

BROOKLYN



COLLEGE

31 August 2004

Ms. Jean Avnet Morse
Executive Director
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-2680

Dear Ms. Morse,

I write to acknowledge the report of Brooklyn College's Periodic Review Report prepared by Provost Linda L. Lamwers and President William L. Pollard and, separately, Ms. Vivian Ellis's letter transmitting the fiscal analysis report by Mr. Martin S. Dorph. My colleagues and I were most pleased with their positive assessment.

Though the PRR guidelines give institutions welcome flexibility in determining an appropriate response, we thought it might be useful for us to send you our comments, not least in order to underscore how useful we found the external reviews. The requisite 15 copies are enclosed.

We appreciate and thank you for your continued cooperation and encouragement. I look forward to meeting Dr. Luis Pedraja, our new liaison with the Commission, whom I've invited to campus to get a direct sense of who we are and what we do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christoph M. Kimmich".

Christoph M. Kimmich
President

Office of the President

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**Brooklyn College Response to Middle States Fiscal Analysis
and Evaluation Report (August 2004)
of the Brooklyn College Periodic Review Report (June 2004)**

Fiscal Analysis

The fiscal analysis of our Periodic Review Report reflects both the strengths of Brooklyn College and future challenges. As pointed out, the continued development of outside funding sources is critical to close the gap caused by increased costs related to teaching and services. It is expected that successes in both fundraising, and grants and research will provide some needed resources.

Annual fundraising has grown from \$4.6 million in fiscal year 2001 to \$7.5 million in fiscal year 2004. The market value of the endowment has increased from \$14 million to over \$35 million. Future efforts will build upon the progress made during the last few years. The development staff will expand its efforts toward garnering more unrestricted support. Initiatives include establishing a planned giving campaign, increased cultivation events, and expanded annual fund and major gift outreach.

The recent restructuring of the College's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has generated promising results, including over 30% more submissions during the last fiscal year. A more proactive approach to grants management is expected to yield increased cost recoveries and direct funding for institutional initiatives.

While challenges are inevitable, the College expects to maintain a stable financial condition.

Evaluators' Report

Introductory comments by the evaluators on the PRR:

The College uses adjunct faculty extensively and, of course, needs vary from program to program. However, the optimal mix of 70 percent regular faculty and 30 percent adjunct faculty, which has been set by the University, is met by Brooklyn College.

Recommendation 1: Improve faculty demographics through targeted recruitment and retention strategies, focusing on underrepresented group.

The evaluators' report of the Periodic Review Report represents a strong endorsement of the College's efforts and goals since the CHE decennial evaluation report in 1999. The report cites the significant improvement in the diversification of faculty recruited since 1999 with women representing a 50 percent increase in new hires and minorities a 30 percent increase. The College needs to differentiate more specifically the number of non-tenured faculty in tenure track positions and those from underrepresented groups, as well as an analysis of tenure and promotion rates for various subgroups of faculty. This will be the responsibility of the Office of Institutional Research. In terms of incentive funding, the College does provide some moving expenses for new faculty and offers candidates from underrepresented groups additional

incentives in terms of salary and equipment. The Provost has convened the College's Research Council, a body of junior and senior faculty active in research, to devise strategies for improving the College's research efforts.

As was the case in previous Middle States evaluations, the prospect of significant retirements over the next five years was cited as an opportunity to increase the diversity of faculty recruitment and retention, particularly in the context of the highly multiracial and multicultural constituencies that the College serves. This goal is imbedded in the College's Diversity Plan and in the several faculty and administrative groups that are charged with monitoring its realization. It is a goal we share with The City University of New York as well.

The emphasis on reflecting the College's commitment to diversity and multiculturalism in its publications continues to be reflected in the myriad program brochures being produced as well as in the aggressive television and radio advertising campaign that has brought the College considerable notice, particularly since the high national ratings received from the Princeton Review. In addition, the College sponsors a host of cultural and social events every year celebrating the almost unmatched diversity of CUNY and this campus.

With respect to the orientation program and academic year workshops for new faculty, participants are asked to submit evaluations and recommendations for improvement. The Office of Institutional Research has been continually assessing the efficiency of the various recruitment and retention efforts, together with the Office of Affirmative Action, Compliance, and Diversity, which reports directly to the President. These assessment efforts will be increased in response to the evaluators' suggestion on page 3 of their report. Development of the Brooklyn College Experts Database or similar programs will be explored. Also, as we pointed out in the PRR, this past year we totally restructured the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to greatly enhance the College's grants efforts and expect our work to yield results.

Recommendation 2: Develop a unified technology plan.

Enhance Tech Plan efforts by using "funds to purchase systems such as The Learning Connection (TLC) Web training platform for staff development and to provide increased access to scholarly information in the form of digital media and full-text electronic databases." The College welcomes the reviewers' encouragement to use benchmarks to assess the efficacy of the technology plan, particularly such things as the use of Blackboard and training goals.

The Provost has asked representatives from various faculty development technology programs to develop a uniform – with some customization – way of assessing the effectiveness and impact of such efforts. They will be reporting back in December with the results of their deliberations and we expect to implement some kind of across-the-board assessment shortly thereafter.

The Student Technology Fee (\$75 per annum per student), instituted by CUNY several years ago, is allocated in response to specific needs by a college-wide committee of administrators, faculty, and students.

The reviewers strong suggestions (top of page 4) with regard to student skill sets and which ones are needed by students to become technologically competent will be addressed by the college-wide TLTR (Teaching, Learning, Technology Roundtable), which will need to devise a plan that may be accommodated by our resources.

Recommendation 3: Engage in a comprehensive planning process.

The reviewers commended the College for the development of the annual Strategic Action Plan goals and targets. The Strategic Action Plans, which are designed to implement and update the College's 5-year Strategic Plan, are one way in which overarching goals are drilled down into specific departmental, divisional, or cross-divisional goals. To further clarify the statement on page 19 of the PRR regarding "Alignments of Departmental Strategic Planning Activities with Overall Planning," overall and unit alignment of planning processes are accomplished by linking departmental assessment to success in achieving strategic goals, by allocating scarce college resources to departments in part on the basis of efforts and relevance to strategic goals, and by recruiting and hiring new faculty who can contribute to those strategic goals.

The Strategic Plan database is being developed further in response to the reviewers' encouragement and we expect to roll out a simplified version of what is already available, together with continued linkage of budget and planning. This will be on the agenda of the College's forthcoming Executive Committee retreat in September 2004.

Recommendation 4: Devise and implement a campus-wide and comprehensive outcomes assessment plan.

The College's Outcomes Assessment Plan submitted to Middle States in 2001 was well received and to some extent used as a model for other colleges. The reviewers commended Brooklyn College for its "strategic focus on academic excellence, a student-oriented campus, and being a model citizen for the Borough of Brooklyn. It is clear that the institution has an inclusive process for planning and has moved toward a culture of evidence."

The reason that the website did not detail the results of the student learning outcomes assessment is that the results are not yet available, while the process of producing those results is very much underway. Also, the structure of assessment needs to be clarified. Academic assessment is the responsibility of a college committee chaired by the Provost, which includes the Director of the Center for Teaching, who coordinates instructional assessment. Institutional assessment is the responsibility of the Assistant Vice President for Budget and Planning, who oversees the Office of Institutional Planning, Research, and Assessment, and who cooperates closely with the Provost.

Efforts are ongoing to utilize results from assessment activities for programs and institutional improvement. Large surveys and assessment efforts are generally followed by debriefings and discussions. Departments individually review information in the context of making improvements. Follow up analyses are based on prior results and new initiatives. The beginnings of a feedback loop are present, although we do need to improve here.

This information has not been placed on the college-wide website because our philosophy has been that in order for assessment to impact improvement, departments must have the opportunity to discuss the information freely so they can address both strengths and challenges without feeling they are being evaluated. Making this information globally-available may cause some "editing."

Finally, the College wholeheartedly agrees to the concluding recommendation that "Brooklyn College should continue its efforts to improve faculty demographics through targeted recruitment and retention strategies, focusing on underrepresented groups" and that "Brooklyn College should continue to implement and institutionalize the comprehensive assessment plan."

In closing, we appreciate and find very useful the Fiscal Analysis and the Evaluation Report of our 2004 Periodic Review Report. The PRR provided a timely opportunity to reflect on and to analyze the College's strengths, limitations, and goals both with respect to the Five-Year Strategic Plan and to the paradigms enunciated in the Commission's *Handbook for Periodic Review Reports* and its *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*. We look forward to a reaffirmation of our accreditation by the Commission.