WHAT IS FORTNIGHT?

A **fortnight** is a unit of time equivalent to 14 days. The term derives from the Old English *feorwertyn 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.

This **FORTNIGHT** marks 50 consecutive issues, and represents a milestone for the campus. Now in its eighth volume, the publication shares information about assessment and institutional effectiveness while documenting accomplishments on campus. **FORTNIGHT** appears as a cited source in the College's **Middle States Self-Study**, demonstrating that the campus has a commitment to improvement and informed decision-making that is not episodic, but consistent and pervasive. All issues of **FORTNIGHT** are available online in an organized, cataloged repository at [www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment/fortnight.html](http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment/fortnight.html). They may be helpful to departments and programs for planning purposes, completing self-studies, or in preparing materials for external accreditors.

THE MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY: FINAL EDITS COMPLETE

Following nearly two years of work by more than 130 campus representatives organized into seven Working Groups, the preparation of seven Working Group reports, several rounds of editing, and final revisions during December and January, the **Middle States Self-Study 2011-2012** is complete. Hard copies of the document have been provided to our Middle States visiting team members in time to meet the calendar prescribed by the Middle States Commission. Following completion of a major printing effort which is now underway, members of the Steering Committee and Working Groups are to receive a personal copy of the Middle States Self-Study for their reference. This can be used to prepare for the site visit in just a few weeks, and as part of a portfolio of professional accomplishments and service materials.

After consultation with our team chair, Dr. Carlos Vargas-Aburto, Provost of Kutztown University, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment staff members worked to finalize an electronic version of the document with hyperlinks to our primary resources. Representing a significant amount of preparatory work, this process provides evaluation team members with access to supporting documents several weeks before their arrival, rather than solely relying on bins of hard copy documents during the site visit. Team members are being provided with self-contained flash drives, holding the hyperlinked self-study document and these primary resources. At the time of their arrival, team members will be given access to a more elaborate electronic version of the self-study with secondary material links.

Self-study Co-chairs Susan Holak and Richard Powers wish to take this opportunity to express their appreciation to members of the seven Working Groups, the countless contributors to Working Group reports, Steering Committee members and the many other members of the campus community who read the rounds of documents and provided commentary and editorial suggestions. Special appreciation goes to Terry Mares, the College’s editor, Janice Awerbuch for design assistance, Abraham Rajan for technical assistance, and Jean Coombs, whose desktop publishing skills in complex formatting resulted in a very professional final presentation.

Warrick Bell has been leading the effort to develop the hyperlinked document and organize the supporting documentation. Ably assisted by El Samuels and Louise Levine, the team has been identifying and citing sources in the material that has been collected over the course of several years in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment Repository.
COUNTDOWN TO THE MIDDLE STATES SITE VISIT:
LESS THAN SIX WEEKS TO GO

The Middle States Reaccreditation Special Resources Committee is moving into high gear as the April 1-4 evaluation team visit fast approaches. Representatives from major support areas around the campus, including Special Events, Security, OIT, Design Services, and Hospitality/Catering have been meeting since the seven Working Groups began their work. In addition to learning about the 14 Middle States Standards, this group concentrated on the how-to's of hosting a visit. As well as representing functional areas of the College, the Special Resources Team provides an opportunity for invited student representation to be part of the Self-Study process.

The team is currently working on finalizing a floor plan for the multi-functional home base of the visiting team in Building 1A. The evaluators will need a comfortable workspace, computer access, a documents center, and areas to convene. Exhibit space will also be needed. The Resource Committee team is also addressing workspace needs and computer access in the reviewers' hotel, along with planning meals, welcoming events, and interview schedules. Since members of the review team may request additional interviews with any campus constituents, it is important that the campus community be aware of the visit and be available, particularly on April 2 and 3.

CLOSING THE LOOP: OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT CHANGES INFORMATION COLLECTION METHODS

Every year, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) contacts a broad sector of the College with requests for information, which is passed on to various external agencies such as federal and state governments and informational publications. This process has previously involved scans, faxes, and sheets of paper, often asking for responses to the same questions several times as new requests for information have been received.

After an internal review of the information flows involved, and in an attempt to minimize the impact on the members of campus who provide information, OIRA has developed customized spreadsheets to reduce the duplication of questions that each contact person is asked to respond to, and is also testing simplified methods of delivering empty sheets and receiving completed responses.

CAMPUS UPDATES

Enrollment Management Assessment Committee – Associate Provost Susan Holak and OIRA Assessment Coordinator Warrick Bell met with members of the Enrollment Management Unit’s Assessment Committee on January 9 to discuss assessment progress in many of the areas represented. The assessment work of the Registrar’s Office, already featured at a regional conference, was highlighted during the meeting. The Enrollment Management Unit’s Assessment Committee consists of Dina Grant (Academic Advisement); Michelle Buonacore (Admissions); Alan Hoffner (Testing); Thomas Brennan (Evening and Weekend); Chrisanthi Anastopoulou (Academic Support); Charles Gomes (College Now); Caryll Lentol (Financial Aid); Shannon Cammarano (The Hub); and Wandy Tse (Registrar).

CUNY NEWS AND EVENTS

CUNY Assessment Council – The Assessment Council hosted an event focusing on the “Assessment of Online and Hybrid Courses” in conjunction with the CUNY Graduate Center on Friday, February 24, 2012. Dr. Ellen Smiley (City College and School of Professional Studies), Dr. Susan Ko (School of Professional Studies), Alan Winson (York College) and Dr. Wenying-Huang Stolte (York College) were featured speakers. For more information about Assessment Council events, please contact Warrick Bell in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at warrick.bell@csi.cuny.edu.

FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

Josephine Tozier’s illustrated 1907 work A Spring Fortnight in France is a dramaticized travelogue that describes a trip through eleven cities and towns, from Le Mans in the Pays de la Loire region, to Tarascon near the Mediterranean coast. Tozier also published Among English Inns (1904), The Traveller's Handbook (1905), and Susan in Sicily (1910). A Spring Fortnight can be downloaded as a free e-book from a number of sources.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by March 2, 2012, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué.