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.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY CSI DAY OF ASSESSMENT: APRIL 19, 2013

On April 19, 2013, the College of Staten Island will hold its TENTH ANNIVERSARY Day of Assessment! Since the first Day took place on May 2, 2003, hundreds of staff, faculty and administrators from the College, our sister CUNY schools, and other institutions in the region have attended the annual event to learn about and discuss strategies, methods, and the use of assessment in both academic and non-academic areas of the College.

Planning for the Day of Assessment for this year has been underway in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment for several months. The agenda, registration form, and other information about the Day is available on the event webpage at [www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment/doa2013.html](http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment/doa2013.html)

The agenda this year includes two faculty presentations, from Computer Science and Social Work. While these two programs are both externally accredited and therefore have specific assessment requirements, Computer Science has been accredited since 1989 while the Social Work program has gained accreditation candidacy status only within the last two years. The presentations will discuss “thinking inside the box” (Computer Science) – how to maintain a viable assessment strategy while adhering to accreditation standards – and the development of curriculum and assessment practices when faced with a completely new set of accreditation requirements (as is the case with the Social Work program).

Other presentations will be made by the CUNY Director of Assessment, Raymond Moy, focusing on the University’s use of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). Dr. Sam Michalowski, the College’s own Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, will demonstrate examples of the how the College and individual programs and offices can make use of the Noel Levitz Survey of Student Engagement, which was undertaken on this campus in 2000, 2011, and again this semester.

As always, this FREE event is open to all CSI and CUNY staff and faculty. Information about every Day held since 2003 can be found at [www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment/doa.html](http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment/doa.html). We always look forward to seeing many friendly faces from previous years, along with interested newcomers.
CLOSING THE LOOP: HISTORY MASTER'S PROGRAM EXAMINES STUDENT TRANSCRIPTS, DEVELOPS NEW GRADUATION OPTION

When Professor Ben Mercer took over as coordinator of the History Master’s program earlier this semester, he began to follow up on questions that had been brought to light by the self-study undertaken in 2009. Members of the History MA committee were interested in determining whether there were any particular points at which students exited the program prior to graduation, why those exit points existed, and if there was a way to retain some of those students who did not complete their degrees. Of particular interest was developing an alternate, equivalent route to degree completion for those students who struggle to produce a thesis based on original research – currently the only terminal point in the program.

At the request of Professor Mercer, Warrick Bell of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment produced records of course enrollment and completion for every student who entered the MA program since its inception in Fall 2000, along with the date of degree conferral if the student had completed the program. Dr. Mercer then added contextual information held by the History MA program and faculty to better understand the landscape described by these transcripts.

After examining the resulting data alongside the program’s self-study and external reviewers’ comments, the History department will now propose a variant completion model, where students develop and expand upon original work that they have produced in courses and create a portfolio that they will defend before a faculty committee. This model is used successfully at a number of other History Master's programs both within CUNY and at non-CUNY institutions, as well as Master's programs in other social science and humanities disciplines. This portfolio option will be added to the current thesis option, providing two equally rigorous terminal points for the History MA.

The program also plans to reach out to students who completed all their coursework within the last few years but did not produce a research thesis, and invite them to complete their degree in this new way. Material produced by students attempting this alternate degree path will, of course, be monitored through History MA Program assessment processes to ensure that students demonstrate an equivalent level of knowledge and mastery as those who undertake original research projects.

CUNY NEWS

CUNY Assessment Council Seminar – Each semester the CUNY Assessment Council hosts a series of professional development assessment seminars, usually based in disciplinary approaches. The next seminar, entitled, “Speech Across Curriculum & Assessment of Public Speaking Competencies,” will be held on the morning of Friday, April 26 at John Jay College. Presentations will be made by faculty from the Department of Speech, Communications, and Theatre Arts of Borough of Manhattan Community College, and the Academic Assessment Manager from Bronx Community College. A panel discussion and question session will follow. For further information, please contact Warrick Bell in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at warrick.bell@csi.cuny.edu or extension 2086.

FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

The College of Staten Island is not the only American institution of higher education to make use of the “Fortnight” concept. Harvard University’s Advising Programs Office is holding an Advising Fortnight for incoming freshmen from April 8-19, to encourage students to select the major that they will study (what they call a “concentration”) during their academic career there.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by April 26, 2013, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué.