WHAT IS FORTNIGHT?

A **fortnight** is a unit of time equivalent to 14 days. The term derives from the Old English *feorwertyne niht*, meaning “fourteen nights.” Inspired by the opportunities and challenges of Middle States Standard 14 and the desire to share information and best practices, **FORTNIGHT** is a communication vehicle, which is distributed online to the campus community.

MIDDLE STATES AND SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE: THE COLLEGE PREPARES TO CONFER A NEW DEGREE LEVEL

Pending approval by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the signature of Governor Cuomo, the College will soon begin conferring professional practice doctoral degrees. Since its inception in 2006, the Doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT) program has been jointly offered by the College of Staten Island and the CUNY Graduate Center (GC). While all aspects of the program (faculty, laboratories, support services, and resources) have been provided by CSI, the degree itself has historically been conferred by the GC. Commensurate with similar changes within CUNY and across the country, we anticipate that, by Fall 2014, doctoral students in Physical Therapy will be admitted directly to the College of Staten Island, and their degrees will be conferred by the College.

As colleges and universities evolve, a few specific circumstances trigger the Middle States Commission to begin formal evaluation processes to review the impact of change on the entire institution. In addition to the inauguration of a new degree level, Substantive Change Requests are triggered when institutions undertake actions such as closing or relocating facilities, opening branch campuses, changing legal status or form of control, reaching the point where 50% or more of any degree program can be completed through distance education, or making substantial changes in the hours required to complete degree programs.

CSI holds Middle States accreditation for the associate, baccalaureate, and master’s degree levels, but it does not hold accreditation at the Doctoral level. In order to achieve this well-earned acknowledgement of the work that our Physical Therapy faculty have been doing for some time – expertly preparing doctoral candidates for professional practice – the College will be submitting its first Substantive Change Request for a New Degree Level (Doctorate – Professional Practice) in March. A second Substantive Change Request (for Doctorate – Professional Practice) will be prepared soon for the anticipated Doctor of Nursing Science (DNS).

CLOSING THE LOOP: NEW ASSESSMENT INITIATIVES IN THE OIRA TO AID IN FOCUSING CAMPUS PROJECTS

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) has seen a significant increase in requests for statistical analyses and custom surveys over the last several years. While OIRA sometimes receives anecdotal feedback regarding the value of their input for programmatic and institutional change, a more sustained evaluation of this process is needed.

To encourage better coordination of projects and use of information, OIRA will launch a “client response survey” starting in summer 2013. On an ongoing basis, requestors who collaborate with the OIRA on assessment-related analyses will be sent a link to an online survey. This survey will solicit categorical and open-ended information on their use of the analyses and materials, their satisfaction with various aspects of working with OIRA, and comments about improving the development of actionable information in the future.

The survey will provide opportunities to reflect on how the information produced by OIRA was used to reach programmatic goals and objectives; data will also be used by OIRA to improve its work process.
CAMPUS UPDATES

General Education Committee – The Committee held its first meeting of the semester on February 4, 2013. Following general business related to course reviews, the committee discussed plans for the Middle States Monitoring Report, which relates to Standards 12 and 14. Two sub-groups of the General Education Committee have been organized: one addressing the approach and scheduling of General Education assessment, and the second studying the College’s General Education goals. These two groups will work in concert with the Middle States Follow-up Committee, which will have oversight over the preparation of our Monitoring Report. The final report must be submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education by December 1, 2013.

Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee (AOAC) – The Committee, composed of representatives from each academic department and one member for interdisciplinary programs, held its initial meeting of the semester on February 6. Co-chair El Samuels (Education) led a continued discussion on the preparation of Assessment Reports for 2011-2012, noting that a few departments were still completing their documents.

Since the AOAC serves as a forum for sharing information, experiences and best practices, committee members have been presenting their approaches to assessment reporting. To this end, Professor Sarah Zelikovitz (Computer Science) commented on her department’s continued assessment efforts. Along with other topics she noted the challenges of addressing the assessment of interdisciplinary programs such as the Mathematics-Computer Science degree. This is a topic of ongoing interest to the AOAC.

Along the same lines as Professor Zelikovitz, Professor Rosane Gertner (Business) presented on her department’s assessment efforts in December. Professor Gertner noted that they had been building on their assessment efforts gradually over the last several years; the department’s plan calls for the evaluation of at least one course from each of four main discipline area within Business (Accounting, Finance, Management, and Marketing) annually.

The AOAC also discussed “Assessment Retreats,” a new campus opportunity to facilitate the assessment activities of department and programs. The “retreat” idea evolved from conversations that included Committee Co-chairs El Samuels and Carol Hartman (Medical Technology), OIRA Coordinator Warrick Bell, and Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness Susan Holak, who were interested in assessment innovations and fostering ongoing and sustainable assessment practices on campus. Retreats will begin with a general review of the College’s approaches to assessment, move on to The Repository and the materials that the department/program has already developed to date, and then focus on coordinating the department’s assessment plan and activities to determine next steps and optimal assessment approaches.

Assessment Retreats will be held in the Faculty Center for Professional Development (1L-203), which allows for projection of materials on the Smart Board and provides room for break-out activities. Multiple instructors can also review student materials and conduct course assessments during the retreat. To participate in an Assessment Retreat, an academic program or department should contact members of the Assessment or Institutional Effectiveness areas: Associate Provost Susan Holak, OIRA Coordinator Warrick Bell, or AOAC Co-chairs El Samuels or Carol Hartman.

Day of Assessment – The College’s “Day of Assessment,” an event scheduled each spring to address assessment-related topics, share best practices, and note exemplary assessment activity on campus is returning after a year’s hiatus for the Middle States decennial visit last April. The event is scheduled for Friday, April 19, 2013, in the Green Dolphin Lounge. More detailed information about the agenda will be forthcoming in future issues of FORTNIGHTLY NOTES.

FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

In Volume 244 of The Gentleman’s Magazine, covering January to June 1879, a section called “Cold Winters” discusses the “old-fashioned winters” of Great Britain and examines whether the climate has changed over time. The article includes such minutiae as “the first fortnight of January, 1770, [was] frosty, but on the 14th and 15th all the snow melted and to the end of February mild hazy weather prevailed.” These observations about the weather of Selborne, England, span a period from 1768 to 1792. The magazine can be viewed at http://books.google.com/books?id=MRQJAAAAIAAJ

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by March 8, 2012, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué.