

Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students  
of  
BROOKLYN COLLEGE  
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
Brooklyn, NY 11210

by  
An Evaluation Team Representing the  
Commission on Higher Education  
of the  
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

Prepared after study of the institution's Self-Study Report  
and a visit to the campus on April 18-21, 1999

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**This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an education service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist City University of New York, Brooklyn College. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.**

## **AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT**

Date when instruction began: 1930

Year of first graduating class: 1932

President/CEO: Dr. Vernon E. Lattin

Chief Academic Officer: Dr. Laura Kitch (acting)

Chair of the Board of Trustees: Dr. Anne A. Paolucci

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Brooklyn College was established in 1930 as the first public coeducational liberal arts college in the City of New York. Now one of the eleven senior colleges in the CUNY System, Brooklyn College is a comprehensive, multifaceted state-funded institution of higher education enrolling over 15,000 students in a wide variety of liberal arts, professional and career-oriented programs leading to baccalaureate and master's degrees, and advanced certificates. Brooklyn College also participates in the CUNY doctoral programs, including campus-based programs in the sciences.

Located in the residential Flatbush section of Brooklyn, New York, one of the nation's largest and most diverse urban areas, Brooklyn College is a 26 acre campus with over two million gross square feet of buildings for teaching and learning, study and scholarship, cultural, social and recreational activity, and administrative and operational functions.

Brooklyn College prepared a comprehensive Self-Study with emphasis on institutional effectiveness and integrity. The study's purpose was to examine the College's Mission in view of its practices (integrity) and to determine that mission. While the Team found several areas needing additional or increased attention, we observed many strengths at Brooklyn College, and would like to begin our report by noting several of the most significant institutional strengths.

First, the Team congratulates Brooklyn College on the award of the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for History to one of its many distinguished faculty, and commends the College for its long and continuing history of producing high achieving graduates and award winning faculty.

The Team was impressed with the commitment of the faculty to Brooklyn College students and the dedication of the administration and staff to supporting and promoting the work of the faculty and the well-being and progress of students, even in the face of recent serious financial challenges and significant staff and faculty turnover.

Other indicators of strength and excellence for which we commend Brooklyn College are the nationally recognized core curriculum which serves well as the heart of the College's liberal arts and sciences mission; a rich array of educational options for undergraduate students, including several new interdisciplinary programs; and a filmmaking department recently recognized by the press as one of the best in the world.

Also noteworthy is the School of Education's current work in partnership with the library and the Brooklyn High School division, to strengthen the role of technology in the high schools and College classrooms and to increase students' access to a variety of opportunities available on the College campus, including online coursework.

The Graduate Division is to be commended, as well, for its community-involvement and its foresight in developing and marketing within the Brooklyn area several new and innovative programs.

This report will focus on the Team's findings and responses to the broad areas addressed in the Brooklyn College Self-Study and included in the standards for accreditation delineated in the Middle States Association's *Characteristics of Excellence*.

## II. THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE MISSION

With its primary goals of access and excellence, Brooklyn College shares the mission of the City University of New York (CUNY). Within this context, Brooklyn strives to provide a superior education in the liberal arts and sciences; to promote excellence in teaching, advance the frontiers of knowledge through research and scholarship, and stimulate creative achievement and intellectual growth. Among its goals are to provide students with the knowledge and skills to live in a globally interdependent world and the support services to help them succeed; to develop in them a sense of personal and social responsibility; foster a campus environment hospitable to multicultural interests and activities; and, to draw upon the myriad resources of the city to enhance its educational mission.

This mission and these goals are included in all major documents from College bulletins to promotional and fund-raising brochures. Although not always expressed in the same language, the purpose and direction of the mission of Brooklyn College is understood and accepted by the College community. Faculty and administrative staff identify with the goals and are generally guided by them in their educational, governance, and leadership actions.

### III. THE ACADEMIC MISSION: TEACHING AND LEARNING

At the root of the Brooklyn College Mission is its valued tradition of offering a liberal arts and sciences education which provides students with "the knowledge and skills to live in a globally interdependent world and the support services to help them succeed." A strong measure of an institution's effectiveness and integrity in achieving its mission is found in the extent to which students are able to negotiate the College structure, feel positive, progress and, sooner rather than later, succeed in learning and beginning or continuing a career.

#### **Students and Student Life/Student Support**

In our conversations with individuals and groups including an open meeting with student leaders, gatherings of student services staff, and informal interviews of students walking across campus, the Team found Brooklyn College students to be an earnest, hardworking, and highly diverse group. They are strongly motivated to succeed and intensely goal directed. They are proud of their ability to meet the high academic standards set by Brooklyn College and are determined to cope with the numerous and often quite serious challenges in their personal lives. Similarly, the faculty and staff seem to care deeply about the personal welfare of their students and are proud of their accomplishments. However, they often feel hampered because of long term institutional financial problems which have resulted in reduced staffing, deferred facilities construction and maintenance, and an inability to provide the kind of personal advisement and mentoring the student body's demographic profile would suggest is needed (e.g., first generation college goers, students who work part time, immigrants, members of racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups, etc.). While both students and College employees appear to expend a great deal of energy merely keeping things afloat on a day-to-day basis, we encourage the College to continue seeking new ways of addressing these needs and solving what the Self-Study describes as "the built-in problems of a commuter college." The Team believes that community-building is a central task for this College as it continues to experience an influx of large numbers of transfer students and to address appropriately the tensions inherent in such a diverse student body. The Team was pleased to observe, however, that despite their many differences, students at Brooklyn College share many characteristics: high ambitions, a fierce dedication to succeeding in their careers, and a clear pride in their membership in the Brooklyn College community.

We also noted improvements in the institution's freshman retention rate for participants in the Freshman Program (75% retention after four semesters.) Block scheduling leading to the formation of learning communities, better first-year advisement, accelerated summer programs, and academic progress alerts contribute to this improvement. Second-year advising initiatives also appear promising as a mechanism for further improving retention, as recognized in the Self-Study. Transfer articulation also needs continuing improvement. Some students indicated that they find applying transfer credits difficult, and they must take more than 120 credits in order to graduate. We also noted that student and academic support services are spread out geographically and by administrative organizational unit. For students unfamiliar with the "landscape" of higher education institutions, this may create additional challenges.

Significant reductions in campus crime have taken place since the early 1990s adding to the institution's attractiveness to students and employees. Need-based financial aid is generally adequate to properly assist students. The SEEK Program has achieved positive results (including an overall better than 90% remediation pass rate for its students by the end of the first year). Its intrusive methods of student counseling and monitoring hold promise for other students, possibly those at the upper-class level where there is the perception that the College's heavy reliance on adjuncts prohibits some students from receiving the amount of mentoring and counseling they would like. Significant progress has been made in providing strong services for and access to facilities and programs for students with disabilities. Similarly, substantial progress has been made in gender equity in athletics.

Overall, the Team finds that with regard to student life and support services, Brooklyn College is maintaining its "core" academic mission. Its identity as a rigorous and demanding institution instills a sense of pride in its students and a recognition that the College is moving them beyond what, for a substantial number of students, has been inadequate high school academic preparation and life in essentially segregated Brooklyn neighborhoods. For example, the reaction to externally imposed new remediation standards has been positive, productive, and forward-looking. Students (while expressing some uneasiness and, at times, resentment) are making good progress toward meeting the new standards. A positive byproduct for Brooklyn College is the enhanced formal relationships it has established with its feeder high schools.

In view of these important strengths and our several concerns, the Team offers the following suggestions:

1. Efforts at overall community building remain important. The College should continue efforts to develop in students both an appreciation of their differences and understanding of their commonalities. Among the ways in which this could be accomplished are pooling resources from disparate student organizations and retaining some portion of student fees in order to produce programs designed to strengthen each student's institutional affiliation and to provide mediated resolution of some of the conflicts seemingly endemic to the current two-party system in Student Government. It might help also to establish additional student organization offices, which could serve as useful home bases for students who often have few mechanisms to gain a sense of connectivity to the institution, given their multi-faceted home, work, and family responsibilities.
2. The Team suggests that the College reconsider the question of on-campus residences. Such facilities could help attract Brooklyn residents who now leave the city to attend college including some with high levels of academic preparedness. They also could provide a haven from the distractions posed by home lives and communities, faced by significant numbers of current Brooklyn College students.
3. In addition to raising money for student internships, the College should consider the creation of cooperative education programs. Such programs allow students to earn academic credit, try out careers, experience professional level work, and earn pay. Cooperative education programs also serve to tie the surrounding community more firmly to the College and its goals.

4. The Team also suggests expanding childcare facilities to serve the many students with children whose academic progress is hampered by competing demands for their time posed by family responsibilities. This may be especially helpful to the College in responding to the Self-Study recommendation to consider more recruitment of non-traditional and graduate students.
5. Student participation in the co-curriculum can be encouraged by initiating a student development transcript memorializing students' leadership activities, service participation in governance, etc. This could help students with career placement.
6. We believe that the rehabilitation of campus athletic facilities would do much to encourage faculty/staff/student out-of-class interactions, support wellness education, help Brooklyn remain competitive with other CUNY institutions and build institutional identity through successful varsity teams.

## Faculty

The faculty, without question, are central to any institution's fulfilling its mission effectively and with integrity. As noted in *Characteristics of Excellence*, "the faculty are responsible for devising and developing an institution's academic, professional, research and service programs within the framework of its education mission and goals. The faculty must consist of competent, committed individuals academically prepared and qualified." In our review of printed materials and interviews of faculty groups, committees, and individuals, the Team found the Brooklyn College full-time faculty of 487 and part-time faculty of 493 to be a well credentialed and motivated group of professional men and women, committed to the intellectual growth and professional development of their students. In addition, a large percentage (more than 90%) of the faculty hold the highest degree offered in their field of study and are productive in research and scholarship. Many individual scholars have national and international reputations. Indeed, Brooklyn College's reputation as one of CUNY's leading senior colleges is due in large measure to the impressive scholarly and professional achievements of its faculty and their successes in the prestigious Core Curriculum and other innovative educational programs.

In addition to the major strengths of the faculty, the Team found several areas of concern. The Brooklyn College faculty is largely senior in composition. Recent statistics show the average age of their full-time faculty to be 55, with over 80% holding the rank of associate or full professor. As Brooklyn College indicates in its Self-Study, and the Team confirmed during the visit, there is a missing "middle generation" of faculty due to attrition over the last decade and early retirement initiatives and the College's inability, until very recently, to recruit qualified replacement or new faculty at middle as well as early career stages. If this situation persists, Brooklyn College will be faced with major challenges over the next ten years in appropriately addressing its academic mission and strategic goals. The Team strongly urges the faculty and administration to continue their joint efforts in developing a campus-wide plan to carefully address the challenge of rebuilding the faculty so that not only scholarship and teaching excellence are maintained, but strength is retained in curriculum development and governance leadership as well.

Also important is continued faculty development initiatives at the departmental and institutional levels. Currently Brooklyn College sets aside annual budgets for this purpose, although various departments indicated that the level of institutional funding for faculty development was inadequate. Institutionally supported faculty development activities include innovation in teaching methods, use of technology in the classroom, and research opportunities at the College or elsewhere. Peer mentoring of new faculty is occurring in a few departments. However, some faculty members interviewed by the Team complained of major drawbacks to their active participation in these activities. These "drawbacks" include a heavy workload (courses and committees), resulting in faculty "burnout" and not enough, or nonexistent, release time to engage in professional development endeavors.

Faculty diversity also continues to be a major concern at Brooklyn College, as expressed in the Self-Study and by the great majority of the faculty interviewed by the Team. The 1996 Brooklyn College Diversity Plan addresses the faculty diversity problem especially in terms of compliance with affirmative action regulations. One of the major long-range goals of this plan is to improve diversity at the College by promoting significant recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities, including women, for the faculty. The achievement of greater faculty diversity and an overall increase in faculty numbers will help resolve several related issues such as student diversity and faculty communication with students as mentors and advisors. To illustrate, some faculty members said that their many responsibilities (governance, advising, curriculum development, and review) together with mandated high teaching loads and the research and scholarship required for promotion and tenure lead not only to the "faculty burnout" described earlier in this report, but are aggravating issues in terms of retaining minority and nontraditional students and generally improving diversity in the student population. In more than one meeting they indicated that the quality of communication between faculty and students and the mentoring process that should be occurring are seriously hampered by the lack of sufficient faculty (numbers and time) to address the academic needs of these and all students outside the classroom. While we acknowledge the Self-Study's findings (in a student satisfaction survey) that most (three out of four) of the College's commuter student body have little contact with faculty outside of the classroom, particularly given the number of part-time faculty, we believe that the faculty would like to remedy this situation. In all meetings the faculty appeared caring and dedicated to their profession, and expressed willingness to go beyond the call of duty for their students and the institution.

The Team further agrees with the Self-Study that under the leadership of President Lattin, initiatives have been developed that demonstrate the College's support and firm commitment to the principles of diversity and pluralism — in the faculty and the student body. These initiatives have led to increased levels of awareness and sensitivity to diversity throughout the College.

To continue its tradition of an excellent and hard working faculty and increase the gains that have been made over the last few years in expanding the College community to include more faculty from underrepresented groups, the Team offers these suggestions:

1. The Team suggests that new faculty hiring and replacement of retirees continue to be given top priority to prevent having a "lost generation" of scholars and teachers. As the president has indicated, the College's number one priority during all of the budget

reductions of the 1990's has been "faculty lines and replacement of retirees." In spite of budget cuts, since 1991 (through Fall 1999) the College will have hired 149 new faculty. As a result of conscious efforts to improve diversity, 28% of the new hires were minorities and 53% were women.

2. Efforts should be made to increase support for faculty involved in formal research and scholarly endeavors, especially if their projects include graduate or undergraduate student participation. In addition, the faculty should be provided greater development opportunities, focused not only on their specific professional needs, but to increase their ability to provide leadership in the assessment and improvement of programs and curricula.

In order for the College to meet its stated goals in its Diversity Plan and mission statement, and to maintain its institutional integrity regarding the central role of faculty in its academic mission, we also make the following recommendation.

#### **Recommendation 1:**

The Team recommends that significant efforts be made to continue improving Brooklyn College faculty demographics, generally through the recruitment of high quality faculty at middle and early career stages and the expansion of support (including non tax-levied funds and grants) for faculty development and advancement; and specifically in terms of increasing currently underrepresented minority and women faculty.

The recommendations of the Brooklyn College Diversity Plan should be implemented as quickly as possible and monitored for longer-term outcomes. In addition, the Center for Teaching, Transformations, Faculty Day, and other recent initiatives should continue to be supported, but assessed frequently to ascertain their impact on the College's achievement of its academic goals.

#### **The Status of Educational Programs and Curricula**

Since the last team visit to Brooklyn College in 1987, many developments have impacted higher education, including the growing demands for accountability and more efficient use of resources. State revenues declined during this period, especially in the City of New York where every public agency was affected by a reduction in state taxes and revenues. It is clear that Brooklyn College was no exception. But, in spite of the scarcity of revenues, the College has been judicious in responding to fiscal mandates, has remained positive, and has continued on the pathway of excellence in the development and offering of academic programs.

Consistent with its mission and the program analyses in the Self-Study, Brooklyn College offers a broad range of curricula in the liberal arts and sciences and in professional and career-oriented areas. Recently added to the rich array of undergraduate educational options are several new interdisciplinary programs, the revision or elimination of a number of programs, and the creation of 35 minors. At the graduate level, new programs are being developed in public health

(M.P.H.), organizational principles (a collaborative effort among psychology, political science, economics, sociology, theatre arts management, and health and nutrition sciences), and in the area of art, digital media (MFA).

The Team commends the graduate school for its foresight in developing and marketing, within the Brooklyn community, several new and innovative programs. Particularly impressive is the College's recent recognition by the press for housing one of the best filmmaking departments in the world. At the undergraduate level, there also have been many rewarding educational innovations for which the university should be commended. Prominent among these is the core curriculum, which is distinctive in the strong liberal arts education it requires of all baccalaureate students. The 13 core study areas which comprise the core curriculum are designed to expose students to the principal branches of learning (the arts, humanities, social sciences, and science), as well as to provide them with a rigorous foundation for study in any discipline. As was pointed out to the Team, the College's Core Curriculum faculty meets annually to review and revise the Core. For example, Core 3, "People, Power, and Politics," is an introduction to the Social Sciences through the study of the structure of power in American society. The course focuses on class, race, gender, and ethnicity. The core is now on the eighth edition of a reader created by faculty members from the Political Science and Sociology departments. The course has been continually revised since its initial inception to incorporate new trends in American society and the latest literature in the field. Moreover, the issues raised in Core 3 have been incorporated into other core courses.

In our review of undergraduate and graduate bulletins, academic program review reports and other materials, including the Self-Study, as well as our interviews and meetings with faculty, we found a good balance in the requirements for degrees between specialized studies and general education. Overall, Brooklyn College has many fine undergraduate and graduate programs which seem to be sound and effective. The transfer process seems to be working as well, given the recent influx of transfer students. However, as noted earlier in this report, the difficulty students find in applying their transfer credits needs to be looked into, with an eye toward a better articulation policy or process.

In our meetings with faculty and administrative staff, and our review of curriculum revisions and academic policy changes since the College's last reaccreditation review, the Team found consistent evidence that the Brooklyn College curriculum is dynamic. The institution continually makes efforts to improve the quality of education it offers. These efforts reflect the College's objectives of providing offerings in emerging fields, raising standards for admission and retention, increasing the intellectual stimulation of students, and incorporating innovative and educational approaches into curriculum offerings.

We found faculty, despite constraints described in the previous section, to be involved in pedagogical innovations, including classroom methods, learning styles, and teaching techniques. To support these efforts and innovations, Brooklyn College successfully operates a Center for Teaching, as well as the Honors Academy at Brooklyn College, the academic program which is the umbrella for its Scholars Program, Ford Colloquium, and the Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship. In addition, there are a number of centers designed to integrate the principles and goals of the College's mission. These include the Center for Diversity and Multicultural Studies,

Center for Personal and Career Counseling, Center for Teaching, and the Center for the Study of World Television. Although there seems to have been no formal assessment of the work of these and other centers, their goals are commendable, and they are perceived very favorably by Brooklyn College faculty, students, and other members of the community.

With these strengths in the Brooklyn College educational programs and curricula are several challenges that the institution faces as it prepares for the new millennium. No doubt, many of these challenges are the same confronting urban colleges throughout the nation. However, the Team agrees with the Self-Study's emphasis on several noteworthy themes instituted to enhance Brooklyn College's academic mission for the year 2000 and beyond. These themes center around race, class, and gender concepts as they relate to changes that are occurring or must occur in the student body, faculty, and curriculum.

The Team offers the following suggestions to strengthen these themes:

1. Through the integrated work of College committees (e.g., planning and budget, Chairs Committee, Faculty Council), the College should take steps to ensure that all department and program curriculum goals and objectives are linked specifically to the College mission and vision.
2. Further, the College should ensure linkages of department and program curriculum goals and objectives with specific outcomes assessment measures for retaining and graduating students.
3. The College mission and vision and department goals and objectives, as well as assessments should be developed around global concepts of race, class, and gender. This is especially important for a city college that includes such a polyglot of the world's people.
4. The College faculty and administration should explore ways to make team-teaching and interdisciplinary instruction more feasible at Brooklyn College. As part of this exploration, a committee might be established to consider ways to enhance and institutionalize interdisciplinary curriculum development and team-teaching and to make recommendations as appropriate.
5. The Team suggests that as the College reviews its mission and goals, ideally as a part of its new planning process, it should consider appropriate revisions which clarify the role of research in faculty responsibilities and identify the place and proportion of graduate studies in the Brooklyn College curriculum.

### **Library and Learning Resources**

As community and college libraries reshape their collections and restructure their organization and procedures in response to the new information era, the Brooklyn College Library is emerging as a leader in the application of technologies to learning. It has assumed

responsibility for faculty development, with respect to incorporating technologies into teaching, and is serving well as home for Academic Information Technologies.

Like other areas of the College, the library has been significantly affected, in collections and staffing, during the recent period of fiscal constraints. Yet it has continued to function and accomplish its goals. Among its major strengths are: the integration of technologies into resource and service programs, including a significant Web presence, and 350 networked computers in its facility; its plans for a more advanced online library information system for the management of circulation, acquisitions, cataloging, and serials systems, with support from the CUNY Central System; and a large and growing collection of bibliographic and full-text electronic resources that include both CD-ROM and web-based resources, electronic journals and reference works; and the increased availability of its collections through the recent completion of a comprehensive inventory as a way to ensure the accuracy of its bibliographic records. The library also has many successful grants, including the FIPSE virtual core grant, the TIIAP high school electronically based learning grant, and the new visions grant for archival and community programs.

The Team especially commends the library for its development of the new Library Cafe as a high tech, inviting environment for student computing. Though open only a few months, the Library Cafe appears to be well appreciated by students who are using it heavily. Faculty also are bringing students to the facility to work with information technology, a sign of both the need for and success of this kind of facility.

The Team believes that Brooklyn College is definitely on the right track in planning and developing the new library facility as a hub for teaching multimedia and information technologies. The library's outreach to public high schools is an excellent way of serving the community and helping to strengthen the information literacy and academic performance of students who, as a result may be better prepared to succeed in college.

Clearly, the Brooklyn College Library has a forward-thinking and innovative staff who already have many major accomplishments and are seeking positive and innovative ways to prepare for the new information era. However, while the library is addressing collection and information needs in innovative and creative ways, including cost-sharing with others in the CUNY System and building the Friends of the Brooklyn College Library, staff frequently cited the many years of budgetary difficulties as factors which have made (and will make) it difficult to maintain and develop collections, to adequately staff the new facility, and to support new and emerging student and departmental needs.

#### Suggestions:

1. The comprehensive inventory of the circulating collections that is nearing completion has generated a listing of titles of books that are no longer on the shelves or in circulation. It will be important to review this list, in conjunction with the academic departments, to identify those titles requiring replacement.

2. In two years, the library will move into a new building that is 50 percent larger than the existing one, with a doubling of its computing capacity. The College needs to recognize that the expanded capacity and services will require additional staffing, ranging from computing and technical personnel to student workers and custodial personnel. Moreover, the new library building underscores the need for the library to participate as a major information service provider in the College-wide technology planning process.

## IV. TECHNOLOGY

### Teaching and Learning Resources

Brooklyn College has a number of pioneering and creative faculty who have spearheaded work on using technology for course enrichment and for exploring ways to make learning active and students open to discovery and exploration. This work is reflected in the evolution from the web core initiative to the virtual core as a program that seeks to provide the best learning experiences from both in-class and web-based instruction for students in the general education program.

The selection of the core (as opposed to working with courses that are unrelated to each other) as the focus for web page creation and web module development, opens up new possibilities for students to learn about relationships between and among the diverse disciplines and to gain the perspectives of other disciplines. Additionally, the selection of the core as a primary area for technology integration has given faculty development a new focus, and should facilitate incorporation of some of the "best practices" of the core into the curriculum and pedagogy for majors. Brooklyn College appears to be developing a model of "two-thirds class time and one-third web-based instruction" that may be useful for others to consider as they seek to think through the issues of what works best.

The School of Education is currently working in partnership with the library and the Brooklyn High School division to strengthen the role of technology in the high schools and college classrooms and to increase students' access to a variety of opportunities available on the College campus, including online coursework. The School of Education is also working in collaboration with other CUNY resources and the New York City public schools to develop a federal grant to 1) build faculty capacity in the area of technology, 2) develop technologically rich field experiences for Brooklyn College students in schools, and 3) conduct research on the effectiveness of the instructional use of technology in a variety of settings. One faculty member is currently using CAUCUS (a conferencing software program) with her students to provide a forum for discussion outside of class; another has posted the work of the children enrolled in the early childhood center on campus for her students to observe and respond to, including the use of narratives as a research tool. The math and science education faculty continue to explore ways to use technology to increase student interest and to help them perform effectively at high levels in math and science.

In the Division of Graduate Studies, doctoral students participate in interactive television classes, MFA (Masters of Fine Arts) students participate in videoconferencing with artists and others at remote locations, and there is an interest in exploring the results of asynchronous learning for educational enhancement.

There are, of course, many other examples of technology usage in the various departments and other units of the College.

The lack of resources to keep up the rapid changes in technology is a key issue for the College. This includes the need for resources to attract and keep faculty and staff with expertise in technology and its use in educational settings, and to continue, even increase, the development programs that train faculty (and students) in the use of technology as an effective teaching and learning tool.

#### Suggestions:

1. The next two years will see major developments in the implementation of the new telecommunications infrastructure and in the building of the new library facility as a hub for the use of multimedia and other technologies. Given the new availability of networked classrooms and spaces and the possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning with visuals and sound, it will be critical that faculty are involved in making decisions about technology support and usage. Faculty development needs to be a significant component of technology planning.
2. There are some quantitative and qualitative evaluative studies being undertaken, with comparative data and narratives on technology as a teaching and learning resource. This is an important and exciting area for research and assessment, and more needs to be done to add to our knowledge about how technology works in an educational setting. As Brooklyn faculty continue to work on the creation of a "cybercore," it will be important for them to get involved in this research and assessment on an ongoing and, perhaps, more formal basis. Therefore, Brooklyn College is encouraged to continue to build a knowledge base of research about technology and pedagogy based on its evolving virtual core work and to continue to disseminate the emerging results to the campus and to the higher education community.

#### **Infrastructure and Organization**

The Brooklyn Self-Study explores the issues associated with technology in-depth including characteristics of the College's current capacity, the organizational structure, and a number of issues needing further examination.

The Team observed a noticeable commitment to using technology for the accomplishment of the College's Mission. Indeed, embracing technology begins with the president and is present throughout the College. There are significant technology infrastructure projects underway or being planned. In addition, many faculty are active users and advocates of technology. Academic programs and applications of technology to teaching, learning, and research seem to be driving the use of technology — as opposed to technology being seen as an end in itself.

The Team found a number of effective strategies and structures in place to implement technology initiatives. Especially noteworthy are the partnering efforts of faculty, administration, and programs and the initiatives of identifying a technology representative in each department. Through the advisory committee on academic computing, all are working

toward shared outcomes. Overall, we found a strong sense of energy, enthusiasm, and creativity within the technology organization.

There are several concerns, however. There does not seem to be a coherent, overall, fully integrated technology plan. The lack of a plan is reflected in the fact that there seems to be no direct relationship between technology plans at the unit level and the College level, and between academic and administrative information technologies and instructional technology services. Equally important the College does not have a comprehensive, written life-cycle plan to support and continue, much less expand, the technology infrastructure of which it, rightfully, is so proud.

### **Recommendation 2:**

The Team recommends that Brooklyn College develop an overarching, unified, and coherent technology plan, with a formal life-cycle commitment. A life-cycle plan at this stage is a policy statement, not a specified budget commitment. Given the rapidly growing importance of technology for teaching, learning, and research, it will be critical that faculty are included as key participants in the development of the plan. In fact, as part of the new technology planning process, the College should conduct a needs assessment of faculty and staff lines to identify persons with expertise in the new educational technologies who can contribute most effectively to programmatic and faculty development. It will be important also to address the need for both "high tech" and "low tech" planning so that individual student and faculty needs are addressed appropriately. Clearly, faculty must be full participants in campus technology planning activities. Finally, the College should consider bringing technology together (for planning and for operational purposes) at the highest level of the organization by having a chief information technology officer (CIO) who reports to the president. Because Brooklyn College has chosen to make its future so dependent on the effective use of technology, the organizational visibility and coordination that this plan and office would create make it worth consideration as a priority.

## V. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

### Resources

The College operates its facilities and manages its financial resources within the policies and practices of the State of New York and the City University of New York. Responsible staff seem to be well versed in and experienced with the requirements of financial control and management. There is appropriate separation of duties so as to avoid "conflicts of interest" among the operation, management, and oversight functions.

Although this report does not specifically analyze the amount of funding available to Brooklyn College, and the Team was made aware of serious financial constraints by faculty and others, there appears to be adequate funding available to meet the basic needs of a senior college of CUNY, and fiscal resources are managed effectively. We also found effective communication existing among the College executives regarding allocation of funds to proposed activities and projects. Short-term plans also receive rational consideration. We were also pleased to note that the College is moving toward a "charge-back" system for selected services and is implementing an online, electronic budget reporting system. Piloting with designated support offices demonstrates a well-organized implementation plan, with preliminary reports showing favorable impact of this electronic purchasing initiative.

### Suggestions:

1. All allocations, including end-of-year spend out, should be related to the College's strategic plan.
2. The strategic plan should serve as a continuous guide to action plans for use of fiscal resources.

### Facilities

Brooklyn College has a full range of general purpose and discipline-dedicated facilities appropriate for a college of its size, purpose, and curricular offerings. The College encompasses an area large enough to fulfill its purposes. Its buildings were constructed at different times, with the oldest dating to the 1930's. More recent buildings date to the 1960's. There are no residential facilities.

The lack of general maintenance of facilities is apparent. The College has not been able to maintain the appearance and furnishings of many of its facilities. However, the Team noted several important strengths in the College's physical plant. There is a Physical Plant Master Plan to provide guidance for campus development. There is a near-term commitment of \$277 million dollars for Capital Construction and infrastructure upgrades. The facilities' organization has demonstrated strength by coping effectively with the unexpected reassignment of the Assistant

Vice President. In addition, the facilities' organization is quickly, effectively, and appropriately integrating technology into its operations.

Suggestions:

1. The College should review space assignments and relate space allocations to current and future college needs.
2. Facilities/physical plant staff should review all strategic and academic program plans to determine impact and effort/cost needed to develop facilities in line with proposals.
3. The College should develop long-term plans for Adaptive Reuse of facilities following planned capital construction. These plans should also address too long neglected facilities — especially deferred maintenance and major facilities life-cycle.
4. It will also be important for the College to develop a plan to address esthetic/appearance issues recognizing the impact "first impressions" have on potential students, employees, and benefactors.

## VI. INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Since the last Middle States evaluation (1987) and Periodic Review Report (1994), significant changes have taken place in the Brooklyn College leadership. Indeed, all senior administrators have been appointed within this period, beginning with the appointment of President Vernon E. Latin (1992) and including in the last two years, the appointments of an Acting Provost and Acting Vice President for Finance and Administration; and the appointments of several new administrators: a Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Deans for Student Life, Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies, and Education. In accordance with a recommendation of the last evaluation team, a Director of Institutional Research also has been appointed.

Other notable changes have been in the portfolios of senior administrators and in the governance structure, including the creation of several new campus-wide committees, the most important being the Advisory Committee on Budget and Planning, established and chaired by the president and composed of faculty and student leaders as well as senior administrators. An important function of the Advisory Committee is to cooperate and communicate with the College's governance bodies. The Committee also served as the steering committee for the development of the Self-Study and is likely to serve a central role in the College's next long-range planning process.

It was clear to the Team, from the Self-Study, our review of organizational charts and other documents and our meetings, that Brooklyn College has experienced and is continuing to experience a significant period of change. It is the Team's view, however, that the change is not entirely ad hoc. To the extent possible, it is a planned process, informed by broad consultation and intended to be responsive to several constraining factors such as high attrition in faculty and staff due to early retirements and fiscal constraints. However, most of these changes, particularly the reorganization of some academic and administrative units and the revision of administrative responsibilities, were not merely responses to budgetary issues. They were undertaken, according to the president and other senior leaders, to open up the processes of budgeting, planning, hiring, and governance, and to decentralize decision making for greater efficiency and more collaboration.

The Team agrees with the Self-Study's description of the College's leadership and governance. The management and implementation of programs and administrative functions are decentralized and generally, although not highly cooperative, across and among academic and administrative units. The administration views itself as a support team, or as the Self-Study says, "service-oriented" for the academic mission of the College and seeks ways to consult and collaborate on areas of common concern. While there are certainly some non-traditional elements in the leadership and governance structure, including some possible overlaps in committee responsibilities, it works. The faculty leadership and the student leaders expressed trust, appreciation, and, therefore, support of each other and the administration. As one senior administrator said, "We have a smaller administrative group, but we have many checks and balances, and almost no decision is made without broad and elaborate consultation."

President Lattin is widely credited with refocusing the College on communication and cooperation by opening many aspects of decision making to the community. Especially noteworthy are his efforts to "open" budget decision processes to many elements of the Brooklyn College community.

Many individuals commented on their positive feelings about the "openness" of communications on campus. To some extent this may be an outcome of the multiple advisory councils and the vision of the President that College leadership is expected to consult broadly.

The College administration should continue to be inclusive in its vision of leadership and governance, consult broadly and extensively, particularly as they embark on a new planning cycle. Accordingly we offer the following suggestions:

1. Since several new committees have been formed or have been expanded, the College should review its committee structure (advisory panels, councils, committees) to ensure not only that there is as little overlap of responsibility as possible, but that this still evolving governance structure serves and supports the College's vision and mission.
2. The divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Life should continue to develop strong linkages that include faculty and staff collaborating in program planning, outcomes assessment, and other activities and projects that support and enhance student learning, in and out of the classroom.

## VII. INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

One of the most significant and telling attributes of an institution of higher education is integrity. As defined in *Characteristics of Excellence*, integrity is reflected in, "the manner in which an institution specifies its goals, selects and retains its faculty, admits students, establishes curricula, determines programs of research, pursues its field of service, demonstrates sensitivity to equity and diversity issues, allocates its resources, serves the public interest and communicates and interacts with its constituencies and the public." In short, the integrity of an institution is the keystone of its quality and vitality. Central to an institution's maintenance of quality and vitality and its exercise of integrity is a system of continuous planning, self-study or assessment and institutional improvement.

### Planning

Comprehensive long-range planning is a critical campus-wide, dynamic activity in which all institutions of higher education must engage, not solely because accrediting agencies and governing boards require it, but because it "stimulates" imaginative and creative proposals and approaches for strengthening the effectiveness of the institution as it improves and changes to survive and thrive in challenging times — as is the current complex period in the life of Brooklyn College.

Brooklyn College's current long-range plan, *Brooklyn College: The Year 2000 and Beyond*, was developed in 1992-93, the first year of the Lattin presidency. From all indications, this plan has been useful and effective in providing guidance and direction to the College community in its activities and efforts to achieve the College's mission and goals. The two progress reports issued by the president in the years since 1993 attest to the value and integrity of the plan. The College also has engaged in continuous short-term planning on two levels: the academic program review process which occurs in the departments and results in an annual College Academic Program Planning (APP) report to the university as a prelude to its submission of budget requests; and the College's annual budget planning and preparation process.

Brooklyn College is to be commended for having addressed the priorities established in its current plan and for tying its planning process closely to the budgeting process. The participation of faculty and students, along with administrators, in the process not only through their membership on the Budget and Planning Committee, but through the president's policy of open communication and broad consultations, is also commendable. Faculty interviewed by the Team informed us, however, that the issues related to faculty recruitment, promotion and tenure are also the challenges they have faced in their planning efforts: long periods of insufficient resources, the short time usually given to comply with university and Board mandates as well as state level decisions and policies that must be implemented by Brooklyn College and other public higher education institutions. These factors, the faculty noted, tend to take precedence over and impede effective faculty participation in pre-planning activities such as open forums, environmental analyses, and other self assessments, as well as goal identification and prioritization as needed for the development of a sound and realistic institutional plan.

Indeed, the Team, while being impressed with *Brooklyn College 2000* and the achievements noted in the president's progress report, did observe that ongoing planning activities at Brooklyn College seem to take a narrow focus, concerned primarily with managing (effectively we noted) budgetary and hiring problems. For instance, according to the Self-Study, the priorities of the Budget and Planning Committee have been 1) avoiding retrenchment, 2) limiting adjunct spending, and 3) increasing class size. Concentration on these issues, of course, is enabling the College to emerge from a period of reduced resources less damaged, stable, and operating in a positive mode.

Notwithstanding, the College's new or renewed planning process must be an encompassing, highly collaborative process, undertaken not only to respond to budget allocation issues, but more so to develop strategies to optimize existing resources and creatively attract new resources; to develop goals for and offer guidance on academic programming, support services and structures, and other issues which affect the College's ability to serve students well. Planning will further require that the College give serious attention to developing guidelines and procedures for assessing institutional effectiveness; for looking closely at how they conduct business, and exploring ways in which they might do things better and in a less costly manner. For Brooklyn College, this means that the planning process must be informed by a clear and deep understanding of the environment, internal and external, in which the College will function. In other words, those involved in planning at Brooklyn College must be prepared to collect and review data and relevant information about the College and the environment in which it exists, at the front end of the process. The College should also consider engaging external experts and continue to consult widely with internal constituencies as it prepares itself to plan.

The Team was pleased to see that an Office of Institutional Research has been established as recommended in the last Middle States Association evaluation team report. The office regularly provides "data books" and other fact-based reports. But the office needs to do more. As noted in *Characteristics of Excellence*, one of the criteria for testing the adequacy and soundness of institutional planning is the "utilization of adequate and appropriate data along with an awareness of their implications." A sound institutional research function that not only provides data, but also has the capacity and the responsibility to help the university understand the meaning of the data, is essential. The next round of planning at Brooklyn College should include a careful, data-based analysis of the institution's rapidly changing external environment, as well as its internal conditions, including the challenges and the opportunities each offers.

The Team agrees with the Self-Study and the administration and faculty that the current plan, *Brooklyn College 2000*, has served the College community well. There is evidence throughout the Self-Study that the plan's initiatives have been and are being addressed. But they may not be the strategies that can guide the College, dynamically and progressively through the changing and challenging times that will characterize the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is time for either a revision of *Brooklyn College 2000* or a new plan.

### **Recommendation 3:**

The Team recommends that Brooklyn College begin a comprehensive planning process for the development of its next strategic long-range plan, including not only the identification of a broad-based planning commission whose membership is representative of the Brooklyn College community and its major constituencies, but the early initiation of a process to develop and communicate a Vision which is dynamic and futuristic in the directions it sets for the College. The conduct and utilization of institutional research should also be a fundamental component of the planning process.

In addition, Brooklyn College must be careful to align departmental strategic planning activities with the overall, long-range planning of the College, to link planning with available and projected resources (the College budget) and unit responsibilities and to coordinate the planning process across all sectors of the College not only to ensure broad input and participation in the process of planning and implementation, but to assure that all initiatives and projects will be directly tied to the institutional goals and objectives set forth in the new plan.

### **Outcomes Assessment**

The emphasis that *Characteristics of Excellence* places on self-renewal and improvement provides the connection between outcomes assessment and institutional effectiveness. With simultaneous pressures to contain costs and remain competitive, outcomes assessment offers a valuable means for colleges and universities to evaluate their current programs and policies, to innovate where necessary, and to ensure that they fulfill their mission.

Based on various conversations, observations, and review of materials and data, the Team believes that Brooklyn College is doing well. However, the College has not consistently and cumulatively (over time) gathered and evaluated both quantitative and qualitative data which show congruence between the actual outcomes of its educational and support programs and activities and the College's mission and goals. Leading researchers and practitioners of outcomes assessment describe it as an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning and institutional effectiveness. It involves making expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality and program effectiveness; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

Some of these processes are going on to varying extents at Brooklyn College, but not in a planned systemic manner. Indeed, the Self-Study presents "an inventory of outcomes assessment procedures, analyzes these procedures" and proposes a plan for outcomes assessment at the College. The Self-Study honestly and clearly states that although it has various forms of evaluating its effectiveness and the extent to which units meet their goals, in reality when taken together, these activities constitute only a de facto assessment plan. For example, the annual

self-studies prepared by department chairs and various support offices of the College are forms of assessment.

However, although these assessments are used to comply with university requirements and are reviewed by external evaluators, they generally do not comply with outcomes assessment as defined in *Characteristics of Excellence*. According to this standard, institutions should assess the outcomes at all levels, linking course goals to program goals, and both to institutional goals. This is more nearly the case of offices that must follow federal norms or of programs that are dependent on grants or federal funds. Such programs, for example SEEK or the Office of Affirmative Action, Compliance, and Diversity establish goals and objectives, then gather and report data to provide evidence of whether these goals have been met. The results of this process are then used to develop strategies to continue planning for the program's future. They may also be used (or cited) to measure the achievement of institutional goals.

In addition to these programs and in particular, the dean and program heads of the School of Education, are to be commended for promoting outcomes assessment, including reviewing their Mission Statement and promoting faculty development and research which, in turn, helps them better prepare their students. They are currently working on complying with state standards for teacher certification and determining how to meet these standards through curriculum and program revision. The school is also working to develop students' participation in community involvement activities. They have gathered data indicating that 89% of their graduates pass the certification examination on the first attempt. They also are meeting with focus groups and gathering data on seniors' feelings towards how well prepared they are when doing internships.

In addition to these unit level processes substantial evidence is gathered and distributed regarding the individual achievements of both faculty and graduates of Brooklyn College, primarily in the form of newspaper clippings, fact sheets, and announcements of awards and prizes that have been granted, as well as in the president's progress reports on the College's priority goals.

As these activities and projects demonstrate, although outcomes assessment and planning as defined by the MSA standards are not the general procedure at Brooklyn College, there is evidence throughout the College of their concern for assessing and documenting the effectiveness of teaching and learning, the achievements of faculty and students, and the quality of programs. The College is interested also in conducting more institution-wide research and data gathering. In the Team's view it is a strength to have an official in the Institutional Research Office who is highly motivated to gather assessment data and most willing to cooperate with the administration and faculty in analyzing and interpreting data and research statistics when called upon.

Concern for developing the best new programs, such as the Freshman Year College, while undertaking long-term revision efforts to maintain and improve the strengths of the current programs such as the Core Curriculum, is also a strength on which to build a sound assessment plan.

Overall, the desire and willingness expressed by the Brooklyn College community to maintain and enhance the high standards and achievements that the College has been known for is commendable and can be one of its greatest strengths as the faculty and administration embark on several integrated planning processes — for technology, diversity, and outcomes assessment, and to revise or replace *Brooklyn College 2000*.

However, one of the first things Brooklyn College must do is greatly increase the faculty's understanding, involvement, and ownership of assessment. The Institutional Outcomes Assessment Committee's request to all academic departments and programs for information on program goals and the methods of assessing effectiveness in meeting those goals was not fully responded to. At least 32% of the departments did not respond even after the committee sent out a second letter two months later. The Outcomes Assessment Committee's perception that "people were too busy" and "already overburdened by bureaucratic requests" as well as the fact that "statement of goals and modes of assessment were not ready to hand in" was fully supported by different faculty and administrative personnel who were interviewed. Many, in fact, stated that they do not know what outcomes assessment is nor what it entails.

#### Suggestions:

1. If the College is to have a good, perhaps eventually exemplary, outcomes assessment plan, it must first engage faculty (a broad representation, not just leaders) and administrative staff in professional development activities such as attendance at conferences on assessment, participation in campus-wide workshops which utilize an external expert or consultant, and review and research of literature on assessment that is available in professional journals and the Internet.
2. Developing an effective assessment plan depends first on identifying the specific outcomes the institution, its administration, and support units and academic departments are trying to achieve by formulating learning goals or statements of intended student outcomes. A beginning step then is to develop analytical tools and viable assessment strategies that explicably link goals and objectives to evaluation and review activities.
3. Also, the Team strongly urges that the outcomes assessment guidelines described in the Middle States Association's *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, Standards for Accreditation* be included in all strategic planning (i.e., the technology, diversity, and long-range plans proposed in other sections of this report) at Brooklyn College.

Brooklyn College has the opportunity to use all assessments, both in place and planned, to provide accountability, quality improvement, and meaningful answers to questions about student learning; and as a method for strategic planning. We therefore make the following recommendation.

**Recommendation 4:**

Outcomes assessment has been identified as a need in a previous evaluation and by the College in its 1999 Self-Study. The Team recommends that a campus-wide comprehensive outcomes assessment plan be developed and implemented very soon. Such a plan must be guided by the Brooklyn College's mission and goals and be a major component of the institutional strategic planning effort. This would provide the required input which would lead to the effective assessment of student learning as well as institutional and program effectiveness and integrity.

Faculty, administrators, students, and staff must participate in bringing the Brooklyn College outcomes assessment plan to fruition. The plan is a College effort that requires a commitment from all members of the Brooklyn College community. It involves more than writing outcomes; it involves embracing an innovative assessment perspective, shifting from a teacher-centered paradigm to being fully learning-centered. The Center for Teaching and Learning should serve as an outcomes assessment resource center that holds current professional publications, conference information, program review formats, grants information, and audiotapes.

A coordinator for outcomes assessment needs to be identified to lead the College through the development and the initial implementation of the Brooklyn College Assessment Plan. Finally, there are many excellent ideas and viable suggestions for a comprehensive outcomes assessment plan in the Self-Study and the 1998 Title III grant proposal. Both of these documents should be used as a foundation for the plan.

## VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the Team's findings and the Commission's standards, the recommendations which we are making to the College are as follows:

### **Recommendation 1:**

The Team recommends that significant efforts be made to continue improving Brooklyn College faculty demographics, generally through the recruitment of high quality faculty at middle and early career stages and the expansion of support (including non tax-levied funds and grants) for faculty development and advancement; and specifically in terms of increasing currently underrepresented minority and women faculty.

The recommendations of the Brooklyn College Diversity Plan should be implemented as quickly as possible and monitored for longer-term outcomes. In addition, the Center for Teaching, Transformations, Faculty Day, and other recent initiatives should continue to be supported, but assessed frequently to ascertain their impact on the College's achievement of its academic goals.

### **Recommendation 2:**

The Team recommends that Brooklyn College develop an overarching, unified, and coherent technology plan, with a formal life-cycle commitment. A life-cycle plan at this stage is a policy statement, not a specified budget commitment. Given the rapidly growing importance of technology for teaching, learning, and research, it will be critical that faculty are included as key participants in the development of the plan. In fact, as part of the new technology planning process, the College should conduct a needs assessment of faculty and staff lines to identify persons with expertise in the new educational technologies who can contribute most effectively to programmatic and faculty development. It will also be important to address the need for both "high tech" and "low tech" planning so that individual student and faculty needs are addressed appropriately. Clearly, faculty must be full participants in campus technology planning activities. Finally, the College should consider bringing technology together (for planning and for operational purposes) at the highest level of the organization by having a chief information technology officer (CIO) who reports to the president. Because Brooklyn College has chosen to make its future so dependent on the effective use of technology, the organizational visibility and coordination that this plan and office would create make it worth consideration as a priority.

### **Recommendation 3:**

The Team recommends that Brooklyn College begin a comprehensive planning process for the development of its next strategic long-range plan, including not

only the identification of a broad-based planning commission whose membership is representative of the Brooklyn College community and its major constituencies, but the early initiation of a process to develop and communicate a Vision which is dynamic and futuristic in the directions it sets for the College. The conduct and utilization of institutional research should also be a fundamental component of the planning process.

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#### **Recommendation 4:**

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Faculty, administrators, students, and staff must participate in bringing the Brooklyn College outcomes assessment plan to fruition. The plan is a College effort that requires a commitment from all members of the Brooklyn College community. It involves more than writing outcomes; it involves embracing an innovative assessment perspective, shifting from a teacher-centered paradigm to being fully learning-centered. The Center for Teaching should serve as an outcomes assessment resource center that holds current professional publications, conference information, program review formats, grants information, and audiotapes.

A coordinator for outcomes assessment needs to be identified to lead the College through the development and the initial implementation of the Brooklyn College Assessment Plan. Finally, there are many excellent ideas and viable suggestions for a comprehensive outcomes assessment plan in the Self-Study and the 1998 Title III grant proposal. Both of these documents should be used as a foundation for the plan.

In addition to these major recommendations, various suggestions for improvement and progress as well as indications of significant strengths are threaded throughout our report and are offered for your serious consideration.

The College should be pleased with the process of the Self-Study and for the integrity and candor of College personnel, whether in individual conversations with Team members, group meetings and interviews, or open forums. The Team believes that the Self-Study along with this report, will serve the institution well as it responds to needed change and renewal.

In closing, the Team would like to commend Brooklyn College, for its many strengths and, as friends and colleagues, wish the institution every good fortune in the years ahead.