

KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11235-2398

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 26, 2008

Ms. Jean Avnet Morse, President
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Ms. Morse:

Following the preparation of a self-study and a team visit in March 2006, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted to reaffirm the accreditation of Kingsborough Community College. The Commission, however, requested a progress letter, due by March 1, 2008, documenting: (1) evidence that direct methods of assessing student learning are being used to improve teaching and learning, and (2) evidence that student learning assessment information is used as part of institutional assessment. Kingsborough's complete progress report (*Status Update, Winter 2008*), with its associated attachments, is enclosed. This letter serves as an introduction and summary of that document.

Since our self-study and the team's visit, the College has continued to develop its assessment activities, increased the number of faculty engaged in these activities, and increased the number of projects designed to improve student learning outcomes. Kingsborough's governance body is its College Council, composed of faculty, administrators, students, and staff. Through that council's Committee on Budget, which is also concerned with strategic planning, the College has made the budget process that supports these activities more visible and accessible.

Institutional Assessment and Planning

Kingsborough Community College conducts a cycle of integrated assessment and planning processes based on widely inclusive input from the College community. In coordination with the College's strategic plan, the college participates in the CUNY Performance Management Process, which is an annual plan based on the priorities identified by the College and the University. In addition, through the CUNY Campaign for Student Success, the College develops detailed implementation plans and influences the budget allocations to support these priorities. For 2007-2008 the top priorities were to:

- Increase student retention
- Increase success in developmental education
- Enhance preparation for the CUNY Proficiency Examination (The CPE is an examination of critical thinking, literacy and interpretation of quantitative information given to students between the 45th and 60th credit and a requirement for graduation.)

- Extend and expand faculty development
- Create a culture of success for students

To promote implementation of the plans, two retreats are being held each year; one for senior administrators and one for academic department chairpersons. Last year's retreats focused on strategic planning. The most recent chairpersons' retreat focused on general education, student advisement and mentoring, assessment, and academic leadership. Following the retreats task groups are formed to carry out the plans.

Two more mechanisms – the CUNY Coordinated Undergraduate Education initiative (CUE) and the CUNY Compact programmatic initiative – connect assessment and planning to budget allocation. The CUE initiative allocates more than \$600,000 to high priority projects. The CUNY Compact allocates resources to seven programmatic initiatives from academic support to facilities infrastructure.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Gateway Courses Project - The College is conducting a project designed to promote the learning outcomes of as many students as possible by concentrating first on courses that the largest number of students must complete.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - With the support of the Kingsborough Center for Teaching and Learning, two cohorts of individual faculty are conducting projects investigating the teaching processes and learning outcomes in their courses. These projects are targeted at improving instructional practices and using evidence to evaluate their effectiveness.

Integrative Learning - Kingsborough is participating in a project headed by the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education. Faculty are applying a protocol being tested by the Washington Center to assess integrative learning. As a result of this participation, faculty are adapting, applying, and elaborating the protocol to more closely reflect Kingsborough's particular concerns and goals.

Academic Program Review - The review cycle for academic programs has been shortened from 10 years to six years, and a new template for the reviews has been developed. The College is currently reviewing programs in science and in business disciplines.

General Education - The Faculty Committee on General Education will submit to the College Council Curriculum Committee in March, 2008 recommendations for changes in the requirements for all degree programs. These recommendations follow three years of assessment and discussion, and they identify areas in need of improvement such as enhancing transferability and preparation for baccalaureate-level study.

Student Learning Outcomes in Courses - With the circulation of an 87-page compendium of course learning outcomes, the process of bringing together statements of

student learning outcomes for courses is nearly complete. Developmental education, gateway courses, the scholarship of teaching and learning project, integrative learning, and general education outcomes are in the forefront of our efforts to measure and improve these outcomes.

Institutional Research and Surveys - In addition to continuing activities according to the College Assessment Plan, the College participated in the pilot administration of the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (a CCSSE initiative), which focuses on institutional practices and student behaviors in the first few weeks of college. The College will be sending a team to the Entering Student Success Institute in Spring 2008 to develop plans responding to the survey findings.

Using Assessment to Improve Teaching and Learning

After considering assessment results, KCC has developed a number of curricular and pedagogical initiatives.

Increasing Student Retention

Expanding Learning Communities - Through its freshman Learning Communities program Kingsborough has emphasized the creation of educational environments that foster connectedness to the College. Extending and expanding these benefits is a top priority for Kingsborough. We have begun offering Career-Focused Learning Communities for second-semester students. We are also identifying critical elements of the program that will be used to enhance the experience of students not connected to learning communities.

Strengthening Academic Support Services - The College is continuing to refine its methods of identifying students who are at risk of academic probation and providing comprehensive support services for them.

Increasing Success in Developmental Education

Restructuring Developmental English - We are continuing to develop a collaborative teacher cohort model for instructors to increase academic progress in the exit-level developmental English courses and to improve alignment between students' perceptions of their performance and those of their instructors.

Redesigning ACT Workshops - Faculty have redesigned the workshops taken by students who pass departmental exams in developmental reading and/or writing courses, but have not passed the respective CUNY ACT examination. Pilot programs testing the new methodologies have been conducted, and the results are being compiled so the next course of action can be considered.

Improving Mathematics Outcomes - Math faculty are analyzing the results from an assessment project designed to link the skills acquired by students in Basic Mathematics and Introductory Algebra (both developmental courses) to College Algebra.

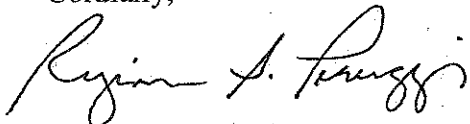
Strengthening Student Preparation for the CPE

Faculty Development - Each department has identified faculty members who are redesigning or creating new course assignments to promote the critical evaluation of essays and articles, as well as quantitative materials, required for students to achieve success on the CPE.

Initiatives Focused on Students - The College has implemented a requirement that students must complete a CPE Orientation before registering for the exam. It has also improved coordination between CPE Orientation sessions and CPE Workshops, as well as funded an initiative to have faculty rather than tutors conduct the workshops.

Kingsborough Community College has made considerable progress integrating student learning assessment and institutional assessment, and using direct methods of assessing student learning to improve teaching and learning. As detailed in the accompanying report, these issues are being addressed in the assessment and planning processes and we look forward to reporting additional progress at the time of our next Periodic Review Report in 2011. I am, of course, available to discuss any aspect of this progress report with you.

Cordially,



Regina S. Peruggi
President