



# Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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## Team Report to the Commission on Higher Education

**Bronx Community College**

**Dates of Evaluation: *March 24 – 27, 2019***

**The Evaluation Team Representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

### *Section A: Team Members, Titles, and Institutional Affiliation*

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***Section B: Institutional Representatives at the Time of Visit***

**Officers of the Institution at the time of the visit:**

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William C. Thompson, Jr.

***Section C: Team Findings***

**Standard I: Mission and Goals**

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

### 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:

BCC's mission states that the College "serves students of diverse backgrounds, preparations and aspirations." In conjunction with the college's vision, the mission synthesizes the institution's educational philosophy to advance students' academic and career goals. The mission and vision were upheld as part of the college's strategic planning process during 2012-14. The current strategic plan, Building a Community of Excellence (2015-2020), was unanimously approved by the college senate in December 2014, following a strategic planning process characterized by broad participation and involvement. The process included a campus-wide survey and focus groups to elicit input on the mission and goals.

A primary focus of BCC's work during the current strategic plan has been the expansion of ASAP (Accelerated Study in Associate Programs). The program has been championed nationwide as a model for creating optimal conditions for student success and completion in community colleges. BCC's administration, faculty and staff have worked diligently at scaling up the program while remaining aware of the need to serve all students including those who cannot meet the requirements to enroll in ASAP. There are a number of ways the College has relied on ASAP expansion as an "incubator" to spread best practices, reengineer internal processes, and innovate across the board. They include streamlining the admissions processes, reducing the advising ratio, adopting a more intrusive advising approach for all students, implementing Starfish as a tool for early alert and student tracking, and acquiring funding for the creation of a one-stop student support center.

Strategic planning at BCC is guided by the College's own Institutional Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment Model (IPBAM), which includes four key components: Contextual Assessment, Visioning and Strategic Planning, Operational Planning, and Outcomes Assessment. In addition, along with its sister institutions, the College participates in CUNY's strategic framework and its annual Performance Management Process (PMP). CUNY's PMP intersects with BCC's strategic planning model, but the two establish different sets of processes, objectives, and metrics.

BCC's vehicle for realizing its mission is the Strategic Plan, which contains seven goals, each of them supported by strategic objectives. These objectives, in turn, are used to inform annual goals and priorities, which are buttressed by allocated resources and reflected in concrete initiatives and activities involving faculty, staff, and students. On an annual basis, BCC produces college-wide reports explaining the work accomplished to meet the strategic goals from the prior year, followed by a list of anticipated challenges, goals, and priorities for the upcoming year.

While BCC college-wide reports present a broad, institutional perspective on annual progress towards implementation of the Strategic Plan, more detailed, department- and program-focused

evidence can be found in the annual academic department reports, administrative department reports, as well as in reports for specific programs such as ASAP and CLIP, the CUNY Language Immersion Program.

BCC's strategic goals are aligned with CUNY's strategic framework. According to this framework, the University sets performance goals and metrics for the upcoming academic year. Every CUNY college president establishes college-specific targets for each metric in dialogue with their executive teams and college constituencies. A reflection on the College's progress towards meeting its targets occurs at the end of each academic year, including identifying strengths and challenges. This process is partly documented in BCC's President Letters to the Chancellor.

CUNY's PMP appears to be rather global when considered as a mechanism to evaluate whether the College's is fulfilling its mission and goals, and whether faculty and staff are making progress in achieving the Strategic Plan. Even though there are clear, documented linkages between BCC strategic goals and CUNY's PMP goals, the comparison between the PMP metrics' annual targets and results does not constitute by itself a source of actionable information. Thus, the kind of concrete evidence and reflection included in the college-wide reports and department reports remains crucial to determine whether specific initiatives and activities to achieve the college's mission and goals are proving to be successful.

BCC's strategic goals and objectives put a strong emphasis on student learning and continuous improvement. The college community's efforts to achieve strategic goal five, in particular, led to the decision to develop a new Academic Master Plan (AMP), which will inform the next Strategic Plan. The AMP development involved in-depth analysis of academic programs, structures, and resources, resulting in the decision to pause enrollments in low enrollment programs, remove inactive programs, and revamp existing programs in need of improvement.

Scholarly activity and creative inquiry are also prominent in BCC's strategic goals and objectives, especially strategic goal three, objective three, "promote excellent teaching/scholarship (including scholarship of teaching) in promotion and tenure processes." BCC has also in place a robust professional development and mentorship system for faculty, including the New Faculty Seminar (NFS) and the First Year Seminar (FYS), both of which create opportunities for faculty to advance the scholarship of teaching and learning. These opportunities are further expanded by a variety of faculty grants and scholarship programs.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- The ASAP program has become a nationwide examples of best practices to improve student success and completion in community colleges, and it has been leveraged by the college community as a catalyst for institutional redesign.
- The College's three-year graduation rate has increased steadily from 7% for the fall 2006 entering cohort to 20% for the fall 2015 entering cohort.

### **Recommendation:**

- Conduct a thorough review of the mission prior to the development of the new strategic plan.

### **Requirements of Affiliation:**

In the Team’s judgement, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation #7 and 10.

### **Standard II: Ethics and Integrity**

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

In the Team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

### 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:

As evidenced by its self-study, Bronx Community College (BCC) embraces and values respect, integrity, engagement, excellence and empowerment. While functioning as a “unit” of the City University of New York (CUNY), BCC endorses the University’s policies and procedures based on the following criteria:

Faculty has access to a discussion on academic freedom outlined in the September 2009 document titled, University Faculty Senate (UFS) Statement on Academic Freedom. Included in this document is the definition of academic freedom, historic examples, peer review, due process, and shared governance. The CUNY-wide Committee on Academic Freedom, reporting to the UFS, monitors threats to academic freedom throughout CUNY. To BCC’s credit, the Committee on Academic Freedom was formed because of a change in the governance plan approved in January 2017 by the CUNY Board of Trustees. Faculty, Student Government Association (SGA) members, instructional staff, and an administrator appointed by the President serve on the Committee.

Access to discussion on freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, and intellectual property rights in accordance with CUNY, are published in the 2012 University-wide expressive conduct policy, the Academic Freedom Policy and the CUNY IP Policy respectively. These documents are available to faculty and students.

Bronx Community College takes pride in its culturally diverse student, faculty and staff population representing more than 100 countries. True to its mission to provide access to students from diverse backgrounds and prepare them for the world beyond college, it was recognized in 2017 in the *Chronicle of Higher Education’s* Mobility Report Card for its role in intergenerational mobility. Designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution, BCC is “ranked 6<sup>th</sup>

among associate-level colleges in social mobility” of “students whose parents were at the bottom of the 20% income levels and who reached the top 20% of individual earnings.” This ranking can be attributed to BCC’s goal to foster a climate of respect for all.

Interviews revealed that the institution has experienced communication issues that have impacted the distribution of key information to the entire BCC community as well as faculty and staff morale.

The institution employs a Chief Diversity Officer who reports to the President and oversees the Office of Affirmative Action, Compliance and Diversity. This office is responsible for distributing an annual Affirmative Action Plan and ensuring a climate of respect for all. Various groups on campus offer a number of activities that include The President’s Conversation Series and ethnic celebrations such as Hispanic Heritage Month.

As evidenced in an annual Faculty and Staff Survey, over the past three years (SP 16, SP 17 and SP 18), improvement of mutual respect and cooperation has continued. However, a 2015 survey conducted by the Harvard University Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) showed “low satisfaction among women and faculty of color with promotion and tenure outcomes”. A COACHE survey is in process for this semester.

To BCC’s credit, the hiring of women has increased to 48% from 43% over the last ten years. The hiring of full-time faculty of color has increased to 49% from 39% during the same period. The Team agrees that this is a remarkable accomplishment that can perhaps be attributed to assembling diverse search committees and “building a culture of common sense”. Despite this, concerns were raised regarding the transparency of the hiring process.

BCC has a well-established and documented grievance policy that addresses complaints from students, faculty and staff. The policy is web accessible in the Student Handbook, BCC catalog, and the student Consumer Information page under the Student Life tab. In addition, it is introduced to incoming students during New Student Orientation. The policies and procedures are guided by CUNY policies and BCC’s Academic Rules and regulations, all documented in the BCC catalog. Student complaints are handled across campus by the Office of Academic Affairs, department chairs, the Vice President for Student Success, the Financial Aid, Bursar’s and Office of Finance and Administration, the offices of Judicial Affairs, Student Life and Student Success, and the Admissions Office.

During the self-study, BCC recognized the need for a better system for handling student complaints. In consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Success, the IT Department created the Student Issue Resolution System (SIRS) designed to report, track resolve and analyze student complaints. To keep the number of hearings to a minimum, BCC conducts mediations to determine whether a formal judicial hearing is warranted. Formal hearings are a last option for students.

Academic complaints, such as grade appeals, are typically resolved at the department level, though are sometimes escalated to administration. The Division of Academic and Student Success has full responsibility for resolving escalated open issues, though within the context of applicable policies from CUNY and from the BCC Codification of Academic Rules and Regulations. The Division maintains complaint records, number of complaints and patterns and resolutions of complaints to upper management. With respect to academic integrity issues, it was revealed during an interview, that these issues may result in referral to the judicial process, but

this is not a constant. Judicial processes are engaged only when the integrity violation meets the standard in the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy that indicates disciplinary/judicial sanctions are appropriate. BCC prefers that academic and not judicial sanctions be applied.

The process for handling and resolving employee complaints is outlined in the collective bargaining agreements that are accessible on BCC's website, distributed by the Human Resources Department and the Office of Legal Affairs, and discussed during New Employee Orientation. Those employees represented by unions are instructional staff and classified employees. BCC works to ensure that complaints are handled in a timely, fair and equitable manner. A separate labor designee handles all labor and employment concerns on behalf of BCC.

BCC adheres to all CUNY guidelines and applicable laws related conflict of interest and ethics. The Conflict of Interest Policy is on the website and included in the Manual of General Policy, also accessible on the website. Multiple trainings are held for employees throughout the year that focus on ethics, unwarranted benefits, gifts, financial disclosures, zero tolerance policies, and conflicts of interest. New employees are educated on these matters during New Employee Orientation. BCC's ethics reports are included in CUNY's annual bulletins. The website includes the document, Responsible Conduct for Research published by CUNY.

BCC demonstrates a fair and inclusive work environment for students, faculty and staff. It adheres to CUNY's HUMAN RESOURCES Policies and Procedures regarding employment practices, employee evaluations and the separation of employees. The offices of Affirmative Action, Compliance and Diversity, Legal Affairs and Human Resources all play a role in ensuring fair and equitable practices.

The institution utilizes a BCC Mobile App to communicate accurate and up-to-date information about activities and critical resources to students (special events, campus email, and emergency numbers). BCC has engaged in "rebranding and relaunching" to improve aesthetics and raise its profile through social media. The inclusion of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, College Catalog, President's monthly reports, and consumer and security reports has promoted and heightened its transparency. All information shared with the public and through social media, is reviewed by a team of executives who ensure that materials are in line with College policies.

BCC offers multiple venues that include programs and financial aid workshops designed to educate students about eligibility for federal and local financial aid, and available resources for tuition, books and specialized services. Basic skills instruction is offered at no or minimal cost. In addition, the Accelerated Study in Associates Program (ASAP) and the College Discovery (CD) Program include help with tuition, book vouchers, academic support and Metro Cards. These types of support have resulted in higher completion rates. Students enrolled in the STEM program can enroll in related courses at no cost during the summer and winter sessions.

As noted in the self-study, BCC students remain financially challenged. Responses to the 2018 CUNY Student Experience Survey showed that 40% of household income falls below \$15,000; 37% face with hunger issues; and 68% deal with housing costs. Issues such as lack of academic progress, withdrawals and lack of financial aid result in financial liabilities for students and outstanding payments to the College.

The Student Consumer Information Guide available on BCC's website complies with full disclosure of information such as accreditation, licensing, student finances, enrollment statistics, graduation rates, student ratios, diversity and academic programs. The self-study report and the

College's Institutional Federal Compliance Report confirm that BCC is in compliance with Middle States' Requirements of Affiliation. The institution's "ethics-based and legal legislation and regulation have not required any major changes.

BCC participates in annual internal audits conducted by CUNY and in accordance with the NYC Comptroller's Directive #1, which focuses on principles of internal control. BCC also engages in an external audit of CUNY's financial statements and compliance with OMB Uniform Guidance. In addition, selected campuses are audited on a "rolling basis". Audits of BCC's entities are also audited by an external auditor including but not limited to the BCC Association and the BCC Foundation. All audited financials are reviewed and approved annually by the Board of Directors.

**Suggestions:**

- The Team recognizes BCC's challenges with respect to increasing the number of promotions and tenure for women and faculty of color and affirms their interest and willingness to show improvement in the 2019 COACHE survey.
- The Team affirms BCC's efforts to do a more efficient job of reporting, tracking and analyzing student complaints through the newly created SIRS.

**Recommendation:**

- The Team recommends that BCC refine their communication process that allows for the effective distribution of information college-wide to promote a climate of trust

**Requirements of Affiliation:**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation #7, 12, 13, and 14.

**Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

An institution provides students with learning experiences characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, administration, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:



Bronx Community College (BCC), a campus of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, states in its self-study that the institution holds “the strong belief that all of the students of diverse backgrounds, preparations and aspirations (at BCC) have the capacity to successfully master (the college’s) rigorous academic programs and succeed in subsequent academic and/or professional experiences.” The college’s mission statement implies and its student-centered strategic plan operationalizes this belief. This is further advanced through the institution’s participation in CUNY’s University Performance Monitoring system in general and particularly CUNY’s “college momentum” campaign. Beyond the written word, the dedication and commitment of the faculty, staff and administration were evident in the interviews and conversations held during the Team’s visit to campus.

BCC celebrates its highly credentialed full-time faculty, the majority of whom have doctoral degrees in their respective disciplines and/or a terminal degree in education. The institution’s emphasis on scholarship is strong, especially for a community college where, nationally, research and publishing are not often valued to such a degree. New full-time instructors are inaugurated into the faculty through a year-long seminar that builds a teaching-and-learning culture and establishes assessment as a core element of each instructor’s responsibilities. The University Performance Management Process reports the percentage of instructional full-time equivalencies in undergraduate courses delivered by full-time faculty at 56.6% for the 2016-2017 year. Changes in faculty workload will likely reduce these percentages, although BCC will likely continue to compare favorably to other CUNY institutions.

This year’s cohort of new full-time faculty are the institution’s fifth group to participate in BCC’s NFS designed to orient the instructors to BCC’s culture of assessment and introduce them to best practices in teaching and learning. The data gathered thus far indicates that NFS participation improves instructors’ ability to generate student satisfaction, increase student performance and retain students at a higher rate. The ePortfolio Faculty Seminar provides both new and veteran faculty with paid professional development on high-impact practices in teaching and learning and in assessment of student learning. Administrative and student support staff are similarly supported with workshops and training in assessment leading to improvements and innovations. The Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology (CTLT) monitors and supports professional development programming and, while reaching much of the full-time faculty with a large variety of programs, considers adjunct faculty underserved.

BCC has adopted the Pathways model as part of the CUNY system initiative. The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) model is the framework for assessing General Education proficiencies and is integrated into course-level and program-level assessment to monitor rigor across the curriculum. Degree Maps for each program are designed for full-time, on-time (two-year) degree completion. This optimistic completion schedule is supported through a significant expansion of the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) initiative, which provides academic and financial support to students as part of CUNY’s Academic Momentum campaign. Associated with the national “15 to Finish” campaign, BCC’s data demonstrates that more students can succeed with a larger course load, making them more likely to graduate quickly and less expensively. New York State’s Excelsior Scholarship supports this effort as well.

BCC communicates degree/program requirements in the college catalog, on advising sheets, and digitally through the DegreeWorks degree audit system. Through these and other interventions targeting special student populations, the institution seeks to provide the support network necessary for student success. Still, there is some concern on campus that there are student groups that are underserved. In addition, as the ASAP program advances toward its goal of

serving fully half of the student population at BCC, there are some stresses created by the bifurcation of the students. Programs like APEX (Advancing Part-Time Excellence), which applies ASAP-type supports to part time students, are designed to address this issue.

Degree programs are reviewed every seven years or as called for by external program accreditors. The Periodic Academic Review (PAR) includes a self-study, an external evaluator review, and an action plan to improve the student learning experience and synthesis of learning. BCC's Institutional Planning, Budgeting and Assessment Model (IPBAM) inform the comprehensive evaluation processes for the institution and are represented in the BCC Assessment Framework. The Annual Report and Plan is an academic department's year in review, addressing both student and faculty achievement in a department, including an assessment of how well the department met the prior year's goals, especially in terms of "closing the loop." The report summarizes assessment activities and results and establishes the next year's goals. Outcomes are to align with the Strategic Plan. The provost, associate dean and department chair use the PAR findings for planning, budgeting and personnel allocations as well as changes to curricula, student support, and departmental organization and structure.

BCC requires all degree students to complete courses in the humanities, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences in compliance with the New York State Education guidelines and follows the general education core "Pathways" structure implemented across CUNY.

### **Suggestions:**

- BCC is doing good work in assisting students in making progress at the College. The impressive improvement in the three-year graduation rate (from seven percent to twenty% over ten years) demonstrates that the interventions are working for the students who receive assistance. The Team affirms the institution's identification of the challenge of bringing these proven practices to scale. To the extent practical, the institution should prioritize this work to improve retention and completion rates for more students.
- The Team affirms the institution's identification of the challenge of expanding supports and programming for working adults. To the extent practical, the institution should seek ways to expand services to this important population through well-supported degree programs that can be completed through evening, weekend, and/or distance courses and non-credit continuing education and workforce development courses.
- The Team affirms the institution's interest in improving integrated programming for specific student populations (e.g. honors students, working adults, and probationary students).

### **Recommendations:**

- Considering the extent to which adjunct faculty are used for instruction, the Team recommends that the institution dedicate resources to part time faculty development.

### **Requirements of Affiliation:**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation #8, 9, 10 and 15.

## **Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience**

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributed to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

### Summary of Evidence and Findings

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

There is evidence in the College's strategic plan that the institution is meeting its mission. The College embraced a direction toward "Building a Community of Excellence" which included three goals that support the student experience: "empowering students to succeed", "deepening student learning" and "enhancing the Campus Environment".

The college's organization chart indicates that a learning culture is apparent through the organized partnership with Academic Affairs and Student Success in one division. An important manifestation of the support for students is the construction of North Hall and library. This space gave students a place where they can focus on their academic endeavors within the context of the college. This support center opened the way for the implementation of more support programs. Among them are orientations, First Year Program (FYP), Math tutorials, labs and workshops, ALP, Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), and College Discovery. According to interviews with students, North Hall improves the opportunity to study, access library materials, and interact with one another and socialize in the café. In addition, this beautiful space creates an environment for learning and growing into the seriousness of academe.

Students who take credit-bearing courses in writing and math are experiencing progress. Yet, an area of challenge that remains is student academic progress for those taking developmental coursework. The implementation of First Year Programs, summer success programs, and pre-college basic skills support programs exemplify that Bronx Community College provides a holistic approach to college. This college strives to remove the barriers to student success.

While the focus is on academic success, it is apparent that the College recognizes the need for personal support also. Through counseling, mentoring, Single Stop, coaching and childcare, the College realizes a holistic approach. In an interview with students, one student shared that she was not doing well and she was assigned to the ASAP program where she received added support, transportation assistance, intensive advisement and referrals to Single Stop where she further accessed SNAP for food assistance and other support which helped improve her grades. In addition, the College, based on data, supports special groups like males, veterans and targeted support when indicators showed that some groups perform on a lower scale than the general population. The College and its Information Technology (IT) department automated a system to determine specific programs (CUNY and Math Start, ASAP, CD) for which students were eligible during the onboarding process.

To support parents, a “drop in” childcare center provides care for 114 preschoolers as well as after school and evening care for 28 more children. The Center is supported by a \$1.4 million grant from the Federal government. The center integrates care for children with services for the family. In a collaborative approach, the Center establishes working relationships with college counselors, Single Stop and other services that support students through parenthood as well as through their academic challenges. Students can use computers, study, get a snack or ask for help with life issues through this comprehensive support service.

To exercise outreach, the College markets to the community and through its website. BCC is flexible in its admissions practices. The on-the spot admissions practice allows for the disparity in prospective students’ personal schedules. As students seek admissions, they are also informed about the myriad of programs that the college offers to assist and support them during their journey through the learning process.

Financial aid provides information and support for paying for college including financial aid, scholarships, grants and loans. Most students qualify for financial aid. There are also payment plans that help student when they do not qualify for aid. Many of the special programs have financial components. For instance, ASAP assists if a student’s aid package does not cover all expenses.

The recognition that the student experiences is not just about academics, but recognizes that human issues are also related to success, is apparent in the redesign efforts that encompass the emphasis on college operations, academics, and support in all areas. They assist other students to have their needs met.

Student leaders took their roles very seriously. They believe that their voices are heard. They lamented the need for upgraded computers that support them in labs and in class. Designated spaces for students on campus are lacking. They are working together with other students, staff and the president to help remedy this situation.

Among the student concerns are food insecurities among the student body. The food pantry, Single Stop and SNAP provide food stamps assist students when they are in need. They shared that they also help each other. They often schedule Student Government meetings so that when the meeting is over, students can take food with them so that they can have food on the weekend. Student Services staff is aware of this concern.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- The college is to be commended on implementing extensive support programs. BCC should also be commended for securing the \$1.4 million dollar grant for childcare programs that covers traditional day hours as well as evenings and weekends.

### **Challenges:**

- With enrollment having decreased over three percent, the challenge will be to improve success rates and retention to maintain enrollment numbers while finding new markets. The College has effectively implemented weekend and evening programs as well as stackable credentials that should contribute to these efforts.

- Another challenge is that students have many personal issues that take attention, collaborative support and intrusive and intensive advisement, counseling and other support.

**Suggestions:**

- While significant resources and effort are directed toward improving student success, BCC should be vigilant in monitoring the successes and pitfalls for all students.
- Redesign the advisement process to better support all of the students.
- While the Child Care Center is currently well funded, a sustainability plan should be developed.

**Recommendations:** None

**Requirements of Affiliation:**

In the Team's judgement, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation # 8 and 10.

**Standard V - Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

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: In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

BCC annually and periodically assesses all academic and non-academic programs and learning outcomes and uses the results for student learning and administrative improvements as it is emphasized in Standard V Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

The culture of assessment is evident at BCC with the enthusiastic faculty and staff conducting systematic assessment. The College has multiple processes for assessment such as General Education Assessment, Periodic Academic Review, Periodic Administrative Self-Study, and Institutional Assessment. BCC Strategic Goal 1, Objective 1 emphasizes the need to "Foster continuous improvement with use of analysis and evidence driving all academic, student support

and administrative decisions.” The College has several guidelines to assist the faculty and staff in assessing the effectiveness of the College, programs, and student learning outcomes (Assessment Plan and Guidebook, Guidelines for Periodic Academic Review, Periodic Administrative Self-Study Guidelines, as well as templates for preparing uniform reports). BCC also hosts systematic professional development opportunities, designed for faculty to have knowledge and skills to conduct an effective assessment of student learning such as the Assessment Day Program sponsored by Academic Affairs and the Assessment Council which was held in 2017 and 2018. Also, the mandatory year-long NFS has a classroom assessment project module that teaches new faculty members how to create and implement a classroom assessment project that assesses an aspect of a course. NFS participants present the findings at the BCC Faculty Day. The Outcome Assessment Council and Administrative Council are the assessment ambassadors in their departments.

Institutional Learning Outcomes were designed based on the CUNY Pathways General Education Learning Objectives and adopted in May 2016 to assess the high enrollment courses. Also, BCC has assessed general education student learning in critical thinking, analytic reasoning, communication, and problem-solving using the Collegiate Learning Assessment tool in spite of the fact CUNY stopped financing it. While student success and graduation rates increased due to the implementation of several strategic initiatives, students’ retention and completion rates data are the lowest in CUNY and below the national average.

Degree/Program Learning Outcomes were designed for program assessment. All programs clearly state program outcomes and are published on the public website and in the catalog and mapped with the institutional learning outcomes and the program’s mission statement. The academic programs are assessed periodically for an in-depth evaluation of the program based on data such as student’s enrollment and success progress with internal and external reviews to allow departmental reflection on the strength and weaknesses of the program with an action plan to improve student learning and overall program. The annual Program Assessment Reports are required to be submitted by all programs to the Provost. The Assessment Council coordinates this process.

The Periodic Review of Administrative Self Study was designed to assess the effectiveness of the non-academic departments. The guideline has clear criteria for internal self-study and external peer evaluation. This process utilizes the assessment results for an internal self-study followed by an external review. The assessment loop is closed by an action plan to improve student learning and/or the departmental operation. The supervisors are responsible for overseeing the on-going updates on the status of the action plan. The Internal Review Team uses a Review Rubric for evaluating all the PASS reports and provides feedback to the departments and its Vice President with commendations, recommendations, or questions. The College provides training for developing and identifying learning outcomes and appropriate assessment measures to the responsible staff for conducting the PASS.

**Commendations:**

- BCC is commended for an enthusiastic faculty and staff toward assessing student learning and administrative process with strong participation and collaboration among all academic departments and administrative units.
- The College has a strong institutional research department that provides timely data with analytical reports to the stakeholders. The Assessment Council and staff are supportive which has influenced the positive culture of assessment on campus.

**Suggestion:**

- The College should better utilize exciting technology for efficiently collecting assessment data.

**Recommendations:**

- The College should develop mechanisms to organize the assessment results in an easy-to-follow format and disseminate it to the college community in a timely manner.

**Requirements of Affiliation:**

In the Team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation # 8 & 9.

**Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

**The institution’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its missions and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.**

Bronx Community College appears to meet this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

The Team reviewed the self-study, institutional documents and interviewed faculty, staff and students and developed the following conclusions:

The allocation of institutional resources begins with the College's mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities. The College's Institutional Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment Model (IPBAM) provides an integrated process for planning and resource allocation in line with the annual CUNY Performance Management Process. The Strategic Plan (Building a Community of Excellence: 2015-2020) outlines the strategic direction for operational planning and resource allocation. The plan was developed through a college-wide collaborative process led by the President. Strategic planning priorities are established and identified as part of the budget process. The budget allocation from CUNY is based upon a three-year weighted average of enrollment. Concerns exist regarding future limited revenue streams due to declining enrollment. The President's Executive Cabinet makes decisions on the reallocation of resources and new initiatives for each budget cycle. All academic and administrative units report their progress in an annual report with an assessment of the prior goals and an action plan for the subsequent year. These reports could be enhanced by the inclusion of data demonstrating the impact of key initiatives. The President highlights accomplishments relative to the goals and objectives in an annual report to the Chancellor.

The College has a well-defined process for the assignment of responsibility for planning, budgeting and assessment at all levels. The Institutional Planning and Assessment Framework guides the College towards meeting its mission and goals. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee comprised of faculty and staff and the Presidents' Executive Council oversees the progress. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (OIRPA), in coordination with the executives from each administrative unit, compiles the annual report. The Academic Assessment staff assists faculty with the assessment of student learning and using results for continuous improvement. The process ties action items and initiatives to seven strategic goals, the CUNY Strategic Framework, and the Middle States Standards and Requirements.

The College developed a Facilities Space Planning Master Plan in 2007. This plan is utilized to develop funding requests. BCC's Five Year Capital plan is used to make major improvements to the campus infrastructure, renovations and new construction of facilities. Although over the past ten years \$196,892,789 has been invested in the physical plant, substantial deferred maintenance challenges exist. Buildings conditions is the number one complaint from students. The campus is difficult to maneuver from an accessibility perspective with many buildings lacking elevators or the capacity to fit wheel chairs. Since most of the projects in the Space Planning Master Plan have been addressed, it is recommended that a new master plan be developed. The College also collaborates with CUNY on technology initiatives and is part of the CUNY Technology Five Year Plan.

Annual external audits are conducted to ensure compliance and financial viability. In 2016, BCC received a campus visit for assessing internal controls and received no negative findings. Annual audits are also conducted for its related entities and all have received clean opinions.



**Suggestions:**

- Develop a succession plan to ensure uninterrupted operations.
- Consider including data demonstrating the impact of key initiatives in annual reports.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop a comprehensive enrollment management plan aligned with the Strategic Plan and Academic Master Plan that includes retention, marketing, and recruitment and addresses the College's concern of disparate processes for ASAP and non-ASAP students.
- Update the Facilities Space Planning Master Plan and include the comprehensive inventory of the conditions and life cycles of infrastructure systems as well as ADA needs.
- Aggressively pursue capital funding to address the extensive deferred maintenance issues especially as it relates to student learning spaces.

**Requirements of Affiliation:**

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation # 8 & 10, 11, and 15.

**Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration**

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituents it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

In the Team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

**Summary of evidence and findings**

There is substantial evidence that BCC possesses and demonstrates the attributes and activities required to meet Standard VII. Shared governance is exercised effectively by the College Senate

and its standing committees and there is robust involvement of faculty, administrators and students in the decision-making processes of the college.

Bronx Community College (BCC) has a well-defined structure of governance that is reflected in its adherence to the Board of Trustees Bylaws. BCC is governed by the internal College Governance Plan, which defines the responsibility for establishing academic policy and for legislative and advisory functions related to the programs, operations, and goals of the College. Beyond the office of the president, three divisions in the institution, including the Division of Academic Affairs and Student Success, the Division of Administration and Finance, and the Division of Advancement, Communication and External Relations, share administration of the college. BCC provides multiple administrative venues for decision-making accountability including the following committees: Executive Council, Vice President, Deans and Chairs (VPDC), Presidential Cabinet, BCC Administrative Council, PSC/BCC Labor Management Committee, HEO Screening Committee and the HEO Labor Management Committee.

The CUNY Board of Trustees Bylaws also establishes the College Senate at BCC. The Senate is responsible for the establishment of academic policy as well as legislative and advisory function as they pertain to program, operation and goals of the college. Senate legislative powers include academic affairs, protection of academic freedom of students and instructional staff, and the adoption of rules of procedure for itself, its committees and its subcommittees. BCC has established a system of checks and balances. As an example; reappointment, tenure, promotion, and leave for instructional staff are reviewed at the department level, recommendations are made to a College-wide Personnel and Budget Committee, which forwards recommendations to the Senate's Academic Review Committee and then to the president.

BCC follows all local, state and federal laws and regulations in the constitution of its bodies. BCC endorses the Open Meeting Law and Robert's Rules of Order. More specifically, BCC adheres to the additional responsibilities identified in the Board's Manual of General Policy which detail non-bylaw policy. All college employees are bound by the CUNY Conflict of Interest Policy. BCC employs an Ethics Officer who provides comprehensive trainings of regulations outlined in the New York State Joint Commission of Public Ethics. Additionally, the College Office of Legal Affairs disseminates and collects Multiple Position Disclosure forms for faculty.

The CUNY Board of Trustees has authority for the oversight of the quality of educational programs, awarding of degrees, college finances, and policies related to personnel. The senior vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, the president, and the provost share governance authority and responsibility on academic issues. On campus, the Committee on Curriculum is a subcommittee of the Senate which oversees development and evaluation of curriculum, courses, and programs.

At BCC, the standing committees of the Board oversee the financial affairs of the College and advise the Board on fiscal matters, including the annual budget, tuition charges, and the overall fiscal viability of the institution. There is evidence of effective and timely communication between the CUNY central office and BCC, as well as utilization of internal policy documents that detail policies.

The Chief Executive Officer is evaluated formally, as defined by the CUNY Manual of General Policy, at least every five years. Currently, the evaluation of the president occurs every other year. The evaluation includes academic and administrative leadership, relationship with the

college community and communication of the mission and priorities of the institution. Annually, the president establishes performance targets for the institution with their executive teams and college communities. These are reported to the chancellor and evaluated for successful performance, and to establish priorities.

The CUNY Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Thomas A. Isekenegbe as president of BCC in 2015. The search committee was comprised of Trustees, a CUNY college president, faculty, students, and alumni. The power and control of the college is vested in the CUNY Board of Trustees, which delegates executive power to the president for execution of policies and procedures, inclusive of implementing and developing institutional plans, staffing the organization, and the identification and allocation of resources. Dr. Isekenegbe has assembled an effective and qualified Executive Staff that helps lead the college and is assessed annually. Dr. Isekenegbe is appropriately credentialed and has demonstrated through his professional record that he possesses the requisite experience to lead the college in a manner consistent with its mission.

BCC organization structure is defined in the college organizational chart and is structured into four divisions: Division of the President, Division of Academic Affairs and Student Success, Division of Administration and Finance, and the Division of Advancement, Communication and External Relations. BCC has ample staffing to perform the roles and responsibilities of the institution. Human Resources and the Chief Diversity Office oversee the searches, ensuring hiring of qualified personnel. Additionally, the CTLT and IT Departments provide technical training and equipment lifecycle replacements for all personnel. Advancing BCC's goals and objectives actively involves engagement with faculty, staff and students as demonstrated at convocations, the President's monthly report, campus publications, and professional development days. External grant applications are required to demonstrate advancement of the College mission. Robust assessment is prevalent and demonstrated in the institutional use of Annual Plans, Annual Reports, PASS, and PARs.

BCC participates in periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership and administration at the university level via a periodic collective bargaining process and in reviews of the chancellor and vice chancellors during an annual evaluation process. Campus level evaluation is managed by the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment in conjunction with campus constituents during annual evaluations of all campus executives. BCC provides avenues for feedback through annual surveys, focus groups, open meetings, and commentary from the faculty and Student Senate.

BCC is actively engaged in the pursuit and attainment of the mission and goals of the college. A clearly defined strategic plan has provided consistent direction over a period of significant senior level administrative turnover and the College has recognized the importance of a well-designed and executed master plan. To this end, the College is engaged in the development of their next Strategic Plan that is being informed, in part, through their current Academic Master Plan. This has been a thoughtful process and is in adherence to the ideals of shared governance.

### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- The BCC Strategic Plan has provided strong direction for the College and has been an effective means of maintaining the development and support of institutional goals and its

mission through significant leadership change since the last site visit. This has been acknowledged by the institution, which is using this success to inform the development of the new strategic plan.

**Commendation:**

- BCC has demonstrated a universal and genuine sense of community and enthusiastic engagement across all constituencies.

**Challenge:**

- In the interest of transparency, tremendous amounts of information are shared across the college, however, there is no location identified as a repository for information.

**Suggestion:**

- The college would benefit from a unified system to provide access to a repository of shared information. This could be utilizing the website to making governance and administrative matters more accessible to the campus community.

**Recommendations:** No recommendations

**Requirements of Affiliation:**

In the Team’s judgment, the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation # 12, 13, & 14.

***Section D: Verification of Compliance***

**I. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation**

Based on a review of the self-study and accompanying materials, interviews, and the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations, the Team affirms that the institution continues to meet all of the *Requirements of Affiliation*.

**II. Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations**

The Team affirms that the institution meets all accreditation-relevant federal regulations, which is based upon the review of the self-study report, accompanying materials, and the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations and the evaluation visit.

## ***Section E: Verification of Data and Student Achievement***

### **I. Verification of Data and Self-Study Information**

The Team confirms that data and other information provided by the institution are reasonably valid and conform to higher education expectations.

### **II. Student Achievement**

After interviewing institutional stakeholders and visiting the institution's student achievement information available at its website, the Team confirms that the institution's approach to its student achievement goals is effective, consonant with higher education expectations, and consistent with the institution's mission. In addition, the student achievement data available at its website is reasonably valid and accurate in light of other data and information reviewed by the Team.

## ***Section F: Third-Party Comments (if applicable)***

**Not applicable**

## ***Section G: Conclusion***

The Team again thanks Bronx Community College, and hopes that the institution will be open to the ideas contained in this report, all of which are being offered in the spirit of collegiality and peer review.

As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

1. The institution replies to the Team report in a formal written Institutional Response addressed to the Commission.
2. The Team Chair submits a Confidential Brief to the Commission, summarizing the Team report and conveying the Team's proposal for accreditation action.
3. The Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully reviews the institutional self-study document, the evaluation Team report, the institution's formal response, and the Chair's Confidential Brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission.

4. The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.