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 FOLLOW-UP REPORTING: LOOKING AHEAD TO SPRING 2013 ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

As noted in a previous issue of FORTNIGHT (see Volume 9, Issue 1), the College has been requested to provide the Middle States Commission on Higher Education with a Monitoring Report as a follow-up to our decennial self-study, due on December 1, 2013. The report will address aspects of Middle States Standards 12 (General Education) and 14 (Assessment of Student Learning), demonstrating alignments between the College’s General Education goals and Pathways learning objectives; in addition, the Commission wishes to see continued evidence of learning assessment in academic programs in a sustained and more consistent way across all divisions and departments. The Middle States Commission did not require that the College host a small team visit as part of this follow-up; visits are sometimes required when the Commission has concerns whether a report will provide satisfactory evidence on its own that all standards are being met.

Plans are well underway to develop the follow-up response. A Middle States Follow-up Committee is being assembled that includes faculty members who have demonstrated interest and experience with assessment; they may have participated in the decennial self-study, served on the General Education Committee, represented their department or program on the Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee (AOAC), or some combination of these. This Follow-up Committee will lead and oversee the Monitoring Report’s development. A draft project calendar has been established to ensure that the report is completed by the deadline.

Given the Monitoring Report’s focus on Standard 12, the College’s General Education Committee has started to discuss approaches to the work and analysis necessary for the Report (see FORTNIGHT, Volume 9 Issue 5). Professor Richard Powers and Associate Provost Susan Holak proposed two sub-committees of General Education—one to address the alignment of goals and the other to examine the approaches taken to oversee assessment. These Gen Ed sub-committees will commence work in the Spring 2013 semester; Professor Powers is leading the assessment sub-committee. These sub-committees will work in a coordinated way with the Middle States Follow-up Committee. Associate Provost Susan Holak and Warrick Bell, Coordinator of Institutional Research and Assessment, will work with the goals alignment sub-committee and provide updates on assessment activities to members of the Middle States Follow-up Committee.

With regard to Standard 14, the Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee, the Academic Deans, Department Chairs, and Interdisciplinary Program Coordinators, along with Associate Provost Susan Holak and Institutional Research Coordinator Warrick Bell, are all working to build upon and expand the systems that were in place prior to the Middle States team visit. These activities include: 1) following the academic program review calendar that can be found at www.library.csi.cuny.edu/assessment, 2) continuing assessment activity reporting using our templates, currently for 2011-2012, 3) refining Assessment Plans and rubrics, and 4) examining the linkages between learning assessments and program planning as described in academic self-studies.

According to the tentative timeline, the Middle States Follow-up Committee will develop a draft of the Monitoring Report by the end of the Spring 2013 semester. Revisions and
editing will be done over the summer and into the early autumn. The final report and support materials will be completed well in time to meet the December 1, 2013 deadline.

**CLOSING THE LOOP: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IMPLEMENTS NEW STUDENT PERFORMANCE TRACKING FORMAT TO FACILITATE EARLY INTERVENTION**

For students seeking Education degrees, the course sequence through the Education Department itself can be completed in two years. This relatively brief period does not always give the faculty much time to get to know students as well as the instructors would like before class members begin their clinical field experience: student teaching in area schools. Although the department uses various aspects of academic performance to track students, evidence from their field experiences revealed occasional difficulties that had been missed by the data collected in the department. In a few cases, these missed issues were severe enough to threaten students’ chances of graduating from their program.

To address this situation, the department worked through established and *ad hoc* committees to investigate these cases, finally resolving that a modified student progress form could help to identify specific cases early enough to allow for successful intervention. The form provides instructors the opportunity to note issues that may require further attention without interfering with students’ progress towards the completion of their program. The department will review the form at a departmental meeting during the spring. Faculty plan to pilot test the new form soon after it is approved, expecting that it will help them meet the needs of all of their students more fully and quickly.

**CAMPUS UPDATES**

**Foundations of Excellence (FoE)** – The Foundations of Excellence project will move to a new stage when the nine dimension committees begin meeting in the Spring 2013 semester. An important part of the analysis that each group will do will be based, in part, on the results from the student and faculty/staff surveys that focus on our students’ first-year experience. Invitations from Interim President Fritz to participate in the survey will be going out imminently; please watch for announcements. The online survey window will remain open for several weeks.

**CUNY NEWS AND EVENTS**

**CUNY CTL Committee, CUE Committee, and CUNY Assessment Council** – Under the guidance of University Dean for Undergraduate Studies Karrin Wilks, a number of CUNY agencies are examining the various approaches to the assessment of General Education across the University. Among these are the CUNY central committee of Centers for Teaching and Learning, chaired by Dr. Wilks; Professor William Bernhardt, Director of the Faculty Center for Professional Development, is the College’s representative to the committee. The CUNY Coordinated Undergraduate Curriculum (CUE) committee is another group examining the issue, and has produced a summary of the approaches to General Education assessment at all CUNY undergraduate institutions. Dr Deborah Vess, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs, represents CSI on this committee. Dr. Wilks also met with the CUNY Assessment Council regarding this topic, and the Council is discussing the possible impact of common General Education goals across the University. Warrick Bell, Coordinator of Institutional Research and Assessment, participates on this Council.

**FORTNIGHTLY NOTES**

The online project called *Fortnight* is “a documentary on the Millennial Generation” that brings together film and text from 58 “Millennials” – the generation of people born between roughly 1978 and 1990 who have been raised by and with the internet. Produced between 2010 and 2012, *Fortnight* features innovators from areas as varied as technology, economics, sciences and the arts, and pairs some of the Millennial contributors with mentors in their fields to promote a cross-generational dialogue. The project can be seen at [fortnightjournal.com](http://fortnightjournal.com)

*Fortnight* will resume publication in the Spring after a brief hiatus for the semester break. The Office of the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy holiday season, enjoyable intersession break, and prosperous New Year 2013!