

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students

of

Community College of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA

By

A Team Representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared After a Visit to

the Campus on

January 12 – 13, 2016

The Members of the Team:

Dr. Thomas Isekenegebe, President
Bronx Community College of the City University of New York
Bronx, NY

Dr. W. Allen Richman, Dean of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research
Prince George's Community College
Largo, MD

Working with the Team:

Dr. Debra G. Klinman, Vice President
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Philadelphia, PA

INTRODUCTION

The team offers its sincere appreciation to Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) for hosting this small team visit. The team notes that considerable effort went into the production of the monitoring report and we thank the members of the CCP community for their honesty, openness and commitment to the processes of self-appraisal and self-improvement.

The team reminds the institution that, in accordance with federal regulations, Community College of Philadelphia must have its accreditation reaffirmed within two calendar years of the date when its warning was first issued (i.e., no later than June 2016). MSCHE sets the dates for reports and institutional visits to accommodate federal regulations, and to allow time for institutional due process and for the deliberation of peer evaluators, appropriate Committees and the full Commission.

REASONS FOR THE VISIT

Community College of Philadelphia hosted its decennial evaluation visit in spring 2014. On June 26, 2014, the Commission acted as follows:

To warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning). To note that the institution remains accredited while on warning. To request a monitoring report, due March 1, 2015, documenting that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Standard 14, including but not limited to (1) implementation of a documented and sustained assessment process, in all programs, that uses multiple measures of sufficient quality to provide direct evidence of student achievement of key learning outcomes; (2) steps taken to promote a culture of assessment, including evidence of support and collaboration among faculty and administration in assessing student learning and responding to assessment results; and (3) evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teaching and learning (Standard 14). To direct a prompt liaison guidance visit to discuss the Commission's expectations. A small team visit will follow submission of the monitoring report. The due date for the next Periodic Review Report will be established when accreditation is reaffirmed.

Community College of Philadelphia hosted a small team visit on March 31 – April 1, 2015. The Committee on Follow-Up and the full Commission reviewed the institution's monitoring report, the small team report and the institution's response to the small team report. On June 25, 2015, the Commission acted as follows:

To accept the monitoring report and to note the visit by the Commission's representatives. To continue to warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that it is in compliance with Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning). To note that the institution remains accredited while on warning. To request a monitoring report, due December 1, 2015, documenting evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain compliance with Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning). To request that the monitoring report include, but not be limited to, documentation of an implemented, organized, systematic, and sustainable process to assess the achievement of student learning goals in all programs that (1) uses multiple measures of sufficient quality to provide direct evidence of student achievement of key learning outcomes and (2) provides clear evidence that student learning assessment information is used to improve teaching and learning (Standard 14). A small team visit will follow submission of the monitoring report. The due date for the next Periodic Review Report will be established when accreditation is reaffirmed.

CONTACTS DURING THE VISIT

During the visit, the team met with a number of individuals and groups, including:

- President Dr. Donald General

- Meeting with Vice Presidents:
Dr. Samuel Hirsch, Vice President, Academic and Student Success
Dr. Judith Gay, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff
Ms. Carol de Fries, Vice President for Workforce and Economic Innovation

- Meeting with Deans, Department Chairs, Faculty and Senior Staff:
Ms. Krishna Dunston, Director of Assessment and Evaluation
Ms. Christine McDonnell, Coordinator of Assessment
Dr. Amy Birge, Coordinator of Curriculum Development and Associate Professor, English
Dr. Dawn Sinnott, Director of Institutional Research, Adjunct Faculty, Psychology
Curriculum Assessment Team (CAT)
Mr. Jeffrey Markovitz, Assistant Professor, English
Dr. Kristy Shuda-McGuire, Assistant Professor, Biology
Dr. Connie Watson, Director of Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and Assistant Professor, Psychology
Ms. Deidre Garrity-Benjamin, Assistant Professor, Social Science and Coordinator of Geographic Information Systems
Dr. Faye Allard, Assistant Professor, Social Science
Dr. Sharon Thompson, Associate Vice President, Strategic Initiatives
Mr. Richard Saxton, Department Head, Business Administration and Assistant Professor, Automotive Technology

Mr. Christopher DiCapua, Associate Professor, Foreign Languages
Dr. Barbara McLaughlin, Department Head and Professor of Nursing
Dr. Mary Anne Celenza, Dean, Math, Science and Health Careers
Ms. Dawn Janich, Assistant Professor, Biology
Dr. Chae Sweet, Dean, Liberal Studies
Dr. Pam Carter, Dean, Business and Technology
Mr. Mansour Farhat, Assistant Professor, Business Administration
Mr. Craig Nelson, Assistant Professor, Computer Technologies
Mr. Osvil Acosta-Morales, Associate Professor and Department Chair, History,
Philosophy and Religious Studies
Ms. Deborah Rossi, Department Head, Allied Health and Professor, Medical
Assisting
Dr. Kelly Connelly, Assistant Professor, English
Ms. Kathleen Harter, Associate Professor, Chemistry
Ms. Laureen Tavolaro-Ryley, Associate Professor, Nursing
Ms. Giriya Nagaswami, Department Chair and Associate Professor, English

TEAM FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning)

The institution was asked to provide documentation of an implemented, organized, systematic and sustainable process to assess the achievement of student learning goals in all programs that:

- *uses multiple measures of sufficient quality to provide direct evidence of student achievement of key learning outcomes*
- *provides clear evidence that student learning assessment information is used to improve teaching and learning.*

In the team's judgment, Community College of Philadelphia meets this standard.

Overall, it is clear that a culture of assessment has been developed at the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP). The college has taken steps in this process by fulfilling the fundamental elements described in the Characteristics of Excellence for Standard 14. The team commends the college for creating this change of culture. From meetings with Deans, Chairs and faculty it was clear that the culture of assessment is beginning to provide evidence to the faculty, which they find beneficial. It is critically important that the institution continue to focus on moving this culture forward and thereby continuously improving the learning outcomes, curriculum maps, metrics and the assessment process itself to develop a more mature assessment process.

The institution has an established set of written learning outcomes for general education, major programs and courses. Additionally, there are maps showing the interrelationship between courses and programs. In reading the college's monitoring report and materials the team found many examples of well written and aligned learning outcomes. The team had very positive meetings with faculty, Chairs and the Curriculum Assessment Team (CAT). The team believes that the early adopters of assessment, the Curriculum Assessment Team (CAT), are clearly eager to continue the development of the assessment process. Developing a mature assessment process will require that faculty and assessment leaders are given more professional development concerning Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and mapping. This professional development should come from both internal and external sources.

The institution has documented the process for evaluating learning outcomes in the Manual for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes. The assessment procedures describe a process by which departments are primarily responsible for identifying methods of assessment, assessing student learning, reporting the percentage of students that met the learning outcomes and the use of results to improve teaching and learning. The departments are supported in part by the CAT members, and the Chairs and Deans oversee the assessment process. The ongoing sustainability of this process needs to be

demonstrated because it is relatively new, but the process is being sustained currently. Some aspects of the reporting requirements may be worth reviewing to remove redundancies and to streamline processes. During interviews, it was clear that the faculty have started to find the learning outcomes assessment data useful for improving their teaching. This has resulted in a shift in thinking regarding the purpose of assessment. This shift has planted a seed that will naturally grow to a continuously sustainable assessment process. It will be important for the college to continue to nurture this early excitement and continue to support its growth to ensure the sustainability of the assessment process. With this in mind, it is suggested that the college establish more clearly written roles for each group/individual involved in the assessment process.

In the teams review, some assessments conducted by academic departments at the institution are accurate and meaningful in that they offer quality data appropriate for action. Some other assessments may benefit from review and refinement. The importance of what to measure, where to measure it, etc. were all issues discussed at various times during interviews. Once again, what the team observed was the early development of a strong assessment process at CCP. In order to continue the development and sustainability of the process, further professional development for the CAT and others will be of significant importance. CCP needs to learn how other community colleges are handling these same types of issues for further development of the CCP assessment process.

During interviews with the VPs and Deans, there were multiple examples of improvements that have been made as well as planned improvements moving forward (e.g., revamping the SharePoint pages and interconnecting with CANVAS). While there is evidence of systematic improvements occurring of the assessment process itself, it is recommended that the college more formally designate points in time when the assessment of the assessment will occur, what kind of data will be collected and who will be involved in this reflective improvement process.

CCP has been able to establish broad communication about the learning outcomes process through the use of SharePoint. The documentation provided evidence that the materials were publicly available for use by all college constituencies. During interviews, there were multiple instances where the college personnel discussed accessing the materials within and across their departments/divisions in order to obtain needed information. In addition, it was noted that this access allowed for comparisons and sharing of assessment practices across divisions.

Significant Accomplishments

- The team commends the college for bringing to fruition a cultural shift at the institution, which demonstrates a strong commitment to the assessment of student learning outcomes at all levels.

- The team commends the college for changes in structure and leadership to support the success of the assessment process (e.g., CAT, combining Assessment and IR offices).

Suggestion

- It is suggested that the college more clearly delineate and define the roles played by support mechanisms in the assessment process (CAT, coordinators, Chairs, Deans, etc.).

Recommendations

- It is strongly recommended that the college continue to focus on assessment of student learning with a heavy focus on professional development (inside and especially outside of the institution) so that continuous improvement of the assessment process occurs and thus the process matures appropriately.
- The team recommends that the college establish written guidelines about how the student learning process fits into institutional assessment and budgeting.
- The team recommends that the college establish a timeline and benchmarks for assessing the effectiveness of the student learning assessment process.
- The team recommends that the college make intentional use of learning outcomes assessment results to inform the new strategic plan.

CONCLUSION

The team again thanks everyone at Community College of Philadelphia for their hospitality, time and dedication. The team reminds the institution that the information contained in this report, along with the institutional response to these findings, will be reviewed first by the Committee on Follow-Up and then by the full Commission. The team hopes that the college community will be open to the findings contained in this report, all of which are offered in the spirit of collaboration and peer review.