Queens College (2017-2018)
Strategic Plan Progress Report

Initiative 1: Support Transfer Student Transition

Link to QC Strategic Plan Goal 1: Facilitating Student Success

Providing a clear and efficient path to graduation, an enhanced orientation, and customized advisement are important steps toward improving the transition and academic performance of transfer students.

Key priorities for this year included:

- Strengthening first-year academic supports geared toward transfer student needs
- Strengthening advisement services to help transfer students reach their desired academic goals
- Cataloguing, coordinating, and initiating new articulation agreements with CUNY and other campuses – so that our offerings are more coordinated, resulting in clearer pipelines for transfer students

Strengthen first year academic supports and advisement services to improve first year outcomes for transfer students (first semester GPA, % of credits passed of those attempted, 1st semester and 1st year retention rates)

Progress: Transfer students currently comprise 64% of our new students. This past year we saw an increase in the percentage of transfers enrolling full-time, to 77.1% from 74.9% the prior year. Although unlike our freshman population, nearly all of whom begin at Queens in the fall and enroll full-time, at least initially, we continue to admit a substantial number of transfer students in the spring, and spring transfers are even more likely than their fall entry counterparts to enroll part-time.

The indicators below reflect momentum and performance of full-time students. Some indicators of first-year outcomes for new students are trending in the right direction but others do not yet show the increases we are working to realize. Outcomes for freshmen are better than for transfers, as we might expect, due to the earlier start we had in strengthening academic momentum policies and practices for freshmen.

Our targeted efforts around transfer student success are still nascent yet we are optimistic about their potential positive impact on transfer student performance. Broader efforts are informed by three promising initiatives on campus: The development of degree maps, the QC in 4 program, and a $5.6 million grant supporting the STEM-Bridges Across Eastern Queens HSI project. Last year we launched degree maps and the QC in 4 program for freshmen, leveraging the planning work from the prior year.

Our QC in 4 program strongly encourages first-time freshmen to register for 15 credits per semester. The goal, consistent with the NY State Excelsior program, is to facilitate and encourage students to complete at least 30 credits per year to remain on track for degree completion within four years. QC’s academic departments developed degree maps for nearly every undergraduate major showing examples of course selections for completing the program in eight semesters. Our Degree Maps are posted on the QC in 4 website. The QC in 4 initiative includes a guarantee that students will be able to...
get a seat in courses necessary to complete their program on time, for students who keep their on-track commitment.

We are focused on strengthening connections with our colleagues at the other CUNY colleges in the borough of Queens through our Queens Transfer Affinity Group as a means to help us develop degree maps for transfer students. These degree maps are more complicated than for freshman due to the variation in prior course-taking and credit accumulation among the transfer population. A multi-year project funded by our HSI STEM grant is leading the way in developing transfer degree maps with LaGuardia and Nassau community colleges, our three largest transfer partners.

As implementation of these new supports for transfers progresses, we anticipate that transfer success rates will follow the same trajectory as for freshmen. Trends in first-semester and first-year outcomes for freshmen and transfers are shown in the charts below.

- We note a slight uptick in the percentage of transfers attempting at least 15 credits in their first semester over the past few years, but that rate was higher five years ago. The pattern is similar for both fall and spring entrants. The percentage passing 15 or more credits in the first term remains stable and low for transfers, but is on the rise for freshmen.
- A related set of indicators - average credits attempted and earned in the first semester - not surprisingly, show an increase for freshmen and a lower stable value for transfers.
- On a more positive note, average GPA trends seem to indicate that more recent cohorts of both freshmen and transfers are earning higher first semester grades than prior cohorts.
Redesign a College Option course to include curriculum and learning outcomes to support academic success of first-time freshmen and new transfers

**Progress:** The College Option Task Force has drafted the curriculum for a new course which is currently under review by our Academic Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC). The course is intended to serve as a common First Year Experience for new students (both freshmen and transfers). The course includes segments on program and career planning as well as intercultural competence and dialog, two areas important to the QC mission but which were lacking in our general education program.

Review existing articulation agreements, revise as needed, and determine programs for which agreements should be initiated

**Progress:** We undertook a comprehensive review of existing articulation agreements which revealed a number of issues, some of which are being addressed through our participation in the Queens Transfer Affinity Group (QTAG; a collaboration of QCC, LaGuardia, York and Queens). We are developing a standard template that will require agreements to include an effective date, review date, detailed course equivalencies, performance conditions, and identification of campus leaders in addition to the relevant program information. We have created a repository for housing electronic agreements and are developing a plan and guidelines for regular review, but will not add links to our website until our agreements have been updated to the newly-designed template.

Our ongoing data exploration has yielded some ideas of the common transfer pathways. With our QTAG partners, we will identify at least one new program with each of the Queens community colleges to prioritize for a new articulation agreement.

In addition to reviewing program articulations, the college has taken the lead in University-wide effort to review course equivalencies by creating a web-based tool (The Transfer App) to simplify and document the reviews. The app allows college reviewers to confirm course pairings or otherwise mark them for further review. Reporting capabilities from the app will facilitate compliance reporting at the college, division, and academic program levels. Queens College administration is promoting the app to all relevant departments across the college.

**Initiative 2: Improve the Graduate Student Experience, with Emphasis on Masters Students**

**Link to QC Strategic Plan Goal 1: Facilitating Student Success**

Building on last year’s accomplishments, our goal was to make concrete progress on the highest priority recommendations from the 2016-17 Graduate Program Review including recruitment into master’s programs from QC bachelor’s programs, development of dual degree programs, and enhancement of program marketing and recruitment. We also gathered data and feedback directly from graduate students to gain better insight about priorities for currently enrolled students.

Key priorities this year included:

- Developing organizational structures that cater to and best serve graduate student needs
- Conducting and following up on analyses of offerings to determine the optimal mix of and pathways to graduate programs
Developing organizational structures that cater to and best serve graduate student needs

*Progress:* Queens College has made substantial progress on the development of accelerated master’s programs. Leveraging the University’s new policy permitting undergraduates to take up to 12 graduate credits at the undergraduate tuition rate and then transfer those credits into a CUNY graduate program, the college has created 15 bachelor’s to master’s pipeline programs in a number of disciplines, [http://accelerate.qc.cuny.edu/grad-programs/](http://accelerate.qc.cuny.edu/grad-programs/). We will expand this effort in the coming year to include more programs and departments. Academic departments have been encouraged to identify a set of courses that undergraduates could take to get an early start to their graduate education at a reduced cost to the student. Departments set performance criteria for student eligibility for acceleration.

In order to better understand graduate student needs to inform our practice, undergraduates in Sociology 334 conducted a survey of graduate students revealing that career support was one of the greatest needs among our graduate student population. Plans will be developed in the coming year to enhance support for career development at the graduate level.

We also formed a graduate council last year to help set priorities and formalize our strategy for improving and expanding graduate education. The council is an important mechanism for ensuring that faculty are involved in all processes related to developing, improving, and marketing graduate programs.

In addition to strengthening our practices around graduate student needs, we have also directed resources to strengthen our organizational capacity to support this important segment of our student population. The Queens College Foundation has provided nearly half a million dollars to support the development and marketing of more graduate and post-baccalaureate courses. The college has also appointed a Dean for Graduate Studies to lead our program development and improvement processes as well as expand our recruitment and marketing efforts. The Dean will use enrollment, performance and cost/revenue data to make decisions about program offerings.
Although our enrollments do not yet reflect the program development and marketing work we have accomplished, our master’s retention rates (graduates counted as retained) are at their highest level in
10 years - 87.4% - and 4-year master’s graduation rates are trending up (see trends below).

Master’s Retention Rates

Master’s Graduation Rates
Initiative 5: Support Professional Development of Staff

Aligned with [QC Strategic Plan](#) Goal 2: Supporting Faculty and Staff Excellence

Increasing our capacity to better serve our students requires fostering professional excellence at all levels. Queens College provided a number of opportunities for faculty and staff to advance their career goals while increasing their ability to lead and/or support key administrative functions at QC. The college also offered opportunities to advance the scholarly pursuits of faculty by providing them with the support they need to be successful educators, administrators, and key partners in achieving our organizational mission.

Key priorities this year included:

- Providing training for all staff on their role as educators and advisors
- Fostering Faculty Scholarship in Research, Teaching, and Service

Professional Development of Faculty

Progress: In addition to the regular orientation for new faculty, the College held three professional development sessions for untenured faculty:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 6, 2017</td>
<td>Reappointment, Tenure (or CCE) and Promotion</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 8, 2017</td>
<td>Research Forum for Junior Faculty</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9, 2018</td>
<td>The Library</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
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We also developed and piloted an online survey to determine the support needs and professional development interests of associate professors during the spring 2018 semester. We plan to administer the survey to all associate professors at the college in fall 2018. Based on responses, we will develop appropriate training, information sessions, support activities, etc. as needed.

In order to track faculty satisfaction we are planning to administer the COACHE survey in spring 2019 as part of the university-wide administration. This will help us gauge whether we have improved faculty satisfaction since 2015, when we last administered the COACHE survey. These ratings are among the set of outcomes we track for our 2015-2020 strategic plan.

During the 2017-18 academic year, the Center for Teaching and Learning offered or co-sponsored 17 workshops and professional development programs serving 393 faculty. This is an increase from the prior year during which the CTL served 320 faculty members in 15 programs. Programs included faculty orientation, Quantitative Reasoning, Strategies for Teaching Online, Student Learning, and Teaching Portfolios, in addition to several department-specific programs.

At the end of 2017-18, we kicked off planning to create and offer a comprehensive professional development program for department chairs that would provide training on administrative functions as well as leadership development. We held the first planning meeting in June 2018 and developed a draft outline for the curriculum and proposal for the program’s structure. We are expanding greatly our new chair training to a series of workshops. The first meeting will be in late August, 2018.
In spite of the challenging federal funding environment, the college made progress on its 2020 target to increase research awards. As of June 2018, faculty and staff submitted 96 proposals and 133 awards received totaling $21.3 million in research grants; the prior year we had 141 proposals submitted and 143 were funded, totaling $18.4 million. Although we had fewer submissions and funded proposals than in the prior year, we received 15% more grant funding this past year than in FY 2017.

**Staff Professional Development**

*Progress:* Our HR Department offered 19 workshops in 2017-18 covering a range of topics to enhance management and performance skills, including conflict resolution/communication, developing customer service skills, leadership, stress management and project management. These workshops had 331 enrollments.

Workshop evaluation survey results show that a vast majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped to improve the participant’s knowledge and skills.

Part of our strategic goal to support staff involved leveraging union resources to help our staff improve their skills. In particular, DC37 funds were used to provide computer training workshops (Word and Excel) and English language (listening/speaking, and reading/writing) classes to union members. We had 121 enrollments in computer classes and 16 in winter language classes (spring figures are not yet available).

The union will expand offerings in the coming academic year.

The college offered refresher training on Procurement/Accounts Payable and HR functions:

- Requisition to Receipt
- Travel & Expense
- ePAF training (50 participants)

**Lynda.com Usage Statistics: Online Professional Development**

- We added 178 new users in 2017-18 to bring our total user group to 2,836; 1,798 students, faculty and staff logged in last year to view at least one video.
- At least 440 (25%) of the 1,798 are faculty or staff
- Users viewed more than 11,000 training videos in total (over 750 hours of training)

We also leveraged our partnership with The Center for Ethnic, Racial & Religious Understanding (CERRU), to provide support to our Buildings & Grounds department to improve work climate (general discussion sessions, focus groups, and individual and small group meetings with staff, supervisors and management across the department). The college is now working to build stronger leadership development opportunities among those in manager positions to be implemented on an ongoing basis starting in 2018-19.
Initiative 10: Re-engineer Business Processes to Better Meet Student Needs

Aligned with QC Strategic Plan Goal 3: Strengthening Operational Capacity and Infrastructure

Queens College seeks to foster a culture of continuous improvement to best serve our students. We are committed to keeping pace with the changing needs and demands of our student population. This requires an on-going assessment of key student services to increase student satisfaction with their efficiency and effectiveness as well as targeted efforts to develop and communicate clear pathways toward degree completion.

Key priorities this year included:

- Improving the seamlessness and quality of interactions across key student services at the beginning of each semester/peak usage times

Improve key student services to reduce wait time in key student service offices and improve consistency and accuracy of communications regarding degree completion and progress for all majors for freshmen and transfer students

Progress: We formed a working group to set priorities for making our student-facing processes more efficient and effective (for example, by reducing redundancies and reducing the number of visits students needed to make to service offices). Part of this effort entailed developing an on-going inventory of student-facing business processes on campus. We have completed descriptions for three campus offices during this strategic plan year namely, the Child Development Center, the Bursar’s office and the Summit Residence Hall. Business processes highlighted in these reports will be analyzed during the 2018-2019 academic year and recommendations for improvements will be submitted to the President.

The working group examined both academic and non-academic areas and prioritized the following activities: 1. Creating the QC Hub; 2. Creating the Office of Advocacy and Appeals; 3. Implementing the QC Scholarship Search Engine; 4. Improving the distribution of essential information to students. Progress on each is described below:

- The college’s proposal for the QC Hub, an integrated services center, was submitted to the Central Office with full plans and cost estimates and we are now awaiting final approval to begin the building renovations needed to house the Hub. We anticipate that this space will be available this fall and we will be able to launch the QC Hub in early 2019. Preparations involved moving numerous student services staff to spaces in other buildings (a tremendous logistical effort). We are working to fill several vacancies and train staff for the new service model.

- Feedback from students suggests that the academic appeals process can be confusing to students so the College is creating a new Office of Advocacy and Appeals. At the end of the year, efforts were underway to staff the new office, and we are developing a communication strategy to ensure that all members of the campus community are aware of the new office and process.

- We purchased an application to better manage student scholarships and improve the way we provide such information to our students. Academic Works is a searchable database of student scholarships to make it easier for students to access institutional grant aid which can help students remain enrolled and make faster academic progress. Our Queens College Academic Works platform opened last fall and was fully implemented by spring. We received more than 350 applications from students in the fall and more than 1500 in the spring. Not only did this application better serve our students but it also provides a way for donors to see how their contributions are being
used to support students. One challenge we now face is having sufficient numbers of faculty and staff to review the increased number of applications for different scholarship programs. Our Honors and Scholarships Office is working now to simplify the recommendation form to expedite the review process.

**Initiative 11: Promote the Impact and Visibility of QC**

Aligned with QC Strategic Plan Goal 3: *Strengthening Operational Capacity and Infrastructure*

Strengthening our college operations and infrastructure to better serve all of our constituents requires an improved communication system to expand access to needed information, increase awareness of the college’s robust offerings, and to continue to cultivate a culture of excellence and service.

Key priorities this year included:

- Updating existing communications tools, including QC’s website

**Update the QC website through reorganization, modernization and standardization**

*Progress:* The overall look and function of the QC website is imperative to promoting the impact of Queens College to the campus community and beyond, and is essential to strengthening the College’s visibility to all stakeholders.

The college has embarked on a comprehensive overhaul of its website that will eventually involve every department and office on campus. This year, the college created a roadmap for the redesign, and formed a Website Advisory Committee with broad representation from across the college (administrative and academic units). The committee is working on an RFP - devising the scope of work for this impressive and necessary undertaking which is essential to strengthening the college’s visibility to all stakeholders and for creating a site that prospective and current students, as well as faculty can easily navigate to get the information they need.

**Increase and expand communication tools (e.g., newsletters, email blasts, social media posts) for a variety of audiences to better promote the college’s unique mission, the excellence of its faculty and staff and the achievements of its students.**

*Progress:* This year the college strengthened existing communication tools with timely and inspirational content and also developed new tools to increase visibility and promote its many strengths. Content has been developed (or is currently under development) to support a number of on-going and new publications-including supporting departmental newsletters. These include feature stories for the fall 2018 publication of the Q Magazine, to highlight students, alumni, donors and events taking place on campus. The magazine is sent to tens of thousands of alumni and members of the QC community, including borough politicians and other leaders. The work in this area has strengthened the relationship between Marketing and Communications and our Fundraising and Alumni Relations offices.

The Q View, a thrice monthly electronic campus newsletter, was also developed and disseminated to keep the QC community abreast of the latest news and events/activities taking place at the College during the regular academic year. The newsletter is sent to the community via email blast and is also available on the Queens College website. In addition to reporting on events hosted or attended by the President, Q View highlights events and activities of our academic and administrative departments, profiles staff, alumni, student and faculty, shares information about college history and campus programs, and importantly, publicizes and promotes the scholarship and service work of our faculty and
students. The college also distributed a monthly electronic publication called **Saludos** which served as an important mechanism for communicating campus news directly from the President.

Last year, the QC Marketing and Communications Department led an effort to develop an outline for a new publication—**a Biennial Report** on the college, content has been in development in preparation for the first issue, expected to be published this winter. The content will include a letter from the President, facts and figures about the college, highlights about facilities and technology enhancements, financial information, and distinguished student and faculty profiles. **QC at a Glance** (print and digital formats) is currently in development this summer to better engage and inform the college community about Queens College activities, events, and services.

**Expanding QC’s reach through mission driven activities and events**

The College’s **80th Anniversary** was celebrated all year with various events, activities and commemorations. It provided numerous opportunities to increase visibility of Queens College and promote the many accomplishments of members of the QC community. Many of the 80th anniversary events were built around the theme of “building futures.”

Highlights include the following events:

- 80th Anniversary Celebration and award of President’s Medals and Class of 1941 Alumnus Award
- Development of 80 wows about Queens College, which were shared twice per week through social media
- Inaugural reception in recognition of Queens College’s 2017-2018 1199SEIU Joseph Tauber Scholarship recipients
- Visit by Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor
- Lucille Kyvallos Basketball Court Dedication
- Writing Your Way Home in the World’s Borough, with Queens Poet Laureate Maria Lisella
- Media, Immigration & Being Latino in the Age of Trump Latino Heritage Month/Leadership Series presentation by Ana Navarro
- QC Student Winners Celebration, “We Are The Champions”
- Proclamations by Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York State Senate, and New York City Council
- Letter/Citation by Mayor Bill de Blasio
- United States Congressional Record Citation, entered by Congresswoman Grace Meng

This year, the communications and marketing division worked very closely with appropriate internal and external offices on targeted **QC enrollment campaigns** to support robust year-round enrollment at Queens College. A major focus was increasing summer session enrollment in the short-term and overall undergraduate and graduate on a longer term basis. We engaged in a number of initiatives that involved coordinated print and electronic promotional campaigns along with strategic partnerships and enrollment-focused collaborations.

Highlights of these efforts include:

- Retaining Rubenstein Associates to develop and implement a comprehensive QC summer session social media campaign
- A “Summer is Coming” event was hosted in the Dining Hall encouraging students to learn more about and sign up for summer session. A Summer Session Squad was created with the help of the Office of Student Life to distribute information. Nine videos were produced and showcased via social media, utilizing testimonials from students and campus images.
• Preparation and implementation of the first QC “Parents and Families” website page, including valuable information and links.

• Expanded and earlier outreach to SUNY and private college student newspapers promoting admissions opportunities at QC particularly for winter and summer sessions.

• Working with CUNY Central to encourage QC summer session enrollment for ASAP students.

• Continued development of partnerships with unions DC37, 1199SEIU, and RWDSU to increase professional and continuing studies enrollment.

• Promotion via The QView, QC mailers, and website reminders of new graduate level opportunities for undergraduates to enroll in graduate courses.

New projects in development focus on increasing enrollment of African American students while enhancing student recruitment overall include a campus virtual tour to assist prospective students in navigating QC, a revised script for tour guides, and a new video to assist the Office of Career Services and Engagement to outreach to freshmen and prospective students and parents. We have also expanded outreach and promotional efforts to enroll African-American students through collaborating with Eagle Academy schools while expanding SEEK, BMI and other programs that support underrepresented students. Campus outreach also included a meeting held with local community leaders from Pomonok and Electchester to keep these important communities engaged and informed of programs here at Queens College, particularly summer session, summer camp, and professional and continuing studies.