CHAPTER TWO: SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

A summary of the major findings, recommendations, and needs presented in the self study is presented here to make clear the extent of coverage of the study.

I. Students: The student body has remained fairly uniform in size for a number of years at a little over 15,000, including both undergraduate and graduate students. Students are predominantly local. They are doing reasonably well academically and after graduation. A concern about the effect of higher admission standards, currently being established by both Brooklyn College and mandates of the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York, is alleviated by the promise of the College Preparatory Initiative. Recommendation: consider more recruitment of non-traditional and graduate students.

II. Retention: The institution of the Freshman Year College has been successful in improving first year retention. Recommendation: develop plans to improve second year retention.

III. Faculty: Because of budget reductions and unreplaced retirements, the faculty has dwindled to half of what it was fifteen years ago. The decline in numbers has been uneven, resulting in a missing generation of faculty that should now be stepping into responsibility. Nevertheless, faculty development has been constant in terms of curriculum development and teaching development. In the past two years significant hiring of new faculty has begun. Recommendation: New hiring should avoid the problem of overloading the faculty with a single generation, and it should seek a more diverse faculty.

IV. Basic Skills: The college's long history of remedial programs in mathematics, reading, and writing has led to the development of an intensive summer immersion program that will enable students to pass all three CUNY assessment tests before matriculating, as may be required by the Board of Trustees for the class entering in the Fall 1999. There has been recent improvement in the program for students learning English as a second language.

V. Core Curriculum: The Core Curriculum, which is Brooklyn College's general education program, continues to have the support of the college community as the heart of its liberal arts and sciences mission. There is a need for a good assessment system, consideration of the addition of an Economics course, and a review of the role of the course coordinators.

VI. Majors: Scarcity of resources and faculty departures have led to problems of class size, limitations on the number of classes, and the cancellation of some programs. The great majority of programs continue, however, sustained by curriculum development. Career-oriented programs contain liberal arts and sciences components. Major offerings in the evening and on weekends are limited.

VII. Graduate Programs: About half of the graduate students in Masters Degree programs are in programs in the School of Education, but other programs are doing well, notably the nationally competitive professional programs. Recommendation: more coherent planning for the graduate division in relation to undergraduate programs.
VIII. Honors, Interdisciplinary, Non-traditional Programs  The several honors programs are providing advanced training for successful students preparing for graduate or professional studies. The small interdisciplinary programs are marginalized by lack of control of personnel but are being increasingly recognized in college governance. The continuing higher education programs for non-traditional students are holding their own, with increasing strength in the Weekend College. Recommendation: more attention should be given to the programs for non-traditional students.

IX. Institutional Organization and Operations  There has been extensive reorganization in the past five years, leading to a more decentralized and collaborative administration. The function of the Provost's Office, including the Assistant Provost and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, has been significantly expanded. Some major physical renovation has been completed in the past five years; more is ongoing. A major expansion and rebuilding of the Library is about to begin, and development of the West Quadrangle, including removal of the Plaza building, has been planned and funded. There has been a significant advance in fund-raising. Recommendation: better definition of the role of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

X. Technological Innovations  Over the past decade there has been a great expansion in both the institutional and academic use of computer technology, the academic use sparked by individual faculty initiatives. Recommendation: increase faculty development and improve technical support systems.

XI. Outcomes Assessment  Current procedures are extensive but inadequate for institutional development and reporting. A plan is being developed for more effective assessment, starting with more precise statements of expected outcomes and modes of evaluation. The plan emphasizes collegial discussion and agreement. Recommendation: establish outcomes assessment committees at the departmental and Faculty Council levels.