

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
of The City University of New York

Report of the President
to the Academic Senate

March 14, 2006

Plan for Integrated Education:

Queensborough Community College is a unique institution that is now poised to do the extraordinary for our students. We can create a place where we are able to tailor educational support and academic services according to the needs of each student. We can extend the courtesies and services to our students that they deserve but that are usually reserved for elite and costly independent colleges and universities. These things we hope to do this through the Plan for Integrated Education.

As the Office of Academic Affairs moves to implement parts of the Plan for Integrated Education (PIE) at Queensborough Community College, you the Senators, through your committees, should become aware of the elements of the plan. We must identify those items that need to be reviewed by the Academic Senate, and we must consider those items in a timely manner for the pilot programs to start in September. The Office of Academic Affairs, through the Department Chairs and the Senate liaisons, has been charged by me to bring to the appropriate committees, any items that need Senate action. But, I am asking for your help as well.

When this plan is fully implemented, the student who wants to study on a full-time basis and who is sure of her/his academic goals will be able to accelerate the completion of their objectives; the student who wants to experiment will be assisted in choosing courses that can be valuable later on; the student who wants to attend part-time, evening or weekends and who wants to complete a degree, will be helped accordingly. The key is in determining as quickly as possible the student's educational goals and providing an "individualized academic prescription" to meet these goals. Then, we can provide the personalized assistance required for successful completion of the student's goal. We will use every tool available from accurate advising to linked courses, learning communities, writing intensive courses, tutoring, e-portfolios, etc. We will create a Learning Center that will provide the setting for this support and that will serve as the hub of our Academic Community. If the student comes to us without goals, we will protect their financial aid by providing careful assessment of their aspirations and providing solid academic advice. In other words, we are not just going to provide the opportunity for success; we are going to take responsibility for the success of every student.

We are engaged in nothing new. Many colleges provide these services. Usually, these are small, private, well-funded colleges. What is new is that we are attempting to do this in a large, public, not-as-well funded institution. But, we have the will; we have a fantastic, engaged faculty; we have the local reputation; for now, we are at a good place fiscally; and we have leadership willing to take some risks. And, in many ways, we are already engaged in helping students meet their aspirations. All we are trying to do, is to focus all our initiatives to ensure that we can deliver the highest possible educational services to our students in the most effective manner.

But these initiatives require your input and discussion. While the final plan may not contain all the input received, it is imperative that all of us feel free to express our thoughts and, in this manner, contribute to the development of an effective plan.

TAP Audit: As you know, we are undergoing a TAP audit by the Office of the State Comptroller. While our financial aid operation is very much improved, before certain procedures were put in place in 2003, we had some files where students were advised to take courses that were not eligible for New York State financial aid. CUNY's computer systems were not able to catch these mistakes and until we started reviewing each file manually, we allowed some students to receive TAP for courses that were not eligible. We are not the only CUNY College in this predicament; Staten Island and John Jay had the same problem when they were audited. I suspect that most, if not all, CUNY colleges would find themselves in the same predicament should they be audited. Furthermore, the audit affected not only CUNY and SUNY colleges, but all colleges within New York State.

Within thirty days, we will be receiving a letter from the New York State Comptroller informing us of the outcome of their audit. The Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Financial Aid and the Office of Academic Affairs continue to work with the State auditors to eliminate five sample cases that still remain questionable. We need the cooperation of those faculty members who may have been involved in these cases. Vice President McColloch and the Chairpersons may have to ask some of you to help us reconstruct some of these cases. I know that you will extend all the cooperation necessary to further reduce the number of cases that will be subject to a disallowance of TAP aid. Remember that each case of disallowance is magnified in significance because the audit is based on a sample of 200 students which is then extrapolated to the entire college headcount receiving financial aid.

2007 Budget: I am pleased to report that, on the State side, we might be making some real progress on the issue of TAP restoration and Basic Aid. Remember to write to your representative in Albany asking them to support our request. We are hopeful for an "early budget." As you know, the budget deadline is April 1.

On the City side, the Mayor's budget proposal contains cuts for the community colleges and the elimination of the Vallone scholarships. We have much work to do in asking the City Council to restore the Mayor's proposed cuts. The final City budget is voted upon in June.

2ND CUNY-WIDE CONFERENCE ON GENERAL EDUCATION: May 5th

Please mark your calendars for this all-day event. This is an important event for Queensborough Community College. We are leaders in this area and this is our time to shine!

Please contact your counterparts at other CUNY colleges and help make them aware of the caliber of this conference.

As you may know, a real giant in the field of Higher Education, Dr. Lee Shulman, President of the Carnegie Foundation, will be the keynote speaker. A panel of Business Leaders and CUNY Presidents will address the audience at 1:00 pm. A number of presentations will be made by faculty from Queensborough Community College and other colleges throughout the day.

Our reputation for excellence has made it possible for our colleagues to want to come all the way out to Queensborough to participate in this conference. Let us do everything possible to make it a resounding success!!!

Commencement: There are a number of changes that have been incorporated into the commencement plans for this year. Among them are a larger tent, the elimination of the rehearsal, and a new feature: departmental banners and tables where faculty, in their caps and gowns, can meet their graduates after the ceremonies. Members of the faculty are expected to attend the exercises, as the summer break begins the day after. Please make sure to order your caps and gowns early.

Our commencement speaker is Howard Lapidus. As he retires from a long and distinguished career at Queensborough Community College and commences a new phase of his life, it is only fitting that he share his experiences and feelings and with the new graduates.