

Strategic Plan, 2005-2010
STUDENT ORIENTED CAMPUS

To assure a student oriented campus by creating an environment that puts student needs and interests at the heart of our concerns and activities.

The success of our students is the clearest indication that we are honoring our commitment to access and excellence. This means creating an environment that helps students attain a deeper understanding of the material they are learning through interaction with one another, their teachers, their advisors, and other participants in the learning enterprise. The College is intent on creating a rich and vibrant learning community in which participants from all over the campus are encouraged to discover new connections.

Successful initiatives over the past five years have included--the expansion of Freshman Year College, a full-scale program designed to help students with the first-year transition, a beautiful new state-of-the-art library, innovative, campus-wide technological improvements, a Library Café open 24/7 and numerous lectures, performances and workshops. Initiatives that will help us expand and strengthen our learning community goals at this point include enlarging the campus intellectual and social dialogue, improving student services and overall communication, and rethinking academic advisement.

Support Student Development Beyond the Classroom.

Students learn from all aspects of their college experience, including time spent with peers, in student activities, and in their out-of-school work and service lives. Brooklyn College defines learning as a comprehensive experience that integrates academic activities and student development activities, processes that in the past have too often been considered separate. We are a commuter campus and many of our students work and have family responsibilities. The College must deal with the challenge of our students' busy lives in order to ensure that they engage in a full range of academic and co-curricular experiences that promote their personal and intellectual advancement.

- Experiential learning such as community service, leadership opportunities, internships and participation in student government all offer dynamic educational opportunities to teach academic content in applied contexts. Service learning has been described as a very effective strategy for helping students develop a social imagination that makes it possible for them to question and analyze the world. Departments will be encouraged to create programs that offer credit for enriching out-of-class activities in the students' major,

- Learning communities are centered on the exploration of issues that cut across traditional academic boundary lines to include co-curricular and community activities. The College advocates programs and approaches that foster intentional and definitive links between the academic disciplines and student affairs, with the awareness that both seek the holistic development of our students. Faculty should be recognized and rewarded for their participation

in and contributions to the student life of the college and for their work with student affairs and community outreach.

- The College takes pride in the wide-ranging diversity of its students and faculty and from its location in the borough of Brooklyn. By developing new initiatives that encompass the full spectrum of diversity issues (intellectual, political, religious, ethnic), we will promote a balance of viewpoints through periodic discussions in familial, nurturing campus environment. The entire Brooklyn College community will engage in dialogues on citizenship and community service, ethics and civility, and on-campus spaces should be provided to promote such discussions. The Center for Teaching, the Wolfe Institute for the Humanities, and the Center for Diversity will be asked to sponsor presentations on these issues.
- By training students in leadership skills, personal empowerment and civic responsibilities the College makes a major investment in promoting a student-oriented campus. The leadership course formerly offered by Student Affairs will be recreated in order to ensure that new student leaders learn how to take on their responsibilities and carry on the work of their predecessors who are graduating. Classes that incorporate leadership and personal empowerment initiatives within the syllabus will be identified so that there can be intentional linkages.
- The College will generate and publicize opportunities that link academic studies and out-of-class educational activities that foster the holistic development of students. The new Web Central portal will enable improved communication about campus activities and should adopt a more individualized approach, including messages about campus opportunities geared to the students' own interests. Freshman and transfer student orientations can also be used to broaden students' awareness of campus activities and resources, including clubs and meetings, lectures, music and theater productions, and career and studies-skills workshops.

Develop a Coordinated and Comprehensive Institutional Approach toward Academic Advisement

It is the responsibility of college advisors to interpret the institution's mission, standards, goals and values to our students so that they can make a successful transition to undergraduate life. Despite the continuing reduction of available resources for student services on many college campuses, students still deserve dependable, accurate, respectful, honest, and professional advisement. In the past five years the College has initiated a number of programs designed to broaden its efforts to strengthen the advisement process, including the On-Course Advantage (TOCA), which helps students graduate in a timely fashion, the new Megner Center for Career Development and Internships, pre-registration orientations workshops for all entering and transfer students, and a reorganized Office for Pre-Professional Advisement. The need at this point is to create a culture of advisement on campus aimed at bringing together various parts of the college to concentrate on helping students identify appropriate life goals and educational choices.

- The College should develop a proposal for an integrated system of advising from admissions to graduation that involves active involvement of faculty and professional staff. Ideally, this would involve a stand-alone advisement center with the staff and e-tools to monitor the progress of all

students. Renovation and reorganization of the academic advisement facility should be undertaken to create a more welcoming environment. Once students arrive at the center they should find a wide array of resources that will suit their needs. The number of full-time professional advisors should be increased.

- The College will create a culture of advisement throughout the campus so that all members of the administration, faculty and staff will see appropriate, timely, formal and informal advising as integral to their professional responsibilities. The College will systematically and intentionally explore the nature of faculty advisement; advising about their discipline should be part of every faculty members' job responsibility. Faculty and staff throughout the college will have the information and tools they need to provide accurate advisement to students.

- It will be necessary to find the appropriate balance between regulatory and advisement functions, with "enforcement" functions separated from developmental advisement. Review and simplify rules and regulations and provide easy mechanisms for changes in policies and procedures. Develop a "Handbook for Success" that identifies key offices and major campus organizations, offers advice on finding mentors, describes how to develop essential skills, provides comments from recent alumni, and answers frequently asked questions.

- One characteristic of successful advisement programs is that students have a personal relationship with an advisor. Students should be encouraged to see the same advisor as they move through their studies. Students should also be encouraged into early exploration and declaration of major. The data indicates that students who do not declare a major until well into their studies demonstrate significantly weaker retention and graduate rates than their peers. Counselors might be assigned to particular academic specialties, such as business, arts, education, offering workshops with faculty from these departments.

- The new Web Central portal is becoming an invaluable aid for developing and coordinating advisement tools and distributing information widely to students and faculty. The College should promote widespread use of degree audits, WebAttendance, WebGrade, the online Student Academic Progress Alert and other resources. Faculty should post syllabi on the web prior to the start of the semester and all departments should engage in long-term course schedule planning to enable students to plan ahead and to enable them to graduate on time.

Provide a full complement of academic and student support services and establish a coordinated academic support system.

The College recognizes that our success as an institution depends upon the continued enhancement, and in some cases, redesign of our administrative support systems. In the past five years the institution has made considerable progress in improving the delivery of student services beginning, first of all, with the Noel Levitz Survey which informed us that we needed to improve the tone of our communications, the quality and consistency of our information, and the services to evening and adult students. Initiatives designed to improve these problems are: the Yes to Evening Students Services Center (Y.E.S.S.), staff and management training in customer service, a new information booth located in Boylan Hall, Staff Appreciation Day and the new Employee of the Month Award, and, most important, the development and initiation of the West Quad

project, which will bring major student services together in one location and will considerably alleviate the continuing “run-around” problem. There is general agreement that the College’s attention to student services has had a noticeable effect, resulting in improved office procedures and staff attitudes. Nonetheless, providing students with quality services will be an ongoing challenge. The college must continue to work on creating an academic environment that is efficient, user-friendly and service-oriented

- The West Quad building, when it is completed, will bring together major student services in one central location, including, admissions, registration, financial aid, enrollment services. We should use this opportunity to develop a full-scale plan for a student support system that is coordinated, user-friendly and service-oriented.
- The College should create a value statement that communicates the its core values, including what the institution stands for and what it expects from those who study and work here and institutionalize these core values so that senior executives, faculty, administration and staff know them, understand them, and work to achieve them. The core values should be translated into action steps, and a system of rewards should be developed to encourage the college community to act in accordance with the values.
- Create an environment of civil engagement by improving what we communicate and how we communicate—including being sure we deliver correct information and monitoring the tone of our discourse. The College can also encourage a greater sense of interconnectedness by creating an environment where collaboration between faculty and staff from different departments are the norm. Community-building events such as “art around the campus” and departmental athletic teams and intramurals will promote improved cooperation.
- We must initiate new measures to ensure that all college messages are transparent, that they are consistent, and that information reaches all concerned parties. All college materials should be updated so that current requirements, programs and procedures are described. A manual of standard operating procedures with lists of frequently asked questions should be created for every department and office so that new employees can familiarize themselves with key information.
- Department chairs, administrators, and supervisors play an important role in helping the college achieve a more welcoming and positive environment because they set the tone for our faculty and staff. Brooklyn College managers of all kinds will be invited to take part in workshops in which they develop a concrete agenda for improving the college environment and for effectively motivating and coaching those who work under them.
- The College should focus on the particular needs of adults who are returning to college to finish their degrees, and working people who want to advance into a more rewarding career. We should broaden the mission of the Office of Adult Degree Programs to serve all adult students and expand the availability of services targeted to evening, weekend, adult and graduate student populations. The aid offered by critical college services such as the YESS Center, academic advisement, the library, career counseling, and the Learning Center should be broadened and their hours extended. On-campus childcare services generally need more attention and support.

- The College should formally assess whether campus services are effectively serving students. Also, we should evaluate programs funded by special student fees in order to reexamine the existing structure of student-funded services and ensure that student funds are used for activities and staff that enhance the academic and civic life of the college.