

Bergen Community College  
**MIDDLE STATES** *Self-Study*  
2005-06



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**Bergen Community College**  
**Self-Study Report**  
**2005-06**

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# Executive Summary

## *College Overview*

Bergen Community College was established by the County Board of Chosen Freeholders in 1965 in order to provide affordable, high-quality educational programs to county residents.<sup>1</sup> The first classes were offered in September 1968 on the 167-acre campus in Paramus. Construction of the 430,000 square foot Pitkin Education Center was completed in 1973 and two subsequent phases of construction have increased the square footage to 587,000. In October 1999, the College's Adult Learning Center in Hackensack was renamed The Ciarco Learning Center and relocated to a larger facility. The Technology Education Center was opened in September 2002. This 56,215 square foot facility houses a simulated manufacturing lab, a state-of-the-art meeting and training facility, and a two-domed observatory. Groundbreaking for West Hall, which will house media technologies and fine and graphic arts facilities, took place in July 2005. Enrollment has increased from an initial 1,454 students to 14,762 students in Fall 2005. The College currently offers 77 transfer and career programs and 29 Certificates.

## *Self-Study Process and Goals*

In January 2004 President Judith Winn appointed an eighteen-member steering committee. The Middle States Steering Committee was charged with the design and implementation of a comprehensive self-study process and the task of preparing the final Self-Study document. The committee has representatives from the entire campus community: faculty, students, support staff, professional staff, administrators, and the Board of Trustees. Eight study groups, each also composed of representatives from across the campus, did the major research for the Self-Study in Fall 2004 and early Spring 2005. In order to keep lines of communication strong, ten members of the Steering Committee also served as chairs or co-chairs of the study groups. A Self-Study website, including online access to self-study documents and resources, was created to assist the study groups.

Study group reports written in outline form were distributed on campus through email and hardcopy in early March 2005, and fourteen Open Forums were held later that month. Input through comment forms was also solicited and accepted through April 2005. In May, the Steering Committee Chair, who also served as the general editor, began to draft the report in light of the feedback received in March and April. In July and early August, the Steering Committee met weekly to review, revise and update the narrative chapters. The Executive Council and Board of Trustees reviewed the report in late August. The narrative draft was widely distributed and a final round of Open Forums took place on October 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

The Steering Committee set the following objectives for itself in the Self-Study Design:

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<sup>1</sup> For the College's Annual Institutional Profile, prepared for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, see [Appendix D](#). For the College's organizational chart, see [Exhibit 25](#).

1. To lead a thorough, well-organized and comprehensive self-study process in which all sectors of the college community are represented and engaged.
2. To determine the extent to which the College is fulfilling its mission and goals, and in particular the extent to which different offices and units of the College are able to work collaboratively to more effectively and efficiently achieve these common goals.
3. To determine and evaluate the level of support that the College provides for outcomes assessment activities, and to determine the extent to which the College collects assessment data, and is responsive to assessment data, in its planning, budgeting, and renewal processes.
4. To review and evaluate the integrity and commitment to quality reflected in all of the College's policies and practices.
5. To determine the extent to which the College, as an open access institution, maintains high academic standards.
6. To review and assess the extent to which the College has been responsive to continuing student demographic changes in its student services, curriculum, and faculty development efforts.
7. To produce cogent findings and recommendations based on empirical evidence, to serve as a solid basis for strategic planning.

We believe that we have amply satisfied these objectives. Of all of the objectives, perhaps the most pragmatic is the last. In service of that objective, this Self-Study was used as a major internal environmental scan by the Strategic Planning Committee. The committee began working in January 2005, and in July produced *Strategic Plan to 2008: Meeting the Challenges of a New Century*. (See [Exhibit 12](#).)

### ***Major Findings and Highlights***

This report contains a chapter for each of the fourteen Middle States Standards for Accreditation, and each chapter concludes with a summary, followed by Commendations and Suggestions, and in many cases, Recommendations. In light of these readily accessible chapter summaries, we will not include an additional comprehensive summary here. Instead, what follows below are brief highlights from across the report.

- The College has engaged in extensive planning over the last ten years and made major improvements in technology and facilities, both of which expand its capacity to serve students.
- The most recent Graduate Follow-Up Survey revealed that 94% achieved their objective for attending BCC and that 98% would recommend BCC to prospective students.
- The annual budget has grown by \$22 million since 1994. Percentages of funding from the county and state have decreased, leaving tuition and fees to comprise an increasing share of total budgeted revenues. If this trend continues, it may ultimately limit the affordability and accessibility of the College.

- Pressure to maintain a high enrollment has placed a strain on the facilities and staff. The College continues to work on the challenge of finding ways to expand capacity and assess the efficient use of existing facilities.
- The Board of Trustees has been effective in representing the College to the local community and has had continued success increasing facilities funding for the College.
- The administrative structure of the College underwent a major reorganization in 1995 and several smaller scale changes have been made since then. The addition of Vice Presidents in several areas and the reinstating of Department Heads have led to noticeable improvements in the overall functioning of the College.
- The College goes to great lengths to ensure the integrity of its programs, services, and operations. Assisted by improvements in IT resources, there have been major improvements in the accessibility and accuracy of information for students, faculty, and staff.
- In addition to monitoring traditional indicators of institutional effectiveness, the College has engaged in several broader assessment initiatives over the last years, and several areas of the College engage in model assessment practices.
- The new Center for Institutional Effectiveness marks a major step forward in the College's commitment to institutional assessment.
- The implementation of the Colleague system, starting in 1997, has significantly improved services for students. Web registration has been available to students since the fall of 2001 and online admission for programs other than those with restricted admissions has existed for three years.
- The admissions and registration processes at Bergen have been a major focus of assessment over the past few years, with the aim of increasing efficiency and service. The resulting Student Services Improvement Project led, in July 2005, to the merger of the admissions and registration.
- Student development is the primary aim of the College's student support services, which include counseling and advising, student life, cooperative education and career development, athletics, and specialized services for disabled students. Bergen is now recognized and lauded as a regional center for deaf education and has the largest population of students with disabilities of any college in the state of New Jersey.
- Several recent surveys and focus group interviews indicate that campus diversity is widely valued.

- The faculty are well-qualified and actively engaged in scholarship and student life. The hiring of full-time faculty has been a budgetary priority in the last decade, and the current 325 full-time faculty members reflect an increase of 20% since the last Self-Study. This number includes lecturers —full-time, temporary instructors—whose numbers have more than doubled in the same time frame.
- The College’s educational offerings are broad and rigorous, and well-aligned with both the Mission and community needs.
- The library is heavily used and highly regarded, and is a major source of instruction in information literacy.
- Supplemental instruction services, now combined in the Learning Assistance Center, are also heavily used and have grown extensively in recent years.
- Bergen now offers 157 General Education courses, up from 135 in 1994, and the scope of the program is broad, offering students a wide range of courses to choose from. The course approval process was revised during 2004-2005, and now includes explicit criteria for qualification as a General Education course.
- Electronic placement testing and increased supplemental instruction have enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the basic skills programs.
- The non-credit offerings of the Division of Continuing Education, the Ciarco Learning Center, and the Institute for Learning in Retirement serve large numbers of students with a wide variety of needs, as does the Distance Education program, which has grown significantly since 1998 and promises to further increase capacity and access.
- The College is on track to begin using learning outcomes data to improve teaching and learning. Among the challenges the College has faced are a lack of shared assessment concepts, and a lack of an infrastructure to coordinate assessment activity.

The Center for Institutional Effectiveness promises to meet these last challenges, and integrate assessment of student learning into overall institutional assessment. Although the Center came into existence only one year ago, the college community is pleased with its excellent progress in implementing the Assessment Framework, and the solid foundation for future assessment activity it has created.

Finally, in light of this and the many other improvements implemented on campus since the start of this self-study, we believe that we have led a process that is generating institutional renewal and an enhanced ability to demonstrate student and institutional success.



# Forward

All supporting documents are labeled as “exhibits” and numbered according to their order of appearance in the report. In this PDF version of the Self-Study, exhibits can be accessed by clicking on the exhibit numbers in the text, which appear in blue. Hard copies of each exhibit are also available in the Visiting Team’s work areas.

Technical limitations have required us to present some of the exhibits as individual documents which we differentiate with additional letters, e.g., Exhibit 35a, 35b, etc. Accordingly, the Exhibit Master List and the exhibit references in the text vary slightly from the hard copy version of the Self-Study.

Each chapter ends with a brief Summary and some combination of Commendations, Suggestions, and Recommendations. Most Suggestions indicate an area for improvement that is not directly addressed in the Fundamental Elements of the relevant standard.

A copy of the College’s Eligibility Certification Statement appears in [Exhibit 23](#). The Annual Institutional Profile prepared for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education appears in [Appendix D](#).

# Chapter One

## Mission, Goals, and Objectives

A well-constructed and widely embraced mission statement serves as the theoretical and practical foundation of an institution of higher learning. Providing guidance to campus leaders and the governing body entrusted to bring about its fulfillment, the mission ensures that the institution is driven by ideas and principles in its planning, priorities, and decisions. The effective mission also serves as a criterion against which to assess the institution's effectiveness.

The Mission and Goals/Institutional Renewal Study Group was charged with reviewing the College's Mission and Vision Statements. In addition to a broad assessment of these statements, the group analyzed (1) how the College measures the extent to which it meets the goals and objectives articulated in these statements, and (2) how the College utilizes the Mission and Vision Statements to develop and shape its programs and practices.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The College's Mission and Vision Statements, each created in 1999, together express what the College currently is, and what it aspires to be. (See [Exhibits 1 and 2](#).) The Mission Statement captures the basic purpose of the College and is accompanied by four major College Goals that describe how the College fulfills this purpose. The Vision Statement places a heavy emphasis on the values that should guide the College as it works to fulfill its mission and is similarly divided into the themes of the four College Goals: Learning, Service, Diversity, and Partnerships. Both statements were developed collaboratively by representative groups from across the campus community, discussed in draft form during open forums, and ultimately approved by the Board of Trustees. Both statements appear prominently in the College Catalog, can be viewed on the College website, and the Vision in particular is highly visible on campus—on posters and on a large mural in the much-utilized Student Center. The Mission and Vision Statements were also a focus of attention during the new employee orientations conducted in September 2005.

The Middle States Surveys revealed that the Mission Statement is well known across the College, with 89% of the faculty and 77% of the administrators/staff reporting familiarity with the Mission Statement. (See [Exhibits 3 and 4](#).) Of those who were familiar with it, 82% of the administrators/staff and 78% of the faculty indicated that the Mission Statement “very much” or “somewhat” guides their work. Two-thirds of the respondents believed that the Mission Statement “very much” or “somewhat” promotes professional growth.

## ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

This section will focus on issues of particular and current importance to the College. The key issues are: (1) whether the Mission Statement is in need of revision, and (2) how the Mission statement is used in assessment and planning activities.

### *Mission Revision*

Although the College's mission as expressed in the Mission Statement is fundamentally sound, the study group found that certain parts of the statement need greater articulation and emphasis. For example, both formal and informal interviews with members of the college community found that the current statement should be revised to reflect more recent changes in our population (both internal and external). The Bergen student body enjoys remarkable diversity—even greater than that of the local community—with students from well over 100 nations. There is an increasing awareness that this diversity is an educational resource that creates comparatively unique opportunities for learning. Accordingly the Mission could give greater emphasis to the diversity the College actually has and the learning opportunities it creates. Although community colleges are, by their nature, designed to serve the broad spectrum of potential students residing in any community, the group also found that the Mission statement could be more specific about the major student populations served and how they are served—“embracing change and responding to complex needs of those it serves” being perhaps too subtle to be effective. Despite the fact that a majority of our incoming students require remediation in mathematics and English, and the number of students with documented disabilities has risen and is expected to continue to rise, these major facts about our student body are not well reflected in the Mission.

Finally, the group concluded that any future Mission revision should take into account the results of the campus-wide exploration of institutional values that has taken place over the last six months.<sup>2</sup>

### *Mission's Use in Assessment and Planning*

The study group found a point of strength in the way that the four College Goals accompanying the Mission Statement were integrated into the *Five-Year Plan 2001-2005*. These goals and an additional four operational goals form the eight major sections of the plan.<sup>3</sup> As it stands, this arrangement is an ideal way to ensure that college planning is mission-driven. Further, the multi-year plan and reporting process asked individual departments and units within the College to align their annual goals with these College goals, and, at least initially, the status of all of these goals was reported to the college community.

A more basic challenge for using the Mission to evaluate the effectiveness of the College lies in the fact that the Five-Year Plan, while containing an assessment component, is primarily a document for the organization and alignment of goals.

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<sup>2</sup> This exploration includes the Bergen Values Dialogue ([Exhibits 5-7](#)) and follow-up Values Survey ([Exhibit 8](#)), both of which are described in further detail in Chapter Six.

<sup>3</sup> See [Exhibit 9](#).

## **SUMMARY**

The College's Mission and Vision are well-known and have played a central role in the major planning processes during the past ten years. Changes that have taken place since their creation, as well as recent institutional renewal activities, suggest that a review of these statements would be beneficial.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The four College Goals that accompany the Mission are clearly and directly integrated into the Five-Year Plan.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The Mission Statement should be reviewed. It is suggested that the following be considered in the review:

- The need to state more clearly who we serve and what we do, e.g., that we offer two-year degrees, that we are comparatively affordable, that we emphasize teaching, that we have a student population of both traditional and returning students, have a highly diverse student body that creates a rich educational environment, etc.
- The results of Bergen Values Dialogue and corresponding Values Survey.

2. All College employees should be encouraged to use the College Goals as a framework for developing and completing their tasks at the College.

3. The College should establish a process, perhaps tied to strategic planning, for periodically reviewing the Mission, Goals, and Vision. In conjunction with recent changes to the employee orientation program, such a process would help maintain or increase awareness and commitment to the Mission. This process could include an annual in-house survey designed to determine the effectiveness of the Vision and Mission statements.

## Chapter Two

# Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Effective planning enables an institution to achieve and maintain excellence in the midst of internal and external change. In order to be truly effective, institutional planning must be supported and informed by outcomes assessment in all areas, and must be linked to budgeting to ensure that planning initiatives are appropriately supported by institutional resources. Effective planning allows the institution to adapt and renew itself as circumstances dictate, ensuring that quality is maintained and that the institution's mission continues to be realized.

This chapter will examine the nature and quality of planning within the College. The Mission and Goals/Institutional Renewal Study Group (1) analyzed the planning processes within the College, (2) determined how these processes are assessed, and (3) determined the extent to which these processes and their outcomes are used to support the development and change necessary to improve and maintain College quality.

In February 2005, after the study group had completed its work, the administration announced a restructuring involving the creation of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness that will become the locus of assessment, strategic planning, and institutional renewal activities. The Center is being led by the current Vice-President for Information and Technology Services, elevating responsibility for these activities to the executive level. It is hoped that the following analysis will be useful as the College enters a new phase of planning, assessment, and renewal.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Institution-wide planning at the College during the last ten years primarily falls into four distinct phases. The first two phases are fully documented in *Continuing the Quest for Excellence: a Multi-Faceted Planning Process*. (See [Exhibit 10](#).) The second and third phases represent a development and refinement of a single approach to planning based on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) principles. The fourth phase began during the 2004-05 academic year, with the start of a new strategic planning initiative. There have also been major facilities planning and smaller-scale planning efforts.

During the first planning phase, 1995-96, a set of six planning initiatives was formulated by the Board. The areas of focus were: curriculum, technology, finance, physical plant, human resources, and collaborative ventures. Two sets of facilities plans arose from these initiatives: the *Construction, Renewal, and Renovation Seven-Year Plan* aimed at creating additional classroom space and maintaining the physical plant, and the *Strategic Technology Plan* was designed to ensure that the College would keep current with advances in technology. Although improving physical capacity remains a challenge in light of steadily increasing enrollments, the College's IT resources and various

facilities expansion projects have been exemplary. An institutional marketing plan emphasizing communication also arose from these initiatives.

### ***The Critical Issues Planning Model***

The work of the Coordinating Council for Strategic Planning in existence at the time of the 94-95 Self-Study was replaced by a “Critical Issues” planning model used during each academic year from 1997 to 2000. What distinguished this model from previous planning models was the encouragement of campus-wide participation in addressing the issues deemed critical for that year—an innovation inspired by the College’s work in Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Accordingly, all departments and offices were asked to develop objectives that were directed toward these issues. In the first year of the new planning approach, 31 campus groups or offices included the Critical Issues in their Goals and Objectives, and in the second year, that number rose to 47. Three of the four Critical Issues from the initial year were carried over into the second year, and three new issues were added. At the end of each year the goals and objectives of the participating groups were collected and their status was reported as “Accomplished,” “Partially accomplished,” “In Progress,” or “Not Accomplished.” The increase in participation from year one to two was impressive, and is a good indicator of early buy-in. The carry-over of issues between years indicates that some assessment of the planning process and its effectiveness was done.

### ***The Five-Year Plan 2001-2005***

One lesson learned from the first year of using the Critical Issues approach was that some issues take longer than a year to address. With that in mind, the College undertook a much larger and more ambitious five-year planning project, based on the Critical Issues model, which placed the Mission at the center of the plan, and called for the formation of objectives to meet the four College Goals and four operational goals deemed critical for continuing success of the College: (1) To enhance leadership and strategic planning to ensure achievement of College goals, (2) To provide financial support for the College, (3) To provide adequate and appropriate facilities conducive to a learning environment, and (4) To support the development of the College’s human resources. (See [Exhibit 9](#))

The plan was designed to be constructed collaboratively and at multiple levels: the Vice-Presidents provided their plans and were asked to seek input from departments and the Deans. This led to the compilation of an eighteen-page grid that organized the eight major goals of the plan and the objectives established to meet them. In each academic year, the President and the Vice-Presidents selected their goals and priorities from the larger set of objectives that constitute the plan. The Vice-Presidents then asked their constituents to align their own goals and objectives to those of the Vice-President and President. Annual goals and objectives were collected by the Office of Research and Planning and reported each year in the *Five-Year Plan Status of Goals and Objectives* documents.

Early on it was clear that the scope of the planning document and the desire to report the status of each objective annually would create record-keeping challenges. For

example, initially, for each objective there were columns for Coordinating Responsibility, Collaborating Responsibility, Timeline, and Status. However, due to the complexity of the plan and the uncertain completion dates of ongoing and multi-year objectives, a complete timeline for completion of the objectives was never worked out; rather, a system for cross-referencing annual unit goals was used in the first cycle of reporting. The following year only the objective and the status of each objective were listed, with assignment of responsibility and cross-referencing to annual goals removed. Instead, each participating unit's goals were listed in a way that showed the connection with the plan's objectives.

A close reading of the plan and subsequent annual *Status of Goals and Objectives* documents reveals that most of the objectives were addressed in some fashion over the five year period, and very many of them were accomplished. The Five-Year Plan has thus been successful as a tool for the senior staff to track and report progress on objectives, and has provided a means to identify those objectives that needed further attention, and act on them where necessary. Furthermore, several objectives were deemed no longer relevant and were so identified in the status reports; this, combined with the addition of new objectives following the October 2000 Trailblazer Retreat, is evidence of a certain amount of flexibility and assessment of the plan.<sup>4</sup>

In retrospect, the Five-Year Plan was more of an operational plan than a strategic plan, because the four College Goals that form the “strategic” core of the plan are really operational goals, not strategic in the most basic sense. However, these goals were derived in part from the Vision statement—whose creation preceded the Mission and Goals revision—and the Vision *does* contain what can rightly be considered strategic initiatives: to build an inclusive community, to evaluate and improve our services, etc. Further, it is clear that the spirit of the Vision is contained in many of the objectives in the Five-Year Plan, if not in the major College Goals under which they are subsumed.

### ***The Role of Continuous Quality Improvement in Planning***

The College's CQI initiative was quite visible from 1997 through the Trailblazer Retreat. During those years the President appointed a pair of CQI Advisors, one from the professional staff and one from the faculty, to assist with campus initiatives. Consultants were hired to do initial training in quality initiatives, and Quality Circles in some areas were operative in the first two years. And, as seen above, the initiative bore fruit: it was the collaborative work in CQI that led to the creation of the Vision statement and subsequent Mission revision, and the formation of the Critical Issues planning model and the Five-Year Plan that succeeded it.

The Trailblazer Retreat was attended by approximately 40 people from across all levels and departments of the College. Although the retreat has been the object of some criticism, as has the entire CQI initiative, it serves as a clear example of a feedback loop from assessment to planning: the top three action-steps identified during the retreat were immediately added as objectives to the recently completed Five-Year Plan. A year later,

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<sup>4</sup> See [Exhibit 11](#) for the *Trailblazer Report*. Trailblazer is a qualitative self-assessment and collaborative planning tool modeled on the application for the Baldrige Award in Education.



in the Fall of 2001, the retreat action steps were revisited, and several other objectives were added to the plan.<sup>5</sup>

The reasons CQI became less visible on campus are unclear to many. It was actually a confluence of factors that led the College away from a more visible commitment to CQI. The Executive Council made a conscious decision to stop using CQI language in response to a perceived campus backlash against the “business model” in education. But also, those working on the initiative realized that the College did not collect enough data in a number of areas to take the next step in CQI—the submission of a Baldrige application.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the final reason was that the draft revisions to the Middle States *Characteristics of Excellence* made it evident that Middle States would soon be requiring the very same outcomes assessment based on data sets that is required for a Baldrige application. Given the proximity of this decennial Self-Study, the decision was made to focus on the accreditation process rather than an independent quality award. Shortly thereafter, one of the CQI Advisors began to lead an ad hoc committee on assessing student learning outcomes. Quality initiatives have continued, though perhaps less visibly, in areas such as Student Services, with the 2005 Student Services redesign being the culmination of the most recent effort.

### ***Current Strategic Planning***

The Five-Year Plan ended on June 30, 2005. In anticipation of this, in the fall of 2004, the President selected a senior faculty member from the English Department to chair a new Strategic Planning Committee. The President charged the group in January 2005 with the task of creating a strategic plan and strategic planning process, to be ready by July 1, 2005. The committee contained representation from across the College, including a student, a support staff member, a member of the professional staff, a dean, a department head, a faculty member from each division, the Director of Research and Planning, the Budget Manager, the Director of Continuing Education, the Self-Study Chair, the Executive Director of the Bergen Community College Foundation, and the Executive Council member overseeing the new Center for Institutional Effectiveness. Given the limited time to accomplish this major task, the committee quickly divided into three subcommittees: Environmental Scanning; Budget, Assessment, and Planning Cycle; and Mission, Vision, and Values. This Self-Study and the Bergen Values Dialogue process served as the internal scan. The whole committee met at least twice a month and subcommittees met and worked on tasks in the intervening weeks.

The committee formally presented *Strategic Plan to 2008: Meeting the Challenges of a New Century* to the Board of Trustees on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005, and it was formally approved by the Trustees on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005. (See [Exhibit 12](#).) Executive staff members have written their 2005-06 annual goals to correspond to the strategic priorities identified in the plan, and the plan is also being implemented by both instructional and non-instructional units. Under the guidance of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness, all departments and offices have identified unit goals that align with the strategic priorities, and are creating assessment studies to measure the relevant outcomes.

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<sup>5</sup> See Five-Year Plan Objectives II.C.8, VIII.B.6, VIII.B.7, VIII.C.10, V.A.1, V.A.2, V.A.3, and V.A.4.

<sup>6</sup> The Baldrige process requires extensive benchmarking with other institutions.



### ***Major Facilities Planning***

The development of the *2000-2010 Facilities Master Plan* was a six-month project involving a large number of stakeholders. This planning effort has played a critical role in driving campus development. West Hall, currently under construction, is one outcome. In 2003 the College created a *Capital Needs Plan through 2010*. Submitted to the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, this plan incorporates projects from the Facilities Master Plan and other renovation needs, as well as equipment needs. Both documents illustrate a close connection between capital resource allocation and planning.

### ***Other Plans***

Smaller-scale plans in various areas are developed and implemented with evident success. For example, in a 2002-2003 a *Marketing Strategic Plan* was developed, and a life-cycle replacement program for IT equipment has existed for two years. A life-cycle replacement program for campus equipment, including furniture and classroom equipment, is currently being developed.

The College has been especially successful with planning in the area of technology. In addition to life-cycle replacement plan for computing equipment, there is an *Office of Information Technology Communication Plan* that lays out procedures, responsibilities, and budgetary needs for various initiatives and responses to critical events like power outages. There is also a *Distance Education Tactical Plan* in draft form that includes strategies for hitting enrollment targets. Furthermore, an example of how the College conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation is the creation of the Media Technologies department. The responsibility for media support on campus had been spread across several areas. The Educational Broadcast Center (EBC) was responsible for the production of media materials, for the support of broadcasting classes in the studios, and for the support of interactive video classes between Bergen and several other colleges. The Library was responsible for the support of “smart” classrooms and for the support of public events on campus. The Center for Instructional Technology was responsible (with EBC assistance) for the support of the online faculty production room for the development of web-based media. After careful examination of the resources allocated in the various departments, the administration realigned the function of several areas into a combined unit—the Media Technologies department.

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

Discussed below are: (1) the Board of Trustees’ role in planning, (2) the role of constituent input in planning, and (3) the alignment of resource allocation with planning.

### ***The Board of Trustees’ role in planning***

The Board’s Strategic Planning Committee has had an important role over the years in a variety of planning efforts. The business of this committee has included review

and approval of IT planning, the scope of services in the Collegis<sup>7</sup> contract, marketing plans, and the Five-Year Plan. The Committee also reviewed data on community of residence of our students, which was part of the process leading to the Board's decision to explore the development of a Bergen campus in the southern part of Bergen County. Additionally, the Committee worked with a consultant regarding the possibility of developing a business incubator on campus. The Strategic Planning Committee has also been active in the planning phase for facilities on the Paramus campus, including the 2000-2010 Facilities Master Plan. Following development, such facilities plans have been executed by the Board's Site and Facilities Committee.

### *The role of constituent input in planning*

As noted above, the Critical Issues and Five-Year Plan planning models represented an innovation for the College insofar as they sought alignment between college-wide and unit goals. The models strike a balance between collective effort and individual (unit) initiative: too much autonomy on the level of planning and goals could threaten the unity of institution, but completely harmonious goal-seeking may be unrealistic. Departments and offices were asked to develop their own annual goals and objectives, at least some of which should align with the goals of the Vice-President to whom they report. Thus, the models insured that college-wide goals were being addressed across the institution, without requiring complete uniformity of action or interest.

Many of the other planning efforts that have occurred have included extensive involvement from many faculty and others on campus. Examples include the construction projects stemming from and going beyond the Master Plan, such as West Hall, the Technology Education Center, the Veterinary Technology Surgical Center, the ongoing Library renovations, the renovation of the Surgical Technology Suite, Radiography Lab, the Testing Center, and the Health Services Office. Stakeholders have been extensively involved in planning the space they will work in, and this involvement is well-documented in minutes of meetings with architects. Stakeholders were also extensively involved in developing the lists of equipment purchased under the New Jersey Equipment Leasing Fund, which funded over \$1.6 million of instructional equipment, including state of the art CADD labs located in the Technology Education Center. Additionally, each year teams of faculty work with administrators to develop the College's annual Perkins fund requests. Typically, as result of this planning effort, the College receives \$300,000 to \$400,000 in Perkins funds. These funds are used to support projects such as the construction of the new greenhouse to support the horticulture program, the purchase of adaptive technology hardware and software that is now distributed throughout campus computer facilities, the recent upgrades to the instructional photography and music technology labs, equipment purchases in Allied Health and Nursing, and the renovation of kitchen facilities in East Hall for the Hospitality programs. Finally, each year an instructional technology budget committee meets several times a year to expend approximately \$415,000 of instructional technology funds. The committee is composed of the Deans, the Vice-President of Technology and Information Services, the Manager of Media Technology, the Directors of the Library and Continuing

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<sup>7</sup> Collegis, Inc., is an independent IT firm that staffs much of the Office of Information Technology.

Education, and the Assistant Dean of the Ciarco Learning Center. Further, liaisons assigned to dedicated computer labs work with the Center for Instructional Technology to project long-term needs and to prepare the College's annual capital budget for these facilities.

***The alignment of resource allocation with planning***

In order to be effective, planning must be accompanied by an appropriate allocation of resources to the goals being pursued. Further, devoting sufficient time and resources to the planning process itself is necessary to ensure that planning is done well, carefully monitored, and adjusted as necessary. With respect to the former issue, in 2003 the President addressed Five-Year Plan objective V.C.2 by creating the goal of revising the process for departmental input into budget development in order to better match funding priorities to the plan.<sup>8</sup> In the new process, all budget managers requesting new positions or additional operating funds were required to indicate the Five-Year Plan objective that would be accomplished through the funding. Requests were then prioritized to make the best use of the available resources.<sup>9</sup>

With respect to the latter issue, the study group found that few resources were allocated to planning above and beyond the work of the Executive Council and the offices and departments that contributed their plans. The job description of the Director of Research and Planning states that this person will monitor the plans and planning process, but this work must be done alongside an increasing number of research projects and multiple reporting responsibilities. Given the importance of planning, the size of the College, and enormous number of duties shouldered by senior staff, it would seem that the current allocation of resources to planning is insufficient.

**SUMMARY**

The common thread that unites the majority of the planning and renewal efforts of the past ten years is a basis in quality improvement principles, including collaborative development and the alignment of institution-wide and unit goals. The largest of these efforts—The Five-Year Plan—included assignment of responsibility at the senior staff level, a system for linking resource allocation to the plan, and a system for monitoring and communicating planning outcomes. Facilities and IT planning has been particularly successful. In light of the increasing emphasis on assessment and accountability to internal and external constituencies, the College will continue to evaluate the need for additional resources to synthesize effectively new assessment activities with planning and resource allocation processes.

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<sup>8</sup> Objective V.C.2 reads “Improve the means of assessing departmental and divisional needs in order to make recommendations on the allocation or reallocation of institutional resources including staffing, budget, space allocations, and institutional support services.”

<sup>9</sup> See [Exhibit 13](#), the *President's 2003 Annual Report*, p. 4.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. In the last ten years the College has made enormous efforts at planning and has been successful in moving the College forward with improvements in technology and expanded facilities.
2. The Division of Technology and Information Services stands out as having adopted a culture of planning, assessment and quality improvement.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The College should allocate sufficient resources to support robust strategic planning and institutional renewal activities, including appropriate work space and a staff large enough to effectively support the work involved.
2. The College should develop and maintain a culture of planning and assessment in which continuous improvement and organizational renewal are central.

## Chapter Three

# Institutional Resources

Bergen Community College recognizes that adequate human, financial, technical, and physical resources are all necessary to achieve its mission and goals. In an environment of rapid growth and change, maintaining successful outcomes requires careful management of resources, including assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of resource allocation, and effective communication with all members of the college community.

The Institutional Resources Study Group examined and analyzed the allocation and adequacy of these resources, and the effectiveness of their utilization in the context of institutional goals and growth.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

#### *General facts*

With a Fall 2004 enrollment of 14,325 students, Bergen Community College is the second largest community college in the state of New Jersey.<sup>10</sup> Full- and part-time enrollments are almost equal, with 7,258 full-time students and 7,067 part-time students. The College faculty currently includes 71 Professors, 76 Associate Professors, 75 Assistant Professors, 23 Instructors, 4 Associate Instructors, 76 Lecturers and Minority Scholar Interns and 445 Adjunct instructors.<sup>11</sup> The total number of staff other than faculty is approximately 350. The FY 2004 budget was \$74 million, and net assets of the College as of June 2004 were \$107,289,952.

Facilities located on the main Paramus campus include Ender Hall, the Pitkin Education Center (formerly known as the Megastructure or Main Building), Scoskie Hall (home of the Bergen Community College Foundation), the Technology Education Center, and the Veterinary Technology Surgical Center. The Ciarco Learning Center is located in Hackensack.

The College has changed in significant ways since the 1994-95 Self-Study. The annual budget has increased by \$22 million since FY 1994. Enrollment has also steadily increased, with 1,439 more student enrolled than in 1994. Fall 2004 marked the first semester in the history of the College that the head count surpassed 14,000, and further increases are projected.<sup>12</sup> Also, for the first time since 1968, the percentage of full-time students is slightly higher than part-time students.

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<sup>10</sup> Bergen is the second largest based on headcount, but has the largest number of contact hours. These figures, as well as those that follow, can be found in the *2004 BCC Fact Book*, [Exhibit 14](#).

<sup>11</sup> Faculty and staff counts exclude the Ciarco Learning Center and the Division of Continuing Education, both of which are addressed in Chapters Ten and Thirteen.

<sup>12</sup> Various studies, including the *2003 New Jersey Commission on Higher Education Institutional Enrollment Projections*, suggest that the number of current middle and high school students is significantly

The nature of the student population is also changing. In addition to increasing diversity, the number of first time full-time students is increasing, as is the number of students requiring the accommodations provided by the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) and the Collegiate Center for Deaf Education. As of Fall 2004, the population of OSS students is slightly over 2000, and growth in this population is also anticipated to continue.

### ***Developments in facilities and equipment***

In 1998, the third floor of the C-wing was built, adding 28,000 square feet to the Pitkin Education Center. The *Facilities Master Plan*, developed in 1999-2000 for the further renovation and development of College facilities and infrastructure, was designed to address the needs of students, faculty, staff and the community. The following additional changes have taken place as a result of this planning.

In October 1999, the Adult Learning Center was renamed The Ciarco Learning Center (CLC) and relocated to a newly renovated and much larger building (almost twice the square footage). The CLC provides a non-traditional and flexible learning environment to meet the needs of adult learners and the changing demographics of the community. The new CLC building has also provided the College with a substantial amount of additional space to meet program requirements. In addition to general instructional space, there are dedicated work and learning areas including a Cisco Network Lab, Workplace Learning Link, an ITECH Lab, a Certified Nurse's Aide Program and the Small Business Development Center. There is also a public community meeting room and a student commons area. While the number of classes in Adult Basic Education and Training, Continuing Education options, college credit offerings, and the programs of the Hispanic Institute for Research and Development have all expanded, additional capacity exists at the CLC.<sup>13</sup>

In March 2003, a new and larger state-of-the-art greenhouse and hydroponics lab was built in Ender Hall for the Horticulture Program.

In September 2002, the Technology Education Center (TEC Building) was opened, enabling the Division of Continuing Education (DCE) to update its physical setup and accommodate its administrative functions by relocating to the new building. The TEC building includes a new state-of-the-art Manufacturing Lab to accommodate a new Manufacturing Technology curriculum, and an observatory with new telescopes and equipment for an expanded astronomy program. The telescopes are a major attraction, and the College engages in community outreach by hosting regular events of the Amateur Astronomers Association. The TEC Building is also home to the Moses Family Meeting and Training Center, a technologically sophisticated conference space increasingly utilized by both internal and external constituents.

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higher than it was 5 to 10 years ago. According to the *2004 New Jersey College Source Book*, New Jersey has one of the highest increases in annual production of high school graduates.

<sup>13</sup> While credit courses have been offered at the Ciarco Learning Center, few get enough students to run. Although parking is limited, the CLC appears to be under-utilized.

In September 2003, a new parking deck was opened, providing an additional 600 parking spaces for students and staff. The addition of this lot has helped ease long-standing parking problems.

In Fall 2004, the Veterinary Surgical Center was opened for all laboratory instructional needs of students in the Northern New Jersey Consortium for Veterinary Technology Education.

Growth in Allied Health programs and offerings has required expanded and updated facilities and equipment. Numerous facility renovations and upgrades have taken place to support instruction in this area, including a new state-of-the-art Surgical Technology Lab opened on campus in 2002, freeing students from having to travel to area hospitals for coursework, and enlarged and renovated Radiography and Diagnostic Imaging Sonography Labs. The new Radiation Therapy Program has been accredited to admit students in Fall 2005 and will initially use a lab at the Hackensack University Medical Center. Planning is underway to build a lab facility for the program outside of the Pitkin Education Center B-Wing that will accommodate specialized X-Ray Simulator equipment. A Dental Hygiene Clinic expansion included the addition of four dental chairs, and a lab refurbishment with new dental hygiene workstations.

Ongoing projects include West Hall, which will provide TV and broadcasting studios, computer labs, music classrooms and rehearsal areas, presentation rooms, and gallery space for exhibits. This building will free up general purpose classroom space in Ender Hall as labs that will move to West Hall are vacated.<sup>14</sup> Laboratories in the Science wing will also be renovated and expanded through a first floor building extension. Additional renovations in the Pitkin Education Center S-Wing, currently in progress, will provide for a new medical suite and greater consolidation of the Allied Health programs in a single area. With the exception of the English Language Resource Center located in Ender Hall, all learning labs are being consolidated in a single location within the Pitkin Education Center. Finally, a major expansion/renovation project for the student services area is also proposed for 2006-2008.

### ***Developments in Information Technology***

In 1997-98, the College developed a strategic plan for Information Technology that resulted in a comprehensive technology acquisition and lifecycle replacement plan. Examples of strategic initiatives include: extensive renovation and upgrades of the Sidney Silverman Library computer systems and services; a comprehensive network of dedicated computer labs and over 80 smart classrooms; the integration of new technologies and the conversion from in-house Legacy system to the Datatel Colleague management information system for student enrollment and administrative systems; the introduction of web registration using Web Advisor software; the introduction and subsequent expansion of online course offerings to an average of 1400 students per semester and over 80 different online courses per year; and the introduction of ECommerce (online bill payment) in the Division of Continuing Education in Fall 2004 and the undergraduate division in Summer 2005. The creation of the Executive Council position of Vice President of Technology and Information Services has greatly facilitated this progress. According to the Middle States Surveys, faculty, staff and students are all

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<sup>14</sup> Ender Hall also gained 4 new general purpose classrooms through the renovation of E-155.

highly satisfied with the Information Technology facilities and support available on campus.

## ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

The study group focused their analysis on the adequacy of four areas: (1) budget, finance and planning, (2) human resources, (3) facilities, and (4) technology.

### *Budget, finance and planning*

The College's operating and capital budgets must be distinguished in order to understand how they are constructed and how they are funded. The College's capital budget supports large equipment purchases, construction projects, and most renovation projects. The principal sources of these capital funds are the county and state. Capital budget planning for a specific fiscal year begins at least two years earlier.<sup>15</sup> For instance, the College has been working on preparing its capital budget for FY 07 (July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2007) since early in the Fall 2004 semester. Capital budget requests are prepared by relying upon the many college planning processes which help in projecting long-term needs. In developing this budget, there is heavy reliance on the College's *2000-2010 Facilities Master Plan* and the *2004-2010 Capital Needs Plan*, required by the NJ Commission on Higher Education, as well as projected facilities infrastructure needs. In addition, each year divisions and departments forward capital budget requests through their Vice-President. Further, there are frequently emergent unanticipated needs, such as the need to replace the campus electrical substation this year. Because of county government processes, it is generally not known for certain whether the College's capital budget requests will be funded until just a few months before the fiscal year actually starts. Developing the College's capital budget is a major responsibility of the senior staff working closely with the President and the College's Board of Trustees.

There are two parts to the College's operating budget. The first part is the "personnel services" budget, and the second is "other than personnel services" budget, generally referred to as the "OTPS budget." The personnel services budget covers salaries and benefits and is much larger than the OTPS budget. The OTPS budget covers everything else, such as travel, office supplies, minor equipment and repairs, printing costs, subscriptions, utilities, postage, and insurance. It is the OTPS budget that most campus managers are familiar with.

Shortfalls in funding for the operating budget have placed enormous pressures on the College. A major activity of the Board of Trustees, the President, and the senior staff is dealing with this budget pressure while maintaining access as an open admissions institution. This is a complicated activity, as is illustrated by the following example. The budget for FY2004—2005 was \$77,875,780 and for 2005-06 is \$81,140,310, an increase of \$3,264,530.<sup>16</sup> The estimated salary increases<sup>17</sup> amount to \$2,493,860 and the increase in health benefits is budgeted at \$736,160, totaling \$3,230,020. Therefore, increased

<sup>15</sup> See [Exhibit 15](#) for a description of the annual budget planning cycle.

<sup>16</sup> This has to now be reduced by \$109,000 because of state-wide county college enrollment changes. Cited figures are from *FY2005-2006 Operating Budget Revenue Sources*.

<sup>17</sup> These can only be approximate because four contracts are not settled.



personnel costs for continuing employees accounted for almost all estimated new revenues. There are also inflationary costs associated with postage, insurance, travel, etc. The President and Board of Trustees have long recognized that the addition of new tenure-track faculty is important in maintaining quality given the trend in enrollment growth. For FY2006, the College was able to add fourteen new faculty lines in addition to the year-over-year increases in salaries and benefits only because the county bonded for \$750,000 in technology life-cycle replacements that were in the operating budget, which freed up the funds for faculty lines. As a consequence, the county will have to continue to provide the capital funding every year for the life-cycle replacements.<sup>18</sup> The College now faces the challenge of working with county government to fund our capital budget fully in the future to ensure that we can maintain our technology life-cycle plans.

One additional impact of operating budget shortfalls is that the College has had no choice but to control the growth of the OTPS budget. Although budget managers generally receive a .5% increase in their OTPS budget each year, the College relies heavily upon achieving economies of scale to meet needs. Examples include the implementation of an online system for the purchase of office supplies and the centralization of printing. Unless funding for the operating budget improves, even small increases to the OTPS budget may become unrealistic.

Assumptions about operating and capital budgets are based on anticipated county and state budget, projected enrollment/tuition revenues, and projected program, department, and division budgets. Budgeted revenue of over \$81 million (for FY '06) is derived as follows: 18.5% state funds, 20.3% county funds, 49.3% tuition & fees, 7.8% student aid and grants, and 4.1% other sources. The state share of the budget decreased by 0.4% over the past decade, from 21.3% to 20.9% in FY 2005, and the percentage of county funds decreased by 9.8% from 32.8% in 1995 to 23% currently.

When the College was founded, the financial support planned was 33% state, 33% county, and 33% tuition, but that allocation formula was short lived, and tuition and fees comprise an increasing share of total budgeted revenues. This share increased by 11.5% since the last Self-Study to 49.3% in FY 2004. This is slightly less than the 12.3% increase over the previous decade (37.8% of total revenues in FY 1995 and 25.5% in 1985). The difference in percentages of increase in these three funding sources between 1992 and 2004 is dramatic: the share of revenues from tuition and fees has increased 126%, compared to 90% from state funding and 17% from county funding. While state and county funding is flat in FY 2006, and projected to be flat again in FY 2007, the tuition and fees share has increased to 145% from 1992 to FY 2006. (See [Exhibit 16](#).)

Future state and county budgets remain uncertain, which impacts the ability of the College to plan. The current State deficit is estimated at well over \$2.0 billion, and it is not currently clear what the ultimate impact of this will be on community colleges. If the anticipated deficit results in reduced state funding for the colleges, and if the enrollment and diversity of student needs continue to rise, the College will be hard pressed to meet all of its institutional goals. In the event of a shortfall, projects may need to be deferred, and greater tuition increases and other fees may need to be instituted.

The rising share of revenues from tuition and fees may ultimately affect affordability and accessibility, thus threatening the ability of the College to achieve its

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<sup>18</sup> Life-cycle replacements have been in the operating rather than capital budget because frequently the county has not fully funded this request.

Mission. According to the 2004 *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Feedback Report*, Bergen Community College students rely more on Pell, state, and local grants compared to our cohort of public two-year community colleges. While BCC is currently affordable in comparison to this cohort based on the IPEDS report, revenue per FTE student<sup>19</sup> from state and local appropriations was \$3,181 in comparison to \$5,007 for the comparison mean group. Instructional expenses per FTE student are also well below those of the cohort: \$3,291 at Bergen, compared to \$4,497 for the comparison mean group. Considering just local appropriations per FTE, the average for other New Jersey County Colleges is \$2,116, compared to \$1,670 for Bergen. (See [Exhibit 17](#).)

Other revenue sources include the Bergen Community College Foundation and external grants. The BCC Foundation was established in 1982 to raise funds to support student scholarships, faculty and staff development, and construction and other special projects and programs. The Foundation's Board of Directors, comprised of 47 community leaders from the public and private sector, works closely with the College to develop fundraising opportunities to meet the needs of the institution. In 1999, the Foundation introduced its Naming Opportunities Program with the opening of the newly renovated Adult Learning Center. That facility was later renamed the Ciarco Learning Center as a result of the program. As of 2005, \$2,325,000 has been raised for scholarships and other initiatives at the College through the Naming Opportunities Program, a substantial increase of \$2,151,000 from 1995. The Grants Office actively pursues external funding for special projects, equipment, and activities that support the mission and goals of the College. Significant funding has been obtained for a variety of activities, such as the Education of Language Minority Students (ELMS) programs, Allied Health programs and services for students with disabilities. The IPEDS Report indicates that the College lags behind other comparison institutions in other core revenues per FTE student. It should be noted, however, that grants revenue has increased to \$1.6 million in FY 2004-2005 from \$864,000 in 1994-1995. The Foundation's net assets increased to \$2.8 million in 2004 from \$1.1 million in 1995. During that same period, the remaining \$1.369 million owed to the County on the student center construction debt was repaid by the Foundation. Funding of student scholarships by the Foundation continues to increase as a result of its significant success in attracting funds.

Despite these successes, uncertainty about funding from the state and county make planning a challenge, and lower than anticipated funding is clearly detrimental to the College. With an increased share of the budget coming from tuition and fees, there is pressure to maintain high enrollments, and this in turn places a strain on the facilities and staff.

Requests for allocation of resources, including capital requests, are funneled from Department Heads to Directors, Managers, and Deans, and ultimately to the Executive Council, with final approval from the Board of Trustees. As noted in Chapter Two, since 2003 all local budget managers requesting new positions or additional operating funds have been required to indicate the Five-Year Plan objective that would be accomplished through the funding. Budgeting and planning are closely aligned, and in addition to

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<sup>19</sup> Full-time equivalent (FTE) is calculated by dividing total academic credits for the 12-month period by 30.

processes and plans noted above, the administration provides the Trustees with revenue projections in regard to potential collective bargaining negotiated salary increases.

The College has a three-year projection of budgeted revenues and expenditures. (See [Exhibit 18](#).) The Vice President of Administrative Services and campus Budget Manager circulate annual request forms for proposed operating and capital budgets to all local budget managers.<sup>20</sup> While policies and procedures to determine allocation of resources are rational and consistent, the study group found that the process is not clearly understood by the campus community, as suggested by a small number of survey respondents familiar with the budget planning process or procedures. (See [Exhibits 3 and 4](#).) In response to this finding, a budget committee has been established to raise greater awareness about the budget process and solicit input on the funding of strategic initiatives.

Finally, the Audit and Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees carefully monitors the efficient use of College resources. This committee (1) reviews budget requests submitted to the county for operating and capital funds to make sure they are consistent with the institutional mission and plans, (2) reviews monthly expenditure and revenue reports, (3) and reviews monthly every check disbursed by the College for operating expenses. The Site and Facilities Committee of the Board reviews monthly all expenditures for renovation and construction projects, including requests for payment for professional services from architects and engineers. Periodically during the year the Executive Council reviews expenditures as compared to budgets across the College by means of management projection reports. Additionally, the Vice President for Administrative Services reviews bi-monthly operating and salary expenditures and has regular meetings with staff to monitor expenditures throughout the year. Every budget manager is responsible for monitoring the expenditures from their own budget.

An annual audit (financial and enrollment) has been performed by KPMG and most recently by the Mercadien Group, and is circulated to state, county, and federal agencies. Given the size of the College—with an over \$81 million budget and over \$100 million in assets, including over 8,000 pieces of major equipment—budget controls in conjunction with the annual external audit appear to be working effectively.

### ***Human Resources***

The Department of Human Resources serves the College through a broad range of human resource services, including recruitment, labor relations, contract administration, benefits administration, payroll, and compliance. The HR department seeks to provide adequate staffing to meet program and office needs by recruiting and retaining a pool of qualified staff and credentialed faculty.

The College staff is represented by five different bargaining units of New Jersey Education Association (NJEA): Faculty, Directors, Professional Staff, Support Staff<sup>21</sup> and the Ciarco Learning Center Staff, each with its own contract. At the time of this

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<sup>20</sup> This has been the case since 1995 though there was a hiatus in the practice between 2002 and 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Professional staff includes about 60 employees in a wide variety of titles such as Financial Aid Assistant, College Nurse, Accountant, Purchasing Agent, Testing Assistant, Research Associate, Assistant Director (several positions), Manager (several positions), Supervisor (several positions) and many others. Support staff includes about 180 clerical/secretarial, buildings and grounds, and public safety employees.

writing, most bargaining units do not have current contracts in place, but are in the process of negotiation. Teaching and other instructional staffing needs are determined in the course of academic planning by the Deans and the Academic Vice President. Other institutional staffing needs are discussed within the appropriate department, and approval is sought through Human Resources.

Given the steady and projected growth in student enrollment and facilities, it appears that staffing may not have kept pace in all areas, including Buildings and Grounds, Public Safety and some areas of Student Services. Fully adequate comparisons of staffing are not always possible because of the various changes and reorganizations that have occurred over the past ten years, but the following numbers are nonetheless noteworthy: <sup>22</sup>

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2005</u>
Buildings and Grounds (total)	61	55
Maintenance	13	11
Custodians	43	40
Grounds	5	4
Public Safety	30	32

The slight decrease in personnel in most of these areas must be weighed against the increase in facilities: two new buildings—the Technology Education Center and the Veterinary Surgical Center—and an expanded Pitkin Education Center. Use of these new and existing facilities is also not limited to increased credit and noncredit enrollment and corresponding increases in faculty: the external community has also taken ample advantage of these new facilities through popular programs like the noncredit Institute for Learning in Retirement and events coordinated by the Office of Community and Cultural Affairs.

The positive growth of the College in meeting student and community needs seems to have been counterbalanced by less attention to maintenance and other internal needs, seemingly due to lack of adequate staffing. As expressed by one of the discussion circles in the Bergen Values Dialogue, “the capacity for growth is limited. There is a need to reconcile the tension between increasing enrollments and the need for increasing resources to support these students, and this includes facilities limitations”. The anticipated turnover of faculty and staff at or approaching retirement age will occur at a time of peak enrollment, and will require a careful allocation of resources in terms of new faculty and staff to meet the growing and changing needs of the College.

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<sup>22</sup> 2005 numbers are from the current Organizational Chart. It should also be noted that the College has for some time been outsourcing grass mowing and some plumbing.

While the HR department has been reorganized since the last Self-Study to include additional positions, the study group found that there has been a lack of stability in the office of the Director of Human Resources, and delays in hiring are a frequently cited concern. The recent study group survey of Deans, Directors, and Department Heads also indicated that there is a general lack of consistency in policies and procedures. Many policies that are in place are not readily accessible, either in print or on the College website. Lack of ready access to information may contribute to perceptions of inconsistency.

### ***Facilities***

The extensive construction and renovation initiatives demonstrate a responsiveness to program needs, and as noted in Chapter Two, an ability to take advantage of funding opportunities. Adhering to the College's Mission and Goals has required a flexible approach to planning and a willingness to alter and amend infrastructure plans as needed.

The instructional areas that have received the greatest attention have been those requiring specialized facilities and equipment, such as Allied Health and computer technology. The College has complied with outside accrediting bodies in Allied Health by addressing the office shortage in that area. Rapid advances in computer technology and equipment, the demands of the commercial and educational marketplace, and shifts in instructional technology, including more on-line course offerings, have also all required extensive and immediate upgrades for the relevant academic areas.

By contrast, it appears that upgrades to general purpose classrooms have received less attention. Additionally, as program needs dictate more specialized learning environments, there is a perception that a smaller percentage of the facilities remain as flexible, general purpose classrooms. However, this perception is not borne out by fact.<sup>23</sup> Although the process for upgrading the contents of these older facilities has not previously been clearly articulated, the Office of the Academic Vice President is now initiating a lifecycle replacement program for these classrooms and their furnishings. Of concern are the decades-old general purpose science labs, whose safety has been questioned by the science faculty. However, funding has been secured for total renovation of these labs.

Classroom and office capacity have also been a major concern. Science classes requiring laboratory space are consistently "at maximum"—unable to accommodate all students who need or require the courses. Although improvements have been made by recent concerted efforts to move "lecture" classes out of small classrooms, sections assigned to general purpose classrooms are still frequently over-subscribed, as last minute registration prompts the administration and Faculty Association to increase seat numbers, in some cases despite available desk space. Faculty office space is also insufficient.

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<sup>23</sup> Sixteen classrooms were added with the third-floor C-wing addition. (While some C-labs have computers, these are also used for non-IT skills courses in which faculty want to use the technology as part of the instructional mode.) Two CADD labs were moved from Ender Hall and the vacated labs are new general classrooms. There are also six general classrooms in Technology Education Center, and four new classrooms added in Fall 2005 to Ender Hall. The College has not, by contrast, converted this many rooms to specialized labs.

The environmental implications of the College's growth merit considerable attention. The tremendous increase in square footage, coupled with an exponential increase in computers, copiers and other equipment, has raised concerns about the adequacy of HVAC systems and the sufficiency of support staff to maintain a clean, safe and healthy environment. In some cases, College response to these concerns has been slow. For example, although \$3 million has been recently spent on HVAC upgrades, some parts of the Pitkin Education Center have had inadequate heating and cooling for over a decade.<sup>24</sup> In some cases, better communication could allay concerns. For example, the newer computers and office equipment generate less heat though this fact is apparently not widely known. An NJEA-sponsored survey involving mold and air quality was recently initiated. The College has agreed to investigate the results, and remediate as appropriate. In addition, the college attorney has developed specifications for an environmental consultant.

The adequacy of signage on campus has also become an issue as the campus has grown,<sup>25</sup> though steps have been taken to address the concerns: The Board of Trustees hired a signage consultant, and county funds for signage changes were used last year for classrooms signs that provide directions to nearest exit. New exterior signs were installed in October 2005. Also, although many classrooms now have telephones, not all do—a concern that instructional staff have in an era of increased security needs.

The College Mission is to strive for higher-than-average standards of adequacy in its role as an “educational leader” and a provider of “high quality” educational programs, and in many areas it clearly fulfills this mission. Despite chronic space concerns, for instance, the Facilities Master Plan reflected and exceeded the per square foot/FTE ratio deemed appropriate by the state. In many instances, technological upgrades have often *exceeded* average educational standards, such as the manufacturing technology lab, the astronomy observatory, the new greenhouse and hydroponics lab, and the veterinary surgical lab, all of which exemplify the highest standards for educational facilities. The resulting facilities picture, then, is one in which there is sometimes a stark contrast between the areas where the College excels and the areas where improvement is needed. This picture must be understood, however, within the realities of funding: funds are typically only available for special-purpose facilities, not general purpose classrooms. The College has been wise to take advantage of the available funding for construction and renovation for special-purpose needs, and then renovate vacated spaces for general purpose use. As new facilities become available, the College will be presented with new opportunities for reorganizing and upgrading existing areas.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that HVAC renovation in the Pitkin Education Center is ongoing, and part of phased-in project. Renovations cannot be performed during heavy occupation periods, and thus the project will take longer than might be expected. The Center's B-wing is scheduled for renovation in the summer of 2006.

<sup>25</sup> The Middle States Surveys indicates that 47% of staff find signage on campus to be inadequate. In contrast 68% of students find signage on campus, including maps, to be adequate.

<sup>26</sup> An example is the Office of Specialized Services, where centralizing offices would facilitate service to their distinct student population.

### ***Technology***

Technology is irrevocably interwoven into most of the College's operations. The Middle States Surveys revealed that 74% of students, 91% of administration and 92% of faculty report a high level of satisfaction with the computing technology and access on campus.

While acquisition and use of technology varies by program, considerable effort is made by the various technology planning committees to acquire and maintain the state-of-the-art technology needed to prepare students for the demands of the work world. These efforts align with the second College Goal, to "provide supportive services and leadership opportunities in an environment that enables and encourages students to achieve their educational and professional goals." A formal technology plan not only facilitates the budget process for department heads and administrators, but it also creates a certain stability on campus, ensuring a fair and objective allocation of technology resources.

With expected enrollment increases in distance learning courses, successful learning outcomes will increasingly depend on the extensive and continuous training that is available to faculty members. Currently over 60 faculty members have received training through The Online Professor Program (TOPP).

### **SUMMARY**

The College can rightfully boast about impressive growth in facilities and IT resources, and about fiscal health in a time of economic challenges. However, this growth parallels enrollment increases and other changes in the student population, and thus capacity remains a challenge. In the midst of flat or declining financial support from the county and state, tuition and fees constitute an increasing percentage of the College's revenues. While future economic uncertainty creates particular challenges for capital planning, it also places pressure on enrollment and tuition.

### **COMMENDATIONS**

1. Advanced technology is recognized as a top priority, and is widely available to the College community. There is ample evidence of its accessibility and effective use in meeting program needs. The current IT acquisition and life cycle replacement plan provides for the most up-to-date equipment and software vital to meeting program needs.
2. External funding through the Grants Office and the Bergen Community College Foundation continues to increase and has been utilized effectively to meet institutional needs, including scholarships.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The College should use its now widely available technology to better communicate all policies and procedures to faculty and staff, including those concerning budgeting and human resources.

2. With capacity a challenge, the College should study why credit courses have not been successful at the Ciarco Learning Center.
3. The College should continue to explore the amount of additional revenues that can be realized through grant-funded projects and BCC Foundation support.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The College should ensure appropriate staffing to maintain the capacity necessary to adequately serve students.
2. Since new facilities present the College with opportunities for reorganizing existing areas, the College should institute an assessment process to ensure the effective use of all of its facilities.



## Chapter Four

# Leadership and Governance

Governance—that process whereby policies are established, decisions are made, and resources are mobilized—is an institution’s most basic and foundational method for achieving its mission and goals. Since governance in higher education must be collegial in order to be successful, effective governance involves the sharing of authority and responsibility with the appropriate institutional stakeholders. This requires the clear delineation and assignment of roles in policy development and decision-making.

The Leadership, Governance and Administration Study Group examined the governance structure at Bergen Community College, and in particular analyzed the extent to which the roles of the various constituency groups in the governance process are understood and assessed how effectively shared governance works at the College.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the College.<sup>27</sup> A principal responsibility of the Board is to set policy for the College and to oversee the implementation of that policy by the President. The Board consists of eleven members: two are appointed by the Governor, eight are recommended by the Bergen County Executive and approved by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, and one Trustee—the Superintendent of Schools—is a statutory appointment. In addition, there is a non-voting Alumni representative elected from the previous year’s graduating class, who serves a one-year term. The President also serves on the Board, as an ex-officio, non-voting member. The Board experienced a major turnover between 2002 and 2004. With three new appointees in November 2004, seven of the eleven Board members were appointed within a two-year time frame.

The President is the chief executive officer of the College, charged with formulating policy for consideration by the Board of Trustees and implementing approved policy. In order to discharge these responsibilities and meet institutional goals, the President directs current- and long-term planning and develops and maintains both an appropriate administrative and academic organization and a program for the effective management of institutional resources. The five Vice Presidents and the Assistant Academic Vice President assist the President in administering the College in their respective areas of responsibility. Deans and Directors are included in the Management Team.

There are five bargaining units at the College, representing their constituents in the College’s governance structure, and all are affiliates of the New Jersey Education

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<sup>27</sup> The Board certifies to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education that Bergen Community College is in compliance with the MSCHE eligibility requirements (see [Exhibit 23](#)).

Association (NJEA): the Bergen Community College Faculty Association (BCCFA), the Professional Staff Association, the Ciarco Learning Center Faculty Association, the Support Staff Association, and the Administrators' Association (representing Directors).

The *Constitution of the General Faculty* (Exhibit 20) provides for the self-governance of the General Faculty subject to the ultimate authority of the Board of Trustees. The President of the college is the Chair of the General Faculty and the Executive Vice-President is Vice-Chair. According to the Constitution, the Faculty Senate is the governing body of the faculty, advising the College President on matters of curriculum, educational standards, pedagogy, and academic freedom. The Chair of the Faculty Senate is the Senate's liaison to the President and acts in an advisory capacity on all academic matters. The Senate Chair also presides over Faculty Senate meetings.

As specified in the *Bergen Community College Faculty Association Contract* (Exhibit 21),<sup>28</sup> the BCCFA is the exclusive bargaining representative for setting the terms and conditions of faculty employment. The BCCFA represents tenure-track and tenured faculty as well as professional and technical assistants in negotiations and grievances to the College administration and the Board of Trustees. The terms and conditions of employment of lecturers are specified in the BCCFA Contract although lecturers are not represented by the BCCFA. Adjunct faculty are also not represented in any bargaining unit.

In addition to activity in the BCCFA, tenured and tenure-track faculty may participate in college governance by serving on the Faculty Senate, through the Department Head position, and through two seats on the President's Advisory Council. Administrators and tenured and tenure-track faculty serve together on the standing committees of the Faculty Senate, such as the Curriculum Committee, and also on the Technology Governance Committee and the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) Advisory Board. Search committees, insofar as they recommend candidates to their divisional dean, also afford the faculty some voice in College governance.

The Student Government Council (SGC) aspires to further the well-being of the student body. All students in good standing are eligible to be members of the SGC, which has both an Executive Board and a Senate. The Executive Board consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, who are elected by the student body for one-year terms. The Student Senate enacts by-laws for the proper functioning of all SGC committees; it also coordinates all SGC activities. Although attendance and participation is uneven, representatives of SGC and the Student Senate are eligible to be members of college-wide committees, including the Faculty Senate, the General Education Committee, and the Curriculum Committee, adding their voices to the governance of the College. On some committees, student input has been significant.

In response to the last Self-Study, several changes and initiatives have been implemented to increase shared governance and promote communication between governance units. The academic units were reorganized into three divisions, and the supervisory position of Department Head was added.<sup>29</sup> Continuous Quality Improvement efforts were designed, in part, to address shared governance concerns and included the creation of major planning models that sought input from across the College. Also,

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<sup>28</sup> The current contract expires June 30, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> These changes are analyzed in greater detail below and in Chapter Five; major administrative reorganizations are also described in Chapter Five.

faculty and students now regularly offer presentations at Board meetings and some Board Committee meetings; this change was a response to a concern from the last Self-Study that the Board needed to increase its communication with faculty and students. During 2004-2005, a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate was created to address the issue of shared governance and a subcommittee report is now being circulated for comment. In spite of these changes, concerns about shared governance persist and are discussed below. In more limited areas, such as budgeting, progress toward a more inclusive model is promised with the establishment of a new budget review committee.<sup>30</sup> While much effort has thus been made to improve aspects and elements of campus governance, the College has not engaged in a formal or comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of its governance structures.

## ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

This section will focus on (1) the findings of the Board of Trustees' Fall 2004 Self-Study Project and (2) the overall state of shared governance at Bergen.

### *The Board of Trustees Self-Study*

An institution's governing body is a major focus of Standard Four and, accordingly, the study group analyzed the operations of the Board of Trustees, with some attention paid to the Fall 2004 Board Self-Study Project. (See [Exhibit 19](#).) What follows is a more focused overview of the Board and a summary of key issues identified by both the Board and the study group.<sup>31</sup>

Board functions, including the selection process for Board members, are prescribed by New Jersey statutes and Board by-laws. Trustees must be residents of the County for four years prior to their appointments. No elected public official or employee of the College is eligible to serve on the Board. One of the findings of the *1994-1995 Self-Study* was that the Board of Trustees did not have sufficient diversity in respect to gender, race, and ethnicity. However, there are now three women Trustees, and a range of races and ethnicities represented on the Board.

The Board organizes annually by electing four officers: a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary, who serve one-year terms and can be re-elected to an unlimited number of terms. The Board utilizes a committee structure and members serve on several committees. Board committees report monthly on their activities and provide recommendations for Board action on the monthly consent agenda. Board committees include: Audit & Finance, Education & Student Affairs, Personnel, Site & Facilities, and Strategic Planning. The Board also has legal counsel for updating and discussing legal affairs, and one Trustee acts as liaison between the Board and the BCC Foundation.

Since new members are regularly appointed to the Board, an orientation session is designed to help new members understand their position and responsibilities. Current orientation consists of a meeting between the Board Chair, the President, and the new Board member. Given the significant number of new appointees, special attention has

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<sup>30</sup> The inaugural meeting in Spring 2005 included the Executive Council, the Deans Council, and two representatives each from the Directors, support staff, professional staff, and faculty.

<sup>31</sup> For discussion of the Board's conflict of interest policy, see Chapter Six.

been paid to educating the Board on its roles and responsibilities, including a Board weekend-long retreat in January 2005 facilitated by Dr. David R. Pierce, Retreat Associate from the Association of Community College Trustees.

According to the Board's own Self-Study, one of its key governing responsibilities is to represent the College to the external community. Evidence of the Board's effectiveness in this area is continued success in bringing funds to the College, which is most evident in the continued expansion of the College's facilities. One source of strength appears to be that the President engages in the day-to-day operations of the College with minimal Board intervention. Board members feel that the process by which the President provides regular, comprehensive reports keeps them up-to-date on College operations. Still, the Board has expressed interest in receiving semi-annual reports from the Vice Presidents, which Trustees feel would help them to make more informed decisions. Although communication between the Board and the faculty may have improved, as the Board states that it has, such communication should continue and be enhanced in the interest of fostering understanding and contributing to the decision-making process.

Following its Self-Study, the Board agreed to practice annual self-assessment. In addition to serving as a renewal process for more seasoned Trustees, periodic self-assessment will also assist with the orientation of new Board members.

### *Shared governance at the College*

Statements about governance are contained in the Board by-laws ([Exhibit 24](#)), the Faculty Contract, and the Faculty Constitution<sup>32</sup>, and administrative job descriptions include the governance responsibilities of administrators. Thus the College's system of collegial governance appears to be well-defined, and yet the study group found that there are a multiplicity of views on the Bergen campus about what constitutes collegiality and shared governance. Furthermore, there are areas where there has been, and continues to be, uncertainty or disagreement about governance responsibilities. The group also found that concerns about governance extend beyond the historical, internecine disputes between the administration and faculty leadership, and that these concerns are shared by members of the professional staff and Management Team.

Shared governance is often said to necessitate mutual decision-making, informed participation, consultation, input on decisions, and teamwork. Shared governance may be undermined when faculty expertise is undervalued, or when administrative prerogative is not respected. Clearly, colleges must agree upon and understand their own system in order for it to function effectively. The following two examples illustrate that in some areas of campus life, there has been a lack of clarity—or lack of agreement—about governance roles.

The search process for new faculty has been the source of recent controversy. The roles and responsibilities of Deans, Department Heads, and Coordinators have been unclear, and as a result, the process for determining the composition of search committees has occurred differently in different parts of the College. In at least one division, the Dean has worked collaboratively with Heads to compose committees. In

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<sup>32</sup> The Faculty Constitution is an extensive document that outlines the faculty role in shared governance, including clearly defined committees and membership on such committees.

another division, a disagreement between the Dean and a Head caused the Dean to take control of the process, only to have the decision overturned at the executive level through personal appeals by the Head. At least part of the problem appears to have been the previous wording of the *College Policy Manual* (Exhibit 22), which reads “The composition of the Search Committee shall be recommended by the *Administrator* directly in charge of the Unit involved, in consultation with an Executive Officer, and will be subject to the final approval of the Executive Vice President or designee.” (emphasis added) The position of the Faculty Association is that Heads, as members of the union, cannot perform duties assigned to an administrator. Nonetheless, Heads have argued that the staffing of Search Committees should be their prerogative, and state that the problem is that this policy was written before the College’s reorganization in 1995. It therefore does not take into account the current divisional structure.

During this past year the problem was brought to the administration’s attention by a Head, and new policy language was developed. The new language was shared with Heads before it went to the Board of Trustees, and all Heads with the exception of one agreed to the new language, which makes the committee selection a collaborative process. The Board of Trustees approved the new policy language at the April 2005 Board meeting, which reads as follows: “After collaboration with the appropriate supervisor, the administrator in charge of the unit involved shall recommend the composition of the search committee in consultation with an Executive Council officer. The committee appointments will be subject to the final approval of the Executive Vice President or designee.”

Another recent source of controversy is the new class scheduling grid implemented in Fall 2004. There is concern amongst some faculty that the new grid has had a negative impact upon scheduling: with the movement toward offering classes across the entire grid, which optimizes classroom use and, therefore, benefits both students and faculty, faculty in some smaller disciplines are experiencing the cancellation of under-enrolled classes offered at off-hours.<sup>33</sup>

Some faculty have suggested that their remedies to this problem are either not being heard, or not being considered, and that in a system of shared governance, the faculty should have a higher degree of control over such conditions of their professional work. The grid was established by a cross-functional presidential taskforce that included senior faculty members, but it was not presented for Faculty Senate approval prior to its implementation. It should be noted, though, that the task force’s recommendations were given to the Faculty Senate for comment. Revising the master schedule grid is clearly a difficult task, so it is to be expected that further fine tuning will be necessary. Still, clear and prior delineation of administrative and faculty roles, and agreement about such, would benefit the College.

Concerns have also been expressed that matters of a college-wide nature are often decided by the Executive Council and the BCCFA and Senate leadership, to the exclusion of the rest of the campus leadership. Shared governance at the College should include not only the administration and faculty, but also the Professional Staff, Support Staff,

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<sup>33</sup> It should be noted that development of the new grid included the development of guidelines designed to ensure that smaller disciplines are not inappropriately affected. Whether class cancellations in smaller disciplines have been due to the new grid, its accompanying guidelines, or for other reasons would need to be determined by further study.

Directors, and students. Students, as mentioned previously, serve on all college-wide committees, providing input to the College on areas that affect them, and a recent alumnus serves, although in a non-voting capacity, on the Board of Trustees. But leaders of the Support Staff and the Professional Staff report feeling marginalized, and the Directors feel that the BCCFA is taken more seriously than the other unions at the College. Interviews revealed that the Professional Staff regards their status at the College as reactive rather than proactive. They share the concern of the Support Staff; both groups feel that they have little input into the College's governance processes.

Alongside these challenges, past and present, there are numerous examples of successful shared governance. The creation of West Hall is one such example. Faculty were involved every step of the way in the West Hall planning process, including seeing blueprints and specifications. At one point blueprints were changed because of faculty comments, which is clear evidence of their input. In fact, all recent renovation and construction projects—including the design of the Technology Education Center, and the renovations of the Health Services Office, the Testing Center, and the Radiography Lab—have had the same extensive involvement of stakeholders as West Hall has had. And most institution-wide assessment and planning efforts have enjoyed similar broad involvement. The work of the Strategic Planning Committee is a recent example, in that a representative group from across the campus developed a set of initiatives that will guide the College for years to come.

In addition, while many believe that there is a divide between the faculty and the administration, the officers of the Faculty Senate meet monthly with the administration and contribute, among other things, to designing the annual calendar. The officers of the Faculty Association have also recently been meeting more regularly with the President.

## **SUMMARY**

While the basic governance units at the College have remained the same (Board of Trustees, Executive Council, Faculty Senate, collective bargaining units, and Student Government Council), there have been several initiatives and reorganizations designed to enhance institutional governance. Planning, including facilities planning, is a prime area where governance is successfully shared. The Board has also been successful in recent years at building community support and attracting funding for the College.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The committee structure of the Board of Trustees, and the work done by committees, continues to be a source of considerable strength.
2. The increased diversity of the Board enhances the Board's ability to reflect the diversity of the student body and the regional community that the College serves.
3. Many planning processes have been inclusive and have exemplified successful shared governance.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. Current avenues of communication between campus leadership and the Board of Trustees should be continued and enhanced.
2. As the composition of the faculty continues to change, every effort should be made by the faculty leadership to create opportunities for listening, constructive dialogue and community-building.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The College should periodically assess the effectiveness of its governance structures.



# Chapter Five

## Administration

An accredited institution is characterized by an administrative structure that is focused on three key areas: (1) the facilitation of learning and scholarship, (2) the fostering of quality improvement, and (3) the support of the institution's organization and governance.

The Leadership, Governance, and Administration Study Group examined the administrative structure of the College and studied the administration's efforts to foster a positive working environment for all of its constituencies; facilitate a supportive environment for teaching, learning, and professional development; and understand and support an appropriate governance structure for the College.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The administration of Bergen Community College is led by the President. The Vice Presidents, an Assistant Academic Vice President, Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Academic and Program Coordinators assist the President in the daily and long-term operation of the institution.<sup>34</sup>

The President is chief executive officer of the College. The responsibilities of the President are to: formulate recommended policy for Board of Trustees consideration, implement policies approved by the Board, direct current and long-term planning, develop and maintain an appropriate administrative and academic organization, and develop and maintain a program for the effective management of institutional resources in support of all institutional programs. The President supervises the College's five Vice Presidents. She also has taken a leadership role in New Jersey's network of community colleges, working collaboratively with the other eighteen community college Presidents to insure the future mission and funding of the College. Amongst other such duties, she serves on the New Jersey Council of County College Finance Committee.

The Executive Vice President supervises the offices of Human Resources, Research and Planning, Grants, Health Services, and the Manager of Training and Compliance, and she also serves on negotiations teams. She is the Chair of the College-Wide Promotion and Sabbatical Leave Committee and is a voting member of the Faculty Senate. In the absence of the President, she serves as the College's chief executive officer.

The Vice President of Administrative Services is the chief business officer of the College, with responsibilities for the organization, administration, and planning of all business affairs. Specific responsibilities include long-range planning and budget development, management of fiscal resources, long-range facilities planning and

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<sup>34</sup> The College's organizational chart indicates lines of reporting; see [Exhibit 25](#).



construction management, asset protection and risk management, and auxiliary and contracted services. Amongst the areas that he supervises are Maintenance and Plant Operations, Facilities Maintenance, Purchasing, Public Safety, Financial Aid, and the Controller.

The Vice President of Student Services provides administrative leadership for student services programs, oversees all student development programs and activities, and advocates for students. He oversees Enrollment Services, the Educational Opportunity Fund office, the offices of Student Development, Specialized Student Services, Cooperative Education, Service Learning, and Career Services. In addition, he chairs the Academic Standing Committee.

The Vice President of Technology, Information Services, and Institutional Effectiveness oversees the Library, the Office of Public Relations, the Office of Information Technology, the Center for Instructional Technology, Media Technologies, the Distance Learning Program, and the new Center for Institutional Effectiveness. He assists all areas of the College in utilizing the power of information technology to transform and improve the College's services and operations. To achieve this goal, he oversees and coordinates activities related to information technology planning, instructional technology policy development, and implementation of all information technology projects. In doing so, he oversees the work done by employees of Collegis, Inc., the independent IT firm that staffs much of the Office of Information Technology. He also coordinates and facilitates the activities of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness, the Center for Instructional Technology, the Distance Education Program, the Teaching Learning Technology Roundtable, and ad hoc technology groups.

The Academic Vice President is responsible for the formulation, recommendation, and implementation of academic policies and procedures at the College. He recruits, recommends for appointment and reappointment, and provides opportunities for development of qualified faculty and staff; coordinates the academic divisions and the interaction of academic programs with other divisions and departments; and oversees the Division of Continuing Education, the Ciarco Learning Center, and Corporate Training. The supervision of the Assistant Academic Vice President, Deans, Directors, and Department Heads, and the development of programs to meet community needs, are among his other responsibilities. He also chairs the college-wide Curriculum Committee, serves as a member of the college-wide Promotion and Sabbatical Leave Committee, and is a voting member of the Faculty Senate.

Reporting directly to the Academic Vice President is the Assistant Academic Vice President. This is a recent administrative position, created in April 2001. The Assistant Academic Vice President develops, oversees, and maintains articulation, dual enrollment programs, and joint admissions agreements. His other responsibilities include overseeing the Institute for Learning in Retirement, Perkins Grants, academic scheduling, assessment of student learning, and faculty development activities.

The College's administrative structure is rounded out by the Management Team, which includes Deans and Directors. There are three Academic Divisions (Arts and Humanities; Business, Mathematics, and Social Sciences; Science and Health) led by

Deans. In addition, there are eight Department Heads, and twenty-eight Coordinators.<sup>35</sup> Two Coordinators report directly to the Deans of their respective Divisions, and others report to their respective Department Heads. There are also Directors of, among other areas, Continuing Education, Community and Cultural Affairs, Human Resources, Public Relations, Research and Planning, Public Safety, the Library, Student Development, the Nursing Program, and Technologies.

In 1995, with the arrival of a new President, the College reorganized its administrative structure. In 1993 there were four Vice Presidents: Budget and Finance, Employee Relations and Facilities, Academic and Student Affairs, and the Executive Vice President. There are now five Vice Presidents, with separate administration of the academic divisions and student services, and the addition of position of Vice President of Technology and Information Services in 2001. The addition of this last position reflects the great emphasis on technology that has occurred in the last decade.

Enhancing technology services was also a major reason for a significant administrative restructuring that occurred in 2000. Supervision of instructional technology, technological support functions, and information services were consolidated under a new position, Chief Officer of Information and Technology Services.<sup>36</sup> As with other major restructurings, the details and rationale for the changes were clearly communicated in a memo sent out to all employees. The effectiveness of grouping the technology functions together in this way would appear to be amply demonstrated by the high satisfaction with campus technology that has been reported.

The most recent administrative restructuring became effective in July 2005, and involved the adding of responsibility for overseeing institutional effectiveness to the position of Vice President of Technology and Information Services. Also involved was the placement of admissions and registrations functions under a single office. The former change will be described further in Chapter Seven, and the latter in Chapters Eight and Nine.

The study group found that the current organizational structure of the College has been carefully developed, and it is an improvement over the earlier organizational structure—which was criticized in the *1994-1995 Self-Study* as being in need of restructuring. Reporting lines make more sense now, and the reorganization has addressed past concerns of administrators regarding the clarity of some of their roles. In particular, the job responsibilities of the Vice Presidents appear to be more logical now. In the past, for instance, the Academic Vice President oversaw Student Services; now that significant function resides more appropriately in the office of the Vice President of Student Services.

Prior to the 1995 reorganization, there were eight Deans, five of whom supervised the five academic divisions, which varied considerably in size. The three other Deans performed functions somewhat different in nature, e.g., there was a Dean for College Advancement. The Deans who supervised divisions were assisted in their work by various Academic and Program Coordinators. There are now three Deans overseeing the

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<sup>35</sup> Department Heads and Coordinators, as members of the BCCFA, are not members of the administration. Nonetheless, they do play important supervisory roles, and are thus included in the discussion and analysis of this chapter.

<sup>36</sup> This position was replaced a year later by the position of Vice President of Technology and Information Services. As noted above, the title is now “Vice President of Technology, Information Services, and Institutional Effectiveness.”

three large academic divisions noted above. The position of Dean of Community Services, which now coordinates the Institute for Learning in Retirement, remains from the previous structure, as does the position of Assistant Dean of the Ciarco Learning Center. The Assistant Dean position in Continuing Education was changed to a Directorship, and Directors continue to oversee the Library and the Student Development area.

Another major development in the 1995 reorganization of the College was the creation of three Academic Divisions, noted above, and the creation of the Department Head position. The restructuring of the divisions was accomplished by a Divisional Restructuring Task Force comprised of seven elected faculty members, the officers of the Faculty Senate, and two Vice Presidents, and there was an open hearing on the Task Force's recommendations. Eight elected Department Head positions were created in the following areas: English; Arts and Communications; Mathematics and Computer Science; Business; Social Sciences; Wellness and Exercise Science; Allied Health; and Science and Technology. The Nursing Department has a full-time appointed Director, who functions in practice as the ninth Department Head. The disciplines of Philosophy and Religion and World Languages and Cultures are led by Coordinators who also function in practice as Department Heads, and who are included among the Department Heads when that groups meets—either amongst itself or with the Academic Vice President. Because of the dynamic nature of this institution, changes in the administrative structure are ongoing.

The very nature of how the College operates has changed in recent years as a result of the introduction of new technologies. In 1999 the College implemented the Colleague system, purchased from Datatel, Inc., to replace the mainframe system that had been previously used. The subsequent introduction of such services as WebAdvisor, the Help Desk, and the new phone system has improved both the flow of information and decision-making. With these new systems, information can be gathered more quickly, efficiently, and accurately.

Another change that has taken place at the College since the last Self-Study is that there is now a system of evaluation for individual administrators. A detailed document has established a philosophy guiding administrative evaluation as well as a process for evaluation. (See [Exhibit 26](#).)

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

The following issues are given further analysis below: (1) the effectiveness of the Department Head and Coordinator positions, and (2) the scope and effectiveness of administrative evaluation.

### ***The effectiveness of the Department Head and Coordinator positions***

Although lines of reporting in the College's administrative structure are clearly laid out in the organizational chart, the reporting lines involving Coordinators, Department Heads, and Deans are not well understood. Concerns have also been expressed about the leadership responsibilities of the Head position.

The creation of the Department Head position has addressed a major concern of the last Self-Study—the use of Coordinators to provide administrative assistance to Deans. Now Department Heads, who receive released time and stipends to perform their duties, are able to assist the Deans in running the academic divisions. This system of Coordinators, Heads, and Deans provides departments and divisions with more hands to assist in the work of running these entities, and having both Coordinators and Heads has expanded the availability of faculty with discipline-specific knowledge to assist students.

Yet discussion with Department Heads reveals that some see their primary function as servicing student complaints and assisting their Deans, and that they do not have much opportunity to provide constructive input to their Deans, or to provide real leadership to their faculty. An additional, related area of concern is that while the organizational chart, the official statement of the College on reporting lines, indicates that Coordinators report to Heads, this is apparently not the practice in some departments. Department Heads are elected by their departments, and subject to term limits. Coordinators—who report to Department Heads—are appointed on the recommendation of the Dean to the AVP, and no longer have term limits. Theoretically—and in some cases, in practice—Coordinators can have more longevity, and thus more job security, than the Heads and administrators who are meant to supervise them. And yet Heads who have trouble with their Coordinators do not have the authority to remove them. Overall, this arrangement does not appear to be in the best interest of the College. Some Heads have also argued that curricular initiatives, the proper work of departments and divisions, are often overlooked under the pressure to complete day-to-day responsibilities. Still, the Curriculum Committee and Senate agendas prove that a significant amount of curricular work is taking place.

Currently, 21 of the 29 Coordinators have tenure and rank. This appears to be an improvement from the time of the 1994-1995 Self-Study, when it was found that “the role of Coordinators is poorly defined and that *the position is generally unattractive to most tenured faculty.*” (p.93; emphasis added) Those Coordinators who are junior faculty (without tenure) are primarily working in the newer programs. Although experienced, tenured faculty members are now providing disciplinary leadership in greater numbers, there is still some dissatisfaction with the fact that Coordinators receive stipends for their work, rather than released time. Many senior faculty who might otherwise be interested in a leadership role are not interested in having coordinating responsibilities in addition to a full teaching load—they want time, not additional money, to do this work. Some faculty members have requested released time to assume these positions, but the BCCFA contract calls for Coordinators to receive stipends.

Finally, there appears to be a suboptimal understanding of the different kinds of work that Coordinators do, and of the reasons for the differences in compensation they receive. Coordinator stipends range from \$3,000 to \$7,000, but some have viewed this differential as being unfair in light of the different sizes of the programs being coordinated: some Coordinators supervise less than a handful of people, whereas others supervise many more. But some coordinators have substantial duties beyond personnel supervision. Allied Health coordinators, for example, are also responsible for coordinating the placement of students in clinicals, and science coordinators are also responsible for large supply orders. The full range of the coordinator’s duties is taken

into account in determining their stipend amount. The misunderstanding of these differences could have an impact on Coordinator staffing.

### ***The scope and effectiveness of administrative evaluation***

#### Evaluation of administrators

The administrative evaluation process ([Exhibit 26](#)) includes evaluation of the President by the Board of Trustees, evaluation of the Vice-Presidents by the President, and evaluation of the Deans by the Vice-Presidents. Progress toward meeting stated individual goals is a major component of the evaluations. The system appears to work as planned, but it was discovered during the course of this study that the Deans had not been evaluated in the past four years. In addition, these evaluations do not include a means of formative input from those whom administrators supervise; therefore, there is a concern that the evaluation system is not complete. Evaluation by stakeholders, or “360-degree evaluation,” is now fairly common in higher education, and would be of use to all administrative and governance units at the College. Currently, administrators receive input only from those to whom they report, and not from all those many others with whom they work. Yet, if such evaluations are meant to serve a guide for professional development, one would think that useful formative information would come from subordinates. There is a sense among many faculty and staff that they should have input into the evaluation of their superiors, especially those with whom they work closely—their Deans and perhaps the Vice President to whom they report. There is similarly no mechanism for formative evaluation of Department Heads and Coordinators by the faculty and staff who work under them; indeed, it does not appear that Heads and Coordinators are formally evaluated.

#### Evaluation of Administrative Structures and Services

Some of the College’s administrative structures have had extensive review, but formal evaluation of these structures has not been college-wide. The Vice Presidents and Presidents regularly discuss the coherence and effectiveness of administrative structures and services, and in situations where the cause of problems in efficiency and effectiveness is not transparent, the President has recommended to the Board the use of consultants to assist in defining the cause(s). In situations where the cause is clear, and the structural change needed to improve services is apparent based on careful review by the Executive Council, a recommendation on an organizational change is made to the Board without the use of a consultant. An example of the latter is the 2000 reorganization involving technology services described in Chapter Two. Many smaller changes to improve the administration of the College have been made as a result of review by the Executive Council, including the adding of the positions of Manager of Training and Compliance and Budget Manager, and the modification of positions in Human Resources.

While it is clear that regular effort is made to ensure that the College’s administrative services are functioning well, the Bergen Values Dialogue revealed that perceptions of “little empowerment,” “top-down management,” and “overwhelming” and “ineffective” administrative processes were among the list of key disappointments. (See [Exhibit 6](#).) Careful stakeholder evaluation of administrative structures and services

would confirm or falsify these impressions, and afford an avenue for improvement, if needed.

## **SUMMARY**

The College's administrative and organizational structure has undergone numerous changes over the last ten years. Although most of the changes have led to clear improvements, the roles and responsibilities of Department Heads and Coordinators are still in need of further clarification. The introduction of new technologies has enhanced information flow and decision-making. The College has an annual assessment program for Deans and senior staff members.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. One of the principal strengths of the administration is the President's increased involvement in state-wide community college activities.
2. The creation of the Department Head position has resulted in better service to students and overall improved supervision of departments.
3. Expanded technology services, located in an office of Technology and Information Services, have improved the flow of information and the ability of administrators to make informed decisions.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The College should review the roles of the Department Heads and Coordinators and clarify their respective responsibilities and authority.
2. The College should review the appointment and election processes for Coordinators and Department Heads.
3. The perception that administrators engage in top-down management and that employees are insufficiently empowered should be reviewed. Steps to improve communication to and from the administration should also be taken.
4. The College should establish a system of formative evaluation for all administrators and supervisors that includes input from the appropriate College stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The College should establish a system for the periodic assessment of all administrative structures and services.

## Chapter Six

# Integrity

Integrity must be a fundamental value of institutions of higher education. Specifically, institutional integrity includes fair and impartial processes and practices; the avoidance of conflicts of interest, or the appearance of such; equitable and consistent treatment of constituencies; a climate of academic inquiry and engagement supported by widely disseminated policies on academic freedom; honesty and truthfulness in all college materials; the availability of, and ensured access to, college information; a climate of respect for a range of backgrounds and ideas; and the periodic assessment of the integrity of all policies, processes, and practices. The College engages in a range of practices, some long-standing and some more recent, that address and demonstrate a basic and broad institutional commitment to integrity.

Given the broad scope of the Integrity Standard, the Steering Committee directed each of the eight study groups to analyze the integrity inherent in the facets of the College they studied. This chapter is thus based on a compilation of findings from the research done for the other thirteen chapters.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

#### *Campus values*

It is clear from a study of campus-wide planning efforts that the President has been committed to making campus values a regular focus of attention. This began formally with the 1998-99 Critical Issues, in which the fifth critical issue called for the creation of a campus environment in which all College constituents show civility and respect for each other. The theme of respect was continued in the 1999-2000 Critical Issues, and combined with the goal of meeting the needs of a diverse population. Emphasis on creating an atmosphere characterized by collegiality, civility, and respect was continued in the *Five-Year Plan 2001-2005*<sup>37</sup> and, most recently, in Spring 2004, the President called for faculty volunteers to work on an initiative to explore campus values. Given the relevance of such work to self-study and strategic planning, the leaders of those initiatives collaborated, in November and December 2004, on a process called “Bergen Values Dialogue” that invited reflection on campus values and the role of such values in decision-making. The process started with twelve focus-group listening sessions involving a total of 140 people. A listening session was held for each major campus constituency; members of these constituencies were randomly chosen and invited to attend. The listening session questions were also sent to all members of the campus community in the form of a voluntary questionnaire; approximately 50 were completed

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<sup>37</sup> See the Five-Year Plan Objective VIII.A.1.

and returned. These responses, both written and oral, were summarized and presented during an open, two-hour group dialogue session facilitated by Dr. Stephen Littlejohn of the Public Dialogue Consortium, in which 60 people (students, faculty, staff, and administrators) participated. The final step in the process was an online Values Survey that enjoyed high response rates.<sup>38</sup> All of these sources reveal the continued presence of campus concerns about trust and respect.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Diversity***

There has also been a deliberate and often parallel campus emphasis on diversity, starting with the Critical Issues, and running through the Five-Year Plan.<sup>40</sup> The Office of Student Life has made a tremendous effort to engage the diversity on campus, and one also sees this commitment in the opening of the Center for the Study of Intercultural Understanding in 2001. Diversity awareness on campus is very real: the diversity of our students was the most commonly reported item of appreciation by participants in the Bergen Values Dialogue. The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory revealed that the following item was considered a strength from the student and employee perspective: “Students are treated fairly in the classroom regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or disability.” (See [Exhibit 27](#).) In addition to cultural diversity, there have also been deliberate efforts to ensure that campus speakers are from across the political and ideological spectrum—from Ward Churchill (2001) to David Horowitz (2004).

### ***Official college policies, procedures, and accreditation information***

College policies are collected in the *College Policy Manual*, copies of which are available for review in departmental offices. The College has both long-standing and new policies designed to maintain integrity. The Board of Trustees has a conflict of interest policy contained in its by-laws, and the Board Self-Study Project revealed that there is broad agreement that the Board’s policy is well understood by the Trustees. In the area of technology, there is an “Acceptable Use Policy” for all information technology resources, and there is also now a policy on intellectual property rights and ownership of courses in distance education that is consistent with the existing college policy on intellectual property. Despite the prevalence of written policies and procedures, the study groups found that there are some areas in which written policies and procedures are absent, and lack of written procedures, policies or processes was a common disappointment expressed in the Bergen Values Dialogue listening sessions and questionnaire responses. (See [Exhibit 6](#).) In response to these findings, the President and Vice Presidents established a 2005-2006 timeline for developing or updating procedures manuals, and to date, the following manuals have been updated or created: Finance (including the Bursar, Accounting, and Purchasing), Financial Aid, Public Safety, Plant

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<sup>38</sup> The multiple quantitative and qualitative measures were designed to ensure the reliability of the feedback collected.

<sup>39</sup> See [Exhibit 7](#) for the Listening Session Transcripts, [Exhibit 6](#) for a spreadsheet summary of the sessions and questionnaires, [Exhibit 5](#) for the Dialogue Summary, and [Exhibit 8](#) for the Values Survey results.

<sup>40</sup> See Five-Year Plan Objectives I.D.1-3, II.B.5-6, and III.A.1-4.



Operations, Public Relations, and Media Technologies.<sup>41</sup> The remainder were scheduled to be completed in January 2006.

The College also has permanent offices and committees, some of which are described in the following sections, which focus on matters of campus integrity. For example, the College employs a Manager of Training and Compliance, whose responsibilities include monitoring campus compliance with Board policies and federal and state regulations concerning Affirmative Action, sexual harassment, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Manager also works with search committees to ensure that the clearly defined procedures for hiring are understood and followed.

All documents relevant to the College's Middle States accreditation are available in the library's reference area.

### ***Integrity in student affairs***

Policies concerning all aspects of student life can be found in the Student Handbook and the College Catalog. The Student Handbook was first published in 2002-2003, and was revised and reissued at the Fall 2005 student orientations. The Handbook is also available at the Welcome Center and in the Office of Student Life. The College Catalog, also widely available in print, is now also available in electronic format on the College website. The Catalog has seen substantial improvements in accuracy and design, largely as a result of increased collaboration between the Office of Public Relations and the Faculty Senate.

The College has a Student Judicial Hearing Committee that began meeting in the Fall 2004 semester. This committee deals with student complaints, grievances, and discipline issues, and reports to the Vice President of Student Services. The committee is chaired by a faculty member, and is comprised of representatives from the faculty, Public Safety, and two students from the Student Government Council. The Committee's processes are described in the Student Handbook, the College Catalog, and on the BCC website.

The College's current policy on academic honesty (a new policy is forthcoming) appears in both the College Catalog and the Faculty Handbook, and faculty workshops on dealing with plagiarism, including tutorials on using "Turnitin.com," have become standard fare at faculty conferences. The College now has an institutional subscription to Turnitin.com, a web resource for instructors who wish to detect and deter plagiarism.

### ***Integrity in faculty affairs***

Policies concerning faculty affairs are contained in the BCCFA Contract, the Faculty Constitution, and the Faculty Handbook. All three are available in PDF format in links from the Faculty Home page on the college website. Grievance procedures and the College's "Code of Professional Ethics" are both mentioned Faculty Handbook and are more fully described in the BCCFA Contract and College Policy Manual, respectively. The faculty's academic freedom policy, which is the statement from the American Association of University Professors, now appears in the Faculty Handbook as well as the

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<sup>41</sup> The latter two manuals are available online; the others are available in the relevant campus offices.

Contract. Although all of these policies and information sources are widely available, the Middle States Faculty Survey revealed that large numbers of professors do not know where to find many of them.

The Faculty Senate has a Parliamentarian who ensures that proper procedures are followed during meetings. There is also a Nominations and Elections Committee which conducts Faculty Senate, BCCFA, and department elections. The basic purpose of the committee is to ensure the integrity of elections, and its role has expanded in recent years.

### ***Academic inquiry and engagement***

That the College enjoys a climate of academic inquiry and engagement can be demonstrated by (1) the scholarly achievements of the faculty (2) the rich variety of annual lectures and performances, and (3) the consistently strong Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter and recent revitalization of the Honors Program. Quite a few of the Bergen faculty are active in publishing and artistic activity, as is amply demonstrated by the “Works and Works in Progress” section of the Faculty Home page and regular display cases in the library. There is also an abundance of co-curricular activity on the Bergen campus, and on many days, one can choose from a slate of lectures or performances, many involving prominent scholars and celebrities. The PTK chapter at Bergen has over 300 members and has received the Distinguished Chapter award for the past six years. As a testament to the quality of academics at the College, BCC’s graduates have transferred to prestigious colleges and universities including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Georgetown, and the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Public Relations and Campus Communication***

The Office of Public Relations and Creative Services oversees and is responsible for internal and external communications. The Office oversees the development of promotional and marketing materials, including brochures, academic publications, and some newsletters. The Office is also responsible for media relations and designing and managing content on the college website. Through the creation of newsroom press releases and posters, the Office has major role in promoting campus events. In recent years the Office has moved many of its services online, expanding access and convenience. Most forms and guides used to request Public Relations services are now available directly on the Office’s web pages.

The President’s “Connections” newsletter is published regularly. In addition to raising awareness about upcoming events and important developments on campus, the newsletter is an opportunity for the President to share her vision about the College and its future directions. The President’s Coffee Hour and the President’s Advisory Council are designed to afford opportunities for listening and answering questions.

The Fall and Spring Faculty Conferences are an additional vehicle for conveying critical college information to the faculty. In contrast, the half-day spring conference for professional and support staff members has not had a comparable informational focus. As a result, these staff groups do not get the same level of information as faculty, a cause for concern amongst some staff members.

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<sup>42</sup> For further discussion of this general issue, see Chapter Ten.

There is also a more general concern about campus communication that was clearly expressed throughout the Bergen Values Dialogue. Communication was one of the most frequently cited disappointments in the listening sessions (see [Exhibit 6](#)), and in the open dialogue session, the statement “Communication needs to be improved up, down, and across the institution” was met with broad approval. The Values Survey asked respondents to choose five issues they feel should be most important for the College to address. 43% of administration and staff and 36% of full-time faculty chose “open communication” within the top five. On average, out of the 18 issues listed, open communication got the fifth highest number of responses, indicating that this is an issue of substantial importance on the Bergen campus.

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

This section will look more closely at concerns about (1) consistency and fairness and (2) faculty governance.

### *Concerns about consistency and fairness*

#### Evaluations

Problems with consistency raise issues of fairness. Although there are now evaluation processes for faculty and administrators, and more recently support staff, the study groups found that there is no process for professional staff evaluation. Similarly, there is no evaluation process for Department Heads and Coordinators. One study group found that Deans had not been evaluated for a period of several years despite the existence of a process for this.

There are also concerns about the fairness of the evaluations themselves. For example, the Middle States Administrator and Staff survey revealed that 33% of support staff think the evaluation process for support staff is fair.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, the same survey revealed that 65% of administrators feel that the evaluation process for administrators is fair. The full-time faculty fall somewhere in between, with a small majority of the full-time faculty finding the faculty evaluation process to be fair (52%), and 22% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing about its fairness.

#### Searches

While there are clearly defined search procedures designed to ensure fairness and impartiality, consistency in personnel searches has been a source of concern. The Middle States surveys revealed that 43% of staff and administrators and 51% of faculty experienced consistent search procedures.

For faculty positions, the vetting of qualifications is done in the search process, when five members of the faculty—three from the discipline, one from the division, and one from outside the division—work with the Manager of Training and Compliance to develop the appropriate criteria based on the wording of the job advertisement. Committees must develop a common set of questions to be asked of each candidate, and these questions are vetted by the Manager of Training and Compliance. Nonetheless,

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<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that a group of secretaries participated in the development of the evaluation process.

many faculty members who have served on search committees have reported discrepancies in what was told to, or asked of, prospective candidates.

### Advising

The faculty have always participated in the student registration process. Initially faculty would serve at in-person registration, helping students with course questions and scheduling choices. Academic advising was done by the counseling staff. Over time, as the College population grew, the demand for academic advising began to exceed counseling services available, leading to the creation of the Academic Advising Center.<sup>44</sup> Teaching faculty hired on or after September 2001 are now contractually obliged to serve 21 hours per semester in Academic Advising Center, but faculty hired prior to this date have the option of continuing traditional registration duties, which typically involve a much smaller time commitment. If the latter faculty choose to serve in the Advising Center, they have to serve only 16 hours. Many faculty in the former group resent what they see as a double standard, or “two-tiering,” of the faculty. New faculty have expressed that they are the least prepared for their duties, and that the discrepancy in hours between new and senior faculty is unfair.<sup>45</sup>

Some of the above concerns have been addressed. For example, an initial round of training sessions was offered to faculty advisors. Refresher sessions were offered in fall 2004, and while attendance was low, the sessions were favorably received. A mentoring program pairing experienced faculty advisors with newly hired faculty was established and is continuing, and further, a counselor and the faculty advising coordinator produced the pamphlet “REG Notes” to provide answers to the questions most frequently asked by students seeking advisement.

### The Staff Promotion Process

Promotion procedures for professional and support staff create concerns about consistency and fairness. The Executive Vice President verified that there are no formal processes for promotion of professional staff. Information from staff leaders indicates that there are evaluation procedures for support staff, but they are not consistently followed, and although there are formal promotion procedures for support staff, they are not clearly understood nor are they carried out with any regularity. Furthermore, criteria for promotion are not widely known.

### The Faculty Promotion Process

Faculty are more concerned about the fairness of the promotion process than they are about evaluation: in response to the Middle States Faculty Survey statement “I think the promotion process is fair,” 25% of full-time faculty either strongly agreed (4%) or agreed (21%) with the statement, 37% were neutral, and 39% either disagreed (16%) or strongly disagreed (23%). Although the survey data does not include reasons for the perception of unfairness, the process itself will be analyzed in some detail in this section.

The College-Wide Promotion and Sabbatical Leave Committee (CWPSLC) is charged with reviewing promotion applications forwarded to it by departmental

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<sup>44</sup> See Chapter Nine for further description of the Center.

<sup>45</sup> This was conveyed, amongst other places, in the January 2004 Faculty Dialogue session through expressions of concern about stratification or hierarchies amongst the faculty. (See [Exhibit 28](#).)

promotion committees and recommending candidates for promotion to the President. The number of promotions is set at 5% (currently 12) of the total number of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty, and the allotted promotions are spread over the professorial ranks. The College President may choose to promote through “exceptionality” faculty members who do not meet the requirements for the rank; in this situation the faculty member applies directly to the President, by-passing the CWPSLC. The President can choose to promote more than the 12 recommended by the committee; in 2004-05 there were 16 total promotions—13 from the CWPSLC applicant pool, and 3 by exceptionality. The CWPSLC has 12 members: ten elected faculty members, the Executive Vice President, and the Academic Vice President. Composition of the committee will be discussed further below.

The study group assigned to faculty affairs has observed that in addition to the minimal qualifications necessary to apply to the various ranks<sup>46</sup> and a general, unweighted list of “suggested attributes” pertaining to the three areas considered for promotion,<sup>47</sup> there are no objective standards for the various ranks that promotion committee members must adhere to in making their judgments. Thus there are also no objective standards that candidates can use to gauge their own prospects for promotion. The absence of such agreed-upon and shared standards can open the committee’s work to suspicion and charges of arbitrariness. There are application forms that require faculty to indicate their contributions under the various criteria. But short of these “suggested attributes,” there is no college-wide information for faculty about what needs to be done, and what does not need to be done, not only for promotion, but also for reappointment and tenure. Although the three criteria appear to be of equal weight, it is widely believed, and reasonable given the mission of the College, that teaching is the most important consideration in these decisions. There is disagreement, however, as to what is second and third most important. It would greatly benefit the faculty, and thus the College, if the relative importance and priority of these activities would be clarified.

A similar situation pertains to sabbaticals. Although the basic purposes of a sabbatical are listed on the Sabbatical Leave Information document (e.g. research, educational travel, or restoration of health), without more information about what sorts of sabbatical projects are and are not acceptable, it is difficult to judge the integrity of the decisions made about the applications. As stated on the sabbatical leave application form, the sabbatical process requires the submission of a written report at the conclusion of the sabbatical. One study group determined that these summary reports have not always been consistently filed.

Of those who applied for promotion but were denied at least once, 89% reported that they did not receive recommendations for professional growth that would help in future promotion applications. In all fairness to the promotion process, there are no provisions for giving such recommendations, so it is no surprise that so few recommendations have been given. In the absence of such provisions, the logical person from whom to receive such recommendations is either one’s divisional Dean or one’s Department Head, but the former is not privy to the committee’s deliberations, and in most cases the latter is not either.

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<sup>46</sup> These are (1) degrees earned and (2) amount of teaching experience.

<sup>47</sup> These are (1) teaching effectiveness, (2) scholarship and professional growth, and (3) contributions to the Division, College, and community.

One area that has received some attention during this self-study process is the high percentage of BCCFA officers on the CWPSLC. During 2005-2006, three out of the five members of the Executive Committee of the BCCFA are members. A conflict of interest is possible when one notes that the BCCFA has a role in representing the faculty in grievance procedures. Under the current circumstances, grievance for continued denial of promotion is not an option.<sup>48</sup> In essence, a group charged with defending faculty interests is simultaneously evaluating faculty for the purposes of promotion. It is only fair to say, however, that tenured and non-tenured faculty nominate and elect the ten members of the CWPSLC under the rules and regulations of the Nominations and Elections Committee and the Faculty Constitution, and faculty have consistently voted (most in closed ballot elections) for officers of the BCCFA, even when there are many other qualified candidates.

With regard to the treatment of promotion applicants, there is at least one obvious inconsistency: tenured members of the teaching faculty do not need to have their teaching observed when they apply for promotion, nor is it required that they submit their student evaluations for review. Since non-tenured members of the teaching faculty have their teaching observed regularly as part of the reappointment process, and since—also as part of this process—their student evaluations are reviewed by their supervisors, the two groups of teaching faculty are subjected to different levels of scrutiny.<sup>49</sup> Other ways to evaluate teaching, beyond observation, were recommended by the Faculty Evaluation Task Force, but these alternatives were ultimately rejected by the College.

Finally, there is also a long-standing concern about the fairness of having “quotas” for promotion to the various ranks. However, the number of promotions granted each year is determined by the Board of Trustees, following state-wide guidelines concerning the appropriate percentage of faculty in each of the ranks. The purpose of the guidelines is to maintain balance in the faculty ranks.

### ***Findings on faculty governance***

The Middle States Faculty Survey ([Exhibit 3](#)) found that while 44% of the respondents strongly agree (8%) or agree (36%) that there is opportunity to voice opinions in matters regarding faculty governance, 27% are neutral and the remaining 28% either disagree (15%) or strongly disagree (13%). 48% of the respondents indicated that they believe they will be penalized for taking a position in opposition to the faculty leadership. The survey also indicates that there is a perception of arbitrariness in decision-making. When asked about the extent to which faculty governance decisions are made arbitrarily, 19% answered “Very much,” 42% answered “Somewhat,” 31% answered “Not very much,” and 8% answered “Not at all.” It should be noted that the faculty leaders who have reacted to these findings have suggested that they are indicative of misperceptions on the part of large numbers of faculty. The impressions of arbitrariness in decision-making may stem from lack of understanding of the way the faculty leadership performs its duties and may point to a need for better communication.

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<sup>48</sup> Faculty may appeal to the President; this past year, eight appeals were received.

<sup>49</sup> The annual Record of Activities used for tenured faculty members is much less rich in evaluation information than the non-tenured reappointment forms. Indeed, it is not clear how judgments about teaching effectiveness are made for the tenured faculty members who are applying for promotion.

There is also a concern amongst some about the propriety of the BCC tradition of faculty leaders playing multiple roles within the various faculty governance bodies. In response to the question, “In your opinion, to what extent does the overlap of faculty leaders in various faculty governance units, such as the BCCFA and Faculty Senate, create a conflict of interest?”, 22% answered “Very much,” 40% answered “Somewhat,” 21% answered “Not very much,” and 17% answered “Not at all.” In addition to the possibility of conflicts of interest, or the appearance of such, some faculty have expressed concern that this arrangement ensures that only a small group of faculty interface with the College administration on a regular basis. But again, because the leaders of both units are elected by the faculty, and will continue to be so, this overlap may simply reflect the will of the majority of the faculty. Although no recommendations were made regarding this overlap, the 1994-95 Middle States Evaluation Team noted in their report that “The leadership of the Faculty Senate and Faculty Association is indistinguishable, thus undermining shared governance” (see [Exhibit 29](#)), an assertion that the faculty in general has, through their actions, always disputed.

While this tradition continues, there are also signs that ideas about faculty leadership are changing. For example, in response to the Middle States Faculty Survey question “Which of the following groups do you believe represents your professional interests?” the most popular response (49%) was Department Head, with Faculty Association (45%) and Faculty Senate (33%) getting lower responses. (See [Exhibit 3](#).) Although this Self-Study notes problems with the Head position (see Chapter Five), it also seems clear that there are new opportunities for expanded faculty leadership. Also, in recent years there have also been competitive elections for several BCCFA offices and for Chairperson of the Faculty Senate. In addition, some departments are beginning to choose new faculty members as representatives to the Senate. The BCCFA has also begun to ask newer faculty to chair committees, attend conferences, become members of the Representative Assembly, and begin to assume the responsibilities of leadership. Finally, the current Faculty Senate has only two BCCFA officers in leadership positions, and two of the five association officers are not members of the Senate.

## **SUMMARY**

Many efforts in the last several years are indicative of a broad institutional commitment to integrity: the inauguration of the Student Judicial Hearing Committee, the creation of student and faculty handbooks, and the drive to increase the accuracy and accessibility of information on the college website and in the College Catalog. Study groups did, however, find inconsistencies regarding some evaluation and promotion processes, and some areas where written policies, procedures, or standards are either inaccessible or do not exist. Faculty survey data also reveals concern about some aspects of faculty governance. This indicates that there are still opportunities to improve overall campus communication.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The College administration has shown leadership in exploring institutional values and has allowed this exploration and subsequent findings to guide strategic planning.

2. The convening of the Student Judicial Hearing Committee is a major step forward in ensuring that students are treated justly and fairly.
3. The technology acquired by the College since the last Self-Study has greatly increased the College's ability to make timely and accurate information accessible to all of its constituents.
4. The faculty leadership has made a concerted effort to bring new voices into the affairs of the Faculty Association.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The College-Wide Promotion and Sabbatical Leave Committee, in consultation with the faculty, Deans, Heads, President, and Board of Trustees should develop and circulate a set of possible project guidelines for sabbaticals. Summary reports of sabbatical leave accomplishments must also be consistently filed.
2. The faculty leadership should study the perceptions of conflict of interest.
3. The disparity in faculty advising duties should be discussed in the next faculty contract negotiations.
4. The College should take steps to improve communication across the campus and between campus constituencies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The College should create a written plan for the periodic assessment of the integrity evidenced in all of its policies and practices. This should be a component of the larger institutional assessment plan.
2. The following should be addressed: perceptions of unfairness regarding staff evaluations, the absence of professional staff evaluations, and inconsistency in Dean evaluations.
3. The College should institute clear and consistent procedures for promotion of the support staff and (when applicable) the professional staff, and ensure that promotion criteria are widely known and understood.
4. The administration, in conjunction with the faculty leadership, should study and explore possible changes to the promotion and sabbatical leave process that would allay widespread concerns about unfairness. There should be a review and discussion of the composition of the College Wide Promotion and Sabbatical Leave Committee.



## Chapter Seven

# Institutional Effectiveness

If an institution's effectiveness and success can be understood as the achievement of its stated goals, then careful and comprehensive assessment is the means by which effectiveness can be most clearly demonstrated. Beyond the mere showcasing of individual success stories, a coherent and effective program of institutional assessment will identify areas in need of improvement and link with planning and budgeting to effect those improvements. When assessment is done meaningfully and in a spirit of renewal and improvement, integrity is strengthened and movement toward excellence is assured.

The Institutional and Student Assessment Study Group conducted an inventory of the College's assessment activity, including assessment of student learning. The group examined how well the College assesses the accomplishment of its goals and objectives and uses assessment results for improvement. The group also assessed the extent to which outcomes assessment findings are used in strategic planning and resource allocation. Finally, the study group examined the methods by which the College maintains appropriate accountability for its assessment to external bodies, including the public. A more detailed analysis of student learning assessment is presented in Chapter Fourteen.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

There have been very few points during the last ten years when some type of major assessment planning has not been taking place. In addition, the College has monitored traditional indicators of institutional effectiveness, and some areas of the College have routinely engaged in self-assessment. Since the 1994-95 Self-Study the College has also engaged in a variety of broader assessment initiatives. Some of these are described below, and the remainder are discussed in the Analysis.

The Office of Research and Planning (ORP) produces an annual *Institutional Accountability Report* measuring general student outcomes, including graduation, transfer, persistence, and attrition. (See [Exhibits 30a](#) and [30b](#).) Another measure of general student outcomes is the *Graduate Follow-up Survey*, a retrospective assessment survey completed by graduates approximately one year after graduation. The most recent survey revealed that 94% achieved their objective for attending BCC and that 98% would recommend BCC to prospective students. In support of decision-making, the ORP provides critical reports to the President and the Board of Trustees, the Vice Presidents, and various other units at the College. These include federal and state reports linked to College funding and evidentiary information regarding the accomplishment of the College's Mission and Goals, like the annual *Fact Book*. The ORP also provides data and documents for program reviews. The technology introduced at the College over the last five years has allowed the ORP to function with greater ease, and at a much higher level.

The Five-Year Plan 2001-2005, though not an assessment tool *per se*, contains many objectives aligned with the College's Mission and Goals and a mechanism for monitoring completion of these objectives. Thus, although it was not designed to be an instrument for directly and comprehensively measuring institutional effectiveness, the annual *Status of Goals and Objectives* documents do track progress made in achieving specific goal-directed objectives.

Academic programs are assessed through program reviews. Despite uneven implementation, a five-year cycle of program review has been a long-standing feature of the College's outcomes assessment efforts. As of Fall 2004, program reviews are under the supervision of the Assistant Academic Vice President (See [Exhibit 31](#) for the review schedule.) Programs requiring accreditation, such as those in Allied Health and Nursing, are assessed through national accreditation agencies. Programs with licensure exam requirements have also used the results of these exams annually to review curricula, instructional materials, laboratory and clinical procedures, and pedagogy.

On a broader level, the College uses annual reports as well as marketing and enrollment trends to help evaluate its offerings. In general, mid-year and/or annual reports on accomplishments are prepared by Vice Presidents, Directors, Department Heads (including the academic departments), and Coordinators. The study group collected annual goals and objectives from, for example, the Office of Cooperative Education, Service Learning and Career Development, Office of Registration and Student Information Services, the Director of Purchasing, the Office of Financial Aid, the Office of Information Technology, the Center for Instructional Technology, the Sidney Silverman Library, and the Office of Specialized Student Services & Collegiate Center for Deaf Education. In addition, many units at Bergen Community College are conducting reviews and making revisions. Eight directors (75% of those interviewed as of November 2004) have either recently completed a renewal and reorganization with an articulated strategic plan or are engaged in an assessment process in their respective unit.

Two outside agencies are integral elements in the process of establishing goals for the Office of Specialized Student Services and Collegiate Center for Deaf Education (CCDE): the Community Advisory Committee and the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education. CCDE compiles an extensive data base which is submitted annually to Trenton for analysis of retention, graduation and transfer rates. This information is submitted to the New Jersey legislature for a rigorous review to obtain funding for all grants. The Equality Opportunity Fund Program is also required to submit reports on student success rates. Similarly, the Ciarco Learning Center is assessed through the reports dictated by the grants that fund it. The Institute for Learning in Retirement is assessed mainly through the feedback gained from evaluation forms the participants complete.

Assessment and strategic planning are evident at every step in the Office of Information Technology. Regular assessment processes keep the College at the appropriate level of computing sophistication: planned replacement of computing equipment, effective problem solving for hardware and software, and secure internet connections. (See [Exhibit 32](#).)

The Sidney Silverman Library assesses itself using several internal instruments: feedback from the library on-line tutorial, gate counts, continuous staff observation, and assessment of student needs and usage. External assessments include responding to the

library-specific results of the Noel-Levitz survey, and using the LibQual satisfaction survey (Spring 2005) as an additional assessment tool. The library views the increase in student use, student compliments and an increase of 34% in faculty requests for library instructional services as evidences of success.

Assessment of budget allocations involves a number of different bodies and offices. The budget is constructed for the fiscal year July 1—June 30, and is presented for approval to the Board of Trustees and the Bergen County Board of Freeholders. The budget encompasses expenses and sources of revenue. A monthly statement is sent to the Board of Trustees showing the revenue and the percent expenses incurred, and a monthly report looks at the reasonableness of the budget. The monthly report notes whether the projected revenue is accurate and assures that expenses are in line with the projected revenue. During the year the Budget Manager works with Human Resources and Payroll to make sure that the budget reflects the proper allocation of money and also works with the departments to see if the resources are allocated properly. A new budget review committee will increase the involvement of campus governance units.

The creation of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness (CIE) was approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2005. Although the CIE’s formal genesis coincided with a larger restructuring effective July 1, 2005, planning and foundational work began in Fall 2004. The following mission and objectives have been established:

**The mission of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness is to promote institutional policies, practices, and activities which enhance institutional effectiveness, and to foster on campus a culture that values inquiry and evidence.**

**Objectives:**

- **to offer educational and training activities designed to promote the accomplishment of the Center's mission.**
- **to collaborate with College stakeholders to identify appropriate measures of institutional effectiveness.**
- **to develop an overall framework for assessment at the college.**
- **to ensure that assessment data are used for improvement.**
- **to coordinate and allocate resources for planning, assessment, and institutional renewal activities.**
- **to report regularly to the Board of Trustees, the President, the Executive staff, Management Team, and the campus community on the progress and status of planning and assessment activities on campus.**

In July 2005, the Board also approved “An Assessment Framework” (see [Exhibit 33](#))—a strategic institutional assessment document that outlines the assessment activities the

Center will coordinate and monitor. Under the new Framework, all units and offices of the College will engage in outcomes assessment on a regular basis. The CIE will be led by a member of the Executive Council—the former Vice-President for Information and Technology Services, whose title has been changed to include this additional responsibility. By placing leadership and responsibility for the CIE at the senior staff level and developing a formal assessment strategy, the College has demonstrated that it understands the importance of outcomes assessment, and that it is committed to institutionalizing it.

The CIE is currently coordinated by a senior faculty member on released time, and departmental liaisons are coordinating assessment activities within their units.<sup>50</sup> All units are using standardized worksheets to organize and report on their assessment work. Non-instructional units have completed a full cycle of assessment; the instructional areas will be using the Spring 2006 semester to complete their first cycle.

Prior to these developments there was no formalized systematic plan of evaluation, although movement in that direction began in June 2004 when an Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC) was formed by the President. The IAC was charged with creating a written plan to bring institutional assessment and student outcomes assessment to the forefront of the College. Chaired by the Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment and Testing, the committee worked intensively during the Fall 2004 semester and completed a comprehensive institutional assessment plan in January 2005. The plan was designed as a mechanism to generate goal-driven assessment at every level of the College. The CIE ultimately superseded the IAC in order to place direction of institutional assessment at the vice-presidential level.

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

This section will focus on (1) the extent to which assessment efforts have led to improvements, and (2) how the current strategic planning effort has made use of assessment activities.

### ***Assessment and improvement***

The College's Vision Statement states that "We will support an ongoing process of improvement through continued assessment of our vision, values, practices, and mission." While this aspiration underlies a number of the successful assessment initiatives described below, it is fair to say that it has not, thus far, become a reality across the College.

This statement was written in 1999, at a time when the College was beginning to explore the possibility of college-wide outcomes assessment in the more systematic, process-oriented manner needed to apply for a Baldrige quality award. The Baldrige process places a premium on measurability in the loop from assessment to improvement and involves constructing a framework for continuous institutional self-study that has direct links with planning and decision-making.

As noted above, some areas of the College routinely engage in self-assessment, and by all accounts, have been remarkably successful. Additionally, the study group

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<sup>50</sup> Faculty liaisons are also being compensated for their work.

found a number of other examples of assessment results leading to improvements, many of which are clear examples of quality improvement efforts. For example, the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey administered by the Office of Research and Planning in 1998 and 2003 led to a number of positive changes in Student Services, as did the Fall 2000 Trailblazer Retreat.<sup>51</sup>

In support of institutional assessment, the College has also invested in consultants to evaluate various areas in student services, administrative services, and contracts with Collegis for support service regarding Datatel. Deloitte & Touche reviewed the administrative services eight years ago and various recommendations were implemented to improve this area. Consultants have also been engaged to evaluate the workings of various areas of Student Services. Examples include the following:

- Evaluation of Financial Aid operations, management and staffing by Academic Management, Inc. (2001)
- Assessment of Student Services' Capability and Effectiveness in the area of Customer Services and Utilization of Technology (Collegis, Inc. Summer, 2002)
- Business Process Redesign Study of Admissions (Spring, 2004)
- Financial Aid Services, Inc. Office Effectiveness Review and Desk Audit of Financial Aid Operations and Staffing (summer/fall 2004)
- Regular external field evaluations of the Office of Specialized Services program and the College Center for Deaf Education.

The great majority of the recommendations made by these consultants are in the process of being implemented. Perhaps the most significant, as noted in Chapters Eight and Nine, is that admissions and registration functions are being brought together under a new Director of Enrollment Services.

Some assessment results that should prove useful in the future have just recently been made available. For example, a *Composition Readiness Study*, conducted in Spring 2004 by the faculty in the English Department, was designed to determine if students are prepared for Composition I. The study compared the learning outcomes of students placed through English Basic Skills, the American Language Program (ALP) or initial placement testing. Rubrics were used for the evaluation, and about 30 faculty volunteers from Composition, ALP and Basic Skills gathered to do the study. (See [Exhibit 34](#).)

A clear pattern emerges from the foregoing analysis: with few exceptions, the assessment work leading to improvement was conducted by an outside firm, at the direction of the Executive Council, or is done by an office that primarily employs, and is supervised by, non-College employees. The last example—the *Composition Readiness Study*—is perhaps the most significant exception because it was initiated by a department head, and it is not a program that is externally accredited.<sup>52</sup> In addition to this English Department study, the Mathematics and Computer Science Department has done similar studies in the last few years (See [Exhibits 35a, 35b, 35c, 35d, and 35e](#).) Overall, outcomes assessment—particularly learning assessment—has gained little traction and born little fruit in the academic divisions.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter Eight for further detail on these changes.

<sup>52</sup> Programs that are individually accredited—such as Nursing and those in Allied Health—have historically had fewer problems engaging in outcomes assessment and program review.

In retrospect, one of the more successful initiatives has been the program review process for the academic units, discussed in more depth in Chapter Eleven. The Program Outcomes Assessment Committee formulated a 5-year Program Review process which was approved by the Faculty Senate in 1996. In 1996-97 the first scheduled programs began the recommended three semester review process, and while completion has sometimes been delayed, programs have undergone review each year. The *2001 Periodic Review Report* revealed that the process was too cumbersome, and thus the review process was revised in 2002. Although not formally approved by the Faculty Senate,<sup>53</sup> programs began to use the new process.

A Faculty Evaluation Task Force comprised of faculty and administrators also began meeting in 1996. The work of this taskforce is analyzed in some detail in Chapter Ten.

In 1998 the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate passed a standardized course syllabi format to be used for designing all new courses, and in same year, the Faculty Senate approved a set of ten General Education goals and objectives as part of a state-wide articulation agreement. The standard syllabus format was never, however, mandated or implemented for existing courses, so a widely heterogeneous set of course syllabi still exist. The General Education goals and objectives now have a bearing on the new General Education course approval process, approved by the Faculty Senate in Spring 2005.<sup>54</sup>

In Fall 2001, also in response to the Periodic Review, the Academic Vice-President formed an Assessment Team to create a college-wide plan for assessing student learning outcomes. Over the course of that year, the team developed a written assessment plan, including a set of Core Competencies. However, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the written plan was never brought forward for Senate approval, and the team dissolved in Spring 2002. In Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 a single faculty member on released time—the chair of the former Assessment Team—offered a series of assessment workshops and served as a consultant to departments developing learning objectives. Interestingly, the Core Competencies were put forth for Senate approval in May 2003, and they passed with minor revisions. But without a plan in place to assess the competencies, their use has not been widespread. The current “Assessment Framework” addresses this problem.

As previously mentioned, the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC) was formed in Fall 2004 under the Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment and Testing. The IAC presented an outcome assessment proposal to the Faculty Senate in Fall 2004, and this resulted in the decision to create two new faculty committees—assessment subcommittees of the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate—to create and facilitate the implementation of a learning outcomes assessment plan.

The establishment of the IAC, and ultimately the new CIE, was prompted in part by a “March 2004 Assessment Status Report” prepared by the Director of Learning

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<sup>53</sup> This appears to have been an oversight; until formal approval is given, programs have the option of using the old or new process.

<sup>54</sup> See [Exhibit 36](#). The course approval document ([Exhibit 49](#)) states that “A course proposed for general education certification at Bergen Community College must address, serve, and support the goals and objectives of the college's general education program,” but it is not specified how this support or service should be demonstrated, e.g., by aligning course learning objectives with the GE Goals. An obvious opportunity to support assessment through course approval has thus been missed.



Outcomes Assessment and Testing. (See [Exhibit 37](#).) In order to determine the state of assessment at the College, the Director reviewed all activities relative to assessment, and submitted an assessment status report containing a number of challenges. The Director position itself had been urged by the 2001-2002 Assessment Team, and in July 2003 the College had hired an experienced person to fill this new position which would oversee both entrance testing and learning outcomes assessment.

The Director, however, was never more than an assessment “consultant” to departments seeking assistance—he was given no authority over the assessment process. To complicate matters, during 2003-2004, the job description of the Director overlapped with that of the Assistant Academic Vice-President, so it was unclear who was to work on—and be responsible for overseeing—learning assessment. Furthermore, without a Senate-approved plan in place, it was not clear what should be done.

Although learning assessment will be taken up in more detail in Chapter Fourteen, it seems evident that the primary problems have been, at various times, (1) disorganization—specifically, lack of clarity about roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines; (2) absence of Senate approval of a learning assessment plan; (3) overall faculty reluctance, due to concerns about additional work and suspicions about how the assessment information would be used; and (4) insufficient allocation of resources, both human and financial, to support a college-wide program. Assessment activity has typically involved a relatively small group of faculty and administrators, and the efforts have hit roadblocks or resulted in policies or plans that did not get implemented.

The establishment of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness creates much room for optimism about moving forward in a more organized, systematic way with assessment of student learning. However, the CIE itself must get faculty support and collaboration to work effectively. The biggest challenge for the CIE is to create a campus culture in which assessment is “the norm” and is a part of all activities in both the academic and non-academic areas of the College. At this point in time there are some units within the College where this is the case. These are mostly areas where assessment is prescribed by federal and/or state law, and in the Division of Technology and Information Services. Assessment must be seen as a means of helping the College improve its performance with respect to its Mission and Goals, and not as an evaluation of individuals. Related to this is the challenge of ensuring that the results of the various assessment tools are used to make the improvements indicated by the assessment process.

### ***Assessment and Strategic Planning***

The latest strategic planning initiative made full use of all available assessment and scanning data. This Self-Study played a major role—by design—as did the results of the Bergen Values Dialogue. The ideal assessment data for strategic planning—data on student learning outcomes—was at the time not organized or widely available, but by the time the next strategic plan is created, learning outcomes data should be available and ready for use. For further discussion of this planning initiative, see Chapter Two.

## **SUMMARY**

Institutional assessment activity has taken place in a number of areas, including the monitoring of traditional indicators of institutional effectiveness, self-assessment by individual units and divisions, quality improvement initiatives, and the use of external consultants for specific assessment needs. A number of these assessment activities have led to clear improvement. The creation of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness in 2005, and the implementation of the Assessment Framework, is indicative of the institutionalization of assessment and its linkage to strategic planning.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The creation of the Center for Institutional Effectiveness represents a major step forward in the College's commitment to outcomes assessment.
2. There is recognition on the part of the administration that strategic planning and institutional assessment are interrelated, and that the findings of the self-study should be incorporated into the strategic plan. To this end, the administration encouraged and facilitated the interaction between the chairs of the Strategic Planning Taskforce, the Institutional Assessment Committee, and the Middle States Self-Study.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The College should provide those involved in implementing assessment processes, both non-academic and academic, with (a) significant training, (b) time away from other duties, and (c) the open and visible support of all those in leadership roles.
2. The College needs to devote appropriate resources to assessment activity. This may require a reassessment and reprioritizing of current resource allocations in order to be feasible.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Institutional assessment plans should involve a method to evaluate administrative processes. This should not be an evaluation of individual personnel, but of the processes and procedures by which the College operates, and the effectiveness of such. The chosen method should include a mechanism for feedback from and to all employees of the College.



## Chapter Eight

# Student Admissions

The Student Admissions and Support Services Study Group examined the role of admissions at the College. It evaluated the extent to which the College’s admissions procedures and practices are clearly stated, widely communicated, fully understood, consistently implemented, and periodically reviewed for planning. The group also analyzed the degree to which these procedures and practices are consistent with—and contribute to—the College’s Mission and Goals as part of an overall enrollment strategy.

In February 2005, after the study group had completed its work, the College announced a restructuring that would include the recommendations of the 2004 Student Services Improvement Project described below. This project was a result of a multi-year consulting effort to streamline and improve student services, resulting in the *Admissions Business Process Analysis Report* (Exhibit 38). This chapter concludes with changes that have occurred between July and October 2005.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The Bergen Mission is to provide “high quality, relevant, and varied educational programs and opportunities for the intellectual, cultural, and personal growth of all members of its community.” The College’s open enrollment admission policy is clearly consistent with its Mission. While this policy is rooted in belief that access to higher education should be made available to everyone, student “capacity to benefit” is also an important consideration. Enhancement of the student through the College’s programs and services is the first of the College Goals. (See Exhibit 1.) Student “capacity to contribute,” though less visible in the Mission, is no less of a consideration at BCC than at any higher education institution: access to higher education promotes the greater good and further development of society. Accordingly, not every program at the College is open admission: in the Allied Health and Nursing programs, admission is competitive and a record of academic success is required.

Most programs, however, are open to anyone with a high school diploma or the equivalent. Students who do not plan to complete an Associate Degree or certificate program may take classes without completing an official application form,<sup>55</sup> and for non-degree seeking students, high school graduation is not a requirement for those over 18

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<sup>55</sup> Currently, non-degree seeking students can either complete an official application form or complete the reverse side of the registration form, which collects critical information (e.g., address, sex, educational objectives) from the student.

years of age. The College admits students without regard to color, age, race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital or veteran's status as defined by law. It is also a barrier-free education facility that is accessible to students with disabilities.

The IT upgrades in the last ten years have led to significant improvements in the way prospective students can access admissions information and apply for admission. Admissions and “Getting Started at Bergen” web pages offer students basic information and useful links. Also, the ECatalog, developed during 2002-2003, allows one to access the College catalog online. An online admissions application was piloted in Spring 2004, and is now available for all but Allied Health and Nursing admissions and students on F-1 visas. Online applications are monitored to eliminate duplication of records. Additionally, the Legacy information system that had been used for many years was replaced by the Datatel Colleague system, which allows for the student service information systems to be networked.

Several other admissions-related developments are noteworthy. In 2001, the BCC Foundation received a commitment from a donor to make annual contributions to the newly established Wilton T. Barney Scholarship Fund. The donor asked that the applicants be high school seniors applying for entrance to BCC and exhibiting a community service history. Admissions and Recruitment were asked by the Foundation to structure the strategy for inviting applications from the high school population. The donor established the scholarship criterion, and the Foundation and Director of Admissions developed the application and selection process for the first Wilton T. Barney Scholarship for Community Service. This process is still in use today. Similar collaborations have occurred between the Foundation and other units of the College since 1995. Also, between 2000 and 2004 the College saw a marked increase in the diversity of its student population. The largest growth occurred in the Hispanic population, which saw an increase from 2,232 (21%) in Fall 2000 to 3,144 (25%) in Fall 2004. Furthermore, the College consistently produces students whose scholarship and personal success stories facilitate recruitment. Testimonies of outstanding BCC graduates are now in local newspaper advertisements.

In the past year, a new New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) initiative was implemented. This scholarship program, created by the State of New Jersey, covers tuition and most fees for up to five semesters for first-time community college students who graduate in the top 20 percent of their high school class. Many NJ STARS students are also automatically eligible for the College's Honor Program. NJ STARS admissions in 2004-05 were lower than anticipated, due in part to a late announcement of the program. Another problem appears to be the need for remediation in otherwise qualified students: students who are required to take more than 3 non-degree credits of remedial courses, based on Basic Skills Testing, are not eligible for the NJ STARS Program until those courses have been successfully completed.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, a Business Process Analysis was initiated to improve all operational aspects of the College's admissions process. Its recommendations resulted, in 2004, in the Student Services Improvement Project. This will be discussed in more detail below.

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

This section will look more closely at (1) the quality of admissions information, (2) the use of assessment in the admissions area, and (3) the efficiency of admissions processes, including findings of the Business Process Analysis conducted in 2004. For additional discussion of financial aid, scholarships, and transfer credit, see Chapter Nine.

### ***The quality of admissions information***

According to the Self-Study Student Survey, 58% of students obtain information about the admissions process from the printed College Catalog, and 34% of the respondents obtained information from staff in the Admissions Office. Efforts are made with respect to both of these major information sources to ensure that information is accurate. The College Catalog is reviewed annually by each department to ensure accuracy and also to see that program/curriculum requirements are accurately printed in brochures. E-mail, memos and staff meetings are used to make certain that staff members have accurate and up-to-date information for prospective students.

There are 46 brochures, “What Can I Do with a Major in...” outside of the Cooperative Education and Career Development Center (CECDC). Of these, 34 pertain to career programs and 12 to transfer programs. In addition to these brochures, the CE CDC makes available two sets of books that correlate careers and curricula. “Careers In...” begins with the career field, and then informs the student of the appropriate degree program. The other set of books, “Great Jobs for...,” is curriculum-centered—it starts with programs of study and examines the kinds of careers they lead to.

The study group did find two sources of concern. During the busiest times of the year, temporary employees who receive little formal training are often in contact with the public. The reliance on temporary employees in this capacity becomes problematic when they are asked questions or faced with situations that go beyond procedural. The study group also found that the admissions and registration process for Allied Health and Nursing courses is confusing for students because there are dual sets of application deadlines, depending on whether the student is newly admitted or changing curriculum. Additionally, printed information on the Allied Health and Nursing programs only reflects the minimum requirements for applying to these programs. Due to the competitive nature of some programs, some selection criteria are altered for each entering class. Both of these concerns are being addressed, and the steps being taken with respect to them are described below.

### ***The use of assessment in admissions***

Assessment is currently done in some areas—for example, there are evaluations of the annual meeting for guidance counselors, and for College information sessions and tours, but neither is evaluated consistently. Overall, the study group found that the integrity of admissions operations was difficult to determine because of the lack of systematic assessment. Formal and consistent assessment would enable the College to

truly demonstrate its excellence, and often good opportunities are lost. For example, the previously mentioned increase in student diversity over the last four years appears to have been facilitated by collaboration between the Director of Admissions and Recruitment, the Director of Public Relations, and the College Publications Editor in marketing the College to the external community. Although these recruitment efforts seem to have contributed to the increased diversity on campus, the absence of a formal assessment made it difficult to establish this. It was precisely the concern over the integrity of the admissions process that led to the hiring of a consultant to do an extensive assessment of the process.

### *The efficiency of admissions processes*

One of the key findings of the 2004 Business Process Analysis (See [Exhibit 38](#) for the resulting report) was that the management of paper application documents is inefficient and error prone. The existing student records management does not effectively utilize information technology, is inefficient, and has not effectively maintained pace with increased student enrollment. For example, when students apply to the College but do not enroll the semester for which they applied, their academic files are marked, “never enrolled.” Due to inconsistencies in marking these files, some remain in Admissions while others are transferred to Counseling. This becomes problematic when students request a change of curriculum into Allied Health and Nursing programs. Whether prerequisites have been met can only be established through the student’s high school transcript, which is contained in the file.

Another finding of the study group was that the roles of the Office of Admissions and the Office of Registration were not well defined, and that for an open admissions institution, students had to take a very large number of steps to be admitted. That problem, combined with the inefficient use of the Colleague system and the problems with records management, led the College to hire a consultant to work with stakeholders on a redesign of these areas. The resultant "Student Services Improvement Project" led, in July 2005, to the merger of the admissions and registrations functions. The project set for itself the following goals:

- a more streamlined intake process for students.
- a unified application (for both degree and non-degree seekers) that is submitted electronically and interfaced with Colleague.
- a unified transcript evaluation for both the Office of Admissions and the Testing Office.
- a new transfer database.
- electronic transmission of transcripts.
- centralized records, which will both minimize paper flow and maximize accessibility.
- a restructured and reorganized Allied Health, Nursing, and International Student admissions process.

As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005, several of these goals, as well as several of the concerns expressed above, have been addressed. Cross-training has been initiated for the

admissions and registration staffs. This is due to both the merger of the two offices and the need to address improved customer service. Temporary employees are now “behind the scenes” and do not provide information to the public. Full-time admissions and registration personnel now staff the windows in both areas; admissions personnel also handle registration, and vice versa.

A streamlining of the admissions process has also been initiated, and as a result, students are admitted more quickly. This is true for all students except those seeking admission to the Allied Health and Nursing programs, and those seeking an F-1 Visa. With regard to the former, the plan is to have all applications to Allied Health and Nursing handled by admissions, but this has not yet been implemented.

In addition, the implementation of “Liquid Matrix” has begun. Liquid Matrix is a software program that will create an interactive and personalized admissions experience that will include an online application. The search for Central Records Manager has also begun. As the title implies, one of the responsibilities of the position will be to create centralized records for all student services. This, along with the above noted changes, addresses most of the desired improvements in the College’s admissions process.

## **SUMMARY**

The recent merger of admissions and registration was based on several years of careful assessment and planning. Process redesign, enabled by cutting edge technology, is leading to a process that is simpler, quicker, and more efficient. Admissions and program information is available both online and in print, and is routinely checked for accuracy.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. Recognition of the need to improve all aspects of the College’s admissions process led to a multi-year effort, including the 2004 Student Services Improvement Project. Although changes are ongoing, extensive efforts by a variety of College stakeholders have led to significant improvements.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The College should formally assess admissions and recruitment activity.
2. Some information for prospective students should be monitored and improved:
  - The College Catalog should refer students to the Allied Health Web page for up-to-date information.
  - Learning outcomes information should be available to prospective students

## **Chapter Nine**

# **Student Support Services**

An institution's student support services should be closely aligned with its mission and goals, appropriately geared to the strengths and needs of the student population, and available to all of its students. The Student Admissions and Support Services Study Group examined the extent to which student support services at Bergen Community College (1) comply with their purpose of enhancing the student's quality of life; (2) contribute to student development and learning; and (3) are congruent with the College's Mission and Goals. In addition, the group examined the effectiveness of Student Service programs and the utilization of outcomes assessment in planning.

### **INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW**

The second College Goal is "To provide supportive services and leadership opportunities in an environment that enables and encourages students to achieve their educational and professional goals and to develop their social skills." The student support services at Bergen exist to enable each student to achieve the goals the College has set for them by enhancing the student's quality of life and contributing to student development and learning. The services and programs that address the academic, career, cultural, socio-emotive, civic and moral development of the College's students include: the Counseling Center, the Academic Advisement Center, the Office of Student Life, the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Development, the Office of Specialized Services, the Athletics Program, and the Personal Enrichment Workshops. The Learning Assistance Center and other tutoring services will be discussed in Chapter Eleven.

There have been significant developments in all of these areas in the last several years, but a few of them have had particularly broad-reaching effects and implications. The implementation of the Colleague system began during Fall 1997. Modules went live beginning with the financial areas in July 1998, and the College began registering students with Colleague in Fall 1999. WebAdvisor was first rolled out during Summer 2001 as a means for students to check their grades. It was first used for registration for Fall 2001, and approximately 1700 students used it. By Spring 2002 approximately 66% of students used WebAdvisor to register for classes. Colleague and WebAdvisor have had a major impact on the way counseling and academic advising services function. The College also implemented E-commerce in March 2005, and this service is now available on a 24-hour basis. The Bursar's office has reported a significant decrease in students waiting in line to pay as a result of this online service.

A second development was the use of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory in 1998 and 2003 to assess campus climate and student attitudes. Although the scope of the inventory is quite broad, it helped the Student Services staff determine which support services, workshops and learning opportunities students find most useful and

satisfying. As a result, the College has made a major priority of providing enhanced institutional support services to meet discipline-specific needs and promote student success. These services are described in the following paragraphs.

Student Services saw several important reorganizations, openings, and expansions. For example, in 1999, the Career Planning Services group relocated and formed the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Development. The Office's extensive outreach program includes: Cooperative Education classes, specialized classroom presentations, the "Resume Doctor" walk-up booth, and support for service learning. In the same year the Academic Advising Center was established. The Center is a result of collaboration between the Divisions of Student Services and the teaching faculty, and is staffed by both the teaching faculty and counselors. This opening coincided with the implementation of the Faculty Advising Program. In addition to the opening of this convenient walk-in center, New Student Advising workshop sessions began in Spring 2000. By addressing English Basic Skills, American Language Program, and English Composition I students in separate groups, these sessions are more focused to the skill level of students. Also, the Counseling Center expanded transfer advising services by offering nine group Transfer Advising Information Sessions to new students and special Honors transfer assistance; creating a "transfer library" with catalogues and "Best Bets" transfer information sheets on local colleges; and presenting two Transfer Fairs each year at which students can speak to college admission representatives from fifty colleges and universities. "Transfer Express," which provides additional resources to answer quick questions, was created in the Academic Advisement Center in 2000; this service has reduced the need for individual appointments. The annual Personal Enrichment Workshop series was developed in 2002.

The Office of Specialized Services (OSS) opened an Assistive Technology Lab in 1999 and, in the same year, began to collaborate with the Office of Student Life to increase accessibility to student activities for students with disabilities. Deaf Awareness Week was also celebrated for the first time that year. Between 2001 and 2003, the OSS Staff was expanded to meet the needs of the student population, with two Resource Accommodations Specialists and a Rehabilitation Job Specialist brought on staff. In 2002, American Sign Language I and II were approved as General Education electives; Introduction to the College Experience (known informally as the "ICE course") sections were adapted to address the needs of students with disabilities; and, in conjunction with the Department of Wellness and Exercise Science, an adapted fitness course (WEX-206) was created for students with physical and mobility impairments. In 2003-04, when the NJ Special Needs Center grant was reissued for a five-year cycle, OSS was listed as a non-competitive bid, indicating that the state was so satisfied with OSS that the College had the right to renew the grant without competition. In December 2004, OSS was also awarded a highly competitive Kessler Grant which, in conjunction with the Partnership for Community Health, will lead to the establishment of a free online knowledge base for accessing and posting disability-related information. This project's activities will also include a series of free seminars featuring national leaders who will address needed changes and improvements in services for students with disabilities.

The Office of Student Life significantly expanded programs that represent diverse needs of student population. The popular off-campus Leadership Weekends are part of an extensive student leadership program. The number of heritage/diversity weeks

and celebrations has also greatly expanded (see [Exhibit 39](#)), and an off-campus intensive Diversity Awareness weekend was created. There are now student representatives on most college committees, expanding opportunities for student input and enhancing student governance. Membership in clubs and the number of clubs has increased as well.

In the Financial Aid area, collaboration between then Vice President of Student Services and the Executive Director of the BCC Foundation resulted in a request in fiscal year 2000 to all faculty asking them to formally recommend students for scholarship consideration. In the spring of 2000, the BCC Foundation held its first scholarship awards ceremony in which donors and recipients were directly introduced. (Results of these developments will be analyzed further below.) More recent Financial Aid developments include, in 2004, the incorporation of Web-based, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications and the creation of a PC-based student loan delivery system.

The Athletics Program also saw expansion: a new fitness center was opened in 1995, and adaptive exercise equipment was installed in the S-128 fitness room in 2000. Other improvements include the creation of a Bergen Athletics web site, in 1999, and the creation of women's basketball and women's soccer teams, in 2000 and 2001, respectively.

Finally, a Student Handbook that outlines important College policies was first published in 2001, and a third edition became available in September 2005.

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

The study group focused on the following issues in their evaluation: (1) the extent of assessment and planning efforts in Student Services, (2) the results of collaborative efforts, (3) the quality and accessibility of information and services, (4) Student Services' capacity to serve a growing student body, and (5) the quality of support and enrichment provided by Student Services.

### ***Assessment and planning efforts***

As noted above, the Student Services goals in the Five-Year Plan that were derived from the results of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory are reflective of student concerns and have occupied a place of central importance in divisional operations and planning. Additionally, the top two action steps from the October 2000 Trailblazer Self-Assessment Retreat directly involved Student Services: (1) Make Student Services more success-enhancing for students, and (2) Take a better, more complete inventory of student goals. These action steps were also integrated into the Five-Year Plan, and overall, the study group concluded that integration with, and adherence to, the College's Five Year Plan better ensures programmatic and systematic changes in response to student needs and preferences. Two points should be made, though. The first is that measuring student satisfaction can importantly function both as a student needs assessment and as an assessment of the outcomes of Student Services' programs and services; however, as outcomes assessment, it is only an indirect measure, and more direct measures may be warranted.



At least one office—Cooperative Education and Career Development—can demonstrate regular and ongoing internal assessment for a wide variety of its programs. (See Exhibit 40 for a complete listing.) OSS has also been evaluated regularly for the last five years by an independent evaluator selected by the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education. In other areas, assessment is in various stages of development. As noted above, student evaluation of counselors began in 2001. Evaluation of the New Students Advisement Sessions has been initiated but not completed, and evaluation of the Transfer Advising Information Sessions was piloted in Summer 2004 and continued through Fall 2004. A major assessment and planning effort in Financial Aid was conducted in 2004, resulting in long-term changes in the Financial Aid office and operations. In addition, the Business Process Analysis in Admissions and the Student Services Improvement Project discussed in Chapter Eight have been ongoing since the spring of 2004. Both have resulted in dramatic changes and strategies for how services are provided to students. Despite mixed results on the status of assessment activity, the study group found evidence of a move toward strategic planning in the following areas: the Counseling Center, the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Development, the Office of Specialized Services, and the Office of Student Life.

### *Collaborative efforts*

The study group found many examples of concerted effort being made to foster collaborative partnerships and provide a more seamless delivery of services. Collaboration during the last four years between the Vice President of Student Services and the Executive Director of the BCC Foundation has made for a more seamless delivery of annual scholarships. Successful fundraising by the Foundation helped to increase the amount awarded in scholarships from \$7,000 to \$70,000, and the five-year old practice of faculty recommending students for specific scholarships has helped in the giving of awards when the donor has very specific criteria. Moreover, the Counseling Center began collaborating with teaching faculty in offering the “New Student Advisement” sessions. The teaching faculty have also collaborated with counselors in offering the Introduction to the College Experience (ICE) course. Transfer Advising Information Sessions are now presented in collaboration with ICE faculty and Educational Opportunity Fund instructors, and consequently they reach a broader range of students. The Personal Enrichment Workshops now regularly offered represent collaboration between personal counselors, ICE faculty, and local community professionals. Finally, the original team involved in the Business Process Analysis, which led to the Student Services Improvement Project, cut across many areas of the College. In addition to the representatives from the student service areas of Admissions, Registration, and Counseling, there were representatives from Public Relations, IT, Testing and the teaching faculty.

### *Quality and accessibility of information and services*

Enhanced IT resources have created new opportunities for making information accessible to students. In the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Development, for example, networked computers now make it possible to handle on-line job postings.

The development of web sites by Student Services departments has also provided additional resources for students, despite the fact that the maintenance of these sites has proven to be labor and resource intensive. WebAdvisor allows students to search for open sections of courses and register online, to check their class schedule, to find out what rooms their classes are scheduled in, to find out what courses remain to be taken for graduation, to get an informal copy of their transcripts and, most recently, to pay their tuition bills online. Its use has grown steadily since its inception, with roughly half of the student population now using it to register. It has also significantly reduced waiting in lines at Registration, and at the Counseling and Academic Advising Centers. However, as students sometimes encounter difficulties when using it, the study group found that there is insufficient support to assist students with technical WebAdvisor problems.

In 2002, in collaboration among Technology and Information Services, the Technology Governance Committee, and OSS, the baseline specifications for computer labs were changed to include two specially-equipped stations for students with disabilities. All new and upgraded labs meet these specifications, thereby expanding access to computing facilities for students with disabilities. In subsequent collaboration between OSS and the Library, enterprise license arrangements were purchased to ensure that adaptive software would be available to students throughout the campus, not just in a few locations.

In a number of readily available documents, e.g., the College Catalog, the College publishes the policy pertaining to confidentiality of student information mandated by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Memos from the Executive Vice President concerning the College's policy on the release of student information have been distributed college-wide.

In two cases, the study group found that location of offices may compromise the ability of students to get information about, and subsequently use, a College service. The Office of Cooperative Education and Career Development, for example, was able to expand its services by relocating, but the new location is not contiguous with the other Student Service offices. This problem will be corrected when West Hall opens and Student Services expands into the adjacent offices. The Office of Specialized Services has a separate but related problem: it lacks a central location and space that will accommodate the whole staff in one area, which has created challenges and inefficiencies.

Hours of service are also a concern, given that 55% of students take some evening and/or weekend classes. In addition to the new E-commerce services mentioned above, and the Bursar's Office drop box, students can make payments with checks and credit cards by mail. With other key services, though, evening hours are not fully aligned. For example, while the Counseling Center is open until 7 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, the offices of Admissions, Registration, and Financial Aid are open until 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays only. As a result, some students may have to come to campus on multiple days or evenings in order to accomplish a small set of essential tasks. The library has the most hours of operation, including weekends. Increasingly, though, the key services and functions available to students on a 24-hour basis on the "virtual campus" are leading to improvements in accessibility.

***Capacity to serve a growing student body***

A major and institution-wide concern is the College's capacity to adequately serve a growing student body. In Student Services, this challenge is especially apparent in the Office of Specialized Services and in both the Counseling and Advising Centers.

The Office of Specialized Services has experienced exponential growth, with students served increasing from 350 in 1994 to 2,001 in Fall 2004. While this growth is consistent with both state and nationwide trends, and while the Director and increased staff now provide a larger range of services, there are still extraordinary demands on this office.

Environmental scans indicate that the College can continue to expect a growing demand for specialized services, and BCC has become known in the region for offering excellent educational opportunities to special needs students. In light of these trends, and the comparatively high costs associated with specialized services, it is especially important that the College plan carefully to continue to meet student needs.

The Counseling Center, which is staffed by 18 counselors, sees on average 1,000 visits per counselor per year. These figures mark a third straight year of increase. This continued increase is especially significant in light of the opening of the Academic Advising Center, which was meant in part to reduce demand on the Counseling Center.

The Academic Advising Center is also seeing dramatically increased use. The number of student visits has grown from 471 in 1999-2000 to 9,333 in 2003-2004. The Advising Center was designed to provide an alternative resource for students and to allow the Counseling Center to provide more in-depth counseling. Despite its increasing use and ostensible success, contractual obligations with faculty staffing and staffing problems during registration persist. This issue is taken up further in Chapter Six; it suffices here to note that because faculty contract requirements are controversial, service in the Center is generally a source of resentment, and some of the academic departments have been reluctant to engage in discussions about the Center or offer feedback about its operations.

Finally, attendance at the New Student Advisement sessions facilitated by counselors has grown from 1501 in 2001-2002 to 2595 in 2003-2004, and in the Transfer Advising Information Sessions, attendance has more than doubled, growing from 200 in 1999-2000 to 525 in 2003-2004. In light of all of these instances of dramatic and further projected growth, careful assessment and planning will be needed in order to ensure that the College can continue to increase its capacity to serve students' needs adequately.

***Quality of support and enrichment provided by Student Services***

The College offers a number of programs and services aimed at educating and supporting the growth of the "whole student." Briefly analyzed below are the Personal Enrichment Workshops offered by the counseling staff; the ICE course developed and offered in collaboration with counselors; new student orientations; the activities of the Office of Student Life; the Athletics Programs; and student grievance and judicial processes.

The Personal Enrichment Workshop series that began in 2002 addresses topics relevant to students' needs: personal relationships, eating disorders, credit card debt, and

the like. Judging by attendance, student response has been very good: 554 students participated in 2003-2004 workshops, up from 292 students in the 2002-2003 series.

The ICE course includes units on career planning, communication skills, critical thinking, learning styles, study skills, and time management. The course has expanded from 13 sections/189 students in 2000-2001 to 39 sections/684 students in 2003-2004.

The new student orientations coordinated by the Office of Student Life have grown dramatically, from 100 parents and 500 students attending in Spring 2004 to 250 parents and 1200 students attending in Spring 2005. OSS conducts orientation sessions for students with disabilities, and evaluations of the sessions filled out by both parents and students have provided useful information for improvement.

The Office of Student Life is the locus of student activity outside of the classroom, offering a wide variety of activities both internally and with other sponsoring groups on campus. In addition to mentoring the Student Government Association and the Student Activities Board, the Office assists in the coordination of club activity and related heritage and diversity celebrations, and sponsors and coordinates a very successful lecture series. Cornell West, Linda Chavez, Ralph Nader, David Horowitz, and Maya Angelou are just a few of the prominent speakers who have visited the Bergen campus in the past few years. As noted earlier, leadership development efforts have been collaborative and exceptional, with many student leaders playing multiple important roles on campus, gaining national recognition, and ultimately moving on to prominent four-year colleges and universities. A very active chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (the International Honor Society of Two-Year Colleges) consistently wins annual leadership awards, and some of these students have also been selected for recognition by USA Today as First Team members. There is also a growing awareness of the potential of the many co-curricular activities to support and enhance classroom learning. The Center for the Study of Intercultural Understanding developed a Co-Curricular Programming Subcommittee during the past year, and is actively working with Student Life and classroom instructors to integrate cultural programming with classroom activity. The study group found, however, that there is a need to create a greater awareness on campus of how student activities can enhance the academic experience.

Although only a small percentage of students participate in intercollegiate sports (3.8% according to the Self-Study Student Survey), the athletic programs play an important role on campus and have been responsive to student needs. For example, the addition of adaptive equipment has permitted the participation of students with disabilities in exercise courses. Additionally, the Self-Study Student Survey indicates that 17.8% of students participate in recreational or non-competitive athletics. The study group found, however, that the new class schedule has negatively impacted some intramural programs by shortening the Student Activity period from 80 to 55 minutes, making some traditional intramural activities impossible to complete.

On the intercollegiate level, new women's teams and exceeding the general goal of 50% post season play (it was 75% in 2003-2004) are signs of success. However, the study group found a number of challenges with respect the recruitment and retention of both athletes and coaches that go beyond the Division III rules that limit such recruitment. Coaches are essential to program success, but are often attracted by higher salaries and better athletes at local high schools and four year colleges. Student athletes

report that coach turnover and competing demands on their time have a negative impact on their ability to participate.

Finally, an important form of support for students is having fair processes for addressing their complaints and for student judicial matters. In addressing student complaints and grievances, the College publishes the relevant processes in the Student Handbook, the College Catalog, and on the College website, and overall provides an environment that facilitates the expression of their concerns. The process provides follow-up, including a letter of resolution, to ensure that legitimate issues and complaints have been addressed equitably and in a timely fashion. The College maintains documentation on these cases for a minimum of three years.

The recently convened Student Judicial Hearing Committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and students, oversees and facilitates the judicial and appeals processes. As with the grievance process, the Student Handbook clearly defines disciplinary procedures. The study group found that although the current process is fairly new, it is proceeding equitably and opportunely once a case has been initiated.

However, two sources of concern were uncovered. First, interviews with the Deans revealed different interpretations of the process for addressing student complaints and grievances and, second, students sometimes do not disclose an incident in a timely fashion, creating an unhelpful time lag. Redoubling efforts to raise awareness across campus about student grievance and judicial processes may go some way toward addressing both of these difficulties.

## **SUMMARY**

The College's student support services include personal counseling, general academic advising, an Office of Specialized Services that serves students with disabilities, the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Development, the Office of Student Life, and intramural and intercollegiate athletics programs. The implementation of Datatel Colleague and WebAdvisor, in 1997 and 2001 respectively, has led to improvements in the delivery of counseling and academic advising. Improvements have also resulted from use of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory. Grievance and disciplinary procedures are widely accessible. Campus events and club activities afford students many opportunities for leadership development and intercultural learning.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The implementation of the Datatel Colleague system in 1997 and WebAdvisor in 2001 has greatly improved overall Student Services functioning.
2. The College has become a regional center for Specialized Services, and offers a wide range of support for students with disabilities.
3. The College also offers a robust student life program that emphasizes leadership and the value of diversity.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. Student services should be centralized to facilitate operations and interaction between departments. Better communication between all units should be promoted, when feasible and appropriate, by sharing counseling data and providing feedback on referrals. The use of Colleague to facilitate this information sharing should be explored.
2. The College should explore further ways of fostering collaboration between Student Services staff and the teaching faculty: e.g., workshops, information sessions, and class presentations.
3. The College should reevaluate compensation for coaches in order to improve their recruitment and retention.
4. The College should make a PDF version of the Student Handbook available on the College website.
5. The College should provide more assistance to students using web registration.
6. Efforts to ensure that students are getting accurate, up-to-date information should be redoubled. In particular:
  - Departmental web pages should be developed and better maintained so that student services web information is uniform, current, and accurate.
  - Follow-up processes for addressing student complaints and grievances should be published and widely circulated.
  - WebAdvisor instructions in the College Catalog and Registration Book need to be clarified.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Although some offices are regularly evaluating their outcomes, the Division of Student Services should utilize outcomes assessment to evaluate delivery of all of its services.
2. In light of anticipated further demand, the College should evaluate the need to increase counseling support.
3. Faculty staffing of the Academic Advising Center remains a concern and needs to be reviewed with the Faculty Association and administration.

## Chapter Ten

### Faculty

Teaching and learning is the central function of Bergen Community College, and as such, its faculty play a central role in supporting and fulfilling the College mission. The faculty have the primary responsibility for developing and carrying out effective instruction, counseling, and library services. The faculty also engage in scholarly and creative activity, and in service activities, which include advisement, guidance of clubs, and coordination of cultural events.

The Faculty Study Group researched and analyzed the extent to which the faculty are responsible for devising and developing instructional, research and service programs within the framework of the College's educational Mission and Vision. It analyzed the adequacy of faculty and other professional staff to support the programs offered by the College. The analysis included a review of the faculty selection processes for their consistency with the College's Mission and Vision, and with the diversity of our student population. The group also examined the consistency of processes for appointment, promotion, tenure, and evaluation, as well as the College's commitment to standards for professional growth and academic freedom for full-time and part-time faculty.

#### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

##### *General facts*

The College faculty includes all full-time college employees holding the academic rank of professor (71), associate professor (76), assistant professor (75), instructor (23), associate instructor (4) and full-time teaching personnel on temporary, non-tenure track lines, designated as lecturers and minority scholar interns (76). There are 325 full-time faculty members reflecting an increase of 20% since the 1994-95 Self-Study. In addition, there are 450 adjunct faculty members, up from 441 in 1994.<sup>56</sup>

The number of full professors has remained relatively static over the past 10 years (71 in 2004, 68 in 1994). The number of associate professors has decreased from 103 to 76; the number of assistant professors has increased from 38 to 75; and the number of instructors has decreased from 32 to 23. Associate instructors have increased by 2, while the number of lecturers has dramatically increased, from 28 to 76. Lecturers and adjunct instructors will be discussed below in the Analysis.

##### *Qualifications*

In Article XIII of the *BCCFA Contract* it is stated that "Bergen Community College seeks to attract, hold and enhance the interests of the best qualified personnel

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<sup>56</sup> Unless noted, all figures are from Fall 2004. See below for discussion of Non-credit faculty.

who will most effectively instruct, guide the growth of, and advise students.” The number one attribute listed for hiring is “Mastery of subject matter in the discipline.” (p. 21) In general, the College requires a Masters degree in the specific discipline to be taught; additional criteria in job advertisements are determined by the Department Head and/or Dean. Departments must also adhere to any criteria imposed by an outside accrediting agency. The highest degrees earned as of Fall 2004 are:

	<b>Full-Time Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct Instructors</b>
<b>Doctorate</b>	25.2%	14.6%
<b>Master’s</b>	72.3%	66.0%
<b>Bachelor’s</b>	2.1%	8.0%
<b>Associates</b>	0.3%	10.7%
<b>No degree</b>		0.6%

The incidence of a Bachelor’s or lower as the highest degree earned is explained by the fact that this small number of faculty members (8) are hired for particular experience, skills and programs for which a higher degree may not be necessary or available. Interviews with Department Heads revealed that frequently they would like to require a doctorate for tenure-track lines, but the positions are advertised as Master’s or above because to require a doctorate would severely limit the pool of applicants. In addition, although improvements have been made, advertisements are still sometimes placed without the input of the faculty who specialize in the area in question, and sometimes without the full approval of Deans and Department Heads. The former group has noted that because the search committee is bound by the advertisement, even small wording differences or omissions can make a major difference to the selection process.

### ***Diversity***

The percentage of women faculty has increased from 48% in 1994 to 53% in 2004, and by rank, the percentage of women faculty has been steady or increased in all but the Instructor rank. This trend is encouraging in light of a long-standing concern amongst some that women have been underrepresented in the highest-paying ranks. Although the percentage of men in the full professor rank is down 4% from 1994, currently 59% of full professors are men. (See [Exhibit 41](#).)

In terms of race and ethnicity, the majority (85%) continues to be white, although this percentage has decreased 2% in 10 years. With respect to minority faculty, the only significant increase has been in faculty of Asian descent, with the percentage increasing from 1.4% to 5.1%. The mostly minor increases in faculty diversity have not kept pace with the increase in student diversity: the percentage of students of color and non-white ancestry has thus risen from 27% in 1994 to 45% in 2004, with Latinos now making up 25% of the student population. Although one of the College’s goals has been to increase the diversity of its faculty, it has remained relatively unchanged in this 10 year span, while the diversity of the student population has almost doubled.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> It should be noted that the College has a Minority Scholar Intern Program, and some of these interns have been hired as tenure-track faculty. Also, for some encouraging findings on faculty interest in engaging diversity, see the discussion on pedagogy in the Analysis below.



One increase in both student and faculty diversity that is not visible in the forgoing discussion concerns Eastern Europeans. The population of students whose country of origin is Eastern European has increased from 696 in 2000 to 908 in 2004, and there has been an increase in hiring of Eastern European faculty. Still, although the College has consistently applied principles of affirmative action in hiring, more aggressive and creative recruiting tactics may be warranted.

### ***Faculty Role in Curriculum Development***

Faculty members propose new courses or new programs of study when either a need arises, or when it would enrich the programs already offered. A proposal procedure exists whereby the Department Head and Dean sign off on the proposal and then forward it to the Curriculum Committee. This committee is chaired by the Academic Vice President, and is comprised of representatives of all academic departments. If approved by the Curriculum Committee, the proposal moves on for Senate approval. If a course is proposed as a General Education course, the proposal first goes to the General Education Committee.<sup>58</sup> All Senate actions are forwarded to the President for approval, and recommendations for the addition or deletion of academic programs require approval by the College's Board of Trustees. New programs also must be approved by the New Jersey Presidents' Council. The administration may suggest to the faculty that a program be developed if community need is determined. For new programs, faculty are involved in preparing the statement of need that is part of the state-wide approval process. In recent years, the Division of Continuing Education has also collaborated in course development. 79% of the faculty surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I am given sufficient opportunity for input in terms of curriculum design and update in the area in which I teach." Still, some faculty have argued that insufficient time is given to develop curriculum.

### ***Non-credit Faculty***

In addition to the faculty who teach credit-bearing coursework, the Division of Continuing Education (DCE) and the Ciarco Learning Center (CLC) employ approximately 400 predominately part-time faculty. These faculty teach non-credit courses that range from 3 to 270 hours in length. Two issues of concern shared by these faculty arose in the course of this Self-Study: compensation and opportunities for professional development.

The salary caps and weekly hourly caps set forth by Board of Trustees policy are specific issues of concern. In many instances, hourly rates (maximum \$45.00 per hour) are lower than the DCE's and CLC's competitors<sup>59</sup>, and preclude the hiring of faculty with industry-specific expertise. Additionally, part-time faculty needed to teach day programs are capped at 19 hours per week, limiting the amount of income they can earn, and further increasing the competitors' appeal.

It was also found that faculty who teach non-credit courses have few professional development opportunities. Of particular note is that there are no opportunities for

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<sup>58</sup> For further discussion of General Education, please see Chapter Twelve.

<sup>59</sup> Such as Bergen Technical High School.

interaction or dialogue with their colleagues who teach on the credit side. It would be beneficial for all if opportunities for communication and collaboration could be developed.

### *Changes since the last Self-Study*

In addition to developments discussed in the Analysis below, the following changes in faculty life have taken place:

- Technology has changed many aspects of faculty life and has helped improve availability of information. Email has become the most common form of communication, and the Faculty Homepage—created and maintained by members of the faculty, and supported by the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT)—collects information and resources of interest to the faculty. There are also now faculty-maintained BCCFA and Faculty Senate pages.
- Critical faculty information is now more accessible than it has been in the past, and communication about controversial issues has increased somewhat. An updated Constitution of the General Faculty was adopted in April 2004 and revised in September 2004, and along with the faculty contract and a Faculty Handbook, is available online on the Faculty Homepage. A “Faculty Dialogue” email group and session at Spring 2004 faculty conference signaled a desire for more open faculty communication.
- A significant number of faculty now teach online courses, and are trained and supported by the CIT’s The Online Professor Program (TOPP).<sup>60</sup> “Smart” classrooms have also enabled many faculty to discover new ways to teach their subjects. Although the Teaching and Learning Technology Roundtable has been working with faculty to equip and redesign rooms, the demand for Smart Classrooms is greater than their availability. 83% reported satisfaction with campus IT resources, and 92% reported satisfaction with IT support.
- Some faculty are now involved in more structured and expanded student advising through the Academic Advising Center. At the time of last Self-Study, faculty only engaged in student advising during registration. (Staffing of the Academic Advising Center is further discussed in Chapters Six and Nine.)
- In 1995 the number of academic divisions was reduced from five to three, and the position of Department Head was restored. The Department Head position has been the source of some concern. (See Chapter Five for further discussion.)

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

The following issues will be analyzed in more detail: (1) the effects of enrollment increases, including the use of lecturers and adjuncts to maintain and increase capacity; (2) the College’s support of pedagogy, scholarship, and service, including the state of faculty development efforts; and (3) the effectiveness of faculty evaluation. Faculty governance is discussed further in Chapter Four, and the faculty promotion process is taken up in Chapter Six.

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<sup>60</sup> See Chapter Thirteen for further discussion of TOPP.

### *The effects of enrollment increases*

Enrollment increases have been felt by faculty in a number of areas, though perhaps none more directly than class sizes. The class size provisions in the *BCCFA Contract* have remained relatively stable, and currently classes are not to exceed 42 students, with lower limits for labs, nursing clinics, English composition and remedial courses, and remedial mathematics courses. Still, as the overall student population of the College has increased, average class sizes have increased as well. The benefits of these increases must be weighed against the fact that resources—including instructors, room size, and number of desks—are limited. The ability of individual faculty to teach effectively and give feedback to 200+ students, many of who are underprepared and need special attention, is also limited.<sup>61</sup>

As enrollment has increased, so too has the need for faculty office space. Since the 1994-95 Self-Study, there has been a 12% increase in tenure-line faculty. (As noted above, with inclusion of lecturers, the increase in faculty requiring office space has been 20%). While a small number of faculty offices were added with the construction of the Technology Education Center, the College has had to increase the number of faculty per office. 60% of faculty disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “Office space is adequate and appropriated equipped.” It is especially difficult for faculty to meet with students during office hours when they are sharing an office with three—or in some cases, four—other faculty members.

As noted in Chapter Three, the capacity problem extends beyond office space: 63% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “Instructional space is adequate and appropriately equipped.” Of greatest educational concern is the fact that classrooms are often too small for the number of students registered for the course.

The College has relied heavily on the hiring of Lecturers to meet the demands of increasing enrollment. Lecturers are full-time employees, but they are appointed for a one semester period, and may be reappointed for 7 consecutive semesters.<sup>62</sup> Thus, they are “temporary,” in some sense, and are not eligible for tenure. Lecturers are required to teach fifteen credits per semester, and hold four office hours per week. The original rationale for the lecturer position appears to have been (1) to temporarily replace faculty on leave, and (2) to allow the College to meet potentially temporary enrollment surges without having to commit to a tenure-line. However, as the number of lecturers has increased from 28 in 1994, to 48 in Fall 2000, to 76 in Fall 2004 (now 25% of the full-time faculty), it is clear that lecturers are being hired for additional reasons as well. Indeed, the wording in the Board of Trustees’ resolutions concerning the hiring of lecturers changed since the last Self-Study from “replacement for” to “to provide adequate classroom coverage.” This Board resolution and subsequent change in the use of lecturers was based on an agreement reached between the BCCFA and Senate leaders, the President, and the Executive Vice-President.

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<sup>61</sup> The contractual teaching load for full-time faculty is 15 hours per semester, which is 5 classes for many instructors.

<sup>62</sup> They also have no contractual right to reappointment. The contractual guidelines for lecturers are spelled out in Article XVIII of the *BCCFA Contract* ([Exhibit 21](#)).

The much increased use of lecturers has been beneficial to the College in some respects, and is sometimes requested by Department Heads. Increased use of lecturers has, for example, limited the need to hire additional part-time adjunct faculty, with the number of adjunct employees increasing only slightly over the last ten years. From a fiscal perspective, it has helped the College increase the percentage of full-time faculty (tenure-line and other) without the expenses of higher pay and a full benefits package. Lecturers also often bring specializations that complement existing departmental strengths. And, in spite of policy change, some lecturers are still used for replacement—for faculty on extended medical leave, for example. Some Department Heads have also requested additional lecturers when they need to fill a significant number of sections, since adjuncts can teach a maximum of nine hours, and at less than half the salary per course as a lecturer, adjuncts are sometimes harder to hire.

In other respects, though, this trend is worrisome. At the time of the last Self-Study, and under the terms of the *BCCFA Contract*, lecturer lines were either eliminated or replaced with tenure-track line after four semesters, rather than eight. And of those lecturers who had, for various reasons, been at the College for more than four semesters, there was concern about the creation of an “underclass.”<sup>63</sup> With the length of possible service doubled, and the number of lecturers more than doubled, this concern about an underclass must be amplified. Lecturers are no longer entitled to full family health benefits,<sup>64</sup> and although many of them give a good amount of service to the College, including serving as club advisors, they are not eligible for awards such as the President’s Recognition Award. Lecturers are, however, considered members of the General Faculty, but although the terms and conditions of their employment are contained in the *BCCFA Contract*, they do not enjoy faculty voting privileges. Many become integral members of their department over the four years, and their departure can compromise the continuity and quality of their departments and clubs, and negatively impact departmental morale. While their presence may allow the rotation of teaching responsibilities for certain courses and allow a broadening of departmental offerings, their departure can also mean the loss of the special skills they often bring.

In spite of the Board of Trustees’ established goal of maintaining 50-60% of class hours covered by tenured or tenure-track faculty across the academic departments,<sup>65</sup> the use of temporary faculty (full- and part-time) to fulfill the College’s Mission and Vision continues to outweigh the use of tenure-line faculty. In Fall 2003, 55% of total class hours were being taught by all non-tenure track faculty, with 45% being taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty. Although the President has required Fall and Spring reports on class hours from the Academic Vice-President, and enrollment projections are used to anticipate the need to hire full-time faculty, unanticipated enrollment surges are cited as creating a challenge in meeting this established goal. In addition, fiscal constraints of the College have prevented some departments from filling vacancies or creating new positions to accommodate the steady upsurge of students. Despite the continuing gap, Bergen has made the hiring of tenure-track faculty a priority, bringing on 91 new tenure-track faculty in the last 6 hiring cycles, not all of which are replacements.

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<sup>63</sup> 1994-95 *Self-Study*, p. 55.

<sup>64</sup> For those hired after September 1997, only the employee is covered.

<sup>65</sup> Adopted in January 1997—see [Exhibit 42](#).

Other areas of the College are in need of additional positions as well, but the available new funds have been focused on faculty.

Heavy reliance on part-time faculty has also involved chronic challenges. The study group found that a majority of Department Heads report a shortage of adjuncts to fulfill their department needs,<sup>66</sup> and it is not uncommon in some departments to be still hiring faculty on the first day of classes. Some Heads cite non-competitive salaries as a factor, with Bergen's local competitors paying between \$825 and \$900 more per 3-credit course.<sup>67</sup> The Adjunct Faculty Survey revealed that only 13% of adjuncts are motivated to work at Bergen because of the salary, with location and other factors being much more significant in their decision.<sup>68</sup>

In spite of the challenges of covering courses, including the time Coordinators and Heads spend on hiring, the current pool of adjuncts do not appear to be dissatisfied with their employment. Almost 50% of the adjuncts surveyed have taught at Bergen for 6 or more semesters, and 50% intend to apply for a full-time tenure track position. Similarly, a majority were satisfied with orientation, communication with their department and the College, class sizes, technology, and evaluation.

Of greatest concern with last-minute adjunct hiring is the potential effect on overall educational quality. When classes are added late, and there is a need to rapidly hire adjuncts, concerns about teaching effectiveness may become secondary, and the College may hire persons with appropriate academic or work credentials, but little teaching experience and/or little familiarity with the needs of our student population. While 75 to 80% of adjunct instructors are asked to return, it seems likely that ongoing need plays a larger than desirable role in rehiring decisions.

### ***Support of pedagogy, scholarship, and service***

Staying current in one's field and engaging in other forms of professional renewal are both widely acknowledged—and stated in the *BCCFA Contract*—to be factors in maintaining overall faculty effectiveness. When considered collectively, the extent of such engagement must have a considerable impact on the effectiveness of the College, including, most importantly, student learning. As such, all of the governance bodies at the College, but most centrally the administration and the faculty leadership, have a shared responsibility to provide and maintain a robust program of faculty development for both full-time and part-time faculty.

The College now spends well over \$300,000 annually to support the professional development of the faculty (See [Exhibit 43](#) for an annotated listing for AY '04-05.) Almost a third of that amount goes to tuition reimbursement for graduate courses and workshops, and almost half is allocated for departmental travel budgets. The remainder is allocated for things like the Faculty Development budget (now used primarily to supplement conference travel expenses), Center for Instructional Research and Development (CIRD) Grants, released time for external grants management, the

<sup>66</sup> This is most true in departments in Arts and Humanities, and least true of the Business Department.

<sup>67</sup> Hudson and Passaic Community Colleges pay comparable or slightly less; thus Bergen's real competition for adjuncts is the cluster of more local 4-year schools.

<sup>68</sup> 70% indicated that location was most important factor influencing them to adjunct at BCC; 57% cited schedule; and 61% cited academic connection to their discipline.

Princeton Mid-Career Fellowship Program, the New Jersey Community College Consortium's Chairs Academy, and travel for the NISOD Excellence in Teaching Awards. Faculty are also eligible, within contractual guidelines, to apply for sabbatical leaves in order to engage in scholarship, and this requires adjunct replacement costs for those on sabbatical.

In terms of campus-based support for teaching, several initiatives exist. For example, the CIT offers numerous workshops each year for faculty and staff involving the use of technology in the classroom, and TOPP, as mentioned above, is an extensive training program for online faculty. In Spring 2004, the Center for the Study of Intercultural Understanding (CSIU) offered a series of workshops on diversity education, and in Spring 2005 coordinated a Teaching Circle on diversity education.

Campus opportunities to enhance one's general teaching skills, though, are quite limited. A "Partners in Learning" program, in which two members of the faculty observe and critique each other over the course of a semester, has existed for some time. While admirable, the program requires a commitment of time and/or effort that may be prohibitive for some, and serves a limited number of faculty.

Of note, there is no centralized support mechanism for the teaching professionals on campus. Something like this existed at the time of the last Self-Study, and also addressed scholarly growth. For seven years, a part of the faculty development budget was used to fund the comprehensive, faculty-driven Faculty Development Program, administered by the Academic Vice President. The Program involved a multi-faceted approach to encouraging professional growth and scholarship and enhancing the skills necessary to provide effective instruction. Although the Program changed somewhat over time, the standard elements were an annual schedule of workshops and lectures, the allocation of money for faculty travel and projects, and the support of a Faculty Development Resource Center located in the library, which was established by the Program. The Program was coordinated by three elected faculty members who served multi-year terms, and supported by a Faculty Development Advisory Board, also comprised of faculty. A faculty mentoring program was coordinated by the Partners in Learning Coordinator, who sat on the Advisory Board. The program was very much faculty-driven: the Advisory Board selected Coordinators and the faculty elected members to the Board. The Coordinators ran the program (often in consultation with the CIT Coordinator, who for several years sat on the Faculty Development Board), designing programs, producing a newsletter, granting funding for faculty members to attend professional conferences, and assisting the Academic Vice President in planning Faculty Conferences.

The Faculty Development Program was ended three years ago, and while the other forms of support for faculty professional development have continued, the elimination of the program remains the source of much controversy. It is widely acknowledged by both the administration and faculty that the quality and coordination of the program had become a concern. There were also conflicting views, never resolved, about what the program should be concentrating on: scholarly endeavors, personal growth, teaching skills, or some combination thereof. While there were attempts to restart a program, none was successful. At the time of this writing, a new Faculty Professional Development Planning Committee has been charged by the President—in

conjunction with a member of the faculty leadership—with developing a mission and goals for a renewed effort in supporting faculty development.

There are many examples of faculty engaging in scholarly activities: since 2001, the Academic Vice President’s office has been publishing the weekly “Monday Report” newsletter, which typically reports on one or more professor’s current professional project or achievement. Also, a separate listing—“Works and Works in Progress”—appears on the Faculty Homepage. Some faculty have gained national recognition; the Philosophy and Religion program, for example, was recently featured in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. Nevertheless, with regard to the overall maintenance of a climate of academic inquiry and engagement, the study group found that many on the faculty find challenges in engaging in scholarly work or other professional development. In response to the Middle States Faculty Survey statement “I am provided with adequate opportunities for professional development,” 19% strongly agreed, 47% agreed, 17% were neutral, 11% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed. (See [Exhibit 3](#).) This finding must be compared, though, with the findings on the statement “With the current contractual workload, I am able to pursue scholarship and professional development,” to which 7% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, 17% were neutral, 27% disagreed, and 20% strongly disagreed. In response to the statement “I have been supported by the College in my scholarly activities (such as publishing and participation at conferences) financially and/or by being given time away from other duties,” 17% strongly agreed, 37% agreed, 24% were neutral, 12% disagreed, and 9% strongly disagreed.<sup>69</sup> The resulting picture is one in which for many faculty, there is money available to support development activities, and development activities are taking place, but with a fifteen-hour teaching load, there is little time to participate in them. The conundrum for many faculty members is how to reconcile the demands of teaching 15 hours per semester with the suggested attributes of scholarship and service required by the Faculty Contract for reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

An additional finding of concern is that 15% of the full-time faculty have reported having limitations placed on their academic freedom. However, no formal complaints have been made. Since the concept of academic freedom is often misunderstood, the College may need to take further steps to educate the faculty on the rights afforded by academic freedom.

With regard to service, Bergen faculty are expected to make contributions to the College, their relevant Division, and the community. “Suggested attributes” of such service are listed in the Faculty Contract, and include committee work, participation in community activities, including service in research projects for industry and government, leadership in student and faculty extracurricular activities, and the like. Tenure-track faculty report this activity on their annual reappointment forms, and tenured faculty report it in their Annual Record of Activities. Opportunities are plentiful and part of the fabric of college life.

Finally, with respect to interest in pedagogy, a 2003 study done by CSIU (see [Exhibit 44](#)) revealed that of those faculty members who teach Diversity Requirement courses, 83% are interested in learning how to further include diversity themes in their teaching. There is also significant interest in learning strategies for teaching students

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<sup>69</sup> It should be noted that released time is generally not given for scholarship or professional development activities.

with disabilities and special needs (83%), and teaching their discipline in a multicultural classroom (73%). While close to 60% of those who responded said that they did not teach a class that fulfills the College's Diversity Requirement, they also expressed the desire to learn how to include diversity in their teaching (69%) and teach their disciplines in a multicultural classroom (73%). In addition, 82% of this group is very interested in learning strategies for teaching students with disabilities and special needs.

### ***Faculty Evaluation***

Tenure-track and tenured faculty are evaluated on the three criteria used for reappointment, promotion, and tenure: teaching effectiveness, scholarship and professional growth, and service (contributions to the College, division, and community). For the purposes of reappointment, promotion, and tenure, non-teaching faculty within this category—librarians and counselors—are evaluated on their effectiveness in their respective areas of responsibility, rather than teaching effectiveness.<sup>70</sup> Lecturers and adjunct instructors are only evaluated for their teaching effectiveness.

Currently, the teaching effectiveness of all teaching faculty is supposed to be determined by two methods: written student evaluations, and classroom observation.<sup>71</sup> All student evaluations involve the same instrument—the ETS SIR II—and all classroom observations use the same standard form whether a faculty member is tenured or not, adjunct or lecturer. Adjuncts, lecturers, and tenure-track faculty receive student evaluations each semester; tenured faculty receive them every other semester. New adjuncts are supposed to be observed in the classroom their first semester, and then minimally once a year by the Department Head or faculty recruited to help with the large number of adjuncts that need to be observed. Lecturers are observed every semester, as are tenure-track faculty. Student evaluations and observation reports of adjuncts, lecturers, and tenure-track faculty are reviewed by the Department Head and the Dean, as well as the faculty member, and these review meetings are an opportunity to give faculty feedback and advice about their teaching.

The use of student evaluations and the frequency of observations are quite different for tenured faculty. In the current policy, student evaluations are given directly to the faculty member once they have been processed and returned to the College, and although tenured faculty are required to save them for a specified number of years, they cannot be asked to turn them in for administrative review.<sup>72</sup> Officially, according to the procedure policy book that all Deans have, tenured faculty are supposed to be observed in the classroom once every five years, but in reality, even when the faculty member is applying for promotion, this is no longer a standard practice. Some tenured faculty have not been observed in the classroom since the mid-1980s. While it might be prudent to subject non-tenured faculty to a greater level of scrutiny, there is certainly room for more balance and equity in the evaluation process.

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<sup>70</sup> Although the “suggested criteria” for such are not spelled out in the Faculty Contract as they are for teaching effectiveness.

<sup>71</sup> As is noted in Chapter Six, while there is a method for getting feedback from online students, there currently is no agreed upon procedure for “observing” online instruction.

<sup>72</sup> In the future, tenured faculty will be asked to summarize the results of their student evaluations.



Evaluation of professional growth and service for non-tenured faculty occurs through the annual reappointment process, and involves review of a comprehensive reappointment application. For tenured faculty, these attributes are evaluated through a much briefer year-end Record of Activities.

The recognition of the need for a more robust system of faculty evaluation led to the formation of a Faculty Evaluation Task Force comprised of faculty and administrators. The Taskforce was assembled in Fall 1996, and after several years of work, it proposed a new, comprehensive evaluation process for all tenured and tenure-track faculty. The process involved four components: student evaluation, colleague review, self-assessment, and supervisor evaluation. This process would involve yearly evaluations for non-tenured faculty, and a three-year cycle for tenured faculty (including counseling and the library, with different instruments for each). Starting in Fall 1998, the full process was piloted for two years, and it was reported to be cumbersome. In addition, the standardized form for student evaluation of faculty was found difficult to understand.<sup>73</sup> After much discussion in the Faculty Senate during Spring 2001, only one piece of the plan devised by the Faculty Evaluation Task Force—the student evaluation component—was adopted during contract negotiations in the following academic year. Since that time, no more comprehensive evaluation process for faculty has been explored or adopted.

On a final note, the study group observed that in the *BCCFA Contract*, the use of the word ‘suggested’ in “Suggested Attributes” can lead to varied interpretations of what actually constitutes effectiveness in teaching<sup>74</sup>, scholarship and professional growth, and service, and yet these attributes are considered in hiring, evaluation, reappointment, tenure and promotion. (For further discussion, see Chapter Six.)

## SUMMARY

The Bergen faculty are responsible for the development and delivery of effective instruction, counseling, and library services. Committee membership, academic advisement, club advisement, and coordination of co-curricular activities are typical avenues of service, and many faculty are also active scholars and artists. The College devotes considerable resources to the support of professional development activities. The teaching effectiveness of all faculty is measured through student evaluations.

## COMMENDATIONS

1. As chronicled in “The Monday Report” and the “Works and Work in Progress” section of the Faculty Homepage, the faculty is very active in scholarly and artistic endeavors. A number of professors have received national recognition for their work.

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<sup>73</sup> It must be noted that the same is true of the current SIR II form. In addition, some faculty have remarked that the forms are not returned in a timely fashion.

<sup>74</sup> Or, in the case of non-teaching faculty, effectiveness in appropriate areas of responsibility.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. Adjunct salary schedules should be reevaluated and made more competitive with those at local colleges.
2. The College should explore ways to enhance communication and camaraderie between full-time and part-time faculty.
3. Faculty communication issues should be addressed by (1) reformatting the Faculty Homepage, (2) developing written policies and procedures for all faculty processes and functions, and (3) creating an information map indicating where various items might be found. Although email is an acceptable form of communication, print copies of vital documents should be available upon request of faculty.
4. There is a need for serious discussion amongst the administration and faculty regarding the relationship of scholarship and service to the teaching workload.
5. College leaders should explore the finding that some instructors believe they have had limitations placed on their academic freedom.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The current process of faculty evaluation demands considerable attention and should be made more equitable across the faculty ranks.
2. As faculty development undergoes reconsideration, the alignment of the goals of faculty development with the College's Mission should be reviewed.

## Chapter Eleven

# Educational Offerings

Accredited institutions of higher education develop and deliver educational offerings displaying appropriate academic content, rigor, and coherence and identify student learning goals and objectives for their educational offerings. Learning resources, including learning facilities, instructional equipment, library services, and a professional library staff, are available and adequate to support the institution's educational programs. Co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences are planned, coordinated, and assessed as part of the institution's larger student development program.

The General Education and Educational Offerings Study Group reviewed BCC's educational offerings to determine the degree to which they display academic rigor and coherence. The group also determined the extent to which (1) student learning goals and objectives have been identified, (2) programs provide a coherent experience that leads to the desired outcomes, and (3) appropriate resources, including library resources, are available to support these educational offerings.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

#### *Academic Programs*

The College offers 42 transfer programs, which as described in the College Catalog, “include a course of study that corresponds to the freshman and sophomore offerings at most college and universities and are designed primarily for students planning to transfer into a baccalaureate degree program.” There are 23 options offered within the Associate of Arts (AA) degree—14 in Liberal Arts and 9 in Fine and Performing Arts. Within the Associate of Science (AS) degree, there are 7 options in Natural Science or Mathematics, 1 in Engineering Science and 11 in Professional Studies. There are 35 career programs that emphasize professional training. Within the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree there are 10 options in Allied Health, 2 in Art, 5 in Business Administration, 7 in Business Technologies, 3 in Health Services, 4 in Industrial and Design Technologies, 3 in Science and Technology, and a degree in Nursing. There are also 23 One-Year Certificates and 6 Certificates of Achievement offered.<sup>75</sup>

Many new programs have been added in response to increased demand, while a number have been discontinued.<sup>76</sup> Three new programs have been added as options within the Associate in Arts (AA) Liberal Arts degree, while one—the Leisure and Recreation option—was eliminated. Within the Associate in Arts (AA) Fine and Performing Arts degree, four new programs have been added. One option has been

<sup>75</sup> See [Exhibit 45](#) for a complete listing of transfer programs, career programs, certificate programs, and certificates of achievement.

<sup>76</sup> See [Exhibit 45](#) for a list of all programs developed since 1995.

added to the Associate in Science (AS) Natural Sciences or Mathematics degree, while three have been added to the Professional Studies degree. Most of the changes, however, have occurred within the career (AAS) degree programs. A Radiation Therapy program has been added in Allied Health, and two new programs have been added in Business Administration, while Real Estate, Real Estate Management, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Medical Lab Assistant were eliminated. Business Technologies has added four new programs, and it has discontinued Business Computer Programming and Business Computer Programming—Microcomputer. Industrial and Design Technologies eliminated Automotive Technology and Commercial Art (Illustration and Photography Specialization). Science Technology has eliminated Ornamental Horticulture—Horticulture Therapy Technician and has added two new programs.

Eleven new One-Year Certificate Programs are being offered in response to increased demand,<sup>77</sup> while One-Year Certificates in Commercial Arts, Data Entry/Micro-Mini Computer Operations, Desktop Publishing, Media Technology, Real Estate Salesperson, Office Studies, Photography, and Illustration are no longer offered. The College also now offers Certificates of Achievements which, according to the Catalog, “award recognition to students who successfully complete a program of specialized courses in a specific discipline. These courses prepare a student for a specific occupation or job responsibility or encompass a specialized body of knowledge in the arts or sciences.” Certificates of Achievement are offered in six areas: Commercial Music Production, Environmental Technology, Geographic Information Systems, Manufacturing Design, Professional Cooking and Special Imaging for Radiographic Technologists.

Bergen also offers a number of programs to meet the needs of the underprepared student (English Basic Skills, the American Language Program, and Developmental Mathematics) and a wide variety of non-credit offerings. See Chapter 13 for a discussion of these areas.

### ***Library services***

The Sidney Silverman Library is a major resource for information and study, and as such, it plays a significant role in the College’s educational offerings. In support of the curriculum, the library provides access to a wide variety of print, media, and electronic resources for both individual and classroom use, and includes the Media Center.

Significant changes and improvements have occurred in the library since 1995, many involving technology. In 1999, a new integrated library system was installed to provide better management of all internal functions and give users 24-hour access to the library catalog. Electronic reserve (“E-reserve”) was implemented in 2003. The library has increased the number of networked computers and has expanded the number of databases and electronic resources. Remote access with authentication is now available through the Innovative proxy server, and thus the expanded number of electronic resources, including full-text e-books, journals, newspapers and reference materials are all available with 24-hour web access. Two electronic classrooms with a total of 50 workstations for the teaching of library instruction have been added to the library, and six adaptive technology workstations have been added to the reference network. An

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<sup>77</sup> See [Exhibit 45](#) for a list of all certificate programs.

interactive web tutorial for basic library instruction, “Sidney,” was created. As of July 2000, the library reports to the Vice President of Technology and Information Services, rather than the Academic Vice President. The library also restructured its management team for three principal reasons: (1) to provide more efficient management of day-to-day operations, (2) to respond to the growing dependence of the library upon information technologies, and (3) to ensure that all patrons—those who physically come to the library and those who enter its virtual door—have a seamless experience. The three most notable new positions are: (1) Head of Access Services, (2) Assistant Director for Technology and Technical Systems, and (3) Assistant Director for Patron Services. While these are new positions, no additional lines were added to the library; rather, vacant lines were reconfigured.

In addition to these improvements, efforts have been made to assist the underprepared learner. For example, the English Language Resource Center collection was added to the library catalog, and a new collection of ‘easy readers’ for students in the American Language Program and English Basic Skills was also added. The library faculty also partnered with teaching faculty to create and teach a one-credit Information Literacy course, IST-101.

A major library renovation has just begun, and will include a 150 workstation Information Commons. (Please see the Analysis below for further discussion of library services and renovation.)

### ***Other learning resources***

In response to recommendations made in the 1994-95 Self-Study the College has expanded its support programs and services for underprepared and adult learners. Supplemental instruction has greatly expanded, and now includes the English Language Resource Center (ELRC), The Writing Center, and the Tutoring Center. These centers have been brought together under the direction of a single administrator with the creation of the Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center. Most of the services will be housed in a single physical location in the Pitkin Education Center, while the ELRC will remain in Ender Hall, where the need for additional space is better met. All services are free, and open 6 days a week.

There is a great demand for tutoring services, and growth has been significant in the last ten years. Ten years ago there were a handful of tutors serving approximately 500 students annually; now there are over 80 extensively trained peer and professional tutors assisting over 5,000 students in approximately 20,000 visits annually. According to the Middle States Student Survey, 62.6% of student respondents who have used tutoring services rate them as above average. In addition to these services, there is also an Online Writing Lab (OWL), and for several years, the College has contracted with SmartThinking to provide online tutoring services for students in a range of courses. In some cases, tutoring services are available on a 24-hour basis.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to these extensive offerings in supplemental instruction and the above-referenced academic programs in developmental education, the College also provides

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<sup>78</sup> For further description, go to <http://www.bergen.edu/library/learning/tutor/smart>.

offerings and support services for students with disabilities through the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) and the Center for Collegiate Deaf Education. OSS has reorganized and greatly expanded, and is now the largest such office in the state, serving over 2,000 students including blind, deaf and paraplegic students. The College is also one of two New Jersey Regional Centers for Collegiate Deaf Education, and was recently rewarded renewal of status and grant funding for another five years. These offices have developed a version of the “Introduction to College Experience” (ICE) course that addresses the needs of students with disabilities, and in conjunction with the Wellness/Exercise Science program, adapted physical education class for persons with disabilities. Another enhancement that has occurred within the last year is the purchase of three leading types of Adaptive Technology—technology that specifically helps students with disabilities function on PCs. The College installed server versions of JAWS, Kurzweil 1000 and Kurzweil 3000. Now any student with a disability can go to any computer lab, computer classroom, or the library, and is able to use this software. In terms of expanding access for students with disabilities, this was a major step forward.

Finally, labs are also an important learning resource. The number of computer labs has also increased dramatically since the last Self-Study, and free-time computer labs are available for student use. Science labs have added equipment, and new labs have been created as new curricula have been added. Planned expansion to Pitkin Education Center will create space for additional science labs. These will be discussed further in the Analysis below.

### ***The Honors Program***

The Honors Program is a program of academic coursework that exists to serve the College’s most motivated students. Students are eligible for the program if they have received 1100 or higher on the SAT, have a college grade point average of 3.4 or higher, or if they have the recommendation of Bergen faculty member. The program involves taking 4 to 6 honors courses, depending upon degree track, which are generally special sections of the College’s General Education offerings. These sections enroll between 8 and 20 students each, and thus offer a significantly smaller class size than a regular section of the same course. Students who successfully complete the required coursework receive an Honors designation on their transcript. In the past the program experienced low enrollment, and coordination with the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society was weak. However, coordination has improved in recent years, and there have been dramatic enrollment increases: 180 students are now participating, and more sections are being offered.

The Honors Program is overseen by a faculty member on partial released time. The faculty who teach Honors courses are selected by the appropriate Department Head in consultation with the Director, and it is the responsibility of the faculty member teaching the course to select the course content.

Students who graduate with Honors are now guaranteed admission into the Albert Dorman Honors College of the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), with Honors courses taken at Bergen counted toward the number of courses a student needs to graduate with Honors from NJIT. In addition, Bergen Honors graduates are offered \$3,500 NJIT scholarships. Similar programs with two other prominent colleges are in the

final stages of preparation. In recent years Honors graduates have gone on to Columbia, Yale, Harvard, New York University, Rutgers, and Michigan.

The Honors Program is currently being evaluated in accordance with the recently approved Assessment Framework.

### ***Extra- and Co-curricular Experiences***

For discussion and analysis of the College's extra- and co-curricular activities, please see Chapter Nine and the Analysis below.

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

The following issues are analyzed in more detail: (1) whether educational offerings reflect and promote the College's Mission and Core Competencies and provide sufficient breadth and rigor; (2) whether the library resources used to support educational offerings are adequate; (3) whether the library plays an appropriate role in promoting information literacy; (4) whether computer and science labs are adequate; (5) whether policies regarding transfer credit are consistently applied and well communicated; (6) whether programs and courses are sufficiently assessed; and (7) whether extra- and co-curricular experiences are adequately assessed and improved on the basis of assessment.

### ***Reflection and promotion of Mission and Core Competencies; breadth and rigor***

Congruence with the College's Mission, Goals and Core Competencies is addressed through a structured course approval process and ongoing work on course and program learning objectives. All changes involving courses must be evaluated and approved by the Faculty Senate and President, and all additions and deletions of programs must be additionally approved by the Board of Trustees. This past year, the Senate also approved guidelines for "Special Topics" courses so that special opportunities can be taken advantage of while academic standards are maintained.

Effective this past year, new educational offerings and syllabi must list specific student learning objectives. Program goals are stated in program materials (e.g. brochures) and some academic department web sites include program goals. Course learning objectives appear on most of the existing departmental syllabi for courses offered at the College. The Self-Study Survey found that although learning objectives may not be on all syllabi, 89% of students think that syllabi explain "what you will learn in the class" and 85% report that syllabi explain "what you must do to succeed." Many faculty have also developed, or are developing, corresponding assessment criteria for each learning objective. Every program has a core of General Education courses which vary in subject and facilitate common learning, skills, and values. As noted in Chapter Fourteen, the results of the Graduate Follow-Up Survey (2001-2002) indicate that graduates see themselves as improving in many of the core competency skill areas.

Part of the College's Mission is to respond to the "complex needs of those it serves." Student needs vis-à-vis the curriculum are communicated through the counselors who serve on college-wide committees, and through the Graduate Follow-up Survey. New classes have been added, and others have been modified. Online

instruction programs are now available for those who might not be able to take classes on campus. An American Sign Language course, housed in World Languages and Cultures, has been added and approved for General Education, and as noted earlier, adaptive courses in Wellness and Exercise Science have been created for students with disabilities. There are plans for new language courses in Arabic, Chinese, and Hebrew, and additional courses in Korean, Russian and Japanese in order to accommodate increased campus and community interest in these languages. New certificate programs are also being tailored to meet student needs. The administration is supportive of new course development and, accordingly, allows for small classes when appropriate to ensure that students can complete degrees and get the needed specialized offerings. Bergen also continuously works with employers like Stryker Orthopedics to develop customized training. Program Reviews are used to eliminate programs where necessary; for further analysis of this process, see below.

Ease of transfer and success rates at four-year schools can be used as a measure of the strength of the College's courses since other colleges are accepting completion of a course at Bergen in place of their own. Data from the Graduate Follow-Up Surveys from 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 is summarized below:

- For AA and AS graduates – the percentage transferring remained constant at 80% (2000-2002)
- 77-80% of the AA and AS graduates who transferred felt that the preparation for further education they had received at Bergen was good to excellent. (2000-2002).

Articulation agreements can also serve as measure of the confidence that other educational institutions have in the rigor of the courses offered by the College. Since 1982 the College has established active articulation agreements for 41 of its programs with 11 in-state colleges and for 62 of its programs with 18 out-of-state colleges. The College has begun a review of all its articulation agreements in order to determine which are still of value to the students. Currently, 25 of the 41 agreements with in-state colleges have been renewed and 3 more are still in review. Articulation agreements have been renewed with 15 out-of-state colleges and 16 agreements are currently in review. Some articulation agreements have not been renewed because a program was no longer offered, or based on the number of students transferring to these institutions, it was determined that there was not sufficient interest. These statistics, however, indicate that a significant number of programs at the College are sufficiently well respected by other institutions to be accepted in articulation agreements.

Employment history can be used as an indirect measure of the strength of our career AAS programs. The Graduate Follow-Up Surveys reveal that in the AAS degrees, the percentage of graduates who reported being employed fluctuated somewhat but remained consistently high (89% in 2000, 82% in 2001 and 87% in 2002). The percentage who reported that their preparation for employment was good to excellent rose steadily from 77% in 2000 to 79% in 2001 to 83% by 2002. Finally, the percentage of graduates who reported that their job was related to their program of study at Bergen was essentially constant from 2001 (64%) to 2002 (63%).



*Library's support of educational offerings*

The library's collection is substantial: it contains 137,295 books, serial backfiles and other paper materials; 10,159 microforms; 4,922 Electronic Books; 684 periodical subscriptions; 8,938 audio-visual items<sup>79</sup>; and 10,441 online full-text periodical titles.<sup>80</sup> The library collection was most recently reviewed in 2004. The total library staff of 41.5 is comprised of 13 librarians, 4 professional staff members, 17 other staff members, and 7.5 student assistants. Bergen's average total library staff per 1000 students is 4.66, slightly above average when compared with 19 two-year colleges in New Jersey, which is 4.33.<sup>81</sup> The reference desk is covered 80 hours per week, and reference questions can be emailed as well.

The library is open seven days a week during spring and fall semesters, and 86.25 hours per week when classes are in session. Evening hours have been added during spring break at students' request, as have additional evening hours during the final weeks of the semester.

There are 550 library seats for students, including those at computers, open areas, and in the Media Center. The library, including the Media Center, currently houses a total of 72 networked computers, with plans to double that number in the near future. The Media Center houses a variety of media software, 14 networked PC's, 18 public media-viewing stations, and portable equipment for classroom use.

The library takes advantage of a wide variety of electronic resources in order to expand its collection and maximize access. In many cases, the electronic format is preferable, more cost-effective or has substantial value-added features. Careful purchasing decisions and participation in cooperative purchasing agreements have enabled the library to maximize the quality of the collection. The library materials budget has been comparatively healthy despite its being flat for several years. The total library expenditures for FY 2002-2003 exceed the average expenditure per FTE for 19 two-year colleges in New Jersey.<sup>82</sup>

Indicators of the library's appropriate and responsible use include gate counts (which are increasing), circulation counts, in-house usage counts, database hits, reference interviews, a strong demand for print and e-reserves, and a high demand for library instruction classes. The BCC Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy is posted both physically and online. The Self-Study Survey revealed that 61% of students are aware of the policy. Circulation of library materials, including reserves, has increased from 54,598 items checked out during 2001-2002, to 71,293 in 2002-2003, to 81,065 in 2003-2004.

To serve and support students, the library attempts to purchase all required textbooks and place new editions of textbooks on reserve. Access to electronic versions of textbooks is currently being investigated. Efforts have also been made over the last few years to enhance the library's diversity holdings: two Center for Instructional Research and Development (CIRD) Grants have been awarded to the library faculty and

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<sup>79</sup> IPEDS (NCES) 2002 Academic Libraries Survey

<sup>80</sup> Serials Solutions Overlap Analysis, 10/12/04

<sup>81</sup> IPEDS (NCES) 2002 Academic Libraries Survey

<sup>82</sup> IPEDS (NCES) 2002 Academic Libraries Survey—Peer Group Comparison

staff to purchase diversity-oriented materials for the collection. The library provides distance learning support through the library web page, which points students to the online catalog and databases with full-text access to over 10,000 periodicals online. The library also offers special services equipment and workstations, and one professional librarian who is a licensed social worker is designated as the Specialized Services contact.

According to the Self-Study Faculty Survey, 90% of faculty respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the library resources are adequate to support the educational needs of students enrolled in their classes.<sup>83</sup> Student surveys have been used in assessing library services, and many of the concerns expressed by students are explicitly addressed in library renovation plans.<sup>84</sup> However, with the relocation of the Media Center to the second floor, an increase in the number of computers in the library, and anticipated enrollment increases, some believe that additional space will be needed within the supportive library environment.

There is strong collaboration between the library staff and teaching faculty: all college departments have a librarian liaison, and librarians collaborate with teaching faculty in selecting media and electronic resources. Library faculty also do in-class tutorials for discipline-specific reference needs. Faculty input is obtained through a college-wide library committee chaired by the library Director.

The library has also played a significant role in promoting information literacy, and was instrumental in developing a one-credit elective, Introduction to Technological and Information Literacy (IST-101), began in Fall 2002. The course is now primarily taught by library faculty. Enrollment has been low—possibly because of its elective status—but student evaluations of the course have been positive. In Fall 2004 the course was modified to be taught as a partially online in order to better accommodate student schedules.

In addition to teaching IST-101, the library offers classroom bibliographic instruction on all levels upon request of course instructors. Also available are regularly scheduled “drop-in” sessions and tours. Subject bibliographies and pathfinders to guide students in doing research are available in print and online. One-to-one instruction is also provided by librarians at the reference desk. As mentioned earlier, “Sidney,” a modular online tutorial with self-testing capability, can be accessed from the library web page.

According to the Self-Study Survey, 60% of students agree or strongly agree with the statement “The classroom library instruction taught by the librarians helped me to do research.” 67% of students who used the online library instruction tutorial rate it above average. 84% of faculty feel that the library adequately fulfills its role in promoting information literacy, and 78% feel that the library is a collaborative partner in teaching students how to access and evaluate information resources.

In order to evaluate library service, the library conducted a standardized survey, LibQual, in Spring 2005.<sup>85</sup> Campus-wide satisfaction with the library is consistently high.

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<sup>83</sup> 74% of faculty respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that library resources were appropriate to support their professional needs.

<sup>84</sup> These include requests for group study rooms, different seating arrangements for different study activities, increased access to information technology, including wireless access to the library’s Millennium system, and improved lighting.

<sup>85</sup> Results of the LibQual survey have not yet been disseminated.

***Adequacy of computer and science labs***

In the 2003 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory students rated “adequate and accessible computer labs” as a strength. Free-time labs are open Monday through Saturday, and computers are available in the library on Sundays. Policies are in place to ensure that the computer labs are used appropriately. Technology refresh plans ensure that all computer labs are replaced at least once every four years. In most instances, labs are replaced on a three-year cycle. Faculty teaching courses that utilize Macintosh computers set aside free time in instructional Macintosh labs in order to insure student access to the computers outside of class time. A second instructional Macintosh lab was added to Ender Hall in recent years, along with significant expansion of Macintosh computers in other art classrooms in the Pitkin Education Center. There is currently, however, no free-time PC lab facility in Ender Hall, where four renovated, general academic classrooms have been added. With still more classrooms becoming available when Music and Art functions are moved to West Hall, the need for this type of technology support has grown. With larger numbers of students spending time in Ender Hall, both students and faculty have recommended the addition of a PC lab with free-time hours.

Starting in 2002, the College made a commitment to have full-time PC technicians available on campus any time classes are in session, including nights and weekends. Further, the IT department has committed to a 15-minute response time to any classroom emergency. Statistics on response times are routinely kept by the IT department and are reviewed monthly by key administrators to ensure that the service standard is kept.

The study group found, however, that there have been concerns in recent years concerning the capacity, equipment, and utilization of science and Allied Health labs. Most labs can accommodate the current student demand, but lab space will become an issue as programs grow. An extension onto the Pitkin Education Center that will house 6 additional laboratories has been funded, and this will increase capacity and address the problem of dated equipment. Funds have also been allocated for the total renovation of all current science labs. However, even with the additional labs, high demand for science courses makes it necessary to schedule labs almost continuously. This creates a particular problem in disciplines like chemistry, where replenishing used chemicals between classes is difficult.

***Consistency and accessibility of policies regarding transfer credit***

Transfer to Bergen requires the submission of an official college transcript to the transfer evaluator. The policy for transfer of credit is clearly stated in the College Catalog.<sup>86</sup> Students who attended a foreign college are required to send a transcript to an evaluation service such as World Education Services, Inc. The completed course grade must be a “C” or better to be accepted, and the maximum amount transferable into an associate degree program is 45 credits. Transcripts are evaluated according to applicability to the specific program, course content, and credit value. The transfer evaluator’s main objective is to strike a balance by maintaining fairness to each student

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<sup>86</sup> In the 2005-06 Catalog, see p. 17.

without compromising consistency to the educational standards of the programs. This is a time-intensive process, and since a significant proportion of the new students each year are transfers, there is generally a backlog of transcripts to be reviewed.<sup>87</sup> At least one other drawback to this system is the fact that potential applicants are normally not granted an estimate of transfer credits, and this can hinder or delay informed decisions. As enrollment has increased, so has the number of transfer students whose credits from other institutions need evaluation.

### *Sufficiency of program and course assessment*

In addition to the previously mentioned development of course and program learning objectives, educational offerings are formally assessed in a variety of ways.

In terms of student progress, many of the career programs, particularly in Allied Health, have licensure or certification examinations, although not all are required for employment. In addition, the remedial programs (English Basic Skills, Mathematics, and the American Language Program), and some Allied Health programs (Nursing and Dental Hygiene) have exit examinations.

In terms of program assessment, many programs in Allied Health, as well as the Paralegal Studies and Legal Nurse Consultant, report to national accrediting agencies which review the programs (including course sequencing) and in many cases monitor the success rates of the students on national licensing examinations. (See [Exhibit 46](#) for a complete list.)

Bergen's internal program review process is outlined in a systematic college-wide plan that includes an assessment of a program's courses and their sequencing. Although some programs (e.g., English Basic Skills) report successful reviews, the program review process as a whole has been less successful, and there are a number of concerns, including the support given to the review process, the time allotted to perform reviews, the manner in which evaluators are chosen, and the use of the reviews. The study group found that program reviews have not been done consistently across campus. In addition, although the new guidelines for program reviews proposed in 2002 are available on the Faculty Senate Home Page (see [Exhibit 47](#)), it was found that these new guidelines have not been approved by the Faculty Senate, and thus a number of reviews are currently being conducted according to the 1996 guidelines, which had been found to be too cumbersome to be practical.<sup>88</sup>

In light of these ongoing challenges, the Assistant Academic Vice President has been given the responsibility for overseeing the program review process. (See [Exhibit 48](#).)

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<sup>87</sup> In Fall 2004, for example, the Office of Research and Planning reports that 9% of students were new transfers, while new-to-college students made up 23% of the student body.

<sup>88</sup> Lack of Senate approval appears to have been an oversight, and an agreement has been reached that allows programs to use the new guidelines prior to their formal approval.

*Adequacy of assessment of extra- and co-curricular experiences*

Extra-curricular and co-curricular experiences are organized under a series of goal areas identified by the Office of Student Life: academic, social, co-curricular, cultural, and recreational (intramural sports).

To address the educational goal identified by the Office of Student Life—student leadership development—the Office provides leadership programs and mentoring of student government officers and club leaders.

Co-curricular activities are planned by a wide variety of clubs and departments, and include speakers, films, and related group discussions. In many cases, the event is campus-wide; the Wellness Center, for example, coordinates an annual major Health Fair, “Take Back the Night” event, and Great American Smoke Out. There is a rich selection of events every semester. (See Chapter Nine for further discussion.) Cultural activities include celebrations and awareness “weeks” and “months”, such as Black History Month, Native American Week, and Asian History and Heritage Week. (See [Exhibit 39](#) for a complete list.) Faculty interest and participation in these events comes via informal contacts, as well as by formal invitation and through coordination by the Center for the Study of Intercultural Understanding (CSIU), which recently established a Co-curricular Programming Subcommittee. Clubs also play a large role in developing these programs, and faculty are closely involved in club advising. Although the Office of Student Life, and CSIU, are taking steps to better coordinate these experiences, faculty report that there is not enough communication between Student Life and the academic divisions regarding the planning of extra- and co-curricular events. In order to enhance communication, the Director of Student Life recently began to more systematically inform faculty about upcoming events through campus email announcements.

Many of these activities, including club meetings, are scheduled during the “Student Activities Hours,” during which, in the past, no classes were scheduled. Unfortunately, as enrollment has increased, it has become necessary to schedule classes during these time periods as well. In addition, the quantity of events, when combined with these scheduling limitations, means that many activities that have potentially similar audiences are scheduled at the same times. While some see this situation as sign of vibrancy, others feel that there should more careful planning, coordination, and assessment in this area. Some of these programs and events are evaluated via audience questionnaire, but many are not.

With regard to intramural sports, the Self-Study Survey indicates that 6% of full-time and 2% of part-time students participate. 22% of full-time and 14% of part-time students indicate participation in recreational (non-competitive) activities (e.g., use of the swimming pool and fitness center). More study would be needed to determine the efficacy of our intramural and recreational programs, and how students feel they contribute to their overall academic/college experience.

## **SUMMARY**

The College offers a broad array of educational programs that are both congruent with the aims of higher education and responsive to community and local business needs. Assessment is ongoing through both internal and external program reviews. A rich set of

learning resources, many enhanced by the latest technologies, include the Sidney Silverman Library, the Learning Assistance Center, and the Office of Specialized Services. The library is a strong supporter of information literacy and effective information use. Learning objectives are a standard feature of course syllabi, and many programs have intended outcomes with respect to student learning. Finally, an extensive co-curriculum and expanding Honors Program serve to enhance existing educational offerings.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The College's educational offerings and degree programs are well aligned with the Mission, and based on the available indicators, they appear to be sufficiently broad and rigorous. Collaboration with local industry continues to provide career learning opportunities that speak to business and demographic-based needs. Satisfaction surveys of graduates have been consistently positive.
2. The library is well-supported, heavily used, and rated highly by the campus community. All indicators suggest that the library, along with its librarians and staff, amply supports the College's educational offerings, including the teaching of information literacy.
3. The Honors Program has experienced recent enrollment increases and is forging attractive articulation agreements.
4. Supplemental instruction has been greatly expanded. Tutoring services have grown, and the number of hours available per week and the number of tutors for most services meet the current demand. There is also good technological support for tutoring and supplemental instruction.
5. Computer labs are well-equipped and highly rated.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The College should study the co-curricular events and cultural celebrations on campus in order to maximize their impact and ensure efficient use of the resources devoted to them. A system for greater collaboration between Student Life and the academic divisions should be implemented.
2. Given the increase in general purpose classrooms in Ender Hall, the addition of a PC lab with free-time hours should be explored.
3. The College should continue to study whether additional supportive space within the library will be needed in the near future.

## Chapter Twelve

# General Education

Accredited institutions of higher education design their curricula to enhance the intellectual growth of their students. In practical terms, this means that programs of study are constructed such that, in addition to the specific knowledge and skills learned in the transfer and career programs, students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education, including the following essential skills and abilities: oral and written communication; scientific and quantitative reasoning; critical analysis and reasoning; technological competency; and information literacy. A general education will also include the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.

The General Education (GE) and Educational Offerings Study Group examined the role that the GE Program plays at the College and examined how the program advances the College's Mission and Goals. The group reviewed the process by which GE courses are approved, as well as how these courses are designed to enhance students' abilities in the above-mentioned areas. Finally, the group analyzed how the program communicates its requirements and policies to students and faculty, how the Committee on General Education (CGE) performs its functions, and how the GE Program assesses outcomes.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

#### *Philosophy, organization, and scope of the GE Program*

The College's philosophy of general education is succinctly expressed in one of the main criteria for GE course approval:

"A general education course is *general*, i.e., not focused upon "majors" or academic and vocational specializations. Its object is "common learning," based upon those realities, experiences, and concerns which all humans share by virtue of their common participation in "the human situation." It seeks the academic and cultural common ground. Its subject matter is part of what all truly educated people have (and ought to have) in common."<sup>89</sup>

The scope of the College's GE Program is rich and varied, offering students a wide range of courses to choose from. Bergen offers 157 GE courses, up from 135 in 1994, which are divided into six broad areas of study: Communication (3 courses); Humanities (87 courses); Mathematics and Computer Science (13); Natural Sciences (26); Social Sciences (21); Wellness and Exercise Science (7). All degree programs far surpass the

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<sup>89</sup> See [Exhibit 49](#): *Certification of the General Education Status of A BCC Course: Policy And Process*, p. 3.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education’s minimum requirements for GE semester hours.

The GE Program takes the “distribution” approach to GE (rather than the core curriculum approach), wherein students must choose and take a prescribed number of courses in each of these six areas. There are, however, a few required courses: All AA, AS, and AAS students must take courses two courses in Composition, and in most cases Speech Communication is required as well. Some certificate programs also require these classes. Dynamics of Health and Fitness is also a required course for AA, AS, and AAS degrees.

Currently each academic major or “concentration” determines, from the existing list of approved GE courses, the type and number of courses that must be completed by students in the major.<sup>90</sup> The order in which these courses are taken is typically not, however, prescribed, although suggested orders appear in the College Catalog and ECatalog. Programs of study in all degree and certificate programs are organized so that students who follow the suggested orders of GE classes are gaining an appropriate foundation for learning. Foundational GE courses, like Composition and Speech Communication, are encouraged, but not required, to be taken early on.

The program’s current form has been largely shaped by the College’s involvement in two interrelated statewide initiatives: the NJ Council of County Colleges’ Project on General Education, and the NJ Academic Officers Association’s Foundation Agreement regarding the 2-year college GE curricula. From 1991 through 1997, the NJ Council of County Colleges’ Project on General Education developed a set of ten GE Goals and Objectives (see [Exhibit 50](#)), as well as corresponding assessment criteria and sample assessment items, for the GE programs in the state’s two year colleges. The intent was for this common core of GE goals to be recognized by all NJ colleges and universities, and thus to improve 2-year/4-year college transfer articulation. The Project finalized the goals and objectives in 1997, and in 1998, the CGE and the Faculty Senate formally approved a slightly modified version of the Goals and Objectives. The assessment criteria were not approved.

In 1999, the NJ Academic Officers Association issued its “Foundation Agreement” (see [Exhibit 51](#)). The purpose of the agreement is to “provide an efficient path toward an in-state bachelor's degree for New Jersey college students who begin their studies at a community college. Ideally, this means full transfer toward the bachelor's degree of all credits earned in the associate degree program at the community college and the same credit requirements for baccalaureate completion by transfer students as for native students.” (p.1) The agreement adopts the GE goals produced by the Council of County Colleges project and specifies the number and type of GE credits that must be obtained for the articulation agreement to be honored. For Bergen, this involved making three changes to the GE program: (1) introduction of a 6-credit history requirement for some degree programs; (2) adopting a 3-credit Diversity Requirement (see below); and (3) introducing a 0-4 credit Computer Science or Technological Literacy requirement (also discussed below). Although the Foundation Agreement is still in place, the statewide GE project is now officially defunct. Nonetheless, members of some of the participating colleges met in 2004 to discuss issues of common concern and had a second meeting on the Bergen campus in October 2005.

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<sup>90</sup> These recommendations must be approved by the Committee on General Education.



The ten GE goals ([Exhibit 50](#)), related objectives, and assessment criteria are clearly consistent with the College's Mission and Goals. To cite just one example, the Mission Statement asserts that the College provides opportunities for cultural growth, and the ninth GE goal requires students to “analyze the implications or commonalities and differences among culturally diverse peoples.”

Through a review of GE course syllabi, the study group found that GE courses adequately address oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, discipline-appropriate technological capabilities, and information literacy, broadly construed to include critical analysis and reasoning.<sup>91</sup> Some GE classes focus on just one of these goals whereas others address several. For example, all English literature and writing classes address the skills of communication, information literacy, and critical thinking. Classes in mathematics and the sciences address scientific and quantitative reasoning. The CGE has determined through survey that technological literacy is addressed in many GE courses, though it had also coordinated the development of a one credit, non-required course, IST-101: Introduction to Technological and Information Literacy (TIL), introduced in Fall 2002, and oversaw the creation of TIL-intensive sections of existing GE courses, such as Composition and Speech Communication.<sup>92</sup>

### *The study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives*

Effective July 1, 2000, all students enrolled in AA or AS programs must meet a diversity requirement which requires students to “take and pass at least one course in gender studies, non-western history or thought, and/or cultural diversity.” Students enrolled in AAS programs are encouraged, though not required, to meet the diversity requirement. Because of the numerous and very specific requirements of these programs, students cannot always fit a diversity course into their schedules. Students enrolled in Certificate and Certificate of Achievement programs are also not required to meet the diversity requirement; this is because of the limited scope of these programs.

The diversity requirement was adopted in conformity with the NJ Foundation Agreement. A number of existing GE courses satisfied the requirement,<sup>93</sup> and thus the creation and assessment of “diversity classes” is overseen by the CGE. Only GE courses can be diversity courses. Diversity courses can be found on the list of GE courses in the Course Catalog and class registration booklet.

The ninth GE Goal, “Diversity and Global Perspective,” could serve both as a means for identifying diversity courses and as a guide for developing learning objectives of diversity courses. At present, however, there is no defined process for the designation of a diversity course, and although a high percentage of faculty include learning objectives on their diversity course syllabi, there is no review process in place to evaluate these objectives for appropriateness. For further discussion, see the Analysis below.

The third GE Goal, “Ethical Perspective,” states that “Students will recognize, analyze, and assess ethical issues and situations.” At Bergen, these skills are taught and exercised through direct and indirect discussions of issues, informal and formal involvement between student and faculty, and examinations, essays, and assignments.

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<sup>91</sup> In some cases this was inferred from course content.

<sup>92</sup> See Chapter Eleven for further discussion.

<sup>93</sup> And others were developed for this purpose.

### ***Relationship of GE Goals to the Core Competencies***

In Spring 2003, the Faculty Senate approved a set of nine “Core Competencies.” (See [Exhibit 52](#).) These competencies were developed by the Assessment Team (discussed further in Chapter Fourteen), and were part of a college-wide plan to assess student learning outcomes. Part of the team’s task was to identify a set of institutional learning goals that could serve as an umbrella for the many more specific learning objectives of Bergen courses. It considered using the ten GE Goals for this purpose, but ultimately decided that they would not be suitable: the set of institutional goals would need to be broad enough to subsume the learning objectives of *every* course taught at the College, GE or not, and a number of disciplines (e.g., Business, Nursing) have courses whose learning objectives do not fit under any of the GE goals.

The Core Competencies were designed to serve as guidelines for the development of learning objectives at the course and program levels, and can be described as “an outgrowth” of the GE goals. This characterization makes sense insofar as most of the Core Competencies are either identical with or closely resemble GE Goals (e.g., Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, and Critical Thinking.) Even where there is no strong resemblance, it is still the case that each of the GE Goals can be subsumed under one or more of the Core Competencies, and that is precisely what is needed for the two sets of goals to be compatible.

There is one finding of note on Critical Thinking: the Self-Study Survey asked faculty which of the Core Competencies they address in their courses, and asked students which of the Core Competencies have been addressed in the courses they have completed. There was a wide divergence of opinion about the extent to which Critical Thinking is addressed: 84% of faculty reported that they address it, whereas 57% of students felt that this competency was addressed in their courses. (See [Exhibits 3 and 53](#) to compare responses on all of the Competencies.)

### ***The Committee on General Education***

Created in 1982, the CGE is a Presidential Committee, not a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. Although the CGE Chair reports directly to the President, who also appoints the Chair, the CGE has historically sought Senate approval on all major decisions and policy changes. Members of the CGE are chosen by the Chair in consultation with Department Heads, Deans, and the President. There are no term limits for either the CGE Chair or members. The role of the CGE is to: monitor and manage the GE program; approve new GE courses; determine policies and guidelines for such approval; assure compliance with statewide requirements; participate in statewide GE efforts; and articulate with four-year college GE programs.

The CGE Chair oversees and coordinates the work of the committee and receives released time to perform these duties. Subcommittees and task forces are formed for special, more labor-intensive projects. A student representative is appointed from both Phi Theta Kappa (the academic honor society for 2-year colleges) and the Student Government Council. There is presently no formal assessment of this committee, though the CGE Chair submits an annual report and meeting minutes to the administration.

Two years ago, the CGE Chair created a webpage for the GE Program that contains key documents and meeting minutes from 1996 to the present. This webpage is discussed further in the Analysis.

### *Assessment of GE learning outcomes*

In general, GE courses are designed to ensure that students are proficient in one of more of the 10 GE goals, and assessment is done locally through the use of conventional diagnostic tools: exams, written assignments, laboratory assignments, and field experiences. The College has also monitored graduates' perceived improvements in these areas through an annual Graduate Follow-up Survey conducted by the Office of Research and Planning. This survey asks alumni to compare their expectations for improvement with their perceptions of their actual improvement in ten skill areas, seven of which are identical to, or resemble, the GE goals. In general, these surveys indicate that students' expectations for improvement were exceeded in most of the skill areas.

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

The following subjects are given further analysis below: (1) The GE course approval process, and (2) accessibility of information about the GE Program and courses.

### *The GE course approval process*

Until 2004-05, course approvals by the CGE had been based on two criteria: (1) potential transferability as a GE course, and (2) the course's alignment with the philosophy and the goals of the College's GE program. While these two criteria had been given equal weight, specific criteria for being a GE course had not been fully articulated. Accordingly, the CGE worked through Fall 2004 to create a more explicit set of standards for qualification as a GE course; the new approval process and criteria were approved by the CGE and Faculty Senate in December 2004. While high transferability as a GE course will still be an important consideration, the College's own new definition of GE will also figure prominently in the process. (See [Exhibit 49](#) for the new criteria and approval process.) In the old system, proposed courses were evaluated for transferability before the CGE evaluated them; in the new system, the CGE will first determine whether the course conforms to the bulk of the College's new GE criteria, and then it will be submitted to "NJ Transfer," an online system for establishing the transferability of courses. Final decisions about the course by the CGE will take into account its transferability as determined on NJ Transfer. Starting in January 2006, existing GE classes are being reviewed and re-evaluated to determine adherence to new standards. The new process will not alter the way in which courses are initially chosen for candidacy as GE courses. In order for a course to have GE status, a proposal requesting such status must be submitted to the CGE by the faculty of the relevant discipline. Pre-approval by the relevant Head or Coordinator, as well as the divisional Dean, is required.

One source of concern is that some Bergen courses that are ostensibly GE in nature do not have GE status. Thus a student who wishes to take these courses for their intrinsic merits cannot simultaneously satisfy a distribution requirement, as can be done

with a designated GE course. This situation not only gives the student a disincentive to take such courses, but it also does not acknowledge the “general education” that is happening while the courses are being taken. The following example vividly illustrates how this can be problematic. SPE-114: Intercultural Communication, which would seem to be an excellent candidate for satisfying the College’s Diversity Requirement, is not a GE course, and thus cannot be used to satisfy the requirement. However, since individual disciplines must initiate the application for course approval, the CGE is limited in its ability to address this situation.

Until recently there were no formal criteria for a GE course to qualify as a diversity course. To address this, a subcommittee of the CGE, including representatives of CSIU, was charged with studying the Diversity Requirement and making recommendations for improvement. A new set of criteria were approved in December 2005.

### *Accessibility of information about the GE Program and courses*

The study group found that certain kinds of GE information is optimally available to students and faculty, but that some important items are also comparatively difficult to locate, particularly for students. Information about GE course requirements is readily available from a variety of sources: the College Catalog, the ECatalog, the Registration Booklet, and counselors and advisors. The Self-Study Student Survey revealed that 70% of students are either very familiar or somewhat familiar with GE course requirements.

Students are also made aware of the GE courses approved or suggested for their declared majors in the College Catalog and ECatalog.

Information about the purpose and goals of the GE program is much less accessible to students. While the ten GE goals and philosophy are linked to the GE webpage and appear in the Faculty Handbook, they are less accessible for students and staff due to their location and content.<sup>94</sup> It should be noted that the information on the GE webpage was designed for faculty and does an effective job of informing faculty about the goals of the GE program. The philosophy of the program and the GE goals do not appear, and are not mentioned, in the College Catalog, the Registration Booklet, or the Student Handbook. There is also currently no explanation available to students about the relationship between required GE courses and their academic majors, or about how the GE goals are connected to their experience in the classroom. Further, while learning objectives do appear on some GE course syllabi, and at times resemble the official GE goals, the inclusion of these on syllabi is inconsistent.

## **SUMMARY**

Bergen’s GE Program includes 157 courses from six broad areas of study. Ten GE Goals focus on such areas as communication, critical thinking, health and well-being, society and human behavior, information literacy, ethical perspective, and diversity and global perspective. GE courses are designed to ensure that students are proficient in one or more of the 10 GE goals, and assessment is done through the use of local diagnostic tools. GE

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<sup>94</sup> The GE webpage is only linked to the Faculty Homepage. Almost 90% of the full-time faculty reported familiarity with the GE requirements.

requirements are clearly described in the College Catalog and other publications, and a GE website contains related GE resources.

### **COMMENDATIONS**

1. The GE website has a wealth of information, including clearly defined GE goals and assessment criteria.
2. The CGE has taken steps to substantially improve the process by which new GE courses are approved and is planning to review existing classes to ensure they meet the new standards. This process will enable an inventory of GE Goals and learning objectives across the GE program.
3. The self-reports in the Graduate Follow-up indicate that students' expectations for improvement in many of the GE goal areas are met.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The College should take steps to better inform students about the purpose and goals of the GE program.
2. The GE program should undergo a review that examines the entire scope of GE offerings. A comprehensive review of GE courses vis-à-vis GE goals should be done, and this review should inform future GE curricular changes.
3. The College should ensure that a substantive procedure for the designation of diversity courses is implemented and disseminated to the faculty.
4. The College should consider requiring (rather than recommending) that certain GE courses be taken at certain times in degree programs so that these courses act as a foundation for learning.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. GE learning outcomes should be assessed within the College's overall plan for assessing student learning, and assessment data should be used for curricular improvement.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

# **Related Educational Activities**

An accredited institution accepts responsibility for all activities conducted in its name or under its sponsorship, including those programs and activities defined by their particular content, focus, location, or mode of delivery. At Bergen Community College the following courses and programs are offered in addition to its regular credit offerings: English Basic Skills, Developmental Mathematics, and American Language (ESL); Non-credit courses through the Division of Continuing Education, the Institute for Learning in Retirement, and the Philip Ciarco Jr. Learning Center; and online credit-bearing courses through the academic departments.

The Related Educational Activities Study Group determined the extent to which the College's Basic Skills, ESL, Certificate, Non-Credit, and Distance Learning programs meet appropriate standards and are consistent with the College's Mission.

### **BASIC SKILLS**

#### Organization and Scope of Programs

Basic skills courses do not carry academic degree credit. American Language Program (ALP) courses are also pre-academic and generally must be completed before credit-bearing courses may be attempted. English Basic Skills courses must be enrolled in continuously from the first semester until the requirement is satisfied. Until recently, students were advised, but not required, to begin their developmental Mathematics or elementary algebra requirements in their first semester. In April 2004, the Faculty Senate approved a proposal from the Mathematics and Computer Science Department on developmental mathematics sequencing. The proposal will require students to begin their developmental mathematics requirements with their 16<sup>th</sup> college credit, and once begun, be completed in sequential semesters. Implementation of the proposal is being phased in by degree, and will be required first for AS degrees (in 2006), and then later for AA and AAS degrees. Non-degree seeking students may take up to 11 credits before they must take the placement test in English and Mathematics.

There are two levels of English Basic Skills. In addition, there is Directed Studies in Writing, which is required of students who test into English Composition I with low placement test scores. Separate sections of EBS classes are now designated for U.S.-high school educated language minority students, and curricula have been designed to take into account their second language learning needs. Some college-level courses require completion of EBS as a prerequisite, but many do not.

The American Language Program (ALP) offers four levels of instruction. Each level has four components: six credit hours of grammar, three credits hours each of reading, writing, and speaking/listening. Students in the ALP cannot take college-level courses until they have successfully completed all levels of the program and have passed

required exit examinations. However, students are permitted to take college courses if they have passed most of the final level of the program and if they need additional credits to be full-time students.

Based on the mathematics portion of the placement test, students may be placed in Basic Mathematics and/or Algebra. Intermediate Algebra may be required of students who intend to enroll in the Calculus sequence. The Academic Intervention and Monitoring System (AIMS)<sup>95</sup> and Learning Disabled sections have a support class linked to the regular mathematics class. Since fall 2002, unlinked sections of support classes have been available to the general student population. According to the Mathematics and Computer Science Department, for these sections of support 43% of the students have enrolled voluntarily, while 57% of the students were required because of having attempted the developmental mathematics course at least twice. Developmental mathematics courses were changed since the last Self-Study from partially self-paced (successful completion of the course could extend beyond a given semester) to mastery learning (course must be passed in the same semester student registers in it).

One finding about the basic skills programs that demands considerable attention is the size of developmental mathematics classes. The state-wide community college average for developmental math classes is 24, but at Bergen, developmental mathematics and elementary algebra classes are capped at 35.<sup>96</sup> Grade distributions for the Spring 2004 semester indicate that fewer than half of the students in developmental math<sup>97</sup> passed the courses (See Exhibits 54 and 55.) Many instructors believe that there is a link between these success rates and class sizes. There is also a disparity with the remedial English courses at Bergen: the ALP and EBS class size is limited to 22 students. Grade distributions for the Spring 2004 semester indicate that, by contrast, more than 70% of EBS<sup>98</sup> students passed. While capacity and resources are limited, a reduction in developmental math class sizes seems warranted.

Another finding of note is that both the number and percentage of students enrolling in basic skills classes has increased as shown:

<b>Remedial enrollment, unduplicated headcount</b>			
<b>AY 1994 and AY 2004</b>			
	Fall 1993/ Spring 1994	Fall 2003/ Spring 2004	% change
<b>ALP</b>	1285	1603	24.7%
<b>EBS</b>	2426	2984	23.0%
<b>MAT</b>	4665	5323	14.1%

Over the same 10 year period, Fall headcount increased from 12,854 in Fall 1993 to 13,991 in Fall 2003, a change of 8.8%. There is a large group of US-high school

<sup>95</sup> The AIMS program is designed for students who are most at risk in a college environment because of their deficiencies in reading, writing, critical thinking, and mathematics.

<sup>96</sup> With the exception of AIMS sections, which are capped at 18.

<sup>97</sup> For this study, the following courses were included in remedial Mathematics: MAT-011, MAT-031, MAT-032, MAT-035

<sup>98</sup> For this study, the following courses were included in English Basic Skills: EBS-014, EBS-015, EBS-016, EBS-017, EBS-023, EBS-024

educated language minority students whose placement test results indicate the need for remedial instruction in English and mathematics. In addition, according to OSS, Bergen is serving the largest number of students with disabilities in the state (2,001 students), and 99% of them test into remedial programs.

#### Computerized placement testing

In the summer of 2002, computerized placement testing for English and mathematics replaced paper and pencil testing of incoming students. A pilot study was initiated which would enable the transition from the New Jersey Collegiate Basic Skills Placement Test (NJCBSPT) to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Accuplacer Test. Benchmarks were established by comparing individual student performance on both the traditional and the computerized placement test. Since October 2003, all English and mathematics placement testing has been done online in a computer lab set up on campus for testing.

In a second phase of implementation of computerized placement testing, the process of changing the format for ALP testing was initiated in the fall 2003 semester. ALP faculty evaluated, piloted and adopted the ETS Accuplacer-Levels of English Proficiency (LOEP). The transition from the paper-based Comprehensive English Language Test (CELT) was achieved in the fall 2004.

Placement criteria were converted from the NJCBSPT to Accuplacer using translation tables where available. Accuplacer-LOEP ranges were used in the absence of equivalency for CELT. Benchmarks for EBS are consistent with those originally established by the NJ Department of Higher Education through research conducted by the NJ Basic Skills Council.<sup>99</sup> Placement in ALP is based on a holistic score drawn from three of the four parts of the LOEP: Language Arts, Reading Skills, and ESL Writeplacer. Scores on the LOEP listening test are used for placement in the speaking /listening component of the ALP.

Uniform challenge testing policies and procedures exist for the three basic skills areas. Students may choose to retest up until the first day of classes. In EBS and ALP, new students may be referred for challenge testing by classroom instructors based on the outcome of placement reassessment tests. Data show that approximately 50% of students taking the mathematics challenge test prior to the beginning of classes receive a higher placement, whereas EBS the placement reassignment rate is much lower, approximately 15%.<sup>100</sup>

#### Staffing and Pedagogy

Program coordinators oversee the basic skills programs. They are supervised by the Department Head and are responsible for coordinating activities among the faculty and implementing policies and procedures related to their areas. Coordinators are members of the faculty who receive a stipend and perform their duties during non-teaching hours. The ALP coordinator is assisted by sub-coordinators, who are responsible for the specific levels in the program.

A variety of pedagogical approaches drawn from recent scholarship in the field of developmental education and classroom research are used in EBS courses including:

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<sup>99</sup> The NJ Department of Higher Education was formally closed in June 1995.

<sup>100</sup> This information was obtained from the Testing Office.



modular, mastery-based, multi-theme approaches utilizing textbook readers and workbooks; whole book, single-theme approach, Web-enhanced instruction, and technology and lab components. Additionally, the ALP program employs communicative or task-based skills integration requiring language production. Materials to support all of these techniques are collected on the English Department Resource Envelope (EDRE)<sup>101</sup>, a nationally-recognized collection of support materials. EDRE is linked to the Faculty Homepage, and contains course materials, student and teacher resources, and useful links.

### Evaluation

According to the Middle States Faculty Survey, instructors who have taught in EBS and ALP have a positive perception of the programs. 90% of respondents who have taught EBS reported that remedial courses in their area meet the needs of the students “very well” or “fairly well”. The results for ALP were slightly higher, with 92% positive responses. For developmental mathematics, the responses were slightly lower. 80% indicated the courses were meeting the needs of the students “very well” or “fairly well”, while 13% responded “not very well”, and 7% responded “not well at all”. (For the other remedial programs, 0% responded “not very well at all”). Respondents to the Graduate Follow-up Survey rated the quality of developmental English instruction and developmental mathematics instruction as 3.8 and 3.7, respectively, on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being “excellent.”

### Related Support Services

Several different areas of the College offer programs and services for underprepared students to strengthen their academic skills. Tutoring is available through the Edith and Henry Cerullo Learning Assistance Center, which includes the English Language Resource Center (ELRC), the Writing Center, and the TALL/Mathematics Lab. The “Introduction to the College Experience” course is a first-year course, and the Counseling Center also offers academic success workshops. The Office of Specialized Services (OSS) supports students with disabilities, the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) serves low income students who lack adequate academic preparation, and as described above, the AIMS is designed for students who are most at risk because of their academic deficiencies. Improved articulation of instructional support services with basic skills programs has been achieved by increased faculty involvement in the activities of the learning centers. Members of the faculty are given released time to work in the learning centers, training and evaluating tutors and acting as liaisons between learning centers staff and the faculty. The Academic Advisement Center also offers workshops for new basic skills students conducted by counselors and faculty to assist in registration and orientation.

### Effectiveness of student support services

The curriculum of ICE, formerly Freshman Seminar, has been redesigned and the number of sections offered has increased from 13 (2000-01) to 39 (2003-04). Students on academic probation are required to be enrolled in ICE. Student Success Workshops (Mathematics Anxiety, Study Skills, Test Taking, and Time Management) offered by the

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<sup>101</sup> Formerly ALPRE (American Language Program Resource Envelope), the site was recently expanded to include EBS and other departmental materials as well.

Counseling Center are tied into and provide support for ICE. Attendance has increased from 190 (1999-2000) to 489 (2003-04).

OSS offers a complete and comprehensive array of support services on a case-by-case basis, allowing students the opportunity to access information and develop independence. The Learning Assistance Center is accessible to all students and employs a staff person as liaison with OSS. Academic and personal counseling are available, as is access to a state-of-the-art adaptive technology lab. As noted in Chapter Eleven, adaptive technology is now available across the entire campus. After meeting with the OSS staff, individual accommodations are provided each semester for each student with documented disabilities.

EOF, funded by the state of New Jersey, assists capable and motivated low income students who lack adequate academic preparation. This program provides students with biweekly tutoring in the Learning Assistance Center in remedial English and mathematics, and tutoring for EOF students interested in entering the Nursing Program. In the past two years, EOF personnel created a mentoring program for male African-American students in order to increase their retention.

Created in 1987, AIMS provides intensive remedial instruction in their first semester to students whose placement scores are within the bottom 5% of students entering the College. The program is comprised of designated sections of EBS and developmental mathematics (with small class size), a basic communication course designed for this program, and ICE. Of the AIMS students beginning in the fall of 1998, 1999, or 2000, 51% completed the program and enrolled in English Composition I (WRT 101) by fall 2001. The AIMS Study 2002 reports that of these, 86% passed WRT 101 and returned the following spring. (See [Exhibit 56](#).)

The Learning Assistance Center is the major source of supplemental support for EBS and developmental mathematics. The Center provides an average of 2,400 hours of tutoring in Developmental Mathematics to approximately 575 students per semester, and an average of 500 hours in English Basic Skills to approximately 175 students. Tutorial support is provided by peer and professional staff assisted by faculty members on released time assignments (as previously noted). ELRC provides support for students in the American Language Program. In the Self-Study Student Survey, 64% of the respondents who use these services reported that the Learning Assistance Center and the ELRC were above average at meeting their needs as students.

## **NON-CREDIT OFFERINGS**

*(The Division of Continuing Education, the Ciarco Learning Center,  
and the Institute for Learning in Retirement)*

### Philosophy, organization, and scope of offerings

Non-credit continuing education is an integral part of the College, and functions as an incubator for testing new programs, new marketing strategies and new delivery systems which are frequently institutionalized by the college community. In addition, continuing education has the ability to respond quickly to the educational and training needs of an increasingly diverse society.

The Division of Continuing Education (DCE) offers non-credit courses in a wide variety of subject areas. Many courses respond to the needs of working individuals looking to advance in their current careers as well as those looking to change careers. The BCC Factbook reports that the DCE has grown in size and scope of offerings; 9,300 students are now served by the non-credit areas. The offices have been relocated to the new Technology Education Center, and the Center for Business and Industry as well as the Moses Family Meeting and Training Center have been established and incorporated into the DCE. Courses for children and young adults have been added, including a summer enrichment program and test preparation. The DCE has grown to include a partnership with New Jersey City University to offer non-credit certification and graduate degree credit toward a Master of Arts in Teaching. Students can now conveniently register and pay for courses online. The Center for Business and Industry, which operates under the auspices of DCE, provides customized and corporate training programs to the business sector. Economic development efforts are a vital value-added function which provides the community with a full service college.

The on-site corporate training offered by the Ciarco Learning Center (CLC) is primarily ESL and ABE (Adult Basic Education). Some workforce development is offered at the CLC. Some are part of the DCE offerings and some are part of CLC grant-supported offerings. Formerly called the Bergen Community College Adult Learning Center, the CLC was relocated to a new facility and renamed the Philip Ciarco Jr. Learning Center in 1999.

The Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) was established in 1999, and as a non-residential Elderhostel program, offers a variety of courses for adults 55 years and older. Last year over 800 seniors were served by the ILR.

Each area has its own catalog of course listings and web pages to reach potential students. Special events such as Open Houses and Information Sessions warrant additional advertising in Bergen County's chief news publication, *The Record*.

### Course and program development

Non-credit courses and programs are developed by the staff of the three areas to meet the needs of the community and address current market trends. The offerings of the non-credit areas are thus consistent with the College's mission to "provide high quality, relevant and varied educational programs and opportunities for the intellectual, cultural and personal growth of all members of its community."

New non-credit courses are approved by the Director or Dean of the area. (ILR courses are approved by the ILR Advisory Council President.) All new non-credit courses are classified as either fundable or non-fundable, and those deemed to be fundable are submitted on an annual basis to the New Jersey Council of County Colleges for review and approval for state funding.

The DCE has approximately 100 online course offerings made available by the vendor, "Ed2Go." Most courses are designed either to meet career pathway opportunities and/or to provide professional certifications. Many courses that offer professional Continuing Education Units to maintain licensure are developed in conjunction with the College's academic division and state licensure bureaus. The ILR conducts surveys to ascertain the types of courses and topics the senior population desires.

The non-credit areas are mandated to generate revenue sufficient to cover instructor salaries and all direct costs. Occasionally, the CLC offers courses that are sponsored by a grant and offered to the public at no cost. Most courses are priced according to NJ state guidelines, competitor market analysis, and consumer demand.

Workforce development and corporate training are provided by both DCE and CLC. While in some respects this may be a strength, in practice it sometimes results in internal competition and external confusion regarding which area of the College is offering the customized training proposal or product.

#### Connections with credit offerings

Connections between credit and non-credit offerings vary. ESL and literacy programs offered at CLC are independent of the ALP and EBS programs.<sup>102</sup> Long-standing partnerships exist between the DCE and credit-bearing Allied Health programs and Nursing. Students graduating from many AAS Allied Health programs take non-credit test preparation courses, refresher courses and professional development courses, which are only offered through DCE. Another partnership exists in Early Childhood Education; upon completion of the 120 hour non-credit Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate program and national CDA credential, students can matriculate into the Early Childhood degree program with nine credits toward the AAS degree. A new partnership between DCE and the Division of Business, Mathematics and Social Sciences has resulted in co-marketing of credit and non-credit coursework in PC Technician Training, thereby allowing students to take this program for credit toward an associate degree or for non-credit, which could lead to certification. The Criminal Justice program and the DCE jointly offer non-credit courses to the professional and lay community-at-large.

#### Evaluation

At the completion of each non-credit course, students fill out an evaluation form which shows the students' perception of the extent to which the course objectives have been met and whether the students perceive that the course has been a valuable learning experience. Recently, a process has been developed whereby all courses which meet for 15 hours or greater have a generic course syllabus on record. This syllabus documents course objectives as well as learning outcomes and assessment measures. Additionally, at the CLC students in the Basic Skills, Academic Skills and GED classes take standardized post-tests.

#### Staffing and Room Assignments

Operational staffing for non-credit areas include the administrator (Dean in CLC and ILR; Director in DCE) and full- and part-time professional and support staff. Each area handles its own registration. The DCE employs part time instructors who are subject

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<sup>102</sup> It should be noted that the ESL courses at CLC are very elementary; most of the students in these courses do not have a high school diploma and, therefore, cannot register for ALP courses on the main campus.

experts with expertise in adult learning methodologies. CLC has full- and part- time instructors. IRL uses volunteer instructors only, many of whom are current BCC faculty or retired teachers from the community. In addition, two academic counselors are assigned from the main campus to the CLC during the academic year.

While DCE has some classrooms specifically designated for its use, the remainder are assigned to DCE after all credit course room allocations are complete, sometimes only days prior to the start of the class.

#### Non-Credit Certificate Programs

Only the DCE offers non-credit certificate programs. They follow the Division's usual design, approval, review and assessment procedures. Some of the programs define the order in which courses must be taken. Others consist of courses that can be taken in any order during the Spring, Summer and Fall semesters.

#### Contractual Relationships

In the non-credit areas, many contractual and consortial relationships exist with both internal and external constituencies. For example, the College houses Bergen County's Small Business Development Center. The Center works in unison with the DCE to offer many non-credit programs and events. The College also belongs to the College Consortium for International Studies to provide study abroad opportunities for students in credit-bearing programs. These relationships are developed and evaluated by the administrators in each area. The Academic Vice President as well as the attorney for the College Board of Trustees reviews the terms and conditions of external contracts. Other contractual relationships are discussed in the Distance Learning section of this chapter.

## **DISTANCE LEARNING**

The Bergen Community College *Report on Institutional Change: Distance Learning* submitted to the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Higher Education in May 2000 details the development, beginning in 1998, of online education at Bergen. Implementation of the program has been vigorous and successful. The number of instructors involved and number of online courses has grown significantly since 1998, when two professors taught online courses. There are now 72 online instructors. The number of students taking online courses is continually increasing,<sup>103</sup> and departments and disciplines are constantly striving to meet the student demand by increasing the number of sections offered online. The College has continually upgraded the infrastructure and provided staff and technical assistance to support growth in distance education.

#### Scope and organization

Bergen offers online courses in 27 academic disciplines. The vast majority of the courses have been developed by college faculty and are taught on the WebCT platform. There are a small number of courses in which the instructor uses a website developed by

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<sup>103</sup> See the data below in "Evaluation and Outcomes" for the number of courses offered and students enrolled.

a publisher and not WebCT-based. Courses taught via video-conferencing are also utilized in two Allied Health programs in consortial arrangements with other colleges, and are run from state-of-the-art facilities on campus. Additionally, the College has undertaken a pilot project to develop hybrid courses in which part of the course is held in a traditional face-to-face classroom and part is conducted online using WebCT. Finally, the College supports the development and delivery of web-enhanced courses in which the course meets in a traditional on-campus setting but makes use of varied online resources.

A result of the growth in the Distance Learning program is that some degrees can now be completed online. Currently, students can fulfill all of their General Education requirements online, and in addition, they can fulfill all of the degree requirements for three degree programs, including ten options and one certificate program. These programs are identical to the conventional degree programs; the courses include the same learning outcomes and degree of academic rigor. There is every indication that students who intend to complete these degrees online will be able to do so.

### Rationale

Offerings via distance learning enable the College to act consistently with its Mission to take a leadership role in serving the varied needs of a diverse student population. Online course offerings enable students to complete their General Education requirements and take a variety of electives that can be applied toward various degree programs. The College's distance learning courses are accepted by the four-year institutions to which our students apply, and they serve as a cornerstone of a recently finalized articulation agreement between Bergen Community College and Thomas Edison State College. In addition, these asynchronous courses with flexible formats enable adult students to "enhance their personal and professional growth through lifelong learning," a key part of the Bergen Mission, by allowing them to take courses that fit conveniently into their busy family and professional lifestyles. The Office of Distance Learning reports that the typical Bergen online student is female, 21-30 years old, lives in Bergen County and takes one to two online courses in a given semester. She is typically a part-time student and takes on-campus and online courses.

### Course Development

Online credit courses are completely under the control of the traditional institutional course creators: faculty members, institutional committees and administrators. The courses are not outsourced, and they must meet all institutional criteria for quality that the non-distance learning versions of the same courses meet, including having an explicit set of student learning objectives.

### Evaluation and Outcomes

The same model of student evaluation of on-campus courses, modified as appropriate for online, has been adopted. Student evaluation forms are emailed to online students. In 2000, the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) worked with instructors to develop a process for "observation" of online courses that could be used by discipline observation committees. Individual online instructors assess the quality of their courses in a variety of ways as indicated on the Self-Study Survey. Most of the respondents (81%) indicated that they use completion/ attrition rates while 78% use discussion boards and/or private email from students. Some online instructors, (47%) use their own surveys.

Based on the assessment of their online courses, 86% of respondents have changed the assignments, 42% have changed testing methods, 36% have made changes in instructor availability and 33% have changed textbooks.

In Fall 2004, 96 sections of 71 different courses were offered online. The number of students who took online courses and completed them was 1,367, with a total of 1,960 enrollments. According to the Office of Research and Planning, 62% of the enrollments yielded grades of A-D and 38% yielded E, F, or W grades. For studies of online course completion in Fall 2002 and Fall 2003, see [Exhibits 57a](#) and [57b](#).

### Information for students on distance learning offerings

Online courses are advertised in the registration booklet and on the College website each semester and are open to all students. They are not required to demonstrate computer or information literacy prior to enrolling. A link on the College Home Page labeled “Online Services” leads to Web pages created and maintained by the CIT to provide pertinent information regarding distance learning. Students can contact CIT staff through the Web site if necessary, and WebCT orientation sessions are conducted on campus at the beginning of the semester. Online orientation sessions were implemented in the Spring 2005 semester. Before registering, students can take a self-quiz to determine whether they have the competencies to succeed in online courses. Students are also informed of the software and hardware required.

### Support services for online students

Learning resources (tutoring, library services) are available for online students. Tutoring is provided on campus to all students and online through with SmartThinking™. All BCC library services are available to online students. Electronic resources, reference assistance, library instruction, and interlibrary loan, online forms and book delivery are available for students taking online courses. Responses on the Fall 2004 Self-Study Student Survey indicate most online students consider electronic learning resources to be above average in effectively meeting their needs as a student.

### Support for online instructors

The College’s faculty training program, The Online Professor Program (TOPP), assists all new and many experienced online professors in developing and maintaining courses that are equal to or surpass on-campus courses with respect to academic standards and rigor. New online and partially online instructors are required to take TOPP Level 1, currently offered on campus annually in June, which focuses on both pedagogical and technical skills. Participation in TOPP is by self-selection with approval from Department Heads and Deans, and instructors are compensated for participating. Two additional levels of training are available once instructors begin to teach online.

CIT offers a wide variety of workshops and services for faculty and has grown significantly in the last few years. In addition to the full-time staff, a faculty support team coordinates TOPP, runs workshops, provides one-on-one assistance and organizes special projects, such as the Online Hybrid Course Pilot Project. CIT provides continuous WebCT assistance for faculty. CIT has also recently expanded its staff to include an instructional designer to assist instructors in all aspects of online course development and implementation. When asked on the Self-Study Faculty Survey how

well CIT meets their needs for training and support with online classes, 97% of respondents who have taught online indicated “very well” or “fairly well”.

#### Policy on intellectual property

Planning for distance learning has included consideration for copyright, intellectual property and ownership of courses. The *BCCFA Contract* stipulates in the section entitled “Memorandum of Understanding for Distance Education” that “Copyright and ownership is in accordance with the College’s existing policy on intellectual property”. The TOPP program covers the College’s intellectual property policy and discusses issues of copyright in online courses.

#### Related advisory committees

Various faculty and staff groups address technology issues: the Teaching and Learning with Technology Round Table (TLTR), the Technology Governance Committee (TGC), and the CIT Advisory Board. None is specifically charged with technology planning, but all serve as advisory groups to the Office of Technology and Information Services, which functions under the Vice President of Technology, Information Services, and Institutional Effectiveness.

#### Contractual relationships

As a member of the New Jersey Virtual Community College Consortium, the College participates in two vendor contracts, one with WebCT, and the other with SmartThinking™, the 24-hour online tutoring system. In both instances membership in the consortium has resulted in lower rates and significant savings to the College, with no loss of customized service and technical assistance. Agreements with these vendors and other vendors providing technology-based resources are monitored by the faculty and staff directed by the Vice President of Technology, Information Services, and Institutional Effectiveness. Also, Bergen’s role as a founding member of the consortium has always ensured that the needs and policies of the institution are considered.

#### Equipment and infrastructure

The College provides more than adequate equipment and infrastructure to support distance education. WebCT is available at all times and currently serves over 5,000 users and can more than adequately serve over twice that number. The equipment is connected to a backup generator to ensure that WebCT remains available to students and faculty even during periods of electrical outages and services. The WebCT equipment is remotely monitored continuously to minimize any downtime, and all major upgrades and maintenance services are conducted at times in the early morning hours to minimize inconvenience to faculty and students. The College also provides a Real Network server for video distribution and has cutting edge video conferencing facilities. The Office of Information Technology, the Media Technologies, and CIT have staff dedicated to support distance education.



## **SUMMARY**

The College's Basic Skills programs have benefited from the transition to electronic placement testing and from substantial supplemental instructional support services. With regard to non-credit offerings, the courses and programs provided by the Division of Continuing Education, the Ciarco Learning Center, and the Institute for Learning in Retirement have been responsive to the needs of the community and local industry. Certificate programs are particularly useful to those who are retraining or changing careers. The College's distance learning program has been well-implemented and promises continued future expansion. Structured training for online instructors (TOPP) is designed to ensure that online courses meet a high standard of educational quality.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

1. Accuplacer (and Accuplacer-LOEP) has improved the College's ability to test students efficiently using an untimed individual test, and to provide rapid reporting of scores, advisement and counseling.
2. Supplemental instructional support services are highly developed, easily accessible, and continuously upgraded. In addition to peer and professional tutoring, online tutorial support and computer-aided instruction is available.
3. Certificate-granting programs offer those considering a career change a comprehensive learning experience. Certificates issued by the DCE offer job seekers enhanced opportunities in various industries.
4. The College anticipated the demand for online courses, made a commitment, and allocated resources for equipment, infrastructure and staffing to support distance education. The academic administration, the Division of Technology and Information Services, and many members of the faculty have participated in designing and implementing the distance learning program.
5. Campus groups addressing technology issues (TLTR, TGC and CIT Advisory Board) have faculty and staff representation, meet regularly, and have brought about significant improvements. CIT is playing a major role in serving online students as well as faculty.
6. TOPP has been developed and is taught by experienced teaching faculty members who have demonstrated both pedagogical and technical skills.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. The College should move toward reducing class sizes in developmental mathematics and algebra to the state-wide average of 24 students.
2. The College should provide on-going faculty development opportunities that target appropriate developmental teaching methodologies.
3. The College should strengthen the connection between non-credit and credit areas in the design of employer-focused programs.
4. Better and timelier allocation of rooms for DCE should be explored.

5. With the anticipated increase in the number of sections of online courses and instructors, CIT and the TOPP should plan now to efficiently manage the demand.
6. The College should study the accuracy of placement testing by gathering tracking data on student performance with respect to placement into basic skills courses. In particular, data on the number of students testing at each level who have to be moved following in-class retests would be helpful.
7. The College should create a means to improve communication between the non-credit areas and, where appropriate, increase efforts to create unified and coherent marketing.

## Chapter Fourteen

# Assessment of Student Learning

Effective assessment of student learning is an integral part of the accredited institution, and a shared responsibility of the faculty and administration. When well done, assessment of learning outcomes supports a systematic plan to monitor quality and provides information for strategic planning and institutional improvement. The mission of the institution provides direction to the establishment of learning goals and objectives. These goals and objectives, which include knowledge, skills, values and competencies, should be consistent and should be articulated at the institutional, program, and course levels. There should also be a plan to use assessment findings to improve teaching and learning, and to communicate this activity to the campus community.

The Institutional and Student Assessment Study Group analyzed the degree to which Bergen Community College assesses student learning outcomes. The process involved an initial review of the Mission and Vision statements and related documents to determine the establishment of, and support for, institution-wide learning goals. The group then reviewed the extent to which systematic learning assessment plans are implemented at the course, program, and institutional levels. Finally, the group examined how the College uses the results of assessment for strategic planning and the improvement of student learning.

### INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

During the last ten years the College has engaged in numerous initiatives to improve existing assessment activities, and to begin new efforts. These have included both planning for learning outcomes assessment at the course, program, and institutional level, and refocusing the program review process on such assessment. The initiatives, along with outcomes and status, include:

- In 1995-96, the development of a 5-year Program Review cycle and process.
- In 1998, the approval of ten General Education Goals by the Faculty Senate.<sup>104</sup>
- In 2001, the creation of an Assistant Academic Vice President position. This position was later given supervision of assessment of learning outcomes.
- In 2001-02, the convening of an Assessment Team to develop a college-wide plan for assessing student learning outcomes.
  - Development by the Team of a written plan and set of Core Competencies (see Exhibits 58 and 52), consistent with the Mission and Goals of the College, and designed to articulate learning goals at

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<sup>104</sup> A corresponding set of assessment criteria was not approved; see Chapter Twelve for further discussion.

the institutional level. The team stopped meeting in 2002 after the completion of the plan.

- Creation of an assessment resources website:  
[www.bergen.edu/assessment](http://www.bergen.edu/assessment)
  - In 2002, at the recommendation of the Assessment Team, the redesign of the Program Review process to facilitate review completion and enhance consistency across programs and departments. (See [Exhibit 47](#).) This redesign was presented to the Faculty Senate, but not voted on. Departments have the option of using the new guidelines until formal approval is given.
  - In 2002-03, a series of faculty workshops on constructing learning objectives, assessment criteria, and assessment strategies was presented by members of the former Assessment Team.
  - In 2003, at the recommendation of the Academic Vice President, the approval of the Core Competencies by the Faculty Senate. The written assessment plan that contained the Core Competencies was not similarly presented for Faculty Senate review or approval.
  - In 2003, on an earlier recommendation of the Assessment Team, the creation of an administrative position to coordinate and oversee assessment activity. As part of a restructuring that moved placement testing under the Academic Vice President, this position would also oversee placement testing. The Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment and Testing was hired in Spring 2003. As a result of another restructuring in February 2005, described below, this position was eliminated.
  - In September 2004, a proposal to establish a college-wide Committee on Learning Outcomes Assessment made by the Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment and Testing. The proposal was reviewed, modified and approved by the Faculty Senate. (See [Exhibit 59](#).) The modified proposal involved the creation of two committees. A subcommittee of the Senate was charged to:
    1. Review/revise the assessment plan developed by the Assessment Team.
    2. In cooperation and consultation with the Academic Vice President and the Divisional Deans, facilitate the implementation of the Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan.
- A subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee was charged to:
1. Review all courses and curricula proposed to the Curriculum Committee to ensure that the items proposed incorporate the assessment of student learning.
  2. Regularly and systematically review all current curricula to ensure that they incorporate the assessment of student learning.
  3. Review and provide constructive commentary on learning assessment to faculty and administrators engaged in the College's Program Review process.
- The Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment and Testing had participated as an *ex officio* member of each of the aforementioned Faculty Senate committees.

- In February 2005, the Board of Trustees' approval of a Center for Institutional Effectiveness (CIE). Included in the CIE's charge is the oversight of learning assessment activities in the context of institutional assessment.
- In July 2005, the Board of Trustees' approval of an institution-wide "Assessment Framework," created by, and to be overseen by, the CIE, and designed to accommodate more specific learning assessment plans, should they be developed. (See [Exhibit 33](#).)
- In Fall 2005, academic disciplines and departments began to implement the annual assessment activity outlined in the Assessment Framework by selecting two or three learning goals aligned with the mission, strategic plan, and/or Core Competencies, and making plans to study related learning outcomes during the following semester. Each department and discipline selected a formal liaison to CIE to coordinate the unit's assessment activity.

The Senate subcommittee on learning outcomes assessment presented a written plan in Fall 2005, and with a collective bargaining agreement reached on faculty compensation for assessment activities, the Senate formally approved the plan in January 2006.

The preceding timeline demonstrates a consistent awareness of the need to implement a program of learning assessment. It also, however, demonstrates that there have been challenges in moving forward with implementation, and as a consequence, there has been a lack of continuity in the efforts made. From the preceding and what follows, it is also clear that organization and leadership have been a challenge.

The approval of the Assessment Framework and subsequent planning for its implementation mark a decisive change in institutional commitment to the assessment of student learning outcomes. Amongst other assessment measures, the Framework calls for each degree program-granting department to choose and evaluate outcomes annually of at least one goal related to the Core Competencies. While the Framework's implementation will no doubt face challenges, the College is now on course to use learning outcomes data more consistently for the improvement of teaching and learning.

## **ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES**

The following will be focused on in this section: (1) successes in assessment and program review; (2) faculty perspectives on assessment; and (3) the status and integration of the Core Competencies and General Education Goals.

### ***Successes in assessment and program review***

Some programs engage in ongoing assessment of learning outcomes and regular program review. As noted in Chapter Thirteen, a number of programs, particularly in basic skills and Allied Health, use exit exams to assess learning outcomes. In addition, a number of programs are accredited by external accrediting agencies, including Nursing, Allied Health programs, and Paralegal Studies, and these programs are typically required to review discipline-specific learning outcomes in the context of their accreditation reviews. (For a complete list of these programs, see [Exhibit 46](#).) The College's internal program review process has undergone a concerted evaluation since Fall 2002 when the

Academic Vice President presented the Faculty Senate with a proposed set of revisions to the 1996 Program Review Guidelines. Currently, the Assistant Academic Vice President is coordinating program reviews. During 2004-05, 22 programs were in the process of a full-fledged program review.

The following are examples of ways in which departments have studied learning outcomes, or have made changes as a result of such study:

- With the assistance and support of the Office of Research and Planning, some departments have initiated formal outcomes studies in the context of program review. Both the Accounting Program and the Office Systems Technology Program, for example, use graduate surveys to gauge how well the programs prepare students for their careers. Specific skills are referenced; see [Exhibits 60 and 61](#).
- The English Department's *Composition Readiness Study* (see [Exhibit 34](#)) examined the writing skills of students in the various pre-college programs.
- Mathematics and Computer Science has also done several studies in the past few years. (See Exhibits [35a](#), [35b](#), [35c](#), [35d](#), and [35e](#).) One result is a move away from computer-assisted instruction in mathematics, as it proved to lead to less successful student outcomes than traditional classroom education.
- In Dental Hygiene, "Pass/Fail" grading was used for several years to grade students in the clinical areas. Noting that students' performances were not as expected in response to the Pass/Fail grading, a traditional system for grade assignment was reinstated.
- Also in Dental Hygiene, graduates must achieve a level of competence in a variety of core areas, including health promotion and community service. This fall the program will partner with Service Learning to provide students with experiences in these two areas. Students will now have the opportunity to simultaneously meet clinical course requirements and have assessable service learning experiences.
- In Nursing, when it was noted in 1999 that overall NCLEX (RN licensure) passing rates for the program were dipping, a three pronged approach to enhance student success was instituted. This approach included adding a required Nurse Entrance Test (NET) with a passing grade of 50%, raising the passing grade in all nursing courses to 75 (which had been demonstrated on studies to be a more accurate predictor of success), and adding an exit exam. Reviews for the exit exam and tutoring services for all students who may need them are offered.
- Also in Nursing, in August 2004, at the request of the Nursing faculty, the Office of Research and Planning ran a correlation to determine the predictability of program success with a specific cut-off score on the NET entrance exam. Noting a weak correlation, the NET exam has now been discontinued. The Nursing Program has now begun (for the September 2005 class) using Accuplacer with a specified score for admission. Follow up studies will be conducted to determine the correlation of success in the Nursing Program with the set score on Accuplacer. In addition, after several years of following the correlation of HESI (exit exam) results with NCLEX (RN licensure), the exit exam passing grade was raised from 800 to 850 in Spring 2005.

- Assessment data has led faculty in some programs to write grants for establishing tutoring centers. Examples include Nursing, which began a discipline-specific tutoring program, the American Language Program, which received funding for the English Language Resource Center.

Assessment has also been addressed through faculty conferences and workshops. Over the last several years, nationally known experts in the area of assessment have presented at General Faculty conferences. In addition, as noted above, a series of campus-wide faculty development workshops were conducted in 2002-2003 to familiarize faculty with strategies for implementing assessment outcomes through writing measurable learning objectives and aligning them with relevant measurement criteria.

Finally, the creation of the position of Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment and Testing signaled the beginning of a deepening commitment to supporting and monitoring assessment. Under this new structure, the general status of assessment at the College was reviewed, protocols were developed for external program reviewers, and workshops and presentations were given to familiarize faculty with assessment terminology, techniques and strategies. Work sessions on writing measurable learning objectives were continued in 2004-2005 by the Assistant Academic Vice President, and were included in the Fall 2005 Faculty Conference. As noted above, responsibility for overseeing assessment activity now rests with a Vice-President.

### ***Faculty perspectives on assessment***

At a faculty convocation in Fall 2004, faculty expressed continuing concern about the value of outcomes-focused assessment and about limitations on “academic freedom.” Concerns were also expressed about the possibility of punitive uses of outcomes information. It would seem that considerable dialogue on these issues will be needed to gain further faculty buy-in and support. Amongst those who have a better understanding of outcomes assessment, some are strongly philosophically opposed to it.

Concerns of a different nature have been expressed by faculty leaders. Interviews with twenty randomly chosen Program Coordinators from the three divisions (both certificate and degree programs) revealed that the Program Coordinator (or designee) is responsible to oversee program assessment and facilitate producing program review reports. In three cases, Department Heads are responsible, and in four, individual faculty members assume the responsibility due to the small size of the program. In interviews with Department Heads and Program Coordinators, it was noted that there is limited support and time allotted for assessment activities. In addition, some revealed not knowing how the program reviews are used and what initiatives are developed based on review findings.

It is expected that the establishment of the CIE will lead to improvements in these areas, but assessment of student learning will remain a shared responsibility, and CIE’s success will be contingent on the success of assessment activity across the College.

*The status and integration of the Core Competencies and General Education Goals*

Faculty Senate and administrative approval of the General Education (GE) Goals and Core Competencies indicates that the goals and competencies in total reflect those dimensions of education and student outcomes that the College values. While it is understood that not all courses or programs will reflect all 9 Core Competencies and 10 GE Goals, the study group determined that departmental articulation of the Core Competencies and GE Goals might demonstrate the integrity and coherence of the College's academic goals.<sup>105</sup> The group also determined that student awareness of these competencies and student experiences with their own improvement vis-à-vis the competencies would similarly indicate integrity and coherence. In exploring these questions, the group studied course syllabi and reviewed new and existing student data.

In order to review the learning objectives and assessment information on course syllabi effectively, the group began by creating a random sample of 26 of Bergen's current academic programs.<sup>106</sup> From a list of all the courses that were offered at the College from Fall 2000 to Summer 2004, the required courses for these 26 programs were identified and used to create a group of "required courses." In addition, all the College's approved GE courses were identified and used to create a group of GE courses. From these course lists another random sample of 29 courses was selected for review—15 required courses and 14 General Education courses.

In assessing the extent to which stated course objectives address the Core Competencies and GE Goals, the study group found that much had to be left to the interpretation of the objectives and, in some cases, other statements included on the syllabi.<sup>107</sup> In addition, the study group also found that the terms 'syllabus,' 'outline,' 'objective,' and 'goal' have no shared meaning amongst the members of the college community. There is evidence that these terms are often used interchangeably, and have different meanings to different people and in different situations, and this appears to be the source of much confusion.

Overall, of the syllabi reviewed, 65% included learning objectives—9 GE syllabi and 10 required course syllabi. Of greater concern is that the majority of the syllabi (25 of the 29) fail to show the connection between the learning objectives of the course and the way in which those objectives are assessed, i.e., there is no linkage to indicate how assignments measure learning outcomes relative to the objectives. During the course of 2004-05, Department Heads and Coordinators were directed to take steps to ensure that these connections are now made explicit.

Overall, the study group found that the faculty have not made much progress in explicitly integrating the Core Competencies and GE Goals into their course materials, either on the individual or college-wide levels. For example, neither the Core

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<sup>105</sup> For further description and discussion of the Core Competencies, see Chapter Twelve. Although this chapter is primarily focused on the efforts of the teaching faculty, student learning is something that must, of necessity, cut across many areas, and is a responsibility of faculty both in and outside of the traditional classroom.

<sup>106</sup> This was done by selecting every 4th program on the list of programs in the College Catalog.

<sup>107</sup> This examination of course syllabi actually generated much discussion and heightened awareness of the lack or vagueness of the Core Competencies and GE Goals listed on syllabi, and as a result, many Department Heads and Coordinators began the process of reviewing and revising their syllabi in order to address these gaps.



Competencies nor the GE Goals are mentioned in Model Syllabus for GE courses. (See [Exhibit 62](#).) The 2004-revised GE course approval process includes an inventory of the GE Goals, but not the Core Competencies.

In the Self-Study Student Survey, a majority of students (62%) reported that they were either Very Much (19%) or Somewhat (43%) aware of the College's Core Competencies. In this same survey a majority of students (85%) responded that their syllabi explained Very Well (34%) or Fairly Well (50%) what the student must do to succeed in the class. While "what must be done to succeed" does not necessarily equate to intended learning outcomes, it is nonetheless good that such a high percentage of students report awareness of their instructor's expectations of them.

The results of the last three Graduate Follow-up Surveys<sup>108</sup> show that critical thinking, communication skills, and problem solving skills are among the top skills in which the graduates *expected* the most improvement. These three skills also made the top of the list of skills in which the students *experienced* the most improvement. (See [Exhibit 63](#).) In addition, tolerance and "understanding of the other people in our diverse society" were among the list of skills for which students had lowest expectation for improvement. However, the improvement the graduates experienced in their tolerance and understanding of the other people far exceeded their expectation.<sup>109</sup>

While the student data is encouraging, greater coordination of information on syllabi is clearly needed. The CIE Framework places responsibility for this on the academic departments.

## SUMMARY

While some assessment of student learning has been done both on the institutional and departmental levels, and while much planning and groundwork has been done, the recently approved Assessment Framework and future complementary assessment plans promise to institutionalize assessment practices to a much greater degree. College-wide implementation of the Framework has begun, and completion of an initial cycle of learning assessment is anticipated in June 2006.

## SUGGESTIONS

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<sup>108</sup> This survey is conducted one year after graduation, and all data is self-reported. It is important to note that the Graduate Follow-up Survey was developed and in use prior to the adoption of the Core Competencies, and that the items measured on the surveys were associated (though not identical) with the previously adopted set of GE Goals. However, given the overlap between the Core Competencies and GE Goals, these findings can reasonably be taken to have some bearing on students' experiences with the Core Competencies.

<sup>109</sup> The 2002-2003 *Graduate Follow-up Survey* revealed an improvement in all areas that are either directly or indirectly related to the Core Competencies. In all areas—communication skills, ability to identify and solve problems mathematical and computational ability, development of job related skills, mastery of fundamental scientific principles, broadening literary experiences, tolerance and understanding of others in our diverse society, ability to cope with new situations, ability to think critically, potential for improvement of social and economic status—graduates reported that their expectations for improvement were exceeded.

1. The College should establish a centralized and accessible archive of all institutional assessment policies, documents, and resources, including departmental syllabi, program reviews, and follow-up reports.
2. Efforts should be made to address the lack of shared assessment terminology.
3. Workshops should be conducted at department meetings and elsewhere to assist faculty in selecting developing general skills in assessment techniques.
4. The College should raise awareness about the Core Competencies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The College should continue to make progress on assessing student learning outcomes across the curriculum and documenting the use of assessment activities in making curricular improvements.