AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/Chief Executive Officer:

Dr. Judith Gay, Interim President

Chief Academic Officer:

Dr. Sharon Thompson

Chair of the Board of Trustees:

Mr. Matthew Bergheiser

I. Introduction

The Middle States Evaluation Team visited Community College of Philadelphia as colleagues and peers charged by Middle States to assess the degree of alignment with the Middle States *Characteristics of Excellence*. This written report reflects the collective thinking and findings of the evaluation team.

As a team, we were charged to engage in a review process of the Community College of Philadelphia that relies on evidence to insure that the college:

- Has a mission appropriate to higher education;
- Is guided by well-defined and appropriate goals, including goals for student learning;
- Has established conditions and procedures under which its mission and goals can be realized;
- Assesses both institutional effectiveness and student learning outcomes and uses the results for improvement;
- Is accomplishing its mission and goals substantially
- Is organized, staffed, and supported so that it can be expected to continue to accomplish its mission and goals, and
- It meets the Requirements of Affiliation and accreditation standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

We want to thank the Board of Trustees under the leadership of Chair Matthew Bergheiser for their advocacy and support of the Community College of Philadelphia. We want to acknowledge Interim President Gay for your commitment; Co-chairs Susan Tobia and Pete Watkins for your joint leadership of the Middle States Steering Committee, and the Committee for your hard work and adherence to the process as defined by the college within the context of the Characteristics of Excellence, the fourteen standards, and the fundamental elements. We want to recognize the entire college community – students, faculty, staff, and administration, for your pledge to ongoing self-reflection and continuous improvement.

II. Context and Nature of the Visit

- Institutional Overview

  The Community College of Philadelphia is an accredited, associate-degree granting, public, single campus institution that has both state and local affiliations and serves a largely urban population. The College has been a member of the Middle States

Commission on Higher Education since 1968 and was last reaffirmed on November 19, 2009, when its Periodic Review Report was accepted.

The College is the largest public institution of higher education in the city of Philadelphia with 34,506 students enrolled in credit and noncredit courses during the 2012-2013 academic year. The main campus has seven buildings located in downtown Philadelphia—the centerpiece of the main campus is the renovated Philadelphia Mint building located at 1700 Spring Garden Street. Also serving Philadelphia is the Northeast Regional Center located at 12901 Townsend Road, the Northwest Regional Center located at 1300 West Godfrey Avenue, and the West Philadelphia Regional Center located at 4725 Chestnut Street.

The Institution is an open admission, associate degree granting institution which provides access to higher education for all who may benefit. The College offers more than 70 degree and certificate programs in liberal arts, science, business, health, social and behavioral sciences, career technologies, and basic academic skills, providing a coherent foundation for college transfer, employment, and lifelong learning.

In fall 2013, the Board of Trustees approved the 2013 -2017 strategic plan which focuses on the following strategic directions: (1) Fostering Student Success; (2) Making an Impact, and (3) Positioning for the Future.

The College has demonstrated its commitment to its mission, vision, values and strategic directions through innovative and noteworthy developments. These are characterized by growth in academic initiatives, student support, planning and infrastructure, and community/workforce initiatives.

- The College created three academic centers to explore significant societal issues and provide faculty development and student enrichment.
- The College general education requirements underwent a major revision. The model chosen by faculty requires students to take courses in major areas of learning including information literacy and technological competency.
- The College created 18 stackable proficiency certificates (which require fewer than 30 credits) to create a path to employment and degrees.
- The College participated in the *Achieving the Dream* initiative and was awarded Leader College Status for its progress on student retention.
- My Degree Path, an academic planning tool, was implemented to provide consistent and meaningful direction on the path to degree completion for students by faculty advisors.

> ➤ Scope of the institution at the time of the evaluation:

- Degree levels offered
  - o Certificate
  - o Associate of Art (A.A.)
  - o Associate of Science (A.S.)
  - o Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S)

- Branch campuses – none

- Additional locations:
  - o Northeast Regional Center
  - o Northwest Regional Center
  - o West Philadelphia Regional Center
  - o Neighborhood and corporate locations citywide

- Distance education programs
  - o For eight (8) programs, 50% or more is offered via distance education

> ➤ Self-study process and support *(self-study design/model, level of participation)*

- o Community College of Philadelphia chose the comprehensive design of self-study to allow the College to engage multiple stakeholders in a rigorous examination of the impact of changes since the last self-study. A Steering Committee comprised of representatives from divisions across the College, the Board of Trustees, alumni, and the student body provided leadership and assumed responsibility for ensuring the quality of the Self-Study. Due to stalled faculty contract negotiations in 2012, faculty participation in the Self-Study was less than typical or desired. After the new faculty contract was ratified in September 2013, faculty provided feedback and input into the Self-Study through face-to face forums and through electronic communication.

III.   **Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, interviews, the certification statement supplied by the institution and other documents, the Team affirms that the institution continues to meet the requirements of affiliation in *Characteristics of Excellence.*

IV. **Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements**
Based on separate verification of compliance with accreditation relevant provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and, as necessary, review of the Self-Study, certification by the institution, other institutional documents, and/or interviews, the Team affirms that the institution meets all relevant federal and state regulations and the requirements of other Department of Education recognized accreditors. The Verification of Compliance Reviewer's Report is attached.

V. **Evaluation Overview**

The Team commends Community College of Philadelphia for the earnestness with which it undertook not only the Self-Study process but engaged, to the extent possible, all members of the college community. As noted earlier, stalled faculty contracts prevented the complete participation of faculty for approximately 15 months. However, at the completion of contract negotiations, the Steering Committee and the college administration engaged the faculty in a variety of face-to-face and electronic means to insure input, feedback, and conscientious dialogue.

The Visiting Team focused on the college's mission and the use of documentation and evidence to validate its adherence to the fourteen standards as delineated in *Characteristics of Excellence*.

VI. **Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➢ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- Community College of Philadelphia has a mission that guides faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes. The mission is focused on open admissions, access, and diversity. Throughout the Self-Study, it is evident that these goals

are consistent across the campus. The College seeks to include students from a wide range of ages and backgrounds, and this is clearly evident based on their diversity data.

- A survey of faculty and staff in 2009 indicated that 96% of respondents understood how their role supported the mission. In addition, the Human Resource Survey of faculty and staff six months from their original employment revealed that 99% understood the College mission. In 2012 a student government survey indicated 50% of students were aware of the mission that is publicized in the student handbook and catalog.
- CCP clearly works closely with the community and includes its relationship with the City of Philadelphia as a key phrase in the mission. This was reflected in conversations with administrators and the Board of Trustees.
- The Institutional goals are consistent with the mission. The 2013-2017 Strategic Plan was developed and clearly aligns with the mission. The Strategic Plan specifically covers elements of the mission including access, job readiness and transfer opportunities, relationship with the community, and methods to help students achieve their goals. Conversations with faculty, administration and the Board of Trustees were evidence of this commitment. Additional evidence includes the initiatives supported by the College including Achieving the Dream, the Center for Male Engagement, and the Early Alert system.
- The mission was reviewed and reaffirmed collaboratively in 2002-2003 and the College included numerous constituencies in the reaffirmation of its mission. The mission is well known and programs and services offered at the College are reflective of the mission. The mission was reviewed again beginning in January of 2012 and after that as a kick off to the Self-Study. Although there was discussion and reflection on the mission, no follow-up occurred. This would have been an opportune time to assess the current mission and its relevancy to the future direction of the College.

➢ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- The College is to be commended for the communication of and commitment to the mission. The mission is well-known and understood by faculty and students.

➢ **Recommendations**

- The Team concurs with the College's recommendation to periodically review the mission statement to ensure that it continues to meet the evolving needs of its students and the community.

- The Team concurs with the College's recommendation to establish a cycle of review for the mission statement and assign responsibility to ensure that the mission review is completed prior to the development of a new strategic plan.

- **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

  - None

- **Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal**

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➢ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The Strategic Plans for 2008-12 and 2013-17, Enrollment Management Plan, Academic Master Plan (2014-18), Technology Plan, Integrated Marketing Plan, Diversity Plan, Facility Master Plan, and individual department plans were examined and discussed with stakeholders. The plans provided evidence that the work of the institution is linked to the mission and institutional and unit-level goals.
- The annual progress reports related to the plans illustrate that assessment data is used to set goals and inform the next plan. The College did produce an extensive environmental scan report to inform the planning process. Evidence, such as the minutes and materials from cabinet meetings and college budget documents support the finding that resources are deployed based on the goals.
- Stakeholders reported that the institutional level planning and improvement processes allow participation by various constituencies, including students. Drafts and results are posted for review and comment. Stakeholders discussed the decision-making process that facilitates major planning efforts and the assignment of responsibility for improvements and assurance of accountability.
- Unit leaders, such as the Directors of Student Services and Academic Department Heads provided written evidence of unit improvement efforts and their results.

➢ **Recommendations**

- The Team concurs with the College's recommendation that a calendar be established for college-wide planning so the Strategic Plan is the first plan completed in each planning cycle.
- The Team concurs with the College's recommendation to continue to assess institutional strategic priorities to insure the College is addressing the City's most critical priorities and is proactive in engaging other organizations as partners.

- The Team recommends the College consider methods for aligning the tenure of institutional plans so that they are more reflective of comparable operating cycles.
- The Team recommends the College create a multi-year staffing plan to inform the Strategic Plan to address the personnel deficits highlighted in standard 5.
- The Team recommends the College create a timetable for the periodic evaluation of the planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes.

- **Non-binding suggestions for improvement**

  - None

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➢ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- Based upon a review of the materials contained in the Self-Study and interviews with campus personnel, the budget process at CCP is defined and employs appropriate controls, policies and procedures. As noted by CCP in the Self-Study materials, the College should continue to strengthen communication efforts so that members of the campus community are more informed about college finances and the budget process as whole.
- The self-study and campus interviews revealed that budgets are reviewed with the Board of Trustees and college leadership.
- The budget process appears to employ consistent policies and procedures that are appropriate to support the institutional mission.
- The self-study report makes appropriate references to the strategic, academic and facility master plans. However, the dates of the planning documents do not run concurrently, nor is there mention or justification as to the need for this approach.
- The college has been effective in allocating resources to balance budgets despite enrollment fluctuations, declining public support, and an overall challenging economy.

- CCP has effectively managed debt service obligations and maintained an A1 rating from Moody's Investor Services.
- The financial projections contained in the Self-Study appear to be reasonable based upon reported historical results. The Strategic Planning documents are appropriately referenced, however, the varying operating periods covered by these plans can lead to operating challenges or missed opportunities.
- The college should continue efforts to enhance communication and definition in the budget process (documents, communication and assessment activities). As noted in the Self-Study, decisions to limit/close campus facilities should be closely monitored for impact to campus operations.
- CCP indicates that approximately 83 percent of the operating budget or $102.0 million is committed to salaries and benefits. This is an important consideration as future cost control programs may ultimately require staff reductions which can negatively impact academic operations and college morale.
- The audited financial statements presented for the years 2011 -2013 received unqualified opinions and indicated no material weaknesses in internal controls over financial reporting.

- **Recommendations**

  - None

> **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

  - The College should move forward with plans to implement a work order tracking system for campus repairs and replacements. This application will allow the College to more closely monitor operating costs and inform long term planning.

  - The Team agrees with CCP's suggestion that new revenue sources should be explored, where feasible and appropriate. Careful consideration, monitoring and assessment of these revenue sources should be employed to ensure these practices do not adversely impact the College mission.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➢ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The Community College of Philadelphia has a governance structure that is clearly defined and documented with written policies and clear flowcharts that describe the governance process. A thorough review was performed on this structure as a result of the 2004 Self-Study. This review, by a special committee to improve CCP's governance structure, included internal and external constituencies. As a result the body recommended a similar structure to the existing system. The structure is simple and well defined with a flowchart to document the process. In addition, there is appropriate documentation of procedures, bylaws, and membership selection.
- The structure includes voices from a number of constituencies including students. The Institution Wide Committee and four standing committees perform most of the internal governance work of the College. This includes academic policies and curriculum, student affairs, business affairs, and technology - all appropriately represented by faculty and staff. With the exception of the Technology Committee, all committees include representation from students. The process is inclusive.
- The College has a governance website where agendas and minutes are posted.
- The Board of Trustees is a functional body with membership appointed by the Mayor of Philadelphia. The Board of Trustees consists of 14 members. The Mayor has appointed himself to serve in the capacity of a Board of Trustees member, but has abstained from voting on financial or other areas that may present potential conflicts of interest.
- The Committees of the Board of Trustees provide evidence of a well-functioning system with bylaws in place along with conflict of interest policies, and adherence to Sarbanes-Oxley Act through the appointment of the Audit Committee. The bylaws address key areas and responsibilities.
- The Board of Trustees has committed to a biannual ethics training session and described an effective and detailed orientation.

- The board performs a periodic self-assessment and has made efforts to improve the agendas for Board of Trustees meetings to allow for discussion of critical issues.
- The Board of Trustees is committed to generating resources to sustain and improve the organization and to taking an active role in promoting and advocating for the College.
- The Board of Trustees participated in an intensive process to secure their next Chief Executive Officer to lead the institution.

- **Recommendations**

  - None

➢ **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

- While the College has undertaken a study of governance and did not make changes to the current structure, the College should consider additional methods to increase the faculty and student voice either by increasing the role or number of faculty and students in the governance structure.
- The College should continue to seek ways to improve communication between faculty, staff, and administration.

Standard 5: Administration

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

> **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The self-study presents an organizational chart that is reasonable given the size of the institution and the academic programs and services offered. A program of employee assessment and compensation review is in place to deploy resources and ensure that skills are appropriately aligned with responsibilities.
- CCP implemented a program (2002) which provides professional development to employees so that they may develop leadership skills to assume increasing roles of responsibility within the organization.
- The staffing program as presented appears to contain necessary compliance procedures to provide training, support and assessment of personnel in administrative and support roles.
- CCP has experienced turnover in critical leadership positions. In addition to several vacant and frozen positions, a number of significant roles such as finance and institutional research are presently staffed by interim positions (among others).
- As indicated in the Self-Study, there are a number of staff positions that have been "frozen" due to fiscal constraints.
- Based upon interviews with staff, there is evidence to support that CCP has developed appropriate processes to assess staffing positions to ensure that job qualifications are appropriate for classifications.
- Based upon the Self-Study and interviews with campus personnel; authority and accountability appear to be appropriately delineated. Interviews with staff and students revealed that some of the structures lack clarity and appear to contribute to a general observation of bureaucracy.

> **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- CCP should be commended for the Leadership Institute which seeks to cultivate and develop leadership skills among campus staff. Budgetary constraints have caused this program to be offered biannually as opposed to annually.

➢ **Recommendations**

- The Team recommends the College consider ways in which to fill vacant positions on a permanent basis so that operating controls, policies and process are more closely aligned and supported.
- As a result of budgetary constraints, staffing in some areas such as Institutional Research and Assessment (among others), are generally operating on limited staff with only minimal support. As part of a comprehensive review, the Team recommends the College seek to support these positions as these functions are critical to effective operations and assessment activities. These positions and departments should be incorporated into the suggested long term staffing and succession planning of the College.
- The Team recommends the College consider developing a multiyear staffing plan that is reflective and inclusive of strategic plans.

➢ **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

- The Team is in agreement with CCP that a more formal succession plan that not only identifies people who can replace outgoing leaders, but also ensures that there is a system in place for current leaders to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to lead the College in the future is needed.

Standard 6: Integrity

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

> ➤ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- There is evidence that the institution has policies and procedures in place to address student grievances fairly and impartially. The Judicial Hearing Committee and Student Appeals Committee meet this need. The procedures are available in the student handbook and on-line.
- There is evidence for ethical practices in the conduct of faculty through the disclosure forms and policies set forth in the employee handbook and obligations described in the collective bargaining agreement. Department specific requirements are outlined in documents maintained by Department Heads.
- There is evidence that the institution is working to foster a climate of mutual respect among diverse constituencies as found in the policies stated on the website and in the faculty handbook and collective bargaining agreements. Conversations with faculty confirmed this finding.
- Extensive review of the College's website revealed ample evidence that students have access to electronic catalogs; that these catalogs are archived for at least a limited number of years and have adequate indexing systems; that the College's policies, goals, mission, etc. are disseminated in a timely manner as are changes to these elements; that the information the institution provides is verifiable and truthful; that information about the institution's accreditation is available and that information about its Middle States and program accreditations is disseminated; and finally, that all information cited here is available to students and the public by its presence on the CCP website.
- Based on conversations with faculty and students there is evidence of fair and consistent treatment of various constituencies within the institution.
- Discussions with faculty revealed that a small minority is interested in academic inquiry and that support is available from the administration.
- The concept of academic freedom is spelled out within the collective bargaining agreements.
- There is evidence of an institutional commitment to intellectual property rights of those outside the college in the employee handbook. The collective bargaining

agreement references the institutional claims and rights of faculty with respect to the creation of intellectual property by college employees.
- Although most courses are offered on regular basis, some students expressed concern that certain courses are offered at a low frequency and that it is difficult for them to get into classes needed for program completion.

➢ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- Creating and maintaining a Misconduct Reporting Hotline maintained through an outside agency is a significant accomplishment since the last self-assessment.

● **Recommendations**

- The Team concurs with the College's recommendation to develop strategies to improve the relationship between administrators and faculty.

➢ **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

- A faculty/staff engagement survey should be conducted annually and the results disseminated in order to improve faculty/administration relations.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➤ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- A comprehensive assessment plan to assess all courses, programs and services and achieve the institutional mission and goals does exist. A sampling of Curriculum maps, department assessment plan reports, and non-academic unit plans were presented to illustrate that unit-level goals are clearly mapped to program-level goals and overall institutional goals.
- At the institutional level, annual reports document progress on the major goals needed to fulfill the college mission.
- To assess unit-level and program-level goals that encompasses *all* programs and services, many components of that plan have been implemented (goals set, assessment methods chosen (quantitative/qualitative), timelines displayed); QVI and 335 compliance reports are completed; databases have been established (QVI data on the institutional research website); and faculty and staff have been given ready access to that data. This access to timely data allows the program leaders to see results every year to guide changes and to ultimately inform the formal program audit conducted every 5 years.
- Administrative audits of sufficient quality for services have been performed and results discussed. Changes indicated by the results have been implemented.
- Minutes from the Board of Trustees' Student Outcomes Committee and the academic deans meeting provided evidence of the review of certain metrics (enrollments, graduation rates, etc.). A discussion of results with suggested next steps was documented. This included evidence of the decision-making discussions concerning general education goal selection, outcomes design, and some assessment results.
- The Team is unable to determine if assessment of student learning results were used to improve student achievement of the program outcomes.

➤ **Recommendations**

- The Team recommends the inclusion of pivotal course level results within the program review framework. Program Audits did not include many course level

results of student learning outcomes assessment (Standard 14). Since the curriculum maps tie assessment activities within the courses to program-level goals, without access to more summaries of pertinent course level data within the program review, it is not possible to determine if the measures are of sufficient quality that results can be used with confidence to inform decision-making for the improvement of programs. For example, if there is an identified program learning goal assessed via two courses within the program and those course outcomes are measured in the final exams, it would be useful to present a summary of results in the program review to show whether students met the program learning outcome.

- The Team recommends a review of the staffing and budget of the offices of Institutional Research and Academic Assessment and Evaluation to assure adequacy in cycling through all programs in a reasonable time to be able to close the loop and support ongoing assessment and evaluation. While stakeholders were highly satisfied with the service provided by the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Academic Assessment and Evaluation, they indicated there are insufficient institutional resources to support assignment of faculty to lead and document assessment within the unit.
- The Team recommends the establishment of an organized and sustained schedule of evaluation of the institutional assessment process.

➢ **Non-binding suggestions for improvement**

- None

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➢ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- There is evidence that the college is meeting its mission in admitting and supporting students that may otherwise be denied access to higher education and that the college has programs and services in place with outcomes. The Community College of Philadelphia is an open-admission, associate-degree-granting institution which provides access to higher education for all who may benefit. Using the Accomplishments of 2008-2012 and the enrollment management plan as a reference, the college uses key performance indicators and work teams to ensure delivery of quality services and to evaluate those services. Especially noteworthy- the college used an environmental scan and a review of the population characteristics of Philadelphia to help them strategize.
- The enrollment management plan includes a recruiting and marketing plan that closely reflects the racial/ ethnic demographics of Philadelphia. There is evidence that the college's recruitment and marketing strategy sustains enrollment in some programs and increases growth in other programs.
- There is evidence based on interviews, publications like the Dual Admissions Handout, and observations that the college publishes and implements policies and procedures regarding transfer. There is a transfer and placement office for incoming newly admitted students located in Enrollment Central.
- Based on the publications and interviews with staff of the Enrollment Central Services, the college demonstrates evidence of programs and services for special student populations such as the differentially abled student and the at risk academic student.
- Accurate and comprehensive information regarding financial aid, scholarships and loans, academic programs and necessary testing exist. This information is disseminated through the website, at various locations throughout the college including its regional centers and at Enrollment Central Services offices.
- The *New Student Registration Handbook* explains programs of study and understanding test scores.
- The *Student Affairs Guide to Assessment* is a comprehensive document that connects the division mission statement to assessment of students learning

outcomes. Additionally, there is evidence based on interviews with staff from the Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) and from the division Student Affairs Guide to Assessment (SAGA) reports that there has been an intentional culture transformation within the division to propel leadership and staff to understand why it matters to connect mission to student learning outcomes to objectives and assessment.

➤ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- The creation of the Welcome Center and the Enrollment Services Central area which consolidates many services is a significant accomplishment for the college. The space allows for better access to many services for all students.
- The College should be noted for its planning and implementation of Student Orientation and Registration at the main campus and its one day New Student Welcome at the main campus and regional sites.
- The creation of the Center for Male Engagement is a noteworthy achievement to address low persistence and graduation rates of African American males.

➤ **Recommendations**

- The Team concurs with the recommendation made by the College to continue to assess retention and its current practices, make changes where appropriate, and explore additional strategies to further enhance student success.

➤ **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

- Provide additional workshops to assist students in understanding the benefits of My CCP Portal and My Degree Path.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➢ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- There is evidence that the College's student support services undergird the mission and the vision.
- Based upon interviews, the website, selected handouts from various centers, and enrollment management reports, there is evidence that the college has programs of student support services relative to student needs. The Community College of Philadelphia has the following: The Counseling Center, the Center on Disability, the Veterans Resource Center, the Learning Lab/Student Academic Computer Center Department, and the Learning Commons.
- There is evidence that the College has an academic advising structure in place. The College has a Joint Curriculum Advising Committee to address advising concerns.
- There is ongoing assessment of student affairs and student life support services. The *Student Affairs Guide to Assessment* provides mission statements of the various areas as well as the connection to student learning outcomes.
- Student Life Support Services includes the following centers: Career Services Center and Women's Outreach and Advocacy Center. Services offered in both centers are reflective of the institutional mission and they are appropriate in addressing student needs.
- There is evidence that the College provides adequate support services in for international students.
- There is evidence that the College recognizes the importance of intentional learning outcomes in planning co- and extra-curricular activities. The College is responding to previous surveys at the regional centers when students indicated they did not have a connection to participating in student life.
- The institution recently joined the NJCAA. Students must meet eligibility requirements. This demonstrates the fact that their athletic program is regulated by a national governing body. The college uses the "Colonial Corner" and the Early Alert System to track student academic progress and to provide academic support especially to first year or high risk students.

- Based on interviews, there is evidence the College has qualified staff in support services areas. The Human Resources Office maintains qualifications.
- There are policies to ensure that procedures are in place for securing student records and for releasing student information. The college has quarterly audits to ensure compliance with changing laws.
- There is evidence that the College has published grievance procedures via the student handbook.

> **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- The Student Life area, the Women's Outreach and Advocacy Center and the Athletic Center are to be commended for their welcoming atmosphere, creativity in achieving student learning outcomes through intentional use of community events, office space, poster boards, and lounge area space.
- Also notable is the recent opening of a full service Veteran's Center, and CCP has been recognized by military publications for being "Military Friendly."

> **Recommendations**

- The Team concurs with recommendations made by the College to modify the advising model to be more responsive to student needs, emphasizing a consistent advisor/student relationship and to evaluate the caseload pilot to determine its effectiveness and ability for scaling to include a larger student population.
- The Team recommends an evaluation of current office operations given the criticality of the Office of Academic Advising to students' ability to successfully manage and negotiate their academic career at CCP.

> **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

- Provide additional workshops and instruction for students and staff explaining the differences and functions between counseling and advising.

Standard 10: Faculty

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➢ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- There is evidence that systems are in place to ensure that faculty are qualified to teach college-level courses. The standards for employment and verification procedures are consistent with the norms for community colleges and the evaluation by peers is appropriate. The roles of faculty are spelled out in the collective bargaining agreement.
- There is evidence that syllabi are updated by faculty and that there is administrative support for this process. A 2011 workshop supported these activities and discussions with faculty heads confirmed that standards for each course are reviewed by faculty committees every two years.
- There is evidence that individual faculty members are recognized for teaching excellence. Award systems within the College as well as external awards reflect this recognition. Although this recognition does exist, interviews with faculty revealed that many of them feel that administrative praise is rare and insignificant and they would appreciate a greater effort on the part of the administration to celebrate their accomplishments.
- There is evidence of administrative support for the development of faculty teaching success and professional development among the faculty. Obligatory professional development sessions at the beginning of each semester and the function of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning support this conclusion. Every semester there is a professional development seminar for all faculty.
- There is evidence of appropriate linkage between teaching and student learning in the use of student surveys and feedback to faculty members. Student evaluations and faculty peer observations are an important part of faculty reviews and are used to help faculty members improve their teaching effectiveness.
- There is evidence of published standards for appointment, promotion and tenure. The practices related to these issues are addressed in the collective bargaining agreement, and the specific requirements for each department are held in administrative offices and distributed to faculty by Department Heads.

- There is evidence that criteria applied to part-time faculty are consistent with those for full-time faculty. The collective bargaining agreements make it clear that basic standards must be met by all faculty.
- There is evidence of administrative support for faculty research and scholarship in the form of a new research lab being constructed for STEM faculty. However, research and scholarship are not required by the College for the advancement of faculty and it is rare for faculty members to conduct original research.
- There is evidence of the implementation of a clearly articulated plan for the evaluation of those involved in the educational program of the institution as is shown in the plans for program assessment and in the published standards for the academic promotion of faculty.
- There is evidence within the faculty contracts of adherence to the principles of academic freedom.
- There is evidence of the assessment of institutional policies to ensure the use of qualified professionals as stated in the Self-Study.

➢ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- Establishment of a multidisciplinary science research lab (currently being constructed) to facilitate research opportunities for science faculty members and is a significant advance in fostering faculty success.

➢ **Recommendations**

- The Team concurs with the College's recommendation to develop a systematic process for professional development for incoming Department Heads.

➢ **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

- None

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➤ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The college offers more than 70 degree and certificate programs that are consistent with the mission of CCP. Review of online published materials as well as discussions with faculty and staff provide evidence that program goals are stated in terms of student learning outcomes for various degree and certificate programs.
- The College's educational programs provide appropriate learning resources.
- Classroom space is currently being inventoried and there are plans for furniture and technology updates. Computer labs are available to students.
- Library faculty support the institution's educational programs and have worked with faculty colleagues to include information literacy and technological competency into course content.
- Evidence exists to support the claim that educational offerings at three regional centers, neighborhood sites and distance learning are of comparable quality.
- Specialized academic programs and support services exist to support the educational pursuit of adult learners.
- Transfer policies for both incoming and outgoing students are published on the College website.
- The College has developed student learning outcomes for educational offerings at both the program and course levels. However, reviews of approximately 100 syllabi demonstrate a lack of uniformity regarding how student learning outcomes are stated on syllabi.
- Linkages exist between course, program and institutional goals culminating in a coherent student learning experience as evidenced by the presence of curriculum maps and program audits.
- Limited evidence exists to verify that outcomes assessment measures are utilized in an organized and systematic way, and that the results of these measures are applied to improve teaching and learning.
- Academic programs are scheduled to be audited on a five-year cycle. Programs that are not completing a program audit submit a quality viability indicator (QVI)

or mini-QVI. This matrix is used as an early warning system, identifying concerns to be addressed prior to the five-year audit.
- New programs begin at the department level and move through the Dean of the appropriate department to the Academic Affairs Council and Academic Affairs Standing Committee for approval. Once approved at the committee level the program proposal is submitted to an institution-wide committee and the President for approval. Program revisions are subject to existing guidelines. New courses follow a comprehensive course development template.

➤ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- The college is to be commended on its use of program performance indicators which assist faculty and administration in identifying program concerns prior to the five-year audit.

➤ **Recommendations**

- None

➤ **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

- Develop uniform terminology to describe student learning outcomes on all course syllabi.

Standard 12: General Education

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this Standard.

➤ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The requirement consists of broad general education and requisite skills that align with the Standard and are consistent with the College mission and core values. Requirements include Major Areas of Learning: English Composition, Humanities, Math, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences; and Major Academic Approaches: American/Global Diversity, Interpretive Studies, Writing Intensive, Information Literacy, and Technological Competency.
- The twenty-one hour requirement is comprised of six courses in Major Areas of Learning and a seventh in Technological Competency. The selected model was designed and approved utilizing faculty input and the governance process. Interviews with faculty, including Department Heads, confirm active participation in the design.
- Courses across the curriculum, in areas such as early childhood education and nursing, fulfill American/Global Diversity, Interpretive Studies, and Writing Intensive, which facilitates students' application of general education within the major. Data from 2010-2013 shows the number of courses fulfilling these three requirements has significantly increased. The new course proposal form has a rationale section to link the course's relevance to General Education/Core Competencies; examples are provided showing this connection.
- Curriculum maps suggest that the faculty have been engaged in thoughtful discussions about how the general education curriculum relates to program level learning outcomes.
- The core competency learning outcomes include values, ethics, and diverse perspectives. The Academic Affairs *General Education/Core Competency Guidelines* generally define the course content for each area and links to Core Competencies: Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Information Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning, Responsible Citizenship, Scientific Reasoning, and Technological Competency.
- The learning outcomes in the Competency rubrics include the following on values, ethics, and diverse perspectives: Information Literacy: ethical and appropriate use of sources; Critical Thinking: "Presents multiple solutions,

positions, or perspectives"; Responsible Citizenship: ethical class behavior, "understanding diverse perspectives," including reflection on "how one's values, opinions, and beliefs are shaped...," "acknowledging the College as a place for dialogue and debate," and "participation in student clubs, organizations and activities that reflect the diversity of the College"

- The catalog effectively outlines the general education requirement and courses that fulfill each area. Students can access the information online from the "Degree Requirements" and learning outcomes are listed for the core competencies. The chart for Major Academic Approaches clearly indicates that Liberal Arts students should use the Liberal Arts Course Selection Guide, which is readily available, for distinct American and Global Diversity courses.
- General Education assessment involves collaboration between faculty and the Office of Academic Assessment and Evaluation. The Competencies are measured with course-based evaluation and out-of-class experiences. In interviews, Department Heads describe that the Office of Academic Assessment and Evaluation suggests ways to assess the student learning outcomes of each Competency. Department Heads discuss these with the faculty and advise any changes.
- The Office of Academic Assessment and Evaluation webpage reports the assessment planning, methodology, results, and suggestions for further improvement. Assessment reports show evidence that general education assessments are planned, organized, and produce results that raised some useful questions for further assessment progress. General Education assessment discussion and action for improvement is evident in Department Head meeting minutes. The Academic Master Plan 2014-2017 includes revising the General Education/Core Competencies structure.

➢ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- The process used to design and select the current general education model was systematic and included effective faculty participation.
- The Office of Academic Assessment and Evaluation effectively facilitates assessment and reports for faculty use for General Education/Core Competencies.

➢ **Recommendations**

- None

➢ **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

The Team concurs with the suggestions made by the institution in the Self-Study:

- Rather than approach assessment of General Education/Core Competency outcomes through a series of individual projects, a more sustainable approach could be achieved by assessing multiple course level student outcomes across the curriculum related to the relevant General Education/Core Competency outcomes.
- Consistent promotion of student understanding of the value of General Education/Competencies should be infused through multiple points.

Additionally, the Team suggests:
- Promote student understanding that the General Education curriculum will teach them to analyze values, ethics, and diverse perspectives through enhanced emphasis in the catalog.
- Create a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the General Education/Core Competency curriculum and outcomes in serving relevant learning outcomes in the major.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

In the Team's judgment, the institution **meets** this standard.

➤ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Basic Skills (Developmental Studies)

- The College utilizes a robust and systematic process to identify students who are not fully prepared for college-level study, recognizing that more than half of all new students will need developmental coursework in English and nearly 50% will need developmental math. This process begins with the utilization of COMPASS, the College's placement test. Developmental courses do not count towards graduation.
- The College can refer and provide relevant developmental coursework and support for the under-prepared student as evident by the Student Success Status Report by Initial Placement Level (Institutional Research Brief #189).
- The College analyzes the impact of its developmental program completion on student persistence, as reported by initial placement level. As a result of this analysis, an accelerated workshop has been implemented that aids more students in improving placement levels in reading, writing, and math.

Certificate Programs

- There is evidence that Academic Certificates and Proficiency Certificates are consistent with institutional mission and have been developed with student learning outcomes and the intention that upon completion, credits apply toward an Associate Degree. There are published program objectives, requirements, and curricular sequence for Academic and Proficiency Certificates.
- The College utilizes an Advisory Committee to provide faculty with feedback and a formal process for evaluating the Academic Certificates. As indicated in the Self-Study, there is no formal process in place that provides academic oversight of the Proficiency Certificates.

Experiential Learning (Credit for Prior Learning)

- In 2013, the College awarded academic credit to 145 students who successfully demonstrated college-level learning from other sources. Faculty who are content matter experts, and knowledgeable about the institution's criteria for awarding college credit, serve as prior learning evaluators. Students may elect to demonstrate prior learning through a standardized CLEP exam, a departmental Challenge exam, or a portfolio experience.
- The College publishes policies and procedures that define the amount of credit available by prior learning and the acceptance of such credit based on the institution's curricula and standards. Additionally, within the past year, there have been efforts to streamline the process by which students apply for prior learning, and to improve relevant college web pages to better inform students of this process. Special attention is paid to the web page for veterans to increase their awareness of prior learning.

Non-credit Offerings (Community and Corporate Education)

- The College's non-credit offerings are consistent with institutional mission and goals. They encompass three divisions: Division of Adult and Community Education (DACE); Division of Educational Support Services; and Business and Technology, Corporate Solutions.
- The divisions demonstrate articulated program or course goals, objectives, and expectations of student learning that are designed, approved, and administered under established institutional procedures and meet the state's 22 Pa. Code 335.
- As indicated in the Self-Study, a variety of measures are utilized to improve offerings: certification exams administered at the end of programs or courses; student evaluations of non-credit courses and instructors; evaluations of syllabi; and evaluation of trends in enrollment, retention, and completion.

Branch Campuses, Additional Locations, and Other Instructional Sites

- The College offers credit and non-credit courses of comparable quality at three Regional Centers and neighborhood sites, in addition to distance learning. Offerings at off-campus sites follow the same academic policies, procedures, and standards as the main campus.
- During a visit to the Northeast Regional Center, it was evident the College has invested in assuring students receive a comparable level of support services through Learning Commons that include a library, tutoring services and the student computing center.

- Regional Center directors conduct periodic student satisfaction surveys of the adequacy and appropriateness of library and other learning resources and utilize results to adjust these services or course offerings.

Distance Learning (Online Learning)

- Distance education offerings meet institution-wide standards for articulated expectations of student learning and academic rigor. The same institution-wide standards apply to parallel on-site offerings. Distance education students receive support comparable to main campus, including library electronic databases and proctored testing when needed. Additionally, a pilot for online tutoring was completed in the past year, and Educational Support Services has moved to adopt tutoring software that integrates with the learning management system.
- The planning of distance education takes into account the applicable legal and regulatory requirements, including ensuring academic integrity relative to student authentication.
- The College offers appropriate learning resources for distance courses and as indicated in the Self-Study, has identified a need to increase student support services and success for online and hybrid formats.
- Departments that offer online courses oversee the assessment of these courses. Many faculty who teach online utilize formative assessments throughout the course to remain responsive to students. Based on interviews with faculty and Department Heads in several disciplines, it was evident that online faculty are working towards developing online course assessments that would take into account additional components specific to asynchronous delivery.

Contractual Relationships and Affiliate Providers

- As indicated in the Self-Study and affirmed through interviews with staff, the College assures its contractual relationships with affiliated providers and organizations protects the institution's integrity with regard to oversight and responsibility for activities carried out on its behalf.
- There is evidence of adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of work performed by a contracted party in such areas as admissions criteria, faculty appointment, content of courses or programs, instructional support resources, evaluation of student work, and outcomes assessment.

➢ **Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices**

- It is notable that the College is exploring alternative approaches to prepare students more effectively for college-level work in the area of basic skills; specifically, a three-pronged approach: 1) a non-cognitive assessment using the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory; 2) a peer mentoring project in which successful former Level I workshop students are hired to mentor current workshop students; and, 3) coaching students through the financial aid process while they are in a workshop so they are ready to enroll in college-level courses as soon as placement scores improve.
- The College is to be commended for completing its first Administrative Audit of Distance Education in 2013 and beginning to implement recommendations. The audit demonstrates institutional commitment to establishing a formal planning process for distance learning that enhances the process for identifying online or hybrid courses and programs across departments and divisions.

➢ **Recommendations**

- The Team concurs with the recommendation made by the College to increase the percentage of students who progress from developmental courses to college-level courses by implementing and expanding strategies that have shown success at CCP or at similar institutions.
- The Team concurs with the recommendation by the College to develop a system for ensuring that all non-credit offerings are evaluated in a timely manner
- The Team concurs with the recommendation made by the College to develop and implement a plan for assessing proficiency certificates
- The Team recommends the College develop a system of assessing student learning outcomes in online courses to insure comparable success in student learning.
- The Team recommends the College evaluate student services available to distance education students, such as academic advising, financial aid, counseling, tutoring, testing, etc., to determine ease of access and suitability.

➢ **Non-binding suggestions for Improvement**

- The Team suggests that the College track students who apply for prior learning annually, including academic credits awarded per discipline. In addition, it is suggested that the College regularly evaluate the prior learning process that includes impact on institutional resources.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

In the Team's judgment, the institution **does not meet** this standard.

➢ **Summary of evidence and findings**

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- Since the submission of the Periodic Review Report, the faculty has developed program learning outcomes for all degree programs and listed them in the College catalog. Student learning outcomes at the course level have also been developed; a sample of 110 syllabi from courses across all disciplines revealed that at least 94% of course syllabi at CCP include listed student learning outcomes.
- The College engages in five distinct assessment processes (22 Pa. Code 335-Credit Course Evaluations; department-based assessment of courses; assessment of general education Core Competencies; full-scale program audits; and intermediate QVI performance indicator analysis). These assessment processes are not linked by design to each other; however, there are opportunities to intentionally connect assessment projects to fulfill multiple goals.
- Documentation at the academic department level, along with interviews with the faculty and deans, provided evidence to suggest that there is a plan for the assessment of courses and some evidence of the results of that assessment. Also, compliance with 22 Pa. Code 335-Credit Course Evaluations at exceeds 95%, suggesting an awareness of and response to assessment accountability requirements.
- The College could not present evidence of its ability to complete the cycle of assessment for all general education goals and program audits since its PRR.
- The Office of Assessment and Evaluation, Institutional Research, and Curriculum Development staff provide assistance and research expertise to the faculty in assessment activities. However, review of materials and interviews conducted during the visit at CCP all suggested to the visiting team that these support efforts were uncoordinated and fragmented. Stakeholders declared that one of the functions of the Institution Wide Assessment Committee (IWAC) is to help bring staff and leadership together to coordinate ongoing assessment, but interviews suggested a limited impact in achieving this goal.
- CCP's self-study includes many references to ongoing efforts in assessment. Upon closer inspection of the documented evidence of actual assessment of

student learning presented by the College, the team found that these claims were based on a relatively short-term experience in assessment, with processes and practices formulated primarily in the past three years. Assessment of the general education Core Competencies was nearly completed at the time of the visit, with several of these areas assessed more than once. With some notable exceptions in course-based assessment (English, Biology, Chemistry), the team determined that the direct assessment of student learning overall is at a rudimentary level.

- CCP's assessment plan includes a provision for follow-up actions. Course-based assessments reside in the various academic departments. Current process intends for results of course assessments to be shared with the academic deans and acted upon by the departments. There was some evidence to confirm that activity. Documents reviewed and interviews conducted led the Team to conclude that there was insufficient evidence that follow-up changes ("closing the loop" activities) to courses, teaching, learning, or course designs occur consistently across academic programs.
- While program evaluation (identified as "program audits") is planned on a five-year rotating timetable, the team was concerned to find that of 52 degree programs created before 2009 and still active, fully 35% have either not been audited ever or have not been audited within the past 10 years, based on an updated program summary list provided by the institution. The lack of a long-standing record of successful program audit completion is a significant weakness of current assessment practices at the College.
- A key element of Standard 14 is the sharing and communication of assessment results with appropriate constituents. Evidence suggests assessment results are shared within some departments and divisions and with key committees and the Board of Trustees. However, interviews revealed that assessment results are not consistently or evenly communicated across departments or divisions.

➢ **Requirements**

- The College must develop a systematic means by which decision-making incorporates assessment of student learning and is documented, communicated widely, and tracked (course, program, and institution levels), to ensure that the full process of assessment and program evaluation (audits) does, in fact, lead to improvements in teaching and learning, course design, and resource allocation. To be able to do so, the College must improve its current efforts in assessment of student learning in general education and in academic programs, such that assessment results are of sufficient quality to be used with confidence.
- The College must promote a culture of assessment through the development of intentionally collaborative processes among faculty and between administrative

departments and offices involved in aspects of institutional effectiveness and assessment of student learning; further, a system of ownership and accountability for assessment and documentation of student learning outcomes results is needed.

- The College must comply with its own guidelines and timetable of program reviews (audits), such that all programs are fully audited within the specified timetable of five years. All audits must include a full evaluation of student learning results in meeting program learning outcomes. Direct measures of student learning, in addition to QVI program performance measures, must be applied.
- The College must develop a strategy promoting efficiency in collaborative processes to ensure that assessment of student learning is sustainable.

VII. Conclusion

The Team again thanks the Community College of Philadelphia and we hope that the institution will be open to the ideas contained in this report, all of which are being offered in the spirit of collegiality and peer review. As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are:

- The institution replies to the Team report in a written response addressed to the Commission;
- The Team Chair submits a confidential brief to the Commission, summarizing the Team report and conveying the Team's proposal for accreditation action;
- The Commission staff and the Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully reviews the institutional self-study document, the evaluation team report, the institution's formal response, and the chair's brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission; and
- The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.