

Report to
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
of
Bergen Community College
Paramus, New Jersey 07652-1595

Prepared following analysis of the institution's
Periodic Review Report

First Reviewer:

Joanne E. Braxton

(Former Vice President for Planning and Institutional Assessment)

Suffolk County Community College

Second Reviewer:

Susan Deer

Vice President of Academic Affairs

SUNY Rockland Community College

August 8, 2011

Evaluation of the Periodic Review Report
of
Bergen Community College

I. Introduction

Bergen Community College was founded in 1965 to satisfy the region’s need for convenient, affordable and comprehensive higher education. The college offers a varied array of credit and non-credit programs for the residents of Bergen County.

The Periodic Review Report was clearly delineated; the college completed a comprehensive and forthright examination of accomplishments to date as well as recognizing challenges and opportunities still to be addressed. The Periodic Review Report prepared by the college is a well organized document which will be a useful tool in guiding and maintaining the progress of the institution since its decennial self-study in 2006. As stated in the *Handbook for Periodic Review Reports*, Twelfth Edition, the Periodic Review Report, “is a retrospective, current and prospective analysis of the institution.” Bergen Community College in its Periodic Review Report has designed a roadmap to continue moving the institution forward.

II. Responses to Recommendations from the Previous Decennial Evaluation

The following will be a summary of the institution’s responses to the recommendations set forth in the self-study, and in the decennial report prepared by the visiting team in 2006. The issues addressed by both entities centered on the following assessment, planning, governance structure, faculty and staff, and student learning.

Assessment

The Team Report and the self-study highlighted eight (8) different areas addressing Standard 7 Institutional Assessment - “The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.” Standard 7 is the lynchpin for all other standards; there are two basic questions that an institution must answer – “As an institutional community, how well are we collectively doing what we say we are doing? And, “How do we support student learning, a fundamental aspect of institutional effectiveness?”

The eight (8) areas addressed were the allocation of resources (personnel and professional development), appropriate leadership in the area of assessment, clearly stated action plans,

establishment of clearly delineated practices and process for assessment, roles and responsibilities must be understood by the college community, and the development of a student services assessment plan.

The PRR demonstrates admirable institutional accomplishments in the area of personnel for assessment in directing resources to the Center for Institutional Effectiveness (CIE) by hiring staff to support assessment initiatives; a Vice President of Research, Planning, Assessment and Quality (VP-RPAQ) to direct and oversee the projects of the CIE, a Dean for Program Development, Learning Technologies and Process Improvement, a Technology Coordinator position was created, and a research associate (a failed search for the research associate however funds were used to engage the services of the Hanover Research Council). The granting of release time to faculty, professional development workshops and a negotiated item pertaining to assessment in the Faculty Contract clearly sends a message to the greater college community that places assessment as a high priority. The personnel changes noted in the PRR are recent and it is difficult at this time to assess the effectiveness of the personnel changes.

The college has invested resources in the recent acquisition of Tk20, a software assessment system which should assist the institution in codifying its assessment process as well as providing transparency for the college community.

The PRR references several recently adopted documents to address assessment such as the document titled, *A Framework for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement*; the document possess the elements and actions items required for addressing institutional assessment however the “newness” of the process has not allowed for sufficient time to evaluate the inherent elements of assessment; systematic and sustained processes as assessment relates to Standard 1: Mission and Goals, Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal and Standard 7: Institutional Assessment.

There are three key elements of assessment – organized, systematized and sustained. As noted in the *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* – “Assessment results also should be used to evaluate the assessment process itself, leading to modifications that improve its relevance and effectiveness.” The lack of evidence of the effectiveness of the institutional assessment is not congruent with the statement imbedded in the document, “an integrated approach to planning, assessment, resource allocation and improvement.”

Several of the assessment processes identified in the *A Framework for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement* are in the development or early stages for example, in the Administrative and Educational Support Department (AES) the document states that “A comparable Five Year review process is in the development and will be implemented in September 2010.”

The PRR indicates the use of various nationally-normed instruments; *Personal Assessment of the College Environment Survey (PACE)*, *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)* and the *National Community College Benchmarking Projects (NCCBP)* as well as the hiring of consultants to provide valuable data for the institution which will inform the planning and assessment processes, the college is to be commended for administering the aforementioned nationally-normed instruments.

The PRR indicates that the college has redefined the roles and responsibilities of individuals responsible for assessment as documented by the new position description for the Academic Department Chair and the delineation of ownership for assessment by members of the Executive Council, Deans, Directors, Department Chairs and other unit supervisors.

The PRR provides evidence of the processes and mechanisms required for assessment with the development of two key documents; *Engaged for Excellence: 2010-2013 Strategic Plan* and *A Framework for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement* however the use of the documents is recent which does not yield visible outcome results from employing the processes.

Assessment should relate clearly too important goals, and improvements should clearly stem from assessment results.

A statement written by the planning committee taken from the document titled, *Engaged for Excellence: 2010-2013 Strategic Plan* summarizes the assessment process for the institution – “Assessment of student learning and administrative/educational support services has taken root on campus, but it will need further nurturing to continue to thrive and bear fruit. Assessment, planning and budgeting also need to be more tightly integrated in order to lead to robust institutional renewal.”

The readers offer a recommendation related to Standard 7, Institutional Assessment and Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning:

*The readers **recommend** more evidence of systematic and sustained programs reflecting institutional use of assessment to effect change as clearly stipulated in Standards 7 and 14.*

Planning

The PRR addresses Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal, “ An institution conducts ongoing planning and resources allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.”

The college has adopted new mission and vision statements which are paramount and the foundation for effective planning.

The PRR document titled, *Engaged for Excellence: 2010-2013 Strategic Plan* is the college's blueprint for planning. The plan was collaboratively developed; involving many institutional stakeholders as evidenced by the various forums held to solicit input. The process involved identifying "internal drivers (strengths and weaknesses) and external drivers (opportunities and threats)."

The strategic plan designed by the college focuses on benchmarks for operational initiatives versus an institutional goals oriented strategic plan.

The measurements of success warrant a more in-depth analysis to assess if changes instituted make a difference.

The readers offer one recommendation and one suggestion for Standard 2, Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal:

*The readers **suggest** the involvement of more senior faculty as members of the Strategic Planning Committee. The planning process is a coordinated effort that involves representatives of all affected parts of the institution who give a holistic consideration to all institutional goals.*

*The readers also **recommend** a review of the goals and objectives within the Strategic Plan as they relate to the mission and vision of the college as well as redefining the measurable strategies reflecting outcomes for institutional change and renewal.*

Governance Structure

The PRR documents validate the earnest movement of the college to be engaged in shared collegial governance; Standard 4: Leadership and Governance – "The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution."

The PRR references the use of the Personal Assessment of the College Environment Survey (PACE) which provided the college with data to support the decision to enter into the agreements to establish clear lines of demarcation of roles and responsibilities to diminish ambiguity in institutional decision making.

The documents executed by the college and the Faculty Association clearly demonstrate significant changes for the improvement of institutional governance with the major emphasis on

open communication and separation of authority; *Memorandum Of Understanding* and the *Memorandum Of Agreement*. The college President and the President of the Faculty Association should be applauded for entering into the agreements to ensure all constituents have a voice in the mission and vision direction of the institution.

Two other outgrowths from the PACE data were the development of processes for administrative decisions, actions and communications and the establishment of the concept of institutional culture of assessment.

The academic reorganization to increase the Schools (formerly known as “divisions”) allows for greater representation in the Senate; another positive change for inclusive governance.

In 2008 the Board of Trustees passed a resolution authorizing the president to create and charge a governance structure known as the College Council; the council is a representative body of the various constituents of the college community.

All of the above actions epitomize the concerted commitment by the college to meeting Standard 4, Leadership and Governance.

The readers offer the following suggestion related to Standard 4, Leadership and Governance:

*The readers **suggest** the continued momentum to maintain open channels of communication and broad base inclusiveness for all members of the college community.*

Faculty and Staff

The PRR and the institutional self-study discussed seven (7) areas relating to Standard 10, Faculty – “The institution’s instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals. “Teaching and learning are central to the activities of faculty members at each institution and faculty bear primary responsibility for promoting, facilitating, assuring, and evaluating student learning.”

The PRR demonstrates that the college is maintaining appropriate staffing levels given the budgetary challenges as evidenced in the 2010 data feedback report received from the national *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems* (IPEDS). The IPEDS report denotes that the college’s staffing levels are relative to the college’s size; the college nearly exceeds in all areas of staffing other than Executive/Administrative/Managerial personnel.

The college is to be commended for its commitment in maintaining appropriate staffing levels ensuring the integrity of student learning.

The issue of the importance of faculty evaluations is clearly expressed in Standard 10, “Articulated and equitable procedures and criteria for periodic evaluation of all faculty contribute significantly to sustaining an appropriate level of growth and excellence. Such procedures and

criteria for periodic evaluation support those who, regardless of their professional titles, are responsible for the development and delivery of programs and services.”

The college has addressed the concern noted in the self-study and Team Report by codifying the support staff promotional process, communicating to all supervisors outlining the promotional process for professional staff. The recommendation by the PACE Follow-up Committee, “that the criteria for promotions is clearly stated, posted and discussed, that timelines for application are clear, and that all non-faculty employees are aware of the application process and have easy access to all necessary forms” has been addressed by the college.

Professional development initiatives through the Faculty Development Committee and the Center for Innovation in Teaching offer faculty a wide diversity of pedagogical topics which encourage engagement between the faculty.

The PRR notes the attention given to the faculty development of newly hired tenure track and non-tenured track faculty in providing professional support in the areas of advising, reappointment papers, career planning, time management and developmental education as well as a mentoring program for new faculty.

The college is to be commended for the faculty development program; placing this enterprise within the strategic plan conveys a commitment to the mission of the institution.

Standard 10, Faculty - affirms the importance of the faculty and their role in student learning in the advancement of the college’s vision and mission.

The readers offer the following recommendation related to Standard 10, Faculty:

*The readers **recommend** the continuation of on going faculty development especially in the area of institutional assessment and student learning.*

Student Learning

Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning – “Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.”

Standard 14, as noted in the *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, “builds upon Standards 11 (Educational Offerings, 12 (General Education), and 13 (Related Educational Offerings), each of which includes assessment of student learning among its fundamental elements.” Standard 14 “ties together those assessments into an integrated whole to answer the question, “Are our students learning what we want them to learn?”

The PRR document identified seven (7) issues from the self-study and the Team Report addressing student learning, the items encompassed the following areas:

- Assessing student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level and document the use of the assessment activities in making curricular improvements
- The distinction between the Board approved Assessment Framework and the Faculty Senate Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
- The College should ensure that all syllabi are consistent in design with the Master Course Syllabi, guaranteeing that they include student learning outcomes
- The College must ensure that every program includes specific learning outcomes and that all program courses have clearly stated learning outcomes directly linked to the program goals and outcomes. Student learning must be assessed in terms of these outcomes
- General Education learning outcomes must be assessed within the College's overall plan for assessing student learning, and assessment data should be used for curricular improvement
- The process of assessment of credit and non-credit certificate programs should be continued, supported, and expanded in keeping with other assessment initiatives
- Assure consistency of assessment of Distance Learning courses with other similar courses taught in different modalities.

The readers felt that it was important to list the above items taken from the PRR document due to the importance of student learning, “student learning is at the heart of the mission of most institutions of higher education, the assessment of student learning is an essential component of the assessment of institutional effectiveness (see Standard 7: Institutional Assessment), which additionally monitors the environment provided for teaching and learning and the achievement of other aspects of the institution’s mission, vision, and strategic goals and plans.”

The readers will address each item from the information contained in the PRR and the supporting documents provided by the institution as it relates to Standard 14, and the interrelationship of Standards 7, 11, 12 and 13.

The PRR document indicates that “Every department is required to produce learning objectives and means of assessment explicitly” however the supporting documents did not provide a sample evidence that said action is currently in practice. The statement that “Student learning objectives are aligned with General Education goals where appropriate” is another example of not providing the readers with documentation of the stated functionality.

The *Assessment Student Learning Plan* is an ambitious document however; the two key elements rooted in meaningful assessment are systematic and sustainable – such evidence is not available due to the recent approval of the plan, 2010. The need for quality and quantity of time allows for the assessment of assessment objectives to determine if a difference was indeed made in achieving the overall stated goal(s).

PRR states that many departments were assessing General Education however; now with the adoption of the *Assessment Student Learning Plan* document general education must be incorporated in all programs as so aptly stated in Standard 12, General Education – “The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.”

The readers would like to emphasize that general education requirements are not merely for transfer programs but should also be imbedded within career programs. The PRR document notes that starting in 2011-2012, faculty will engage in summative assessments of student learning within credit certificates that have related associate degree programs.

The inclusion of online and hybrid courses in the assessment process provides a holistic landscape for the assessment process.

The PRR provided examples of program learning goals however; there seemed to be an absence of the mission and goals of the programs to determine if the goals were aligned with the departmental mission and goals and the interrelationship to the institutional goals.

The PRR clearly outlines the institutional efforts to completely overhaul the developmental mathematics program from changing the class size, restructuring of the placement process, the implementation of a 3-tiered approach to developmental math classes, and new and additional support services; the college is to be commended for the changes instituted; student learning was enhanced and assessment effected change in the developmental mathematics courses from retention to completion rates as noted in Figure 2 of the PRR document. The Title V Grant also has further enhanced the developmental mathematics courses.

The readers suggest that the college should embark on a similar effort for English Basic Skills courses which was employed for the developmental mathematics courses.

The readers offer two recommendations related to Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning:

*The readers **recommend** more systematic and sustained evidence of the assessment of student learning at the course, program and departmental level as outlined in the Assessment of Student Learning Plan.*

*The readers also **recommend** general education proficiencies be imbedded in all credit programs, and that they be assessed regularly to ensure the improvement of student learning.*

III. Major Challenges and/or Opportunities

External

Financial Resources and Expenditures

The PRR delineates external and internal opportunities and challenges for the college categorized in six groupings – (external) financial resources and expenditures, student enrollment, the impact of college preparedness on student success, and community awareness of the College’s programs and offerings and (internal) student engagement and success, and a consistent service ethic.

The college is faced with the same challenges as all public institutions that depend on their resources from student tuition, state support and local sponsor support. The student tuition absorbs the greater portion of meeting the college’s revenue, 53.9%. The college also has managed to address its revenue challenge by pursuing grants such as the receipt of the Title V grant, Table 2 demonstrates that the college has increased its grant funding seven-fold; the college should be commended for seeking and being successful in garnering alternative revenue sources.

The college’s Foundation continues to support scholarships for students, faculty and staff development, construction and other special projects.

The college continues to review internal costs savings such as its termination of a contract for information services as well as the reducing overtime at the college.

The readers commend the college for its fiscal acumen though faced with ongoing revenue challenges.

The college addresses Standard 3, Institutional Resources, “The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution’s resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.”

The readers offer a suggestion related to Standard 3, Institutional Resources.

*The readers **suggest** that the institution continue to seek alternative revenue sources to support its mission.*

Student Enrollment

The college has utilized the expertise of outside consultants to assess the demographics effecting increased enrollment, the Hanover Research Council, New Jersey Department of Labor and Economic Modeling Services, Inc. (EMSI).

The findings from the studies yield data to allow the institution to make informed decision about the direction of its programming and services.

The college is to be commended for setting and sustaining the priority of hiring full-time faculty to address the increase enrollment, understanding the importance of the ratio between full-time faculty to student enrollment. As well as developing additional site locations for offering classes and programs to relieve the stress from the main campus and acknowledging population growth and their educational needs.

The readers offer the suggestion related to Standard 3, Intuitional Resources:

*The readers **suggest** that the college continue its commitment of supporting the hiring of personnel to meet the demands of increasing student enrollment.*

The Impact of College Preparedness on Student Success

PRR provided an analysis of the academic preparation of students entering the college, noted in Appendix X, Hanover Analysis of the 2006 Cohort, 92% of the college's entering students required at least one remedial course.

The college is faced with the expense of offering developmental courses while confronting revenue challenges.

The readers offer two suggestions related to Standard 9, Student Support Services.

*The readers **suggest** as noted earlier, that a similar endeavor which was used for the enhancement of the developmental mathematics courses should be employed with other developmental courses.*

*The readers also **suggest** the development of an initiative for the engagement of high school and college faculty to discuss the academic skill set required for students to be prepared for college level work.*

Community Awareness

The college addressed the issue of community awareness by contracting the services of Clarus Corporation, Appendix XII to provide data to assist with two challenges faced by the college –

(1) how to expand a shrinking adult student population market, traditional at community colleges, and (2) how to brand itself in an increasingly competitive market which now includes “career” and online colleges.

The PRR document clearly provides evidence of the college’s proactive measures is using and incorporating the information obtained from the data in the Clarus Corporation report to institute changes to meet the challenges and to seize opportunities from the data to make informed decisions.

The college is to be commended for receiving the *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* in the area for Community Engagement, a confirmation from an external entity of the impact of the college within its service community; this acknowledgement supports and validates the vision of the college.

The readers commend the college for using data and including various initiatives in the strategic plan by developing objectives to meet the desired goal.

The readers offer the suggestion related to Standard 11, Educational Activities:

*The readers **suggest** the review of the initiatives set forth will require time to assess the effectiveness of the desired outcome; the recurring focuses of assessment are two important elements – systematic and sustainable.*

Internal

Student Engagement and Success

The PRR document notes two internal challenges, student engagement and success and a consistent service ethic.

The college has utilized the appropriate nationally-normed instruments to assess issues surrounding student engagement, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Personal Assessment of the College Environment Survey (PACE). The results of the surveys have been incorporated into the strategic plan document titled, *Engaged for Excellence: 2010-2013 Strategic Plan*.

The college has begun activities to address the findings from the CCSSE in an area that the college scored below its cohort institutions – Active and Collaborative Learning – a program has been initiated through the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning to provide workshops and training for faculty in this area.

The PRR notes the redesign of the advising program and processes an objective established by the President; four initiatives were implemented, (1) a virtual college orientation, (2) a refined in-person registration process, (3) a redesigned faculty advising system, and (4) changes to make

the Colleague and Wed Advisor more user-friendly, as well as the unification of the Counseling and Academic Advising Center.

The college is to be commended for its Service Learning Program for its longevity and the number of students and faculty involved with the program; a strong measure of student engagement.

The college has been responsive to the growing enrollment of its student body by directing resources to facility enhancements as noted in the PRR report on pages 45-48. The strategic capital initiatives by the college are outlined in Section 3 of the PRR report commendable, given the current fiscal climate.

The readers offer a suggestion related to Standard 9, Student Support Services and Standard 11, Educational Offerings:

*The readers **suggest** the on going training and support for faculty development in various pedagogical modalities focusing on student engagement.*

Consistent Service Ethic

The college responded proactively from the results of the Clarus report which yield information on the responsiveness to inquiries about the college.

The college is to be commended for its swift response to the concern by providing training in this critical area to the administrative and support units. The interaction that a prospective student encounters upon their initial contact with the college is critical to whether or not the individual will view the college as a welcoming and helpful environment.

IV. Enrollment and Finance Trends and Projections

Finance

The PRR report outlines a comprehensive process used by the college for budget development, Figure 6 displays the contributions received from the State and County sponsor since 2006, the trend has been downward from both entities requiring student tuition to absorb the difference; 53.9% in 2010.

The PRR provides a budget process that is inclusive and is developed through analysis of trend and historical data for the development of the budget.

The three charts referenced in the PRR report on pages 50-52, Figures 7-9, Chart 1: Long Range Overview FY 2012-2016, Chart 2: Historical and predicted sources of income that inform the

long range planning in Chart 1, and Chart 3: Illustrates how one scenario is considered for the impact on future budgets; the information provided supports the building of a fiscally conservative budget.

Enrollment

The college commissioned Economic Modeling LLC (EMSI) to provide more precise enrollment projections inclusive of the demographic make-up of future students.

The projections represent fairly good news for the college that predicts 4% enrollment increase if unemployment remains high, remain flat if unemployment is average, and decrease by no more than 3% if unemployment is low. The PRR document notes, “Unemployment is trending downward, so the College may expect flat to decreasing enrollment, although more students may choose community colleges because of rising education costs. These projections represent fairly good news, but the College will need to continue to expand market share in order to protect current enrollment levels.”

V. Assessment Process and Plans

The PRR report outlines in detail the processes the college has instituted addressing Standard 7, Institutional Assessment and Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning.

The college is working towards the “culture of assessment” in the areas of institutional effectiveness and student learning with the following initiatives:

- The 2005 *Assessment Framework* document which was revised to include Academic and (ACAD) and Administrative and Educational Support (AES) units in a one-year cycle of assessing learning objectives and administrative goals, primarily under the direction of an Assessment Coordinator.
- In 2006 at the request of the Faculty Senate, the 2005 Framework was amended to a two-year cycle and the Assessment Coordinator organized an Assessment Team to assist in the development and evaluation of the assessment plans.
- The PRR reports that many assessment plans were developed during the aforementioned cycle. The readers did not observe evidence of the changes that were effected through these assessments; actions were taken as displayed in Appendices XIX, Academic Assessment Projects, 2006 & 2008 and XX, Administration and Education Support Services Assessment Projects, 2006 & 2008 however; no evidence of the measurements used to ascertain the effect of the action hence the impact of the action on student learning and institutional effectiveness.

- In 2008 the assignment of Assessment Fellows to support Department Assessment Liaisons in developing their assessment projects. Two Assessment Fellows were faculty members and two were members of the professional staff. The readers commend the inclusiveness of more individuals in the assessment process.
- The PRR notes that in 2010 a new *Framework for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement* restored a one-year cycle of unit-level assessment but went far beyond the old *Assessment Framework*, integrating planning, resource allocation, and improvement.
- The PRR notes that the new *Framework* combined with the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan, the *Framework* established priorities and processes for improvement at every level of the College and outlined the process for goal-setting, monitoring of the plans to achieve the goals, and how resource allocation would be linked to the goals.
- A new strategic plan was adopted, *Engaged for Excellence: 2010-2013 Strategic Plan*.
- Another improvement noted in the PRR for assessment included the use of nationally-normed assessment instruments for establishing institutional benchmarks.
- Faculty and staff satisfaction surveys were used to assess institutional effectiveness.
- The PRR report noted, “The 2010 Strategic Plan identified college-wide goals based on five broad Success Factors. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were identified for each goal, and each KPI was assigned a target to track progress toward the goal [Appendix XVII].
- The above aforementioned process facilitated the development of a dashboard to track progress on each of the College’s Success Factors – Students, Faculty/Staff/Administration, Program and Processes, Community, and Financial.
- The PRR report noted that each cycle of assessment of student learning has improved on the previous one. The first two cycles, from 2005 to 2008, mixed learning outcomes, and departmental and program goals. The third cycle, from 2008-2010 emphasized quality over quantity. The current cycle, 2010-2011 is spotlighting General Education learning outcomes.
- The PRR document indicates that the Tk20 planning and assessment software will be used to capture all planning and goal-setting at the institutional and departmental level, provide reporting on departmental alignment with the Strategic Plan.

The readers commend the college for developing the mechanisms for assessment (processes and procedures), resource allocation, increased personnel assigned to execute the assessment

program for the college as well as providing support and professional development training for faculty and staff in the area of assessment.

The readers noted a significant change pertaining to the follow-up on assessment recommendations, under the 2010 *Framework*, follow-up is required as part of the Five Year review of the academic departments.

The readers have noted that many of the assessment processes required for institutional assessment are evident at the college however; the achievement of the fundamental elements of Standard 7 and Standard 14 are beyond just a plan; the college does provide examples of change in calculus and biology but the assessment of the change requires evidence that the actions taken effected student learning for improvement.

The “newness” of the processes is difficult at this time to determine their effectiveness for assessment – the elements of assessment, systematic and sustainability have not been given sufficient time to assess the effectiveness.

The readers offer a recommendation related to Standard 7, Institutional Assessment and 14, Assessment of Student Learning:

*The readers **recommend** staff development, possibly in commissioning an outside consultant, to work with the faculty and staff to develop measurable outcome objectives.*

VI. Linked Institutional Planning and Budgeting

The PRR clearly demonstrates the college’s commitment to assessment as evident by the resources afforded for assessment through additional personnel, commissioning of numerous nationally-normed surveys and the contracting of expert consultants in assessment, and the purchase of software tracking assessment system.

The readers commend the college for meeting Standard 2, Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal for supporting the efforts of assessment.

The college has consistently demonstrated its commitment to linking planning and budgeting to the assessment process.

VII. Conclusion

Bergen Community College is poised to meet the challenges as well as the opportunities for an institution committed to its mission and vision goals.

Bergen Community College is to be commended for its fiscal acumen in maintaining stability while facing ongoing revenue issues.

The readers will summarize the recommendations set forth in the reviewers' document:

1. Recommend more evidence of systematic and sustained programs reflecting institutional use of assessment to effect change as clearly stipulated in Standards 7 and 14.
2. Recommend a review of the goals and objectives within the Strategic Plan as they relate to the mission and vision of the college as well as redefining the measurable strategies reflecting outcomes for institutional change and renewal. (Standard 2)
3. Recommend the continuation of on going faculty development especially in the area of institutional assessment and student learning. (Standard 10)
4. Recommend more systematic and sustained evidence of assessment of student learning at the course, program and departmental level as outlined in the Assessment of Student Learning Plan. (Standard 14)
5. Recommend general education proficiencies be imbedded in all credit programs and that they be assessed regularly to ensure the improvement of student learning. (Standard 12)
6. Recommend staff development, possibly in commissioning an outside consultant, to work with faculty and staff to develop measurable outcome objectives.(Standards, 7, 10, and 14)

Bergen Community College, Paramus, NJ
Periodic Review Report: 1 June 2011

Financial Review Analysis
Prepared on: 21 August 2011
Prepared by: Dr. Lisa Marie McCauley, CPA

Bergen Community College is a two-year public community college. It operates independently but in concert with the New Jersey System of Education. Bergen Community College is located in the northeast area of the NJ.

The material presented in the PRR documents all areas as specified in the criteria for the Characteristics of Excellence.

The strategic plan entitled: *Engaged for Excellence: 2010 – 2013*, depicts the goals, objectives and outcomes being assessed by the institution. It is a comprehensive document which includes financial linkages to specific line items. The strategic plan is also incorporated with the President's Vision 2012, the Technology Strategic Plan and the Campus Master Plan.

The financial resources of the institution have been stable given the current economic environment. The institution continues to see decreases in its state and county funding, thereby requiring the institution to see alternative sources of revenue including grants and tuition increases. The college has been able to show positive results in operations, after allocating back the governmental funding (considered non-operating under GASB regulations). The college has monitored its financial status by implementing a dashboard reporting system. The report indicates specific goal expectations, each indicator is then measured against this criteria in the report using a color coded systems and numeric index. This is a positive outcome assessment for Standard 7 – Institutional Assessment.

The PRR section noted as Enrollment and Financial Trends and Projections documented 3-5 years of enrollment trends (credits, tuition and fee assessment), financial projections for income, expenses, and anticipated governmental funding. The verbal analysis describing the financial projections were well represented in the schedules presented. These projections are consistent with the dashboard indicator reports represented in the appendices of the PRR.

The institution has comprehensive Campus Master Plans and Technology Plan which are linked to budgetary financial plans and documented within the PRR.

The college has received unqualified opinions from recent audits, only minor findings have been reported, and resolved within the current year. There were no issues noted by the auditors.

Overall the college should be commended for a comprehensive PRR which documents the important components of the MSCHE review process.