

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
of The City University of New York

Report of the President
to the Academic Senate

February 19, 2008

Welcome to the first meeting of the Spring semester. While the College is moving forward according to the Strategic Plan, while funding for this year is healthy due to an over-enrollment and while a number of projects are being developed, there is much work ahead. We need to prepare for the Middle States Accreditation visit, we must finalize plans to implement the Learning Academies, and we must ensure that our funding stream remains healthy. I know that I can count on the good counsel from this body and that together we will move this College to yet an even more respected position in the higher education arena.

Learning Academies: Seven years and some months ago, when I first met with you as your new president, I shared with you the values that are the foundation of my administration. I indicated to you that under my presidency, we would: a) celebrate the art and science of teaching and learning; b) nurture the growth of the individual student in a supportive environment; and c) establish an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. Also, I said to you that one of my goals was to make Queensborough Community College a place where people came to learn how to teach at a community college.

Along with those of you who were willing to take some chances, we established a number of initiatives such as mandatory advisement (many said it could not be done), learning communities, Bridge to Transfer, writing intensive requirements, departmentally based tutoring, and many others. These initiatives and the tremendous support services that existed prior to my arrival created a cornucopia of services that, at times, appeared overwhelming. But, with the clarity provided by taking the time to look back, one can easily see that all these initiatives lead to the second value of nurturing the growth of the individual student in a supportive environment. The Learning Academies are the mechanism that will be used to focus all the activities on a relatively small number of students. Finally, we will be able to scale up the great services that we provide for the more academically entrepreneurial student who seeks help to the less motivated student who does not.

I know that some of you are skeptical. It is our very nature, as academics to be skeptical. This is why we want your input. We want to have as much discussion as possible to refine the concept, to fine tune the delivery. But, I want to be very sure that everyone understands that this is not a passing fad. I understand that some feel that this concept is just window-dressing. I understand that there are some that believe that when a new administration is installed, this will go away and we will return to “business as usual.” Well, let me tell those who think this way to think again. The literature is replete with proof that cohort education works. It would be foolish for a wonderful college like Queensborough Community College to pass on the opportunity to be a true leader in higher education. It would be folly for us to deny a large number of our students with the advantages offered by this modality. So, to those who are truly interested in making this great College even greater, I want to thank you in advance for your constructive criticism. To those who are more comfortable in the status quo, I ask you to seriously reconsider. I need your input. Without you, we lose an important variable for excellence.

This spring we will put the final touches on the plan. We will share the plan with all of you. Next year we will begin advertising, constructing the academy “homes” and by the fall of 2009, we will welcome all first-time, full-time students through this modality.

Budget: Now, some of the skeptics among us will say that we cannot afford to go forward with this type of effort, in light of the current situation created by the proposed budgets of the Governor and the Mayor.

Attached is a description of the budget priorities of the University. You will note that the Governor is calling for a \$50 **reduction** in the base aid. The reduction in support, in addition to the requested increase of \$200, results in a gap of \$17.7 million for community colleges.

To make matters worse, the Mayor’s preliminary budget calls for a **reduction** of funding for the community colleges of \$28.9 million.

Of course, we are early in the process. We will see some restoration to these proposed cuts. Nevertheless, we will have to work very hard to see that we can get back some of the funding that we need to implement the new initiatives called for by the COMPACT.

I want to make it very clear that while the budget situation is not at all positive, the Learning Academies are not going to be affected. First, the Learning Academies are a priority. Second, the Learning Academies are based on **existing initiatives** that will be delivered in a different modality.

It is necessary that we join together and work to reinstate the funding for the community colleges. To that end, I will organize a series of events to educate our representatives, to make it clear to them that this college community stands firmly behind the need to provide excellent education for all of our students. I hope that I can count on all of you.

Middle States Visit: We have submitted the Self-Study design. The Chair of the visiting team has been identified and will soon be named.

I want to thank all the members of the Steering Committee for the work that has been done to date. Now, the arduous task of compiling all the information begins. Dr. Corradetti has done a wonderful job of managing the process, and we look forward to a final Draft of the Self-Study by September.

Strategic Plan: We have completed the first draft of the 2008-09 Strategic Plan. In the past two weeks we have met with the students, department Chairs and HEOs as focus groups. After the focus groups, the College Advisory Planning Committee will meet to discuss the input and another draft will be created. This draft will be shared with the community-at-large at the Open Hearing scheduled for April 1st.

Presidential Evaluation: As I indicated in my e-mail to Everyone, shortly some of you will be asked to complete an on-line survey about my administration. I urge you to participate. The survey is completely anonymous and will serve as a means for me to determine areas of improvement so that I can better serve you.

Partners for Progress: Please mark your calendars for the Partners for Progress Gala, on Thursday, April 17. This year’s event will have an international flavor and will feature a Jazz band from the Music Department. Our goal that night is to raise \$250,000.

For more information about cost, placement of ads in the journal, and any other questions, call Vice President Rosemary Zins at extension 5144.

Fire Alarms: Please be informed that the Fire Department has requested that testing of the new fire alarms take place on February 26th and 27th. The testing is very disruptive, and it will take place at different times during the day. We know that it will interrupt classes. Please be assured that we made every attempt to have the testing take place over the weekend, but to no avail. So, alert your students and accept our apologies in advance for the disruption.

CUNY Alert:: By now, you should have received an important e-mail invitation **via CUNY eNews** to sign up for CUNY Alert, a new emergency notification system, available to all students, faculty, and staff, full time and part time, including Continuing Education participants.

The CUNY Alert system will enable those who sign up for it to receive text or voice notifications of emergency information ONLY, directly related to college activities, including classes and weather related closings. You will be able to select the best way to get messages: cell phone, home phone, e-mail or IM, or any combination of these. And, you can sign up even if you are registered with another emergency notification system.

You are invited to visit www.cuny.edu/alert to sign up.

Signing up for CUNY Alert:

The process involves going through the CUNY Portal: The CUNY Portal also houses Blackboard. Detailed instructions exist to facilitate access to the CUNY Portal/Blackboard and the two are treated as the same entity.

To sign up for CUNY Alert start at Queensborough's Web home page www.qcc.cuny.edu. Click on the Faculty & Staff link on the left side. On the *Faculty & Staff* page under "WHAT'S NEW!" you will find a CUNY Alert link. Clicking it will take you to the *CUNY Alert* page. There you will find 3 choices which relate to your past usage of the CUNY Portal.

Click on "*Need An Account?*" if you have never registered for the CUNY Portal.

Click on "*Forgot your Username?*" if you have registered for the CUNY Portal in the past and do not remember the user name you chose.

Click on "*Forgot your Password?*" if you have registered for the CUNY Portal, remember your user name but have forgotten your password.

Detailed instructions follow each of these choices. They were designed for faculty, staff and student use. Blackboard and CUNY Portal access are used interchangeably as are references to Tigermail and Queensborough faculty/staff email accounts

The service is free and non-intrusive, and your participation is strongly encouraged.

Queensborough is committed to making sure we do all we can to ensure effective emergency communication to all members of the College community. CUNY Alert is an excellent step toward this goal.