

Summaries & (25) Recommendations from 11/19/07 Self-Study Report

Standards 1 & 7: Institutional Goals & Self-Assessment

While there has been a lot of activity and even some useful data generated at the College, the establishment of a transparent assessment process is just beginning. A strong committee comprised of faculty and staff is working, and a plan has been agreed upon. The time is ripe to implement aggressively all elements of the plan and to use the results to drive decisions. Equally important, the College needs to provide extensive training for middle level management on how to develop a self-assessment plan for units or departments and how to use the results of the assessment to improve the quality of the York College experience. We recommend the following:

1. Unify all the research assessment and planning efforts under one unit, possibly to be led by an individual at the dean's level;
2. Using the *Assessment Plan* as a guide, provide professional development on assessment at all levels of the institution;
3. Assessment of individual units and services such as advisement, tutoring, the majors, alumni relations, etc. should be regular (annual or biannual), centralized, and tied to the Strategic Planning objectives.

Standards 2 & 3: Planning & Resource Management

CUNY has shown unprecedented support for York College over the last few years through University initiatives and resulting from greater and more effective interreaction with the College's new administration. More than any other CUNY college, York College was in a position to take great advantage of any and all new funding efforts. The payoff for students has been better access to better technology, improved and simpler services, and a greatly improved and welcoming campus appearance. The College is quite open about its operations and performance, which is appreciated by the faculty, staff and students, and has allowed greater and more equitable participation by all constituencies in planning and allocation of resources.

We make several recommendations in the new spirit of open and inclusive operations, planning, and accountability, as well as towards serving our students to our best abilities:

1. The administration needs to allow proper time for departmental feedback to the president's annual Goals & Targets proposal after their initial input. Establish a regular annual schedule of meetings and timely deadlines for strategic planning and improve communication between the administration and program leaders.
2. The Library 2005-2006 OTPS budget has only increased 22% since the 1998 Middle States *Self-Study Report*. There now is additional funding through the CUNY Compact (earmarked towards facility renovations) and from the Student Association, but sustained, formal increases should be allocated.
3. Appropriate funding and staffing of the Registrar's Office must be established for full and proper service to the students. The need for 4 full-time CUNY office

assistants has been expressed by Registrar Sharon Davidson.

4. The College should adopt the “all-funds” budget recommended in the 2003 PRR.
5. A campus wide committee comprised of faculty, students, alumni, and administrators should convene to develop the core concepts of the Facilities Master Plan. The committee will assure that these concepts are clearly understood and that the Master Plan process will be a capital plan aligned with the College’s mission, goals, and objectives, as well as with all planning and assessment activities.

Standards 4 & 5: Leadership, Governance, and Administration

Overall, the College’s system of governance supports the mission and allows for the collegial participation of all constituencies in policy development and decision-making. However, this unique feature of appropriate representation of the different constituencies of York College in the College Senate and in all its standing committees also poses a significant burden on the effectiveness of the governing body.

Although leadership stability of the College had been an ongoing concern with the unprecedented turnover of administrators and the large number of executive officers in “acting” roles, the College has been proceeding diligently to bring successful conclusion to searches for the numerous executive officer positions currently held by acting vice presidents and deans.

A few key areas emerge to strengthen the College’s system of governance:

1. York College Charter should be revisited with an eye toward revision as called for in the 2003 and 1998 Middle States documents.
2. Create a centralized and standardized record keeping of the minutes of all the Senate’s standing committees.
3. The strengths and weakness of the College’s governance structure should be periodically assessed.

Standard 6: Integrity

University policies are often not disseminated or immediately enacted once delivered to the College. Some policies are given “interim policy” status, an often lengthy delay. Great strides have been made with the new and stable administration. While the Committee on Academic Standards has been working diligently to improve the petitioning policies and procedures, there is still work to be done in this area. The student evaluation of teaching effectiveness procedure continues to be a challenge as the procedure of administrating the survey is perceived to be a source of conflict. The College has been putting great efforts in improving communication with alumni and updating the look and feel of media materials.

Two recommendations emerge from this self-study:

1. The College should streamline the process for dissemination and implementation of University policies. CUNY policies should be adopted in a timely fashion on

the campus with the necessary minor modifications, when appropriate.

2. The OAA should develop an improved procedure for administering the Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness survey.

Standards 8 & 9: Student Development

Overall, the College is committed to recruiting and retaining a culturally, ethnically, racially and economically diverse student population that will be prepared to successfully complete the academic program of their choice. More evening and weekend classes have been offered to assist students accelerate progress to the degree and meet their own needs. With the new financial resources provided by the CUNY Compact, and the Title III funds York College is strengthening student support services, including hiring staff with the appropriate expertise, promoting and improving advisement and orientation to freshman and transfer students.

A few key areas emerge to strengthen the College's support services for students:

1. Integrate, coordinate, and enhance services provided by the many extant offices, e.g., Career Services, Academic Advisement, Academic Achievement Center, SSS, the Writing Center, the Counseling Center, etc. All academic advisement should be under the direct guidance of the disciplines and departments or at least strictly following their most current recommendations;
2. Establish and support an Office of Evening and Weekend Student Support;
3. Increase staffing and hours and improve training in the student services areas.

Standard 10: Faculty Development

The faculty of York College is highly qualified and talented. At present, the College is achieving modest growth in the faculty ranks as lines vacated through retirements are being filled, and new positions for new and existing programs are being filled. The College pays close attention to recruiting and hiring the best faculty members possible. While many strides in diversity have been made, there is still work to be done in this area. A variety of faculty development activities over the past two years have focused on mentoring new faculty and improving classroom instruction. In this way, the College focuses on retaining both faculty and students. Faculty members are highly productive in the area of scholarship, winning grants, earning prizes and awards. Their scholarship and creative activities enrich students' learning experience as curriculum is developed and constantly updated. Faculty members are also expected to do college service. Many also do community service through activities related to their work at the College. York College's faculty are dedicated to teaching and scholarship, and to service in its broadest sense. They energize the College and help to fulfill its mission every day.

Issues that require more attention include:

1. Increase the number of fulltime faculty to improve the ratio of full-time to part-time teaching hours;

2. Support research by senior and mid-level faculty who did not have the advantages of reassigned time of more recent hires;
3. Improve the physical environment for faculty in order to foster collegiality and help create a sense of intellectual community as a means of recruiting and retaining new faculty;
4. Enhance recognition of faculty service commitments in order to encourage faculty at all ranks to take an active part in the life of the College.

Standards 11, 12, and 13: Educational Programs

York College has a well established, transparent curriculum development process directed by the faculty. The curriculum meets the mission of the College and responds to local economic and societal factors in order to best prepare our students for their future careers. Support services and facilities have been improved recently, and the College looks forward to building on that momentum.

A few key areas emerge to strengthen our educational programs:

1. Revise the College's Academic Master Plan and establish more Master's degree programs in niche areas related to the College's unique programs;
2. Research and create new, innovative, cross-cutting and interdisciplinary Liberal Arts and Professional majors with vision towards potential new markets;
3. Expand training for both faculty and students in new educational technology.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The OAA is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the College's outcomes assessment plan. York has genuinely embraced a culture of assessment as driven by the president, University in its Performance Management Process, and the College's Outcomes Assessment Committee. Since the OIRA has been restructured to include assessment with a coordinator, the College now has the ability to offer real support to departments as they embark on this task. The *Assessment Plan*, once approved by the College Senate, must be implemented at all levels and show evidence of its use in driving decisions.

In order for the plan to truly drive positive change, the following must be accomplished:

1. The OAA must energetically oversee the implementation of the College's outcomes assessment plan.
2. The OIRA must support departments in developing comprehensive systems of assessment that identify outcomes, objectives, assessment tools, data collection intervals, analysis methods, strengths and challenges, and plans for continual improvement, for each program offered.