

## **CHAPTER 7:**

### **RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

*Standard 13: The institution's programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.*

Related educational activities at Queensborough Community College (QCC) include certificate programs, experiential learning, non-credit offerings, distance learning, contractual relationships and affiliated providers. Basic educational skills are discussed in chapter 6 on educational offerings.

### **CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS (CREDIT OFFERINGS)**

QCC's ten 30-credit certificate programs are part of the College's curricular offerings and are designed for students who wish to acquire professional, marketable skills in a specific field within a minimal period of time. Students attending full-time can usually complete these programs within a year to a year-and-a-half of study. In all cases, program goals, requirements, and expectations may be found in the college catalogue, under Certificate Programs, and in the department offices.

The Business Department sponsors a number of certificate programs. The Computer Information Systems (CIS) certificate program is designed for working students in career-oriented positions desiring to improve skills. All courses carry college credit and may be applied toward an associate or bachelor's degree. The Medical Office Assistant and Health Care Office Administration: Managing, Coding, and Billing certificate programs offer students educational opportunities and skills for employment in health and medical offices. All courses carry college credit and may be applied toward an associate or bachelor's degree. The Microsoft Office Applications Proficiency Preparation certificate program prepares students to use office applications programs. At completion, students are prepared to take the Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) Certificate tests. Most courses apply to associate or bachelor's degree. The School Secretary Certificate program prepares students to pass the academic and performance components of the school secretary civil service examination. All courses carry college credit and may be applied toward an associate degree.

Four other departments offer certificate programs. The Day Care Assistant certificate program, under the supervision of the Department of Social Science, is designed to prepare students to meet the requirements leading to the Child development associate (CDA) credential, a nationally recognized credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition. Most courses apply to the associate or bachelor's degree. Sponsored by the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology, the New Media Technology certificate program provides students with a broad understanding of internet-based technologies for the design, development, maintenance and support of digital media technology. All courses carry college credit and may be applied toward an associate or bachelor's degree. The Department of Mechanical Engineering Technology and Design Drafting offers certificate programs in Computerized Architectural Design and Drafting (CADD) and Computerized Manufacturing Technology (CAM). Students completing these programs will be prepared to obtain positions in industry or to transfer with advanced credit into A.A.S. programs in Mechanical Engineering Technology and Design Drafting. The Photography certificate program provides the knowledge and hands-on experience needed for commercial or fine art photography. All courses carry college credit and may be applied toward an associate or bachelor's degree.

### **Analysis and Findings**

The most recently added credit certificate programs are New Media Technology and Health Care Office Administration (both in spring 2003) and Computerized Architectural Design and Drafting or CAD (fall 2005). Program development, however, has largely been a matter of adapting associate degree programs to

smaller-scale certificate programs. A more concerted and strategic effort to address emerging needs among students and the community at large has been lacking.

All certificate program courses receive the same academic oversight as associate degree courses. The full range of support services offered to degree program students is available to the certificate program student. Enrollment trends (*QCC 2008 Fact Book*, 10) show a 14 percent increase in enrollment in certificate programs from fall 2006 to fall 2007. The total enrollment for fall 2007 was 209 students with the 56 enrolled in Medical Office Assistant and 45 enrolled in the School Secretary programs. From fall 2003 to fall 2007, however, the number of students enrolled in certificate program has remained at about 200, with 230 in fall 2003, 196 in fall 2004, 194 in 2005, 183 in 2006. Technical certificate programs are periodically reviewed by their respective department advisory boards.

### **Strengths**

- Certificate programs provide knowledge and skills designed to meet the student’s professional needs.

### **Weaknesses and/or Concerns**

- The number of students enrolled in the programs has remained constant and very low.
- No formal certificate program planning process is currently in place to respond to what may be emerging student and community needs.

## **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

Permitting students to receive credit for skills obtained outside the classroom—internships, cooperative education, and service learning—is strongly supported by QCC. Although classroom teaching provides students with the fundamental theory of the subject being taught, service-learning, cooperative education, and internships are ways to put into practice what has been learned in the classroom. While QCC does not offer experiential learning credits as such, the College does offer alternative ways to earn credit toward graduation. Students can use their life-time experiences to obtain credit by examination using one or more of the following methods: Excelsior College Examination (formerly, Regents College), College Level Examination (CLEP), Advanced Placement Exams (AP), and QCC departmental examination. The requirements for these examinations are listed in the college catalog.

### **Analysis and Findings**

In the past few years, half of the departments have given credits by examination to students. Most have been credits by departmental examination with an average of 3-4 credits awarded for equivalency examinations.

Cooperative education bridges the gap between the classroom and the world of work by integrating classroom study with related field experience. Students learn about a field of study, gain career experience, and may earn a portion of college expenses in jobs related to career and personal goals. Courses in cooperative education are currently offered in Art and Photography; Business (Accounting, Computer Information Systems, Management, Office Administration and Technology and certificate programs in Medical Office Assistant, Computer Information Systems, and Microsoft Office Applications Proficiency Preparation); Chemistry; Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology; English; Mathematics; Mechanical Engineering Technology; Music Electronic Technology; Physics; Speech; and Social Sciences. In the past three years, QCC academic departments averaged between 30 and 40 cooperative education courses per semester. A cooperative education or internship course is required in several degree programs.

The Office of Career Services encourages students to engage in professional work experiences that complement their curricula. Internship opportunities are available in many fields of study, including

accounting, business, social work, technology, public service and health care. Students can meet with an internship coordinator to discuss internships and receive advisement related to career development and can earn credit while participating in an internship by contacting the Cooperative Education coordinator in the appropriate academic department to enroll in a cooperative education or internship course. Other internships are the CUNY’s Edward T. Rogowsky Internship Program in Government and Public Affairs and the Urban Studies Internship, in which students have an opportunity to volunteer with a city, state, or federal elected official for college credit. Students in the Urban Studies Internship Program work at community agencies in such areas as cultural affairs, mental health, environment, recreation, urban government, and educational institutions. Internships are designed to offer students part-time, on-the-job professional training; student interns earn 3-6 college credits for participation, depending on the courses in which they enroll.

Recently, service learning opportunities have begun to take shape in a concerted way. Students benefit dramatically: service learning makes curriculum relevant to students' lives; promotes community and civic responsibility; encourages multicultural awareness; develops critical thinking and problem solving skills; fosters social and personal development; and builds a community within the classroom. Service learning also improves the students’ social capital—the connections among individuals (e.g., employment networks). Instructors benefit: the relevance of the experience to students' lives validates teaching and enhances learning; service learning helps to build classroom community and establishes relationships with people in the community; it also provides opportunities for pedagogical or discipline-specific scholarship and research. Finally, the community benefits from meaningful services, opportunities to participate in student learning, and awareness of college programs and services. At this point, seminars and colloquia are being developed, and some in-class projects are being introduced. A Podcast series is under development as an introduction to service learning. This wide array of benefits points to incorporating service learning in the curriculum.

### **Strengths**

- Internships and cooperative learning modalities are available from most departments as elective or required courses within their respective degree programs.

### **Weaknesses and/or Concerns**

- Additional outreach to students and program development is needed to amplify the value and number of existing internships and cooperative learning opportunities.
- Institutional support is needed to sustain and amplify the existing efforts of the service-learning initiative; the initiative is growing and requires an infrastructure.

## **NON-CREDIT OFFERINGS**

The Department of Continuing Education and Workforce Development currently offers non-credit programs serving approximately 10,000 students per year. The 250-350 courses offered each term focus on professional and workforce development, personal enrichment, and test and preparatory skills. The department serves community members across ages, ethnicities and socio-economic lines, and special offerings include a Kids’ College, Chinese Academy and 50+ Club. Most continuing education students reside in the Borough of Queens, but a growing number are from Nassau, Manhattan, and Bronx counties.

## **Analysis and Findings**

### **Programs and Curriculum**

Continuing Education offers 12 professional certificate programs, along with numerous work-related courses and hundreds of courses in language, studio and fine arts, computers, sports and fitness, test preparation, finance, film, music, driver education as well as academic and cultural programs for children and young

adults. Professional development certificate programs are currently under evaluation with the intent of developing new workforce related programming. All new curricula are reviewed by the dean. As programming becomes more sophisticated and successful, faculty will be encouraged to test courses out in Continuing Education and then develop them for credit.

### **Faculty and Coordinators**

Though some QCC faculty teach in Continuing Education, most are instructors from other institutions, retired educators, local business owners, corporate managers, and community members. There are approximately 125 faculty hired per term. There are coordinators for the Kids College, Chinese Academy, Paralegal Certificate program, Interior Design Certificate program, Medical Office Billing Certificate program and, as of spring 2008, GED and ESL programs. The primary responsibility of the coordinators is to make course suggestions and recruit faculty. Open houses are conducted at the start of each term to assist in marketing. Since distance education is offered through two vendors, QCC faculty are not being employed. As online programs are developed for CEU-type courses, QCC faculty may become involved.

### **Enrollment**

Continuing Education has been struggling with maintaining and increasing enrollment. An analysis of current course offerings, marketing strategies, faculty performance, and operations is under way to determine whether community needs are being addressed. One target market underserved in Queens and Nassau counties is the population 50 years and above. For this population, a new program was launched in spring 2008 in the arts and sciences, health and fitness, and career development. Another target group identified is children and teens. Programs that teach children how to design and program their own video games were introduced via Game Builders Academy in spring 2008. Professional programs launched in fall 2008 meet the demands of the allied health industry in a multicultural society. Certification programs in counseling for substance and alcohol abuse also launched in fall 2008; counselors are in high demand in Queens.

### **Marketing**

The course catalogue remains the primary marketing tool. In the past, approximately 180,000 catalogues have been mailed to random lists of residents in Queens each term so that one in three residents in select Queens zip codes receive a catalogue. This approach was modified in 2008 to include new direct mail, target, and generational marketing techniques. With its new web page, Continuing Education is able to register participants for classes online. Program brochures are still produced but with limited distribution.

### **Administration, Finance and Operations**

Continuing Education exists as a self-sustaining unit, covering all its expenses with course tuition and fees and grant or contract funding. In addition, it is subject to a 17.5 percent city levy on all revenue earned. By definition, this increases the costs of everything from faculty salaries to the development of new programs and impedes the aggressive nature of CE programming to meet quickly evolving market demands. The major bulk of administrative functions such as bursar, registrar, student advisement, enrollment management, marketing, faculty payroll processing and financial bookkeeping, accounting and reporting, web and CE system management are all the responsibility of Continuing Education staff. As such, each staff member needs to be multi-functional and high performing.

#### *Strengths*

- Currently, a large number and broad scope of well established courses and faculty with good followings meet the diverse needs of the Queens community.
- Continuing Education demonstrates the ability to act quickly to meet the evolving needs of the students with new course development and delivery.

*Weaknesses and/or Concerns*

- Quality control in programming: courses designed/developed via instructors' proposals without coordination with academic faculty to prevent competition/duplication of academic offerings
- Quality control of instructional staff: Unless required by state or federal law, there are no standards in place to determine faculty qualifications other than a sole interview by the director and experience in the discipline. Until the spring of 2008, the only assessment measure of faculty performance was the student evaluation form. There was no faculty professional development in place.
- During a severe economic downturn, funding for workforce-related programs becomes more difficult to obtain while students have a more difficult time paying out of pocket; this could negatively impact enrollment.

**DISTANCE LEARNING**

The College has been involved in Internet-based distance learning since 2002. For many years, it had a pioneer program in distance education in the Homebound Program for those learners with special needs who could not be present on campus. For the past four years, the college has offered online classes in Web-enhanced, partly online, and fully online modes. Both the college and CUNY provide the infrastructure, hardware and software, and training for online offerings. Classes have numbered in the dozens, and students enrolled in classes using online instruction in whole or in part have numbered in the thousands.

At present, QCC has no completely or partly online programs of study. There are faculty members, however, who have gained online teaching experience by either developing their own courses or developing and teaching CUNY Online BA courses for online delivery. Each semester, faculty members, at their own discretion, offer five to 10 fully online (asynchronous) and 10 to 15 partly online (hybrid) course sections using the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS). For example, online course offerings for the Spring 2009 semester are:

*Fully Online Course Offerings*

SS 211- Introduction to Macroeconomics  
 SS 212- Introduction to Microeconomics  
 SS 515- Child Development  
 SS 520- Human Growth & Development  
 SS 610- Introduction to Philosophy  
 SS 640- Medical Ethics  
 LS 213- Intermediate Spanish I  
 LF 401- French and Francophone Cultures Today  
 BU 525- Web Page Programming

*Partly Online Course Offerings*

EN 102- English Composition II: Introduction to Literature  
 ET 714- Web Technologies II: Building Database Driven Websites  
 EN 411- American Literature I: Colonial Period to American Renaissance  
 SS 610- Introduction to Philosophy  
 LG 112- Elementary German II  
 LG 812- German Literature in Translation II  
 LS 223- Workshop in Reading and Writing for Spanish Heritage Speakers III  
 BU 859- Desktop Publishing (Software)  
 BU 907- Word/Information Processing Using MS Word for Windows  
 BU 920- Graphic Presentations Development Using Microsoft PowerPoint

While not truly online, more than 250 face-to-face classes are enhanced with online components each semester using the Blackboard course management system. Currently, QCC has the largest number of centrally hosted “active” Blackboard courses among CUNY community colleges. While Blackboard use has steadily increased, the number of partly and fully online courses has remained constant during that time (see the table below).

Recent History of Blackboard Usage								
Blackboard	Fall 2004	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008
Active Courses (under development)	178 (28)	185 (24)	213 (40)	229 (36)	306 (48)	300 (7)	318 (11)	343 (2)
Teachers	83	85	89	94	127	146	136	148
Students	2340	2432	3408	3664	5508	5400	5724	6174

CETL and the Academic Computing Center conduct hands-on faculty development workshops every semester. Topics include online pedagogy, the use of Blackboard, Podcasting, PowerPoint, and other technologies related to teaching online and in the classroom. Since 2000, more than 2,500 faculty attendances have been recorded in these workshops.

## Analysis and Findings

In 2004, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate Standing Committee on Computer Resources was formed and charged with looking into distance learning. The subcommittee surveyed students and faculty: While the majority of students who had already taken online classes indicated that they were satisfied and would take another online class, 53 percent of those in Web-enhanced classes said that they would *not* take a fully online class. Surveyed faculty indicated the following: 55 percent of those who were using the Web-enhanced modality wanted to try partly or fully online; however, an overwhelming majority of those teaching partly online did *not* want to move to fully online. The subcommittee recommended that a Senate Standing Committee on Distance Education be formed, and the Senate voted to create the committee in 2005.

The 2005-2006 academic year was the initial year of the Distance Education Committee as a standing committee of the Academic Senate, comprising members with experience in distance education either in partly online (hybrid) or fully online (asynchronous) teaching modalities. The committee formulated a questionnaire and invited faculty members with online teaching experience to respond (see Appendix 7 for the *Report on Distance Education*, including the faculty questionnaire). There was an 87.5 percent return, and the results were used to inform the remaining recommendations. The main focus of the standing committee for the second year was finalizing the set of recommendations initially developed during the committee’s first year. From the suggestions of an open forum held in November of 2006, the following recommendations were developed and submitted to the administration of the College:

1. The registration and advisement process must be changed to make sure that students know that they have registered for an online class.
2. Some methodology must be developed to make sure that all online classes are designated as such in the Schedule of Classes (both online and in the printed version).
3. ST 100 should be a required course for matriculated students and be enhanced to include modules on Blackboard, on online classes, and computer literacy.
4. Given the small number of fully online sections, student evaluations of faculty that have no face-to-face meetings should be by mail, in much the same way that faculty vote in faculty elections (i.e., using multiple envelopes). Student evaluations could be mailed directly to department chairs.

5. Students registering for fully online classes should be in good academic standing. (Students may still receive the permission of the corresponding department if they are not in good academic standing.)
6. The following class sizes are recommended:
  - For an online section (fully or partly)..... 10 - 25 students
  - For an online section (fully or partly) also WI..... 10 - 20 students
  - For an online section (fully or partly) also honors section..... 8 - 15 students
8. Faculty members should have some formal training related to teaching an online class prior to teaching such a section—i.e., a course dealing with online pedagogy from some organization.
9. Because of the increased workload of online courses and few course offerings, the college should encourage more faculty to participate through stipends, training, mentoring, release time, reduced class sizes, grants or, most important, consideration toward reappointment, promotion and tenure.

The committee’s recommendations emphasized improving the quality of programming with regard to distance learning, rather than expanding programming. More recently, however, especially with the influx of many more students, the need for additional online courses and complete programs of study has become apparent. Making additional course sections available for students, addressing the needs of a working and non-working public; making education available to non-traditional students, and providing entrée for homebound students are major reasons for QCC to pursue the creation of online programs.

Plans to improve QCC online offerings have partly begun: In fall 2008, the Office of Academic Affairs began an online course development program in which faculty participants are guided through the online course creation process by other experienced online teachers. Consideration should also be given to the use of rubrics for the assessment of distance education courses (e.g., a rubric like “Quality Matters” by *Maryland Online Inc*; see Appendix 6, Exhibit J).

*Strengths*

- Continuous support for participating faculty includes workshops covering pedagogy and technology, help-desk troubleshooting, and multimedia enhancements.

*Weaknesses and/or Concerns*

- No complete online programs of study exist at QCC.
- As long as the recommendations of the Distance Education Committee remain unfulfilled, opportunities for growth in distance education are hindered, including ways of enhancing face-to-face courses with distance learning technologies.
- Rubrics for assessment of distance education courses used on a consistent basis are lacking.
- Online academic support services, though available in a limited way, are largely lacking.

**CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Two departments, Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology (ECET) and Nursing, have entered into either contractual or affiliate relationships with non-academic institutions.

**Verizon Next Step Program**

Sponsored by ECET, the Next Step Program is a ground-breaking, workforce education program that offers Verizon employees in New York and New England the opportunity to earn an associate degree in applied science (A.A.S.) with a special focus on telecommunications technology, completely at Verizon expense. The program was established in 1994 in partnership with six community colleges in New England and New York; QCC became a partner in 1995. Currently, there are 25 community colleges throughout New England and New York State participating in the program.

The mission of the Next Step Program is to provide an innovative, skills-based program that will enable employees to stay apace with advancing technology, to understand changing marketplace realities, and to enhance customer service skills. Qualified Verizon Associates who are members of the Communications of America (CWA) or the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) are accepted into the Program based on performance on basic skills evaluation tests, including COMPASS and ACT; holding a high school diploma or GED; having completed two years of high school mathematics; and meeting any additional partner college and Verizon corporate requirements.

### **Analysis and Findings**

To date, in the New York geographic region, 4,090 employees have been enrolled in the Next Step Program with an average completion rate of 75 percent. Currently, there are 100 Verizon employees enrolled in the QCC Telecommunications Technology: Verizon program. Qualified employees must complete 60 credits, divided among Liberal Arts and Sciences, Electrical/Electronics, and Telecommunications. They attend class one day a week for eight semesters over a four-year period.

Lead colleges, as well as partner institutions, meet at least twice a year to discuss program operation and resolve outstanding issues. Faculty curriculum committees, with representation drawn from New England and New York partner colleges, meet each year to develop and refine the curriculum. Verizon sponsors an annual multi-day faculty institute for discussion of curricular matters and professional development.

#### *Strengths*

- Verizon has committed significant fiscal resources to ensure that the degree is competency based, learner centered, and contextually focused. The curriculum incorporates corporate-identified competencies in addition to those usually associated with a technical degree.
- The program is a true partnership, exemplified by the close interaction among Verizon personnel, the lead partner colleges, and the partner college representatives.

### **Nursing Department Affiliations**

Clinical affiliation contracts are negotiated by the CUNY Board of Trustees on behalf of QCC for an initial period of two years with automatic renewal for two additional consecutive terms of two years each. These contracts may be terminated by either party with 60-day notice. Contracts are negotiated with hospitals, nursing homes, outpatient clinics and home care agencies. Affiliations provide clinical experience required in the Nursing Program. Relationships and performance are monitored by the QCC Nursing Department.

### **Analysis and Findings**

While affiliation agreements are signed for two-year periods, space at each institution is negotiated on a term-by-term basis according to course curriculum, educational needs of students, and space availability at the institution. Placement of students into the affiliate is based on their sequence of courses. Clinical experiences are incorporated into universal self-care needs and deficits, nursing care of persons with developmental self-care needs, and deficits and nursing care of persons with chronic, complex multi-system self care needs and deficits. Students participate in clinical experiences each semester in the four core courses in the Nursing A.A.S degree program and are placed in a variety of private and public acute-care hospitals. QCC is currently affiliated with 28 institutions located throughout Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx, and Nassau County. Affiliates are monitored through student evaluations, affiliate feedback, and faculty observations and discussions. The faculty meet on and off site to assess the institution at the start and end of the placement period.

*Strengths*

- QCC has longstanding positive relationships with all of the affiliate institutions and is able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- The Nursing Department's reputation serves well in the competition for placement each term. Institutions want to accept QCC students; many have graduates from the program.
- Several different types of institutions afford students exposure to diverse clinical experiences.

**RECOMMENDATIONS****Certificate Programs**

- A formal process should be created to:
  1. Coordinate the review and articulation of all certificate programs
  2. Establish a connection with local business and industry to ensure relevance of offerings
- Explore articulating non-credit courses with appropriate credit certificate programs to allow more students to benefit from a continuum of education.

**Experiential Learning**

- Students should be made more aware of existing internships and cooperative learning opportunities.
- Service learning should be established in the curriculum in designated courses across departments.

**Non-Credit Offerings**

- Establish academic standards for curriculum and faculty that can be measured and assessed and minimum hiring credentials for faculty and provide development opportunities for existing faculty.
- Apply operational and financial measurements and reduce operational expense.
- Obtain onsite corporate and institutional training contracts to improve Continuing Education's effectiveness in advancing the Queens' workforce and reduce the need for facilities on campus.

**Distance Education**

- Implement the recommendations of the Distance Education Committee.
- Charge a subcommittee of the Distance Education Committee with developing a comprehensive plan and with making recommendations to the Senate, including:
  - Choosing a current program or programs to adapt
  - Developing a new program or programs to address emerging market needs
  - Planning for necessary faculty development
  - Allocating necessary funding
  - Building the infrastructure necessary: online registration, advisement, and academic support
  - Articulating a marketing plan for the new program or programs
- Consider training and mentoring involving distance education during deliberations over reappointment, promotion, and tenure.
- Continuously assess need for new, and improve existing, distance education courses.
- Expand distance education offerings in Continuing Education and Workforce Development.
- Develop innovative ways to enhance face-to-face courses using distance learning technologies.