

**Team Report**  
**Queensborough Community College**  
**March 15-18, 2009**

**I. Context and Nature of the Visit:**

Institutional Overview: Queensborough, located in Bayside, NY, is one of the six community colleges within the City University of New York (CUNY) system of 23 colleges and schools. The College is an Associate's degree granting institution serving the urban borough of Queens. At the time of the self-study QCC reported a headcount enrollment of 13,359, all at the 37 acre campus amidst a residential neighborhood. The College does not have any distance education programs.

**II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements:**

Based on the review of the self-study, interviews, the certification statement supplied by the institution and/or other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet the eligibility requirements in *Characteristics of Excellence*.

**III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements:**

The College's engineering technology programs are TAC of ABET accredited (The Technology Accrediting Commission of the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology), the business programs are accredited by the Association of College Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), and the nursing program is accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission. Based on the review of the self study, certification by the institution, other institutional documents, and/or interviews, the team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits or that the institution has an acceptable plan in place to address federal compliance issues.

**IV. Evaluation Overview:**

The team thanks the institution for its warm welcome and its attention to all the logistical details with both the arrangements in preparation for the visit as well as those of the actual visit. Everyone was most accommodating and flexible with any changes in persons to be interviewed or college offices to visit. Both the resource room at the college and at the hotel was stocked with materials of information to assist us in the exploration of validating the self study in relation to the Characteristics of Excellence. IT assistance was available in the resource and work rooms and at the hotel in case of any unanticipated IT issues the team may have encountered. The team members interviewed dozens of faculty, staff and administrators (schedule of all visits is attached), and reviewed dozens of binders and report documents and data bases to reach its conclusions.

Queensborough Community College is a wonderful college where dedicated faculty and staff meet the needs of students on a daily basis. From the full array of offerings in developmental education

and English as a Second Language to the extraordinary research opportunities secured through grants for both faculty and student scholars, QCC has distinguished itself as a community college to watch as we approach the end of the first decade of the twentieth century and the College achieves its 50 year milestone.

QCC is reaching out to the various constituencies which are served in significant and profound ways:

A nationally recognized College Now program grooms promising high school students (9th to 12th grade) for college careers by providing rigorous coursework. A CUNY wide initiative, Queensborough's College Now, coordinates activities in 8 high schools, with 58 to 62 classes being offered each semester. A campus orientation is followed by visits to the library and the Art Gallery. QCC faculty members collaborate with high school faculty in fashioning curricula that whet the appetites of inquiring minds.

Based on the development of programs and initiatives over the past five to 10 years, the College's six Freshman Academies hold tremendous promise for the students and the faculty and staff who will be engaged in making this exceptional arrangement come to fruition. Taking the foundation that has already been laid as a result of the launch of two of the six academies, QCC incorporates known methods of providing student engagement—including learning communities and service learning—with a college wide focus on learning outcomes assessment, retention and pedagogical research.

The Kuperferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives is continuing to attract scholars throughout the nation as well as internationally. As the College awaits the opening of the brand new facility this coming fall, QCC can be proud of the fact it has been designated by New York City as a Hate Crimes Center. The curriculum will be used throughout New York City schools.

Finally, the Art Gallery has been recognized in the national media for its world-class, multi-dimensional offerings and its value as a cultural resource to the surrounding New York City community.

## **V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards:**

### **Standard 1: Mission and Goals and Standard 6: Integrity:**

The institution meets both of these standards.

### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

The current mission statement was developed using a process that included opportunities for participation and input from the entire college community. The process was highly participative and resulted in approval by the appropriate governing bodies. Equally important, the process presented the opportunity for the institution to reinvigorate its enthusiasm for the mission by including all constituencies in the discussion.

The mission statement clearly defines QCC's purpose within the context of higher education, differentiates it from other institutions, and establishes its institutional uniqueness. The team's on-campus visit confirmed that the college is clearly described and recognizable by its mission statement.

Members of the college community appear to be highly aware of the mission statement as confirmed by college interviews and by faculty and staff survey data. Additionally, the mission statement is systematically used in the college publications appearing in the Faculty Handbook, on the website, in the Annual Report, in the catalog and in a host of other locations. It clearly is an important document for the college community and is treated as such.

The college uses the mission statement to guide decision making as is appropriate. The College has made a monumental step forward in its strategic planning by directly linking the mission statement with three to five year strategic goals and objectives. There is evidence that the mission statement has regularly been used to guide many types of decision making including the new Freshman Academies, departmental planning, budgeting, resource allocation, hiring, and others throughout the institution although the link between these plans and the mission is often more implicit in nature. The current mission statement has the ability to guide many types of long and short range planning efforts including program development, student learning outcomes, institutional improvement and growth, and other significant challenges that constantly confront institutions of higher education.

The College culture is reflective of the high level of respect granted to all constituents: faculty, staff, administrators, students and external constituents. There is clear evidence of respect and collegiality in the many college-wide initiatives, committees, activities, etc. that demonstrate the commitment to full participation in the achievement of the mission of the college. There was evidence of this in the actions of the college, in the employee surveys, and in the interaction that the team had with the many constituents that were interviewed during the visit.

While many personnel decisions such as promotion and tenure are driven by the collective bargaining agreements, there is evidence of an overarching theme of respect for all employees of the college, their individual and collective contributions and their efforts to achieve the mission. That respect is reflected in the policies, practices, and publications of the institution.

Students, faculty and other employees of the college who were interviewed were consistent in their opinion that they were valued members of the college community and were treated with respect. This is supported by the faculty survey where faculty agreed that they were treated with collegiality within their department and college-wide.

The focus on articulating an Academic Integrity Policy shows evidence of an institution that has made a commitment to a high level of integrity. The policy is widely available to students and faculty. Additionally, the Institutional Review Board shows that the institution is strongly committed to protecting the rights of human subjects in the undertaking of pedagogical research. These and other actions show that the institution continues to commit itself to appropriately high levels of ethics and integrity.

One of the challenges faced by all institutions of higher education is the task of making an enormous amount of information available for multiple constituencies in a manner that makes access to the information easy and makes the operations, policies, and procedures of the institution transparent. In several instances the Team found that they were unable to easily locate some standard documents. For example, the search engine on the College website was unable to locate a student code of conduct and the code was not included as part of the online Student Handbook where one might normally expect it to be. Nor was the information relative to retention and graduation rates easily accessible to students or other outside constituents on the college website without first knowing the web location. We found several examples where information for multiple constituencies including faculty, staff, students, and prospective students was not as easily accessible or as transparent as it could have been.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

In 2005, the College reviewed and modified its mission statement. At the suggestion of the College Advisory Planning Committee, the college undertook a highly participatory process of review and renewal of the mission statement. This process not only met the Middle States standards but provided an opportunity for the entire QCC community to recommit itself to the mission. This is evidence that those who take a leadership role in planning understand the significance of an accurate, complete, and well thought out mission statement and are committed to making the link between mission and institutional planning.

As evidenced by the faculty survey presented with the supporting documents, virtually every full-time faculty member who responded said they had knowledge of the mission. Additionally, the staff survey indicated that, on average, individuals acknowledged that they had read the mission and used it in making decision, setting goals, and in prioritizing their own activities. That survey data helps to confirm that the institution has done a commendable job in communicating the importance of the mission and in creating an environment where all are working towards its achievement.

**Suggestions for improvement:**

The team suggests that the College undertake a review of the format of the mission statement. While the mission statement clearly meets the standard, it does not delineate between mission and goals as articulated within the standard. The current mission statement includes both the mission and the goals but the goals are not delineated and members of the college community do not view them as such. The mission of the college is intended to define the type of institution it hopes to be or to become; the goals describe how the college intends to go about reaching its mission. Once the goals (generally the second paragraph in QCC’s mission statement) are distinguished from the mission itself, the college may find that it can be more efficient in setting planning goals and in measuring institutional effectiveness. It is often easier to make the direct link between the mission and clearly differentiated goals. Institutional level planning such as strategic planning, enrollment management planning, and facilities planning becomes easier when the question associated of “how” is clearly agreed to as part of agreement on the mission statement.

Should the college undertake such a review, it might want to consider adding some component to the mission or goals relative to the efficient use of resources. Certainly there is ample evidence of the college’s excellent use of its resources but, as a public institution the College should consider whether such language would formalize its commitment to using its limited resources in the most efficient and effective manner. This would be consistent with goals 7, 8, and 9 in the draft of the new QCC strategic plan.

The college should consider a review of the accessibility and transparency of information to constituents focusing on integrating web links for pertinent information along with reviewing the ease of access of information available on the QCC website.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Requirements:**

None

## **Standard 2: Planning and Institutional Renewal *and* Standard 3: Institutional Resources.**

The institution meets these standards.

### **Summary of Evidence and findings:**

Based on the review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with informed personnel from QCC, the team developed the following conclusions relative to standard 2:

#### **Planning**

- In response to a recommendation from the last MSA self study process, the College has implemented a range of planning efforts to advance the College's strategic agenda. Examples of these include: the 2006 Long Range Plan for QCC, the annual Strategic Planning process, the 2005-09 Technology Plan and the Plan for Integrated Education. Development of a comprehensive integrated planning process is still a work in progress for the College. However, over the past five years significant progress has been made.
- The structure of the current strategic planning approach is designed to respond to institutionally-defined priorities as well as to articulate the planning efforts of QCC with the current CUNY Master Plan. Through the annual planning process QCC develops annual strategic objectives that support achievement of the goals in the CUNY Master Plan. QCC employs a well-defined and participatory college-wide process to review the proposed annual strategic plan.
- For the past several cycles the formal Strategic Plan Development Process has been handled on a one year at a time basis. Beginning with the 2009-10 year a three year time horizon is being employed. In addition, the development of the plan has been restructured to align the plan with the College's Mission.
- As part of the annual strategic planning process each department develops strategic operating plans for the year. The budgeting process is currently being structured to provide funding to the departments to support their initiatives directed towards the achievement of the Strategic Plan's objectives.
- Within the Strategic Plan, targeted outcomes are established to track institutional achievements of the objective. Annual college-wide and departmental reporting processes have been developed that are intended to ensure that progress on the strategic plan is monitored and to identify areas where additional efforts are required in subsequent years to fully achieve the College's strategic objectives.
- Currently the College does not have one central office responsible for coordinating the over-all strategic planning efforts of the College.
- An effective four year Technology Plan covering the period from 2005 to 2009 has been in place which has guided a thoughtful incorporation of technology into instruction and the delivery of student services. A great percentage of the plan has been achieved. Significant funding for student-used technology has been provided through the technology fee.

- While detailed planning for many aspects of academic programs and services has been undertaken by the College, the College does not have a comprehensive academic master plan which can serve as an overarching vehicle to clarify the directions being taken and set priorities for the College's future development of academic program and services. The comprehensive planning for the Freshmen Academies, currently underway, is viewed by college staff as a key step toward developing a comprehensive academic master plan. However many issues, such as future requirements for new course and program development, the expanding roles for distance learning, labor market needs, and other alternative instructional delivery strategies have not yet been addressed by this planning.
- Similarly, while many specific student services delivery plans exist, a comprehensive enrollment management plan does not exist.

### **Facilities**

- The campus is situated on 37 acres in an attractive residential community. There are 15 buildings built between 1965 and 1983. While the campus facilities are generally in good condition, QCC has not added a major new building in 30 years. There is concern expressed by many staff that space constraints on campus have the potential to limit desirable new directions in programs and services and may negatively impact the College's ability to respond adequately to future enrollment growth demands. CUNY space guidelines identify a need for QCC to add 106,000 net square feet of instructional space to address the current level of FTE enrollments.
- In order for the College realistically to be able to expand its facilities, significant investments in the College's infrastructure must be made. Key examples include the College's electrical service, HVAC systems and parking. The College estimates that it currently has \$230 million dollars worth of deferred maintenance.
- The College does not have a Facility Master Plan which would help to set priorities and quantify needs for future facility redevelopment and expansion. The current CUNY Master Plan does not make a specific commitment to future investments in QCC facilities.
- Unlike the four-year CUNY colleges, the CUNY community colleges require capital support from the City as well as the state for new construction. This makes the approval process for major new capital projects difficult to accomplish. A new instructional building has been identified as a critical need for the campus—but staff currently expect that completion of the project could take as long as eight to ten years. This long time frame is due both to the initial investments in campus infrastructure which are required to be made first and the complex steps required to develop both local and state support for the project.
- Despite the lack of funding for major new construction, there has been an on-going effort to renew and redesign the campus to meet current requirements and current planning priorities. Substantial dollars have been made available to QCC from local governments for a wide range of projects. Examples of recent facilities changes include: reconfiguration of the Library Building, security and life safety systems, ADA projects, gymnasium renovations, construction of the new Holocaust Resource Center, and campus mall improvements.

- The College has talented in-house technical and craft staffs who have been able to undertake a wide range of campus renovation and infrastructure upgrade projects at lower costs and with a more timely response to campus needs than would have been possible through the use of outside contractors.

### **Budgeting and Finances**

- For the past half decade funding for the College has been sufficiently adequate for the college to undertake a wide range of new strategic initiatives and to provide financial support for full-time faculty and staff position growth. Downward adjustments to the current and prior year budget based upon gaps in New York City revenues have been addressed by the College without having an adverse impact on programs, services and staff.
- In making revenue budget allocations to individual colleges, CUNY employs a top-down budget process. CUNY Central prepares a general community college budget request to the state. After the state funding is received, CUNY allocates a portion of the funds to each of the six CUNY community colleges. Once the QCC share is known, QCC staff allocate the funds based upon each department's on-going budget requirements and QCC's strategic goals.
- A range of initiatives have been undertaken by CUNY Central which has improved funding opportunities for the College. The 2004-06 Community College Investment Plan resulted in 80 new, permanent positions for College including 43 faculty positions. In addition substantial support was provided to upgrade equipment in many of the College's labs.
- CUNY has worked with the City and the State to create a financial plan to stabilize CUNY colleges' financial support, the CUNY COMPACT. An agreement was reached to stabilize funding for CUNY with no future increases other than CPI adjustments. Only modest tuition increases are permitted. In return CUNY agreed to become more proactive in developing new revenues and increase productivity on the campuses. Revenue targets for each college which represent revenues that the college is responsible for raising through tuition revenues in excess of CUNY-established target, productivity gains and other dedicated sources. Tuition revenue growth beyond targeted levels are shared on a 80 (college)/20 (CUNY Central) basis. COMPACT revenues are intended to help stabilize college budgets and to be used for special initiatives to improve teaching and learning.
- While QCC cannot maintain reserve funds to stabilize funding in difficult financial years, CUNY as an entity can and does maintain reserves. Where possible CUNY has used reserves to help shelter the individual campuses from the impacts of City and State budget reductions.
- In the past half decade the College has greatly strengthened its efforts to develop grant and private gift giving support for the College. In the most recent fiscal year, the college has raised \$2.6 million in grants and an additional \$2.6 million in private philanthropy, totaling \$5.2 million.
- QCC staff have put in place effective multi-year financial planning procedures which allow them to anticipate favorable and less favorable funding scenarios and develop response options to maintain stability in programs and services.

- Under new financial leadership at QCC, efforts are underway to strengthen internal budgeting processes and strengthen ties between the College's planning and budgeting efforts. Consistent with CUNY COMPACT goals, QCC has developed financial incentives which encourage the academic departments to achieve enrollment revenue growth by allowing them to keep a portion of the revenue growth for departmental purposes.
- Through its Personnel and Budget Committees, a structure is in place to provide college-wide input into the expense budget development process.
- CUNY is in the initial stages of implementing a new ERP (Peoplesoft). QCC is one of two colleges chosen to serve as a vanguard site for the implementation. Resources have been provided from CUNY central to QCC to support their efforts in the implementation process. The new systems are providing an important opportunity to the College to improve and integrate processes and eliminate a large number of non-integrated shadow systems that existed on campus. The new chart of accounts, redesigned processes and new Oracle data base will both change how information is made available to college staff and, potentially, greatly improve the quality of information that is available for the college's planning, management and assessment efforts.

**Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

The College is commended for its decision to serve as one of two vanguard colleges to provide leadership in the Peoplesoft ERP implementation. This decision has enhanced the College's opportunity to maximize the benefits from the new systems by having important input into their implementation and has strengthened the leadership role of Queensborough within CUNY.

The college is commended for its successful efforts to develop grants and private gifts to advance college priorities.

The College is commended for its creativity in re-purposing buildings and spaces with a talented in-house staff.

**Suggestions for improvement:**

In order to make optimal use of capital funds as they become available, as well as to make the strongest case possible for increased capital support, the College should undertake the development of a comprehensive facility master plan for QCC. The plan should carefully articulate priorities for infrastructure renewal, redesign of existing space, and the development of new space.

During the on-going implementation of the Peoplesoft ERP careful attention should be paid to the information capabilities of the systems and the ways that expanded and improved data can be extracted from the new Oracle data bases to support the College's planning, management and assessment efforts.

Within the strategic goals framework set by the College's Strategic Plan, formal Academic Master and Enrollment Management Plans should be developed. The current Technology Plan should be updated to address the next several years.

The college should consider assigning one staff member clear responsibility and authority for the coordination of the College's strategic planning efforts,

**Recommendations:**

None

**Requirements:**

None

**Standard 4: Leadership and Governance and Standard 5: Administration**

The Institution meets these standards.

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

QCC has a well-defined system of collegial governance. “The Governance Plan of Queensborough Community College” states that governance is the concern of all constituencies, students, faculty, alumni and administration. The environment of positive cooperation that exists between members of the college community stems from the leadership of the President of the College and his commitment to the prevailing culture of “shared governance”.

The local governing body at QCC is the Academic Senate which has its own bylaws and is the voice of the academic community. The Academic Senate is guided by a Steering Committee and is composed of members of all constituencies of the College with 18 standing committees and one sub-committee. For special investigative purposes, the Senate can form special committees. Each committee has specific charges as indicated in the Bylaws of the Academic Senate. Ongoing activities of the Senate committees have brought about actions providing evidence that “shared governance” at QCC is effective.

Membership of the Steering Committee as stated in the Governance Plan is comprised of an elected chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary from among the elected members of the Senate, for one-year terms. The President presides over Senate meetings, which is unique in the university system, but works well for Queensborough. The President sets the Senate agenda with the Faculty Executive Board and the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee has the responsibility to maintain communications with the CUNY wide University Faculty Senate, the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor on issues of concern as a component of the University as a whole.

Only the Academic Senate may send policy proposals to the Board of Trustees (BOT). If the President does not approve of a Senate proposal there is no veto authority; however the President may speak against the proposal to the BOT. The governing body may send communications to the BOT including a vote of no confidence in the president or local administration. The actions of the Academic Senate can be overturned by stated vote criteria. As stated, the Academic Senate has the power to request information appropriate to, or necessary for, the performance of its duties, from the President and members of the administration, from students and student organizations and from such other sources as may be appropriate.

Evidence from interviews and documentation verify that the Academic Senate provides a mechanism for a collegial process of governance.

The position of the President is described as both an executive agent of, and advisor to, the Board of Trustees. He is given full discretionary power to carry out the bylaws, resolutions, and policies of the

Board of Trustees. As an example of his commitment to the collegial process, he participated and supported the development of the revised Mission statement. The revised Mission was approved by the Academic Senate in 2005 and it brings QCC into greater congruence with the environment that the institution operates within. The President's past academic experiences and recognition as an educational leader, as well as service on the New York State Commission on Higher Education, serve QCC well to lead this institution. As a strong, highly respected leader, he is supported in implementing the Mission and Goals for this institution by a group of talented and dedicated individuals.

The President's Cabinet includes the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Finance and Administration, Institutional Advancement and the Dean of Human Resources and Labor Relations who bring to their positions appropriate experience and skills that have enabled them to create effective and efficient operations. They support the organization's mission by assuming the responsibility for assigning, implementing, and monitoring the Strategic Goals of the organization in their respective areas.

The Vice Presidents work collaboratively as a team and are committed to maintaining the flow of consistent and accurate information within their areas and across the college. They provide the necessary resources for staff to carry out their respective duties and serve the college well through their participation in the College Governance system. Clear lines of authority are evidenced on the College's organizational charts. Administrative support for the Vice Presidents include: eight Deans (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Finance and Administration, Human Resources and Labor Relations); academic departments led by Department Chairpersons (elected by secret ballot for a term of three (3) years in accordance with the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees); Higher Education Officers (HEO), and some members of the Information Technology civil service staff.

To facilitate the necessary actions to foster the functioning of the institution, administrative actions are handled by the president and appropriate vice president (s). Actions related to academic programs and faculty governance are submitted to the Steering Committee for appropriate assignment to committee. This is a process of review, analysis and action that involves all appropriate parties, and provides for a system that stresses accountability.

College administration works well with the collective bargaining units at the college (of which there are 16). Most instructional staff members which include faculty, HEO, and college laboratory technicians, are represented by the PSC-CUNY. Civil Service employees are represented by a separate group.

### **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

The President is commended for creating an environment that encourages change and innovation.

The President is viewed as an advocate for students and employees.

Evidence of importance of Senate participation - The Administration has allowed an increase in the release time for the work of the Steering Committee based on activities and responsibilities.

Release time has been also been granted for the Committee on Course and Standing, Committee on Curriculum, and Committee on Committees.

Since the last Self-study, the Academic Senate has responded to new imperatives and established committees focusing on the Environment, Disability, Quality of Life, Distance Education, Vendor Services and Writing in the Disciplines/ Writing Across the Curriculum. Special Committees on General Education Objectives, students' Bill of Rights and Student Complaints Process, Awards for Contribution to Governance, and External Assessment were also added.

The Steering Committee functions on a 12- month basis.

All Senate and Steering Committee meetings are open to the public.

Members of the Academic Senate and Faculty Executive Committee serve on the College Advisory Planning Committee.

A task force was established to deal with the issue of space and the restructuring of the Library and has concluded its work.

Support from the QCC's Instructional Technology and Academic Computer Staff has increased the exposure of the activities of the Senate to the college community.

Orientation information includes information regarding the role of the Senate and the benefits of participation.

A website provides information that assists in maintaining transparency of this organization.

Electronic voting using clickers has been introduced to create an electronic record of votes taken and to support to support the college's commitment to integrity.

In response to the concern that HEO's did not have involvement in the Academic Senate, the Committee on Bylaws reviewed and recommended that two voting seats for members of the administrative staff (HEO) be added, and subsequently the Bylaws were amended. This change provided the constituency with appropriate representation in the actions of the Academic Senate.

The President most recently conducted a meeting with the administrative department heads, inclusive of HEOs, which will become part of an annual cycle of forums. This forum, an open forum, provided an opportunity to discuss college related issues of interest.

In an inaugural HEO conference of October 2008, the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources served as a guest speaker.

**Suggestions for improvement:**

None

**Recommendations:**

None

**Requirements:**

None

**Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention and Standard 9: Student Support Services:**

The institution meets these standards.

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Based on a review of the Self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard.

A review of institutional publications and the website indicates that admissions policies reflect and support the College's mission and are designed to assist prospective students in making informed decisions. New Student Enrollment Services' effort to personalize and streamline admissions processes for students and improve new student transition through a revamped orientation and advising program is commendable. Implementation of a new ERP system will further automate and integrate admissions and registration processes resulting in improved service for students. A concern was expressed, however, about the length of time it takes to evaluate transcripts of incoming transfer students, a growing student population at the College.

Recruitment, outreach, and marketing efforts are proactive, well planned and coordinated by the Enrollment Management Committee as evidenced by the College's recent surge in enrollment. To sustain the College's enrollment growth, however, the College is strongly encouraged to develop a strategic enrollment development plan that includes specific enrollment benchmarks and retention strategies, incorporates credit and non-credit program development, and demonstrates that systematic market research is being conducted to identify potential new markets. Efforts should be more clearly tied to the College's Strategic Plan and assessed as to their effectiveness.

Retention of students is an integral part of a College's enrollment development efforts and should be more clearly articulated in the plan. Retention initiatives are clearly evident at the College, although these efforts would benefit from greater coordination and integration. The Freshman Academies, however, hold great promise for enhancing and integrating the College's retention efforts of first-time, full-time students and the new three-year strategic plan provides a comprehensive road map to guide its implementation. The College is commended for the commitment to hiring Freshman Coordinators to assist students in their transition into the academies. It will be important for the College to assess the effectiveness of the Academy model as it considers the feasibility of extending eligibility for participation to part-time students.

The College offers a comprehensive array of support services to assist students in maximizing their potential and that reflect the College's mission. The College's commitment to providing appropriate services to meet one of the nation's most diverse community college student populations is evidenced by a variety of programs for special student populations. Collaboration between the Offices of Academic and Student Affairs is evident and staff is well qualified, student-centered, dedicated and readily accessible on campus. A robust campus life program that offers athletic,

cultural, recreational, intellectual, citizenship and leadership opportunities at the College and in the New York City area enhances the overall educational experience of the College's students.

In 2004, the College re-structured its academic advising system and established the Academic Advisement Center. A developmental advising model, requiring students to be advised, was implemented and additional staff hired to meet the increased need. Although there have been modest gains in student retention since its inception, a strong advising system is in place to support the Academies and enhance student retention and goal attainment.

Several staff members expressed concern about the transferability of courses to CUNY for students who do not graduate with a degree. Conducting a comprehensive survey of students regarding the transfer of credits to CUNY would help determine the nature and extent of the concern and may lead to the development of strategies to address this issue.

The College is to be commended for providing students opportunities to participate in the governance process. There was clear evidence that student government leaders and others clearly had access to the College's decision-makers, including the President, to share their concerns and issues. Students provided specific examples of how their concerns were addressed and resolved by the institution.

Student policies and procedures are communicated to students in various publications and the website, although there appeared to be some inconsistencies across mediums. It would be beneficial to conduct an audit of the publications and the website to ensure greater consistency, accuracy, and transparency of these policies and procedures for students.

A comprehensive and coordinated program that assesses student needs, satisfaction, and learning is essential for improving programs, services, and practices for students and documenting continuous quality improvement. Evidence exists that a foundation for assessments exists within the year-end reports for Student Affairs although the process can be strengthened as will be evident in the section of the report on student learning outcomes.

### **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

The Student Affairs Division's proactive efforts to streamline and integrate transition processes for new students is commendable.

The Freshman Academy model holds great promise for integrating College retention efforts and increasing student retention and graduation rates.

Students are active participants in the College's governance process and feel a strong sense of community and support at the College.

### **Suggestions for improvement:**

Evaluate the effectiveness of transcript evaluation services for incoming transfer students and consider modifications based on the results.

Develop a comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan that includes specific enrollment and retention benchmarks, incorporates credit and non-credit program development, and demonstrates that systematic market research is being conducted to identify potential new markets, and linking these efforts to the College's Strategic Plan and developing a more formalized process for assessing the effectiveness of these efforts. (The College may want to consider sending a college-wide team to workshops by groups like Noel-Levitz or SEM that focus on strategic enrollment management planning.

Conduct a comprehensive survey of students transferring to CUNY regarding the transfer of credits and using the results to address the issue.

Conduct an audit of the College publications and its website to ensure greater consistency, accuracy, and transparency of College policies and procedures for students.

Develop a more comprehensive assessment plan for Student Affairs that includes specific benchmarks for institutional effectiveness and student learning outcome measures for each of the departments and documenting how data informs decision-making and enhances programs and services for students.

### **Recommendations:**

None

### **Requirements:**

None.

### **Standard 10: Faculty:**

The Institution meets this standard.

### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Faculty are defined as those persons holding professorial titles; and lecturers, instructors, persons in the registrar series, and college laboratory technicians who have received notice of appointment on an annual salary basis for a third or later year of continuous full-time services. Faculty and other professionals are appropriately prepared and qualified for the positions they hold, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined. They are members of the CUNY Professional Staff Congress.

As reported in the self-study, there are 304 full-time faculty and 635 adjunct instructors: 58% of the full-time faculty have doctoral degrees. The distribution of teaching faculty by rank is Prof. 25.2%, Assoc. 20.6%, Assist. 39.5%, Instructor 4.3% and Lecturer 10.3%. The workload for full-time faculty is 27 hours/year. Full-time faculty teach 53% of the classes and the average class size is 24 students. A comprehensive Faculty Handbook is available as a resource guide and provides information concerning the College's structure, policies and procedures and many faculty rights and responsibilities. There are 17 academic department chairpersons, who are elected and serve as the executive officers of their departments. The Chief Librarian and Vice President of Student Affairs are directed to oversee their respective areas.

As a teaching college, full time teaching faculty teach, conduct research in pedagogy and/or in their discipline, design and maintain curriculum, perform academic advisement, and participate in governance. Faculty are expected to excel in teaching, provide service to the Department, College and the University, and conduct research. Faculty are responsible for developing courses, programs and curricula.

Decisions on faculty appointments, retention and tenure begin with a review conducted by the faculty member's department Personnel and Budget Committee (P & B). Recommendations are forwarded to a college-wide P & B Committee for action and vote. Actions are forwarded successively to the President, the Chancellor and CUNY BOT for final approval. In June 2006, New York State Education law was amended resulting in a seven-year tenure clock. All untenured tenure-track faculty have reassigned time from classroom responsibilities over their first five years to facilitate scholarly activities.

The full-time faculty of QCC are very well qualified, with extensive experience in higher education. In interviews, they uniformly affirmed their commitment to the College Mission and student success; students were enthusiastic in their praise of full-time and adjunct faculty, in interviews and on formal evaluations of instruction.

Unionized adjunct faculty are evaluated by students, colleagues and department chairs. Adjunct faculty are similarly well qualified and experienced, with evidence from frequent evaluations that their teaching effectiveness is comparable to their full-time colleagues. Many adjunct faculty interact with students outside of class although they are not necessarily compensated for non-instructional activities. Teaching adjuncts who are assigned a teaching workload of six or more contact hours are paid for one additional hour per week to engage in professional assignments like office hours, professional development, participation in campus activities, and training.

Faculty participate widely in local departmental initiatives, serve on college-wide committees and constitute the majority voice in the Academic Senate. The Senate also represents all College constituencies and is the principal component in the governance structure of QCC.

### **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

A significant majority of full-time faculty are involved in continuous professional development and pedagogical research activities that inform them of best practices, new skills and methodologies that are used to improve their classroom instruction and programs. QCC faculty have received PSC-CUNY Research Awards with a funding percentage of over 80%. The number of grants awarded to QCC through faculty efforts has increased steadily over the past decade.

Faculty actively support the mission and goals of the College through their active participation in governance.

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) represents a commitment from the College to support professional development for faculty interested in enhancing their pedagogical skills.

QCC has recognized that the ethnic distribution of the full-time faculty varies greatly from the ethnic distribution of the student body and has made a serious commitment to increase the percentage of tenure track minority faculty.

**Suggestions for improvement:**

The Team concurs with the Self-Study recommendation to continue its efforts to increase the number of diverse faculty.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Requirements:**

None

**Standard 11: Educational Offerings *and* Standard 12: General Education Standard**

The institution meets these standards.

**Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

The QCC technology fee is used to employ student assistants in over two dozen departments, including the Academic Computing Center. Students learn how to effectively use the software from different courses in order to facilitate learning for the students who patronage the center.

Over 2,500 students are currently using the e-portfolio format to amass information on their academic, personal and professional accomplishments. Over 200 faculty members have participated in workshops administered by the Academic Computing Center, instructing counselors and instructional faculty in the use of the e-portfolio process.

A QCC staff member is participating in the CUNY, system-wide committee on Academic Computing. Along with a diverse group of colleagues, he is sharing best practices and exploring comprehensive solutions to perennial issues pertaining to academic applications of current and emerging technologies.

As part of CUNY, academic computing and library services have been able to take advantage of reduced hardware and software costs.

QCC was singled out from its five sister community colleges to participate in beta testing for CUNY First, which will integrate student and fiscal services.

The administration is to be commended for its attention to student requests about their needs as noted in the adjustment of class schedules to alleviate a parking dilemma.

Resource allocations appear to be sufficient to meet the current needs for existing and proposed academic programs.

There is recognition that there has been a disjointed approach to funding special programs/projects/initiatives. As a result, a more cohesive strategic planning process is being inaugurated for fiscal year 2010 to ensure consistency in the planning/budget arrangement and the corresponding alignment with the QCC mission.

QCC has developed ten general educational competencies which all students graduating with an associate's degree are expected to demonstrate. These include: communication skills; analytical and quantitative reasoning; information and technology literacy; collaborative skills; values differentiation; integration of knowledge and understanding; understanding of core concepts in science, social sciences, and history, the humanities and the arts.

The general education descriptions and requirements are listed in the 2008-09 online college catalog.

Some reviews are completed internally and others are reviewed by outside accrediting organizations.

There is college-wide participation in the design and development of courses.

There is a variety of services/activities to support the educational offerings.

The Library administrator and professional staff have extensive academic training (most have at least one degree beyond the MLS).

A collection of print and non print media which supports the academic and recreational needs of the students and college personnel.

Cooperative services with the CUNY libraries.

Academic support centers such as: the Basic Skills Learning Center; Mathematics & Science Learning Center; Campus Learning Center, Campus Writing Center; Academic Computer Center; CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP); Port of Entry Program (for Asian students not enrolled in ESL) provide services to QCC students.

### **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

Faculty, staff and administrators collaborate in the formulation and execution of innovative practices that have been proven through extensive research to engage students and to foster a climate of student achievement.

Budgets are allocated for experimentation with practices such as service learning and Writing Across the Curriculum.

Strategies are being examined to institutionalize essential programs that were initially grant funded.

Development and revision through several programs over ten years have resulted in design of six freshman academies. The freshman academies will provide intensive academic and student support services for all first-time, full-time students. Two academies are currently operating and the others

will be launched in the fall of 2009. The college has hired an outside consultant to help develop a plan for assessment of the freshman academies' programs.

Faculty in various disciplines collaborate with each other in the Writing in the Discipline/Writing Across the Curriculum initiatives (WID/WAC) as well as the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CETL).

It is noteworthy that the support initiatives publish informative brochures and handouts about their programs.

The extensive use of technology and the many links on the college web site expand students' access to information about the various services.

### **Suggestions for improvement:**

The information literacy initiative must be promoted so that it truly becomes an 'across the curriculum' activity and the role of the librarians and classroom teachers are clearly defined and known to the college community – students and personnel.

The library, which is in the midst of a renovation project should include appropriate signage to direct patrons and identify the contents of the bookstacks.

Each course/program/curriculum review should contain a library review which includes the library's ability support the initiative –materials, staff, and budget.

### **Recommendations:**

None

### **Requirements:**

None

## **Standard 13: Related Educational Activities**

The institution meets this standard

### **Summary of Evidence and Findings:**

Certificate programs in Continuing Education are growing as a direct result of market research that identifies needs within the broader community. Other strategies have also rendered positive results: the early release of the non-credit catalog, decreased pricing, and offering targeted discounts.

Market research demonstrated that youth and seniors were underserved in the general population. Continuing Education answered with expanded programming: The Kids College and the 50 + Club.

The new director of Continuing Education is moving into the middle schools and high schools to offer specialized programming.

There are myriad English as a Second Language programs under the QCC umbrella.

There is a close relationship between the faculty who teach in specific academic departments and their associated academic support centers.

Many academic support centers have peer tutors as well as faculty members.

### **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:**

The director of Continuing Education has established an Advisory Planning Committee (APC) to enlist the support of business and industry in advising QCC faculty and staff on curriculum enhancements and programming options. The new APC will expand the networking, marketing, and promotional capabilities of the Continuing Education area.

The CUNY Language Immersion Program is to be commended for its attempt to address the needs of immigrant students who have been enrolled in the CUNY system but who don't have the requisite English literacy skills to enroll in the Basic Educational Skills Department. Students receive 25 hours of instruction per week for \$180 per semester. The curriculum is thematically based, permitting the acquisition of essential communication/language skills (reading, speaking, and writing).

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is supporting the College's objective of instituting a culture of pedagogical research. Through ongoing dialogues, workshops, and readily available resources, CETL is enhancing the professional development opportunities for faculty across the spectrum of disciplines.

The Basic Educational Skills Department has a cadre of dedicated faculty who initiate programs that lead to collaboration with academic departments. For example, some "high impact" activities, which will become pivotal components of the Freshman Academies, originated in the Basic Skills Educational Department, including service learning, learning communities, and Reading Across the Curriculum.

### **Suggestions for improvement:**

Although the myriad ESL programs appear to address the needs of specific populations of students, there is little evidence of the linkages between the programs in the printed materials. It would be advisable to have schematics which depict the intersection between the various levels of programming. This would benefit the students, faculty and staff within QCC, as well as the casual observers. Given the diversity of the student body (nearly 50% of non-native speakers of English) and the burgeoning diversity of the surrounding County, it is important to move in this direction.

In the same way that the Continuing Education division is utilizing market research to determine new programmatic offerings, the credit areas of the College should embark on a similar strategy to determine labor market needs as part of the comprehensive Academic Plan.

Hire a veteran faculty, staff member from within the staffing of QCC who could coordinate the following activities which are now fragmented: departmental scheduling, the advertising of faculty development activities, the promotion of learning communities and Freshman Academies, and the identification and recruitment of students from the Honors Program.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Requirements:**

None

**Standard 7: Institutional Assessment and Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning:**

Essential to meeting Standards 7 and 14 is the presence of an “organized, systematized, and sustained process” of assessment. (MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence). While there is evidence that QCC has plans for institutional and student learning assessment at several levels of the institution, the institution lacks an organized, systematized, and sustained process. The committee concludes that the majority of the component pieces necessary to fully meet the standards are evident but that they are not linked into an organized, systematized, and sustained process.

**Description of assessment related documents appearing in the self study:**

There is evidence that assessment of mission and institutional effectiveness includes both CUNY system-defined indicators and QCC locally-defined assessments. The system-defined measures are described in the Performance Management Plan (PMP). Locally-defined assessments of student learning are described at four levels: course, department (teaching and non-teaching), program, and institution.

In the QCC 2004 Periodic Review Report it is stated that “over the past five years, the College’s Assessment Committee has focused its efforts on developing a method to assess student learning outcomes in general education, in academic programs, and across individual courses.” The Self study shows that locally defined assessments are planned and reported through several documents that are intended to feed one another. These documents can be described as follows: At the course level, assessments are defined by faculty and reported using a standard format prescribed by the QCC Course Assessment Form. There are two versions of the template used for reporting department assessment results. One template is for use in reporting assessment done in the context of academic departments and the other for assessment done in non-teaching areas. This template for reporting department assessment activities on an annual basis is called the QCC Planning Report: Teaching/Non-Teaching Departments. There is little difference in the assessment related component of the two versions of the templates. The annual teaching department report template includes a summary of course assessment results and action plans while the annual non-teaching department report template includes a summary of assessment results and action plans for departmental functions and services evaluated. The results of the course level assessment are summarized in the annual department report.

At the institution level, assessment is described in a document called the College Assessment Plan Schedule of Assessment Surveys Questionnaires and Data Reports. At this level assessment includes analysis of graduation and transfer data as well analysis of student performance on the CUNY Proficiency Examination (CPE).

**Findings:**

While there is evidence of assessment at several levels of the institution the process does not appear to be “organized, systematized, and sustained.”

Evidence of course-level assessment provided to the visiting team did not clearly indicate how courses were selected for assessment. Nor is there evidence of a schedule of course assessment. In the Fall 2003/Spring 2004 Pilot Course Assessment Project it states that twenty-three courses from fifteen departments were assessed in fall 2003 or spring 2004. Similar summary data regarding the number of courses assessed does not exist for the years since that report. Review of the 2005-2008 annual department reports indicates that some departments continue to regularly assess courses while others do not.

Middle States Standards 7 and 14 also require that institutions provide “clear, visible, and convincing evidence” of student learning. The template for QCC Course Assessment Form provides examples, to the user of the template, of convincing evidence. The corresponding course assessment reports were not available in the evidence room. When asked for course assessment documents, the institution was unable to provide them. While the annual program reports available in the evidence room contained a summary of course assessment results, convincing evidence is not consistently provided in the program summaries of course assessment.

The self study states that “all departments have instituted or are in the process of instituting assessments of their progress in achieving general education and curricular objectives. This has been embedded into program review since 2004-2005.” A few program review documents were available in the evidence room. Inspection of the assessment section of the 2006 A.A. degree program in liberal Arts and Sciences revealed a plan for assessment as well as evidence of data collected and actions suggested. Since the Program Review is on a five year cycle follow-up on resulting actions need to be tied back to the appropriate annual department report or course assessment. For example, an attempt to follow one program review action back to the annual and course reports did not come to fruition. Inspection of the assessment section of the 2008 Degree Program in Fine and Performing Arts demonstrated evidence of assessment planning but did not provide evidence that assessment had been carried out.

At the institution level there is evidence of use of CUNY system-defined data. The PMP data, which includes placement and exit-from-remediation data, as well as results from the CUNY proficiency examination, is reviewed by the institution. While the self study suggests that the Annual Completion Report “aligns CUNY’s master plan and the college’s strategic plan with outcomes across departments, program, and divisions,” there is a lack of evidence of sustained use of locally-defined institutional assessment data. Institution level assessment was reported in the 2004 Periodic Plan Review Report. There is no evidence that this or a similar report has been made since 2004. No evidence of either a new or updated assessment plan was found. The Assessment Committee which developed these criteria and templates for this plan stopped functioning around 2006 and no evidence could be found of any college-wide assessment activity since then.

The current on-line course offerings do not contain any plan for assessment.

**Suggestion:**

The Team suggests that the College gain expertise by familiarizing itself with best practices in the area of assessment.

## **Recommendations:**

In order to develop, implement, and document an organized and sustained assessment process that evaluates and improves student learning as well as the achievement of institutional mission and goals, the institution needs to:

1. Create a conceptual framework for assessment describing the relationship between assessments at all levels.
2. Establish criteria for selection of courses to be assessed. These criteria may include department specific criteria.
3. Establish and implement a schedule of course assessment.
4. Include in annual department reports convincing evidence of course embedded assessment.
5. Establish clear links between the goals selected for assessment at the course, department, and program levels.
6. Utilize an appropriate departmental annual report to report on follow-up assessment of actions appearing in the assessment component of Program Review reports.
7. Establish a clear link between mission and assessment of institutional effectiveness. Reporting on institutional effectiveness needs to be done on a regular basis.
8. Create a central repository for assessment data.
9. Assure that the assessment process is monitored and reviewed for effectiveness.
10. Ensure that all departments, teaching and non-teaching, are participating in assessment of student learning, including assessment of distance learning.