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.

CURRICULUM COMMITTEES PASS RESOLUTIONS ON ASSESSMENT

Early in March, the three governance committees charged with the oversight, approval and evaluation of curriculum – the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), the General Education Committee (GEC) and the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) – all passed resolutions relating to academic learning assessment. Each governance committee ensured that its resolution included explicit linkages to the Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee (AOAC), and a reporting responsibility to accreditation agencies through such groups as the Middle States Follow-Up Committee.

Both the GEC and the GSC set up subcommittees, each charged with ensuring that academic learning outcomes assessment is documented within the programs under their purview; the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee approved a resolution for an assessment subcommittee at its first meeting in April. Further, because of the curriculum-spanning nature of General Education, the GEC made its subcommittee responsible for coordinating the assessment of General Education as a program.

In the discussions that gave rise to these subcommittees, faculty, staff and administration all voiced their commitment to the assessment of student learning remaining in the faculty domain. It was agreed that the existing groups and committees at the department and program level will continue to be where learning assessment operations take place, close to both the curriculum and the classroom; the AOAC will maintain its support role, fostering conversations about assessment practices and providing guidance to faculty; and the governance-level assessment subcommittees will act to document the ongoing assessment activity and ensure that it is performed in regular and sustainable ways.

CSI DAY OF ASSESSMENT – TENTH ANNIVERSARY!

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 due to the Middle States decennial visit last April. The event is scheduled for Friday, April 19, 2013, in the Green Dolphin Lounge. Detailed information including registration links, can be found at [www.librarycsi.cuny.edu/assessment/doa2013.html](http://www.librarycsi.cuny.edu/assessment/doa2013.html)

As with past years, the Day will feature a mixture of presentations, highlighting both academic learning assessment and institutional and programmatic evaluation. This year, faculty will present on their practices in Computer Science and Social Work, and the CUNY Director of Assessment will speak about the University’s approach to a broad understanding of student learning in critical thinking, analytic reasoning,
problem solving and written communication through the use of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). Finally, the Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at CSI will present on what our College can learn from the Noel Levitz survey of student engagement, fielded on campus in 2000 and 2011 and currently open to students enrolled this semester.

**CLOSING THE LOOP: ACADEMIC OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (AOAC) REVISES ANNUAL REPORTING TEMPLATE**

Following a suggestion from one of its long-standing members, Dr. Sarah Zelikovitz of the Computer Science department, the Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee (AOAC) elected to revise the annual assessment activity reporting template for the 2012-2013 year.

In the Computer Science department’s reporting for their accreditation agency, CAC-ABET, the baccalaureate program has the ability to report on how assessment-based changes at the course level have resulted in changes at the program level. In discussing the template for the 2011-2012 academic year, Dr. Zelikovitz suggested that a section be added to the 2012-2013 report that explicitly requested this kind of information as a way of clearly linking observations of student learning in the classroom with the expectations of an academic program. The members of the AOAC readily endorsed this suggestion, and the new prompt area was added to the learning assessment reporting form for the current year.

In addition, some faculty felt that the template emphasized courses as the only “sites” where learning assessment could be assessed. Faculty who wanted to describe their learning assessment across multiple courses or at a program goal level – rather than a course objective level – felt that the form appeared to be restricting what they could report. The template has been modified to make it clearer that courses are only one “site” where the assessment of student learning can take place.

The new form is available under “Assessment Resources” on the College Assessment website at [www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment/resources.html](http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment/resources.html) and will also be distributed to department chairs and program directors in coming weeks.

**CAMPUS UPDATES**

**Assessment Retreats** – The first targeted assessment retreat on the campus was held on Friday, 8 March in the Faculty Center for Professional Development. Faculty members from the Dramatic Arts and Music programs worked with AOAC co-chairs El Samuels and Carol Hartman, and Office of Institutional Research and Assessment Coordinator Warrick Bell, to grapple with learning goal and assessment questions specific to the activities of those programs, and how student learning could be assessed. After discussing their mission statements, program goals and course objectives, the faculty members turned to student material that they had collected in class; they assessed these materials *in situ* and then summarized their findings in the annual assessment template for their respective programs.

**FORTNIGHTLY NOTES**

SST, the School of Science and Technology in Singapore, held a “Mother Tongue Language” (MTL) Fortnight in early February, 2013. Within the English-language school, the MTL program aims to encourage the use of Mandarin, Malay and Tamil, as well as foster students’ connections to their home cultures through writing competitions, film screenings, and other organized activities. In March of 2013, the School solicited feedback from the student body in order to assess the MTL Fortnight and improve the event for next year.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by **April 19, 2013**, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué.