

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership

The Steering Committee would like to echo the March report of the Committee on Committees in noting the pending term expirations of the following senators:

Paul Azrak
Peter Bales
Jean Darcy
Lorena Ellis
Elyn Feldman
Eugene Harris
Linda Reesman
Regina Rochford
Roland Scal
Emily Tai
Alexandra Tarasko
Craig Weber
Reuvain Zahavy
Lana Zinger

The chair of the Steering Committee has submitted a re-nomination form (as has the chair of the Committee on Committees), but would like to take this opportunity to thank all Senators who may be contemplating taking leave of the senate at this time, and to remind all department chairs that every academic department is entitled to the representation of up to four department faculty members. If rotations of senate terms leave a vacancy in your department, we hope you will encourage new faculty to become involved in the shared governance structure of our college.

The Steering Committee is also taking this opportunity to announce the pending conclusion of Mr. Thomas Shemanski's current term as the second of two senators appointed by the by-laws to represent Queensborough's Computer Laboratory Technicians. The Committee on Committees is also sending nomination petitions to all of Queensborough's Computer Laboratory Technicians, inviting nominations for this second representative slot, to be filled in May, 2010.

Finally, the Steering Committee would like to remind Senators and members of the instructional faculty (including HEOs) that that they should be in receipt of an e-mail inviting them to rate their interest in serving on committees of the Academic Senate. We hope all faculty at the college will consider rendering valuable service on a college committee, and we remain grateful for the work and efforts of all faculty and staff members who are already serving in this capacity.

2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership

Committee membership is stable at this time.

3. Committee Matters: Activities

The Steering Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all the chairs of our various committees and sub-committees. As of this writing, the Steering Committee is planning to schedule a final meeting with committee chairs, to confer with them regarding any concerns they may have had over the semester concerning the work of their committees, on **Wednesday, April 21, 2010**. The Steering Committee will have a room and time for this meeting, shortly.

At this time, we would like to advise the members of the Academic Senate of several actions underway in committees of the Academic Senate:

- The sub-committee of the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues formed to respond to President Marti's executive order to implement a restricted smoking policy at Queensborough Community College has met to begin planning an educational campaign that will prepare members of our campus community for the transition that will occur when this new policy is implemented in August, 2010. The Steering Committee wishes to thank the members of our faculty, staff, and student body who are giving generously of their time to staff this important sub-committee.
- The Special Committee to Develop On-Line Education at Queensborough is also at work on a report containing recommendations about how more of Queensborough's instruction might be offered in a virtual setting. The Steering Committee has been advised that this report will be ready for review and discussion in either the April or the May Academic Senate.
- As per the attached report, the Committee on By-laws is in the process of considering the final changes to the charge of the Committee on Gallery and the Performing Arts, to accommodate an extended purview over the Harriet & Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center & Archives, as well as the amendment to the by-laws that the Steering Committee has proposed concerning e-mail communications, and an amendment the Committee on Distance Education has submitted a proposal to increase the number of members on their committee from five to seven.
- The Steering Committee has also been in communication with the Vendor Service Committee, and been advised that the President's Designee to this Committee,

Assistant Dean for Business and Financial Services William Faulkner, has been kind enough to share a current draft of the annual report of the Auxiliary Enterprise Board, so that the members of the Vendor Service Committee may review and evaluate this report, as per their committee's charge. The Steering Committee is most grateful to the members of Queensborough's administration for assisting members of the Vendor Services Committee in carrying out the responsibilities assigned to them in our shared governance system.

- As members of the Academic Senate will be aware, the Assessment of our institution and student learning outcomes has been a major focus at our college over the last year, in connection with our Middle States Review process and the reception of our college's report by the Middle States Commission. Our college is currently under a mandate to produce a "Monitoring Report" by October, 2010 that will demonstrate:
 1. Implementation of comprehensive integrated and sustained processes to assess institutional effectiveness and achievement of institutional mission
 2. Implementation of comprehensive integrated and sustained processes to assess the achievement of student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels
 3. Evidence of adequate institutional support for and faculty leadership in the assessment of student learning; and
 4. Steps taken to promote a culture in which assessment is understood and valued and in which efforts to assess student learning are recognized and rewarded.

In moving forward to implement this recommendation, the members of the Academic Senate may recall that President Marti asked Dean Arthur Corradetti to convene two Task Forces in order to address the question of Institutional and Learning Assessment at Queensborough. The Faculty Task Force, which has already begun to meet, is composed of representatives from each of the Department's Personnel and Budget Committees as well as the Chair of the Committee on Curriculum of the Academic Senate; the Administrative Task Force has representation from each major Administrative Division, as well as representation on behalf of the Academic Senate from the Chair of the Publication Committee of the Academic Senate. Both Task Forces are charged with producing two assessment handbooks (one, respectively, for faculty and one for administrators) which will be presented to the Academic Senate at the April 2010 meeting.

The question that lies before us is how to proceed in evaluating the handbooks these Task Forces will produce. On the one hand, Assessment has never formerly been under the purview of the Academic Senate, which is a policy-making body. There are some useful reasons why it has been argued that undertaking to make policy in the area of assessment might be regarded as an infelicitous course. There has been concern expressed that addressing assessment as a policy of the Academic Senate might diminish the flexibility of departments in devising assessment templates and activities appropriate to their disciplines.

There, are, however, some reasons why it might be argued that such involvement would be consistent with the recommendations of Assessment experts, as, for example, Wendy F. Weiner (quoted in previous Steering Committee reports), who wrote in her recent article, “Establishing a Culture of Assessment,” *Academe: Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors* (July-August, 2009), 28-32, that “faculty ownership” is crucial to a successful assessment initiative on any campus. In particular, faculty remain the best judges of what students should learn, and whether they’ve learned; and they also are the most qualified to gage the average between an assessment effort that enhances student learning, versus one that interferes with other crucial instructional activities.

For this reason, the Steering Committee would like take the opportunity of the March Academic Senate to introduce the resolution first presented before Senators and members of the Queensborough Community College community at the February Academic Senate for a vote. Once again, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude and thanks to all members of the Administration, Academic Senate, and Faculty Executive Committee, who gave generously of their time and mental effort in considering this resolution:

Whereas on June 25th, 2009, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted on the recommendations made by the team that visited our College in March 2009 and requested a MONITORING REPORT by October 1, 2010, and

Whereas this report must document:

1. *Implementation of comprehensive integrated and sustained processes to assess institutional effectiveness and achievement of institutional mission*
2. *Implementation of comprehensive integrated and sustained processes to assess the achievement of student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels*
3. *Evidence of adequate institutional support for and faculty leadership in the assessment of student learning; and*
4. *Steps taken to promote a culture in which assessment is understood and valued and in which efforts to assess student learning are recognized and rewarded.*

Whereas the College has been engaged in a College-wide discussion through two task forces, one representing all Academic Departments and the other representing Administrative units of the College, and

Whereas for some departments, comprehensive and sustained assessment has been occurring, and it has been documented in the year-end reports and used in program reviews and outside accrediting reviews, in others there is a need to prioritize the documentation of assessment efforts;

Whereas a comprehensive, integrated and sustained process for assessing student learning outcomes must systematically plan for and implement assessment of courses and academic programs offered by the college and approved by the Academic Senate, but neither mandates nor dictates how a faculty member engages in such assessment;

Be it Therefore Resolved, that the Queensborough Community College Academic Senate adopts as College Policy that the College shall have comprehensive, integrated, and sustained processes to assess institutional effectiveness and achievement of institutional mission, and

Be it Therefore Further Resolved, that the Queensborough Community College Academic Senate adopt as College Policy that there shall be mechanisms and processes to promote a culture in which assessment is understood and valued and in which efforts to assess student learning are recognized and rewarded, and

Be it Further Resolved that the Committee on By-laws prepare a resolution to amend the Senate bylaws to establish a Standing Committee of the Academic Senate on Assessments whose purview will be the comprehensive overview of all assessment activities of the College, and to whom all efforts to assess student learning and institutional effectiveness and any other units or operations of the College would be reported along with the results of those assessments. Such a committee would make its annual report to the senate inclusive of such summary reports and the committee's own assessments of the assessment processes in place along with appropriate recommendations, and

Be it finally Resolved, that the Academic Senate at the May 2010 meeting will consider approval of the Handbook on Assessment of Spring 2010 as providing a working guideline for the implementation of comprehensive, sustained and integrated assessments of student learning outcomes, and of institutional effectiveness, and the achievement of institutional mission.

Along with this resolution, the Steering Committee has been in the process of crafting language for an amendment to the By-Laws of the Academic Senate to support the creation of a new Committee on Assessment as per the powers granted to the Senate in

Article VII, Section 2: *“The Academic Senate may establish such standing and ad hoc committees as it determines.”*

There are a number of questions that have been raised with regard to this proposed committee, including, but not limited to:

- The need for such a committee—could these matters be addressed episodically, by an administrative task force?
- The purview of such a committee—should it oversee assessment for all units of the college, as per Dr. Pecorino’s remarks at the February Academic Senate? Or, would it be better, as several members of the faculty have maintained—and this would appear to be the current opinion of the majority of the Faculty Executive Committee-- for the purview of this committee to remain exclusively the oversight of assessment of student learning outcomes on a program, curricular, and course level?
- Would the introduction of a faculty committee on assessment necessitate a change in the faculty by-laws, mandating the creation of departmental assessment committees to conduct course assessments and keep records regarding these initiatives?
- How would such a committee be named? Should it be titled “Committee on Assessment?” “Committee on Academic Assessment?” “Committee on Educational Effectiveness?” “Committee on Mission Effectiveness?” Some combination of these titles?
- How would the workload of such a committee be managed?

The Steering Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Administration, Faculty Executive Committee, the Committee of Department Chairs, and the Academic Senate who have devoted their time and effort to thoughtfully raising these questions, and to reviewing the text the Steering Committee offers below as a species of synthesis. Once more, the Steering Committee would like to stress that we regard this language as a work in progress. We continue to welcome comments and suggestions for modifying the language below. Moreover, we wish to renew the thanks that our committee offers, in advance, to any members of the Academic Senate who may propose further suggestions at the March meeting of Queensborough’s Academic Senate:

Addition to Article VII of the Bylaws of the Academic Senate, to be inserted as Section 11, between Section 10, “Committee on Admissions,” and the current Section 11, “Committee on Awards and Scholarships,” necessitating a renumbering of Sections 11-25 as Sections 12-26:

Section 11. Committee on Assessment and Educational Effectiveness

The Committee on Assessment and Educational Effectiveness shall consist of five (5) members of the faculty and eligible staff, reflecting, where possible, a balanced representation of faculty from Arts, Humanities, Sciences, Technical, Professional, and Remedial departments and/or curricula; two (2) students; a designee of the President, and a designee of the Steering Committee.

The Committee on Assessment and Educational Effectiveness shall:

- a. Receive and review summary reports describing initiatives to assess student learning from academic departments, academies, and academic program of the college;
- b. [Receive and review documents relating to assessments of institutional effectiveness from all non-academic units of the college;]
- c. Make annual reports of progress in assessment data collection, [including:
 1. The receipt of assessment reports from each department/unit of the college;
 2. Courses/college units assessed from each department;
 3. Summary of Assessment data gathered from assessments;
 4. Any departmental conclusions drawn and/or actions taken as a result.]
- d. Review assessment procedures the College undertakes and make recommendations concerning these assessment initiatives to the Academic Senate.

RATIONALE:

The creation of an assessment committee would accomplish two goals: first, it would represent a means to implement Middle States recommendations. Second, it would insure that all assessments conducted within our college, and particularly, the assessment of student learning outcomes, would remain within the purview of shared governance. The Steering Committee believes that the formation of such a committee would constitute a means to establish "comprehensive, integrated, and sustained processes to assess institutional effectiveness and achievement of institutional mission," as well as "assess the achievement of student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels." This would constitute evidence of adequate "institutional support for and faculty leadership in the assessment of student learning," as well as the cultivation of a "culture of assessment," as per the recommendations of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Steering Committee believes that locating this process of review within the shared governance system of our college will particularly affirm the integrity and legitimacy of departmental, program, and curricular assessments, and signal respect for the time and effort of members of the faculty who conduct them. The transactions of the Committee on Assessment could, where necessary, draw upon, and/or take into consideration, the overlapping efforts and purview of the Committees on Curriculum, Academic

Development and Elective Programs, the Committee on Writing in the Disciplines and Across the Curriculum, and any additional committees for which assessments conducted on campus might have implications. We are, moreover, imagining that the annual reports of the Assessment Committee would constitute an archive of assessment effort and result upon which our faculty and staff could draw in the assembly of future reports to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

As of this writing, the main issues that have generated discussion between the Steering Committee, Administration, the Faculty Executive Committee, Department Chairs, and other members of the Academic Senate have been the questions of (a) whether the Assessment committee should be concerned exclusively with learning outcomes (Standard 14) or all units of the college that could be said to support Queensborough's institutional mission in some form or another (Standard 7); and whether the content of the Assessment Committee's annual reports (as per items 1-4) should be specified by the by-laws. It is for this reason that the Steering Committee has shared the current language of this by-laws proposal with those sections in brackets.

The Steering Committee welcomes and invites debate on both these matters, but would like to preface whatever discussion may follow the circulation of this report by suggestion that the substantive rationale for creating a committee that would oversee assessments of such matters as the condition of Buildings and Grounds, Campus Safety, and so on, *alongside* learning outcomes would be because both of these matters are currently under review by the Administrative Assessment Task force (the task force on which Dr. Madrigal, chair of the Publications Committee, is acting as Steering Committee/Senate representative). On the one hand, because these elements are often comprehended in the College's Strategic Plan, they are assessed regularly. On the other hand, an Assessment Committee of the Academic Senate would be able to confirm the transaction of this process, in much the same way as, for example, the current Vendor Services Committee of the Academic Senate reviews the report of the Auxiliary Enterprise Board. The thinking of the Steering Committee is that the breadth of this charge would fashion a committee on Assessment and Educational Effectiveness into a "nexus" committee that could confirm that both instructional and institutional assessments were being carried out in support of the mission of Queensborough Community College.