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.

DISTINCT CHANGES SET FOR 2012-2013
CUNY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS (PMP)

For over a decade, the City University of New York has maintained a Performance Management Process (PMP) that serves as a mechanism to centrally guide the University’s Master Plan goals and initiatives; these central goals are then adapted at the campus level across all colleges to ensure alignment between the University and its system institutions. The process is designed to help integrate CUNY’s many campuses, each of which has a distinct mission, structure, and culture, into a more unified system. The PMP was previously featured in FORTNIGHT (Volume 6, Issue 3) as a “Closing the Loop” item relating to campus participation and input into the process.

Drawing from the Master Plan, the PMP focuses on three major University Goals: raising academic quality, improving student success, and enhancing management and financial effectiveness. The three overarching goal areas are more directly addressed through nine objectives; these focus on initiatives and performance related to upgrading and maintaining academic programs, hiring and maintaining a quality faculty, offering a quality and effective general education instruction, supporting student retention and timely degree completion, improving post-graduation outcomes, enhancing student life and campus experiences, increasing revenue and decreasing expenses, and improving administrative services.

The University’s Central Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (COIRA) compiles data from across CUNY, which is disseminated in a data book to campus leaders and institutional research staff each spring. The annual data book tracks more than 150 indicators that align with the nine objective areas noted above. Each campus uses the indicators to assess its performance relative to its own campus goals. System-wide and cohort averages (senior, comprehensive, and community college) are reported to add other perspectives to the process. The College of Staten Island focuses particularly on information relating to senior and comprehensive institutions, although with the phasing out of Associate degree programs at John Jay in recent years, there are now few comprehensive institutions in that cohort. Among the many specific indicators that are tracked are measures or items relating to accreditation, academic program review, faculty hiring and retention, faculty research and grants, student retention and graduation rates, post-graduation student outcomes, fundraising, and sustainability plans.

The core of the Performance Management Process is a year-long cycle, which culminates in the month of June when two major reports are submitted to the Chancellery from each campus. The first document, the response to the previous year’s goals, is due in mid-June, while the goal-setting document for the next year’s activities is submitted at the end of the month. Now embarking on its 13th cycle, the PMP will incorporate several significant changes in 2012-2013. They include the following:

- Indicators relating to the Pathways Initiative will be incorporated into Objective 3, given its focus on General Education.
- Veteran and non-veteran faculty teaching hours will be reported on an annual basis, rather than focusing solely on the fall semester.
- For the first time, average student scores on graduate and professional school entrance exams (e.g., GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, etc.) will be reported in the PMP data book.
The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory will be used as the basis for student satisfaction with academic and student support services, and campus climate. Beginning this year, the biennial CUNY Student Experience Survey will be replaced with this national instrument (Objective 6). A new target will reflect the quality of student life and campus climate.

- Campuses will be expected to meet, but not exceed, enrollment targets (Objective 7).
- Emphasis will be given to the space utilization of degree and degree-related programs (Objective 9).
- Campus administrative services will be expected to move beyond their current levels of compliance and sustainability planning (Objective 9).

As reported in FORTNIGHT (Volume 6, Issue 3), preparation of the PMP reports is an operation that spans several months at the College of Staten Island. Associate Provost Susan Holak, the campus PMP Liaison, works with the Cabinet, Provost’s Council, General Chairs Committee, and other faculty and staff to prepare both the response and goal-setting documents.

At the University level, comparisons made over the period spanning from the 2000-2001 to 2010-2011 PMP cycles suggest that major strides have been made in many goal areas, including headcount (38% increase), transfer enrollment (66% increase), grants and contracts (64% increase) and fundraising (211% increase). Among the challenges still to be addressed in the evolution and improvement of the PMP are issues relating to the reporting of student learning outcomes, and the Middle States accreditation process.

Details about the CUNY Performance Management Process can be found on the University’s website at www.cuny.edu/pmp. The College’s goal-setting documents are listed along with those of the other CUNY campuses. Any questions or comments about the PMP can be directed to Associate Provost Susan Holak.

CLOSING THE LOOP: “DATA BOOKS” DEVELOPED FOR ATHLETICS, SEEK, AND OTHER SPECIAL PROGRAMS SHOW DEMOGRAPHICS, RETENTION AND PERFORMANCE OF SPECIAL STUDENT GROUPS

In order to help understand the makeup and degree progress of students in special cohorts such as the SEEK Program, the Verrazano School, student athletes, and students enrolled in language courses or receiving STEAM grants, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has been developing data books about these programs. Beginning with a few simple tables about students in the SEEK program in 2009, these data books have evolved over time to include not only demographic information about the students, but attempted credit loads, credit completion rates, and retention and graduation charts. Where appropriate – for example, if a program has specific entry requirements – the data books include tables that compare the demographics and performance of students in the program with a group of similar students who also meet the program’s entry criteria.

These data books and comparison tables have proven invaluable to the SEEK program, both for the development of their assessment plan and as part of their ongoing reporting for this plan, and data book information about students receiving STEAM grants has been used in presentations to the National Science Foundation to help demonstrate the ongoing effectiveness of the program.

CAMPUS UPDATES

Institutional Effectiveness Committee – The Committee met on Friday, May 11, to review the Middle States Evaluation Team’s visit and discuss ways to maintain momentum in reporting continuous improvement. The committee, made up of representation from many administrative offices and programs, focused on campus preparation for residence halls and the use of templates from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment for reporting goals, objectives, and year-end accomplishments.

FORTNIGHTLY NOTES

The Gates Au Sable Lodge east of Grayling, Michigan, caters to anglers fishing in the catch and release trout waters of the Au Sable River. The area is internationally known for its abundant insect hatches, so the rivers are restricted to fly-only fishing; in support of this, the Gates Au Sable offers printable instruction sheets for a “Fortnightly Fly.”

Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit items related to departmental assessment projects, College institutional effectiveness activities, committee announcements, and best practices by May 31, 2012, for consideration to appear in the next communiqué.