

# ***REALIZING THE POSSIBILITIES***

**Long-Range Plan for  
Queensborough Community College**

**April 2006**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document represents an attempt to draft a Five-Year Plan for Queensborough Community College. The idea for this plan originated with the College President, Dr. Eduardo Martí, who tasked the Chief Operating Officer Howard L. Lapidus with the responsibility for creating a long-range plan for the college. The Chief Operating Officer took primary responsibility for the writing of this document and was assisted by the following individuals who volunteered to work with him on this document: Dr. Sheena Gillespie, Chairperson of the English Department; Dr. Nathan Chao, Professor of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology Department; and Indra Avens, Lecturer in the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department.

In preparing this document, the Chief Operating Officer met with faculty members from every academic department at the college during the Fall 2005 semester and also received some written comments from faculty members and administrators concerning items of interest to them that they thought would be useful in the planning process. He also met with the HEO Directors Council and with the heads of various academic support service areas such as CETL (Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning), Instructional Support Services, and CUE (Coordinated Undergraduates Education). The Chief Operating Officer also spoke with representatives from the Queens Chamber of Commerce, local planning boards, members of the business community and elected officials. In the beginning of the Spring 2006 semester, he also met with leaders of the Student Government. In each case, comments concerning the future direction of the college were solicited.

This plan attempts to factor in the interests of the City University as the University Master Plan of 2004-2008 was not only read in its entirety, but was addressed at the aforementioned meetings that were held by the Chief Operating Officer. Homage was paid to the fact that Queensborough is a unit of the integrated entity that is the City University by the Chief Operating Officer having attended meetings with members of the Chancellery in which the future direction of the University was discussed. Attempt was made throughout to dovetail this plan to the extent possible with the University Master Plan.

This plan is not intended to be a “top-down” document, but rather a reflection of what members of the college community have observed about the campus and the direction that it might take over the next five years. Unlike the College’s annual strategic plans, this document, similarly to the CUNY Master Plan, will not rely on templates or specific timetables, but rather on a narrative that will focus on certain key areas and attempts to provide a vision that does justice to the sentiments expressed by those that spent time discussing the future of Queensborough Community College. Prior to the final version of this plan being issued, it will, of course, be discussed with the appropriate campus governance bodies such as the President of the college who commissioned it, the College Advisory Planning Committee, members of the college community at an open hearing and the College Academic Senate.

## **PRESENT**

In looking at what might be accomplished at Queensborough in the five-year plan period culminating in the academic year 2010-11, it is important to take at least a brief look at the state of the college today and what has already been accomplished.

Queensborough Community College is by every measure a stable, mature college that in two years will be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. The college's enrollment when factoring in the high school students who participate in college level courses through the College Now and Tech Prep programs has shown an increase of 13% over the last six years. When the students in those programs are taken out of the equation, overall enrollment shows a very slight increase during that same period. The college enrollment continues to be very diverse, with students representing 132 countries and 60% of students at age 22 or under. It is significant to note that Queensborough remains very much a Queens institution, as approximately 88% of the students reside in the borough of Queens.

Queensborough currently offers 24 degree and 10 certificate programs. When one factors out College Now and Tech Prep, over 41% of Queensborough students are enrolled in the Liberal Arts and Sciences curriculum, an almost 8% increase in the last five years. The second biggest program during that time period remains Business and Computer Information Systems, with over 21% of the student enrollment, which represents a decrease of some 10% during the past five years, a reflection of the decline in Computer Information Systems enrollment.

The number of full-time faculty at the college is nearly 300, an increase of 14.6% in the last five years. It is noteworthy that 53.6% of them have a Ph.D. or equivalent, which vastly exceeds the national average for a public community college or 19%. Currently, over 57% of our classroom college instruction is done by full-time faculty. The college's undergraduate student/faculty ratio is 17.6%, which is lower than the CUNY average.

Queensborough continues to perform well on several key City University performance indicators: almost 91% of our students pass the CUNY Proficiency Exam, which exceeds the CUNY community college average; the college's fall-to-fall retention rates among full-time freshmen shows over 68% continuing into their second year, which again exceeds the University total; and the last Nursing Licensure Exam had a pass rate of just under 88% for Queensborough students. Queensborough received full reaccreditation in 2004 from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Department of Nursing was granted full reaccreditation by the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission. The College's four TAC/ABET accredited programs are currently undergoing their self-study for a reaccreditation site visit in fall 2006. The Business Department will be going through the reaffirmation for accreditation process by ACBSP in the 2006-07 academic year. Queensborough students continue to excel in many areas and to represent the college with distinction. Queensborough students were the first community college group to present at the American Chemical Society and the only community college students to compete in a Federal Reserve Board challenge.

Queensborough students also recently won a city-wide poetry slam. In athletics, the Queensborough baseball team participated in the 2005 National Division III World Series.

Queensborough continues to advance in technology as befits a college that was the first in CUNY to offer students on-line access to registration, advisement and financial aid. All students have been given a college email account known as “tiger mail” and the college Academic Senate recently approved the policy that the primary method of communication with students will be through “tiger mail.”

Queensborough currently maintains a balanced budget with the possibility of increased fiscal stability as a result of the City University’s new proposed Compact to fund the University’s Master Plan (which will be discussed later). Donations to Queensborough, which are a major part of the University’s Compact, have increased, as the Fundraising Campaign has raised a total of \$7,030,003 as of the close of FY’05. Queensborough continues to advance its community outreach. On October 21, 2004, it dedicated the opening of a completely redesigned Art Gallery, which received critical acclaim for two of its exhibits in the *New York Times* and in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Additionally, the college has received public and private funding to move the college’s Holocaust Resource Center and Archives to a newly constructed central site on the campus.

The College, however, does face a series of challenges as it looks towards the next five years. A recent SWOT analysis prepared by the college’s Office of Institutional Research, identified the following areas of weakness:

- In the Fall 2004 CUNY Admissions Report, Queensborough was not the first choice of 60% of first time freshmen
- In a survey conducted in May 2004 by CUNY, 25% of Queensborough students had the intention of transferring, which was the highest percentage of any CUNY community college.
- 33% of Queensborough students reported in that same survey that space was not available in the course they needed to take.
- Although not identified as a weakness, that same survey reported that 60% of Queensborough students indicated they wanted the college to offer more courses in the evening.
- Queensborough is in its third year without a collective bargaining agreement
- Student parking remains an issue, as over 70% of our students have indicated they utilize public transportation.
- Additionally, almost one-third of the 2004 freshman class left Queensborough after one year.

If one were to categorize the challenges to Queensborough that the aforementioned surveys reveal, the major areas of challenge will probably revolve around enrollment—in particular retention—space in terms of facilities (the college is scheduled to open a new instructional building in approximately 2010, which would be its first new building in

over 30 years), and perhaps scheduling and ease of transportation. The college also has issues to be resolved concerning the role of instructional technology in the future, especially as it relates to a college attempting to make use of its status as a wireless campus and the future of on-line education. The challenges that the college faces are by no means unique to Queensborough Community College.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* in an Oct. 29, 2004, section devoted to community colleges stated that “The institutions—part liberal-arts colleges, part-occupational training grounds, with more than a dash of remedial education and a pinch of general-equivalency-diploma thrown in—are widely misunderstood.” In its January 2006 edition, *University Business* inaugurates a new column devoted to community colleges, which states that “Growing enrollments, degree candidates who drop out, under-prepared students, and stretched-thin budgets comprise just a few of the realities.”

All this comes at a time when American community colleges were singled out for recognition in a 2004 Presidential State of the Union address, which called for them to receive more federal assistance, and at a time when 46% of undergraduates attend community colleges. Before considering a possible roadmap for the future, it would be appropriate to conclude this look at the present by familiarizing ourselves with the new mission statement adopted by Queensborough Community College in 2005:

Operating within the framework of the City University of New York, Queensborough Community College is committed to fostering a collaborative, learning-centered community. The College is dedicated to academic excellence and to the development of the whole individual in an environment that promotes intellectual inquiry, global awareness, and lifelong active learning. Queensborough is committed equally to open-admission access for all learners and to academic excellence within an environment of diversity. In the service of these goals, Queensborough utilizes the close integration of academic and support services and a focused attention to pedagogy. The College offers post-secondary associate degree and certificate programs that prepare students for careers and for transfer to four-year institutions of higher learning. Queensborough provides its students a variety of opportunities to enrich themselves intellectually and socially and to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

Recognizing that learning is a dynamic and collaborative process, the College offers comprehensive, multi-layered academic programs that serve as a framework for students to become active, responsible partners in their intellectual pursuits. Providing a rich general education core aimed at enhancing students’ critical thinking and decision making skills, and utilizing effective learning strategies, the College offers many options to students for achieving their academic and career goals. A community that values the diversity of its members, Queensborough strives to individualize the college experience through meaningful collaboration among students, faculty and staff. The College features a highly qualified faculty with excellent scholarly credentials, well-planned curricula and developmental course work, strong and closely integrated academic

and student support services, and the use of innovative pedagogy, including educational technology. To help ensure excellence in teaching and learning, Queensborough engages in on-going assessment of its academic offerings and support services, promotes research on community college pedagogy, and supports scholarly accomplishments and professional advancement among its faculty and staff.

In response to evolving community needs, Queensborough also offers non-credit courses and certificate programs and other activities. These provide community residents with accessible and affordable educational, recreational and job training opportunities, and help individuals and businesses and other institutions respond to changes in technology and the economy. The College takes a leadership role in providing access to arts and culture to enrich the quality of life for the community at large.

## **FUTURE**

In looking at the next five years, some thoughts need to be articulated. This plan is written with the understanding that, if the college community does not embrace the suggestions that follow, Queensborough will continue to be a quality institution providing a first-rate education delivered by a superior faculty, which is arguably the college's best asset. The premise of this document is that Queensborough is well positioned to take steps that will put it in the vanguard of community college higher education. Queensborough, while addressing the needs of its students, can make a difference by demonstrating to other colleges how a successful college can redefine the meaning of success.

The mission of Queensborough Community College speaks to both a dedication to academic excellence and a commitment to open admission access. It is understood, and this will be referenced later, that there will always be community college students that may have goals other than graduation. Nevertheless, a mark of academic excellence at any degree-granting institution has to be the number of students that can graduate in a timely fashion. Although many members of the public will describe Queensborough as a two-year college, academic, economic and personal concerns for too many of our students make a two-year degree a seeming impossibility.

It is interesting to note that the University has had much success with a program funded by non-governmental dollars that, in effect, rewards the highest academic achievers (Honors Program) with a no-cost education. This plan proposes a similar motivational basis, which it is believed can make a difference in recruitment and certainly in retention. The difference is that Queensborough, true to its mission, will not limit entry to those with high academic achievement or condition continuance on achieving a certain GPA. What is being proposed is that a student's tuition cost at Queensborough will be fully subsidized if they graduate in two years. This would be achieved by having interested students commit to an understanding that, if they graduate within the two-year period, whatever money they do not receive in financial aid assistance to cover tuition payments

would be provided by scholarship money from the Queensborough Community College foundation (QCC Fund, Inc.). To receive this money, students would have to graduate within a two-year period. The unfortunate reality is that for students in need of multiple developmental courses, this two-year graduation track is not a reality. In order for a student to have a realistic possibility, clearly a student would have to be in what is described as triple exempt status from remediation or have a very limited remedial requirement. To assist students who have an interest in such a program, it is contemplated that the Instructional Support Service Center will be available to these students in the same capacity as it has functioned in the past. If, for example, a student was in need of writing assistance, it would be obtainable during the summer preceding a student's enrollment in the fall.

How many students would be in a position to take advantage of such a program remains to be seen. The fact is that if one looks at the 2001 entering class at Queensborough, only 81 students, less than 4% of the entering class, graduated in two years. However, it is not possible to ascertain how many of the students from that cohort who transferred during that two-year period to senior colleges would have remained at Queensborough if this program of tuition reimbursement had been in effect or how many more students would have chosen to attend Queensborough. The idea for this tuition reimbursement program originated with President Martí. The obvious rationale of this plan is that it would allow any academically qualified student to receive the financial assistance necessary to allow them to obtain their degree and help remove any economic impediment preventing them from completing their studies in the two-year period.

This tuition reimbursement plan is also consistent with the funding of the University's Master Plan, which calls for a compact that envisions public funding supplemented with private donations. The Queensborough Community College foundation recently was given a donation of \$450,000, \$250,000 of which has already been received. This donation, which represents the largest unrestricted gift to the City University, can certainly be utilized as scholarship money for the two-year graduates. The mechanism for financing paying out the scholarship money on a semester basis could be worked out among the College, the Foundation and the student. As this is scholarship money that is being utilized, it is contemplated that only students who are in pursuit of their first college degree will be eligible to participate in this two-year degree scholarship program. As with other initiatives that are proposed in this plan, it is imperative that an assessment component be built into the process so that one can determine whether this program is in fact deemed a success for the student, the College and the Foundation.

### **The Plan for Integrated Education (PIE)**

At the college convocation of January 25, 2006, the Queensborough Plan for Integrated Education (PIE) was unveiled. In the introduction to that plan, Queensborough's graduation rates were referenced, with it being noted that less than one-third of the full-time freshmen who enrolled at Queensborough at the end of the last decade had, in fact, earned any degree anywhere during a six-year period. Whether or not the PIE helps the

college achieve the goal postulated at the vice presidential level of a 50% graduation rate during the next six years or not, the PIE's ingredients will merit a careful look.

In the meetings with faculty that took place prior to the writing of this document, anecdotal evidence was offered by faculty members that learning communities (the pairing of classes involving the same roster of students) have been successful. Instructors seem to believe, in particular, that linking classes with introductory or developmental courses is contributing to positive results. As this practice continues to grow, it is imperative that institutional research engage in longitudinal studies that directly speak to the value of the type of course linkage just described.

It should be noted that assessment is at the heart of a grant-funded proposal on learning communities that is being pursued by the college which calls for random recruitment with incentives to students selected for learning communities. The goal would be to allow the college to receive information as to where learning communities in the future should be positioned and what their composition should be.

At the heart of PIE is the concept of learning academies, which is tempting to describe as learning communities *squared*. As described in PIE, learning academies are programs

. . . aimed at providing a special identity and plan on success for students, grouped by academic program. . . Components include specialized block and linked courses, targeted advisement, and close interaction among individual students, groups of students, faculty and staff. The purpose is to provide our students with the best educational experience possible for them at the College, and to move them through to the achievement of their educational goals, especially graduation, in a timely fashion.

This program will commence with pilot academies in education and technologies and expand in succeeding years with additional learning academies. The ultimate goal would be to place virtually all entering freshmen into suitable academies. As stated in PIE, "the academies will be presented to students, not as a choice, but as the way in which education is carried out at QCC for students in those programs."

Crucial to the academy concept is the placing of students in block-scheduled, frequently linked classes. Students would proceed through the program in lock-step fashion. The theory is that by creating teams of students and building an *esprit de corps* through steps such as common guest speakers and internships, greater retention should be accomplished. Again, the importance of assessment undertaken by the Office of Institutional Research cannot be overemphasized. In no circumstances should the college proceed down a new path for five years without having done at least a two-year study to see whether the goals intended, in this case better retention and graduation rates, are being met. Certainly, one can agree that for students who are new to a college environment it is an asset to share experiences in common with individuals that are in relatively in the same position. In effect, learning academies link not only the courses but the students.



In instituting the learning academies, the college must square this effort with what on its face can be seen as an apparent contradiction, the previous initiative referred to as My Academic Plan (MAP). As quoted earlier, the academies are not being presented to the students as a matter of choice, whereas the concept of My Academic Plan is by its very name a choice-invoking initiative.

MAP was promulgated by the college as part of a funding proposal to CUNY for the Community College Investment Program initiated in 2003. At the heart of MAP is the concept of student responsibility. Under MAP a student entering Queensborough is responsible for signing off on an academic plan. After having communicated with a college advisor, a plan would set forth the goals the student intends to accomplish by virtue of attending Queensborough. The College's commitment would be to provide what is necessary for the student to achieve his or her goal and the measure of success would be the realization of the stated goal, whether it be graduation or personal enrichment or career advancement. In order for MAP to coexist with learning academies, MAP must precede placement in the learning academy. All entering students should have an opportunity to communicate with an advisor and formulate a MAP prior to being placed in a learning academy.

Over the next five years, Queensborough should strive to provide an ePortfolio for each student. As described in PIE, the ePortfolio is an

on-line, exportable resume, academic plan, reflective document, complete with examples of work... This can be an important tool with which to document competence and achievements, based on student retention and the attainment of educational goals and skills, mandate some reflective analysis and allow for the creation of an effective resume.

The ePortfolio when fully developed will contain an eMAP.

## **Retention**

If it can be argued that the PIE, in introducing such topics as learning academies and ePortfolios, is attempting to address the issue of student retention, there are topics discussed in PIE that have been debated for some years at Queensborough and would seem to have a particular relevance to retention. Central to the MAP discussed earlier is academic advisement. Academic advisement is an issue that many people in higher education would acknowledge is hard to come to grips with. Almost any faculty member or student will acknowledge the importance of proper academic advisement. While the need for this service may be self evident, the issue of how it is to be delivered is one that has not been easily resolved.

At Queensborough for many years, it was the accepted wisdom by many of those employed in academic departments that the only individuals capable of giving competent advice about a particular curriculum were those engaged in the teaching of that discipline.

It would certainly be fair to say at the least that there was a lack of trust in having an “outsider” advise what a department considered it to be its students. Many career departments demonstrated a particular willingness and affinity for advising “their” students.

In 2003 Queensborough became the first CUNY College to offer an on-line academic advisement tool. Effective with the Spring 2005 semester, a new mandatory academic advisement plan was implemented, and the Office of Academic Advisement employed ten new full-time academic advisors. The new advisors each act as liaisons to various designated academic departments. At the time of taking a placement test, each new student was given an appointment date for academic advisement. Returning students were assigned to either an academic advisor, an academic counselor, or a faculty advisor or advisor related to students’ particular programs. An on-line advisement mechanism was used for those students who have in excess of 24 credits and a GPA of at least 2.75. It is paramount that over the next five years Queensborough continues to discuss, refine, and assess the academic advisement protocol.

It is recommended that as an adjunct to mandatory academic advisement, Queensborough continue to pursue and expand the Relationship Manager Program that was introduced for the Spring 2005 semester. Where colleges have had success with academic advisement, it can be argued that such success has occurred when a student has been able to be paired with a particular academic advisor through his or her entire college experience. For reasons primarily related to student headcount and staffing numbers, this does not appear likely to become a reality for Queensborough Community College students. However, the Relationship Manager Program, which is predicated on staff members volunteering to receive rosters of student email addresses to allow them to communicate with and receive communication from students who feel the need to raise a question or perhaps just get some reassurance, can provide that continuity.

It would be hard to refute the fact that students who are new to a college benefit from an orientation. Certainly when one looks at the workplace, many employers provide a mandatory orientation for new employees. At Queensborough new students are provided with a student orientation class taught by college counselors. The College clearly believes that this class is valuable to a student’s success, which is one of the reasons why all new freshmen are told in the college catalog that the 8-hour ST100 class (Introduction to College Life) is “required” of all new freshmen. Nevertheless, the last round of statistics demonstrates that some 35% of entering freshmen do not take this “required” course. It is recommended that the college give immediate consideration to making student orientation a mandatory course. Currently, the college is not, due to academic program restraints, in the position to offer credit for ST100 students, who then feel free to omit that course, frequently citing scheduling or employment concerns. It must be recognized, though, that if the college decides to make the ST100 course mandatory, then it must be prepared to follow through with serious consequences for the students not taking the course, which for all practical purposes means that students would not be allowed to register. Certainly, it will be helpful if the learning academies, in addition to

targeted academic advisement, will as planned link ST100 sections to the courses a new student is given as a member of the academy.

Clearly, a major component of retention is that students' possess college-level skills. As stated in the March 10, 2006, issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "The facts are stunning. More than 40 percent of students arrive on college campuses needing remedial work. Only about half of the high-school graduates who enter college have pursued a college-preparatory curriculum." At Queensborough, 20.3% of entering students need remedial work in reading, 56% in writing and 49% in mathematics. For these students to have any measure of success, they must overcome these deficiencies. It is noted that, currently, three task forces have been formed at the college to study the delivery of ESL and developmental services in reading, writing and mathematics. It is recommended that the college continue to assess these areas and devote whatever resources are necessary to allow developmental instruction and ESL to be successful for all students in need of such assistance.

## **The Learning Center**

In a 2000 publication of *University Architecture*, it was stated that

the university library is arguably the most important building on the campus...The library is the signifier of learning...Libraries are student centers, buildings where student-centered learning takes priority...(irrespective of changes in media) the library retains its central position in the environment of learning.

That statement was then quoted in the May 11, 2005, issue of *Planning for Higher Education* in an article entitled, "Positioning the University Library in the New Learning Environment," which went on to state that:

It follows that a learner-focused pedagogy should require campus libraries to shift from their traditional role as repositories of information and other resources for individual, passive learning to places where learners meet, collaborate, and interact in learning processes that are much more dynamic.

The reality at Queensborough is that, although the Library Building is positioned in the center of the campus, it is by no means central to the vast majority of instruction taking place at the college. In meetings that the Chief Operating Officer had with faculty members from each academic department, there were fewer than 10 faculty members that, in response to a question posed, stated that they required students to go to the library for instructional purposes. If queried as to why this was the case, a variety of reasons would be given. Some faculty would indicate that the resources in some disciplines were out of date; others would state that they themselves found the facility antiquated and not user-friendly in appearance; many would state that, given the resources available via access to the internet, there was no reason for the students to visit the library. It should be noted that a number of faculty indicated that the library was valuable to them as a resource utilizing various electronic databases and services such as interlibrary loan.

Discussions with students, including Student Government leaders, bore out the fact that, although students go to the library, it is not necessarily due to a class assignment. Students go to the library on this campus, in large measure, because of its location. The Library Building is more conveniently located for meeting a fellow student than the Student Union Building at the upper end of the campus. Students are also attracted to the library because of the availability of computer access and the fact that the Academic Computing Center is housed there. Some students say that, in their experience, they went to the library as freshman, in some cases several times, to attend a lecture on library usage and after that never had occasion to visit the library again during their stay at Queensborough.

The solution this plan proposes is not to abandon the library or to create a virtual library or, as some students would undoubtedly prefer, to swap the location of the library and the Student Union. Over the next five years, Queensborough should recreate the library into a true campus learning center. This matter has been discussed with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and is referred to him in the Plan for Integrated Education. The Vice President is also heading up a task force to study this very matter, and the comments provided in this plan are not intended to usurp the role of the task force, but instead to focus the discussion that will ensue as they deliberate.

Over the next five years it is recommended that Queensborough should reevaluate the collections of the library, eliminating what is obviously outdated, should remove all administrative offices from the Library Building, should move the Writing Center and Tutorial Services into the Library Building in the presence of a restructured Instructional Support Services Center, should move The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning into an expanded prominent location, should expand the Academic Computing Center and provide offices that would service new academic initiatives, such as learning academies.

In summary, the facility now known as the Kurt R. Schmeller Library should be reconstituted as the Academic Learning Center at Queensborough Community College. This facility should serve as the true academic hub of the campus, acting as a resource for all the academic departments and the students that attend Queensborough Community College. The academic “buzz” should resonate from this facility as faculty continue to be supported with the various types of scholarly collections either contained in or accessed through the center and through the innovative work emanating from CETL. Students will be able to attend to many of their academic support needs in the facility as well as have certain quiet areas designated as places where one can study.

Some of these initiatives, if agreed to by the college community, should take place sooner than others in the five-year period ahead. In view of the fact that the college is required to submit a new plan for Perkins funding and the Perkins III grant seems to require greater or more global major efforts, it is recommended that the components of the Instructional Support Services Center be moved to the newly titled Learning Center Facility in the summer of 2006. This could be accomplished by moving the Testing

Center from its location in the Library Building to the space that would be vacated in what is currently known as the Instructional Support Services Center. Moving the Testing Center is dictated by the energy realities that currently exist in the library facility. Over the next five years, it is anticipated that the capacity for sustaining additional electronic appliances in the library will be increased by an arrangement between the University and Con Edison. Moreover, the current reality is that the facility is maxed-out on energy and can sustain no additional electrical output, which means that if Tutoring and the Writing Center and, possibly, the CUNY Language Immersion Program, College Discovery and the College Science and Technology Entry Program are to be moved to the Learning Center, then the usage of computers in the building that currently exists must be diminished to accommodate these academic support services. Also, pragmatically, from the aspect of staffing and finances and certainly student convenience, it would make sense to consider creating one testing center at the periphery of the campus adjacent to public transportation.

As earlier stated, in order to convert the library facility into a true learning center, all administrative offices should be removed from the Library Building. Although it is recognized that limitations of manpower and funding mean that offices such as Purchasing and Accounting and Student Affairs may not be able to be moved for a period of time, it is believed there would be benefits that transcend the space that would be created in the learning center by this move taking place as soon as possible. These potential benefits concern the Student Union. The unfortunate reality is that, because of its location, the Student Union facility, either in its prior history as the campus cafeteria or in its current incarnation as the Student Union, has never been able to draw the amount of student traffic that should be seen in a campus of some 12,000 students. It is the belief expressed here that the Learning Center and Student Union would be helped by the move to the Student Union of offices such as Financial Aid and the Career Center. In addition to creating space in the learning center, moving these offices to the Student Union would necessitate an increase in student traffic to that building that could augur well for Student Activities, currently housed in that facility. Additionally, it is recommended that the Vice President for Student Affairs be moved to the same floor in the Administration Building as the other members of the President's cabinet. It is also recommended that Counseling and Academic Advisement remain in the newly created Academic Learning Center as vital academic student support areas belonging in that facility. Although it is recommended above that Financial Aid move to the Student Union, the college should explore whether it is physically possible to incorporate Financial Aid into the lower level of the Administration Building, thereby creating a one-stop registration area with the existing offices of Registration and Bursar.

Moving the services provided in the ISSC into the library building requires some further elaboration. In the meetings that took place between the Chief Operating Officer and members of the academic departments, many of the same concerns were expressed by a number of faculty. It was stated that tutorial services for many departments suffer from an insufficient number of tutors. The common thread expressed was that it takes too long in some cases for tutors to be trained, and as a result their availability then comes too late in the semester. Furthermore, it was the belief of some faculty that the Tutoring Center is

too isolated and that there is a lack of communication between tutors and the faculty, which may result in students being tutored according to the needs expressed by the students themselves without the helpful input of faculty and their classroom observations. This is not meant in any way to diminish the achievements of the staff of the ISSC, which have been acknowledged by faculty and members of the administration.

Locating the ISSC in the Academic Learning Center will ensure better proximity to faculty and to students. Clearly, simply moving tutoring from one location to another does not resolve the feeling of lack of input expressed by faculty. Therefore, this plan endorses the idea that has recently been discussed with department chairs of providing academic support clusters in which each cluster would, in conjunction with ISSC staff, determine the content and deployment of instructional support that is needed in those particular curricula. However, rather than dispersing these clusters to the various buildings around the campus where these groupings of departments are situated, it is proposed that they have individual locations in a designated area in the Academic Learning Center. The rationale is that space, as will be addressed later, is clearly at a premium throughout the campus. Clearly, establishing multiple areas throughout the campus brings its own set of difficulties. Housing these services in the learning center will not only enable them to be part of the synergy created by having virtually all academic support services in the learning center, but it will also allow students that have multiple needs to benefit from having them addressed as much as possible in one location—*as much as possible* because this plan is not envisioning the movement to the learning center of all such support services as those provided by the Basic Skills Learning Center and the Mathematics Learning Center.

In terms of the Learning Center, it is also recommended that the Writing-in-the-Disciplines/Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program (WID/WAC) at Queensborough be housed in that facility. This program, with its emphasis on the development of writing proficiency, has continued to grow since its inception in 1999. The University's Master Plan states that "The Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) program is central to the implementation of the CUE Initiative and, most significantly, is a key component in the development of academic literacies across the curriculum for all CUNY students." Effective with the 2005-2006 academic year, entering students at Queensborough must take a minimum of two writing-intensive classes prior to graduation, making Queensborough one of seven CUNY colleges having such a graduation requirement.

In the various meetings that the Chief Operating Officer had leading up to this plan, faculty that had participated in WID/WAC expressed satisfaction with student accomplishments. The importance of assessing the WID/WAC initiatives cannot be overstated given that the University has committed resources to the program by funding faculty development and CUNY writing fellows and given the fact that the limitation of class size to 25 students has an obvious financial impact on the college. It should be noted that faculty and student surveys were performed in fall 2002 and a revised survey was administered to students in spring 2004.

The 2004 survey indicated that, although students believed they had improved in writing, the primary area they cited for improvement, was in planning for the actual writing. It is recommended that the college follow up on questions posited for additional assessment in the 2004 survey. In particular, it would be instructive to note whether faculty in non-writing-intensive classes detected improved ability and communication, and it might be instructive as well to see if the program has had an impact on grade-point averages as one looks at particular courses. Additionally, as the program necessarily expands to address the new graduation requirement, one must continue to look at how best to utilize the WID/WAC program. Clearly, more full-time and part-time faculty will need training in this initiative, and the decision will have to be made, at some point during the next five years, as to what extent this worthwhile program can or should be expanded. This plan recognizes that from the present offering of some 135 writing intensive courses that the CUE Steering and WID/WAC committees have expressed an interest in increasing the number of writing-intensive sections by 2% over the next two academic years and 3% for the three years following. It is clear that the University considers WID/WAC to be an important part of its General Education initiative. The University has articulated in its Master Plan the close relationship that it believes should exist between writing across the curriculum and college writing centers and centers for teaching and learning. Since it is anticipated that the latter two will be housed in the Academic Learning Center, it only makes sense to house WID/WAC in that facility as well.

Housing the office of Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE) in this facility, from a programmatic point of view, also makes sense. The development of CUE was the University's response to a general sense that multiple initiatives being carried out at the campuses failed to coordinate with each other more effectively. To this end, the University's Master Plan states:

A consolidated Request for Proposals for CUNY's Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE) initiative will replace what were formerly separate Requests for Proposals for the Coordinated Freshman Programs, Summer Immersion Programs, Academic Support Programs, Writing Across the Curriculum, and the new General Education Project.

Queensborough's response to CUNY's initiative was to create a CUE office and to hire a director to coordinate and facilitate across campus these disparate but related efforts in a way that promoted better learning among students.

One successful innovation that combines the CUE initiative with ideas from the General Education inquiry and concerns about articulation within CUNY is the Bridge to Transfer Program. Students are eligible to participate who wish to transfer to either Queens College or York College as their first choice and who are double exempt from the ACT Exam. Through a variety of learning community offerings over four semesters, this program prepares students for transfer to their first-choice college, either Queens or York, after they complete an associate degree at Queensborough. Currently, the retention rate for the fourth semester of this program is 34%, and it is recommended that over the next five years the program strive to double that rate. In theory, Bridge to Transfer is an example of the ways in which a program can both benefit retention and ease articulation.

Now that the original program with Queens College has been replicated with York, the Office of Institutional Research should be charged with assessing the program's effectiveness.

Bridge to Transfer is an example of a type of cooperation between senior and community colleges that is envisioned in the CUNY Master Plan, which states that "Queens College and Queensborough Community College are considering creating a consortium to develop common freshman learning communities and support faculty development across both institutions." This plan advocates more such initiatives over the next five years. Too often in the meetings that the Chief Operating Officer had with the academic departments, faculty commented that articulation within the City University is still not as seamless as the Board of Trustee policy statements over the last decade have advocated. There is also a belief expressed by some faculty and students that the work done by the student prior to transfer to a baccalaureate institution is treated with diminished respect because it was performed at a community college. Through such vehicles as discipline councils, this plan calls for a continued effort for faculty cooperation that will develop an understanding in order that in five years time such comments will be a thing of the past. One would expect no less in an integrated University that still maintains one set of bylaws and one collective bargaining agreement governing all of its campuses. In this connection, it is noted that the University's Master Plan contains a number of initiatives "intended to facilitate program articulation and intra-university transfer and mobility." These include on-line academic advisement, on-line course schedules and catalogs and a university site devoted to articulation.

As stated earlier, this long-range plan advocates an increased presence for the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) in the Academic Learning Center. CETL continues to play an important role in faculty development, particularly as it relates to matters of pedagogy. It is noted that the College's annual strategic plans call for CETL to continue to seek and provide funding for faculty research and pedagogy. This plan envisions the possibility that, over the next five years, Queensborough will be well positioned to become a nationally recognized leader in pedagogical research. For that to happen, the recommendation is that CETL, with the support of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, become more proactive in working with the chairs of the academic departments. Also, the recommendation would be that, in addition to issuing an annual report to the academic senate, CETL form a working relationship with the Curriculum Committee of the senate and also with the Academic Computing Center. CETL should take the lead on the general education initiatives. Because of its scope of interest, it is in a unique position to work with the department chairs and the Academic Computing Center.

Queensborough is proposing embarking on a pilot program with the CUNY Graduate Center, the genesis of which originated with CETL. This program, for which the Graduate Center has requested funding, would provide for an interdisciplinary pedagogy academy. This program would consist of graduate students teaching one course at Queensborough for two semesters and undertaking a research project, all under the supervision of Queensborough Community College faculty. Research projects concluded



would be published. Each of the graduate students would be enrolled in a Practicum course whose syllabus would be created by Queensborough faculty. The plan would yield graduate students that receive funding from this program and commit themselves to several years of teaching at Queensborough or other community colleges in the University, should the pilot be expanded. This program has the advantage of not only allowing for funded study and published research on community college pedagogy, but also exposing new Ph.D. faculty to community college instruction.

Again, if one looks at initiatives such as the one just described and factors in the credentials of the Queensborough faculty, a wireless campus, a President committed to the study of community college pedagogy, and the increase in the number of students attending community colleges, a case can surely be made that over the next five years scholars interested in community college instruction will look to Queensborough Community College. This plan envisions that at the end of the next five-year period, the ultimate measure of CETL's success would be a college that would be recognized in its entirety as an institution that can be seen as a functioning laboratory for pedagogical research and that serves as a barometer of best practices in the field of community college higher education.

## **Recruitment**

As was stated in the introduction of this document, a major challenge facing Queensborough for the next five years is enrollment. Currently Queensborough's enrollment, when one eliminates College Now and Tech Prep from the equation, exhibited a very slight increase over the past six years. Furthermore, the current campus was designed to house a population of some 5,000 day full-time equivalent students. Currently, the campus has over 8,000 FTE students, and space has been further tightened over the years by conversion of general purpose space into dedicated laboratories.

The major issue is whether Queensborough should attempt to grow its population and, if so, how might this be accomplished. This plan operates under the premise that Queensborough has no choice but to continue to try to grow its enrollment. Queensborough by virtue of its mission is committed "to open admission access for all learners." Given this mission and Queensborough's status as a public institution funded by the taxpayers of New York City and New York State, Queensborough needs to be seen over the next five years as making an effort to reach out to all potential students. Additionally, it can never be forgotten that Queensborough's budget is enrollment driven and the allocation from the University of funds is tied directly in large measure to the institution's enrollment.

One possible approach to increasing enrollment is to look at the feasibility of new programs. As stated earlier, Queensborough has made vast strides in technology, as can be determined from a reading of the two technology plans adopted during the last five years. When the Chief Operating Officer visited with the faculty in the various academic departments, the uses of instructional technology were discussed. While this plan cannot possibly do justice to all the comments that were made in this connection, there was some

redundancy expressed in faculty comments that bears repeating. A number of faculty expressed pleasure with the fact that more “smart rooms” are being built, particularly as some stated that they find the “smart carts” to be somewhat unwieldy. Some faculty are also glad to see that by utilization of the technology fee there has been improvement in keeping departmental laboratories current. Those faculty that have utilized web assistance instruction have found it to be a valuable pedagogical tool. When asked about the possibility of distributing laptops to students, which would be aidable if made a course requirement, the reaction of faculty was mixed. Those faculty that thought it would be useful in their particular course were concerned about the resources necessary to make sure that the laptop is properly loaded with the software associated with their curriculum. When the discussions turned to online instruction or to distance learning, those that have attempted either hybrid or asynchronous instruction at Queensborough more often than not related a negative experience. The belief expressed was that, although students may have access to computers, the degree of focus and self-discipline involved has often been missing in the students that have registered for these classes. The validity of the faculty observations is often demonstrated by an increase in the number of unofficial withdrawals and failing grades that have taken place.

Even after accepting all of the aforementioned, it is recommended that in order to remain competitive the college expand degree-based offerings that utilize online technology. On March 1, 2006, a *New York Times* story headed, “Online Colleges Receive a Boost from Congress,” reported that “colleges will no longer be required to deliver at least one half of their courses on a campus, instead of online, to qualify for federal student aid.” The article contained a prediction by an analyst that the proportion of students taking all their classes online could rise from 7% to 25% in the next decade. The article forecast this change to be a tremendous benefit for the for-profit colleges, further evidence of which was reported in a *New York Times* article later that same week on the sale of the nation’s second largest commercial education company. That article, while alluding to the change in federal law, noted that even prior to that change “Growth in enrollment at for-profit colleges is outpacing that at traditional ones. In 2003, the last year for which statistics were available, 703,000 of the 16.9 million students at all degree-granting institutions were attending for-profit colleges.”

Through consultations of the Chief Operating Officer with the respective chairpersons of the following departments, it is recommended that Queensborough move towards an online degree offering in Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology and Design Drafting, and Physics. All classes would be offered online, including those laboratories where it is feasible. The remainder of the laboratories would be available on Saturdays on campus to those students taking the online degree. The expectation is that such an online offering would attract students who have an affinity for the technology utilized in those fields, as well as appealing to students whose job requirements make it impossible to commit to the number of hours required for laboratory sections. One must look at the departments that would be involved in this program and remember that this is a long-range plan, however, depending on what national trends continue to emerge. At some point, given the credentials of Queensborough’s faculty and the facilities and equipment available, it may

be appropriate to initiate a discussion with the University about the feasibility of a bachelor of technology for Queensborough. Currently, there are 14 states where a community college baccalaureate exists, and that number is projected to increase.

Additionally, it is recommended that Queensborough continue to increase its efforts to advertise and, most importantly, utilize its status as a wireless campus. Since, as is noted above, there is a way to make the cost of laptops aidable for students, it is recommended that Queensborough invite interested department chairs to submit to the Office of Academic Affairs any course offerings that they believe would benefit from the requirement of a laptop. If there is enough interest, the college could further this effort by helping to facilitate the leasing of discounted laptops to students in those courses. An additional possibility is the leasing of laptops for student athletes who although traveling to competitions still need to be in communication with their instructors and classes.

Another new program that would have the potential to positively impact on enrollment would be a weekend degree program in the Department of Nursing. Currently, Queensborough has 1,185 students waiting in what amounts to be an academic pipeline that they view as pre-nursing, although the reality is they are liberal arts students. This backlog, which results in the majority of these students never qualifying for admittance to the nursing curriculum, is primarily a reflection of a shortage of available nursing seats and resulting higher standards to gain admittance. A shortage of nursing seats itself is due to a combination of a scarcity of qualified full-time faculty and the number of clinical offerings that participating hospitals make available.

Looking at these problems sequentially, one way to address the shortage of hospital assignments was suggested by some members of the nursing faculty in their meeting with the Chief Operating Officer. The point that they made was that there are nursing programs in the metropolitan region that have taken advantage of the fact that hospitals have many more clinical openings available on weekends to offer a weekend nursing program. This plan recommends, therefore, that the Department of Nursing explore the feasibility of offering weekend nursing courses. These courses obviously need to be staffed by qualified faculty. It is entirely possible that by offering nursing courses on the weekend an additional pool of qualified full-time or adjunct faculty would have an interest in teaching these weekend courses. It is also recommended that the Nursing Department continue to explore the possibility of making an adjustment to the nursing academic calendar that would allow for the equivalent of an additional semester being offered during the academic year. The potential of such a calendar adjustment, as well as having weekend clinical assignments available, could boost the enrollment in the nursing curriculum with the added benefit of serving the public need for more nursing professionals.

To a large extent, the success of these nursing initiatives will depend on the availability of adequate faculty staffing. As has been recognized by the University and the Professional Staff Congress, it is difficult to attract well qualified individuals into the teaching of a discipline when the presence of that discipline may be offering a substantially higher rate of compensation. To address such a situation as it currently

exists in the profession of nursing, it is recommended that college officials, to the extent possible, work to ensure that salary flexibility is a possibility for new and current faculty. In particular this needs to occur when the market place, by virtue of its salary structure, makes it extremely difficult for the hiring of faculty in a curriculum that would otherwise be heavily subscribed if the availability of faculty were present.

The possibilities suggested thus far as they concern online and weekend offerings do not impact adversely on the shortage of available classroom space. In keeping with that approach, it is recommended that Queensborough proceed with satellite offerings. Particularly it is advocated that Queensborough request from the University funding to rent a facility for both credit and non-credit offerings in Flushing. Currently, the University maintains a very limited presence in Flushing in which Queensborough offers non-credit courses. Flushing is only several miles from the Queensborough campus, and it is the most densely inhabited area in the borough of Queens.

The type of facility envisioned for Flushing would benefit not only the population of Flushing, but Queensborough and the City University as well. One only has to walk around the streets of Flushing to observe the number of proprietary schools that have established a location there. Queensborough's presence, offering an array of entry-level course offerings, should inevitably lead to other students taking additional courses on the Queensborough campus and on the campus of Queens College which also maintains a geographical proximity to Flushing. *The New York Times* on February 19, 2006, reported on the fact that New York City, which currently is estimated to have a population of 8.2 million, will expand to 9.4 million in the next 20 years. Projections are that the Borough of Queens will have approximately 2.8 million people, and it is possible in the next 15 years that Queens will become New York City's most populous borough. Much of this rise in population will be fueled by Hispanics and Asians. This fact was buttressed by a 2004 census analysis conducted by the Brookings Institution published on March 7, 2006 in the *New York Times*, which noted that the greater New York region had "gained 288,000 Hispanic people and 201,000 Asians—more Asians, in fact, than any other metropolitan area."

A satellite presence in Flushing allows Queensborough to take advantage of its demographic strengths. In 2006, Queensborough for the first time reached a 25% threshold of Hispanic students that allowed it to file for a Title V grant. For the last 25 years, Queensborough has had a longstanding relationship with the Asian community through its Port-of-Entry program. In the February 11, 2005, issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, which listed the ten community colleges in the academic year 2003-2004 with the largest international enrollments, Queensborough possessed the largest proportion of international students of community colleges in the United States, with a percentage of 15.4%. By renting a facility for classroom instruction in Flushing online, Queensborough should build on its strengths to expand enrollment without burdening the existing physical campus facility. In addition to having the potential to reach individuals who reside in Flushing, this would allow Queensborough to make higher education available to those that work in Flushing, but do not have the time or means to transport themselves to Queensborough.

As one looks at how individuals cope with the pressures caused by balancing work with attendance at Queensborough, there are several recommendations that should be considered as the college looks to increase enrollment in the future. It would seem only logical to examine what impact the scheduling of classes has on enrollment at Queensborough. It should be noted that, according to the latest information obtained from students, 69% of current students at Queensborough were employed either full or part-time. Additionally, 20% were parents. Students may be advised that, while balancing their employment and family obligations, to succeed academically, they need to spend a sufficient amount of time on their studies. This is frequently easier to achieve than it may be to balance scheduling classes with honoring employment and family obligations. The option of taking classes on either evenings or weekends can certainly attract students who may not otherwise be able to attend the college. There are faculty who are of the opinion that classes offered on weekends, evenings and even Fridays frequently do not run and will point to evidence that this has been the case. The college needs to examine the possible reason for these scheduling failures and to make the necessary adjustments to allow for the success of evening and weekend courses. Sometimes, courses may not fill up on evenings or weekends because there may not be enough of other courses that are being offered or because the courses offered are not the courses in heaviest demand. The logic behind offering additional weekend and evening course offerings is irrefutable, as not only do these offerings, as stated, address concerns of students that have employment and family obligations, but it also allows classes to be offered at a time when available class space is at a maximum.

For the Spring 2006 semester there are 7,567 students taking one or more classes as day students, and of this day session total 2,107 students are also taking evening classes and 551 students are combining day and weekend classes. This contrasts with a total of 1,372 Queensborough students that are only in evening classes and 234 that are enrolled in weekend classes. There are 350 students at the college taking both weekend and evening classes. These statistics certainly demonstrate that there is room for growth in attracting more evening and weekend students. An additional possibility that could impact favorably on enrollment would be the possibility of some weekend degree programs. In this connection, it is noteworthy that in a 2004 survey of weekend and evening students, 43.6% stated their most likely reason to enroll at Queensborough was to graduate with a degree or certificate.

It is enlightening when one looks at room utilization at the college to note that for the Spring 2006 semester only slightly more than 8% of the classes at Queensborough are currently being offered on Fridays and less than 4% on Saturdays and not even 1% on Sundays. When the Chief Operating Officer met with officers of the Student Government to discuss the long-range plan, it was their opinion that students would welcome classes on evenings and weekends, and it was noted that each Student Government officer spoken with is currently taking a class on Fridays. It should also be noted in this connection that the only other classroom day that had less than 20% utilization was Wednesday, with slightly over 18%, and that can be attributed to the two-hour block designated as club hours. In reference to that, it is recommended that the

college engage in dialog concerning the scheduling of club hours and whether or not it would be in the interest of the vast majority of students to move those designated hours from their current peak time to a time later in the afternoon or, perhaps, on Fridays, given that that would appear to have less impact on course scheduling.

During many of the meetings that the Chief Operating Officer had with members from each of the academic departments, he inquired about the possibility of offering early morning classes at 6 and 7 a.m. Some faculty stated that they would have no problem with an early morning teaching assignment. Assuming that there is enough faculty willingness, it is recommended that the college engage in a pilot program of early morning course offerings. These offerings would also allow some students to take both early morning and evening classes. In this connection, it is also recommended that no evening class at Queensborough start prior to 6:15 p.m. to better accommodate working commuter students. Currently, in the Spring 2006 semester, the college offers 74 class sections in the vicinity of the 7 a.m. time period, with an additional 326 being offered in the vicinity of the 8 a.m. time slot and the bulk of class offerings being run between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Offering classes at 6 and 7 a.m. would allow for the possibility of attracting commuter students who may work in Manhattan yet reside in Queens. Campus and street parking would also be available in greater abundance at those hours.

When the Chief Operating Officer met with Student Government leaders, the consensus expressed was that inadequate parking and inadequate eating facilities are two of the biggest impediments to an increase in student enrollment. These, of course, are problems that are not unique to Queensborough, and certainly many colleges have addressed them in differing ways. The Chief Operating Officer has visited colleges in New Jersey where driving for students is almost a necessity as the preferred mode of transportation. In some of those campuses, the parking solution utilized was similar to those of retail establishments in that the main parking areas adjacent to classroom buildings were reserved for student parking and all employee parking was in auxiliary parking fields. Other colleges that were short on space were able to utilize capital funds to build a parking structure. Given that over 70% of Queensborough students take public transportation and over one half are taking the equivalent of four buses a day to go back and forth to Queensborough, it is clear that the importance of adequate parking in attracting and retaining students cannot be overestimated. This plan is recommending that the College community examine all possibilities that exist to create a more welcoming parking environment for the student body.

In terms of food service, the utilization of what was formerly a student lounge as a place for students to eat is clearly inadequate for a student headcount of Queensborough's size. Queensborough needs to continue with its plans to secure public and/or private funding that would allow for the rear part of the lower quad to be turned into a domed and closed-in eating facility capable of housing some 300 individuals at one seating. The importance of providing an adequate area for students to eat cannot be overlooked if Queensborough hopes to sustain any enrollment growth during the next five years and beyond.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Interpreting the name Queensborough Community College in its fullest fashion, Queensborough needs to assess its relationship to the overall surrounding community of Queens, a community whose diversity is mirrored almost exactly by the diversity of Queensborough students.

In preparing this long-range plan, the Chief Operating Officer spoke with various elected officials, representatives of the business community, the Queensborough Chamber of Commerce, and members of local planning boards. Almost uniformly they expressed satisfaction with the service provided to Queensborough students and with the college's greater involvement with the community. In fact, the only recommendation made was that the college do a better job on publicizing its accomplishments. However, satisfaction today does not mean that Queensborough does not need to plan for the future because, as is stated in the College's Mission Statement, Queensborough needs to respond "to evolving community needs."

One need that may come up during the next five years is that of an even closer relationship than currently exists between Queensborough Community College and the New York City Department of Education. For many years, Queensborough had a GED Center housed at the college. Six year ago, due to space requirements necessitated by Queensborough's need to house a branch of the CUNY Language Immersion Program, the GED Center was closed. Today, the closest ties that exist between Queensborough and the Department of Education revolve around the College Now Program. College Now, along with the accompanying Tech Prep Program, has continued to grow during the past six years and is expected to show sustained growth over the next five years.

The Department of Education has been endeavoring to construct additional facilities to cope with a shortage of classroom seats in secondary institutions, particularly in the Borough of Queens. Cardozo High School, across the street from Queensborough, has in recent years coped with an overflow by conducting classes in trailers when necessary. The City University Master Plan states:

Our collaborative programs with the New York City public school system will continue to be a University priority... The College Now Program is the centerpiece of our efforts... We will also strengthen a variety of special relationships between colleges and high schools. Those relationships include campus-affiliated high schools, school-college partnerships initiated under the umbrella of the Department of Education's New Century High Schools, and, eventually, the ten early college high schools. In all of these cases, connections between the colleges and the schools go far beyond simply offering courses to students. College faculty often cooperate with their high school colleagues on professional development and curriculum development projects and provide mentoring assistance to high school students, especially in areas of research related to their own disciplines.

Community colleges at Kingsborough, LaGuardia and Hostos are examples of CUNY institutions that are hosting more than one public school entity, whether it be high school, middle school or elementary. This plan recognizes the possibility that, over the next five years, Queensborough could logically expect to have a more collaborative relationship with the Department of Education. Certainly, if the joint education program that the college has with Queens College expands, there is always the possibility of reaching out to our neighbors at Cardozo and PS203 and, thus, of taking advantage of the educational park that we jointly form.

In his meetings with the various academic departments, the Chief Operating Officer inquired as to how the faculty members might feel about hosting a Department of Education facility on this campus should that situation arise during the next five years. Except for concerns about where the facility would be housed on campus, the reaction was almost universally positive. Some departments thought that it could help with recruitment, that lab space might be shared and that the possibility for teacher training and/or collaborative projects between faculty in both institutions would exist. This is not to say that Queensborough has not already been involved in initiatives such as teacher training, one notable example being the work that has been done by faculty in the Department of Mathematics. All that this plan advocates, consonant with the City University's Master Plan and with the physical realities that exists in the Borough of Queens, is that Queensborough anticipate and plan for a closer collaboration with the Department of Education.

One of the important ways that a college can serve its surrounding community is through the efforts of the Office of Continuing Education, Arts, and Business Development. Currently, 11,000 to 12,000 students in an academic year take at least one non-credit course offering. There is no question that in the last decade Continuing Education at Queensborough has suffered financially from the elimination in 1991 of New York State financial support for students enrolled in vocational and community service courses. Additionally, City University community colleges have had to absorb a 17.5% city tax on all continuing education program expenditures. Since continuing education is expected to be a self-sustaining division, it has become increasingly important that a deficit not be run that could then result in the University imposing that shortfall against the College's credit programs. Recognizing this situation, the City University in its Master Plan states:

In the next five years, continuing education schools and divisions will further enhance this work by launching a University-wide collaborative campaign to increase effectiveness and improve efficiencies. This initiative will focus on joint marketing, program development and delivery and outreach...In workforce development, the University will continue to rely on ACE divisions for the engagement, cultivation and maintenance of effective partnerships with business and industry, labor unions, community and government organizations.

Although the Adult and Continuing Education division has over the years partnered with various unions and industries to deliver the necessary instruction, the unfortunate reality would seem to be that Queensborough has much to accomplish if it is to be considered a



leader in workforce development. The five major industries in the Borough of Queens are health care and social services, transportation, retail trade, construction and manufacturing. During the last five years, the biggest growth in any of these sectors has been in the health care and social service areas. The City University's Master Plan notes that "health care is one of the most important sectors of the local economy, accounting for one in seven job in New York City" and states that an effort will be made to "enhance the University's collaborations with the health care industries and its unions." As of the beginning of this calendar year, of the top ten employers in the Borough of Queens, five of them were from the health care and social service sectors and four of the other five were airlines. Given this information, it is recommended that Adult and Continuing Education prepare a specific plan that addresses how it could deliver workforce development to the health care and transportation industries that represent nine of the top ten employers in the Borough of Queens. In developing this plan, as in all plans that concern workforce development, it is imperative that the Office of Adult and Continuing Education consult with and utilize the services of the various academic departments at the college that are in a position to contribute to such a plan.

Over the next five years, Queensborough is well positioned to live up to the commitment in the Mission Statement: "The College takes a leadership role in providing access to arts and culture to enrich the quality of life for the community at large." Queensborough possesses a new state-of-the-art Art Gallery, in the next few years it will be opening a new Holocaust Resource Center and Archives, and its Professional Performing Arts series has just celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving the community.

For any college the town-gown relationship is significant, but this is especially true when the college is funded by tax payers' dollars. Expansion of college services to the surrounding community can only accrue to Queensborough's benefit as the college seeks support from elected officials for public funding and from private donors.

Public-private funding is the foundation upon which the City University's Compact rests. The Compact is the new University funding proposal that was presented for legislative approval in 2006. The Compact calls for public funding to cover all of the University's mandatory costs that are outlined in the University's Master Plan and at least 20% of all other costs associated with the Plan. The balance of the plan will be supported by an increased, efficient, and expanded philanthropic fundraising effort. During the last academic year, funding from grants, contracts and awards increased by more than \$.5 million to almost \$3.5 million. Furthermore, an additional \$650,000 was given from private donors. The Queensborough Community College foundation recently approved a draft detailed fundraising plan that will be circulated to the college community. This draft plan calls for raising \$19 million in gifts and pledges during the next six years.

Over the next five years, the College should proceed with plans to attract the awarding of major college-wide private foundation grants, as well as proceed with its plan to network with college alumni and expand its business/corporate partnerships. An increased philanthropic effort can serve to support the college mission as scholarship money allows students to choose to attend and to remain at Queensborough. Private funding can also be

used to support faculty research. In meetings concerning this long-range plan, faculty members, including department chairs in the sciences, spoke of the need for research-equipped facilities; the establishment of these needed, well equipped facilities can help to attract and retain teaching faculty.

## **CONCLUSION**

Higher education is widely recognized to be a most competitive market. Students considering Queensborough have many choices available to them. This is particularly true when one considers that Queensborough, although housed in New York City, is only two miles from the Nassau County border.

The scrutiny that higher education has faced is only going to intensify. Dissatisfaction with graduation trends and tuition costs has been voiced by elected officials and business officials throughout the country. Colleges are considering signing up to participate in value-added studies, the equivalent of demonstrating a “before” and “after” student. This is all the more reason why Queensborough must be in a position to document its many accomplishments.

As was stated throughout this document, assessment is a necessary component of any college undertaking. Queensborough cannot fall back into the habit of assessing on a five-year basis to satisfy accreditation. Of the seven Queensborough items noted for further attention by the Middle States reviewers in June 2004, five of them dealt with assessment.

It should be noted that this plan does not attempt to prioritize among initiatives discussed, nor does it address the funding that may be required. This is partly because of a belief that the expenditures needed to accomplish any of what has been recommended in this plan are not at a prohibitive level and also because of a belief that Queensborough operates under a well defined governance structure in which the respective college constituencies participate (demonstrated, for example, by the annual strategic plan process). What this long-range plan attempts to do is to set forth the equivalent of a road map as the college looks ahead over the next five years. The underlying premise is that, if you do not have a destination in mind, you will certainly never reach it. For all the reasons stated earlier in this plan, Queensborough is well positioned to become a national leader in community college higher education during the next five years.