

THE PLAN FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Need and Advantages

Since 2004, a large number of Queensborough Community College personnel have been working to develop and implement a more integrated academic experience for our students. Based on our own personal educational experiences, reinforced by a vast body of literature on college student persistence and success, and guided by intuitive reasoning, we reject the cafeteria approach to higher education—one where students pick and choose at will, guided only by poorly understood graduation requirements. Those campus personnel who have been dealing with this issue believe that the College and its students will benefit from a more structured, purposeful and integrated program—one that creates a community of scholars (students, faculty, and staff)

“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever growing insistence.”

— Daniel Burnham

committed to pursuing an intellectually stimulating, rigorous, and relevant curriculum. The provision of such a structured, purposeful, and integrated program requires a thoughtful, measured, and determined paradigm shift resulting in the establishment of a fully-involved college community characterized by (a) greater student involvement in and responsibility for their education, (b) greater integration of students and faculty into a mutually supportive intellectual/professional preparation community, and (3) more responsibility by the College, its faculty and other professionals for student success.

After having studied, piloted, and implemented structural elements on a small-scale over the past three years, the College has now committed to fully implementing the entirety of the Plan for Integrated Education by the fall semester 2009. To achieve that organizational end, one that we know will increase student persistence and student success, the College must marshal its resources to (a) continue limited implementation for 2008, and (b) complete planning for final and full implementation in 2009.

In addition to the specific strategic activities described in this document, the College will engage most seriously in planning and preparing for full implementation of all plan elements two years hence. While that may seem like a long time off, experience demonstrates that extended meaningful planning is a critical element of successful innovative programming. Since the implementation success of the Plan for Integrated Education requires the integration of academic and student affairs personnel, planning is especially critical. We plan to integrate campus personnel in the mobilization of efforts to build campus community

around six academies into which every first-time, full-time student will enroll beginning in 2009.

In general, Queensborough students are badly in need of such an integrated education program that is constructed on a educational philosophy deliberate in its commitment to providing a whole experience rather than one consisting of a number of less-integrated independent elements. In fact, perhaps the greater the barriers our students face to educational success, the greater their need for such a plan. If this program is prudently developed and, likewise, prudently implemented, it will produce measurable success in retention, graduation and college transfer rates. These improvements will be verifiable and demonstrable, and will produce new opportunities for research on both pedagogy and andragogy.

To fully understand why the Plan for Integrated Education is needed, the College engaged in a balanced, sober examination of our successes and failures at the campus level and in both CUNY and national contexts. Our successes are already many. We celebrate the fact that many of our students have and continue to overcome formidable obstacles and achieve their goals, although for many it takes an inordinately long time to do so. We have hundreds of success stories every year and scores that are spectacular.

The College Mission

Operating within the framework of The City University of New York, Queensborough Community College is committed to fostering a collaborative, learning-centered community. The College is dedicated to academic excellence and to the development of the whole individual in an environment that promotes intellectual inquiry, global awareness, and lifelong active learning. Queensborough is committed equally to open-admission access for all learners and to academic excellence within an environment of diversity. In the service of these goals, Queensborough utilizes the close integration of academic and support services and a focused attention to pedagogy. The College offers post-secondary associate degree and certificate programs that prepare students for careers and for transfer to four-year institutions of higher learning. Queensborough provides its students a variety of opportunities to enrich themselves intellectually and socially and to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

Recognizing that learning is a dynamic and collaborative process, the College offers comprehensive, multi-layered academic programs that serve as a framework for students to become active, responsible partners in their intellectual pursuits. Providing a rich general education core aimed at enhancing students' critical thinking and decision making skills, and utilizing effective learning strategies, the College offers many options to students for achieving their academic and career goals. A community that values the diversity of its members, Queensborough strives to individualize the college experience through meaningful collaboration among students, faculty and staff. The College features a highly qualified faculty with excellent scholarly credentials, well-planned curricula and developmental course work, strong and closely integrated academic and student support services, and the use of innovative pedagogy, including educational technology. To help ensure excellence in teaching and learning, Queensborough engages in on-going assessment of its academic offerings and support services, promotes research on community college pedagogy, and supports scholarly accomplishments and professional advancement among its faculty and staff.

In response to evolving community needs, Queensborough also offers non-credit courses and certificate programs and other activities. These provide community residents with accessible and affordable educational, recreational and job training opportunities, and help individuals and businesses and other institutions respond to changes in technology and the economy. The College takes a leadership role in providing access to arts and culture to enrich the quality of life for the community at large.

Yet, a realistic look must also take into account the fact that at QCC, as is the case at other CUNY community colleges and as is the national pattern for community colleges, most students do not attain the goals they aspired to when they first enrolled. Nationally, about 80 percent of incoming community college students say that they wish to earn a degree, and the evidence points to an even higher figure at Queensborough. Many of the main obstacles to their success are external to our institution. Foremost among them are finances and poor academic preparation. Still, we cannot properly remain satisfied with a status quo in which most of our students ultimately fail to achieve their goals. This is the reality that, properly understood, must drive our impulse towards change.

The CUNY Office of Academic Affairs turned its attention to the matter of student persistence and graduation rates at roughly the same time as Queensborough. Thus, just as the College was developing plans to increase student retention and improve graduation rates, CUNY asked campuses to develop specific plans aimed toward this same goal. While many of those strategies were short term and quick-implementation activities, the University's attention to this concern helped advance the attention we have been able to give to those components of the Plan for Integrated Education that focus most heartily on student persistence and graduation.

Balancing the Need for Action with Discussion, Planning and Testing

The Plan for Integrated Education will represent our College response to this request for a plan. More importantly, it identifies our own efforts to address the same problem. Fortunately, we have been at work on this integrative effort since spring 2005. In fact, in the broadest sense, it has been developing for the past several years. Except for a few of the newest, least fixed, elements, the various components of the Plan were initially conceptualized and discussed by the Conferences of the College, and/or by the General Education Inquiry Group, and/or by the Academic Senate. Thus, some parts of the Plan for Integrated Education have already begun to be implemented, as individual programs.

“Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustled.”

— Abraham Lincoln

All of this previous work has allowed the Plan for Integrated Education to develop in an organic way. Already, the plan's nucleus has gone through several drafts and has been responded to by a number of bodies. These include the Cabinet, the Academic Chairs, and the College Advisory Planning Council. In addition, we are currently in the midst of a very arduous, but fruitful, series of program reviews. The revisions and new ideas that have resulted from all of these discussions have strengthened the Plan for Integrated Education greatly. The discussions that took place at the January 2006 Convocation resulted in additional enrichment of the Plan for Integrated Education. Finally, the Plan for Integrated Education is conceptually aligned with the college's annual strategic planning process and to the CUNY Master Plan.

The College has already undertaken a variety of initiatives, some of them very large and significant. These initiatives—although implemented as independent activities—have been conceptualized as key components of the Plan for Integrated Education; they are, if you will, advanced organizational elements of the plan that provide services and curricular/instructional elements that—when brought together—will constitute the building blocks of the Plan.

Some of the most important recent advances are the full implementation of the WI requirement, the implementation of a greatly improved student advising system, and the CETL-centered work of building a focus on pedagogy in theory and practice. We have also benefited from the work of the Gen Ed Inquiry Group, funded through CUE, whose faculty members have been appointed by the joint decisions of the Office of Academic Affairs, the Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee and the head of the Academic Senate Steering Committee. The Learning Communities, E-Portfolio and Capstone/Milestone/Cornerstone courses have all been ideas which have emerged from the work of the Gen Ed Inquiry Group. Each of these projects has taken much effort and has received tremendous support and cooperation from faculty and staff members.

Academies

The initiative that has the possibility to serve as the central component of the Plan for Integrated Education is the effort to create Academies. Academies are programs aimed at providing a special identity and plan for success for students, grouped by academic program. They are joint efforts of the faculty and the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs and its staff. One dimension of the Academies is the effort to give each student a peer reference and support group and to provide faculty and staff "faces" for their program at the College. Components include specialized blocked or linked courses, targeted advisement, and close interaction among individual students, groups of students, faculty and staff. The purpose is to provide our students with the best educational experience possible for them at the College, and to move them through to the achievement of their educational goals, especially graduation, in a timely fashion.

"Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got. . . .

"Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came . . .

"You wanna go where people know, . . . You wanna go where everybody knows your name."

**— Lyrics to the theme song
from *Cheers* (NBC, 1982-1993)**

Two Academies were implemented on a pilot basis in 2006—Technology and Education. The experience of implementing these two pilot academies produced many valuable new ideas. Quite a few other programs indicated a desire to be included in the second wave (fall 2007), but the further expansion of academies was delayed to allow the College to focus its attention on another academy-like initiative—the ASAP Program. The full implementation of our academy program will be informed by our experience with the pilot academies as well as

with the ASAP Program. We would target all incoming freshmen for membership in the Academies. *The Academies will be presented to students, not as a choice, but as the way in which education is carried out at QCC for students in those programs.* From the beginning, the emphasis will be on academic success and on goal setting, community-building, mutual self-help, responsibility and full utilization of support services. Plans to graduate in two to three years will be formulated and emphasized. We will try to apply what we have learned about the most effective pedagogies in these Academies.

Most incoming Academy members will be placed in linked courses (two courses plus ST100), which may also be linked through some common theme or assignment(s). For students who are not in need of developmental/remedial coursework, the initial linked courses will be designed to include a general education/distribution course and one in the special/interest area. The intellectual goal of this academic linkage is to demonstrate connections among distinct academic disciplines and to enhance the perception of relevance by incorporating a specialty-oriented course during the initial semester of attendance. Curricula for developmental-need students will also be developed in each academy; these will similarly be designed to demonstrate intellectual connections across disciplines and academic or professional relevance.

Forming these blocks and enrolling a high percentage of the incoming freshmen in them is not an easy matter, but we have already identified target classes

The Queensborough Covenant

In order to ensure that every student has an opportunity to succeed, the College promises to offer up-to-date and professionally relevant curricula, taught by highly qualified faculty in an interesting and intellectually challenging manner.

It is the concomitant obligation of students to make college study a priority in their lives; to attend class, study earnestly, and complete assigned work; and to register for and complete courses on a schedule that leads to timely program completion.

that can allow a high percentage of the entering students in the pilot programs to enroll in them. The blocks will include a specialized ST100 class, aimed at students in those programs. Blocks will include the major placement levels of the students involved, both exempt students and those at the higher developmental levels. For those needing developmental work to reach the levels of the Academy blocks, we will make additional efforts to channel them into USIP, so that they may attain those goals. Academic advising for those programs will be structured through the Academies. Similarly, most tutoring in the disciplines will be situated within the Academies. While we have not yet worked out the details, we will want to develop some blocks for the second semester and probably beyond as well. We realize that, for a variety of reasons, we will not be able to place all students in a blocked program. That does not mean, however, that the students not in blocked classes are frozen out of the Academies. There will be many other dimensions to the Academies, and we can encourage additional students to join the second semester blocks.

Among the ideas that have been put forward to build a sense of belonging within the Academies is a dedicated room for each Academy, to serve as its tangible headquarters. The College is committed to providing such space. A short common reading or readings, a

common book, or even a common movie may be used to advance the concept of intellectual community within each academy. Regular speakers focused on the discipline's academic and career challenges and possibilities will be important, as will regular structured contact with faculty. Internships and campus jobs might be another dimension. Socially-oriented, community-building experiences are also important, as are academy/community symbols such as banners, caps, shirts, and so forth.

The College has committed itself to providing an academy experience for every first-time, full-time student by the fall 2009 semester. Up to one half of the academies will be fully initiated in fall 2008, with the remainder to be implemented in the following year. The academy experience will be organized around six identified academies, each of which shall be organized around existing curricula of the College. The organization and projected first-year enrollment of each of the planned academies is illustrated in Table 1.

Of course, while maintaining fidelity to established policies and the Queensborough culture, each academy will be encouraged to develop its own community character. We believe that the academy approach has the potential to bring organic unity to our many initiatives and to significantly increase the success of our students. To summarize, the academies will integrate the many excellent educational initiatives we have implemented or planned for implementation, but—more significantly for the success of our students—the academies will build community and will integrate academic affairs and student affairs personnel to ensure student success. A schematic for the academies is provided in Figure 1.

The WI Courses

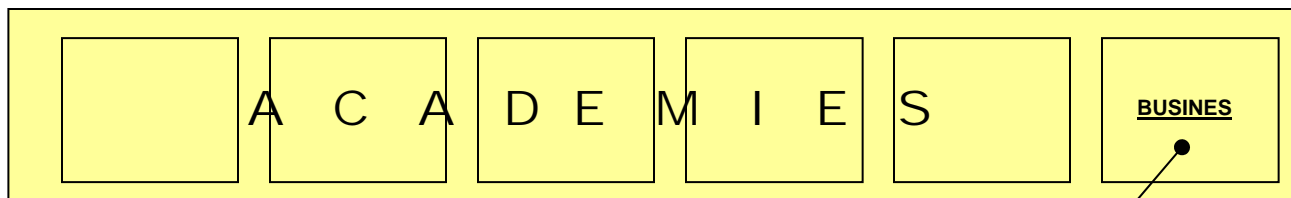
Writing is one of the key skills that the College and CUNY have long recognized as vital for success. The Writing in the Disciplines/Writing Across the Curriculum (WID/WAC) program at QCC has a long history of careful reflection, successful experimentation and skilled nurturing. This culminated in the November, 2004 adoption by the Academic Senate of a plan for the achievement of the earlier Senate goal that all QCC students would take a minimum of two WI classes by the time they graduated. The graduation requirement began for students entering the College in fall 2005. Thus, while WID/WAC has a rich history at the College as a voluntary program for students, the universal requirement has only recently gone into effect.

Our WI program is a critical step towards a more meaningful educational experience for our students. Writing is not only a critical skill in today's workplace; it is a critical element in the ability of our students to perform well in college-level work and successfully clear hurdles like the CPE. As such, it is an important component of our Plan for Success. Our WI program relies on two vital elements: We believe that the best teaching of WI classes requires a trained, engaged faculty, and that we know how to develop such trained, engaged faculty members, on a large scale. Long preparatory work went into building the substantial cadre of trained faculty and a group of WI classes. We have now rapidly increased the scale of the program, more than doubling the offerings in fall 2005 and tripling its size by September 2006. In order for us to continue the success of this program, it is important for us

Table 1 — The Academy Structure for 2007 and Beyond

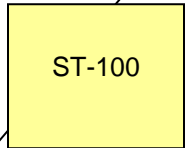
| Academy | Inclusive Curricula | Estimated Number of First-Time Full-Time Freshmen |
|--|--|--|
| Business | Accounting (AAS) – BA2 Business Administration (AS) – BT1 Computer Information Systems (AAS) Management (AAS) – BM2 Office Admin and Technology (AAS) – BS2 | 406 |
| Education | QCC/QC Dual Degree (AA) – LE1 | 103 |
| Fine and Performing Arts | Digital Art and Design (AAS) – DA2 Fine and Performing Arts (AS) – FA1 Music Electronic Technology (AAS) – ME2 | 173 |
| Liberal Arts | Liberal Arts & Sciences (AA) – LA1 | 796 |
| Nursing and Allied Health | Health Sciences (AS) – HS1 Massage Therapy (AAS) – TM2 Nursing (AAS) – NS2 Pre-Nursing (AAS) – NP2 | 312 |
| Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics | Computer Engineering Technology (AAS) – CT2 Computerized Archtl & Indus Des (AAS) – DD2 Electronic Engineering Technology (AAS) – ET2 Engineering Science (AS) – PE1 Environmental Health (AS) – EH1 Laser & Fiber Optics Eng Tech (AAS) – PL2 Liberal Arts & Sciences (Math & Sci) (AS) – LS1 Mechanical Eng Technology (AAS) – MT2 New Media Technology (AAS) – EM2 Telecommunications Technology (AAS) – TC2 | 228 |

Schematic Illustration Of Academies

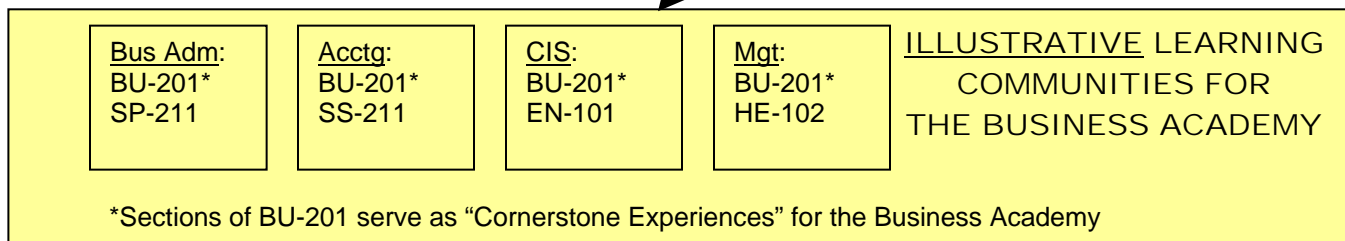


- BUSINESS** (406)
- EDUCATION** (103)
- FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS** (173)
- LIBERAL ARTS** (796)
- NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH** (312)
- SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS** (228)

Academies are communities of scholars (faculty and students) organized around broad disciplinary specialties, with provision of specially-designated student-centered social and cultural support systems



Students in each academy will be enrolled in one Learning Community during the first semester of attendance. The LC will be comprised of a course related to the academy theme, another academic course (may be a remedial), and ST100. The ST100 course will provide an Initiation into the Academy's student-oriented, College-based student support system. The E-Portfolio system will be introduced with the completion



Each academy curriculum will include a designated "Milestone Experience"—the completion of a systematically designed project, internship, service-learning experience, or faculty-mentored research. The goal is to give students an opportunity to more fully engage with faculty and/or to actively engage in activity related to their career or academic interest. (The E-Portfolio will be an important tool in archiving the experience and encouraging an individual, reflective self-assessment of student learning outcomes.)

Each academy curriculum will include a "Capstone Experience"—a major project that demonstrates understanding and practice of the skills of practitioners and/or scholars in the field/discipline. (E-Portfolio work culminates with a demonstration of the student's best work and evaluative summary of the student's overall achievements.)

All curricula systematically incorporate WI courses and emphasize writing across the disciplines.

to continue the expansion of this program and to continue the important professional development of WI-designated faculty.

In fall 2005 the College successfully matched the number of students seeking to take such a course with our offerings, staffed by trained instructors. However, demand that year was reasonable because the requirement has just begun for entering freshmen. Faculty professional development continued through 2006-2007, and the College is still able to meet the staffing demands of WI courses. As new faculty are employed, it will be necessary to train new WI teaching personnel. As demand increases to its maximum (it appears that some graduates have delayed fulfilling this requirement, and that there will be some pent-up demand), we will have to have sufficient number of qualified faculty to teach WI courses, especially for the approximately 30 percent of students in evening and weekend courses.

In order to best fit the impressive WI initiative into the Plan for Integrated Education and gain the maximum value from it for our students, we will need to address a number of questions over the next two years. In particular, an important question to be determined by each academy is when it wants a student to take WI classes. The determination of this question will require consultation between academy faculty and those with WI expertise. Another issue to be addressed at the academy level is that of WI course-relevance to the academy specialty. Obviously, this year faculty need to determine whether students will complete the WI requirement in one or two specialty-related courses or in more general academic settings.

The Development of Other Key Skills and Competencies

Other skills and competencies are widely recognized as important to student success and graduation. At the same time, failure to attain such competencies is often an important cause of failure. Among the most frequently cited of such competencies are reading, mathematics, oral communications, computer literacy, library and research skills, time management, and an understanding of the scientific method, although this list is far from exhaustive.

Currently, the campus is discussing these competencies in a variety of arenas. Individual departments—for example, Math, Basic Skills, Speech, English and the Campus Writing Center—continue to refine strategies for the attainment of these goals. These discussions need to be deepened and brought to the attention of the entire College, especially as they pertain to the successful surmounting for more students of test hurdles and the completion of courses with high failure rates. Another locus for the provision of some of these competencies might be an expanded and improved ST100, discussion of which follows.

Pursuant to a resolution of the Academic Senate, a special committee of the Senate was formed to review the College's General Education Objectives in light of its new mission statement and other campus changes. That committee addressed the skills/competencies issue. In March 2007, the Academic Senate approved the revisions to the College's Statement of Educational Goals and Objectives that were suggested by the special

committee. The following two broad goals now guide the development, delivery, and assessment of all instructional programs:

- (1) Students graduating from transfer programs will meet requirements for successful transfer into the junior year of baccalaureate programs.
- (2) Students graduating from career programs will demonstrate mastery of discipline-specific knowledge, skills, and tools required for entry into or advancement in the job market in their field.

In addition, the College has established ten educational objectives, along with an accompanying array of suggestions for learning outcomes. Faculty are now challenged to ensure that each course make an appropriate contribution toward the mastery of one or more objectives and are further challenged to select appropriate learning outcomes from which assessments of competence can be verified.

| Objective Graduates will be able to . . . | Suggested Learning Outcomes This may require a student to . . . |
|--|---|
| 1. Communicate effectively through reading, writing, listening and speaking. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret texts critically Use writing to create and clarify meaning Write in varied rhetorical modes, poetic forms and voices Use writing and oral communication to connect prior knowledge to disciplinary discourse Apply principles of critical listening to evaluate information Speak clearly, accurately, and coherently in several modes of delivery |
| 2. Use analytical reasoning to identify issues or problems and evaluate evidence in order to make informed decisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish the problem or question from a proposed solution or answer Differentiate among facts, assumptions, and conclusions in the formulation of a proposed solution or answer Evaluate the quality of evidence Describe and compare the way questions, issues, or problems are formulated within various fields of study |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>3. Reason quantitatively and mathematically as required in fields of interest and in everyday life</p> | <p>Identify problems that need a mathematical solution, and use computational methods in the mathematics applicable in everyday life</p> <p>Use the language, notation, and inductive and deductive methods of mathematics to formulate quantitative ideas and patterns</p> <p>Use mathematics appropriate to specific fields of study and recognize its applications in every day life</p> <p>Estimate when doing mathematical calculations</p> <p>Employ technology to collect, process, and present mathematical information</p> <p>Describe mathematical, statistical and probabilistic models and methods, and identify how they are used to obtain knowledge</p> |
| <p>4. Use information management and technology skills effectively for academic research and lifelong learning</p> | <p>Determine the extent of information needed for a research question, problem or issue</p> <p>Access needed information effectively and efficiently</p> <p>Evaluate information and its sources critically and assimilate selected information</p> <p>Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information and information technology</p> <p>Employ technology in research and fields of interest</p> <p>Identify the role of technology and its impact on the individual, society and the environment</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>5. Integrate knowledge and skills in programs of study</p> | <p>Create coherent, documented essays, presentations or solutions to problems based on gathering, analyzing, and comparing evidence from more than one perspective</p> <p>Demonstrate critical and creative thought by producing new arguments, art or solutions to complex problems</p> <p>Analyze and compare evidence to support/refute different points of view on a particular topic</p> <p>Complete sequential courses that use knowledge and skills from a previous course to master the higher level course</p> <p>Complete a culminating assignment in a capstone course</p> |
| <p>6. Differentiate and make informed decisions about issues based on multiple value systems</p> | <p>Identify the key elements of issues and analyze them from the perspectives of multiple value systems</p> <p>Identify values and their origins in culture, religion, philosophy, political, social or economic theory</p> <p>Differentiate ethical and non-ethical elements in arguments and/or behavior</p> <p>Distinguish facts from values in issues</p> <p>Apply varying values or ethical principles and approaches to respond to questions, dilemmas or problems and describe alternate outcomes</p> |
| <p>7. Work collaboratively in diverse groups directed at accomplishing learning objectives</p> | <p>Work in groups to accomplish learning tasks and reach common goals</p> <p>Demonstrate interpersonal skills and accountability in working in diverse groups</p> <p>Design and complete a group project</p> <p>Write or make a presentation based on group work</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>8. Use historical or social science perspectives to examine formation of ideas, human behavior, social institutions or social processes</p> | <p>Use historical facts to provide context for understanding information</p> <p>Apply discipline-specific methods to retrieve information</p> <p>Apply discipline-specific methods to reconstruct the historical past</p> <p>Interpret information to analyze historical events</p> <p>Use social sciences concepts to analyze human behavior</p> <p>Discuss social institutions from a historical or social sciences perspective</p> <p>Identify social processes in everyday life</p> |
| <p>9. Employ concepts and methods of the natural and physical sciences to make informed judgments</p> | <p>Identify fundamental concepts in a field of science</p> <p>Explain and demonstrate the process of scientific inquiry</p> <p>Describe the role of science and its impact on the individual, society and the environment</p> |
| <p>10. Apply aesthetic and intellectual criteria in the evaluation or creation of works in the humanities or the arts</p> | <p>Analyze and evaluate literary works</p> <p>Analyze and evaluate works of art</p> <p>Perform or create artistic works</p> |

Advisement

Changes implemented over the last two years in the student advising system have been a major step forward for the campus. Using a combination of faculty members and an expanded number of advisors, there has been a sharp increase in the percentage of students receiving at least one individualized, high-quality advising experience per semester. We have already seen results in fewer course cancellations and better planning of course additions and cancellations and in support for an expanded number of Learning Communities. Very well coordinated, this system represents a key area of cooperation between the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs.

It has been clearly demonstrated that good academic advising is crucial to student retention, progress and graduation. In fact, the weaker the students' academic background and the greater the financial obstacles in their way, the more of a difference high quality and high frequency advising makes. For this reason, the College must maximize such contact for as many of our students as possible. (We currently have about one academic advisor for every 1,200 students, a very challenging ratio.) Since the student affairs function is planned to be integrated into each of the academies, we will plan this year (and next) for the integration of student advising into the various academy structures. This is one concrete example of how student affairs personnel will be integrated into—indeed, actually physically located with—the academy organizations. Since there is a strong desire among some faculty to play a crucial role in student advising, this integration of academic and student affairs personnel is a potential significant strength.

We also need to examine how to expand personalized advising to students with over 24 credits and a 2.75 GPA or higher. Such students do not currently have to see an advisor to register, under the valid theory that they are probably better equipped to handle decisions without additional help than other students. Yet these same students are our most likely candidates for graduation or for premature transfer to other institutions, and it behooves us to pay close attention to their success and to their retention. We need to do an even better job of communicating to our students the value, including the direct economic value, of obtaining a degree in a reasonable period of time. In addition, we already know that students who complete their associate degree at a CUNY community college are much more likely to complete a four-year degree than those who prematurely transfer. As the academy organizations develop over the next few years, the issues of advanced student advising may be easier to resolve. (In addition, it appears that the College's move from the current online advising system to the one to be adopted by the University-wide student audit system—DegreeWorks—will reduce/eliminate opportunities for self-advisement as they now exist.)

CETL and Pedagogy

In the College's Mission Statement, we identify a key problem: QCC has a history of and a commitment to the maintenance of high academic standards for a community college. At the same time, we are an open admissions institution committed to success for a high percentage of our students. These two goals produce a potential gap for our students. Our Mission Statement posits two main bridges across this gap. One is the provision of the best possible support services, involving a close alliance of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The other bridge is the set of activities led by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)—that is, the adoption of best practices in pedagogy and our own pedagogical research into community college teaching, learning and student success.

It would be difficult to overstate the centrality of this issue. All of us know, and the statistical evidence confirms this fact, that high quality teaching makes an enormous difference in student learning and attainment. All of us have experienced this in our academic lives, either as students or as faculty. To maximize student success at the College and to make the Plan for Integrated Education work well, we must find ways to bring the highest level of teaching and learning to as many classes as possible at the College. Fortunately, the College already

has established a rich recent history of attention to pedagogy and to pedagogical research. We must deepen both of these closely related efforts.

CETL, in its short existence, has already achieved a great deal on both these fronts. In the area of pedagogical research, faculty and staff at the College made about 30 presentations at scholarly conferences last year. We are on pace for the same level of achievement this year, and a number of these presentations will be published. We are striving to develop relations with important players in the area of community college pedagogy, especially with Teachers College, at Columbia. In the process, we are learning a great deal about what can help our students to succeed. Both individual faculty members and projects carried out by Institutional Research on behalf of the College can be of value. It will be particularly useful if academic departments would hold discussions about setting pedagogical issue research agendas for their disciplines. Again, our orientation must be one designed to discover strategies for success. Similarly, we need to do all we can to foster a spirit that encourages the adoption of best practices in pedagogy. The chairs can help to provide the atmosphere for this, by fostering consideration and discussion of pedagogical issues within the departments. Some departments already make this a regular feature of nearly every departmental meeting. CETL can continue to provide seminars on specific skills and on the ranges of pedagogic styles and approaches that work in various settings. The Office of Academic Affairs can continue to assess pedagogical activities and encourage those that are working.

E-Portfolio/MAP

One key component of the Plan for Integrated Education will be the E-Portfolio and My Academic Plan (MAP). The E-Portfolio is, at its heart, an online, exportable resume, academic plan, reflective document, complete with examples of work. The MAP is the first stage in that planning and reflective process. It is currently being completed in a skeleton form by many of our incoming students; ultimately, it will be incorporated into the E-Portfolio.

**E-Portfolio / “My Academic Plan”
... On-Line & Exportable**

A two-part working document containing a plan for achieving career/educational goals and a dynamic collection of work products that demonstrate reflective progress, both of which—at the time of the capstone experience—would be replaced with a finalized collection of artifacts that demonstrate competencies and achievements that would be of interest to future employers or four-year colleges or universities.

These projects can serve our students in many ways. Once it is fully developed and incorporated into E-Portfolio, the MAP can help to produce focused and professionally guided reflection and decisions by a student about initial career/educational paths, including an understanding of which courses to take and why.

The College has also begun testing the implementation of an E-Portfolio program, with much of the initial impetus coming from the Gen Ed Inquiry Group. This can be an important tool with which to document competencies and achievements, focus some student attention on the attainment of educational goals and skills, mandate some reflective analysis and allow for the creation of an effective resume, itself of great worth to the average student. E-Portfolios are an idea that is starting to sweep the country. (Internationally, several European countries

have made the development of one a standard high school graduation requirement.) At least one other CUNY community college has been experimenting with it.

We need to push ahead rapidly with its implementation. With the cooperation of the Office of Sponsored Programs, we have obtained Perkins funding to conduct a pilot program with two curricula, Computer Information Systems and Music Electronic Technology. In each of these programs, the E-Portfolio has been used in one introductory and in one capstone course. A faculty member has been recruited to direct the effort.

It is already clear that rolling out the E-Portfolio to more of our students will require considerable support. Without it, the EP/MAP will become an obstacle to our students, an additional hurdle that they do not understand, rather than a guide and bridge across the problems they face. Outside funding seems to be a necessity, at least to begin, and we continue to use Perkins funds in particular. Within a few years, a majority of our students should be utilizing this tool, and we can expect it to assist in their progress towards educational goals. The College has been studying implementation issues associated with E-Portfolio and MAP for two years. These must be resolved in 2007-08, and this project must roll forward.

Learning Communities

Learning Communities are two or more classes in which the same students are enrolled. They are linked by common themes or assignments, to a greater or lesser degree. Nationally, the evidence is strong that participation in one or more Learning Communities is a very positive factor in student retention. There is also evidence that such participation can affect graduation rates at community colleges. So far, by careful nurturing, we have built up a nucleus of Learning Communities at the College. In the first few years of experimentation with this modality, Learning Communities had been created more on the basis of instructor interest than on a broad analysis of student learning needs. Over the past two years, however, we have made a major effort to shift the focus to early in the curriculum, to link them to key introductory classes, with a link when possible to ST100 as well. As of this writing, the overwhelming majority of our Learning Communities involve EN101 or a developmental reading, writing or mathematics class or an introductory for-credit mathematics class.

Over the next several years, the evolution of our Learning Communities will be affected by two major factors. One will be the Academies. Linked courses and learning academies will constitute the heart of the first-semester experience in each academy. The other is the College's participation in a nation-wide study of learning communities sponsored by MDRC Incorporated. The design of this project requires recruitment of students by random sample into specially designated Learning Communities, with incentives for those who participate in the study and for those chosen at random for the Learning Communities Research Project. This project provides funds for the College to support faculty training, draw students to our Learning Communities, and give us valuable information about where to situate Learning Communities and what their nature should be.

Service Learning

One of the goals of the academy organization is to enhance the perception of relevance—that is, to improve the connections students see between courses and either their current life situation or their immediate academic or career goals. The College recently joined membership in The Campus Compact (New York) and intends to expand the opportunities it provides for credit and non-credit bearing service activities. Each of the academies will be challenged to incorporate service learning opportunities into its curricula, and planning for this venture will be highlighted during 2007-08.

Assessment of Learning Styles

Far too many of our students come to college without any substantial of their own learning styles. While we believe that this should have been addressed at the pre-secondary school level, we believe that—since it is not generally assessed/taught at the precollegiate level—it is important to provide such an understanding to our incoming freshmen. During 2007-08, the College is planning for the 2008 implementation of a program to conduct a learning styles assessment of every incoming freshman student. This planning will include revenue source identification and personnel training and will be incorporated into the planning for the Academy organizational model.

The College is fortunate that several faculty and staff members have studied with and are familiar with Dr. Rita Dunn of Saint John's University, an internationally recognized expert in learning styles assessment. We expect to employ a computerized assessment—Building Excellence—that was developed under her supervision.

Mandatory Orientation and ST100

Nationally, the evidence is overwhelming that students benefit from attending orientation sessions and from taking courses like ST100. This is particularly true at the community college level. Data also seem to support the idea that this is particularly true for the students least likely to attend a voluntary orientation or sign up on their own for an ST100-type course. It seems clear that we would want to move in the direction of giving this experience to as close to 100 percent of our students as possible, as soon as possible. A truly mandatory ST100 course, for incoming freshmen, full-time and part-time, for which a passing grade is a requirement for moving on to the next semester, may be the best strategy. Already, the energetic efforts of Student Affairs have raised the percentage of incoming students taking ST100 from about 50 percent to around 60 percent. Beginning with the full implementation of the academies model, each first-time, full-time freshman will complete ST100 during the first semester of study.

Such a strategy requires some changes. We need to provide enough orientations at enough times to serve close to 100 percent of our population. This requires enough trained instructors. We will almost certainly need to broaden out the ranks of instructors to include advisors and other professional staff. As we expand the Academies, specialized ST100 courses, aimed at the members of a particular Academy, will need to be developed. In the

meantime, those students still out of the Academies will need a revised and expanded ST100. What topics should be addressed in these classes and what strategies should be used to ensure attendance and participation by our students will be key questions, which we must begin solving immediately.

Campus Learning Center

The Library and the Library building are at the physical center of the campus and have, within the last two years, reclaimed their place as the campus's educational center.

Physically, the Learning Center provides space for the traditional library functions, and it also houses the Academic Computing Center, CETL, and other campus learning centers like the Campus Writing Center. During 2007-08, we must continue planning to determine whether this building will also become the site of Academy home spaces.

In 2007, the College hired a new chief librarian. She quickly engaged the consultative assistance of the University chief librarian and has developed and initiated plans that promise to substantially improve the quality of campus library services. We have already made both physical improvement and staff reassignments to achieve improvements.

Remediation for Success

During the past year, the College has focused attention and energy on ensuring best practices in the provision of developmental courses and personal assistance to remediate academic deficiencies in an effort to ensure opportunities for student success. Despite these efforts, it is clear that a large portion of developmental resources are currently being spent on students with extremely poor success rates. To take one example, despite the fact that our very engaged Mathematics Department has reflected on and adopted many successful strategies for boosting student achievement, for students who enter the College at a Math 005 placement level, far too few successfully exit math remediation after one year and even fewer have graduated with an associate degree from CUNY six years later. Given the concern over pass and graduation rates for students who come to the College with major remedial needs, practical and philosophical programmatic issues must be addressed. It will be important to address these issues as we plan for integrating some of developmental education programs into academy protocols.

The College recognizes a need thoroughly to discuss the organization and delivery of remediation, especially the lower levels of remediation, pointing toward a very structured, highly supported "commitment to success" mode. Rather than a strategy of abandoning those students, it is designed to make clear what steps and interventions are necessary for success and to provide reasonable alternatives for those who cannot or will not undertake those steps. For the large majority of lower-level developmental students, the alternative is prolonged floundering at the remedial level. Our revamped remedial efforts, while intensive for the terms involved, should free some resources to concentrate on improved efforts at the higher developmental levels, a key locus of efforts to bring greater success through the strategies of the Plan for Integrated Education. We hope to engage these considerations

from creative problem solving perspectives and—at least in initial considerations—to search for ways to successfully meet student needs, even if it means challenging the University and State bureaucracies to provide flexibility in bureaucratic structures.

Serving Our High-Achieving Students

At this point, many of our better students leave the College for other CUNY schools or for campuses outside our system, well before graduation. Developing and holding onto our more promising students after their freshman year is very important, both to the character of our institution and to the success of those students. Here, a variety of strategies have shown promise. One example would be the work of the Chemistry Department in developing and nurturing outstanding students. Early identification, encouragement, specialized research, honors and other learning opportunities can be valuable. During 2007-08 the College will continue to expand its support and encouragement of faculty-mentored student research, with the goal of replicating the Chemistry Department's successes in several other academic departments. These activities will be incorporated into academy planning as well.

The utility of cornerstone, milestone, and capstone courses has been described previously in this document. As plans for the implementation of academies is fully developed, it is planned that specially-designated milestone and capstone experiences may be offered for students who have demonstrated special skill sets and/or exceptional academic records.

The College has developed a robust honors program. Specially designed courses and contract courses are offered throughout the curriculum. The College is currently emphasizing the opportunities of honors study to enrolled students. As the Academy planning continues through 2007-08, the issue of integrating honors into academy curricula will be addressed.

Conclusion

The Plan for Integrated Education is primarily about community building. It is a program that brings together many critically important but disparate projects into a coherent whole to facilitate the building of a community of scholars, a community that not only integrates project but integrates personnel—academic affairs personnel, student affairs personnel and students. Through this integration and through the improvements of the programmatic elements of the academies resulting from the focus given to the various items delineated in this campaign plan, education at Queensborough will improve. The mobilization of all personnel to focus on student success—successful persistence, successful achievement, successful graduation, and successful transition to further education or career—and the programmatic enhancement will improve both the quality of the educational experience and move a higher percentage of students through to graduation in a reasonable time period.