

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
of The City University of New York

Report of the President
to the Academic Senate

February 14, 2006

Welcome to the Spring 2006 semester!

I am happy to report that the College is in good shape. Our reputation as one of the best community colleges continues to grow. There is excitement in the air. We are energized by the synergy created by your new initiatives and by the realization that we are at the cutting edge of community college education.

The convocation that was held on January 25 provided a forum for discussion of the Plan for Integrated Education (PIE). It was a day in which the college community spent time on education. It was a day in which we examined what we do and how we can do it better. We have much work ahead, but the beginning conversation was both stimulating and highly productive. Queensborough Community College is at a point in its history where it can make a significant contribution to our field of endeavor.

As you know, community colleges pride themselves on providing opportunities to everyone through an open admissions policy. However, we know that community colleges are *de facto* selective in the numbers of graduates that they produce. Most community colleges have less than 20% of their students graduating in six years. So, while most everyone can enter a community college, few actually stay through to completion. Even when we count those students who use community colleges as launching pads for a baccalaureate education and those students who come to the community college for one or two courses to gain a particular skill or engage in a particular intellectual pursuit, we lose over one-third of first-time freshmen. By *definition*, the completion rate of community college students has to be lower than those who attend colleges where a selection process was conducted *a priori*; a selection process that identified those who can meet the rigor of particular curricula.

Regardless of the methodology used for admissions, even a 30% retention rate is unacceptable

The faculty members who teach at community colleges are extraordinary. The conditions at most community colleges are difficult at best. While we work with a population that has the highest risk of failing, the funding per student at the community college is always less than that at the baccalaureate colleges or the research universities. This results in large teaching loads and a high dependency on adjunct faculty members.

Queensborough Community College, with its high percentage of full-time faculty and its pre-eminent position as part of the integrated university, is well positioned to do something extraordinary. Instead of accepting the *status quo* and continuing to perform “educational triage,” saving around one third of those who come to us, we can make it our mission to examine every aspect of the delivery of our instruction so as to ensure that the student is not given an opportunity to fail but, rather, an assurance of success. The Plan presented at the convocation calls for an approach to our students that will achieve the goal of increasing our graduation rate to at least 50% in six years, by the year 2012. This is a going to be a difficult goal to achieve, but Queensborough Community College is ready. We can achieve this graduation rate while preserving academic standards and open admissions. We can do this by focusing our attention on preventing failure through support services while attending to those who are ready to survive the rigor of our curriculum.

I urge all the Senators to become engaged in the discussions surrounding this plan and I urge all of you to become involved in the implementation of the activities that will enable us to achieve the graduation rate of 50% in six years, by the year 2012.

Budget: To achieve this goal we are going to need to restructure our current resources and seek additional revenue. We are fortunate to be well positioned to do both.

The 2006-07 expenditure plan will be prepared with consideration to the costs of the PIE. In addition, thanks to the astute calculation of our student population by our Institutional Research Department, we have qualified as a Hispanic-serving institution. This opens up the possibility of applying for and receiving a Title V grant. Considering that other colleges, such as La Guardia and BMCC, receive as much as \$500,000 per year, we will be seeking participation from faculty and administrators as to how to fund aspects of the PIE so that we can present a strong proposal to the Federal government.

We have received a small grant to fund our Black Male Initiative, and we will continue to seek additional grant funding wherever we can.

Our fundraising effort continues to move forward. We are concentrating primarily on scholarships and on funding the endowment for the Holocaust Resource Center and Archives.

The Governor's Budget Proposal, presented on January 17, is a good starting point. The senior colleges have a \$18.3 million deficit in programmatic initiatives. In addition, the Governor's proposal has a tuition revenue increase of \$17.4 million over the requested amount of \$28.3 million. This must be restored.

For community colleges, although this is the first time in memory that the Governor has proposed an increase in the basic aid to community colleges, the budget request by the University called for \$150 more per FTE that the Governor's proposed budget contains. This is approximately a \$10 million deficit for community colleges.

Finally, the TAP aid modifications are significant. If approved by the Legislature, the Governor's Executive Budget would:

- Require institutions to pre-finance TAP awards to first time TAP applicants admitted without a high school diploma, including students with GEDs or those who passed the Federal Ability to Benefit Tests. This is about 13% of our first-time student population.
- Define full time study as 15 credits per semester. Students enrolling with fewer than 15 credits would receive 80% of their aid.
- Require Full-time attendance at time of certification.
- Enhance the requirement of academic progress and good academic standing criteria for continued eligibility.

As you know, this is the first step in the formulation of a State Budget. Now, the Legislature will propose its budget and, finally, the Governor can line-item veto what the Legislature adds on to his proposal.

We must be clear about our goals: Increase base aid for community colleges to \$250 per student; increase the CUNY budget by \$17.4 million to reduce the tuition increase from \$300 to \$120; eliminate the TAP requirements for non-high school graduates and reduce the full time definition to 12 credits instead of 15; add another \$18.3 million to fully fund the Chancellor's Compact for Investment in the CUNY Master Plan. I hope that we can all make it clear to our friends in the Legislature that we need their support.

Enrollment: At this writing, the enrollment picture is steady at best. I know that you join me in thanking all the members of the college community who work so hard at "getting the word out" so as to ensure that every student who can benefit from our

services knows about us and, hopefully, comes to us. A strong enrollment is imperative for funding. But, more importantly, good enrollments are a validation of what we do at Queensborough Community College.

Lately we have gravitated to less dependency on the UAPC. We find that more and more, students make the conscious choice of coming to us directly. Therefore, I asked Susan Curtis to work with Ellen Hartigan and Winston Yarde so as to capitalize on this trend.

I remain steadfast in my belief that if we have a strong, self-contained Evening and Weekend Program, we will increase our enrollment significantly. Also, we need to make a concerted effort to become a pre-eminent deliverer of workforce development training through our Continuing Education unit.

Have a great semester.