-Study Process**

In preparation for its decennial accreditation review, Queens College undertook a comprehensive self-study beginning in early 2015 and culminating with their Self-Study Report completed in February 2017. The President appointed a Steering Committee chaired by three co-chairs and appointed eight working groups, each comprised of faculty, students, staff, and academic and administrative leaders from across disciplines and functional areas of the College. The self-study process was guided by the 13th edition of the *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation* issued by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) in 2015.

Queens College of the City University of New York (CUNY) is one of the 15 institutions chosen to base its decennial self-study process on these revised standards as part of the Commission's *Collaborative Implementation Project (CIP)*.

The QC Self-Study Report was prepared in a campus-wide effort over a two-year period. There was a working group for each of the seven standards and an eighth was responsible for verifying compliance with federal regulations and MSCHE Requirements for Affiliation. Each working group was chaired by a faculty member, with an administrator as co-chair, and included administrators, faculty, staff, and students. A steering committee, similarly constituted, provided oversight.

The working groups analyzed each of the seven standards and provided recommendations. The resulting reports received campus feedback through campus forums and online solicitations. The findings and recommendations for each of the seven standards are presented at the end of each chapter with a final chapter with conclusions.

### **Institutional priorities**

Queens College has been guided by strategic plans that set goals and priorities. Their current five-year Strategic Plan covers the 2015-2020 period and defines nine mission-driven themes. From them, four major goals have been defined for which there are specific objectives, time-frames and metrics and budget assignments. Details of this plan are presented in the Self-Study document, in the corresponding appendices and are referred to under the section for Standard 7.

## **II. Evaluation Overview**

The Visiting Team received the QC Self-Study Report and appendices on February 8, 2017. The report is well written, every standard is analyzed to document compliance with the Standards' criteria, and abundant evidence is included in the appendices to allow the evaluators to arrive at initial conclusions related to compliance. The visit was carried out to validate the information through multiple meetings with staff, students, faculty, executives, trustees, and members of the QC Foundation, among others. Through triangulation of information and extensive interviews and revision of documents the Team was able to arrive at final conclusions. These are presented below, together with specific findings that merit recognition and several suggestions prepared by our Team. There are no recommendations or requirements since they appear to meet all seven standards.

### III. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

#### Standard I: Mission and Goals

**The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.**

#### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The QC mission identifies the College's dedication to its diverse student body, and confirms the institution's continuing commitment to the core themes of access, diversity, and excellence. It is clearly tied to the CUNY mission, a New York State legislative authorization, which requires attention to the needs of QC's urban location. As part of the CUNY system, QC utilizes CUNY's Performance Management Process that addresses aspects of criteria 1, including collaboration in the process, and ongoing assessment and improvement. QC also has designed a clear map from the QC mission to the CUNY Pathways student learning outcomes (Appendix J.1).

QC's mission statement documents the institution's support for student academic excellence, faculty excellence and support, and the relationship between the institution and the community it serves. Additionally, the mission statement is used to help inform goals and missions for the different divisions of the university, and provides guidance for individual academic programs to develop their own mission statements aligned with the institution's mission. Academic program assessment adheres to a "coherent sequence of mission-driven activities" (Appendix E.1).

Goals and assessment processes to evaluate whether the institution is living up to its mission are also in place. Evidence of the use of mission to inform non-academic units is found in documents such as the Facilities Master Plan and the 10-Year Sustainability Plan. It is indicated that these plans have "been adapted to the evolving mission of the College" (Appendix C.11). Mission is also used to inform budget initiatives as is evident in documents such as the CUE annual reports (Appendices F.4, F.7, & F.8), the QC financial plan (Appendix H.1), and budget requests (Appendix H.3).

Within the Self-Study Report, the College indicated that while over 20 years old, the mission statement still reflects the nature of the institution. This is used to help guide planning processes, including the development of a strategic plan for the institution. However, although the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan maps the Strategic Goals to initiatives and activities, it does not specifically map those initiatives and activities back to the mission.

The College recognizes the need to review and revise the mission to better encompass the nine themes represented in the current strategic plan created in 2015 under the guidance of President Felix Matos Rodriguez. Additionally, the College recognizes its need to improve periodic assessment of the mission, and to make the mission statement more accessible to internal and external constituents of the college.

## STANDARD 1

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

- **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

1. The current mission statement, last revised in 1995, continues to reflect the overarching mission of the greater CUNY system, with a pointed focus on academic rigor in a liberal arts and sciences curriculum.
2. In the context of that Mission, QC has been able to balance tradition and innovation in the service of diversity given the special challenges and opportunities it faces as one of the most culturally diverse campuses in the country (Self-Study, p. 145, ¶ 1853).
3. QC's mission and goals have been consistent over a long period.
4. The College's General Education Program is based on the CUNY wide curriculum known as Pathways, but QC has tailored the requirements to fit the College's individualized needs. The general education learning outcomes address MSCHE criteria related to academics, culture, and diversity, which are also aligned with QC's mission.
5. There is strong evidence that several of the academic divisions have designed departmental mission statements that align with the current QC mission.
6. The mission statement attends to the importance of a rigorous liberal arts and sciences curriculum; it addresses the unique needs of the diverse body of students, both on-campus and commuters; and it points to student support available.
7. The College also evidences its commitment to providing "affordable access to higher education" while working to be a contributory part of the greater community through "cultural and education activities that serve the general public."

- **Suggestions:**

1. The Team agrees with the College's stated need to revise the mission's length and language while keeping its current intent intact; and points to the nine themes outlined within the strategic plan as a launching point.
2. The Team agrees with the College's stated need to better communicate the mission to all the institution's constituents; and, as a first step, has recently relocated it on the College's website in the Strategic Plan tab of the About QC page to make the mission more accessible. However, the Team suggests that the mission be moved to a clearly identifiable place on the website so that all constituents (internal and external) may find it more easily.
3. As was identified by QC, the Team agrees that the College should put into place a comprehensive plan, inclusive of all College constituents, to revise the mission statement through the development of a short but meaningful statement that captures the current mission's essence;
4. As part of this effort, QC could consider making the current Mission Statement, (with the already identified changes to make it more inclusive of all stakeholders), a statement of Institutional Philosophy;
5. The College should identify, communicate, and implement a timeline for systematic review of the mission statement.

- **Recommendations:** *NONE*

- **Requirements:** *NONE*

### **REQUIREMENT OF AFFILIATION # 7 and #10**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation #7 and #10.

## Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

**Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

#### Ethical Conduct

##### 1. Freedom

Queens College demonstrates a strong commitment to academic freedom, transparency, equity, and ethical conduct. The Self-Study Report demonstrates a keen awareness of the importance of institutional integrity in all areas.

CUNY policy emphasizes academic freedom and Queen Colleges' 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan has as its core, goals "to promote student success and faculty excellence." Protections are codified in the college's collective bargaining agreement (2007 – 2010) as well as a new University Faculty Senate's 2009 statement on academic freedom.

##### 2. Respect

The College is committed to fostering respect and collegiality and continues to improve assessment of the perceptions and attitudes of campus constituents. The report acknowledges that non-instructional staff have not been included adequately in the past and has recommended that they be regularly surveyed in the future. Where data show dissatisfaction concerning campus services and attitudes, the College has established working groups to address these concerns.

##### 3. Integrity and 4. Fairness and Impartiality

CUNY's academic integrity policy, combined with strong oversight in institutional policies, ensures that Queens College has clear policies and procedures in place to monitor and foster integrity. The General Counsel serves as the Ethics Officer and Chief of Staff at Queens College and is responsible for representation and guidance in a broad range of legal capacities, including grievances, labor relations, and agency proceedings.

##### 5. Fair and Impartial Hiring, Evaluation, Promotion, and Disciplinary Action

The College practices in hiring, evaluation, and promotion are generally seen as fair and impartial. Many non-instructional staff indicated that in these areas, evaluation, promotion, and disciplinary policies, information was hard to access. The apparent lack of good communication is echoed throughout this section and is reflected in Recommendation 2 at the end of Chapter 2. Faculty tend to see personnel policies more positively, partly because the University Faculty Senate and other academic entities provide oversight.

#### 6. Honesty and Truthfulness in Communications

The Strategic Plan acknowledges concerns with communications across campus and encourages improvement.

#### 7. Affordability and Accessibility

Information about tuition costs and sources of funding for students is readily available and reflects Queens College's high quality, low cost education. In addition, the administration and staff give the college high marks for truth and accuracy in "official communications."

#### 8. Compliance with Regulations and Requirements

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs is a model for compliance, integrity, and institutional communication. A Research Integrity Officer is assigned to each CUNY college and oversees perceived cases of misconduct and conflict of interest in all regulations governing research. Another area that models effective communication is the Office of Compliance and Diversity Programs. This ensures compliance with Title IX, as well as sexual misconduct and nondiscrimination policies.

#### 9. Periodic Assessment of Ethics and Integrity

Although the Self-Study Report does not specifically reference this criterion, Queens College demonstrates that it fosters a culture of assessment around Ethics and Integrity through the MSCHE self-study process, the documents in the Appendix, especially Appendix E, and in the document repository.

### STANDARD II

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

- **Significant Progress:**

The leadership, faculty and staff are forthcoming concerning poor communication, particularly in non-instructional areas. This is reflected in the college's commitment to serve non-instructional staff more effectively.

**Exemplary/Innovative Practice:**

Queens College was named a "Green Campus" in the Princeton Review because of its commitment to sustainable and green practices, and to assessing and monitoring health and safety on campus.

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) is a model for integrity, compliance, and collaboration.

- **Suggestions:**

The Team agrees with Queens College's statement in the Self-Study Report that it do the following:

- a. Disseminate information about rights, policies, and compliance more effectively  
Consolidate pertinent information on the College's website
  - b. Offer more training opportunities on these matters (public presentations, online modules, and department and office visits) for students, faculty, and staff.
- **Recommendations:** *NONE*
  - **Requirements:** *NONE*

### **Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

**An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.**

#### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

As stated in the Self-Study Report, and validated by the Team, Queens College offers high-quality academic programs at multiple levels, inclusive of undergraduate, graduate and certificate degrees. The college fosters a coherent student learning experience and promotes synthesis of learning.

Faculty are the primary means by which curriculum is developed, delivered, and assessed, with appropriate rigor and in support of the goals of the institution. Tenure-track, adjunct, and faculty in the promotion process are evaluated on their teaching, are sufficient in number, and are provided with professional development opportunities.

Academic quality is founded on scholarship. Queens College faculty produce 2.2 pieces of scholarship annually per faculty member, on average, which is higher than the average across the CUNY 4-year colleges. Faculty development is supported through conference funding, in-house workshops and professional activities, pre-tenure grants, and support for grant-writing. Faculty mentoring supports pre-tenure faculty. The College plans to continue to support faculty research, as asserted in their Strategic Plan.

The College's graduate programs are currently undergoing a thorough faculty-based review. Queens College offers 106 master's degree programs (including 49 master's-level programs in education), and 54 certificate programs, all registered with the New York State Education Department. Master's programs require no fewer than 30 credits. The curriculum resides in 30 academic departments within the four academic divisions of the College: Arts and Humanities, Education, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. Queens College also participates in doctoral instruction and research through the consortia doctoral programs at the CUNY Graduate Center in Manhattan. The Clinical Psychology (Neuropsychology) doctoral program is taught entirely at Queens College, and was awarded accreditation by the American Psychological Association in 2015. The College has attained accreditation for many of its programs where such recognition is relevant, including from The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, The American Library Association, The American Chemical Society, The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, and The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Academic programs are described clearly and accurately. The General Education curriculum, based in the liberal arts tradition, offers sufficient breadth and scope, exposes students to experiences outside of their major discipline, and seeks to expand students' awareness of global and intercultural issues, diversity, values and ethics. Core skills of communication, scientific and

quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and information literacy are fostered. The learning opportunities and resources support the programs of study as well as students' academic progress. There is limited use of third-party providers (mainly in international study), and the effectiveness of the academic programs is routinely assessed and efforts made toward improvement.

### STANDARD III

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

- **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

1. Queens College is to be commended for their efforts to maintain a coherent, rigorous General Education curriculum in the face of significant challenges. Having undertaken a revision of General Education on their own accord, they implemented it (called Perspectives) in 2009, only to have a university-mandated General Education curriculum imposed by CUNY in 2011. Leveraging the work that produced Perspectives, they adapted to the CUNY Pathways curriculum, utilizing their shared governance processes and guided by the desire to do no harm to students.
2. They were able to offer a compliant program by 2013. The result utilizes the "College Option" in CUNY's Pathways (four courses the university allows each senior college to choose in accord with their mission), to strengthen the breadth of their liberal arts offerings. They are now engaged in a rich conversation about the College Option with the idea of possibly incorporating a first-year course, which assessment results have indicated will benefit their students. The College's efforts to maintain the liberal arts tradition are commendable.

- **Suggestions:**

1. The College should consider developing and implementing a comprehensive model for the assessment of Oral Communication. The CUNY Pathway General Education curriculum does not require Oral Communication, but MSCHE Standard III (III.5.b) states that an institution "offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including . . . oral and written communication." In conversation with the Provost, Director of General Education, and faculty, it is clear that students are expected to communicate orally in many courses and extra-curricular activities. We suggest that the College try to capture some data about where Oral Communication is already a strong part of the curriculum, and determine where it may be strengthened to continue meeting Standard 3.
2. As was identified by QC, the team agrees that the College should review the current configuration of the College Option, specifically with the view of instituting a first-year student experience.
3. The team suggests that the College put into place a more structured program for mentoring Associate faculty intending to apply for Full Professor.

- **Recommendations:** *NONE*
- **Requirements:** *NONE*

**REQUIREMENT OF AFFILIATION # 8, #9, #10 and #15**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation # 8, #9, #10 and #15.

## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

**Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributed to the educational experience, and fosters student success.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Queens College adheres to the CUNY guidelines for student entry into the College as the prospective students apply using the CUNY application.

Students are appropriately informed about their financial aid options. A net price calculator (available to students on the website), and the Cost of Attendance (COA) are posted in several places on the institution's website.

QC is cognizant of and adheres to the CUNY resolution on admissions to students who need remediation – students who by such regulation are to be educated first at a CUNY community college or ones offering an associate degree. Appropriate staff work with students who may be at risk in reading and writing and offer them free basic-skills immersion program in July, August, and January to the SEEK program. Their outcomes demonstrate that these students are on par with or exceed non-SEEK students in achievement and persistence.

The college offers an orientation program that is an advising and registration day, but does not offer any programs on adjustment to campus until the students return in the fall when a “Welcome Day” provides a student experience that is designed to build a sense of belonging to the campus and a memorable social opportunity. A First-Year Initiative includes learning communities that are cohort-based. The College's learning communities however, aren't designed to help students generally acclimate to a college experience in a traditional sense of orientation.

Academic Advising is centralized, according to the website. “The Academic Advising Center (AAC) provides centralized and integrated academic advising to incoming and current undergraduate students through the articulation, clarification and navigation of degree requirements to foster timely and successful completion of the baccalaureate degree.” However, during the team's visit, it was less clear to us, as some interviewed stated that faculty are involved in advising in the departments. The volume of students compared to the available advisors, places stress on the system and seems to lower student satisfaction ratings on their surveys because of the inconsistent quality of guidance. The College has added technology options to extend the support that students receive from staff as one means of addressing this issue.

QC's counseling services are staffed with six full-time (licensed) and four part-time staff for the student body. They offer counseling two evenings a week and on Saturday mornings. The Counseling Center also offers academic counseling, and all students at academic risk (GPA lower than 2.0 after the first semester) must see a counselor. Lastly, the counseling staff also give advice on financial issues, academic issues (pass/no credit options, withdrawals, grade-replacement policies) and financial aid.

Student success is important to QC. They offer numerous support programs that "wrap around" a student who needs it, such as SEEK, Freshman Year Initiative, Honors College and mentoring programs and tutoring, writing and math assistance. Queens College is focused on improved retention. They have addressed retention through degree requirement maps, expanded support for transfer students, and Academic Advising Center programs, SEEK support programs and many other approaches.

While QC offers impressive support for "at risk" students, they also have excellent programs for high achieving students such as the Macaulay Honors College, Transfer Honors Program and other honors and awards.

The Career Center has an impressive number of contacts with students and offers workshops attracting many thousands of students yearly. They offer traditional career fairs and on-campus interviews to help their students gain employment. The Center provides a Career Center website, though, it is not easily navigable and information on services or outcomes are not readily available.

The College is proud of the fact that over 10,000 students participate in some form of experiential learning while at QC.

The Queens College retention and graduation rates are very good and increasing. The 2014 IPEDS data available from the Education Trust shows Queens College at 84% first-year retention rate and a graduation rate of 56.6%. These rates are even higher than those reported in the QC Self-Study Report.

QC transfer policies are generally guided by the CUNY Pathways system that provides for general education requirements and articulates first courses in some of the largest majors in CUNY. The QC transfer policies are posted on its website. College credits earned other than at CUNY are accepted by QC under "certain conditions." They must come from an accredited, degree-granting institution and the student must earn a C- or better. All QC students must complete at least 45 credits at Queens College to earn a QC degree. Queens College also has other ways to earn credit. A military veteran may receive up to 45 credits that may count toward a Queens College degree. Students may also utilize the Adult Collegiate Education (QC-ACE) program which offers up to 36 Life Achievement Credits and credits may be awarded through Competency Based Assessment or use the CLEP to test out of required courses. Students may be awarded 24 credits for college-level work completed in high school.

The College takes care to adhere to student records policies and privacy protection. Information Technology runs workshops on security and privacy awareness to help maintain security. They follow a strict retention schedule for student records.

Queens College offers numerous programs, activities, and services to enhance student life. There are on-campus intramural sports and recreational activities, and even local community members may participate for a fee. Students may participate in intercollegiate athletics, and these sports events provide spirit and collegiate pride among spectators as well. The information in the Self-Study Report and website show that 80 clubs and organizations are currently available to QC students. Staff in Student Affairs however, reported during committee meetings that the number has grown to 129 this year. These student life activities are supplemented by the work of the College Association, a non-profit auxiliary organization that cultivates student programming.

The campus has a small on-campus residential population. The campus assesses resident student needs via surveys and group discussions to learn how to modify such services or add new services, such as food with adjustments designed to meet these needs.

The campus utilizes several national and campus-based surveys to assess student satisfaction and engagement and are supplemented with various electronic and paper based departmental surveys both at time of service and annually. QC participated in CUNY-wide NSSE and Noel-Levitz surveys, and they use the findings in their assessment process to modify services for students.

The committee concurs with the recommendation(s) of the Standard IV working group to increase support for orientation, advising and counseling services, noting that they cite advances on this recommendation as part of the College Strategic Plan. They also recommend that Queens College reconceptualizes a new service model, the QC Hub, to improve student satisfaction, retention, and outcomes.

#### **STANDARD IV**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

- **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

1. The Academic Advising Center (AAC) handles entering student advisement for all undergraduate students. They offer information on other student services as well, such as Bursar, Registrar, and Financial Aid. The AAC has a Peer Support Service with 50 students helping hundreds of students with numerous academic, personal and practical issues. This model is one that is gaining notoriety in higher education, many calling them "success centers" and the outcomes at QC demonstrate that the approach is working.

2. Queens College is appropriately focused on student success. One commendable approach to student success is their focus on improving student services through the development of the successor to the "One Stop" services center, to be called the "QC Hub." QC has also garnered capital support from Queens Borough to construct this new center and approach to satisfying student needs.

3. Another commendable practice is the establishment of a "faculty help desk" within the QC Hub. This approach will permit faculty to get rapid and appropriate responses to issues that they are facing.

- **Suggestions:**

1. On page 73 of the Self-Study Report, the College states that “Individual counseling is available to assist students with personal issues, including immigration (legal and familiar ...)” and the committee sees this as confusing to the reader. It is suggested that the College clarifies this statement to make it clear that they only offer help with personal/emotional adjustments for students who face immigration issues and they do not offer legal advice.

2. The Team is concerned that counselors/therapists offer advice on issues where there are more qualified professionals within QC who specialize in the functions of Registrar/registration, academic advising or financial aid and who are better equipped to provide such advice. Moving these responsibilities to the requisite offices will afford the counseling staff time and opportunity to address the increasingly more severe and more frequent psychological issues that such staff face at universities across the country.

3. The committee concurs with the recommendation(s) of the Standard IV working group to increase support for orientation, advising and career services, noting that they cite improvement on this recommendation as part of the College Strategic Plan. They also recommend that Queens College reconceptualizes a new service model replacing the One Stop to improve student satisfaction, retention, and outcomes. The committee strongly agrees and recognizes this as an Exemplary/Innovative Practice.

4. Given the goal of improving retention, the committee suggests that QC strongly support the CUNY-wide move to use EAB – Student Success Collaborative to provide the tools necessary to identify, notify, advise and track students throughout their academic career and to identify those “success markers” that will enable the College move the retention needle.

5. The Committee suggests that the campus continue the discussion to evaluate Orientation and adopt a model that will help students to acclimate to collegiate life, engender a sense of belonging to the QC community and to afford them the advising/registration processes that they need to begin their QC studies.

6. The campus should expand the very successful model used by the SEEK program to help students succeed and insure that every student at QC receives the necessary support to succeed that is afforded to those in the programs of SEEK, SSP, Honors, Athletics, etc.

- **Recommendations:** *NONE*

- **Requirements:** *NONE*

**REQUIREMENT OF AFFILIATION # 8 and #10.**

In the Team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation #8 or #10.

## **Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

**Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The assessment of educational effectiveness occurs at several levels and through a variety of processes. There is convincing evidence that demonstrates that QC's current assessment efforts meet the criteria of Standard V as well as compliance with MSCHE requirements of affiliation 8 and 9. While the Self-Study acknowledges that this is an ongoing and evolving culture, many systemic processes are now in place to insure academic decision-making is linked with student learning outcome data. All significant units of QC are involved with collecting and analyzing data points in support of overall goals and mission of the institution. Efforts to assess student learning outcomes include direct assessment of skills through writing, problem sets, exams, and portfolio evaluation as well as indirect measures such as survey results, grades, and measures of academic progress.

### **STANDARD V**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

- **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**
  1. The development of the QC Assessment Document Repository for storing, organizing, cataloging, and reporting on documents related to student learning outcomes assessment in the college's academic departments.
  2. The creation of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness led by the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness to oversee expanded efforts in both assessment and institutional research. This includes coordination of and support for assessment, both institutional and program-specific, in academic and non-academic domains.
  3. The reconstitution of the Outcomes Assessment Committee and Standard V Working Group as the Student Learning Assessment Council. The Council has been charged with evaluating the contents of the Assessment Document Repository, providing feedback to departments about their assessment activities and documents, and identifying needs and opportunities for faculty professional development to help departments build and institutionalize their assessment practices.

4. A well-developed Academic Program Assessment process appears to be in place. Assessment of student learning is clearly faculty owned and faculty driven. Academic program reviews are performed by all departments on a 7-year cycle to ensure that all departments undergo at least one full review cycle between institutional accreditation events. This process allows departments to report their learning outcomes, resource utilization, and link those outcomes to departmental, divisional, and institutional goals.

- **Suggestions:**

The team agrees with Queens College's recommendation that it do the following:

1. Enhance and expand assessment-related professional development for faculty and staff
2. Provide more resources to support assessment at the program level.

- **Recommendations:** *NONE*

- **Requirements:** *NONE*

**REQUIREMENT OF AFFILIATION # 8, #9 and #10**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation #8, #9 and #10.

## **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

**The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

As stated in the Self-Study Report and validated by the Team, the institution has documented a strategic plan and planning processes that show a clear linkage between institutional objectives, assessment, planning and resource allocation. The 2015-2020 Strategic Plan was developed through a cross-college collaborative process, led by the College President, and involving all members of the University Community, as well as community members including disciplinary advisory board members and other members of the community served by the institution.

Faculty documented that the Strategic Plan is infused in efforts related to assessment, professional development and curricular development. As part of a larger system, the institution also included processes and procedures to ensure that the Strategic Plan was aligned with system planning and priorities. Assessment data, specifically data gathered using program specific metrics related to goals of student success, faculty development and support, and resource availability, provided a grounding for the development of the Strategic Plan.

The institution also clearly documents an annual process for the review, assessment and evaluation, and adjustment to the Strategic Plan. Annual planning activities take place in regards to budget, including the incorporation of state of New York budgeting processes and timelines, with acknowledgement of the need to at times adjust budgets and plans as external resources shift.

Along with budget, an annual planning process for capital projects takes place, once again incorporating state and local processes in alignment with college processes. The institutional process is based on a standard and appropriate model of balancing state and local resources with tuition revenue. Queens College has compiled a Planning, Budget and Assessment Cycle calendar that describes the various processes used to implement planning efforts at both the College and University levels. This calendar incorporates the variety of funding sources applicable to the College including tax-levy, non-tax levy, capital, and Reso-A funds. Queens College uses an annual action-planning process linking activities with strategic goals on an annual basis. Recently the process used to request these projects has been revised to ensure that all requests support the College's Strategic Goals and support the interests of the Borough and NYC Council.

The College has developed a 10-year sustainability plan and a process for the planning and allocation of Student Technology fee funds that it uses to prioritize and implement energy savings and technology improvements, respectively. The College has been successful in receiving funding from other external sources to support its infrastructure. Both grants and awards have been

received supporting energy savings projects. Related projects are expected to continue because of the State Mandated retro-commissioning effort.

A Strategic Plan Implementation Group (SPIG) consisting of four Teams, each led by a member of the cabinet and with members representing faculty and staff, oversees implementation across campus and works closely with the President and Cabinet to set priorities for the year, consider financial implications, and gather and interpret data on progress. The Reso-A request examples that have been provided, document clear linkages between the request for resources and the planned accomplishment of strategic goals.

The President of Queens College submits college fiscal priorities to the Chancellor for consideration in CUNY's overall budget request. The Chancellor presents the budget request for the University to the Board of Trustees for consideration. After approval is received, the formal budget request is transmitted to the City and State Executive Branches for consideration. The budget request is based on the University Master Plan which is developed with input from many University stakeholders, including stakeholders of Queens College. The CUNY budget process is documented in the New York Education law. A multi-year financing strategy was developed by the State/City/University and was utilized during 2012-2016. This partnership, referred to as the CUNY Compact, relied on a variety of funding sources including State/City appropriations, philanthropy to CUNY, moderate tuition increases, and operational efficiency improvements to provide stable funding to CUNY. Although the Compact is now expired, CUNY continues to use a multi-year action plan to generate resources to support its mission.

Clear and regular monitoring of resource allocation and resource use effectiveness is also part of the institution's practices, including regular (monthly) reports to the state concerning resource use. The institution has little local control over the amount of resources from state and local sources, but can adjust internal budgets as needed, and has processes in place, once again aligned with the Strategic Plan, to internally allocate and reallocate funds based on institutionally-determined priorities.

The process and timeline for the development of budget requests, allocations and assessment is also clear and consistent for operational, capital, technology and personnel budgets. In these cases, there is required feedback and input from cross-college constituents, as well as clear communication about the process and outcomes.

Institutional operations, including auxiliary and foundation accounts, are audited and reviewed on a regular basis, and the institution documents their responses and reactions to the audit results. The Foundation Allocation Committee has established a formal process for funding requests, based on the Strategic Plan and in collaboration with the priorities of the College. The Foundation is working to develop a divisional strategic plan in response to the College Strategic Plan.

The institution enhanced its operations with the development of a residential facility for students, extending the reach of the institution to serve students who desire or need housing at the institution. This project was planned by the institution, and showed evidence of collaboration with state and local entities, as well as involving a public-private partnership to operate the residential facility. In addition to state, local and tuition resources, the institution has processes and structures in place to develop alternate and additional sources of revenue, and has engaged an external consulting group to evaluate and suggest opportunities for additional growth. Collaborative efforts appear to be

a strength of the institution, and cost-containment and budget savings actions related to facilities (primarily focused on energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives) appear to have provided the institution resource savings that are then used for other institutional priorities--in sum, it appears clear that the institution has sufficient resources to support operations of the institution.

## STANDARD VI

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

- **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

1. The Team commends the program improvements cited in the Self-Study Report, particularly related to the enrollment management changes and transportation program that were based on a careful assessment of needs and a desire to better serve campus constituents.

2. The Team commends the College's continued focus on environmental sustainability supported by several improvement projects.

- **Suggestions:**

1. The institution may wish to consider a review and updating of the 2006 facilities master plan (2006 Master Plan Amendment for Queen's College). A facilities master plan that was created over 10 years ago seems ripe for review.

2. The institution should include a more comprehensive and holistic assessment on an annual basis of the processes used in planning budgeting and assessment to ensure that the processes are effective.

3. The institution may wish to consider a more deliberate and public process for planning for major academic equipment maintenance and replacement.

4. The institution should work to update their web presence so that College community members are better able to monitor Capital Budget requests and projects.

5. The institution should consider developing a clear and formal structure and process for assessment in all non-academic units. The recently developed draft templates for planning and reporting administrative assessment activities that will be piloted with the Institutional Effectiveness Office, one office from the Division of Student Affairs and one office from the Division of Finance and Administration beginning in May are a step in this direction.

- **Recommendations:** *NONE*

- **Requirements:** *NONE*

## REQUIREMENT OF AFFILIATION # 8, #10 and #11

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation #8, #10 and #11.

## Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

**The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituents it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.**

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

As a senior College of the CUNY, Queens College's legally constituted governing body is the Board of Trustees of the University. The Board of Trustees appoints a Chancellor to whom is delegated the responsibility for the development of plans and strategy for the University as well as oversight of overall operations, including each of the college presidents. The Chancellor is provided with recommendations for the development of plans, policies, procedures and budgets for the University by working with each of the college presidents through the Council of Presidents. Senior staff of the University work with their counterparts at each of the colleges through a variety of administrative councils. Other bodies with a role in governance at the University level include the University Faculty Senate, University Student Senate, and the Professional Staff Congress. Each of these bodies includes representation from the main constituents of the University and is given the opportunity to provide input into University plans and operations.

The Board of Trustees evaluates the Chancellor's performance periodically in relation to six broad categories. These categories and the evaluation procedures are documented in CUNY's Manual of General Policy.

Each individual campus in the system, including Queens College, has its own governance and administrative structure that is aligned with the system Governance but manages the day-to-day operational activities of the institution.

The President provides overall leadership to Queens College including the development and execution of academic plans and policies as well as fiscal and administrative oversight. A number of bodies provide input into the governance of the College including the Academic Senate (responsible for academic policy, curriculum and degree requirements) and the Professional Staff Congress. The President chairs the College Personnel and Budget Committee which provides input on policies, budgets, tenure, promotion and other matters. The President is evaluated by the Chancellor on an annual basis based on the College's performance related to the Performance Management Plan. In addition, an Evaluation Committee is established every five years to assist the Chancellor in doing a more comprehensive evaluation of the President.

The President delegates responsibilities and oversees the vice presidents. The Academic Vice President oversees deans, chairpersons, and faculty who assist in the development and execution of

plans for the College. The other vice presidents and senior staff oversee administrative and other areas in support of the College's operations. All of the Vice Presidents are evaluated on an annual basis; the Provost, Deans, and Chief Librarian are also evaluated at the end of their initial five year period by the Queens College Academic Senate. The President has also instituted additional collaborative governance groups to enhance communication and decision making, and to bring in additional voices to the administration of the institution, including an Extended Cabinet and a President's Council.

Unit leaders and another staff are also evaluated on an annual basis by their supervisor. External evaluators are employed at times to review areas of high priority. A recent evaluation was done of the Enrollment Management area that resulted in an administrative reorganization and changes to recruiting and marketing efforts.

Queens College has several component unit entities, such as the Queens College Foundation, LLC and the Q Student Residences, LLC that exist solely to support the College. These organizations operate under the guidance of their respective Board of Directors which are comprised of stakeholders of the College.

## STANDARD VII

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

- **Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:**

1. The President is to be commended for his leadership, for creating an open climate of collaboration and interaction with the members of the QC community and with external constituencies.

- **Suggestions:**

1. The Governance Plan of Queens College provides information about the composition, responsibilities, and functioning of the Academic Senate. As other groups are involved in the governance of the College (Local Professional Staff Congress, Personnel and Budget Committee), it may be helpful to summarize the roles each of these groups play in providing input to College plans and practices either in a revised Governance Plan or other resource. This may be helpful to College constituents who are not familiar with the governance of the College.
2. Although the effectiveness of the governance process can be evaluated through the achievement of intended outcomes, it may be helpful to periodically evaluate the process through other means. For example, Queens College may wish to administer a survey (such as the Chronicles "Great Colleges to Work for" survey) of faculty and staff to ascertain levels of awareness, involvement, and satisfaction with current governance practices.
3. The Team agrees with QC's recommendation that centers and interdisciplinary programs be included in the College's schedule of departmental self-studies.

- **Recommendations:** *NONE*
- **Requirements:** *NONE*

### **REQUIREMENT OF AFFILIATION # 12 and #13**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation #12 and #13.

#### *Section D: Verification of Compliance*

##### **I. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation**

Based on a review of the self-study and accompanying materials, interviews, and the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations, the Team affirms that the institution continues to meet all of the *Requirements of Affiliation*.

##### **II. Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations**

The Team affirms that the institution meets all accreditation-relevant federal regulations, which is based upon the review of the self-study report, accompanying materials, the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations, and the evaluation visit.

#### *Section E: Verification of Data and Student Achievement*

##### **I. Verification of Data and Self-Study Information**

The Team confirms that data and other information provided by the institution are reasonably valid and conform to higher education expectations.

##### **II. Student Achievement**

After interviewing institutional stakeholders, the Team confirms that the institution's approach to its student achievement goals is effective, consonant with higher education expectations, and consistent with the institution's mission.

#### *Section F: Third-Party Comments (if applicable)*

*Not applicable*

## *Section G: Conclusion*

As the visit comes to an end and the validation process is completed, the Team wants to convey our gratitude for the welcoming environment that we experienced during our visit. The collegiality, openness and receptiveness to our questions, commentaries and suggestions are a reflection on the confidence and commitment of the QC community as it continues to work on behalf of its students. Your community engaged successfully in a comprehensive self-study process. Now you must use your energy to implement its recommendations, revise your plans considering external political and economic realities, while maintaining your focus on the search for creative solutions to the new challenges. Your diversity and the transformational impact you have on your students are your biggest assets. For these achievements, we salute you and wish you the best.