Bronx Community College
of The City University of New York

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BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS CUNY

The North Instructional Building Library

Summary of Middle States Self-Study and Major Recommendations
February 2009

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Standard 1: Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission, goals development and assessment are formalized as part of the College's Institutional Planning Model (IPM), which has been operational since 1999. The current *BCC Strategic Plan* includes revised mission and vision statements, four ongoing goals and five strategic directions. The plan was developed by the Coordinating Planning Council, included broad campus-wide involvement, and was approved by the College Senate on December 8, 2006.   The BCC mission statement succinctly reflects the comprehensive purposes of the College and is focused on the students we serve. The new vision statement represents our aspirations to "graduate students who are prepared to live within, profit from, and contribute to a 21st-century global environment marked by diversity, change and expanded opportunities for learning and growth."

All ongoing goals and campus efforts are directly related to the BCC Strategic Plan and the City University of New York (CUNY) performance indicators, which are measured every year and form the basis of annual assessment and planning reports, which are completed at the college-wide, divisional and department levels. The College has repeatedly demonstrated the capacity to set and meet rigorous goals designed to strengthen the institution and its outcomes and can document concrete achievements for each of the five strategic directions identified in 2006.   While there is strong campus-wide consensus regarding the mission and goals, as well as a formal infrastructure for ongoing planning, assessment and renewal, the quality of some individual plans (including implementation strategies and assessment efforts) could be improved with constructive feedback and oversight.

Major Recommendations

1.1   Coordinating Planning Council (CPC) should continue to regularly revisit, reaffirm and/or update the mission, vision, goals and strategic directions.
1.2   Formalize a process to: (1) monitor the College's progress in responding to these Middle States Self-Study recommendations; (2) review and critique various strategic plans to assure correspondence with College's Plan; and (3) review and critique operational plans to assure inclusion of activities, timelines, expected outcomes, responsibilities and feedback mechanisms.
1.3   Balance external demands and new initiatives, while maintaining a clear focus on core mission and objectives.

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal

BCC engages in a continuous process of planning and analysis, rigorously implemented following the last self-study process. BCC is guided by an Institutional Planning Model (IPM) that facilitates comprehensive and cyclical planning, assessment, goals and outcomes analysis, and budgeting involving the entire college community. The College has implemented procedures that make resource allocation, budget management and reporting processes more transparent, while expanding the overall participation of the college community to allow direct consultation, review and input by essential governance bodies.

The College has made much progress toward the implementation of "all-funds budgeting," which is designed to maximize the organization and allocation of fiscal resources as well as the documentation of funding decisions, allocations and outcomes. The College has effectively invested in developing institutional resources designed to support effective planning and resource allocation decisions, including administrative systems development (Information Technology –IT) and the support of analytical capacity building (Institutional Research –IR). Strong analysis contributed to success in securing significant funding of $102 million to build a much-needed, state-of-the-art classroom building and library. Formal institutional assessments (such as the *Assessment Study of the Use of Technology in Courses and Programs*) contributed to the acquisition of $2.75 million in Title V funds to support an Instructional Technology program. The program includes an ongoing assessment mechanism to inform instructional technology and facility resource allocation decisions. Significant investments are needed to support facility and infrastructure improvements. Use of ongoing, structured, high-quality evaluations should contribute to more effective use of resources with increasingly better results.

Major Recommendations

2.1   Continue to improve procedures to support evidence-based decision-making and communications regarding the rationale for those decisions.
2.2   Continue to strengthen strategic human, fiscal and facility resource management procedures, plans and evaluations.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The College's tax levy operating budget is funded annually via the CUNY Community College Allocation Model, in which City University funds community colleges using a series of formulas based on a 3-year weighted average of FTE (full-time equivalent) students. Since 1999, the College has experienced steady enrollment growth along with a corresponding increase in our budget. Increased funding has supported significant hiring of new faculty members and student support staff. Over the past decade, the Business Office has reengineered many business processes in order to improve efficiencies, while maintaining appropriate internal controls to safeguard the College's assets and reduce institutional risk.

In response to a major theme in the College's previous Self-Study, BCC has made substantial gains in supporting the development of administrative and academic technology infrastructure, equipment, staffing, and training, as well as the development of electronic services and administrative tools. Significant resources have been acquired (through grant funding) and allocated to support faculty development as part of the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Instructional Technology. A reorganized and expanded fundraising unit of the College has also been supported and a Strategic Development Plan created, with the goal of raising $11 million by the end of 2012. Significant investments continue to be needed for facilities and infrastructure.

Major Recommendations

3.1   Vigorously continue efforts to secure capital funding by influencing city and state legislators in order to address infrastructure issues.
3.2   Continue to increase fundraising efforts and dollars.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

Bronx Community College is part of the City University of New York, which is the largest urban public university in the country and is comprised of 23 institutions, including six community colleges. CUNY is governed by a Board of Trustees. At BCC, the College Senate is the deliberative governmental body. The membership includes faculty, administration and students. The Senate and each of its standing committees are governed by the Governance Plan, while the Curriculum Committee and Committee on Academic Standing have their own codification. Revisions to the Governance Plan are made as needed. There is transparency in the rules and processes that govern the Senate and its committees. For example, the codification of the Academic Standing Committee is posted on the BCC website. Important decisions have been made under this shared governance plan. One example involved the adoption of a new Academic Standing Policy in Spring 2005, which provided new guidelines for placing students on probation and suspension and providing interventions for these students. The policy was passed by the Committee on Academic Standing and the Senate, following a detailed impact analysis that was utilized by these bodies in their decision making.   Use of assessment practice and results should continue to inform governance decisions and oversight of their implementation.

Major Recommendations

4.1   Create orientation procedures for all new members of governing body and associated
         committees.
4.2   Emphasize efforts to evaluate the potential implications of governance decisions.
4.3   Strengthen oversight of the implementation and assessment of governance decisions.

Standard 5: Administration

The President of the College is responsible for maintaining and enhancing the educational standards and excellence of the College. The President fulfills these responsibilities by the general supervision of the Executive Cabinet, the Executive Council, and the College Personnel and Budget Committee. The President also regularly consults with the Student Government Association and the Professional Staff Congress. The President supervises the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Student Development, and Institutional Advancement, as well as the following senior staff members: the Executive Assistant to the President and Affirmative Action Officer, the Dean of Faculty, the Associate Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment, the Labor Designee and Legal Counsel, and the Special Assistant to the President for Community and Public Relations. An Administrative Council (including all administrative department heads) was created in 1999 to facilitate information dissemination, improve communication and increase collaboration between administrative departments. The topics of the Council have included: risk assessment and management, workplace ethics, performance appraisals, and the use of logic models to improve effectiveness in the workplace, among others.

Major Recommendations

5.1   Human resource development, management and performance assessment should be
         incorporated into the ongoing planning and assessment efforts of the College.
5.2   Performance appraisals at all levels should include multiple measures and should differentiate
         between high, adequate and low performance.

Standard 6: Integrity

As a public institution and part of the City University of New York, BCC is in compliance with all federal, New York State and CUNY regulations, policies and laws. BCC complies with the NY State Ethics Commission and the Public Officers Law and is subject to CUNY financial accountability and control systems. Student discipline policy and procedures are mandated by both NY State Education Law and the BCC Campus Behavior Code. BCC has a functioning Ethics Committee, which was established to raise ethics awareness and to draft an Ethics Statement based on campus-wide input and deliberation. BCC is committed to the communication and disclosure of all BCC and CUNY policies to faculty, students, and staff. The BCC Catalog is available online in a .pdf format. Despite an institutional commitment to support academic and intellectual freedom, there remain concerns among some faculty about the use of web filtering devices that are utilized to protect the campus network.

> **Major Recommendations**

6.1   All College operations should incorporate guidelines consistent with Sarbanes-Oxley, including; "eliminate conflicts of interest; establish effective checks and balances; insist on disclosure, transparency and openness; assure effective oversight; mandate accountability; be forward thinking."

6.2   Continue efforts to complete and achieve consensus about a campus ethics statement.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Bronx Community College has developed a robust assessment infrastructure, anchored in a well-staffed, professional Institutional Research (IR) office. The IR office can draw upon a continually developing technological capacity to generate and manipulate data for analysis. At the institutional level, organizational reforms and associated review processes—all of them established subsequent to the last Middle States self-study—ensure that annual reports are written and systematically circulated among executive and managerial personnel drawn from across the College.

Overall, analysis undertaken for this self-study reveals a mixed campus landscape. Careful, data-driven assessment that leverages the institution's IR capacities has entered operational routines in a number of areas, and has at times resulted in positive policy and operational change. Elsewhere, assessment remains confined to the surface rather than penetrating to the core, and limits itself to the description of activity rather than analysis of its effectiveness.

> **Major Recommendations**

7.1   All operations of the College should include clear evidence of assessment and its application in decision-making.

7.2   Improvement plans should include clearly articulated timelines, accountabilities, anticipated outcomes and follow-up mechanisms.

7.3   The College should continue to support the development, systematic utilization and evaluation of electronic tools to improve individual, departmental and institutional effectiveness and efficiency.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

BCC is strongly committed to its "open access" mission and to serving the academic needs of its students, who are among the most diverse and at-risk post-secondary student populations. While incoming students demonstrate greater basic skill deficiencies and more personal barriers to academic success than their CUNY counterparts, BCC graduate outcomes (including CUNY Proficiency Exam Pass Rates, job placement rates, senior college transfer rates, first-semester senior college GPA and retention rates) are equal to or better than the CUNY , state and national averages. While retention and graduation rates remain a challenge for the College, BCC rates are comparable to the national averages. Several initiatives are underway, as part of the College's *Strategic Plan* and *Campaign for Success,* to improve student performance and persistence. Informed by a detailed analysis, BCC revised the Academic Standing Policy in Spring 2005 in order to inform students immediately about their academic standing after each semester of coursework at the College. As expected, the initial implementation of this policy   negatively impacted enrollment, but we are now observing an improvement in the academic performance (and academic standing) of students at all levels.

Major Recommendations

8.1   Continue to support the development, systematic utilization and evaluation of electronic tools to advance student success and persistence.

8.2   Implement a plan to assess, track and advise the large number of allied health aspirants who may not meet the rigorous entrance criteria.

8.3   Clearly articulate and differentiate: (1) the roles and responsibilities of counselors, faculty and academic advisors; and (2) the particular groups of students serviced by each with respect to academic advisement.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

There are a variety of student outreach methods, including BCC broadcasts, the BCC website, the online College Catalog, the Freshman Handbook, the student planner, the student newspaper (*The Communicator*) and electronic communications. Collaboration between several campus departments created OSSES (One Stop Shop eServices) online support services, which enables students to view course selections, register, pay for classes, view transcripts and grades, communicate directly with professors and classmates, and access an array of other resources including advisement forms and BCC email accounts. Most recently, an early electronic attendance alert system has been implemented – which may be related to a college-wide increase in course pass rates (of 3 percentage points) and a corresponding decrease in withdrawal rates (of 3 percentage points). BCC students have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of co-curricular activities, including student government, clubs, and study abroad opportunities. Academic supports are provided in a variety of venues, including the Academic Success Center (academic advisement and referrals), the Writing Center, Mathematics Lab, departmental tutoring, etc. The freshmen seminar course (OCD 01) is due for a full assessment and possible revision. A systematic mechanism for assessing student needs and the effectiveness of student services is also in order.

Major Recommendations

9.1   Analyze and identify learning objectives, delivery modes and evaluation mechanisms for a first-year seminar course and/or experience.

9.2   Improve communication between student service departments and with students and faculty so that information is clear, accurate and timely.

9.3   Systematize and organize (1) processes for assessing student needs, interests and satisfaction; (2) reporting and communicating results; (3) development of plans in response to results; (4) oversight of implementation of actions plans; and (5) evaluation of results.

Standard 10: Faculty

BCC has significantly increased and diversified its distinguished faculty body over the past several years. Among all full-time faculty, 39% are from minority groups and 46% are female. The annual BCC faculty and staff satisfaction survey traditionally marks "multicultural respect" with the greatest satisfaction results of any category on campus. In addition to their excellent teaching credentials, BCC faculty members are expected to demonstrate scholarly research credentials for purposes of tenure and promotion. The annual report of faculty scholarship exhibits the books, articles, and presentations developed or presented by BCC faculty members. BCC faculty are evaluated by multiple measures, including student evaluation of faculty survey results, teaching observations, and chairperson evaluation. Promotion and tenure appointments are decided by the Personnel and Budget Committee. There are a wide variety of faculty development initiatives that are part of the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Instructional Technology. Faculty concerns include faculty salaries, balancing the multiple teaching, service and scholarship demands, and the need for greater clarification about the specific requirements for promotion and tenure.

Major Recommendations

10.1   Continue to invest in effective strategies to recruit and retain high caliber faculty members.

10.2   Continue to provide orientation for new faculty that clearly outlines expectations for teaching excellence, service and scholarship with respect to promotion and tenure decisions.

10.3   Consider the multiple demands (teaching, research, service) on faculty time in planning new initiatives.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

Consistent with the BCC comprehensive mission to provide both transfer and career preparation for our students, slightly more than one-half of BCC students are enrolled in transfer programs (such as Liberal Arts), with the remaining students aspiring to a terminal degree (such as Nursing, Media Technology, and Automotive Technology).   The quality and rigor of the curriculum is assured in a variety of ways. Standard assessments occur at various levels, including: the requirement for all students to demonstrate basic skill proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics examinations before entering more advanced coursework; the requirement for all students to pass the CUNY Proficiency Exam (a rising junior test) as a graduation requirement; and standard assessments across the curriculum in high-impact courses such as Freshmen Composition and Introduction to Psychology. Currently BCC has more than 40 articulation agreements in place, which are essential to ensuring smooth transitions for senior college transfer. In addition, CUNY guarantees that any student who receives an A.A. or A.S. degree in the CUNY system can transfer the full 60 credits to a baccalaureate degree at any of the CUNY four-year colleges. Historically, even terminal degree students aspire to and enroll in senior colleges upon completion of an A.A.S. degree. A.A.S. graduates who transfer also perform competitively in the CUNY senior colleges compared to other community college transfer students. The majority of career programs have advisory boards that provide current updates on the respective industry trends. In addition, several programs (Nursing,

Radiologic Technology, Paralegal Studies, Business Programs, and Engineering) are externally accredited. The quality of BCC academic programs is internally reviewed in several ways, including measurement of student performance on the CUNY Proficiency Exam, performance on national exams (such as the National Nursing and Radiologic Technology Exams), post-graduate performance at senior colleges, and interviews and surveys of alumni and their employers. These measures are reviewed annually as part of the annual assessment and planning efforts.

Major Recommendations

11.1   Continue to monitor the currency and comprehensiveness of the curriculum in the context of workplace and transfer expectations.

11.2   Establish a campus-wide approach to developing new curricula, with a streamlined process that responds to changing needs and conditions.

Standard 12: General Education

BCC has a longstanding history of requiring all degree students to complete a foundation of courses that emphasize essential skills and knowledge, including courses in the humanities, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences. BCC initiated a "proficiency based" general education model, designed to embed general education objectives and proficiencies throughout the curriculum. Following a rigorous analysis and campus-wide discussion, the College Senate adopted a General Education mission statement and proficiencies in February 2004 to emphasize General Education goals for all students in all curricula. In the first two years of implementation, every department participated in an effort to develop general education exercises that were compiled into two books, available on the BCC website. In order to further broaden the General Education effort, 3 high-impact courses (Composition and Rhetoric I, History of the Modern World, and Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication) have recently been redesigned to incorporate essential general education elements. Current efforts include the redesign of two additional high-impact courses (Introduction to Art and Introduction to Psychology). In addition to incorporating general education within disciplines, there are additional efforts to incorporate general education across disciplines. These include Writing across the Curriculum, Quantitative Reasoning across the Curriculum, and a Global Learning Initiative. The framework for Periodic Academic Program and Department Review has been recently revised to include an identification and discussion of General Education learning objectives that are integrated with program goals and course objectives, and an explanation of how this integration occurs.

Major Recommendations

12.1   Coordinate the various components of the general education effort, including the mission statement and all proficiencies.

12.2   Further develop institution-wide identification of learning objectives and assessments for the proficiencies of personal growth, professional development and information literacy.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

Bronx Community College offers a wide array of programs and activities that support the mission and goals of the College. There are a variety of comprehensive programs that are designed to meet the needs of particular groups of students in the credit bearing programs. These include: the Learning Community Program, the College Discovery Program, the Freshmen Initiative Program and the Honors

Program, among others. Each program has its own goals and objectives, targeted student population and assessment design. There are also a wide array of continuing education programs (some of which are externally funded and others fee-based) that reflect community and business training needs in the Bronx. The programs address workforce development needs, offering unique contextualized learning opportunities, assisting students with general academic and language skills, including GED preparation as well as various programs for youth.

Major Recommendations

13.1   Coordinate, expand and/or bring to scale proven strategies that improve first-year student success.

13.2   Explore methods of continued support for developing skills and proficiencies beyond the first year.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The College has taken large strides toward building student learning assessment expertise and experience. Beginning in 2001-02, a comprehensive approach to instituting effective academic assessment of student learning across the curriculum was initiated, which included the creation of a campus-wide academic assessment committee and a focus on raising academic assessment consciousness and capability across the campus. The first years of effort involved primarily course assessment efforts. More recently a "project" model approach was pursued from 2005-2008, which yielded several valuable initiatives, both in individual courses and in degree programs. These projects resulted in positive, demonstrable impact on instructional practice. Assessment has been introduced and practiced in all academic areas, and a significant cadre of faculty have "bought in" to the concept and understand its benefits in concrete, practical terms. Still, much educative work remains to be done to overcome continued resistance and to establish assessment as routine academic practice.

The next phase of BCC's assessment efforts will address the latter goal and ensure the "routinization" of assessment by integrating it into periodic department self-study and program review. Rewritten protocols focus self-studies and reviews much more strongly on information gathering and analysis that supports strengthening institutional understanding of student learning.

Major Recommendations

14.1   Continue to promote high-quality and meaningful assessment practice with sufficient and targeted fiscal resources resulting in improved student learning.

14.2   Further develop General Education assessment with expansion of the pilot e-portfolio project and/or capstone courses/experiences.

14.3   Assure that student learning outcomes assessment remains a central element in periodic departmental self-studies and degree program reviews.