LaGuardia Community College

The City University of New York

Comprehensive Institutional Self-Study

For the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Higher Education

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LaGuardia Community College
Middle States Steering Committee and Core Team

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Introduction

Institutional Profile

LaGuardia Community College was founded in 1971 as a bold experiment in opening the doors of higher education to all. LaGuardia educates more than 18,000 credit students through over 50 degree and certificate programs, as well as more than 40,000 non-credit students seeking career and educational experiences in more than twenty different categories of Adult and Continuing Education programs. LaGuardia offers associate degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences, business and computer science, as well as career and allied health programs, and offers full-time student career internships as part of their program of study. Upon graduation, LaGuardia students’ lives are transformed as family income increases 17%, and students transfer to four-year colleges at three times the national average. Part of the City University of New York, LaGuardia is a nationally recognized leader among community colleges for boundary-breaking success educating underserved students.

Located in Queens, the most ethnically diverse borough in the City of New York, LaGuardia’s students represent 161 countries and speak 124 languages. Nearly two-thirds of LaGuardia students were born outside the U.S, and half of the college’s incoming students have lived in the U.S. for less than five years. LaGuardia Community College has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education since 1974 and is governed by the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York (CUNY).

Since its founding, LaGuardia has developed an activist and progressive approach to higher education and community service that has made it a leader in post secondary education with an international reputation for teaching excellence. As a Federally designated Hispanic serving institution, it was recognized in 2009 by Excelencia in Education for its exemplary leadership in serving the needs of Latino and nontraditional students. In 2008, the college won CUNY’s inaugural Sustainability Award for environmentally friendly best practices on campus. LaGuardia was named one of two Community Colleges of Excellence in the United States by the MetLife Foundation in 2006, and was named an Institution of Excellence by the Policy Center on the First Year of College for developing one of the best college freshman programs in the nation in 2003. Additionally, the National Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) ranked LaGuardia as one of the top three large community colleges in the U.S. for meeting benchmarks of high academic standards and practices in 2002.

The LaGuardia faculty is accomplished, diverse, and dedicated to the core mission of aiding student success. As of 2010, 54% of the full-time faculty have doctorates, more than twice the national average at community colleges. They have amassed an impressive record of professional achievement and been recognized with numerous grants and awards from such organizations as the National Endowment for the Arts, The National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, NASA, and the Fulbright Foundation. The College has benefited from a substantial growth of the faculty over an eight-year period. Between 2002 and 2010, the number of full-time faculty increased 44% (from 231 to 333), while the number of adjunct faculty increased 52% (from 524 to 795).
LaGuardia nurtures faculty scholarship and creative work through one of the most robust faculty development programs in all of CUNY. In recent years, over 300 full-time and part-time faculty have participated annually in a wide range of programs, including seminars run by the Center for Teaching and Learning, which received the 2004 Hesburgh Certificate of Excellence for Innovative Faculty Training Programs. The Center works with faculty to explore and support pedagogical initiatives, linking technology and pedagogy to advance student learning. Seminars offered by the Center, many of which run for a full year, address an increasingly broad spectrum of topics, such as the capstone experience, quantitative literacy, advising, basic skills education in mathematics, and the effective uses of digital technologies. The College also supports the faculty’s scholarly activities through its Publishing and Tenure Highway (PATH) program, an intensive effort to help faculty complete and place their work in a peer-reviewed journal, and the Carnegie Seminar on Scholarship and Learning, a two-year seminar in which faculty investigate significant issues in teaching and learning in their fields and complete a scholarly paper for submission to a disciplinary journal. Since 2005, the Center for Teaching and Learning has published *In Transit: The LaGuardia Journal on Teaching and Learning*, a collective product of LaGuardia’s faculty and staff.

The Division of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) offers a broad range of educational and training programs for workforce, economic and community development. ACE is one of the largest non-credit education efforts in the country and the largest continuing education program in CUNY, with programs for adults, youth, and special populations. Grants for 2010 surpassed $9 million and programs have grown to serve an increasing variety of constituencies. Through a partnership with ACE and Student Affairs, ACE has helped thousands of students enter credit studies at the College. In the past few years 20% of the incoming freshman class has consisted of students who started their LaGuardia education in Continuing Education. The Division is an acknowledged leader in adult literacy and English as a Second Language instruction. The Center for Immigrant Education was rated an exemplary program by the New York State Department of Education for its pioneering work in providing services to immigrants. The Small Business Development Center has helped entrepreneurs obtain over $25 million in loans, investments and grants since opening its doors in 2001. In recent years, ACE has also launched a Workforce One Healthcare Career Center to expand training opportunities for students in high-demand careers, and provide pathways for foreign-trained health professionals; NY Designs, an incubator for small design businesses; Pre-College Academic Programs; and contextualized GED and ESL programs.

LaGuardia has received national and international recognition for its innovative programs, while President Mellow has emerged as a prominent advocate for community colleges. The College garners extensive media attention, both locally and nationally in the *New York Times, Chronicle for Higher Education*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

In 2007, the College received the National Bellwether Award for Instructional Programs and Services based on our First-Year Academies, which place all freshmen into one of three Academies based on choice of major, thereby contextualizing basic skills instruction. In the same year, faculty member Ellen Quish was named English as a Second Language Teacher of the Year by the *New York Times*, and LaGuardia was one of 26 colleges from around the country to
receive the Ford Foundation’s Difficult Dialogues grant, which focused the campus on the issue of religious tolerance.

In 2008, President Mellow was invited to give the Atwell Lecture at the American Council of Education, becoming only the second community college president to do so. LaGuardia was one of 150 four-year and two-year U.S. colleges to be invited by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to join 150 colleges from the developing world as participants in the Higher Education Summit for Global Development. LaGuardia was also asked by the U.S. Business Roundtable to be one of three community colleges to appear before members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and present a forum on the untapped potential of two-year colleges in advancing American competitiveness. This national attention contributed to significant increases in external funding, including a $2.7 million Title V grant for strengthening the second-year college experience, a $1.25 million grant for a Veterans Upward Bound Program, a $620,000 grant from FIPSE for disseminating LaGuardia’s model ePortfolio program, and a $2.7 million grant from New York City’s EDC for retraining workers displaced by the Willets Point redevelopment project.

In 2009, the College hosted Bill Gates, Sr. and the Gates Foundation to help deepen their understanding of the “real life” work of community colleges. LaGuardia was invited by the Lumina Foundation to be the first college in New York State for the Achieving the Dream initiative, and President Mellow was invited to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing community colleges at the Brookings Institute and the Springboard Project of the U.S. Business Roundtable. President Mellow gave keynote presentations and guidance to the League for Innovation in the Community College, and to higher education systems in Minnesota, Montana and Oregon. On an international level, President Mellow was an invited participant at the Council of Europe’s Biennial Higher Education Summit, and the College has partnered with higher education leaders in Chile to provide hands-on support to launch that country’s first community college.

In 2010, LaGuardia hosted several Gates Foundation activities, including an on-campus orientation to community colleges for the new Gates Foundation CEO, Jeff Raikes, and we played a leading role in the Gates post-secondary education meeting in Seattle. The College also hosted a national online conversation about President Barack Obama’s American Graduation Initiative. LaGuardia was featured in a PBS Frontline program entitled College, Inc., and President Mellow participated in a debate at the National Press Club, broadcast by PBS, with the presidents of Yale University, DeVry University, and the Chancellor of the Maryland State system.

In 2011, the College received two grants to bring our cutting-edge work on ePortfolios to a national audience. One of the grants, a $3.7 million award from the U.S. Department of Education, will allow LaGuardia and four CUNY campuses to use their existing ePortfolio initiatives to help minority and low-income students follow an academic path to a bachelor’s degree. With the second grant—a $700,000 FIPSE grant—LaGuardia will build collaborations with 20 campuses nationwide that are interested in introducing ePortfolio into their curricula. The College also hosted visits by the U.S. Poet Laureate Kay Ryan, and acclaimed author and
activist, Dr. Temple Grandin, allowing students to discuss in both small and large settings the work of these leading thinkers.

LaGuardia’s work has also attracted the attention of both government and private funders, leading to major grants from the Robin Hood Foundation, the MetLife Foundation, and the Goldman Sachs Foundation. One of our most notable programs (now underway in several other cities) is the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program, which provides intensive hands-on business education and one-on-one mentoring and guidance to spur revenue growth and new hiring in local businesses. Already the “graduates” are showing results with 50% reporting double digit year-over-year revenue growth and more than 75% hiring new employees.

Academics

A foundation of LaGuardia’s approach towards raising academic quality is to further the development of academic majors. The majors allow students to pursue more rigorous study in a discipline they are hungry to explore, creating a stronger link and superior advisement opportunities between faculty and students. They also build a richer academic community, leading to the creation of student clubs, journals and conferences. Since 2007, new majors have been launched in a wide range of disciplines, raising the total number of programs, options, and certificates to 59, including new programs in Accounting, Aviation Management, Biology, Communication Studies, Criminal Justice, Digital Media Arts, Environmental Science, Industrial Design Technology, Music Recording Technology, Philosophy, Radiologic Technology, Spanish Translation, Theater, and Writing and Literature. Work is well underway to develop additional programs in Creative Writing, Early Childhood Education, Forensic Science, Journalism, and Psychology. We have also expanded course offerings in modern languages and literature to better address the needs of heritage-language learners, with courses in 17 languages, including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Polish, and Russian.

One example of the power of the academic programs can be found in our philosophy program. Students are flocking to study philosophy, with over 4,500 students enrolled in courses, 60 majors, and the launch of an active Philosophy Club and student journal. LaGuardia’s philosophy program, perhaps one of the largest in the nation, was featured in a 2011 story broadcast by National Public Radio.

LaGuardia’s effort to advance the CUNY Decade of Science is flourishing. The College created a new Natural Sciences Department to separate biology, chemistry, and physics from Allied Health, permitting closer interaction and advisement for students seeking careers in the hard sciences. Four research labs for engineering, physics, natural sciences, and nursing have been completed and faculty, along with their students, are engaged in research ranging from examining environmental toxins in the nearby Superfund-designated Newtown Creek to measuring the movement of potassium through cell membranes using state-of-the-art electrophysiology equipment. Three of our professors were awarded a NASA grant to explore the effects of aerosols and solar variability on the earth’s climate, a project that will engage dozens of students in hands-on research into a suspected cause of global warming. In 2008, the College received Title V STEM Grants totaling $2.1 million, and to encourage the next generation of scientists and engineers, we launched the LaGuardia Youth Center for Engineering
Excellence to encourage Hispanic and low-income high school students to pursue an associate degree in engineering at LaGuardia and a bachelor’s degree in engineering.

Our U.S. Department of Education-funded Project Quantum Leap (PQL), designed to contextualize math instruction by linking it to complex social issues such as public health and epidemiology, shows promising results. Since 2007, 47 Mathematics Department faculty have participated in year-long PQL seminars run by the Center for Teaching and Learning. Course attrition is down and higher pass rates from developmental math are found in PQL courses as compared to non-PQL classes. LaGuardia is also experimenting with pedagogy in the sciences looking, for example, at whether 18-week courses, rather than our conventional 12-week courses, lead to better outcomes for students in key biology courses.

The curriculum has been substantially enriched by an expansion of the Honors Program and our Phi Theta Kappa chapter. The LaGuardia Performing Arts Center maintains an active performance program with extensive connections to our multi-ethnic communities. LaGuardia’s signature Learning Communities have expanded, including faculty-designed Liberal Arts Clusters that provide students with a wide variety of challenging interdisciplinary academic experiences that foster integrative learning. Developmental skills programs have successfully moved thousands of students beyond basic skills to achieve their academic goals. Increasing numbers of our graduates are transferring to four-year colleges, both within and beyond CUNY, including such highly competitive institutions as Amherst, Bard, Columbia, Cornell, Sarah Lawrence, Swarthmore, and Vassar, often with substantial financial aid packages.

**Student Success**

A central focus of the College has been on measuring student learning. LaGuardia is on the cutting-edge of using student-developed electronic portfolios (ePortfolio) as a mechanism to assess general education core competencies in all majors. Over 40,000 examples of student work have been collected for assessment purposes. In 2011, faculty teams assessed a sample of over 3,000 of these artifacts using faculty-developed rubrics for each competency. These assessment readings documented gains in student achievement.

The College has placed sustained emphasis on helping students develop their capacities to envision and plan their own academic futures. Since 2003, LaGuardia students in some programs have been developing longitudinal ePortfolios, working in multiple courses across semesters and disciplines. They collect their work and reflect on their learning, creating narratives that connect academic context to lived experience. Reviewing their growth and planning for the future, students link their work to General Education and programmatic competencies. Faculty development and student peer mentoring programs encourage an ePortfolio pedagogy that supports integrative learning and helps students craft potent new identities as learners. Thousands of students share their ePortfolios with their families, potential employers and transfer institutions, involving outside stakeholders and support systems in the process of reflective conversation and goal setting. In 2009-10, more than 12,000 LaGuardia students were active in their portfolios, and as noted in the Self-Study Report, data consistently documents a significant impact on engagement in learning, retention, and progress towards the degree.
LaGuardia is also providing national leadership on ePortfolios. From 2008-2010, the Center for Teaching and Learning mounted the FIPSE-funded Making Connections ePortfolio Seminar Program, working with 30 New York City higher education institutions (community colleges through research universities) as they moved forward with their campus ePortfolio implementations. An April 2008 conference hosted by LaGuardia, Making Connections: ePortfolio, Integrative Learning, and Assessment, drew 600 faculty from 70 universities in 30 states and 5 countries. LaGuardia’s leadership in these areas has provided regional and national development of assessment practices particularly associated with ePortfolio, helping to document and guide emerging national practices.

LaGuardia embraces technology as a powerful tool to improve student outcomes. LaGuardia is taking the lead on a Gates Foundation-supported project which is using Web 2.0 technology to identify and disseminate effective pedagogical techniques for developmental education faculty at colleges across the nation. This high-profile initiative is showing results with increase in course completion and pass rates. All of our classrooms are now “smart” classrooms, equipped with networked computers, video projector and screen, along with all AV control devices. Our library’s decision to offer e-books was well-received, with over 100,000 e-book files downloaded by our campus community. Although we’ve tripled the number of online/hybrid courses offered, we continue to lag behind the rest of CUNY. The College intends to increase the number of online courses by 50% in 2011-2012.

Academic excellence can be found throughout the college. At a time when approximately 70% of the nation’s veterinary technology students pass the national exam for licensure, 100% of our 2010 graduates passed this rigorous exam. Our paramedics also had a perfect pass rate and our licensed practical nursing and physical therapist assistant pass rates exceed the national average. One area of disappointment was a drop in the percentage of students passing the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses to 79% in 2010. The College is revamping and intensifying the support we provide to students taking the exam and we are committed to achieving a substantial rise in the pass rate next year.

One of the most important measures of our success is academic completion. In the last few years, LaGuardia’s retention and graduation rates have shown small increases. The College has done much to “move the needle” and it is encouraging to see these outcomes and to know that our graduation rate continues to outpace the national average. However, much still needs to be done. Research conducted in connection with the Achieving the Dream project found that students, as well as faculty and staff, often were confused about where to obtain timely assistance to address in-school and external problems which could interfere with course completion. To address these issues, the College is developing on-line tools to enable students to better understand what they need to do and when, as well as where to get the help they may need. Our research on LaGuardia’s graduation rate has led to a new focus on the many students with 45 or more credits who do not complete their degree. We’ll be intensifying our work to ensure these seemingly on-track students get the academic and student support services they need to graduate.

The College continues to wrestle with how we can most effectively deliver advising services. Based on feedback from students, the College has launched a college-wide initiative on creating
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an advising and counseling structure that is understandable to our students, uses limited resources effectively, and provides timely help.

Our Division of Student Affairs is being enhanced to improve service to our students. Staff is being redeployed and professional development is being strengthened. We are using technology to engage students from the first moment they decide to come to LaGuardia and we’ve seen student use of online resources grow. This is particularly important at a time when our enrollment is growing, yet staffing levels are being reduced. In recent years, we created the Information/Call Center and the Enrollment Services Center, a one-stop for registration and financial aid. Our partnership with Single Stop, a non-profit agency who maintains an office on our campus, has led our students to secure over $1 million in tax benefits and has increased applications to available benefits, such as Food Stamps and Public Assistance. The College also provides thousands of students with a reliable and convenient learning environment for their children at the accredited Early Childhood Learning Center.

We continue to achieve important results with severely disadvantaged populations. Our GED Bridge program which provides contextualized instruction and strong academic support to students is showing great promise. Initial results in this Robin Hood-funded random control study reveal higher GED pass rates and less need for remediation. Our CUNY Catch program, which delivers education to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated New Yorkers, will connect inmates now located at an upstate prison to LaGuardia upon their release. Recognizing our students’ need for income supports, we’ve expanded employment of students, specifically as peer mentors and health educators.

Fundraising

Despite a very tough environment, our external funding has grown. We have been increasingly successful in philanthropic fundraising from corporate sources and alumni, with new foundation grants from the Luce Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Wal-Mart Foundation, the Robin Hood Foundation, the Goldman Sachs Foundation and the MetLife Foundation. In 2009-2010 alone, we garnered over $12 million in workforce development grants and contracts, including new funding for our cutting-edge GED work.

The Division of Institutional Advancement has helped the College develop its assets, stay in touch with alumni, strengthen relationships with the community, and maintain clear and powerful communication with the public, helping to raise the national profile of the College. In response to dwindling financial support for public higher education, it has become imperative to engage in fundraising efforts to help sustain our programs and provide support for our students. In 2003, under the leadership of President Mellow, the LaGuardia Foundation was launched and is committed to attracting donations, with the main objective of providing scholarships to our students in need. To date the foundation has raised $4.5 million and distributed 2,600 scholarships to students, growing from $40,000 in 2006-2007 to $300,000 in 2009-2010.

Organizational Structure of the Self-Study Process

The LaGuardia Community College Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee was appointed by the President in November 2009. The Steering Committee consists of the Chairs of
the fourteen Working Groups created to address each Middle States standard, plus the Steering Committee Chair. The members of the Steering Committee and Working Groups were drawn from a broad cross-section of the college and include over 140 faculty, administrators, staff, and students. A co-chair was designated for each Working Group. The composition of the Working Groups was accomplished through a collaborative process involving input from many stakeholders, including the Academic Chairs and the Executive Council. In addition, a self-study website was created to complement the campus forums, surveys and other events to ensure that the self-study was an inclusive, transparent process engaging the entire college community. Appendix A provides a complete listing of the Steering Committee and Working Group members.

To guide the work of the Steering Committee, a smaller Core Team was created, consisting of the Steering Committee Chair; the Working Group Chairs for Standards 7, 13, and 14; and two senior administrators: the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Executive Director for Organizational Development and Planning. The Core Team served as the policy-making body to establish the direction, goals, and activities of the self-study. It established agendas for Steering Committee meetings; assisted the Steering Committee in establishing the format and scope of working group reports; and provided feedback on the Working Group reports. In consultation with the Core Team, each Working Group developed research questions for the self-study. During 2010-2011, the Working Groups conducted research and submitted seven interim reports, including draft findings and recommendations, to the Core Team (see instructions for logging in to the SharePoint site where these interim reports and other research documents are posted).

In May 2011, the final reports of the Working Groups were submitted to the Core Team and preliminary findings were discussed with the Student Government Association and the President’s Cabinet, and at a college-wide Open Forum. Over the summer the Steering Committee Chair, assisted by the Core Team, edited these reports into a draft self-study, which was published on the college website in September for review. All members of the college community were invited to submit comments through the website and to attend a college-wide Middle States Open Forum. An additional Student Open Forum was held. In addition, each Working Group submitted written comments about the draft report to the Core Team. The feedback received from these venues was reviewed by the Core Team and Steering Committee, and, as appropriate, incorporated into the final draft of the Self-Study.

Documentation and Demonstrating Compliance

Throughout this report there are sentences and phrases that have been bolded. The language in these areas has been taken directly from the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education as enumerated in the Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education. We have incorporated and bolded these words in order to state explicitly how LaGuardia is in compliance with the Middle States Commission’s standards. Parenthetical references to the Fundamental Elements follow the order listed in Characteristics of Excellence. For example, FE 1.1 refers to the first Fundamental Element under Standard 1.

All documents cited in the report are accessible online by clicking on the highlighted links. The report also includes references to appendices for supplementary information. These appendices are provided in a separate document accompanying the report.
Executive Summary

Institutional Overview and the Self Study Process: LaGuardia Community College was founded in 1971 as a bold experiment in opening the doors of higher education to all. LaGuardia educates more than 18,000 credits students through over 50 degree and certificate programs, as well as more than 40,000 non-credit students seeking career and educational experiences. Upon graduation, LaGuardia students’ lives are transformed as family income increases 17%, and students transfer to four-year colleges at three times the national average. Part of the City University of New York (CUNY), LaGuardia is a nationally recognized leader among community colleges for boundary-breaking success educating underserved students.

For the past two years, LaGuardia has engaged in a college-wide process resulting in the creation of this self-study report. More than 140 faculty, staff, and students have participated as members of the Steering Committee or the 14 Working Groups, closely examining whether the College meets the rigorous standards established by the Middle States Commission. Throughout the process, the Work Group participants have collaborated with their colleagues in departments and divisions throughout the College getting their input to inform the self-assessment.

Chapter 1 (Standard 1: Mission and Goals): LaGuardia’s 2000 mission statement embraces the College’s core values and commitments, informing the College’s key planning and decision-making processes. The self-study found the mission statement well-embedded in these processes, although often not explicitly referenced.

The self-study process has had an immediate and positive impact on the College: after an inclusive, campus-wide process beginning in spring 2011, the College adopted a new mission statement that embraces the values and aspirations of the institution. The process for reviewing the mission adopted by the College in spring 2011 includes plans for improving the dissemination of the mission and a periodic review of the mission statement every five years.

Chapter 2 (Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal; Standard 3: Institutional Resources; Standard 7: Institutional Assessment)

Standard 2
LaGuardia’s rigorous planning process recognizes the College’s presence in a larger University system, seeks wide input from throughout the College and drives the resources allocation process. As a college within the City University of New York, LaGuardia is aligned with priorities established in the University’s Master Plan and addresses performance goals established by the University. The College’s annual planning process begins with an analysis of reports resulting from CUNY Performance Management Process (PMP) reports, providing valuable metrics to the LaGuardia community, including a listing of comparative performance among CUNY colleges on University targets. LaGuardia’s strategic plan initiatives are guided by these assessments and are designed to move the College toward reaching University objectives and College targets. The College’s strategic planning process requires extensive consulting with students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community. The planning process, while complex because of the overlay of CUNY’s performance goals, has allowed the College to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and develop plans and institute policy changes and/or programs to achieve shared goals.
Guided by the planning process, the College allocates limited available resources to areas where PMP measures have indicated the need for improvement. The structure of the strategic plan, including university goals and long-term strategies growing out of the College’s process to examine longer-term trends through a “visioning process,” makes the core priorities clear to the college community and focuses attention, energy, and resources on priority areas. A move to add assessment designs to strategic plan initiatives permits the College to better determine whether investments in priority areas have brought about the desired results.

**Standard 3**

Budget, capital funding, and strategic planning procedures are repeatedly and effectively communicated to the College community, and recent changes to the strategic plan timeline have expanded participation in the budget process. Long-term planning for the College’s operating budget, often complicated by the fluid nature of state and city budget-making processes, has also evolved in recent years, improving the ability to project revenues and expenses and allowing more lead-time to respond to austere years.

The College’s physical footprint has expanded significantly and the College utilizes funds from a number of sources for capital projects. A regular assessment process is employed to keep priorities focused on maintaining or expanding the infrastructure necessary to provide high-quality instruction and student support. College assessment of the needs and efficacy of its human and technological resources is similarly embedded in the strategic planning process.

**Standard 7**

Assessment is central to the College’s planning and operations. The College, with its myriad unique programs and processes, often with externally imposed assessment frameworks, follows assessment processes with varied timetables and many types of outcome measures. Because the College’s senior leadership recognizes the diverse assessment demands being placed on programs and has sought to avoid a “one size fits all” approach to assessment, no single framework has been imposed on these diverse programs. While this diversity of assessment approaches exists, the strategic planning process ensures that all departments and programs are actively and continuously embracing assessment.

Assessment of student learning is of paramount importance and is detailed under Standard 14. The College has become a national leader in the assessment of learning, adding greatly to the formation of innovative assessment practices by employing faculty-developed rubrics to assess basic competencies and applying these rubrics to assess student work archived in electronic portfolios (ePortfolios) which contain a rich repository of student learning artifacts. The College has built a robust assessment team both within the Academic Affairs Division and a highly regarded Institutional Research & Assessment Office to promote assessment across the College.

**Chapter 3 (Standard 4: Leadership and Governance; Standard 5: Administration; Standard 6: Integrity)**

**Standard 4**

As a part of CUNY, LaGuardia operates within the broader CUNY governing structure. On the campus, the College Senate plays a central role in governance. The tripartite governance structure of the Senate (encompassing faculty, staff, and students) provides an essential venue for
formulating academic and operating policies. Yet, this structure has also engendered debate about how to achieve a balance between giving adequate voice for all constituencies and ensuring appropriate faculty authority over curriculum. The revised governance plan approved in 2009 promoted greater transparency of the Senate’s proceedings and brought the College into compliance with the New York State Open Meetings Law. However, there are ongoing concerns about several issues, including the role of non-faculty representatives in curriculum approval and the orientation of new Senate members. The Working Group therefore recommended periodic, planned assessments of college governance so as to achieve further improvements.

**Standard 5**

Oversight of the College is the responsibility of the President under the authority of the CUNY Chancellor and Board of Trustees. The President administers the College through the Executive Council, comprised of Division leaders and key staff of the President. Six Vice Presidents directly manage operations within their Divisions. The self-study found reporting relationships and lines of organization and authority are clear. Final decision-making responsibility rests with the President; the Executive Council reviews major budgetary and policy matters and recommends actions to the President after careful review and assessment. The Executive Council is informed by the deliberations of the President’s Cabinet, the Student Government Association, the College Senate and other venues.

The Executive Council itself uses several methods of assessment to examine its effectiveness to ensure that the College achieves its strategic plan targets and improves upon its PMP results. These assessments ensure the integrity and efficiency of overall College structures and services and are utilized to inform its decision-making.

**Standard 6**

Employment and promotion opportunities at the College are made available in compliance with CUNY policies dedicated to ensuring that its colleges are administered equitably. The effectiveness of these policies within the College is assessed by the Legal Affairs, Labor, Compliance & Diversity Office. Resolution of employee grievances and appeals is carried out in compliance with collective bargaining agreements. The Division of Student Affairs insists upon due process for students, and the Student Judiciary Officer allows most violators a fair chance to correct their behavior and redeem their academic career.

*Chapter 4 (Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention; Standard 9: Student Support Services)*

**Standard 8**

LaGuardia, an open access institution, has experienced dramatic growth in student enrollment, which is carefully managed by College staff, in coordination with the University’s enrollment team. Prospective students receive early and regular communications and each year thousands of incoming students come to campus to attend new student orientation sessions to better prepare them for college life.

From the first encounter with students, the College emphasizes retention and graduation. This starts with the provision of accurate and comprehensive information about academic programs and policies, basic skills requirements and testing, financial aid, and transfer. The College disseminates information to students at all points in their academic careers via the regularly
updated web site, college catalog, student handbooks, and electronic media. From before students enter the College until they depart, LaGuardia has both college-wide and more focused initiatives to support students as they endeavor to persist and ultimately graduate. Each program assesses itself to assure that it is meeting its goals and is aligned with the College mission.

LaGuardia’s students typically must overcome financial hardship to afford school. The College has improved the processing of financial aid so that it is more quickly delivered to students, has instituted a scholarship program to help needy students, and has changed its financial services processes to promote retention.

A concern noted in the self study has been the College’s communication with and support for those students who have applied to candidacy programs in nursing but are not accepted. The College has developed alternative programs to meet the needs of students who wish to continue in the nursing profession but whose academic achievements do not qualify them for admission to the extremely competitive Associate Degree Nursing Program.

**Standard 9**
The College offers a comprehensive program of student support services from point of entry to graduation that respond to the wide-ranging needs of LaGuardia’s diverse student population. Even so, The College’s Achieving the Dream project (AtD) concluded that more work is needed to remedy a fragmentation of services that confuses students and potentially undermines their experience at the College. In order to address these shortcomings, the AtD Committee issued five recommendations, currently in the process of being implemented. Moreover, the Center for Student Success was launched in November 2011 as one step towards addressing this fragmentation of services by creating a single referral hub for students.

Since 2007, the College has made many structural changes to academic advisement in response to ongoing assessments. Of particular note is a new process that permits each of the College’s advising departments to concentrate on one of three stages of a student’s development. Further, in 2010 the College launched an “Advising Central” website to ensure that faculty and staffs possess accurate advisement information. Despite the intense focus on advising, students, faculty and staff continue to see a need to create a more unified and impactful approach to advising. The College is embarking on a college-wide process to construct a more student-friendly advisement program.

**Chapter 5 (Standard 10: Faculty):** LaGuardia faculty are the bedrock of the institution. The faculty is accomplished, diverse, and dedicated to the core mission of aiding student success. Today, the faculty as a whole possess a level of academic qualifications that far exceeds national norms for community colleges. They have amassed an impressive record of professional achievement and been recognized with numerous grants and awards. Diversity among the faculty is fairly high and increasing, though improvements remain desirable, especially regarding the Hispanic student/faculty ratio.

Since 2002, the College has benefited from a substantial growth of the faculty. Even though the College has devoted significant resources to hiring full-time faculty, due to rapid student enrollment growth, the ratio of full-timers to part-timers has increased slightly.
Evaluation policies for the reappointment of all faculty members and for the promotion and tenure of full-time faculty are clearly defined. The system of annual evaluations, peer teaching observations, and student surveys form the core of this process. Faculty and Chairs expressed that peer evaluations are effective in assessing the quality of teaching, while views of the effectiveness of SIRs are divided.

Professional development opportunities are widely available to both full-time and part-time faculty and are designed to help faculty refine the “art of teaching” and develop their scholarship.

A substantial portion of the LaGuardia faculty responding to a recent survey state they find it challenging to balance their teaching responsibilities with scholarship and service. Overall, faculty members believe that teaching is the core of LaGuardia’s mission as a community college. Many express the desire for a more manageable workload in order to both better serve students and to give more attention to scholarship and publication.

Chapter 6 (Standard 11: Educational Offerings): New program development has accelerated in recent years, reflecting a renewed sense of purpose at the College and providing an increasing range of educational opportunities, including new programs in the liberal arts and sciences that have enhanced LaGuardia’s distinctive identity as a community college that challenges national preconceptions. LaGuardia’s process for developing, implementing, and modifying new and current programs ensures that the College’s curriculum is academically rigorous and consistent with its mission. LaGuardia’s academic programs meet the rigorous standards set by the University, and, where appropriate, national accreditors and appropriate governmental entities. All courses and programs are developed through a peer review process among qualified faculty in departmental curriculum committees.

Substantial enrollment growth in the College’s AA and AS degree programs has exerted extra pressure on transferability in curriculum deliberations, since most of these students intend to transfer to baccalaureate programs. As required by CUNY policy, all new AA and AS programs are articulated with senior CUNY colleges.

LaGuardia graduates are well prepared academically for transfer to baccalaureate programs, with the five-year transfer rate to senior colleges far above the national rate. The College also prepares students for employment through AAS vocational programs and internship experiences arranged by either the Cooperative Education Department or specific degree programs. The College’s six-month job placement rate for AAS programs and pass rates on national/state certification exams indicate that the allied health programs are very effective at preparing students for employment.

The Cooperative Education Department has recently entered a period of change, although cooperative education itself, including internship programs, remains a curricular staple at LaGuardia. Consistent with recommendations of a 2002 college Task Force, the Co-op Department is working more closely with other departments to better serve students, and several programs have requested and been granted direct responsibility over internships for their students.

Capital funding has been secured to allow a major expansion of the library. Student satisfaction with library services is high and demand for services grows. Increasing enrollment and budgetary pressures have created challenges for the library faculty to address student needs.
Student success is supported by an extensive array of tutoring services, most of which are linked to academic departments, dedicated to particular areas, and available to all matriculated students. In addition, special programs offer tutoring along with other services to designated populations, and student peer tutors are employed by the College to assist fellow students.

Chapter 7 (Standard 13: Related Educational Activities): LaGuardia participates in CUNY’s systematic entrance testing systems, identifies incoming students who need pre-college level coursework, and offers a broad range of support services and basic skills courses in English, Reading, ESL, and Mathematics. In later credit-bearing courses, students who have passed basic skills courses tend to perform comparably to those who entered college-level courses directly, suggesting that these pre-college programs are very effective. The College provides multifaceted support, and regularly scheduled assessments show quantifiable gains in basic skills instruction.

The Division of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) carries out the College’s mission with non-credit educational offerings and serves as an important pipeline for students enrolling on the credit-side of the College. ACE programs have a positive impact on the College’s local community and on the 40,000 individuals who access ACE-related courses and programs. ACE programs meet a broad public need for GED instruction, English language programs, services to help small businesses grow, development of workforce skills and much more. LaGuardia’s non-credit programs have garnered much attention, as well as significant public and private financial support. New York City provided substantial funding to launch the city’s first health care career center to meet growing demand for healthcare industry workers. LaGuardia was the first community college to pilot the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, a national imitative to grow small businesses.

Many assessment methods are used to evaluate ACE’s offerings, and in 2011 ACE began reviewing instruction, curriculum, and customer service standards as part of the University-wide examination of continuing education programs. Grant-funded programs are reviewed and evaluated on a continuing basis and must meet rigorous standards established by funding entities.

Chapter 8 (Standard 12: General Education; Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning)

Standard 12
LaGuardia employs an across-the-curriculum approach to general education, based on a core set of competencies that are woven into course work in all the majors. General education goals are assessed by seven core competencies: Critical Literacy (a comprehensive category for three competencies: reading, writing, and critical thinking), Quantitative Reasoning, Oral Communication, Technological Literacy, and Research and Information Literacy. Survey results indicate that students are well-informed about general education competencies and believe they are making significant progress in improving their performance in these competencies.

Standard 14
LaGuardia implements a systematic, sustained, and thorough process that uses multiple qualitative and quantitative measures to document and improve student learning. The Assessment Leadership Team, established in 2005 to guide the College’s assessment processes, has made major improvements in the Periodic Program Review (PPR) process. The PPR process,
coupled with other faculty-led assessment processes, provide the College with valuable data that
supplements course pass rates, retention data, information from standardized examinations, and
course grades.

For general education core competencies, LaGuardia has instituted twice-yearly Benchmark
Assessment Readings using faculty-designed rubrics to augment the findings from PPRs and
create additional direct evidence of student learning on a yearly basis. In spring 2011,
interdisciplinary faculty teams read student artifacts across six core competencies. The 2011
Benchmark Assessment readings documented gains in student achievement, while also
indicating the need to revise several rubrics and to place greater emphasis on the collection of
baseline data.

Faculty within each academic program have established programmatic competencies with
discipline-specific learning goals, outcomes, and assessment plans. Many programs are still in
the process of specifying evaluation criteria for their programmatic competencies, refining
assessment methodologies, and implementing changes based on assessment data.

Student learning outcomes are defined through clearly articulated, written statements and the
College has designed courses, programs, and educational experiences to achieve those outcomes.
The emphasis on clearly defining learning outcomes starts when official course proposals are
reviewed by college governance. All proposals are required to list specific student learning
outcomes as part of the syllabus; there are no exceptions to this policy.

The College is continuously seeking to improve the assessment of student achievement of key
learning outcomes and in utilizing these assessment results to improve teaching and learning.
Within this effort, the Center for Teaching and Learning has been essential to expanding
ePortfolio for assessment purposes, to educating faculty and staff about assessment, and to
supporting programs in implementing changes in curriculum and programmatic development
based on their PPR findings. There has been a steady growth in the use of authentic student
assessment, in the routine inclusion of student work in PPRs, in establishing clear and
sustainable collection methods for student work, and in using the data to inform program
changes.
Chapter 1

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

“*The institution’s mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates whom the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are utilized to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.*” (Characteristics of Excellence 1)

Introductory Overview of Standard 1: Mission and Goals

Consistent with the Fundamental Elements for Standard 1, LaGuardia Community College’s mission and goals have been developed through collaborative participation and approved through a formal process (FE 1.1). (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) The mission statement adopted in April 2000 (01.1.06 2002 LaGCC Middle States Self-Study, p.21) was developed through a participatory process involving all college constituencies (01.1.16 2000 Mission Creation Process). The 2000 mission statement grew out of the 1992 statement (01.2.09 1992 Mission), which emphasized the dual mission of supporting both “students who want to transfer to four-year colleges as well as those who seek immediate employment.” (01.2.07 1975 Mission).

LaGuardia’s 2000 mission statement is the fourth in a series of updated missions since 1975 (See Appendix 1.0). This statement prioritizes the College’s commitment to provide a diverse student population with access to higher education through a large range of educational offerings. The mission also emphasizes the importance of a highly qualified faculty and staff, the assessment of academic programs, strong support for student success, and productive relationships with the local community.

The self-study Working Group for Standard 1 examined how the mission statement guides planning and decision making in academic and administrative areas, including both internal initiatives and external opportunities. It also questioned whether the College has a process for reviewing its mission and goals, how well-informed the College’s constituencies are of its mission and goals, how the mission and goals support professional development, and how the mission enables the College to adapt to changes in the external environment.

Findings for Standard 1: Mission and Goals

We found that LaGuardia is in compliance with the Middle States Commission’s expectation that the College have a clearly defined mission and goals that guide faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes (FE 1.1). Planning and decision-making are driven by the annual Strategic Planning process and the Strategic Directions agreed upon at the College’s 2009 Vision Summit.
LaGuardia’s annual Strategic Planning process, initiated in 2006, guides all college activities. In the Plan each college target corresponds to CUNY Goals. CUNY’s Performance Management Process (PMP) then evaluates how well the College achieves its targets (02.1.02 CUNY Goals Progress Reports). CUNY’s PMP process embeds self-assessment into annual strategic planning for CUNY colleges; however, at no point does the process require attention to the College’s mission statement. (For the College’s strategic planning process see Chapter 2).

Our research also confirmed that the College’s institutional goals are consistent with its mission (FE 1.3), as expected by Middle States. Although the text of the mission statement is not regularly cited in the Strategic Plan or Vision Summits, the Working Group did not identify any instance in which the College’s goals were inconsistent with the 2000 mission statement. For example, the following goals from the 2008-09 Strategic Plan (01.01.05 Strategic Plan) have clear linkages to the 2000 mission statement: Increase on-campus employment for students by increasing the number of student college assistants and peer advisors; increase enrollment of underrepresented groups in new academic programs, including minority males, international (F-visa) and adult students 25 and over; create a Sustainability Committee and implement a validated plan; and, solidify program offerings and identify full funding for NY Designs and the Small Business Development Center. All of these goals are consistent with the 2000 mission statement.

In addition, we found that the mission statement is publicized and known by a substantial portion of the college community (FE 1.1). Since 2002, the College has included the mission statement in the catalog and the mission statement is posted on the LaGuardia website (01.1.03 Mission Statement). Even so, questions emerged during the self-study about how well the mission guides decision-making processes on campus. Opinions varied from an affirmative response to ignorance about the mission’s content. This lack of consistency across campus prompted a recommendation from the Standard 1 Working Group to survey all constituencies to ascertain their familiarity with and use of the mission statement in their daily work at LaGuardia.

In March 2011, faculty, staff, and students were surveyed on topics relevant to the research of several working groups. Six questions for faculty and staff addressed the mission, while one question asked students whether they were familiar with the mission statement (10.09.08 Faculty and Staff Survey Results.xls and 01.03.03 Student Survey Results).

A significant majority of the full and part-time faculty and staff reported having seen the mission statement, while only about one-third of the students in the aggregate had seen it (01.03.03 Student Survey Results). More than half of the full and part-time faculty and staff reported finding the mission on their own, while slightly less than half were introduced to it at orientation or by another colleague. Approximately one-half of the full and part-time faculty and staff reported referring to the mission in their work at the College at any time. Less than half of the full and part-time faculty and staff think the majority of their colleagues are implicitly aware of the College’s mission, while slightly more than half feel the mission is being taken into account as the College plans for the future (10.09.08 Faculty and Staff Survey Results.xls). In an effort to respond to these mixed results, the formal process for reviewing the mission (see Appendix 1.1) includes plans for improving the dissemination of the mission statement.
As expected by Middle States, the College’s mission and goals include support of scholarly and creative activity (FE 1.1). The 2000 mission statement includes a commitment to “maintaining a dedicated, highly qualified faculty and staff, while promoting their professional development” (Appendix 1.0). Support for developing scholarly and creative projects has blossomed since 2002 and is demonstrated by strategic plan targets. Each year since 2007-08 strategic plans have supported CUNY’s commitment to become a “research-intensive institution” and to “draw greater recognition for academic quality” (05.1.47 Strat Plan Targets 2010-11, 05.1.48 Strat Plan Targets 2009-10, 05.1.49 Strat Plan Targets 2008-09, 05.1.50 Strat Plan Targets 2007-08). LaGuardia’s 2010-11 Strategic Plan includes six targets to “attract and nurture a strong faculty that is recognized for excellent teaching, scholarship, and creative activity.” Related targets are described in Appendix 1.2.

Further, we determined that the College’s mission and goals relate to external as well as internal contexts and constituencies (FE 1.2). LaGuardia’s 2000 mission statement calls on the College to “[respond] creatively to changes in student population, technology and the global economy.” In recent years there have been numerous instances in which the College has addressed shifts in student needs, integrated new technologies for pedagogy and communication, and addressed global and local economic issues. Implemented across different College divisions, these initiatives demonstrate the College’s commitment to serving its local constituencies.

Chapter 6 examines how the College has addressed the needs of a changing student population through a robust curriculum development process, resulting in the creation of eleven new academic programs since 2007. Another example of responding to changing constituencies is LaGuardia’s participation in the Ford Foundation’s “Difficult Dialogues” project in 2006-07, where the College fostered conversation about religious diversity within classes and at local venues in many Queens communities, opening dialog among distinct communities and helping educators gain communication skills (01.5.26 Difficult Dialogues).

Since 2007, the College has responded to the dramatic changes in communication technologies by using social networking and text messaging for outreach to students and as pedagogical tools. The use of ePortfolios and Teaching and Learning Networks is discussed in Chapter 8, and the Bursar’s text messaging program is discussed in Chapter 4.

Major shifts have also taken place in the U.S. and global economies as the continuing economic crisis affects markets, housing, and employment. Community colleges play an important role in the response to these economic challenges, and, in keeping with its mission, LaGuardia’s Adult and Continuing Education division (ACE) has responded quickly and creatively by improving its ability to meet student and community needs, as discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 2 (Standards 2 and 7) and Chapter 8 (Standards 12 and 14) demonstrate how the College’s goals focus on student learning, other outcomes, and institutional improvement (FE 1.4).

Finally, the Standard 1 Working Group, noting that the 2002 Middle States report suggested a review of the mission statement, recommended to the President and Executive Council that this task should be undertaken. As a result, participants in the strategic planning process included a
review of the mission statement in the 2010-11 Strategic Plan (01.1.05 Strategic Plan). The President endorsed institutionalizing a formal process for the periodic evaluation of the mission statement (FE 1.1) and committed to integrating the mission statement with the strategic planning process and communicating the statement to the college community. The process, delineated in Appendix 1.1, ensures that the mission statement is revised through collaborative participation (FE 1.1), consistent with Middle States standards.

The President appointed a committee comprised of faculty, staff and a student to consult with the college community and draft a revised mission statement (01.1.19 Draft Mission Statement). In order to stimulate responses from the college community, the committee asked, "In two words, what does LaGuardia Community College mean to you?" At spring 2011 Opening Sessions, faculty and staff texted their words to a polling website and additional constituent responses were gathered via student club fairs, word boards, emails to the ACE job bank database, the library checkout desk, and classroom surveys. Approximately 2,200 words were gathered over the course of one month and those which repeated most often formed the basis for the first draft of the mission statement, which was shared with the College Senate, Student Government Association, and the larger college community for review and recommendations, including a presentation at the June 2011 Professional Staff Meeting. Based on constituent feedback, the Mission Committee made further revisions and submitted the final text to the President and Executive Council, who approved the new mission statement shared with the College in September 2011:

LaGuardia Community College’s mission is to educate and graduate one of the most diverse student populations in the country to become critical thinkers and socially responsible citizens who help to shape a rapidly evolving society.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 1
1. LaGuardia’s mission statement describes the College’s core values and commitments and is well-embedded in key planning and decision-making processes, although it is not always explicitly referenced.
2. The goals articulated in the College’s recent strategic plans are consistent with the mission’s commitment to the professional development of the faculty and include support for scholarly and creative projects. In addition, in keeping with its mission, the College responds to changes in student needs and successfully pursues external opportunities.
3. After an inclusive, campus-wide process beginning in spring 2011, LaGuardia adopted a new mission statement that embraces the values and aspirations of the institution.
4. The process for reviewing the mission adopted by the College in spring 2011 includes plans for improving the dissemination of the mission and a periodic review of the mission statement every five years.

Recommendations for Standard 1
1. The College should implement its plans for disseminating the Mission and Goals throughout the campus. Some suggested methods are shown in Appendix 1.3.
2. When developing goals for annual college targets in the Strategic Plan, divisions and departments should demonstrate how their initiatives support the College’s mission.
Chapter 2
 Standards 2, 3 and 7: Planning, Resource Allocation,
 and Institutional Renewal, Resources and Assessment

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

“An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.” (Characteristics of Excellence 4)

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

“The human, financial, technical, physical facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution’s resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.” (Characteristics of Excellence 9)

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

“The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.” (Characteristics of Excellence 25)

Introductory Overview of Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

As part of CUNY, LaGuardia must address priorities set forth in the University’s Master Plan 2008-12 (02.3.05 CUNY COMPACT –Master Plan 2008-12), and must meet performance goals set by the Chancellor for all colleges in the CUNY system (01.2.04 Final University PMP Goals and Targets for 2010-11). Within these constraints, it must then develop a specific set of goals and initiatives in consultation with the broader college community. These goals are established through a strategic planning process embedded in CUNY’s Performance Management Process (PMP) initiated in 2000-01 to clarify university-wide priorities and establish clear and measurable standards of accountability throughout the University. Annual PMP reports provide comparative performance data among CUNY colleges on dozens of University targets. The latest year-end report is (01.2.16 2010-11 Final PMP Report).

Founded on a philosophy of innovation and change, LaGuardia’s strategic planning process was the first college-wide activity to enumerate organizational-change efforts and to hold the College’s many entrepreneurs accountable. Nevertheless, within the strategic planning structure of authorized innovation and marginal resource allocation, many variations in organization, identifying funding sources, and inspiration are allowed to flourish. Assessment can take many forms in each division with specialized formats for academic programs, strategic plan targets, grant and contract supported activity, CUNY-funded initiatives, student advising departments, student success areas, and administrative service departments.

Each year from 2001 to 2009 the President and the Executive Council began the planning process by reviewing CUNY-generated goals and objectives (01.2.04 Final University PMP Goals and Targets for 2010-11). Next, each division Vice President solicited “targets” for the
coming year from the units they supervised and then submitted these to the President. The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), composed of one member from each division of the College, then integrated these unit targets into an institutional response to the University (02.1.06 Notes, Interview with Paul Arcario). At the end of the academic year, each division Vice President submitted a list of achievements to the President to incorporate into a year-end report to the Chancellor. Finally, the President and the division Vice Presidents compared the report of achievements with the targets to assess institutional effectiveness as well as to determine the goals and targets for the coming year.

The College’s strategic planning process has evolved over the past five years. Feeling that they had to respond to all CUNY goals, faculty and staff found it difficult to connect their individual projects to the College’s vision of progress. As a result, pursuing too many targets strained division and department resources and diffused efforts. After reviewing the process in early 2010, the Executive Council transferred administration of the strategic planning process to the Division of Academic Affairs under the direction of a reformulated SPC, now the PMP Committee (The 2010-11 members are listed in Appendix 2.1). Beginning each February, the PMP Committee reviews CUNY targets, drafts a schedule, and discusses mid-year reviews. The Executive Council then reviews these targets and approves the schedule. The schedule and targets are then distributed to Deans, Chairs, the College Senate, the President’s Cabinet, and the Student Government Association (SGA). Strategic initiatives are then developed by Directors and Chairs to respond to each target and submitted to the appropriate Division Vice President who submits them to the PMP Committee. The PMP Committee compiles the initiatives into a draft college-wide strategic plan and the Executive Council then approves the draft plan to be presented to the President’s Cabinet, the College Senate, and the SGA for discussion and suggestions. A final version of the strategic plan is then submitted to the Chancellor (02.1.06 Notes, Interview with Paul Arcario, 02.1.07 Calendar for 2011-12 Plan).

Consistent with the Fundamental Elements for Standard 2, LaGuardia has a well-defined decision-making process and authority that facilitates planning and renewal with clear assignment of responsibility for improvement and assurance of accountability. The process is clearly communicated and provides for constituent participation (FE 2.2-2.4). (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) The full cycle is shown below in Figure 2.2.

Since 2010 the results of the periodic College Visioning experience have also been included as strategic themes to be pursued within strategic planning target initiatives (Visioning Summit Strategies are given in Appendix 2.2). Their inclusion assures that the substance of the College’s mission is broadly understood by the College community and updated in a way that determines strategic direction for the College (02.1.08 Strategic Plan Presentation to President's Cabinet March 26, 2010).

In early March the Executive Council begins the parallel resource allocation process when the Vice President of Administration submits a preliminary budget based on mandatory changes while assessing the amount of unallocated discretionary funding. The Executive Council decides the overall allocation of resources among the divisions and the Business Office subsequently prepares a “start-up” operating budget for each department and office.
While the Executive Council is prioritizing strategic plan initiatives in May, the Business Office examines the budgets submitted with each strategic initiative. The Executive Council then allocates available discretionary funds to strategic plan initiatives according to their priority. Areas with initiatives that cannot be funded are encouraged to pursue grant funding.

Division strategic plan coordinators assist each initiative leader in entering individual work plans into the online strategic plan. The coordinators then update work plans in January and in late spring for the end of the year. These become the basis of the report to the Chancellor.

After the Chancellor receives the year-end report, documenting the extent to which the College has met its performance objectives and targets (01.2.05 PMP Liaison memo 09-10), he and the CUNY PMP Review Team assess the results and provide guidance to the College President. In July, the CUNY PMP Review Team reviews the OIRA PMP data, the Colleges’ own PMP reports and additional campus performance information reported by CUNY staff (02.1.02 What does the PMP Review Process Entail?, 02.1.03 PMP Frequently Asked Questions). When funds are available, the Chancellor allocates discretionary “PMP incentive funds” to each CUNY college president.

Under Standard 2 we investigated how planning has changed at the College in the last five years, how it has driven changes in resource allocation, how it considers the longer-term future of the College, and how the process effectively involves the college community in improving college performance.
Findings for Standard 2

Our research shows that **objectives at all levels are clearly stated and drawn from assessment results** (FE 2.1, 7.3), as expected by Middle States. Two of the goals of the University’s PMP are to ensure clarity about University and College priorities and to introduce more accountability into the system ([02.1.03 PMP Frequently Asked Questions](#)). In 2010-11, CUNY published three overarching goals in its *Performance Goals and Targets*: (1) Raise Academic Quality; (2) Improve Student Success; and (3) Enhance Financial and Management Effectiveness ([01.2.04 Final University PMP Goals and Targets for 2010-11](#)). The University broke these down into nine more specific objectives. As an example, the second under the topic of raising academic quality is to “Attract and nurture a strong faculty that is recognized for excellent teaching, scholarship and creative activity.” These were further broken down into thirty-five specific University Targets such as, “Instruction by full-time faculty will increase incrementally.” Each target also employs a specific metric to assess performance, such as the “percentage of instructional FTEs delivered by full-time faculty.”

Assessment is thus the basis for strategic plan development. For example, in the 2008-09 Strategic Plan based on PMP results, the College targeted a 2% increase in the pass rate in basic skills math, from 68.7 to 70.7%. In the 2009-10 Strategic Plan, the College had to adjust the target based on actual results to increase the pass rate in basic skills math by 1%, from 68.4 to 69.4%. In the 2010-11 Strategic Plan, the goal is to increase the pass rate in basic skills math by two percentage points from 79.1 to 81.1% ([02.1.01 Strategic Plan-Workplans](#)). Although this example shows target continuity through several years, our review found that not all targets remained on the strategic plan until they were met, especially in the years before the transition in format in 2010. Many projects require more than a single year, but the process as originally designed did not explicitly accommodate these multi-phased activities. Participants registered some confusion over whether longer projects had been stopped or just renamed in a new phase and, if stopped, by whom.

Our inquiries into whether **goals and assessment results are used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels** (FE 2.1) reveal that the College has a record of **institutional and unit improvement efforts and their results** (FE 2.5). The annual letter to the Chancellor outlines each year’s accomplishments against goals. The President and the division Vice Presidents then compare the report of achievements with the annual targets and use the comparison as an assessment of effectiveness as well as to determine the goals and targets for the upcoming year. For example, to improve the College’s PMP ratings under the University goal of strengthening academic quality, while enrollments were increasing, the College sought to maintain the ratio of full-time faculty teaching hours to part-time hours in University Target 2.3. In fiscal years 2008-11, over $1.3 million in Compact funds were allocated for hiring new full time faculty ([02.3.18 Compact and SI Fiscal Year 2007 – 2011](#)). This is only one example of how the College implements targets and allocates marginal resources based on assessment. As another example showing how the College has pursued a longer-term objective, Appendix 2.3 contains highlights of the College’s accomplishments in improving physical space from 2007-10. Appendix 2.4 gives further examples of assessment of College-implemented targets, while Appendix 2.5 provides examples of strategic plan initiatives based on vision strategies.
We also confirmed that the College periodically assesses the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes (FE 2.6). After a review of the strategic planning process commissioned by the Executive Council (02.1.08 Strategic Plan Presentation to President’s Cabinet March 26, 2010), a new Strategic Planning Template (02.1.09 Template for Strat Plan 11-12) was incorporated into the revised process for the 2010-11 cycle and updated for 2011-12. Each unit was instructed to select three areas or activities to focus on: two University Objectives/Targets (01.2.04 Final University PMP Goals and Targets for 2010-11) and one Strategic Visioning Direction (Global Citizenry, Sustainability, Community College Leadership, or Web 2.0).

The requirement of a detailed plan of assessment is a significant change in the College’s strategic planning process. Individual departments and/or units now develop an assessment schedule and a plan to analyze relevant data to determine if stated objectives have been achieved. More significantly, the department or unit must make changes, as appropriate, based on their findings and assess the impact of such changes.

Also, with the new process the College now has explicitly integrated its “visioning process” into the strategic planning process. For each College unit, at least one initiative developed during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 strategic planning processes pursued a strategic direction derived from the 2009 college-wide Visioning Summit. For example, the Business & Technology (B&T) Department identified the following four initiatives for the 2010-11 academic year (02.1.01 Strategic Plan-Workplans):

- Complete Paralegal Studies PPR, including ABA self-evaluation report and exhibits;
- Develop and implement an electronic version of the accounting practice set;
- Increase the number of hybrid courses offered by the B&T Department; and
- Increase the use of Web 2.0 technology in all B&T programs.

The fourth initiative focused on the Web 2.0 technology strategic direction from the Visioning Summit. Other departments and divisions have created goals that similarly invoke a Visioning Summit strategy (02.1.01 Strategic Plan-Workplans). These examples are listed in Appendix 2.5.

In the past the strategic plan was all-inclusive and glutted with routine operational responsibilities. In the last several years, Academic Affairs has streamlined the plan to accentuate the strategic over the everyday with a concomitant effort to oversee the progress of larger objectives. For example, the Dean for Academic Affairs notes that the 2007-08 Strategic Plan listed a target to increase the percentage of FTEs offered partially or totally on-line. PMP assessment revealed an unsatisfactory increase in the number of hybrid/online courses. Lacking a larger scope of responsibility, the implication had been overlooked that further professional development was required, particularly with respect to the newer digital technologies that could stimulate greater faculty interest. This revelation led to an item in the 2008-09 plan in which an existing faculty development seminar was enhanced to incorporate new Web 2.0 applications. Progressive assessments of this initiative showed that growth in hybrid/online courses was still insufficient, and this resulted in a new initiative in the 2009-10 Strategic Plan to appoint a College-wide coordinator to accelerate the project and in the 2010-11 plan to offer a professional development seminar focused exclusively on developing hybrid/online courses. The effort to limit strategic plan targets has led to a greater focus on strategic, as opposed to departmental, change.
Despite the thoughtful 2010 revisions in the strategic planning process and the strengths built into the annual review of performance data within the cycle, we found that the performance report is still essentially pro forma, almost a yes-no response, item by item to the accomplishment of strategic initiatives. More in-depth analytic feedback would improve the College’s ability to reshape and refine targets.

**Introductory Overview of Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

As a CUNY college, LaGuardia receives direct allocations from New York City and State for a major portion of its operating budget, with tuition and fees, grants, and endowments supporting the rest. College support can be broken into three parts: the tax-levy supported portion under the College’s control, the non-tax-levy supported portion under the College’s control, and the tax-levy support portion controlled by CUNY. The tax-levy portion under the College’s control for fiscal year 2010 was $86.3 million. This support was reduced 3.4% or $3.6 million for fiscal year 2011, to about $83 million dollars ([02.3.29 Budget Process Presentation to Cabinet 102910](#)).

The sum of all three sources of support is around $200 million. About 31% comes from city and state appropriations, 15% from tuition, 31% from government grants and contracts, less than 1% from auxiliary enterprises, and 14% from other sources, including private and capital funding ([11.1.03 Profile 2011](#), page 59). Appendix 2.6 shows actual funding through FY 2010.

While New York State appropriations are based on the number of FTEs, the table below shows that the 2012 state appropriation per FTE is 21% lower than 2008 without considering inflation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>State Aid per FTE (calculated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Year 2006</td>
<td>$2,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Year 2008</td>
<td>$2,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Year 2010</td>
<td>$2,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Year 2012 proposed</td>
<td>$2,122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2

Tuition rates and tax levy contributions are set by governmental bodies, and negotiated labor contracts determine the salaries and benefits of faculty and staff. These constraints fix, to a large degree, how resources are allocated. Nevertheless, activities that support student success make up 45% of expenditures.

The College’s annual tax levy budget is established using CUNY’s Community College Allocation Model which uses weighted average enrollment, class sizes, and size and complexity of facilities to calculate LaGuardia’s budget allocation. Final decisions on staffing levels are made by the College and may deviate from the model. Appendix 2.7 explains the funding model in somewhat more detail.

Under Standard 3 we investigated how the College ensures that it has adequate resources—financial, human, infrastructure, space, and technological—to carry out its mission, how long-term financial planning helps the College anticipate the future, and how the College audits its use of resources.
Findings for Standard 3
Our research demonstrates that the College has rational and consistent policies and procedures to determine asset allocation consistent with the institution’s mission, goals, and plan (FE 3.2), as expected by Middle States. The process of developing the College’s operating budget and multi-year projections is complex because of the timing of funding mechanisms and the participation of the stakeholders. After the Executive Council reviews the PMP and the Strategic Plan, the budget allocation process, managed by the Vice President of Administration and his Division, guides resources to areas identified for needed investment (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 (02.3.29 Budget Process Presentation to Cabinet 102910)

The process begins with a spring Executive Council review of the All Funds Budgeted Revenues and Expenses report (03.02.53 All Funds Report Online). In early May, the Business Office provides each College division with “near-final” budgeted versus actual spending reports. At that time, the Business Office also provides each division with its potential tax-levy base budgets for the coming year to be reallocated to fit estimated future spending. (See Appendix 2.8 for a description of the preparation of the base budget.) The base budget includes mandatory salary increases and continuing or rolling allocations and adjustments approved by the Executive Council (02.3.09 01 - a - Budget Process Summary).

The revised “Strategic Planning Template” includes a “Resources Needed” column for each strategic initiative proposal. During early stages of the budget development process, the Executive Council determines the cost of implementing the strategic plan and for each item requiring funding, divisions prepare detailed written budget requests explaining the nature and need for such funds and presents these to the Executive Council for review. Needs are then prioritized, leading to approval and funding. Appendix 2.9 provides an overview of the factors used by the Executive Council in setting priorities.

LaGuardia has undertaken many initiatives as part of its strategic planning process that require new resources. Appendix 2.10 provides an overview of funding for strategic initiatives over the last five years. In addition, supplemental resources from the College Foundation provided $249,000 in 2009 and $269,000 in 2010 in scholarships to students (05.1.52 Final LaGCC PMP).
Appendix 2.11 provides an overview of progress in grant funding and private fund-raising at the College.

Since its founding in 2003, the Foundation has raised $4.5 million and has funded over $1.3 million in scholarships to over 2,000 students. In 2010, the Foundation raised over $1.1 million and funded over $334,000 in scholarships to 304 students. The Foundation has also supported several special programs, including $100,000 to build a nursing lab in 2006, $25,000 for the library laptop loaner program in 2010, and $80,000 to the Academic Peer Instruction tutoring program since 2009. The Foundation has recently begun work on the $3 million Campaign for LaGuardia (2012-15), coinciding with LaGuardia’s 40th anniversary and CUNY’s University-wide $3 billion capital campaign.

Each semester, funds are released or taken back as enrollment meets, exceeds, or falls short of established targets. During this period, the Executive Council considers using projected changes in tuition revenues to fund additional adjunct costs. Unforeseen circumstances (such as budget cuts or hiring freezes) may affect strategic items and cause them to be placed on hold. For example, the College was asked to cut expenses for 2010-11. As a result, each department cut 4.2% from its budget.

Decisions on using student technology fees and student activities fees are made by committees whose members represent relevant campus stakeholders. All decisions for spending these funds require alignment with the College’s mission and the guidelines governing these funds. Appendix 2.12 discusses the management of student fee and Education Fund monies, used to supplement tax-levy resources.

Further allocations of discretionary funds responsive to the College’s mission made through the College’s budgeting process are documented in Appendix 2.13.

We also confirmed that the College has strategies to assess periodically the level of, and effective and efficient utilization of, institutional resources (FE 3.1, 3.10). The College carefully tracks the success of its resource allocation efforts through the PMP report and other assessments. For example, the College’s strategic plan initiative to increase the percentage of instruction taught by full-time faculty has had mixed success. In 2006-07 the percentage increased from 43.7 to 45.1 (02.1.01 Strategic Plan-Workplans) but in 2007-08 the percentage decreased. Over $1.56 million have been spent from 2007 to 2011 to hire 49 new full-time faculty members (02.3.18 Compact and SI Fiscal Year 2007-11) towards this goal. However, significant increases in enrollment as well as retirements have kept the percentage below the target (02.1.01 Strategic Plan-Workplans).

Nevertheless, we found that the College does not regularly circulate the PMP in a way that might help the campus community understand the development of funding priorities. We also found that the budget process itself is not regularly assessed along a set of criteria.

Financial
The Business Office provides periodic and timely financial reports to Divisions and Departments. Managers use the reports to identify excesses and shortages and to assess the efficient and effective utilization of resources provided. As expected by Middle States, the College has a multi-year budget projection process that uses planning and assessment
documents (FE 3.4). Long term financial planning has improved in the University in recent years with the advent of the Multi-Year Financial Outlook, the creation of a reserve fund, and the CUNY Compact. Each year, the College submits a three-year operating budget projection to CUNY called the Multi-Year Financial Outlook (03.02.37 FY2010 Year Financial Outlook and 03.02.39 FY2011 Year Financial Outlook). In addition to contractual increases for both labor and services, the projection plan takes into account anticipated enrollment levels, introduction of new programs, and reorganization of existing programs from the strategic plan.

Revisions to the Multi-Year Financial Outlooks are made when changes in revenues and expenditures are anticipated. For example, in FY2010, the College submitted a mid-year financial plan revision to reflect $1.67 million increase in anticipated expenses (funded directly under the allocation formula) resulting from the startup cost related to occupying the first and second floors of the B Building, as well as expenditures related to new hires (03.02.37 FY2010 Year Financial Outlook and 03.02.38 FY2010 MidYear Financial Outlook).

In the last three years CUNY has allowed the College to build a modest reserve (03.02.07 CUNY Memo on FY11 Financial Plans) using funds collected in excess of tuition revenue targets totaling $1.9 million. If future budget cuts are severe, the College plans to use these reserve funds to offset these losses and fill mission-critical budget gaps. As of June 2011 the College does not expect to use the reserve significantly.

Another improvement to financial planning is the implementation of the CUNY Compact in FY 2006-07 as explained in Appendix 2.14.

Increased enrollment, current and future budget reductions, new construction, a hiring freeze and tuition increases are all factors that will impact both the Strategic Planning process and Budget Development process. The campus experienced a record increase in enrollment over the past six years from approximately 13,800 in the fall of 2005 to approximately 18,000 in fall 2010 (11.1.03 Profile 2011), creating a shortage of classroom space on campus. These classroom shortages are being addressed through aggressive expansion into the B Building.

State and City budget deficits have also led to a $3.6 million reduction in LaGuardia’s FY 2010-11 budget with further cuts projected for the next fiscal cycle, despite enrollment increases. CUNY applied a hiring freeze along with the budget reduction (02.2.01 CITY HIRING FREEZE.pdf), as well as an increase in spring 2011 tuition (02.7.01 Revised Tuition Rates FY11.pdf).

The College brings each event with financial implications to the attention of the college community. The Business Office web site posts the Tax Levy College Wide Summary Report (02.3.28), the Tax Levy College Wide Detail Report (02.3.27 College Wide Budget to Actual Detail YTD current) and a budgeting process PowerPoint presentation (02.3.29 Budget Process Presentation to Cabinet 102910). This PowerPoint has been used in several venues, including the College Senate and various Middle States work groups, to identify and explain budget processes and Budget and Strategic Plan linkages. Also, the SGA has worked with the administration to provide forums on tuition increases.
Although these efforts have increased budget transparency, we found that currently the college community does not have an opportunity to provide input on which strategic plan initiatives will receive funding before the Executive Council makes long-range and marginal resource allocation decisions. It might therefore be advisable to introduce an additional step in the budget allocation process (see Figure 2.4 above) in which the Executive Council would share its proposed prioritization of strategic plan initiatives with the college community for comments before finalizing its decisions.

**Human Resources**

As of fall 2010 the Human Resources Department (HR) served 2,038 employees, of whom 806 are employed full-time and 1,232 part-time. HR adheres to principles of CUNY’s centralized system and complies with applicable labor and employment laws. HR programs include staff development and training, recruitment, employee orientation, performance management, and separation. HR actively assists employees in the pursuit of professional effectiveness from recruitment to separation ([03.03.32 HR Presentation](#)).

Since 2007, Staff Development and Training has been aligned with the College Strategic Plan to enhance institutional effectiveness and foster a supportive environment for faculty and staff. Human Resources’ leadership, managerial, and customer service staff development and training have been recognized throughout CUNY, receiving the CUNY Senior Vice Chancellor’s Productivity Award in 2005([10.05.28 Productivity Award Application](#)). Monthly training sessions also provide information on topics such as sexual harassment, workplace violence, and health and safety.

HR’s policies and processes are closely aligned with those set out in the Strategic Plan, CUNY Rules and Regulations, and Labor Contracts. HR has developed an assessment tool in the staff evaluation process that pinpoints training areas for employees and assists senior and middle managers in measuring the success of employees in the Higher Education Officers series core competencies. Similar measurement is being developed for classified employees ([03.03.32 HR Presentation](#), Slides #27, 28 & 29). An exit survey ([07.4.30](#)) gains relevant feedback from departing employees to help fine-tune College services.

Our research confirmed that **LaGuardia has an allocation approach that ensures adequate faculty, staff, and administration to support the institution’s mission and outcomes expectations** (FE 3.3). LaGuardia staffing reallocations are determined by strategic plan initiatives and available resources. College staffing levels remain above CUNY’s allocation model guidelines.

LaGuardia funding mechanisms put employees into three categories: tax-levy, non-tax-levy, and Research Foundation. The major part of HR’s work is done for City-payroll tax-levy employees. However, HR also offers hiring, employee relations, benefits, and training support to non-tax-levy employees assigned to the College Association, Early Childhood Learning Center, Education Fund, and Auxiliaries. Employees of the Research Foundation, a private entity with its own board of directors, receive benefit support through the Office of Grant Development with referrals to the foundation’s Human Resources department as necessary.

A large number of “baby-boomers” born between 1945 and 1964 are candidates for retirement over the next decade. Currently, the College’s faculty and executive staff have the highest
proportion of individuals over the age of 56 (39% and 42% respectively for each job category) (11.1.03 2011 Institutional Profile). Since 2009, the issue of succession planning has been discussed at several Executive Council meetings (05.01.29 EC Agenda). The College has not, however, completely implementing succession plans across the campus.

A more complete description of the role of the College’s Human Resources department in strategic planning and assessment can be found in Appendix 2.15.

Physical Resources
The Capital Budget provides for the purchase and construction of expensive, long-lived assets, such as buildings, major pieces of equipment, and software. The largest source of funding comes from the issue of tax free bonds by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York.

The University’s overall five-year capital priorities are intended to provide sufficient space for long-term academic initiatives. Each year, college presidents prepare a five-year capital budget request for CUNY that provides an overview of the capital planning process. LaGuardia then works with CUNY to develop a prioritized list of projects. The University incorporates these priorities into a rolling 5-year cycle master plan which guides the capital project budget process. As programmatic changes occur, or real estate opportunities arise, CUNY’s Office of Facilities Planning and Capital Management reviews and revises the facilities master plan of each campus. These master plan amendments are the road maps for requesting and delivering capital projects to support College programs. (03.02.10 2008-12 CUNY Master Plan).

As expected by Middle States, the College has a facilities master plan that aligns with its mission and goals (FE 3.5) and focuses on the adequate support and staffing of facilities, such as learning resources fundamental to all educational and research programs and libraries to accomplish the institution’s objectives for student learning (FE 3.6). The College’s Master Plan provides a long-range vision for the campus, reflecting the needs and goals of the entire college community (02.04.02a1-3 LaGuardia 2007 Master Plan Part 1, Part 2, Part 3). In order to respond appropriately to the needs of students, faculty, staff, and the community, the master planning process requires input from stakeholders. The report identifies a number of opportunities for the College and recent projects, thus helping the College grow in a logical and organized manner. Appendix 2.16 contains further description of the master planning process and how the Master Plan relates to the College Mission.

Prioritization of projects in the CUNY-wide Capital Improvement Plan is based on the CUNY Board of Trustees’ Criteria for the Priority Ordering of Capital Improvement Plan. Projects with the highest priorities—especially health, safety, security, and code compliance—are approved. (03.02.33 FY2009-10 Capital Budget Request Memo from CUNY, 03.02.34 FY2011-12 Capital Budget Request Memo from CUNY, and 03.02.32 Multi-year Financial Outlook). Actual funding of the capital projects depends on New York State and City financial resources. Since 2008, the state has constrained CUNY’s disbursement through a cap on bond sales. As a result, some capital projects have been delayed. There are three particular funding sources for capital projects, determined by size and type of project as discussed in Appendix 2.17.

Guided by the master plan, the College has acquired and improved a large amount of space, increasing the number and type of classrooms, administrative offices, and student spaces. The
expansion has also allowed several academic departments to consolidate and improve faculty and student interaction.

Full- and Part-time faculty rated LaGuardia’s facilities Good/Excellent in the spring 2009 Faculty Experience Survey conducted by the University Faculty Senate. LaGuardia was rated third among the 19 CUNY campuses on "Office Space," with a satisfaction rate of 72% (05.03.05 UFS Survey Website).

Space assignment decisions are reviewed and approved by the College’s Space Committee, comprised of representatives from all divisions and the College Senate, and finalized by the Executive Council. The criteria for considerations are alignment with the College mission, strategic plans, facilities master plan, efficiency, and health and safety (03.04.21 Space Committee Meeting minutes Apr 07 and Oct 07). Facilities, Planning and Management staff attend the Space Committee meetings as technical advisors. However, our research determined that the effectiveness of the space allocation process has never been formally assessed. Moreover, with increasing enrollments and a change in occupancy rules, the allocation of classroom space became a challenge in 2009. The resolution of this challenge is described in Appendix 2.18. Although the classroom allocation process is currently functioning more smoothly, our findings suggest that it would be beneficial to assess the process and explore ways to ensure its transparency.

**Technology Resources**

By design, the College’s technology infrastructure is flexible and scalable with the ability to manage, retrieve, and disseminate vital information to meet the planning and operational needs of the College. The infrastructure is capable of accommodating future growth needs and can be upgraded with minimal downtime. (See Appendix 2.19 for a complete description.)

Since 2007 the College has added many new wired and wireless access points. Additions of state-of-the-art hardware and software have greatly improved the reliability of the service. The College now has over 135 smart classrooms equipped with computers, projectors, and Internet connections (03.06.24 Smart Classroom Build-out B-bldg and 03.02.52 Smart Classroom). These improvements have been made with the input of the college community through the Student Technology Fee Committee and under strategic plan initiatives.

The University is in the process of implementing new enterprise software called CUNYfirst, based on the Oracle PeopleSoft suite of applications. CUNYfirst will provide a single platform to facilitate the student administration, human resources, and business needs of all CUNY Colleges, enabling CUNY colleges to streamline student information processes, standardize administrative processes, and improve decision-making. Critical facts on the CUNYfirst transition are given in Appendix 2.20.

We determined that the College has an infrastructure life-cycle management plan appropriate to its mission (FE 3.5). Moreover, all educational programs and instructional support programs are supported with a plan for equipment acquisition and replacement and for future technology (FE 3.7). Grants and Student Technology Fees fund periodic replacement of student lab computers. These computers are replaced on a three-year cycle to insure low cost maintenance and software compatibility (03.06.09 Stu Tech Fee Allocations 09-10). The Student Technology Fee Committee also funds smart classroom upgrade and installation (03.06.24 Smart...
LaGuardia Community College Self-Study

Since 2007, the College has added three large, open computer facilities with a total of 328 desktop computers for students. With funding from the capital budget and Student Tech Fee, students may now borrow one of 84 new laptops for up to three days (03.06.09 Stu Tech Fee Allocations 09-10).

Purchases of commonly used software are handled centrally through the IT Division, but replacement of computers and purchase of specialized software for faculty and staff are funded by each College Division. The College replaces departmental hardware and software through an ad hoc process, providing individual departments and programs with greater responsiveness and the opportunity to select the most suitable equipment and software (03.06.23 IT Core Component). Faculty and staff may influence college-wide technology priorities through their department chairpersons or directors. Recommendations for purchases are forwarded to division leadership, where they are either fulfilled immediately or added to strategic plan initiatives (03.01.06 Hoffacker Interview 11-17-10). Divisions also provide temporary computers to faculty and staff as needed. For example, the Division of Academic Affairs works with IT to provide faculty members with laptops while their computers are being repaired or replaced. Currently, however, there is no campus-wide replacement cycle for departmental hardware and software.

IT makes network upgrades to meet technological needs identified by the faculty, staff, and student end-users and approved by the College’s senior leadership. The College does not have a formal plan that assesses current and future technological needs outside the planning work of the IT Division.

Our research confirms that the College has adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations and has an annual independent audit of all financial entities. The College follows up on all concerns cited in audit management letters (FE 3.8-3.9). The Business Office routinely provides managers with year-to-date and comprehensive budget reports enabling managers to evaluate spending patterns and make reallocations of the available budget (02.3.30 Business Office Web Site, 02.5.06 OverUnderAnalTaxLevy12-31-09). The overall status of the College’s budget during each fiscal year is also shared with the College Senate and the President’s Cabinet. See Appendix 2.21 for a description of the budget oversight process.

The College follows state, city, and CUNY guidelines for procuring goods and services to ensure competitive prices and transparency. Board members of each of the College corporations are responsible for monitoring and allocating funds. The College adheres to Department of Education policies and procedures as described in The Blue Book for managing, documenting, accounting, and reporting of financial transactions (03.07.22 Blue Book). All purchases using the tax levy budget are subject to state and city procurement guidelines and contracts are awarded according to established procedures. (3.07.24 FAQs on CUNY Purchasing).

All tax and non-tax levy entities are subject to annual audits by independent accounting firms. The findings are shared with the University, the Executive Council, respective departments, and corporation boards. The College takes audit findings seriously and addresses them expeditiously (03.07.25 CUNY Financial Statement FY2010, 3.07.06 through 17: AuxEnt07, AuxEnt08, AuxEnt09, ColAsso07, ColAsso08, ColAsso09, ECLC07, ECLC08, ECLC09, EdFnd07, EdFnd08, and EdFnd09). CUNY-administered audit findings and progress reports are shared with the
Board of Trustee Audit Committee. A list of annual audits using outside auditors along with the management letter findings for the College’s audit can be found in Appendix 2.22.

Management letters (03.07.03 Mgmt Letter 09, 03.07.04 Mgmt Letter 08, and 03.07.05 Mgmt Letter 10) show that the number of open findings has greatly decreased as the College has followed auditors’ recommendations for processes that are directly controlled by the College. However, findings on university processes outside of LaGuardia’s control, for example, on tuition refund methodology, can only be completely addressed by the University, in this case when CUNYfirst software is fully implemented.

CUNY’s internal auditors monitor, assess, and analyze organizational risks and controls; review compliance with policies, procedures, and law; and review the reliability and integrity of information so as to safeguard assets and use resources effectively and efficiently. Internal audit recommendations are reported to University management, campus executives, and managers (03.07.23 CUNY Budget and Finance).

Audits of programs, processes, and procedures are also conducted on occasion to ensure compliance with funding requirements. The NYC Office of the Comptroller in 2008 conducted an audit of the College Discovery (CD) Program (03.07.01 CD Audit 08). The CD Program serves economically and academically disadvantaged students at CUNY Community Colleges, including LaGuardia. The report was critical of the advising and tutoring support provided to the CD students, especially those who were considered “at risk.” The University and the College disagreed with the methodology and argued that the auditors went beyond the scope of their audit and area of expertise. Nevertheless, the College responded to the audit and sought to improve advisement and tutoring.

**Introductory Overview of Standard 7: Institutional Assessment**

Deeply integrated into the strategic planning process is a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve the total range of programs and services and to achieve institutional mission, goals, and plans (FE 7.1). Assessment is not viewed as a process separate from organizational management. Each year PMP assessments, supplemented by College Key Performance Indicators (KPIs, 05.1.25 Performance Indicators for Executive Council), encourage the College to examine its programs and services, fueling the development of strategic plan targets and initiatives, each of which must indicate how its achievement will be assessed (02.1.09 Template for Strat Plan 11-12). Academic program assessment through Periodic Program Reviews (PPR) (14.1.001 PPR Schedule 8-12-11) is an important element of the annual strategic plan with student learning assessment serving as a primary PPR component.

The College appears strongest in assessing its individual programs and initiatives. Assessment of broad, more amorphous systems, like strategic planning and governance, is not yet as advanced. Nevertheless, the College is applying what it has learned from project assessment to the assessment of larger systems.

LaGuardia has a strongly integrated change management system which helps to maintain our core values of innovation, experimentation, and national leadership. Strategic planning integrates the visioning process, CUNY priorities, target initiatives built on assessment, resource allocation, and the assessment of progress.
Under Standard 7 we investigated how effectively the College supports assessment, how assessment gets integrated into strategic planning, and how the College uses assessment to guide performance improvements.

**Findings for Standard 7**

We found that the **College strongly supports a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve the total range of programs and services and achieve its mission, goals, and plans** (FE 7.1). Working from several IR&A assessment templates (**07.4.05 Template v1-3** and **07.4.10 Draft Assessment Plan**), we used an eight-point assessment outline to evaluate the depth to which assessment work has occurred at the College.

1. Mission-related goals: Has outcome success been defined?
2. Functional goals: Has operational success been defined?
3. Outcomes assessment: Has an assessment of outcomes been undertaken?
4. Operations assessment: Has an assessment of operations been undertaken?
5. Recommendations: Have any recommendations come out of the assessments?
6. Recommendation implementation: Have any recommendations been implemented?
7. Implementations assessment: Have the recommendation implementations been assessed?
8. Assessment audit: Has the assessment cycle been audited?

Against this outline we rated the assessment performance in each of the College systems (specified in the Middle States accreditation standards), departments, grant-driven areas, and programs and in each. We have grouped together areas where all subsystems were operating at the same level. The complete Assessment Grid of College Activities is in Appendix 2.23.

In reviewing the Assessment Grid, we found that most areas are far along in the assessment cycle, using **systematic, sustained, and thorough qualitative and/or quantitative measures** (FE 7.1b). Only 15% of the areas have not begun stating mission-related goals and only 11% have not begun stating functional goals. Only 12% have not done some sort of outcomes assessment (including a few who have not yet stated mission-related goals). Only 14% have not done any operations assessments. The great majority have also developed recommendations and begun implementation of these recommendations. Only 18% have no recommendations and only 20% have not carried out implementations of the recommendations. The results are less impressive for the final arc of the loop. Of all areas, 60% have not begun to assess the effectiveness of the implemented recommendations, and 69% have not begun to assess the quality of their assessment designs after having used them.

Data and assessment design support for all divisions is provided by the College’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (IR&A) and by the University’s OIRA, which allows the College to compare its performance against the other two and four-year CUNY campuses. In addition, college leaders regularly use national data, such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CSSE, **08.1.02 CCSSE Exec Summary 2010**), to assess the College’s performance against comparable institutions. Campus-wide involvement in the creation, assessment, reporting and communicating of the PMP is promoted through meetings of the Executive Council, President’s Cabinet, the College Senate, Divisions and Departments and the Student Government Association. Key effectiveness indicators and enrollment data (**05.3.02 Fall 09 Enrollment 2-25-10**) are reviewed at bi-weekly meetings of the Executive Council and actions taken as needed.
The Achieving the Dream (AtD) project is evidence based and serves as only one example of support and collaboration of faculty and administration in assessment (FE 7.1c). Through events such as the “Achievement Café” and its website (07.4.14 AtD Website), AtD has pushed hard for the use of evidence to effect change necessary to reach college-wide goals for improved retention. Regular data presentations (07.4.15 AtD Presentation of Findings) have convinced the College that no single solution to the retention challenge is available, but that it must re-focus its efforts to keep students from “falling through the cracks” (07.4.06 AtD Interim Report May 2010).

Many of the innovations in instruction and community service are grant supported. One of the broadest efforts is supported by the Perkins program. Each year, an extensive assessment of each of these initiatives, tied to the strategic plan effort, is pulled together into the final grant report (07.1.03 Perkins Grant Final Report 08-09 and 07.1.04 Perkins Grant Final Report 09-10). Funds received by the College in 2009-10 were used to: 1) strengthen career and technical programs using technology; 2) enhance vocational education through curricular revision and technology; and 3) provide occupational training and support services for Career and Technical Students.

Using national surveys like the Association of College and Research Libraries annual survey and the Academic Libraries Survey biennial survey, the Library is able to make operating comparisons with peer institutions around the country and within CUNY. “Statistics Week” data-gathering takes place every fall and spring. The College has supported the Library’s experiments in assessing information literacy across the College, including the iSkills exam, and the Project for Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) exam. The results of many of these assessments are discussed in the Library’s PPR (07.5.01 Library PPR May 2007). Also, the Vice President of Academic Affairs recently co-wrote an article with the Chief Librarian discussing the Library’s assessment efforts (07.1.01 CC Week Library Article).

Outside of the College’s academic departments (see Chapter 8 for a description of how student learning assessment drives the cycle of change and improvement in each academic program), the Division of Academic Affairs administers a number of student academic support centers, programs and services whose diversity inhibits establishing a centralized assessment system. Nevertheless, every major program has its own programmatic assessment criteria, frequently using CUNY (including elements from the PMP) or national standards as benchmarks. Assessment in Academic Affairs is particularly strong in the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Academic Peer Instruction program as will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. More examples can also be found in Appendix 2.24.

The division of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) is divided into three “clusters,” each of which contains at least half a dozen thematically related programs: Business Services, Workforce Development, and Academic and Career Preparation (13.2.45 ACE Bubble Chart 2010). Each spring, directors of individual programs establish their annual program goals and also meet with other directors within the same cluster to establish cluster goals, which in turn lead to the creation of overarching divisional goals, measured by assessment strategies.

Goals at all ACE organizational levels are informed by the College’s Strategic Plan, but they also respond to the specific needs identified by each program according to its own methods. As an example, The English Language Center (TELC), the largest single program in ACE, determines
its annual goals from data it gathers from such sources as quarterly student course evaluations, quarterly reports of demographic trends, marketing analytics, and periodic student satisfaction surveys. ACE program directors submit Program Goals Forms (07.2.07 ACE Program Goal Form 09) that show not only how a given goal fits into the College’s Strategic Plan but also require the completion of a Work Plan and a Timeline. Similar Work Plans and Timelines are then incorporated into each program’s Final Goals document (see example from TELC, 07.2.08 Final Goals (TELC) 09-10), which also identifies key staff with primary responsibility for the attainment of each goal. Key staff have the same goals included in their individual work plans for the year, and information on their success in attaining these goals is included in their annual evaluations—another form of assessment. Program directors provide a six-month progress report each fall and, in the following spring, an end-of-year completion report. In this way, there is a built-in assessment of each program’s success in meeting each of its annual goals.

ACE also maintains feeder programs to help students transition from non-credit work into college-credit courses. The programs monitor the success of these students once they have matriculated. The challenging assessment of this transition is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. To push this assessment further, ACE has received a grant from the Robin Hood Foundation to undertake a controlled, randomized study of the impact of ACE’s GED Bridge programs.

Our research confirmed that the majority of areas at the College, Academic Affairs departments, all grant activities, Student Affairs, and IT Institutional Advancement projects have clear realistic guidelines and a timetable, supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources for assessment (FE 7.1d). These assessment processes have sufficient simplicity, practicality, detail, and ownership to be sustainable within the strategic planning process (FE 7.1e).

Under new leadership in the spring of 2010, the Division of Student Affairs began a process of mission development, departmental effectiveness review, and realignment. During fall 2010, the Division began a comprehensive division-wide assessment process which will continue through 2020 (07.2.04 Stu Affs Review Schedule). The culmination of the review and planning has resulted in a Student Affairs Realignment plan, distributed in January 2011.

Student Affairs facilitates student access, retention and degree completion. Beginning in the winter of 2010, the division has sponsored workshops for all its employees on goal creation and assessment (07.1.11 SA Assessment Presentation, 07.1.12 SMARTER Goals, 07.1.13 Assess Presentation I, 07.1.14 Assess Worksheet I, 07.1.15 Assess Presentation II, and 07.1.16 Assess Worksheet II) as they begin a new, formalized assessment cycle. The division has set up a SharePoint website to support assessment with the assessment calendar, templates, best practice examples, copies of the workshop presentations, and other training materials.

The IT division operates within two spheres: operations and projects. The role of assessment is different in each. The Operations area includes the day-to-day work of maintaining hardware, responding to helpdesk tickets, and running regular reports, downloads and system maintenance. Assessment in this system includes a regular analysis of helpdesk tickets (07.4.43 IT 09 Help Desk Report) and annual personnel performance evaluations. Any evidence that points to a need for improved IT performance triggers a project.
The College has funded a Project Management Office (PMO) within the IT division. The office was expanded in 2009 when it offered its services to the College as a whole, taking on the telephone switch upgrade project as its first project outside the division. The PMO methodology assures that complex technology efforts at the College have clear goals at the beginning and a final assessment phase at the end. While most major technology projects are within the IT division, the conversion to a new platform for ePortfolio was project managed by Academic Affairs and the installation of a new phone system was overseen by the division of Administration. Each project’s planning documents are stored on the project server. These include briefs, inventories, meeting minutes, project tables and test runs (07.4.02 IT Project Brief OSP, 07.4.03 IT Project Charter Half Smart, and 07.4.04 IT OnTrack Project Brief).

The Division of Administration consists of ten diverse departments. Assessments are variously built within Strategic Plan targets using the CUNY building assessment reports (07.1.08-paper only), satisfaction surveys (07.5.03 Faculty Staff Satisfaction Survey Summary, 10.10.05 2005 UFS Faculty Experience Survey, 07.3.11 2010 CUNY Student Experience Survey, and the 07.5.06 2006 ACT Survey - Student Experience), On-line Work Request System Evaluations, HR On-line Help Desk analyses, and Hot Line analyses. Each system is used to gather data and feedback from the campus.

Institutional Advancement assessment has been concentrated at the project level, where a number of assessments have led to improved performance. Institutional Advancement’s assessment efforts required support from IR&A in survey design for their website redesign project (07.4.82 Communications Website Redesign Survey), their LiveWire redesign project (07.4.89 LiveWIRE Questionnaire 11-08), and their alumni communications surveys (07.4.93 Alumni e-Newsletter email Blast Analysis). The Information Systems department contributed analytics to their web site redesign project (07.4.96 Website Dashboard Report and 07.4.81 Web Benchmarking).

As noted in Chapter 3, the performance of each CUNY president is assessed every five years. These assessments include surveys of students, faculty, staff, and community leaders. Thus, the College’s divisions engage in an extensive and sustained process, outlined above, to continually evaluate a range of programs and services.

Our research demonstrates that the College has an assessment process to evaluate and improve the total range of programs and services with a foundation in the institution’s mission and strategic plan goals that encompasses all programs, services, and initiatives (FE 7.1). The College’s assessment of the vast array of programs and initiatives is revealed through multiple examples, again demonstrating how the culture of evidence is organically expressed across the campus. The College requires detailed work plans and progress reports for each target to be posted on the College’s website (05.3.09 Strat Plan Progress Report Workplan links 09-10). This allows administrators, faculty and staff to see all work plans for each initiative and improve coordination of efforts across a college objective. Posting work plans and progress reports helps College leaders assess overall efforts across Divisions and Departments. While the use of work plans to assess overall effort and integration into a broader assessment of institutional effectiveness is still a work in progress, the President and Vice Presidents have used the review of work plans for key targets (e.g., retention, basic skills pass rates, etc.) to strengthen the development and assessment of future targets. Some of the best examples of how this works...
relate to the initiatives to improve academic advising. As noted in standard 9, President Mellow, elaborating on the 2008-09 strategic plan College Target 6.1.1 (Make substantial progress in strengthening the effectiveness of advising; implement recommendations from formative assessment of developmental advising plan to improve advisement process.), challenged the Developmental Advising Committee (DAC) to assess its implementation of previous recommendations. DAC continued work the following year under College Target 6.1.2. The results of the assessments are tabulated in the DAC final report (09.1.095 DAC Final Report Draft 7-5-10), which lists dozens of assessments made for the many aspects of developmental advising, outreach, and implementation and shows how each was used to change the way we do advising at the College in support of the College’s overall retention goal as measured in the PMP. The continuous work of the DAC gives an integrated view of how written strategic plans reflect consideration of assessment results (FE 7.3).

While the evolution of assessment technique takes many years, the college has benefited from periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution’s assessment processes (FE 7.1f). Assessment of the Early Alert program (see Chapter 4) began largely as counts of participation by faculty and students. The current assessment is a randomized comparison of retention and grade performance of participants and a matched control group (08.4.17 Assessment Design for Early Alert). After auditing the assessment methodology of the project to increase student work on campus and the College Discovery project, project leaders initiated the randomized matched comparison method into their upgraded assessment designs.

Appendix 2.25 examines two examples of Academic Affairs assessments within strategic planning: the Business and Technology Department’s accounting lab initiative and the Natural Science Department’s efforts to add sustainability to the curriculum.

For many elements in the strategic plan that involve IT, assessments are drawn directly from the Project Management Office project briefs. In the IT division, responsibility for each strategic target is assigned the most appropriate departmental director, who is then responsible for transferring basic elements of the project brief into the strategic plan online documentation (07.2.01 Strat Plan Excerpt 7-2 for 10-11). All major IT projects become strategic plan college targets. For example, the 2010-11 strategic plan included target 9.2.3, “Implement identity management mechanism, network login, web portal, and update Degree Works.” One of the project element assessments listed on the work plan is the narrow set of goals: “Software is implemented. User identity information is accurate and secured. Data passes into and out of system in a timely and secured manner.” In our review, as in this example, we noted few PMO assessments that tied directly to college outcomes.

Another example of assessment imbedded in strategic planning is Human Resources, which in response to a 2009-10 college target to increase on-campus employment of students indicated that they would track new hires of all College Assistants and note whether these were LaGuardia students. As a second example, the 2008-09 target, 9.2.4, was set to improve the cleanliness of LaGuardia’s restrooms after the Faculty/Staff Satisfaction survey (07.5.03 Faculty Staff Satisfaction Survey Summary) indicated that people were not satisfied with restroom conditions. Under several strategic plan targets, the division renovated 45 restrooms on campus and increased the number of cleaners so that restrooms could be cleaned more frequently.
Despite the fact that each divisional target proposed is filed with an accompanying assessment outline, our review finds that none of the assessments for Institutional Advancement or the President’s Office examined the success of the strategic initiative. For example, Institutional Advancement in the 2010-11 Strategic Plan set as a goal to raise the profile of community colleges and importance of their mission through branding, media placement, and outreach to alumni and the community. However, no measure of the height of the “profile of community colleges” was included. Instead, the assessments only aim at measuring step completion within timelines.

In addition, we found that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in institutional planning, resource allocation, and renewal to improve and gain efficiencies in programs, services and processes (FE 7.2). Institutional assessment results are compiled annually in a “PMP End of Year Report” (05.1.52 Final LaGCC PMP Report 09-10 and 07.3.10 2008-09 PMP Analysis Revised) that is submitted to the Chancellor and posted on the College’s website. This report is discussed in detail with the Executive Council and the 65 senior leaders in the President’s Cabinet, which includes the Chair of the Senate and student leaders. End-of-year results are discussed and used in setting and adjusting targets for the following year and in the performance evaluations of the President, the Executive Council and division administrators. The Strategic Plan (02.1.01 Strategic Plan-Workplans) is available from the public LaGuardia web site with individual strategic target work plan progress reports accessible to all LaGuardia employees.

Other assessment results have been shared by individual projects. The Achieving the Dream project has developed retention analysis slides for major presentations by the President (Opening Sessions, Professional Staff Meetings) and division and department presentations (07.4.15 AtD Findings Presentation). The API (Academic Peer Instruction) website (07.3.08 API Website) provides comparative statistics on student performance for classes with and without API. The website helps disseminate program results among students, prospective tutors, and faculty. The Library regularly collects and shares with decision-makers a range of information. For instance, the Library’s Statistics Committee tracked the usage of the print reference books, and the results of that study (07.3.01 Library Statistics Summary, Fa 09) were shared with a Library committee deciding which electronic reference titles to purchase.

Additionally, a variety of ACE group meetings are regularly held to disseminate many types of information, including assessment results at full divisional meetings held twice each year. In addition, there are “Cluster Group” meetings each quarter for areas of common interest such as Business Services, Workforce Development, and Academic and Career Preparation. There are also separate tuition-based and grant-funded program directors’ meetings held on a more frequent basis. Division publications, such as a “Grants Report” (07.4.19 ACE Current Grants), which describe the various divisional grants, provide assessment data as well as connections to the College’s Strategic Plan.

Student Affairs shares assessment information internally at monthly Cabinet and Management meetings and at the division meeting each semester. The Deputy to the Vice President for Student Affairs has delivered several workshops on assessment at division meetings. These
workshops have assisted each Student Affairs office in the development of an institutional effectiveness plan (09.1.119 IEP Schedule, 09.1.116 IEP Fin Svs, 09.1.117 IEP Health Ctr, 09.1.118 IEP Stu Life, 09.1.127 IEP Single Stop, 09.1.128 IEP Testing, 09.1.129 IEP SIC, 09.1.130 IEP Reg, and 09.1.131 IEP Admis).

The IT division has a semi-annual business meeting for all staff (07.3.05 IT Meeting 12-16-09 and 07.3.06 IT MidYear Presentation). A primary purpose of the meetings is to review the status of projects and to discuss the goals and challenges of the coming year’s projects. IT-related elements of the strategic plan are reviewed at the end of the year and a short assessment is included in the final strategic plan report which is sent to the chancellor.

Results of the alumni survey were shared with alumni in an online newsletter article (07.4.91 Interspire Alumni Survey Article). Results of the LaGuardia web site redesign survey were shared with the Executive Council and the President’s cabinet in formal presentations (07.3.18 Mock-ups Questionnaire EC Presentation 3-1-11). The results of the survey of LiveWire readers were presented in a later article (07.4.90 LiveWire Questionnaire Results 2-09).

Moreover, we confirmed that **assessment results are used by the College to improve and gain efficiencies in programs, services and processes** (FE 7.2). Throughout the various divisions are found multiple instances of how assessment results are used to improve services. Retention rates, graduation rates, and basic skills pass rates are the top three areas in which assessment results indicate a continuing need for improvement at all institutional levels. Outcomes in these areas are reported by CUNY’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (01.2.16 2010-11 Final PMP Report) and regularly reviewed and assessed at greater levels of detail by the College. Efforts to significantly raise rates in these three areas are undertaken at the department, division and institutional levels.

Retention and passing rates in basic skills classes are regularly evaluated by academic departments involved in basic skill instruction. For example, as discussed more extensively in Chapter 7, new methodologies and approaches are always under development and then tested in the Mathematics, Engineering and Computer Science department to improve pass rates in Basic Skills Math.

Appendix 2.26 includes further examples of actions taken in response to assessment findings within the PPR process.

Another example of how assessment was used to improve services is in the library. Surveys continue to indicate library users want more library study space. In response, the College prioritized library expansion funding and has received approval for all phases of the project (02.3.32 Preparation of Fiscal 12 Operating Budget, 07.4.39 Library User Satisfaction Survey Results Fa 09 and 07.4.40 Library User Sat Results Sp 09). Survey data also indicated patron frustration with the copiers which led to an upgrade of copiers. The Library now receives very few copier complaints on user surveys. The Library’s March 2009 web site redesign was informed by data from a two-round usability study of students (07.4.41 Library Website Usability Results I, and 07.4.42 Library Website Usability Results II).
Assessment data have also led to specific changes in ACE programs. For example, the Cohort Studies showed that GED students were not sufficiently prepared for college-level coursework, leading to a realignment of GED curricula with the College’s curriculum. These assessments also led to the establishment of a College Transitions Initiative and a “Bridge” program that combines GED studies with a career focus, leading to much higher pass rates (07.4.16 ACE Target 3.5.3-Student Progression 2-9-10, 07.4.17 ACE to LaGCC Mega, 07.4.18 ACE Comparison of Mega 08-09 to 09-10, 07.4.19 ACE current grants, and 07.4.20 ACE studies Cohort).

Outcomes of evaluation and assessment have led to many changes within Student Affairs. Program assessment provided evidence for a new operations model in the Enrollment Services Center and the creation of the Student Generalist Services Department in March 2010 (08.1.14 IEP Enroll Services Ctr), as well as the need to scale up the Early Alert program (08.1.12 Early Alert Presentation and 08.1.13 Early Alert Presentation II) to include all degree students beginning in fall 2009. Since the last Middle States review, assessment outcomes, especially CCSSE data (07.4.11 CCSSE Report 2007), were used as the basis for improvements to the Student Information Center and the Enrollment Services Center to provide more centralized one-stop service.

In IT, the decision to begin the Single Sign-on Project was based on an analysis of IT Help Desk Tickets. The 2009 Help Desk report (07.4.43 IT 09 Help Desk Report) on the IT web site, showed that 440 of 1,600 work orders for Accounts Management were for password resets, indicating the need to reduce the number of passwords that users had to manage.

In the Division of Administration the ACT Outcomes Survey (07.4.07 Opinion Survey Graphics 05-09) indicated that the students were dissatisfied with the College bookstore. Discussions with student leaders revealed that students wanted more used books available for purchase. The division was able to increase the availability of used books, and the used book sales proportion went from 10% to 23%. The survey also indicated that people wanted more menu variety in the cafeteria, and the division successfully requested that the vendor do so. The HR training needs assessment (07.4.31 HR Training Needs Survey 2-17-05 and 07.4.32 HR Training Needs Survey Analysis 05) indicated the need for computer skills training, customer service skills, time management and conflict management training. The Human Resources department has now partnered with Instructional Services/IT to provide computer skills training each semester. In addition, professional development programs for new supervisors and administrative staff includes courses on time management, organization skills, and conflict in the workplace (07.4.36 HR LEAD Eval Survey 5-07 and 07.4.37 HR STEP Survey Fa 09).

One of the most successful collaborative assessment projects has been undertaken for the redesign of the web site. IA convened focus groups designed by IR&A staff to understand better how students used the current web site. This led to an online questionnaire to students, faculty, staff, ACE students, community members, graduates and parents. The results helped establish which content and features would be most important to students (07.4.83 Comm Response to Fixed Questions, 07.4.80 Communications Response to Open Questions, and 07.4.82 Comm Website Redesign Survey). IT then presented the results of web site analytics, showing the relative “success” or “failure” of the site overall as well as specific pages based on the number of visitors to the site, the content pages most visited, the amount of time users spent on each page,
how quickly a user left the site, and where visitors originated. These statistics were monitored over time, especially after changes (07.4.96 Website Dashboard Report). The re-design then relied heavily on these statistics.

The foregoing are just a few of the ways in which assessment data is used to guide the improvement of services. LaGuardia has sought to avoid a bureaucratic approach to assessment, while also working enthusiastically to make assessment part of its culture. The strategic plan cycle begins with reflection to determine what was learned in the previous year, data are then combed for clues, more data are gathered, including surveys, and studies are initiated to analyze results. As each area and cross-college project plans its coming year, strategic plan targets are developed that must include a preliminary assessment design.

Although the College is able to gauge institutional effectiveness within the PMP/strategic planning framework and has an effective system of allocating marginal resources, a global review of the strategic allocation of resources has not been undertaken. For example, the College has found it difficult to measure or justify resources spent on student advising, tutoring, or records processing as strategic endeavors in themselves.

In the last five years, LaGuardia has become increasingly sophisticated in the wide range of assessments it carries out. The College’s entrepreneurial spirit has carried over into the drive to improve the quality of assessment and the usefulness of results. Nevertheless, a more formal and centralized system of sharing results would benefit the College.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 2
1. LaGuardia responds to priorities established in CUNY’s Master Plan and addresses performance goals established by the Chancellor. LaGuardia strategic plan initiatives respond to the assessments included in annual CUNY PMP reports and are built to reach University objectives and College targets, although the wider college community has not been thoroughly introduced to the measures tracked in the PMP.
2. The College’s strategic planning process requires extensive collaboration with students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community. The structure of the strategic plan, including university goals and vision strategies, makes the general priorities clear to all departments and focuses strategic initiative proposals on priority areas. While the process is complex, it has evolved such that the College effectively plans for its future with increasing momentum from year to year.
3. In 2010, the Executive Council concluded that division and department goals should be more focused so as to reflect the interests and drives of the divisions and departments. The Council therefore transferred oversight of the strategic planning process from the President’s Office to Academic Affairs, which introduced a revised Strategic Planning Template that emphasizes designing assessments and proposing budgets. By focusing on fewer targets and formalizing the strategic target budget allocation process, the College strengthened the direct impact of its planning process.
4. The College has been able to allocate resources to areas where PMP measures have indicated the need for improvement. The addition of assessments to strategic plan initiative proposals has allowed the College to determine more precisely whether resource allocations have brought about the desired results.
Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 3
1. Budget, capital funding, and strategic planning processes and timelines are well communicated to the College community. Although a large number of stakeholders are involved, key members are on multiple committees, linking efforts.
2. Long-term planning for the College’s operating budget has evolved in recent years. The new reserve account and CUNY’s Multi-year Financial Outlook have improved projection of revenues and expenses, allowing more lead-time to plan for austere years. Long-term budget and capital planning relies on the College’s strategic and facilities master plans.
3. Recent changes to the strategic plan timeline allow greater college community participation in the budget process. Even so, at present stakeholders do not have an opportunity to provide input to the Executive Council regarding which strategic plan initiatives will be funded.
4. The College uses funds from various sources for capital projects, but capital funding depends on the economy and the financial viability of the city and state. The requirement for matching funds by the city and state, especially in the recent period of economic downturn, has been a challenge and has forced CUNY to delay some projects. Nevertheless, a regular assessment process keeps priorities focused on maintaining the infrastructure necessary to provide high-quality instruction and student support. College assessment of the needs and efficacy of its human and technological resources is similarly embedded in the strategic plan process.
5. All finances are controlled under University regulations and subject to regular external audits. Internal CUNY audits focus on areas of risk and assist the College in maintaining compliance.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 7
1. Placing a priority on student learning, LaGuardia views assessment as integral to the work of the College’s varied operations. Because the College’s senior leadership has sought to avoid a bureaucratic approach to assessment, no single template has been imposed on the College’s myriad unique programs and processes. Continuing its entrepreneurial tradition, LaGuardia’s assessment efforts are organic, inventive, and increasingly sophisticated.
2. Despite this diversity of approaches, the overarching assessment of the College is structured within the PMP-initiated strategic planning process. With each division formulating its own framework, managerial personnel are assessed on strategic plan goal achievement and area operational goal accomplishments. Major IT and other technical projects are subsumed under the strategic plan but are assessed within a project management framework.
3. Through its history of strategic initiatives, the College has become a national leader in the assessment of learning, adding greatly to the formation of innovative assessment practices by employing rubrics to assess basic competencies and in the use of ePortfolio as a repository of assessment learning artifacts. As detailed under Standard 14, the Academic Affairs division assembled the Assessment Leadership Team to support continued advancement in the assessment of learning. In addition, the College has built a seven-person Institutional Research & Assessment Office (IR&A) to promote assessment across the College. Using a client/expert system of support, the office develops data sources, produces analyses, and builds individual assessment designs.
4. LaGuardia’s approach imbeds assessment into its strategic planning and resource allocation system. Especially strong within this system are learning, retention intervention, and academic support assessment. The College is currently in the process of developing
centralized systems to support the assessment of departmental effectiveness, including repositories of assessment documents.

**Recommendations for Standards 2, 3, and 7**

1. The College should report each year if a strategic plan target has been met and targets should remain on the strategic plan until met.
2. The College should consider enhancing stakeholder input into the budget development process by providing the college community with an opportunity to comment on the Executive Council’s proposals for prioritizing strategic plan initiatives before the funding decisions are finalized.
3. The College should devise a succession plan that takes into account the large number of faculty and staff eligible for retirement in the coming decade.
4. The College should assess the classroom allocation process and explore ways to ensure that faculty understand the process.
5. The College should develop a more formal technology planning process that allows regular input from stakeholders on the priorities that the College has developed for the upgrading of all aspects of its technology interfaces and infrastructure.
6. The current uncoordinated system for the acquisition of faculty and staff computers should be assessed to determine if it meets the needs of the faculty and staff.
7. The College should regularly assess the effectiveness of institutional resource allocation, including the budget process itself, to ensure that it is aligned with strategic objectives and initiatives.
8. The College should encourage all areas to file formal assessment designs and assessment results with IR&A. IR&A should maintain a centralized assessment library on SharePoint and periodically update the College community on recent assessments.
9. Each Vice President should file an audit of assessment activities in his or her division each year with the President, providing the President with an overview of all assessment activities at the College. IR&A should provide an annual agenda of key assessment activities at the College to permit broad involvement in the design of the research and dissemination of the findings.
Chapter 3
Standards 4, 5, and 6: Leadership, Governance, Administration, and Integrity

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance
“The institution’s system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution” (Characteristics of Excellence 12).

Standard 5: Administration
“The institution’s administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution’s organization and governance” (Characteristics of Excellence 18).

Standard 6: Integrity
“In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom” (Characteristics of Excellence 21).

Introductory Overview of Standard 4: Leadership and Governance
LaGuardia Community College is one of twenty-three institutions in the City University of New York. Established in 1971, LaGuardia is one of six (soon to be seven) CUNY community colleges. CUNY has a governing board of 17 trustees, whose selection is directed by New York Education Law (6204). The governor of New York appoints ten trustees, the mayor of New York City five. The chairs of the University Faculty Senate and the University Student Senate serve as ex officio trustees, the former in a non-voting capacity. CUNY’s principal educational and administrative officer is the University Chancellor, appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees operates according to the provisions of its bylaws and has purview over all educational units of the University and submits the university’s master plans to the New York State Board of Regents. The bylaws of the CUNY Board of Trustees identify the powers of the University Faculty Senate (Section 8.13) and those of the individual colleges (Section 8.14) (04.1.02 CUNY BOT By-laws).

The President of the college is the chief executive, acting as the executive agent of the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees with primary responsibility to the College (FE 4.11). (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) Article XI, Section 11.4 of the CUNY bylaws outlines the powers and duties of the President giving the President full authority over all matters of the college. Under the bylaws, the President can transfer limited executive agency powers to any number of Vice-Presidents, Deans, Executive Directors and Directors. The powers, duties and qualifications of these officers can be found in Article XI. The College's Personnel and Budget Committee (P&B), created under CUNY bylaws, oversees (1) all recommendations for appointments to the instructional staff, reappointments thereto, with or without tenure, and promotions therein, together with compensation; recommending action to the President; and (2) the College's tentative annual budget (04.1.02 CUNY BOT By-laws). The President is not a member of the CUNY Board of Trustees (FE 4.5). See figure 3.1 below.
As expected by Middle States, the CUNY Board of Trustees policies include regulations on its responsibilities, its role in generating revenues, conflict of interest, orientation of new board members, and assessment of performance (FE 4.4, 4.6-4.10). All board policies are online (05.1.64), including its code of conduct (05.1.65).

Our research confirmed that governance at LaGuardia is well-defined, democratic, reflective of all constituencies, and assigns authority for policy development and decision making (FE 4.1-4.2). A broad range of College policies, especially those concerning curriculum and academic programs, is formulated under the College Senate, an inclusive body of representatives elected by faculty, administrative staff, students, civil service employees, and alumni. In 2009, the College Senate put into effect a new governance plan, replacing the 1978 version. The President consults with the College Senate for vice presidential vacancies and the Senate is involved in presidential searches. Under its bylaws it maintains standing and ad hoc committees (04.1.04 LaGCC Governance Plan 2009). LaGuardia’s Governance Plan Article I, Section II states that the College Senate follows the bylaws of the CUNY Board of Trustees and recognizes...
the Faculty Council as an elected body concerned with faculty affairs and the Student
Government Association (SGA) as an elected body concerned with student affairs.

Non-executive personnel are organized in several bargaining units, including those for faculty
and administrative staff, clerical workers, and technical workers. Salary levels, advancement
processes and working conditions are bargained directly with the University. These concerns are
generally not part of the purview of college governing bodies.

LaGuardia’s SGA is composed of twelve elected student governors, representing students in
policy-making (04.4.04 SGA Constitution, 2010, 04.4.05 SGA By-laws 2010). The SGA has two
standing committees, the Student Affairs Committee and the Budget Committee. The Governor
of Judicial Review monitors and evaluates the governors. The Governor of Information Services
posts public information about the association.

The Standard 4 Working Group investigated how the governance system defined appropriate
decision-making roles, whether the system was understood by the college community, whether
there were changes in governance in the last five years, how governance was assessed, how
students were represented, and how effective selection and development were for governance
representatives.

**Findings for Standard 4**

We found that LaGuardia has a well-defined system of collegial governance and operates
under documented, clear lines of organization and authority (FE 4.1-4.2). Under the 2009
governance plan the College Senate includes a senator elected from each of the College’s twelve
academic departments; twelve elected student senators (with a provision for alternates and
replacements), six divisional representatives, four at-large senators, and one representative each
from the Faculty Council, the SGA, the President’s Office, Civil Service employees, adjunct
faculty, and alumni (Article III Sec. I., 04.1.04 LaGCC Governance Plan 2009). The Senate’s
agenda is set by its Executive Committee, which is elected annually and composed of the
Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, two members of the instructional staff/alumni/civil
service, and two students. The College President and all Vice Presidents are ex officio non-voting
members of the Senate. The Faculty Council has its own Constitution and bylaws and is now a
formal part of the governance structure (see Appendix 3.1) (04.1.04 LaGCC Governance Plan
2009; 04.1.05 Faculty Council By-laws). The committees of the College Senate are shown on
Figure 3.1 above.

In spring 2010, the College Senate added a committee to give voice to the HEOs (Higher
Education Officers or administrators), civil service employees and alumni. The committee on
Budget and Finance is also new with the 2007 revisions and formalizes responsibility for
providing budget input. The new plan simplified the process to update the governance plan and
added a provision to regulate its own functioning through bylaws (04.1.14 By-law of
Committees-HEO, Al, CS; 04.1.15 Senate Budget and Finance Comm).

One recent issue, however, illustrates the difficulty the College sometimes has in balancing two
core values: full participation in governance by all constituencies versus the imperative to
maintain faculty control over the curriculum. The Liberal Arts chairs proposed revisions to the
curriculum of the Liberal Arts Social Sciences and Humanities: AA Degree to make the co-op
experience optional for day students as it has always been for evening students. This major
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revision was brought to the College-wide Curriculum Committee, comprised of one member each from the 12 academic departments, the Registrar, and ACE (Article V, Section I, CII). The proposal passed the committee on its second try, over the objections of some faculty who favor continuing to make co-op experiences mandatory. The proposal was then sent to the College Senate. With Senate faculty split, staff and students caused the proposal to fail. However, students then petitioned for a re-consideration, and the proposal subsequently passed, assuring that students in this program would no longer have a mandatory co-op requirement.

The first vote, however, illustrated the ongoing issue over the degree of faculty control over the curriculum. Students and staff (especially when voting with some faculty) can defeat proposals from the faculty-driven Curriculum Committee.

Further, we determined that the College has processes for the appropriate involvement of constituencies and assures input from students (FE 4.2-4.3), as expected by Middle States. The College Senate has its own website which is regularly updated and provides essential Senate information, including a list of current business (04.1.04 LaGCC Governance Plan 2009). Information about meetings and elections are announced in advance through a series of emails submitted by the Senate Secretary to the college community. Furthermore, the Senate keeps minutes of every meeting archived on the Senate’s website. At the May 11, 2011 Senate meeting, a bylaw change was approved to make the Senate Vice Chair responsible for the website to ensure more timely posting of information.

The selection and elections for the SGA positions are presented in the summary of the Powers of the SGA as defined by the CUNY Bylaws (04.4.01 Article XVI CUNY By-laws). As part of the SGA training, the Vice President of Student Affairs assists the SGA in crafting its annual mission and vision (given for 2010-11 in Appendix 3.2). The College President meets with the SGA leader each semester to discuss issues of concern to students and the College community. The SGA President sits on the President’s Cabinet and the College Senate.

As a member of the College Senate, the SGA President ensures formal student participation in governance. Informally, student senators have a close relationship with student governors, and in 2011 several of the student governors and senators were members of the same honors society (PTK), providing opportunities for dialogue. Appendix 3.3 provides more background on the operation of recent SGA administrations.

The SGA has surveyed students on tuition increases, increased student activity fees for earmarked purposes, financial aid, enrollment services, student social space, and library services. Past outcomes of these surveys have included increasing the Library’s service hours, while feedback on fragmented services speeded the evolution of a one-stop model of student services. A recent student focus group (04.4.03 Stu Gov Focus Group Report 2-9-11), reported that the SGA has been very active in issues that directly affect the student life.

In 2009-10, the SGA revised its constitution and bylaws (04.4.04 SGA Constitution, 2010; 04.4.05 SGA By-laws 2010), adding a 13th student governor to oversee College sustainability efforts (“Green Governor”). This position was modified during 2010-11 to represent weekend students. In March 2011, the SGA approved another new constitution, adding a provision requiring any constitutional amendments or revisions be first approved by the Vice President of Student Affairs and the College President, preventing future disruptive rules changes.
To ascertain the apparent transparency of the governance system, the Middle States Steering Committee sent out an anonymous, electronic survey to faculty and staff, and another to students. Fifty-nine percent of faculty and staff viewed the College Senate to be “transparent” or “very transparent.” These results differed among faculty, staff, and fulltime, and part-time employees. Transparent/very transparent scores by group were: full-time faculty 68%; part-time faculty 62%, full-time staff 48%, and part-time staff 39% (10.09.08 Faculty and Staff Survey Results).

The student survey was administered in 65 randomly selected classes. The SGA received a 38% transparency rating, while 59.8% indicated an understanding of the SGA. Only 24% of students, however, understood the role of the College Senate (01.3.03 Student Survey Results).

We also examined whether the College seeks to orient new members of governance committees (FE 4.9). Under the new governance plan, the Committee on Professional Development (Article V, section I, subsection E3, 04.1.04 LaGCC Governance Plan 2009) is responsible for overseeing the orientation of its members. This committee, however, has not developed written orientation materials, and the Senate Chair continues to conduct personal new member orientations (04.1.18 Senate Chair Interview).

Finally, we determined that the College periodically assesses its governance (FE 4.12). In early 2006 the President, acting partially on a recommendation from the 2002 Middle States evaluation, which noted that the current governance plan had been in place since 1978, created an ad hoc committee to evaluate the current governance plan and draft a revised plan. The Senate Chair and the Chair of Faculty Council headed this Ad Hoc Committee on College Governance. After broad discussion across all constituencies, the new plan was submitted and ratified in the spring of 2009 (04.1.04 LaGCC Governance Plan 2009). Action on the plan was also propelled by the 2005 Perez v. CUNY decision (a suit brought by two CUNY students against the Hostos Community College Senate and its Executive Committee). CUNY college governance bodies were in violation of the New York State Open Meetings Law and the New York State Freedom of Information Law (see Appendix 3.4 for more discussion of the additions of the new governance plan and of Perez v. CUNY), (04.1.19 Interview with Former Senate Chair, 04.1.20 Interview with Senate Leaders).

The new plan greatly improved the 31-year old former system of governance, providing easier methods of achieving quorum, creation of a consent calendar, smoother procedures for passing amendments, a voting Chairperson, and strengthening the faculty voice through the newly-created Committee on Faculty, representation from the Faculty Council, and by allowing adjunct faculty representatives to vote. Nevertheless, under the Open Meetings Law, all members were newly exposed to public criticism, a particularly difficult situation for untenured faculty members.

We also found, however, that the College governance system as a whole has no formal, periodic assessment process. Article VII, on Bylaws and Amendments, Section II, provides a mechanism through which Senate activities may be revised. As one example, in the fall of 2008, a consent calendar was created to vote on curricula as a block. In another instance, in the spring of 2006, a Degree Certification process was created as part of the Senate’s Committee of Faculty to ensure that faculty oversee the conferral of the LaGuardia degree. None of these revisions, however, have been part of a formal assessment.
Introductory Overview of Standard 5: Administration

Administrative oversight of the College is the responsibility of the President under the authority of the CUNY Chancellor and Board of Trustees. The President administers the College through the Executive Council, which is comprised of the President and the College’s six Vice Presidents plus the Executive Director of Organizational Development and Planning, the Executive Director of Government Relations, and the Senior Administrator to the President (the organization chart can be found in 05.2.01). All areas of the College fall under the administrative responsibility of the Vice Presidents. In 2012, a new position of Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs will be created and filled. The new Provost will report directly to the President and will be charged with strengthening alignment between the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs and the Dean for Academic Affairs will report to the Provost and all three will serve on the President’s Executive Council (see proposed organization chart 05.2.16).

Our review of reporting relationships indicates that **lines of organization and authority in the senior administrative unit of the College are clear** (FE 5.6). Final decision-making responsibility rests with the President; the Executive Council recommends actions to the President after careful review and assessment. These processes ensure that the College has a chief executive whose primary responsibility is to lead the College toward the achievement of its goals and is responsible for the administration of the College.

The College’s Executive Council meets regularly in formal meetings and on a monthly basis in more informal “Stand-up” meetings to discuss college issues and take necessary action. Each Vice President also meets regularly with the President. Each fall the Executive Council reviews strategic target funding requests, prioritizing items for funding and monitoring projects that cross divisions. The Executive Council also reviews letters of intent-to-submit-grant-proposals from the divisions. Additionally, the Executive Council reviews and approves or denies all requests for new or replacement employee positions and personnel searches. At this time, there is no Executive Council Charter or Operating Guideline.

The Standard 5 Working Group ascertained whether the College’s senior leadership possessed the necessary skills, education, training and expertise to lead a large institution of higher education effectively and whether college leadership assessed the adequacy of college structures and services to help the College maintain a quality learning environment to foster student success and inform decision-making. The Working Group also examined the quality of the communications structures set up by the Executive Council.

**Findings for Standard 5**

Our research determined that the **College has a qualified and effective President** (FE 5.2), subject to periodic evaluation. The President has deep experience in higher education administration, teaching, developing innovative pedagogy, fundraising, and community service and has a national reputation as an advocate and innovator for community colleges (05.2.03 Pres). The CUNY policy on presidential evaluation is available online (05.1.62 CUNY Policy on Pres Evaluation). The evaluation is monitored by external experienced college leaders and occurs every five years. CUNY asks internal and external constituents to give anonymous evaluations of the President’s performance (05.2.03a Description of Pres Evaluation).
We also found that **the College has leaders with appropriate skills, degrees and training** (FE 5.3). All Executive level searches follow the CUNY Search Process for Executive Personnel (06.1.021 CUNY Personnel Rules-Exempt Class). Executive positions are advertised nationally to bring in a wide range of candidates, representative of the College’s student diversity. Search committees composed of faculty and staff at many levels review credentials and formulate questions in compliance with affirmative action policy (06.1.01 Affirm Action Policy). These committees evaluate all résumés from applicants and select those with the necessary qualifications and experience for the position. Final round candidates are asked to appear at a college-wide interview in which faculty, staff and students may pose questions. Accuracy and integrity of submitted credentials are verified at the point of offer. Upon selection of the final candidate, the President of the College sends a letter of recommendation to the Vice Chancellor of the University. Once the candidate is approved by the vice chancellor, the President presents the candidate to the Board of Trustees Committee of Faculty, Staff and Administration (FSA). This committee then forwards their approval to the full Board of Trustees for final ratification.

We reviewed the curriculum vitae of each Executive Council member, looking not only for education and experience, but also the diversity of skills across the Council (05.2.04-05.2.12, 05.2.17 CVs: VP-ACE, VP-AA, VP-IA, VP-IT, ExecDir-Org, VP-Admin, VP-SA, ExecDir-GovRel, Dean-AA, SenAdmin). As anticipated, the review indicates appropriate levels of education, training, skills, and progressively responsible experience to carry out the duties of each Executive Council member’s respective position. The diversity and complexity of skills and experience that constitute the senior leadership of the College is impressive. Almost all have faculty teaching experience (both domestic and international) in their respective fields. A list of the skills and expertise of Executive Council Members is given in Appendix 3.5.

In addition, we determined that **the College’s staff members are qualified for their positions** (FE 5.4), as expected by Middle States. CUNY hiring procedures are strictly followed, and each position has minimum education and experience requirements (05.2.14 Civil Service Job Descriptions, 05.2.15 HEO Guidelines).

Further, we confirmed that **the College engages in periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services** (FE 5.7). At every meeting the Executive Council reviews key effectiveness indicators, strategic issues, and divisional requests for decision or action (05.1.27 – 05.1.30 Executive Council Agendas: 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010). Additionally, every meeting includes an update on divisional activities, ensuring a comprehensive view of functional areas across the College and how various activities may, or may need to, intersect or overlap. Sample minutes from Executive Council meetings (05.1.32 – 05.1.35: EC Minutes: 4-25-07, 1-16-08, 10-28-09, and 7-21-10) indicate actions taken or to be taken by various Executive Council members in response to issues discussed at meetings. Appendix 3.6 discusses how the Executive Council uses specific PMP measures and key performance indicators to assess the effectiveness of the College’s administration.

A survey on Leadership Feedback (05.3.06 Leadership Feedback VPHS SGA 03, 05.03.07 Leadership Feedback SGA, Pres) of Executive Council members was developed and sent to key individuals within the College to evaluate the leadership of senior College leaders. The survey focused on six areas: communication, decision making, problem solving, operations/action, and human/public relations. We note, however, that the survey has not been administered since 2003.
The Executive Council has integrated college-wide assessments into its decision-making process, especially the allocation of discretionary resources. Using the strategic planning process, the Executive Council effectively manages and monitors initiatives that cross divisional boundaries. While the Executive Council has periodically sought feedback on the effectiveness of its individual members, it has not yet analyzed its own effectiveness as a decision-making team.

Finally, we determined that **decision making is based on adequate information, consultation and effective information systems** (FE 5.5). The administration strives to maintain communication and dialogue with internal stakeholders, including students, staff, and faculty, in order to develop strategic direction as well as evaluate the impact of past actions. The Executive Council meets on a bi-monthly basis to discuss college issues, review feedback from internal and external constituents, and to take necessary action. Included in the input from internal college constituents are leadership surveys for executive personnel (05.3.06 Leadership Feedback VPHS SGA 03, 05.03.07 Leadership Feedback SGA, Pres), recommendations from the President’s Cabinet (05.1.20, .21, .22, .24: Cabinet Notes: 5-19-06, 3-28-08, 3-27-09, 5-29-09), and a variety of satisfaction surveys related to administrative services at the college (07.5.05 Student Experience Survey, 07.5.06 ASAP Service Feedback DegreeWorks 2009) (addressed more fully in Chapter 2). In addition, since 2005 the Executive Council has hosted two Vision Summits (see Appendix 3.7 for links to all Summit documents and further description of the events).

Information not only flows from internal constituents to the Executive Council, but also flows the other way, using for example, Opening Sessions for faculty and staff each semester, annual Professional Staff Meetings for faculty and staff, student orientation, email blasts, the Live Wire newsletter, website announcements, and press releases (05.4.43 Leadership Agenda 8-29-09). There are also two primary advisory groups that the Executive Council looks to for ideas and reactions to strategic directions, visions, and policies. The first is the President’s Cabinet (05.4.01 – 05.4.05 & .44 Cabinet Member List: 05-06, 06-07, 07-08, 08-09, 09-10, and 10-11), which consists of approximately 65 college leaders appointed by the president. The second is the president’s informal advisory group of senior faculty.

The President’s cabinet meets quarterly to solicit feedback from a wide range of stakeholders regarding current issues and future strategic direction (05.1.08 – 05.1.24, see Appendix 3.8 for links). As issues are raised at the Cabinet, task groups may be formed to discuss points, develop possible solutions and make recommendations to the Executive Council for discussion and possible action. The strategic plan target related to faculty professional development mentioned above was an outgrowth of recommendations from the March 2009 President’s Cabinet following the 2009 Vision Summit.

In 2007 the President established an advisory group of governance leaders (Chair of the College Senate, Chair of the Faculty Council, Chapter President of the Professional Staff Congress (the union), and elected representative to the CUNY University Faculty Senate) to meet with her informally on a quarterly basis (05.1.36 Governance Group Info). This group discusses key college, CUNY, city, state, and national issues as well as budget-related matters.

The Executive Council also monitors through the division of Information Technology the “hit rate” of internal and external communication. Additionally, the Marketing and Communications department tracks the number of hits to the LaGuardia website as well as which areas of the website are being accessed (07.3.19 Web Site Redesign Presentation). These statistics are used to
make decisions related to additions and improvements to existing electronic communication vehicles.

**Introductory Overview of Standard 6: Integrity**

To assure equity in hiring and promotion, the Legal Affairs, Labor, Compliance & Diversity Office follows federal, state, city and CUNY regulations and determines the form of all hiring and promotion procedures at the College. That office also collects data to determine the equity of the operations and in response to strategic plan targets to improve equity. The Office of Students Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy is responsible for student disciplinary actions and for assuring that students receive due process. The Labor and Legal Affairs Designee handles all grievances filed under any of the labor contracts and assures that the process is equitable and that its effectiveness is assessed.

The Standard 6 Working Group examined issues involving equity in employment, training, promotion, student recruitment and admission, student and employee grievance and appeals processes, student discipline, academic integrity, and public information.

**Findings for Standard 6**

Our research confirmed that the College has fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation and dismissal of employees (FE 6.2), as expected by Middle States. The College follows detailed CUNY hiring, evaluation and dismissal policies and procedures coordinated by the Legal Affairs, Labor, Compliance & Diversity Office within federal regulations to ensure that all individuals are given fair and equal opportunity to obtain employment, continued employment, and promotion. The hiring process is documented in the Affirmative Action Search Process and Procedures manual ([06.1.11 Affirmative Action Search Process & Procedures](#)), ([03.03.30 Sample Recruitment Plan](#)), ([03.03.18 AA Certification Form](#)).

Reappointment and dismissal processes are managed by Human Resources. Except at the executive level, all procedures are determined by collective bargaining agreements as codified by CUNY. The manner of evaluation, the weight of evidence, evaluation responsibilities, and rights of appeal are all precisely determined. Evidence on performance may be collected from students, peers and supervisors. Judgments are then made by supervisors, department and division supervisors, departmental and/or divisional Personnel and Budget (P&B) committees, the college-wide P&B and the President. Appeals are coordinated by the College’s Labor and Legal Affairs Designee. The faculty and higher education officer (HEO) appeal process, described in the PSC/CUNY Collective Bargaining Agreement ([10.01.01 2002-2007 PSC Contract.pdf](#)), Sections 9.9 through 9.12, is explained in both the Faculty and Staff Handbook and the Curriculum Committee Policies and Procedures. A summary of the process is in Appendix 3.9.

Further, we found that the College treats all people equitably and appropriately by policy and practice (FE 6.4), and the College periodically assesses the integrity evidenced in these policies (FE 6.18). In 2011 the Labor and Legal Affairs Designee analyzed five years of faculty and HEO personnel actions and appeals. Out of 456 personnel actions, 369 resulted in reappointments, 53 reappointments with tenure/CCE (Certificate of Continuing Employment), 23 non-reappointments, and 11 non-reappointments for tenure/CCE. In five years there were only 31 appeals ([06.3.06 Quant. Analysis of Grievance and Appeals Process](#)). Four were denied, eight are still pending, twelve were settled or granted, and seven were withdrawn. Of the 12 settled or
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granted, the most common reasons for settlement were a lack of guidance to the employee by the supervisor and a lack of documented concerns against the employee. The Labor and Legal Affairs Designee is working with HR to improve supervisor training on giving appropriate guidance for reappointment and collecting appropriate evidence for personnel actions.

We also determined that the **College seeks to promote a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration for a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives** (FE 6.7). The climate of respect for a range of backgrounds begins with the CUNY Non-Discrimination Policy (06.1.13). To press this policy further, the CUNY Council of Presidents issued a policy (updated in 2006) on “**Revitalization of the University’s Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Compliance and Diversity Programs**” (06.1.14).

Respect for a range of ideas and perspectives is further protected for senior employees by CUNY’s commitment to tenure and its equivalent for non-professorial staff, the Certificate of Continuing Employment. CUNY also offers mandatory training in the deterrence of sexual harassment and workplace violence.

The Legal Affairs, Labor, Compliance & Diversity Office (LAO) closely monitors and periodically assesses the extent to which our practices are in compliance with CUNY, city, state, and federal guidelines. This work is coordinated with Human Resources, for example by reviewing exit surveys to examine the reasons why faculty and staff leave their positions. The LAO is responsible for completing the federal workforce composition analysis (EEO-6) and the annual Affirmative Action Plan. As part of its responsibility to promote diversity, the LAO reports on college-wide diversity events (06.1.12 CUNY Pluralism Report 09-10). The LAO is also responsible for assisting HR in evaluating requests for reasonable accommodation. The result of an audit by the Equal Employment Practices Commission of the disposition of these requests is not yet available, but the College does not anticipate any difficulties.

In addition, we found that the **College assures that student violations of institutional policies and grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably** (FE 6.1). From 2007 to 2011 the number of discipline cases each year increased somewhat at the College (06.4.03 Disorderly Conduct All Cases 9-01 to 5-11). Factors contributing to this increase include enrollment growth, greater community awareness of the discipline process, and improved cooperation between the Office of Public Safety and the Office of Students Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy. Students are informed of the process through New Student Orientations and online via the Student Handbook. In addition, articles pertaining to the discipline process are periodically written for the **Student News**, a monthly Division of Student Affairs newsletter. The majority of cases are resolved through mediation, conciliation, and engagement in behavioral modification agreements. Cases requiring a greater degree of formality and objectivity are resolved through a hearing process conducted by the Faculty Student Discipline Committee (FSDC).

Recently, a growing number of students have been reported for displaying adverse behavior, increasing from 52 cases in 2007-08 to 166 in 2009-10. An assessment of cases by the Office of Students Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy indicates that student violations of the Colleges’ Conduct Code peak during major exam periods with a greater likelihood of stress-related behavior in a student’s initial semesters (06.4.04 Student Discipline Analysis). For these students
the disciplinary process has worked informally, after determining that the students are under emotional stress. These students have been encouraged to engage in a counseling assessment to determine various strategies to address their situations. The College’s disciplinary procedures emphasize education on standards of civility and on the negative ramifications of adverse behavior on academic progress and on a student’s personal and professional goals. The majority of students who have been charged and processed avoid future infractions.

The Office of Students Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy maintains a database of cases to spot infraction trends and develop proactive measures (06.02 CUNY By-laws Art. 15.0, Student Disciplinary Procedures; 06.03 Art. 15.3 Disciplinary Procedures).

In 2007, the broadly-representative Academic Standing Committee developed a policy covering academic integrity, sanctions for violations, and procedures for filing complaints (Article V, Section 1, D. 04.1.04 LaGCC Governance Plan 2009). This policy revision ensures due process and streamlines faculty reporting of violations. In 2009 the College’s Policy on Academic Integrity and Procedures was formalized and handed out to department chairs and faculty (06.5.01 LaGCC Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures). The policy and procedures were also communicated in colloquia for new faculty and published in the college catalog, on the college website, in the student handbook, and in an Academic Integrity brochure. Further information is given in Appendix 3.10.

In addition, we found that **required and elective courses are sufficiently available to graduate fall semester student cohorts within two years** (FE 6.9). In general, if student complaints arise in this regard, they are investigated by the Ombudsperson.

Our research also demonstrated that **the College pursues honesty and truthfulness in public relations, recruiting and admissions** (FE 6.8), including information on assessment and on program graduation, retention, certification pass rates, and other outcomes as appropriate to the programs offered (FE 6.15). Moreover, **factual information about the College and the catalog are readily available** (FE 6.10, 6.14, 6.16). Information about the College is available from the website. Some examples of these documents include a multiyear study of graduation rates (06.2.03 Six Year Graduation Rate Study) and enrollment statistics (Spring 2011 Enrollment Statistics). The annual Institutional Profile is also online. The public may also download LaGuardia’s 2009 Public Safety Report (05.1.63). College catalogs are available in paper and online, and portions of the college website are available in Spanish and Chinese.

Although most communications that we reviewed were completely accurate, we found that information on the highly competitive nature of admission into the clinical phase of most health sciences majors was not as clearly promulgated as the seriousness of the consequences would demand. On some of the online application materials, students applying initially were only informed in a footnote that acceptance to the College did not mean entry into the clinical phase of the health program. In a number of these programs, the majority of these initial entrants would not qualify for the clinical program and would be asked to choose another major, some after several semesters of study. The University has taken steps to clarify the two-part process for Nursing students by introducing a mandatory initial “Pre-clinical” major. The other health areas are evaluating this option (also see Appendix 4.4).
Finally, we found that the College does not yet uniformly display employment success or licensing pass rate statistics for its career programs online. The College does not have a uniform standard of program information, including graduation, retention and certification rates, to be made available online to the public.

The College adheres to the CUNY Conflict of Interest Policy (FE 6.3) (05.1.66 Conflict Of Interest Policy) and the CUNY Intellectual Property Policy (FE 6.6) (06.1.15 CUNY Intellectual Property Policy). The College’s policies regarding academic freedom (FE 6.5) are examined under Standard 10 in Chapter 5.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 4
1. The governance structure of the LaGuardia College Senate provides an essential venue to formulate academic and operating policy. However, there continues to be debate about how to provide all constituencies with an adequate voice while also ensuring appropriate faculty authority over curriculum.
2. In addition to addressing the requirements of the New York State Open Meetings Law, the new governance plan approved in 2009 has enhanced college governance by, among other improvements, making it easier to achieve quorum, creating a consent calendar, and instituting smoother procedures for passing amendments. However, concerns remain that should be addressed under periodic, planned assessments of college governance. These concerns include the role of non-faculty representatives in curriculum approval and the orientation of new Senate members and student governors.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 5
1. The President and Executive Council members are highly qualified to carry out their respective responsibilities and lead the College.
2. The Executive Council uses several assessment methods to ensure that all functional areas of the College engage in activities that enable the College to achieve its strategic targets and improve its PMP results. These assessments ensure the integrity and efficiency of overall College structures and services and are used to inform its decision-making. However, at present the Executive Council does not regularly assess its effectiveness as a team.
3. The Executive Council does not currently possess a formal charter.
4. The Executive Council monitors the effects of their communications through a variety of tracking methods and uses this data to improve communication methods.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 6
1. CUNY is dedicated to ensuring that its colleges are administered equitably and has promulgated a large number of policies to assure compliance. At the College, employment and promotion opportunities are made available in compliance with these policies. The effectiveness of these policies within the College is assessed by the Legal Affairs, Labor, Compliance & Diversity Office as required by federal law.
2. Resolution of employee grievances and appeals is carried out in compliance with collective bargaining agreements. Minor student disciplinary infractions are handled informally, while the major cases are handled by the Faculty Student Discipline Committee. The Division of Student Affairs insists upon due process for students, and the Student Judiciary Officer allows most violators a fair chance to correct their behavior and redeem their academic career.
3. The means and procedures for disseminating admissions information is communicated well to the general public on the College’s and CUNY’s websites, in the College’s catalog, and in the Student Handbook. However, at present the College does not have a uniform standard of program information to be made available online to the public.

4. Students do not always receive clear information about the highly competitive nature of admission into the clinical phase of most health sciences majors.

5. Protection of general intellectual property rights through enforcement of rules against academic fraud is balanced with due process and an “educational not punitive” system of handling cases of student cheating, the effectiveness of which is attested to by the absence of repeat offenders.

**Recommendations for Standards 4, 5, and 6**

1. The College should define a periodic review process for college governance that includes a timetable and desired outcomes of governance.
2. The College should develop a formal orientation program for new College Senators.
3. The College Senate should post minutes of its meetings online expeditiously.
4. The College should establish a formal charter and guidelines for the Executive Council.
5. The Executive Council should develop a process to assess its effectiveness as a team.
6. The College should assess the effectiveness of communications on the competitiveness of entry to clinical programs and strive to improve applicant understanding.
7. The College should set standards for the information to be made available online on academic programs to include graduation, retention, transfer, employment and graduate licensing rates.
Chapter 4

Standards 8 and 9: Student Admissions, Retention, and Support Services

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention
“The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the students’ educational goals” (Characteristics of Excellence 31).

Standard 9: Student Support Services
“The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution’s goals for students” (Characteristics of Excellence 34).

Introductory Overview of Standards 8 and 9
LaGuardia is an open enrollment college whose mission is to provide access to higher education to people of all backgrounds, ages, and means. Many students at LaGuardia are non-traditional and have one or more of the background elements associated with greater challenge in meeting their goals, persisting, and graduating: part-time enrollment, GED holder, single parent, 24 years or older, employed, first generation to college, independent of parents’ financial and/or emotional support, disabled or have special learning needs, military veterans, in need of mental health support, and/or in need of basic skills development. With regular collection of data the College produces analytic reports that support strategic initiatives for program improvements to assure the success of these non-traditional students.

LaGuardia organizes support services into five somewhat overlapping categories: academic guidance, academic support services, career-related services, personal guidance, and direct support services. These services are offered through four divisions: Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Administration and Adult and Continuing Education. A complete table of services is shown in Appendix 4.1.

The College has created many effective responses to meet the challenges students face. Although the breadth of services are a testament to the efforts of many committed professionals, the resulting structure is subject to communication problems and duplicated efforts, and can thus be confusing to students. Based on two years of research, the College’s Achieving the Dream project (AtD) concluded that the delivery of student support services is fragmented, not all at-risk populations are targeted, and not all efforts are well coordinated (08.1.52 AtD Final Report). In order to address these shortcomings, in June 2011 the AtD Steering Committee issued five findings and recommendations which the College is currently in the process of implementing (08.1.53 AtD Findings and Recommendations).

In November 2011, the College launched the Center for Student Success as one step towards addressing this fragmentation of services by creating a single referral hub that would enable students to be connected to the best help available, both on and off campus (08.1.73 Center for Student Success web site). The Center is staffed collaboratively by LaGuardia and several New York graduate schools of social work. M.S.W. interns arrange appointments for students with resource providers on campus, in areas including academic support, personal guidance, and direct services, and also make outside referrals. The Center will examine usage data and feedback from students and referral areas to measure its success.
The complexity of the College’s student support structure affirms the emphasis in this self-study on an integrated examination of student retention efforts. Improving retention is a central University and College goal and in recent years the College has engaged in impressive work to collect and analyze retention data, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to better understand what helps or hinders student persistence and graduation. As a result the College is making better progress in giving students a clearer description of the path to graduation and in integrating services wherever possible.

Although the work of two self-study groups is combined in this chapter, the Standard 8 team approached its research with questions about the effectiveness of the College’s overall retention efforts, especially its financial aid policies, and how effectively these efforts used assessment outcomes. They also asked how well the College was working with students who were not accepted into candidacy programs. They questioned how well the College was handling the large increase in applicants and whether these applicants and all students were receiving accurate and comprehensive information. The Standard 9 team researched the effectiveness of the College’s student support services, especially student academic advisement. They asked how well-informed students were about these services, what services were available online, whether students understood the College’s grievance system, and the security of student records.

**Findings for Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention**

Our research confirmed that admissions policies support the mission of the College (FE 8.1), as expected by Middle States. (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) The Admissions Office recruits, admits, and encourages the enrollment of all academically admissible people and prospective students are encouraged to attend Information Sessions scheduled throughout the year. Counselors assist students in applying to the College, examining objectives, reviewing program requirements, and assessing career opportunities (09.1.131 Admissions IEAP 11-10 and CUNY Admissions).

With the College experiencing record enrollments, prospective students are encouraged to apply early to avoid waiting lists, and deadlines are posted on the College and CUNY websites (Deadlines). Each term the Admissions Office sets enrollment targets in consultation with staff from other Students Affairs offices, IR&A, and CUNY’s Enrollment Management officers. The new student target for fall enrollment grew from 4,003 in fall 2007 to 4,341 for the fall 2010 semester (03.02.01 Fall 10 Enr Plan 3-8-10). To reach the fall 2007 target 6,949 degree seeking students were admitted, while the fall 2010 target required 8,951 admissions.

In summer 2010, faced with record enrollments, CUNY decided for the first time to place prospective freshmen whose applications were received after the posted deadline on a waiting list. In keeping with its mission, LaGuardia accepted students from the waiting list who contacted the Admissions Office or the Student Information Center. These applicants were allowed to submit their applications directly to the College (08.5.01 Docs on Enrollment Crunch, CUNY Matters Fall 2010 and NY Times CUNY Cutoff).

We determined that admissions policies and criteria are available to assist prospective students in making informed decisions about academic programs, transfer, and testing (FE 8.2, 8.4). Moreover, the College presents institution-wide assessment results as well as
program-specific information, especially student learning outcomes (FE 8.5). Below is a synopsis of College sources of information and the ways students may receive advice on how best to take advantage of that information.

General Information for All Students. The College has a regularly updated web site and issues a College Catalog and a Student handbook annually. Students can access and navigate all other web pages from the LaGuardia home page. Many departments and academic programs have websites that are accessible from the LaGuardia home page, as well as brochures. The College has also created a “one-stop” Enrollment Services Center in C-107 where students receive registration and financial aid services.

Information for Prospective Students. The Admissions Office organizes recruitment events, community outreach events, admission workshops, college tours, and college fairs at affiliated high schools involving representatives of most academic programs. The Admissions page guides students through the admissions process step by step. Accessible from the Admissions web page is “VIP,” a personalized new student portal with information about becoming and being a student at LaGuardia with specific areas of interest, as well as other useful links. Student Financial Services (SFS) and the Bursar, in collaboration with the Marketing and Communications department, produced a three-minute podcast for prospective and new students, available on the SFS web page, which provides information on LaGuardia's academic calendar, financial aid, and tuition payment (SFS).

Information for New Students. At the beginning of fall I and spring I semesters, LaGuardia offers Opening Sessions/ New Student Orientation for all new and transfer students to provide information on starting successfully, including printed material on College resources and a USB flash drive with College brochures. Entering students are advised at New Student Advisement & Registration where educational planners provide them with individualized Personal Education Plans. English as a Second Language (ESL) students are advised by ESL faculty.

All students are required to take the New Student Seminar (NSS) where they learn more about being successful at the College. Seventy percent of fall 2011 new freshmen and transfer students signed up for the NSS in their first semester (IR&A data warehouse). Special programs, such as the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, College Discovery, and the Black Male Initiative offer additional orientation sessions, handbooks, and counseling for new and continuing students.

Information for Continuing Students. In an effort to promote academic programs, departments have Program Days that are scheduled at least once a year. The College also offers informational events with Transfer Fairs and Financial Aid Awareness Days.

Students and advising faculty use the College’s DegreeWorks, an online academic progress reporting system, to audit progress toward a degree. Throughout their academic careers students are able to review this easy-to-read, comprehensive snapshot of their academic progress. With DegreeWorks, students and their advisors can be assured that prospective courses satisfy degree requirements, avoiding graduation delay (Advisement). The Enrollment Management Center offers workshops on using DegreeWorks.
Since 2010, the College has focused on increasing support for faculty advisement of students. The Center for Counseling, Advising, and Academic Support organizes a college-wide Advising Day in the spring I and fall I semesters (10.07.08 College-wide Advising Fa 08-Sp 10, 10.07.09 Advising Faculty Survey 11-08, 10.07.10 Advising Faculty Survey 5-09, 10.07.11 Advising Faculty Survey 5-10, 10.07.12 Advising Faculty Survey 11-09). In these sessions faculty advise students with more than 30 credits. The Center for Teaching and Learning has begun offering the “Art of Advising” faculty professional development seminars (10.07.07 DAC Report - Art of Advising). Also introduced in 2010, the new Advising Central Website (Advising Central) provides faculty with comprehensive and constantly updated information.

GradPath is a technology initiative under development as an outgrowth of the Achieving the Dream project to help students manage their path to graduation. It will integrate other existing support programs (e-SIMS, Degree works, e-Portfolio, and e-Career) within a single-sign-on student portal. GradPath is designed to help students understand what they should accomplish to reach particular milestones, to help them connect to available support, and to provide them with helpful tips and directions to learn behaviors, mindsets and attitudes in order to be successful. This web tool will also enable appropriate faculty and staff to monitor students’ progress (08.1.40 AtD Presentation MLJ, 08.1.42 AtD MLJ Presentation 1-20-11).

The College Website. The website is the central reference for most basic information about the College, including office locations, phone numbers, news, events, and workshops. After a substantial overhaul, in fall 2011 the College launched a newly designed website with a new content managing system, Ektron, to more easily manage updates in content and design.

Research on the effectiveness of college communication has targeted a number of interesting initiatives. One effort has been to convince students to register on time. Using registration tracking data, the College found, for example, that as of June 7, 2010, there was a 47.5% increase in continuing students who registered on time for fall 2010 compared with a year earlier (09.1.095 DAC Report 7-5-10).

Further details about how the College communicates to current and prospective students about academic programs and policies, basic skills, financial aid, and transfer can be found in Appendix 4.2.

Information for Allied Health Candidacy Programs. Of particular concern to self-study teams has been the communication between the College and students who fail to gain admission to the clinical phase of the College’s highly competitive health programs. These programs require students to apply for candidacy after completing key pre-clinical courses before beginning the clinical phase of their program. Many students must switch majors after failing to meet the rigorous clinical requirements. The College is concerned about the degree to which these students are aware of the rigor of these programs and have a clear understanding of the requirements for these careers. Each program provides students with a handbook outlining the academic requirements, philosophy, assessment criteria, and the transfer information (for example, the RN Program Handbook).
Generally, students who express interest in the Allied Health programs declare their major at the time of admission and are given the code for these majors. In some cases the Admissions Office may give students the “Liberal Arts: Math and Sciences” major, if the students apply relatively late, if they have basic skills needs, or if they receive financial aid (particularly TAP, because TAP regulations restrict electives outside of the major, which some students may desire).

The College has developed two alternate tracks for students who are interested in studying nursing. The Practical Nursing (PN) Certificate Program was developed in 2005 to address the needs of students who wish to continue their careers in the nursing profession but whose academic achievements do not qualify them for admission to the Associate Degree Nursing Program. In fall 2009 the PN program was changed from 12 months to 10 months to allow faculty time to evaluate and revise the curriculum during the two month summer break. This time frame also allows students to prepare for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN) State Boards and encourages their application to the LPN to RN Advanced Standing Pathway (08.2.05 Annual Report PN 09).

In addition, the College began a new track called “LPN to RN Advanced Standing Pathway” in fall II 2006 for students who are Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) to continue their education and training to obtain a registered nursing license. Students begin their coursework in ACE as non-degree students and are required to take additional courses such as Human Biology and Medical Dosage before applying for candidacy into the Pathway. Once accepted into the clinical phase, students complete the LPN to RN Bridge course which prepares them to enter their final year of the Associate Degree Nursing Program.

Beginning in fall 2010, CUNY mandated that students who express interest in nursing are to be placed in the Allied Health/ Undeclared major until they meet clinical requirements or change to a major other than Nursing. The former Nursing major code is now only given to students after they are admitted to the clinical program (08.2.33 Interview with Chairs and Deans, 08.2.37 Interview with Academy Coordinator and Counselors). This should help students understand that admission to the College is not admission to the Nursing program.

The College communicates with students regarding the requirements and responsibilities of the programs that require candidacy via the College website, catalog, program brochures, and handbooks. Health Science program websites outline all requirements (for example, the PTA online handbook). Major handbooks are available in each department and in New Student Seminar courses. Special sections of New Student Seminars are dedicated to Health Science majors where a panel of professionals from Health Sciences speaks to students on requirements and career choices. However, not every Health Sciences major registers for these sections. This inability to concentrate students prevents even distribution of critical information.

All Allied Health programs hold a separate Advisement Day for their majors. Pre-clinical students are advised by the Academy Coordinator for Allied Health or by counselors if they are in the New Student Seminar or if they are on academic probation (08.2.37 Interview with Academy Coordinator and Counselors). Students admitted to the program have regular meetings with their instructors and are referred by faculty to join related student clubs and support groups conducted by a counseling faculty member. A number of students who are enrolled in the pre-
clinical phase report benefiting from peer support offered though student clubs, such as the Nursing and PTA Clubs.

More details on the retention efforts, retention reporting, and student support of the candidacy programs can be found in Appendix 4.4.

We also found that the College provides accurate and comprehensive information, and advice regarding financial aid and refunds (FE 8.6). The Bursar and Student Financial Services have implemented changes to retain students during the semester and reduce the number of students leaving for financial reasons. For example, communication with new students has been improved by using the Hobson customer service management system (VIP). With this personalized portal, students are directly linked with the bursar and financial aid office information (08.3.14 Guidelines for different Groups of Students). To prevent students from losing their registration as a result of cancellation for non-payment, the College began sending warning text messages; it increased the number of cancellation dates to provide multiple opportunities to settle bills; and it offered online payment and payment plan options.

Assessments demonstrated their advantages and success (09.1.124 Productivity Award, 09.1.125 Bursar Support Services, 08.1.29 Bursar Text Messaging as a Retention Strategy). The Bursar Office reported 31% fewer students cancelled in spring 2010 compared to spring 2009. In fact, since the inception of text messaging there has been an overall 25% decline in cancellations (09.1.120-123 Bursar Cancelations: Fa09 II vs. Fa08 II; Sp10 I vs. Sp09 I, Sp10 II vs. Sp09 II, and Fa10 I vs. Fa09 I).

Other changes include a single simplified online application for LaGuardia scholarships, and new workshops to help students prepare for and pass the Ability to Benefit (ATB) test, which is required to apply for state aid for students who do not have a US high school diploma or recognized equivalent. Details on the changes the Bursar and Student Financial Services offices have implemented since 2007 are given in Appendix 4.3.

Our research established that the College conducts ongoing assessment of student retention efforts and reflects its findings in its admissions, remediation, and related policies (FE 8.8). LaGuardia has launched an array of programs and services over the past five years to raise academic quality, improve student success, and foster a creative and supportive environment. Many of the College’s efforts to retain students to graduation are focused on particularly critical points in their academic careers or on particular groups of students. Retention efforts at LaGuardia are strategically important and, as such, stress clarity of outcomes and assessment.

Appendix 4.6 summarizes the College’s retention efforts, and Appendix 4.7 provides a detailed description of the retention programs highlighted below to demonstrate the College’s assessment of retention efforts.

Assessment Highlights in College Retention Programs

New Student Orientation. In fall 2009 82% of orientation participants registered for the following spring semester compared with only 72% of students who did not attend. New students participating in spring 2010 were 16% more likely to enroll for courses in fall 2010 than new students who did not participate (08.1.23 NSO Fa 10 Sp 10 Data).
First Year Academies and Learning Communities. From fall 2005 to fall 2007, 75.6% of students in First Year Academy Learning Communities were retained compared to 71.1% of their peers not enrolled in learning communities. The four-year comparison of pass rates in remedial English 099 (fall 2004 - spring 2008) for Academy participants was 69.5% compared to non-academy students at 63.9%. New First Year Academy Learning Communities reduced the failure rate by 9%, the course attrition rate by 6%, and the semester-to-semester attrition rate by 6% according to 2004 data. In 2009, students enrolled in a Liberal Arts Cluster had a passing rate for ENG 101 that was 10.2 points higher than students not enrolled in a cluster. In addition, student ratings of their Academy experience on key questions from CCSSE exceed LaGuardia and national means (LC Homepage, First Year Academy Website, 08.1.15 Learning Communities, 08.4.08 CTL Report 2-11-10, 08.4.09 CTL Data Report 11-29-07, 13.1.07 Retention Committee Report 2006).

Student Financial Services. In assessing the characteristics of students who lost course registrations because of non-payment, the ad hoc Cancellation Committee found that continuing students who had failed to file for financial aid were most at risk (08.3.03 Bursar Cancellations and Financial Aid). The Bursar and Financial Aid Office then launched a firmer communications effort, including text messages, toward these students.

Expanding Academic Opportunities. Student enrollment in fall session II and spring session II classes increased by 7.8% from 3,882 to 4,186 students (05.1.53 LaGuardia Final LaG PMP report 07-08 - 3.1.3). Enrollment in these six-week sessions helps students maintain full-time status and accelerate progress towards a degree. The percentage of withdrawals decreased by 1.5% from 13.2 to 11.7% (02.1.01 Strat Plan, 05.1.53 LaGCC Final PMP Report 07-08, and 08.1.34 AA New Majors Conversation with Interim VP).

Transfer Services. Because 37% of 500 students completing a Needs Assessment wanted more individual interaction, the Transfer Center offered more individual appointments.

College-Wide Advisement Day. On the College’s post-service assessment form, approximately 70% of students said they were motivated to take actions after College-Wide Advising Day. Faculty participation increased 31.3%, from 64 in spring 2009 to 84 in fall 2009, and rose to 96 in fall 2010 (09.1.159 Summary of Advising Data 2008-2010.docx).

DegreeWorks. Over 10,900 students (an increase of 400) logged into DegreeWorks as of June 2008. The number of DegreeWorks faculty training opportunities increased by 80%, from five workshops in spring 2009 to nine workshops in fall 2009. All 22 faculty completing the DegreeWorks workshop evaluation stated that they “benefited from the session” and 90.5% “learned something new” (02.1.01 Strat Plan and 05.1.53 LaGCC Final PMP Report 07-08).

Art of Advisement Seminar. The evaluations of approximately 40 participating faculty and staff revealed positive satisfaction and learning outcomes (2009-10 target 6.1.4). All faculty members who participated in the Art of Advisement seminar series went on to advise students during the College-Wide Advising Day (02.1.01 Strat Plan, 10.07.07 DAC Report-Art of Advising, and 08.6.01 Promising Practices Award).
New Student Advisement and Registration. During fall 2009 and 2010 sessions, a sample of over a thousand students assessed their satisfaction (09.1.095 DAC Report 7-5-10). Organizers responded with changes for 2010 and 2011.

ePortfolio. Students who developed ePortfolios scored higher than both the LaGuardia and national means on a number of key indicators in CCSSE, including synthesizing ideas, writing, working effectively with others, and making judgments about the soundness of information, arguments or methods. Research conducted over multiple semesters shows that students building ePortfolios are more likely to return the following semester. 76.0% of students in a random sample of ePortfolio courses returned the next semester, compared to 70.9% for students in non-ePortfolio, but otherwise comparable, classes (08.1.38 CUE Report 08-09, and 13.1.07 Retention Committee Report).

Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). For its first cohort the ASAP one-year retention rate was 76.4% and 64.9% for two years. Within two years 28.8% of that cohort had graduated. The one-year retention rate for the second cohort is 89% and the one-semester retention rate for the third cohort was 93%. The ASAP program has more than doubled the two-year College graduation rate of 12.5% (08.1.16 ASAP Presentation to AtD, 08.1.17 ASAP FY09 Report, 08.1.18 ASAP Report FY10).

College Discovery. The one-year retention rate for first-time full-time freshman in this program from fall 2007 to 2008 improved from 67.2% to 72.8%. CUNY data for five cohorts starting with the fall 1996 group show that the five-year graduation rate for LaGuardia’s College Discovery has consistently exceeded the rate for the “regular” population, varying from two to ten percentage points higher (08.1.38 CUE Report 08-09, 08.1.30 CD-1 year retention stats 07, 08, 08.1.31 CD 2-year Retention Stats, and 09.1.040 Counseling Dept PPR).

Early Alert. Of the 1,982 students identified as “at-risk” for failing, 66.4% passed their course and 9.4% officially withdrew. Re-enrollment for the spring 2009 was 73.3%. In fall 2009, 73.9% of Early Alert students re-enrolled (08.1.12 Early Alert AtD Presentation and 13.1.07 Retention Committee Report 2006).

Please see the discussion of Basic Skills in Chapter 7, under Standard 13, for our examination of the College’s programs to ensure that admitted students who marginally meet or do not meet the institution’s qualifications achieve expected learning goals and higher education outcomes (FE 8.3). The College’s transfer credit policies (FE 8.7) are examined in Chapter 6 under Standard 11.

Findings for Standard 9: Student Support Services
We determined that the College provides a program of student support services appropriate to student strengths and needs, reflective of institutional mission and consistent with student learning expectations that is equitable, supportive, and sensitive, through direct service or referral with qualified professionals, where ongoing assessment is used for improvement (FE 9-1-9.3, 9.10). Nevertheless, the Achieving the Dream committee concluded that the College’s advising system is “fragmented, dispersed across numerous departments and divisions and not fully understood by students, faculty and staff. Despite committed work by many, and the best intentions of all, students are required to navigate through a maze of different
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offices to obtain developmental advising services.” The committee therefore recommended that the College “re-think and re-organize its delivery of developmental advising services” (AtD Findings and Recommendations).

LaGuardia organizes support services into five categories: academic guidance, academic support services, career-related services, personal guidance, and direct support services.

Academic Guidance. The College provides appropriate student advisement procedures and processes (FE 9.4), as expected by Middle States. Recommendations from the 2002 Presidential Task Force on Advising for Student Success led to the creation of the Developmental Advising Committee (DAC), providing a locus for faculty and staff communication and training on advising. The Committee redefined advising areas and outlined a road map to help students understand advising phases. Beginning in 2007, the College implemented a comprehensive developmental advising model. The President charged the College with increasing faculty involvement in advising and developing specific advising objectives and outcomes as well as a comprehensive assessment program within the three phases of a student’s academic experience (See Appendix 4.5).

The College now has an advisement program designed for the needs of students at each stage of their academic career. Professional advisors and faculty offer educational guidance tailored to students’ level of academic preparedness and circumstances as well as their majors. Trained staff members advise special population groups, such as students with disabilities, students who participate in the Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP), or students on probation. Communication among these advising groups is facilitated through monthly DAC meetings with a focus on new student issues handled by the Enrollment Process and Strategies Team. Nevertheless, fragmentation issues persist, especially for students who may belong to more than one advising group, such as a continuing student who is also on probation. While the current system emphasizes coordination, the number of offices and individuals involved is large enough to make it challenging to direct students appropriately.

In 2008, DAC began a comprehensive assessment of the Developmental Advising Model and in 2010 reported that its four assessment goals had been achieved (DAC Report 7-5-10):

1. Review the goals for each Developmental Advisement Phase and make any necessary adjustments or clarifications.
2. Conduct an evaluative assessment of Phase I of Developmental Academic Advising.
3. Establish uniform data collection in Phase II, which will provide the basis for evaluating Phase II goals in the 2009-10 academic year.
4. Develop and implement Phase III activities.

Other programs provide academic guidance to supplement advisor-student sessions. Following students’ first contact with advisors, the New Student Orientation (NSO) invites students to identify and prioritize their academic and career goals. Students who attended the fall 2009 NSO were ten percentage points more likely to register for spring semester than students who did not attend, and this rose to 16% in fall 2010 (NSO Fa10 and Sp10 Data). The Office for Transfer Services, restructured in 2009 following an Assessment of Transfer Services (Transfer Report 08-09), helps students explore transfer options and provides guidance on choosing the best transfer college. Assessment continued in 2010 (Transfer Report 09-
10), resulting in additional staffing and the creation of a blog. The Early Alert Program provides at-risk students with opportunities for contact with advisors between registration periods. Using an online reporting tool, faculty members register concerns, triggering an intervention by an academic advisor. Merged with web attendance, faculty response increased 51.9% (09.1.077 Early Alert Data Assessment 08-10). Early Alert contacted 1,952 students in fall 2008 and 2,213 in spring 2010 (08.1.20 Evaluation of Early Alert Student Outcomes Sp 10).

Academic Support Services. Under Standard 11, Chapter 6 includes an analysis of tutoring services. In addition, most programs offering academic advisement to special populations provide a variety of services such as student success workshops. The Center for Counseling, Advising and Academic Support, for example, developed, implemented and evaluated 40 hours of workshops in fall 2009 and 32 hours in spring 2010 on topics such as Learning Styles and Study Skills, Time Management, Options in Health Care, Making the Most of Academic Advising, and Intent to Graduate. Of the nearly 300 students in fall 2009 workshops, 96% “were motivated to take action as a result of the workshops,” 97% “benefited from the workshop,” and 95% “learned something new” with similar results for the spring 2010 workshops: 99% of the nearly 300 respondents “benefited from the workshops”; 95% “learned something new”; and 94% were “motivated to take action” (09.1.095 DAC Report 7-5-10).

The Black Male Empowerment Initiative (BMI) began in 2004 to provide additional counseling and group support services to this population of at risk students. The College established benchmarks for assessing the success of the program in 2009 (09.1.064 BMEC Evaluation Report 8-09). Currently the College is evaluating the program as part of an assessment of all Early Alert interventions.

Career Services. After the Executive Council reviewed the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and noted that once again students were less satisfied with career counseling than students at other colleges (see 08.1.02 for 2010 results), it authorized in 2009 the development of the online eCareer Plan to allow students to explore suitable careers either independently or jointly with faculty or advisors. In addition, the Career Central webpage connects students with people, places, and websites to help them choose a major and find out about occupations.

Through funding from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, individuals enrolled in the Family Self-Sufficiency program use the Career Advancement Program in Career Services to start on their career path, change careers, or progress along their career paths through a comprehensive assessment and case management system, with an emphasis on long-term career success through the achievement of short-term goals. Between January 2007 and December 2010 the program served 452 individuals. Through that period there were 115 starts in education with 83 completions. There were 37 starts in vocational training programs that yielded 29 completions, and there were 60 starts in employment (09.1.157 Career Advancement Program outcomes).

Personal Guidance and Wellness Services. The Center for Counseling, Advising and Academic Support partners with Student Services and the Office of Disabled Student to provide personal guidance services to students. Student may access services immediately or by appointment. The
office records each visit (09.1.032 Counseling Dept Contact Form) and tabulates the results monthly (09.1.106 Counseling Walk-ins). While the programs monitor client progress and retention carefully, assessment continues to be a challenge, given the difficulty of constructing true control groups for performance comparisons.

Health Services provides education programs to facilitate the development of healthy lifestyles that enhance intellectual and personal growth (09.1.117 Health Services IEAP 11-10). Its services include coordination of immunization clinics and compliance, enrollment of students in low cost or free health insurance, processing of medical leaves, health counseling, and first aid (09.1.051 Health Ctr Intake log, 09.1.059 Health Services Incident Report 2010, 09.1.061 Health Services Ins Enrollment 2010, and 09.1.062 Health Services STIHIV Testing 2010). The center’s 2010-11 goals are to improve campus mental health, to provide effective and efficient evening services, to raise student awareness of substance abuse, and to increase immunization compliance. As discussed in Chapter 2, all Student Affairs programs have begun assessment projects.

The Office of Student Life and Recreation has been examining the relationship between retention and student involvement in co-curricular activities as well as in new student orientation (09.1.036 Return Rates Fa 09 Orientation). The office’s 2010-11 annual goals are to implement new data collection and reporting systems, design and implement a co-curricular transcript, and raise student substance abuse awareness (09.1.118 Student Life IEAP).

Student Life tracks retention rates for students who participate as club leaders, as student assistants, in leadership and diversity activities, in web radio, and as recreation assistants (09.1.035 Retention and Student Success 9-10). As an example, during FY 2010 the office set a goal of improving retention of club leaders. Training and support were provided to 30 faculty mentors on goal setting, collaboration, and assessment of outcomes. In addition, event training was provided for 60 student leaders. Retention of club leaders increased from 2008-09 to 2009-10 from 75.5% to 93%, and the number of student clubs and faculty/staff mentors increased 20% (09.1.103 Student Life Assessment Highlights).

Direct Support Services. The Enrollment Services Center (ESC) is a centrally located, one-stop shop assisting students with new student advisement, financial aid eligibility, course registration, graduation, and social services benefits. In April 2010 the ESC restructured its staffing to position cross-trained Generalists as “first responders” to students’ immediate needs, while Specialists’ time was reserved for more complex interactions. The ESC assessed front desk engagement with students in summer 2009 against summer 2010, finding that student wait time decreased 20 to 30 minutes during August and September, the two busiest months (09.1.151 The New and Improved ESC).

Student Financial Services (SFS) 2010-11 annual goals are to place more students in Federal Work-Study and to contribute to the College’s sustainability initiative by reducing mailings (09.1.116 SFS IEAP 11-10). Students are encouraged to use the SFS website as well as the Resource Center for staff assistance to complete financial aid applications online or to check their financial aid status and apply for scholarships. A programmatic review has been scheduled (09.1.119 Program and Services Review 2) and assessment plan has been drafted (09.1.116 SFS...
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LaGuardia students are less satisfied with financial aid advising than students at other colleges according to the CCSSE survey (08.1.02 CCSSE Exec Summary 2010). This disaffection will be evaluated in the upcoming assessment.

Single Stop USA collaborated with CUNY community colleges in fall 2010 to provide free state and federal tax preparation, financial literacy coaching, legal advice, and benefits screenings for students and their families eligible for public assistance. As of September 2010 Single Stop tax experts had helped 460 CUNY students receive over half a million dollars in refunds (Single Stop Announced, Single Stop Website).

Federal law requires that the International Student Service Office assist and advise F-1 visa students, while maintaining careful records of student status and progress. One primary service provided by the office, assistance on the preparation of federal applications for permission to work (Optional Practical Training), resulted in a 98% approval rate in fall 2009 (N=141) (09.1.063 Int'l Student Data). International student retention has always been high with return rates increasing from 81% in fall 2009 to 91% in fall 2010 (09.1.064 BMEC Evaluation Report 8-09).

The Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC) is a licensed child care facility for children ages 12 months to 12 years. The facility educates families through workshops on parenting strategies, discipline techniques, and relationship counseling (09.1.052 ECLC Programs). The Center assesses its effectiveness in meeting its operational goals through parent feedback forms twice a year. Parents indicated in 2009-2010 that the ECLC program goals are clear, that teachers maintain regular communication through formal conferences to discuss their children’s progress, and that having child care on campus enabled them to remain in college (09.1.056 ECLC Feedback Tally). The internal review of operational goals (09.1.052 ECLC Programs, 09.1.057 ECLC Monthly Intake Report 09, 09.1.058 ECLC per academic year) feeds into the ECLC End of Year Report and Project Plan (09.1.055 ECLC Report 06-07), an external audit required by the CUNY Office of Student Affairs.

A complete list of student support services is available in Appendix 4.1.

Further, we found that the College has reasonable procedures, widely disseminated, for equitably addressing student complaints or grievances and maintains records of student complaints or grievances (FE 9.6, 9.7). The College publicizes its grievance procedures in many ways and has made improvements in increasing student awareness. Historically, a student handbook that delineated the policy was distributed to incoming students registered for the New Student Seminar, but this was insufficient because not all new students enrolled. Now, all students are emailed a link to an online handbook, and those who attend New Student Orientation also receive a flash drive containing the handbook URL. In another instance, Student Affairs launched a poster campaign in 2009-10 about the role of the Ombuds Officer as student advocate, and in 2010 the division created an Office of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Advocacy to house the Ombudsperson and the Student Judiciary Officer. Other offices, too, participate in raising awareness. For example, the Office of Public Safety publishes procedures for filing complaints of sexual harassment, discrimination, and hate crimes on its webpage. The Academic Standing Committee describes the procedure for appealing its decisions on its own webpage as well. Grievances are tracked by all these offices, and reports are stored appropriately.
and released in accordance with CUNY’s “Henderson Rules,” which define codes of conduct for students at all CUNY campuses, as well as HIPAA and FERPA rules.

Based on a recent survey, more than 65% of student respondents were aware that they could appeal a grade and 60% were aware that they could appeal a disciplinary action. Students who have attended the College longer appear most informed about these processes. The College is continuing assessment to gain a fuller understanding of the effectiveness of communications about complaint procedures (01.3.03 Student Survey Results).

During 2010-11 the Ombudsperson handled 655 issues. The range of issues included bursar cancellations (19%), academic issues (14%), Student Financial Services concerns (13%), complaints against faculty (9%), scholarship and/or emergency funds (8%), and a range of miscellaneous issues (37%) (09.4.06 Report from Ombuds Office 7-11).

Finally, we found that the College has policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance of student records and has published policies for the release of student information (FE 9.8, 9.9). The paper and electronic records of students overseen by the Registrar are stored and made available under strictly enforced guidelines. The systems maintained by the Adult and Continuing Education division are limited to certain staff and are password-protected. Paper files are kept according to the CUNY Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. The physical files for each student are stored in a locked records area on campus with only three Registrar personnel having access. The College is in the process of imaging print records to facilitate administrative efficiency.

Every CUNY Student Information Management System (SIMS) user has customized access which limits his or her ability to add, edit or delete data. Every SIMS user account is created in the Registrar’s Office using a form that requires supervisory approval and acceptance of terms and conditions regarding the confidentiality of student data. DegreeWorks account requests are also reviewed for appropriate use. The Registrar's Office assesses changes to account access for appropriateness before processing. Once a year, a verification list of all SIMS users is circulated to all supervisors, asking them to verify that the staff members listed still belong to the unit and are eligible for SIMS access. Supervisors notify SIMS of departing employees to be deleted from access. A DegreeWorks audit culls non-users and departed staff.

These strict access policies are in part a response to a situation regarding inappropriate changing of grades that occurred between 2004 and 2006 (which also led to the arrest and dismissal of a college employee). In addition to restricting access to SIMS, the College altered its protocols from manual submission of grades to the better-controlled process of web grading. Grade changes can still be authorized by professors, but the departmental chair is also involved in each grade change. The College has expanded and regularized the SIMS audit process that discovered the discrepancies.

Archived writing examination booklets and testing scansheets are kept in a locked area of the Testing Laboratory or in the locked records area and follow the CUNY retention schedule.

The College’s policies for the release of student information follow the federal guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Registrar analyzes all student data requests made to the Information Systems via a GroupLink work order to ensure the
confidentiality and integrity of student records. As part of the ticket routing, a Registrar staff member reviews the request and reserves the right to question or deny the request. The Registrar is responsible for increasing awareness of FERPA and training on the proper dissemination of student information. CUNY has made IT responsible for inventorying the existence of identifiable individual information on distributed computers and enforcing the security of such information.

The College catalogue (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, Appendices: College and University Policies) and the Student Handbook (Students’ Rights and Responsibilities) explain the College’s FERPA policy with examples of legitimate educational reasons why a student’s record would be disclosed despite a nondisclosure request. The Handbook does not delineate the procedure for preventing disclosure of non-directory information. The form to request nondisclosure (FERPA Nondisclosure Form) is available online on the College’s Registrar’s Office webpage and on paper at the Registrar’s Office.

The College does not engage in inter-collegiate athletics (FE 9.5), except some club sports.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 8
1. Guided by its open access mission, LaGuardia has welcomed growing demand from potential students. Each semester the Director of Admissions meets with Student Affairs staff, IR&A, and CUNY’s enrollment management officers to plan enrollment. The College communicates early with prospective students and encourages them to attend information workshops.
2. The College ensures that current and prospective students have accurate and comprehensive information about academic programs and policies, basic skills requirements and testing, financial aid, and transfer. The College disseminates information via its regularly updated web site, college catalog, and student handbooks and provides information to students at all points in their academic careers.
3. A particular concern has been the College’s communication with and support for those students who have applied to candidacy programs in nursing but are not accepted. The College has developed alternative programs to address the needs of students who wish to continue in the nursing profession but whose academic achievements do not qualify them for admission to the extremely competitive Associate Degree Nursing Program.
4. From before students enter the College until they depart, LaGuardia has both college-wide and more focused initiatives to support students as they endeavor to persist and graduate. These programs conduct assessments and use analyses to inform decision making.
5. The College has changed its financial services processes to promote retention and prevent students from leaving because of financial hardships. Changes include improved communication between Student Financial Services and students, review and clarification of the financial aid application process, increasing the number of bursar cancelation dates, and organizing workshops to help students pass the Ability to Benefit Test.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 9
1. The College offers a comprehensive program of student support services from point of entry to graduation, encompassing students’ academic, personal, and social development. Each program and office must engage in regular assessment activities to assure that it is meeting its goals and is aligned with the College mission.
2. The College’s Achieving the Dream project (AtD) concluded that more work is needed to remedy a fragmentation of services that confuses students and potentially undermines their experience at the College. In order to address these shortcomings, in June 2011 the AtD Steering Committee issued five recommendations which the College is currently in the process of implementing.

3. Since 2007, the College has made many structural changes to academic advisement in response to its ongoing program of assessment. Of particular note is the implementation of a process that permits each of the College’s advising departments to concentrate on one of three stages of a student’s development. Further, in 2010 the College launched an internal website, “Advising Central,” to ensure that faculty and staff who advise students have accurate and comprehensive information. In addition, a number of advising groups have been consolidated into the Center for Counseling, Advising and Academic Support.

4. The College adheres to sound policies and procedures to ensure the security of student records, following the federal guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Students have an opportunity to permit or deny third-party access to records using the Directory Information Non-Disclosure Form. Parties can request student non-protected information through the Freedom of Information Law. The College continues to publish policies and procedures online to assure maximum transparency. Student Affairs recently created the Office for Student Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy whose purpose is to satisfy disputes and serve as a liaison between faculty and students concerning breaches of academic integrity.

Recommendations for Standards 8 and 9
1. New Allied Health majors should be mandated to register for an Allied Health section of New Student Seminar in order to obtain essential information about the programs, including requirements and career options.
2. The College should assess the effect of its Ability to Benefit (ATB) preparatory workshops on the pass rate of students taking (or re-taking) the ATB test.
3. Gaps in advising continue to exist because of the decentralization of advising services. A study of these issues has been undertaken by Achieving the Dream and the recommendations from that committee should be implemented.
4. The College should create a position and/or office whose sole responsibility is to supervise, manage, coordinate, and assess all retention initiatives at the College.
5. The College should develop and mandate a comprehensive assessment methodology that can be used across all retention programs and initiatives.
Chapter 5
Standard 10: Faculty

"The institution’s instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals" (Characteristics of Excellence 37).

Introductory Overview of Standard 10: Faculty
LaGuardia Community College has benefited from the consistent and substantial growth of the faculty over an eight-year period. Between 2002 and 2010, the number of full-time and adjunct faculty increased by 49%, from 755 to 1128. The number of full-time faculty increased 44% (from 231 to 333), while the number of adjunct faculty increased 52% (from 524 to 795). The total number of adjunct faculty hired (271) is more than double the number of full-time faculty hired (102) for the same time period. Even though the College has devoted significant resources to hiring full-time faculty, the ratio of full-timers to part-timers has increased slightly from 1:2.27 in 2002 to 1:2.39 in 2010 (10.02.06 Faculty Report). These numbers demonstrate that part-time faculty play a crucial role at LaGuardia and that it is essential that they are well qualified, supported, and fairly evaluated. Appendix 5.1 provides more details about the growth of the faculty.

The LaGuardia faculty is also distinguished by an exceptionally high level of educational qualifications when compared with national benchmarks for community colleges. In 2010, 54.4% of full-time faculty hired had a doctoral degree, an increase from 45.5% in 2002. This compares to 19% of full-time community college faculty nationwide holding a doctoral degree (10.02.10 College Hires 31 Faculty). In the same year, 94.3% of the College’s full-time faculty held at least a master’s degree, as compared to 80-85% nationwide. Moreover, in 2010, 76.2% of part-time faculty held at least a master’s degree, as compared to 67.1% nationwide (see Appendix 5.2).

The data on faculty diversity demonstrates that the hiring process has helped the College achieve greater faculty diversity, though room remains for improvement, particularly in terms of the faculty-to-student ratio among Hispanics. Between 2002 and 2010, faculty members identified as Asian and Pacific Islander increased from 70 to 88; Black Non-Hispanic from 123 to 191; and Hispanic Non-Puerto Rican from 37 to 131. The group with the most lopsided faculty-to-student ratio, Hispanic Non-Puerto Rican, saw that ratio reduced dramatically, from 1:118 to 1:47. (This compares with a ratio of 1:2 for White Non-Hispanics.) Ratios for Asian or Pacific Islanders and Black Non-Hispanics fell less, from 1:28 to 1:23 and from 1:15 to 1:13 respectively (see Appendix 5.3).

Faculty members have produced an impressive quantity and range of publications, conference papers, and creative works. Between 2006 and 2010, 580 items are listed in the annual bibliographies published by the President’s Office to celebrate the accomplishments of faculty and staff who have published books, articles, and literary works, and who have contributed to the worlds of art, music, theater and dance (10.09.02 2006 Faculty Accomplishments) (10.09.03 2007 Faculty Accomplishments) (10.09.04 2008 Faculty Accomplishments) (10.09.05 2009 Faculty Accomplishments) (10.09.06 Faculty Accomplishments). According to the Fall 2009 issue of Faculty and Staff Notes (10.09.01), over 75 faculty and staff presented 140 times at
conferences from coast to coast. The accomplishments of the faculty are evident in the numerous and prestigious grants that they have received. PSC CUNY Awards totaling $308,931.62 have been awarded to LaGuardia faculty from 2006 to 2010 (10.05.20 Grants Awarded 2006-Present). Through a Title V grant, with additional funds contributed from CUNY, the College constructed a faculty research laboratory, an unusual asset for a community college (10.05.36 Natural Science Research).

Based on the annual bibliographies generated by the President’s Office, the percentage of full-time faculty who published has increased from 11.2% in 2006-07 to 22% in 2010-11. It was therefore surprising that the CUNY PMP report on faculty scholarship for 2010-11 documented publications for only 15% of the LaGuardia faculty (CUNY PMP faculty report—documentation not yet available), especially since the CUNY report includes conference presentations, which are excluded from the President’s Office bibliographies. This discrepancy suggests that not all activity by LaGuardia faculty is being reported to CUNY. Currently, faculty receive at least three requests each year to report their professional activity, which may create confusion (President’s Office annual bibliography, Faculty and Staff Notes, and the CUNY scholarship report). The Standard 10 Working Group concluded that the College should develop a procedure for gathering accurate information on the professional activity of the faculty, including better communication with faculty so they understand the importance of reporting professional activity to CUNY.

The Standard 10 Working Group examined the procedures for evaluating full-time and adjunct faculty, how the College ensures faculty are appropriately qualified, whether teaching assessments promote teaching excellence and professional growth, the availability and effectiveness of professional development opportunities, whether these professional development activities help improve student outcomes, how the College supports faculty to provide academic advisement for students, the College’s support for academic freedom, and faculty opinions about the appropriate balance among teaching, scholarship, and service.

Findings for Standard 10: Faculty
Our research confirmed that LaGuardia’s hiring standards and procedures are fair, equitable and clearly articulated, ensuring that all faculty members are well qualified for their positions (FE 10.1). (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) Full-time faculty members are hired through a multi-step process managed through Human Resources and the Affirmative Action Office. These steps include resume review with the search committee; interview with the search committee; interview with the department chair, and interviews with the Vice President and President. At the completion of this process, the most qualified candidate is recommended for appointment. Although adjunct faculty are hired through an abbreviated version of this process, the Academic Chairs take steps to ensure that the criteria for appointing adjunct faculty are consistent with those for full-time faculty (FE 10.8). According to the Chairs, “the interview is crucial in order to determine that the [adjunct] candidate has the appropriate level of discipline expertise and teaching experience” (10.04.01 Academic Dept Chairs’ Response). See Appendix 5.4 for a detailed overview of the hiring process.

CUNY policies and the contractual agreement with the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) require that all members of the instructional staff are evaluated in order to maintain
academic and professional standards of excellence (FE 10.7). Evaluations encourage and provide direction for the improvement of performance and provide a basis for reappointment, promotion and tenure.

Both full-time and adjunct faculty undergo a three-prong evaluation, which includes the annual evaluation, peer observations, and student evaluations of faculty (SIRs). Librarians are evaluated on their area of primary responsibilities and teaching, and use peer observations and student evaluations only if they are teaching a credit-bearing course. Effective September 2006, the tenure clock was changed from 5 to 7 years as part of the collective bargaining agreement. The “March towards Tenure/CCE Calendar” (10.01.04 Tenure Track Table) explains the new tenure clock. In 2009, the annual performance evaluation form was expanded to include ten areas in which faculty would be evaluated (07.4.22 HR Annual Performance Evaluation for Faculty). The new form is more closely aligned with Article 18 of the PSC-CUNY contract (10.01.01 2002-2007 PSC Contract.pdf) (10.05.07 Observation Form). Evaluation of adjunct faculty is governed by Article 18.3 (c) of the PSC-CUNY contract, which stipulates that “after four semesters of service annual evaluation for adjunct personnel shall be held at the request of the chairperson or the adjunct.” Chairs inform HR in May and December whether adjuncts will be reappointed for the following fall or spring. After 6 semesters of consecutive appointments, adjuncts are eligible for annual appointment letters. Chairs rely heavily on peer observation reports to evaluate adjunct performance, since teaching is their only professional responsibility. The evaluation procedures for all members of the instructional staff, including Higher Education Officers (HEO) and College Laboratory Technicians (CLT), are summarized in Appendix 5.5.

We also found that the standards and procedures for evaluating full and part-time faculty, CLTs, and HEOs are clearly articulated (FE 10.6) in the PSC-CUNY contract and Instructional Staff Handbook. The January 2012 revision of the handbook is on the HR website, which HR updates as changes occur. Information about the evaluation process is also shared with the full-time faculty and staff at various forums, including the Employee Orientation for Instructional Staff conducted by HR. In addition, new faculty are invited to the annual Tenure and Promotion Forum, sponsored by Faculty Council, which features the Vice President for Academic Affairs, an academic chairperson, a recently promoted full professor, the Executive Director and Associate Director of HR, and a representative from the PSC, who also conveys information about the grievance appeal process. Grievance procedures are also published on the website of the College’s Labor and Legal Affairs Office (10.01.02 CUNY Legal Affairs Website). Individual evaluation conferences with the chair, supervisor, or director also deliver information about the evaluation process. Finally, managers of HEO staff are invited to attend the HEO Performance Management Workshop sponsored by HR.

New adjunct faculty are encouraged to consult the Adjunct Staff handbook available on the HR website for policies and procedures regarding appointments, evaluations and promotions. However, less information about the evaluation process is shared with adjunct faculty as is shared with full-time faculty since there is no formal college-wide orientation process for part-time staff. Mentors play an important though perhaps informal role in conveying what is expected to succeed, although mentors are not uniformly deployed across the College. Articulation of standards depends upon individual chairs and departmental orientation processes.
Given the large percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty, in 2010 IR&A studied the effectiveness of teaching by part-time faculty (10.03.01 Full v Part-time faculty teaching dev courses). The study examines pass rates for 15,296 students in basic skills courses from fall 2006 through fall 2009. Forty-six full-time and 59 part-time faculty members were included in the sample. The study revealed no significant or consistent difference in class and test pass rates between full-time and part-time faculty (See Appendix 5.6). Even so, the Academic Chairs would like the College to provide funding for part-time faculty to attend professional development workshops in order to further strengthen adjunct teaching (10.04.01 Academic Dept Chairs’ Response).

Further, we determined that the procedures and criteria for reviewing all individuals responsible for the College’s educational program are carefully articulated, equitable, and implemented (FE 10.7), as expected by Middle States. In particular, the Standard 10 Working Group examined peer observations and student evaluations of faculty (SIRs), the two instruments used by the College to measure teaching effectiveness and provide guidance to faculty for improving their teaching. Appendix 5.5 provides the details of administering SIRs and peer observations. The Academic Chairs view peer observations as “very effective, especially when guided by the Chairs in order to insure fairness, objectivity and rigor” (10.04.01 Academic Dept Chairs’ Response). The Self-Study survey reveals that on the whole the faculty also consider these observations effective. Among full-time faculty, only 9.7% of respondents rated peer observations as “not effective,” while only 1.7% of responding adjunct faculty rated them not effective (10.09.08 Faculty Responses to Survey). Regarding the SIR reports, the Chairs stated that the ability to discern consistency and patterns is the main benefit of using SIRs in assessing teaching: “Reports that are out of character and so likely anomalies receive less credence than do consistent assessments over a period of time.” Chairs also point to possible limitations of the SIRs in that students may not always take them seriously or may let the difficulty of the course material or rigorous grading affect their responses (10.04.01 Academic Dept Chairs’ Response). The Self-Study survey also revealed a significant amount of faculty skepticism regarding the value of SIRs. Concerns include the subjective nature of the questions, the possibility that the results reflect popularity rather than teaching effectiveness, and the limits of the multiple choice format. Among full-time faculty members, 30.1% rated SIRs as very effective or effective in improving teaching, while 41.3% rated them somewhat effective and 28.6% as not effective. Among part-time faculty members, 36.9% rated them very effective or effective, 43.9% as somewhat effective and 19.3% as not effective (10.09.08 Faculty Responses to Survey). Overall, however, the Chairs believe that the current methods of evaluating teaching help them identify and assist faculty members who may need to improve their teaching technique.

In addition, we found that the College makes an extensive array of professional development opportunities available to both full-time and part-time faculty (FE 10.4). This is reflected in the strong ratings the college received on two questions in the 2009 University Faculty Senate (UFS) Survey. Among the 19 CUNY campuses surveyed, LaGuardia received the highest rating from full-time faculty (74% good or excellent) and seventh-highest from part-time faculty (51% good or excellent) on the availability of faculty development activities. The College was also rated second-highest by both full-time (71% mildly or strongly agreed) and part-time faculty (77% mildly or strongly agreed) for helping them improve the quality of their teaching (05.3.05 FES).
Faculty development provided through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) includes numerous faculty-led programs designed to advance innovative teaching for full-time and part-time faculty and other teaching professionals. The Center’s programs focus on structural innovations such as learning communities and the use of digital technologies, pedagogies such as inquiry learning, and the building of student academic competencies. To reflect LaGuardia’s growing engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning, in 2005 the CTL launched the journal *In Transit* for faculty to share their pedagogy and practice, and it runs two programs that support faculty scholarship: the Carnegie Seminar on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and the Faculty Scholarship and Publication Workshop. The CTL provides a large amount of fiscal support for faculty participation in professional development. In 2009-10, grants written and administered by the CTL provided close to $500,000 in reassigned time to faculty, plus approximately $150,000 in stipends. Appendix 5.7 provides highlights of CTL programs and accomplishments.

The CTL plays a key role in supporting and documenting the faculty’s excellence in teaching and professional growth by collecting evidence of success of faculty seminars and programs, faculty learning, and improvement of their pedagogical practices, as well as student success rates from classes taught by faculty in CTL seminars. Based on the CTL’s data, professional development for faculty, especially those that focus on pedagogy, has had a positive impact on student learning outcomes, as detailed in Appendix 5.8.

In addition to the CTL, the College provides support for faculty professional development through the Publication and Tenure Highway to Success Program (PATH); library workshops to broaden information literacy; the Grants Office; workshops organized within academic departments; the EDIT grant program, which provided $70,904 between spring 2007 and 2010 to support faculty scholarship; and the Faculty Research Colloquium sponsored by the College Senate Committee on Professional Development. Launched in 2009 by Human Resources for tenure-track faculty, PATH was created to help meet the CUNY goal to raise academic quality by increasing faculty scholarship; evaluation data has been overwhelmingly positive. Other sources of faculty development include institutional support for travel to conferences, sabbaticals, and the contractually negotiated 24 hours of reassigned time for new tenure-track faculty for conducting scholarly activities.

The faculty also receives an increasing amount of support from the College to provide academic advisement that helps students plan, execute, and realize their academic and professional goals. Academic Support Services (ASS) provides DegreeWorks Training for faculty, then collects and analyzes feedback from participants. These training sessions are well attended by full-time faculty, who were overwhelmingly satisfied. The AAS Director, the Executive Director of the Center for Counseling, Advising and Academic Support, and the ASAP Director have developed an award-winning faculty development seminar called the Art of Advising, which has also been highly rated by faculty.
In addition to the AAS, the Developmental Advising Committee focuses on improving advisement through faculty and staff collaboration using a developmental advising model. Finally, the College has established the Advising Central website to support faculty and staff. Appendix 5.11 provides data on faculty participation.

The standards and procedures for evaluating faculty demonstrate that the College recognizes appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning, research, and service (FE 10.5). However, two recent surveys indicate that the extent of faculty workload is a concern for a substantial portion of the faculty. In the 2009 UFS Survey, among 19 CUNY institutions LaGuardia ranked 16th in “Satisfaction with Workload,” with 54% dissatisfied, 7% neutral, and 39% satisfied (05.3.05 FES, Appendix B, Table 28).

The results of the Self-Study Faculty and Staff Survey echo this concern with workload (10.09.07 Text Responses Faculty Survey). Full-time faculty were asked to respond to the following question: “What is the appropriate balance among teaching, scholarship, and service for the LaGuardia Community College faculty?” Of the 220 faculty who participated in the survey, 161 contributed written comments. Of these responses, 55.9% clearly indicate dissatisfaction with their perception of the College’s expectations of faculty in these three areas. The remaining responses refrain from any direct expression of dissatisfaction. Some simply offer a percentage breakdown as to how faculty time should be divided, while others describe at more length an ideal distribution among the three areas without commenting on the existing situation at the College. Overall, the comments show that the LaGuardia faculty value teaching as central to their professional lives; many faculty consider teaching the most important element of the workload, or that it takes the most time. Allocation of time to teaching ranged from 33% to 90% with many variations in between. One respondent wrote, “Teaching at the community college level requires more involvement and planning on the part of faculty... Even though I favor a healthy balance between teaching, scholarship and service, teaching and service are where we as instructors make the most meaningful impact on students' lives.”

Many comments revealed concern about having insufficient time to fulfill expectations for research and service. Many felt dissatisfied with the extent of time devoted to committees and meetings and the general consensus was that time spent in these areas could be better used in the classroom. Most felt that while scholarship is an essential component of an academic career, lack of time often prevents faculty from achieving their scholarship goals. Comments about a heavy teaching load and lack of time for research are numerous. Some faculty worried that expectations for scholarship interfered with the College’s mission, but many emphasized the importance of both teaching and scholarship (“teaching should be the priority, but the College should recognize those scholars who publish in their fields with release time and support. There is room for both types of careers in today’s community colleges”).

While many faculty appear to feel that their 27 contact-hour teaching load makes it difficult to do scholarly work, the PSC contract guarantees tenure-track faculty 24 hours of reassigned time to pursue scholarly activity (used within five years as faculty chooses in consultation with their Chair). In the quantitative portion of the survey, only 10.4% of tenure-track faculty who responded rated this reassigned time “not helpful” in achieving their research and publication goals. Tenured faculty are not eligible for this reassigned time, but they may receive reassigned
time if they are awarded a PSC CUNY grant. The College also provides full year, 80% pay sabbaticals.

The survey demonstrates that many LaGuardia faculty members find it challenging to balance their professional lives. About a third of the respondents said outright that their current professional lives are not in balance. Although they differ about what the balanced life would look like, most agree that reducing the teaching workload would be desirable. Given that the 27 contact-hour teaching load can only be altered through collective bargaining negotiations, we encourage the College to provide greater support for scholarship, service, and professional development in the form of reassigned time, whenever possible, for full-time faculty and compensation for part-time faculty, to allow faculty to better develop as professionals and aid the success of their students.

The Self-Study survey also helps confirm that LaGuardia adheres to the principles of academic freedom (FE 10.9). 70.5% of full-time and 76.3% of part-time faculty responded affirmatively when asked if the College provides them with “a healthy environment with regards to academic freedom in your teaching and scholarship” (10.09.08 Faculty Responses to Survey). The College has made the CUNY academic freedom policy and position papers by the American Association of University Professors available on its library website. A spring 2009 Instructional Staff Meeting was devoted to a presentation on recent legal developments regarding academic freedom (10.10.03 Summary of Facts of Cases to be discussed) (10.10.04 Academic Freedom Documents Online), and the Professional Staff Congress chapter chair reports that no academic freedom-related grievances have been filed at LaGuardia since 2007. It is also notable that the College’s 2009 Governance Plan established a College Senate Sub-Committee on Academic Freedom.

Two recent CUNY-wide surveys also showed that LaGuardia faculty are generally satisfied with administrative protection for their academic freedom. In the 2005 UFS Survey, when full-time faculty were asked about their “Satisfaction with Authority to Make Decisions about Content and Methods in Your Instructional Activities,” 85% of respondents were very or somewhat satisfied. When full-time faculty were asked about their “Satisfaction with Administrative Support for Academic Freedom,” 60% of respondents rated themselves as very or somewhat satisfied (10.10.05 2005 UFS Faculty Experience Survey). In the 2009 UFS Survey, both full-and part-time faculty were asked about their “Satisfaction with Authority to Make Decisions about Content and Methods in Your Instructional Activities.” Among full-time faculty, 88% of respondents rated themselves as very or somewhat satisfied. Among part-time respondents, 87% percent rated themselves as very or somewhat satisfied. Another question in the 2009 survey asked full-time faculty to rate “Administrative Support for Free Expression of Ideas.” In response, 49% of respondents rated themselves as very or mildly satisfied (05.3.05 FES).

The UFS surveys indicate that LaGuardia faculty were more confident about support for their freedom in the classroom than for their “academic freedom” (2005 survey) or “free expression of ideas” (2009 survey). This may indicate that some faculty are concerned about the ramifications of research and/or public statements on controversial issues. Satisfaction in this area also decreased among full-time faculty from 2005 to 2009, although part of this discrepancy may be explained by the different wording and reporting categories between the two surveys. The chairs report that no faculty members have expressed concerns about academic freedom, although they
note that some faculty are worried that “students complaining about a text, film, or assignment might limit a faculty member’s right to assign whatever texts” he or she might prefer (10.04.01 Academic Dept Chairs' Response). A small number of the qualitative responses to the Self-Study survey express concerns about what might be construed as academic freedom (10.09.07 Text Responses Faculty Survey). Although it may be worthwhile to ascertain the significance of these comments, they represent a very small portion of the 270 faculty who responded to this question and thus do not warrant undue concern about the College’s commitment to academic freedom.

The College’s policies and procedures to ensure the use of qualified faculty (FE 10.10) are not subject to institutional assessment because they are governed by the PSC-CUNY collective bargaining agreement. Please see Chapter 6, under Standard 11, for our examination of how faculty design, maintain and update educational curricula (FE 10.2).

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 10
1. The LaGuardia faculty is highly qualified, diverse, and dedicated to the core mission of aiding student success.
2. The College has benefited from a substantial growth in the numbers of both full-time and part-time faculty since 2002.
3. Full-time faculty undergo a multi-step hiring process, which is clearly articulated and consistently applied to ensure they are appropriately qualified for their positions. Part-time faculty are hired through an abbreviated version of this process that maintains the College’s standards for teaching excellence. The faculty as a whole possess a level of academic qualifications that far exceeds national norms for community colleges. Diversity among the faculty is fairly high and increasing, though improvements remain desirable, especially regarding the Hispanic faculty-to-student ratio.
4. The College follows clearly defined evaluation policies for the reappointment of all faculty members and for the promotion and tenure of full-time faculty. The system of annual evaluations, peer teaching observations, and Individual Student Instructional Reports II (SIRs) form the core of this process. Faculty and Chairs feel that peer evaluations are effective in facilitating good teaching, while views of the effectiveness of SIRs are divided.
5. The College makes an extensive array of professional development opportunities available to both full-time and part-time faculty in order to help faculty refine their pedagogy and develop their scholarship. Financial support for faculty scholarship is also available through joint union-management grants (PSC-CUNY grants) and LaGuardia’s EDIT program implemented through a faculty committee. New tenure-track faculty are provided 24 hours of reassigned time for scholarly activities.
6. The College prepares faculty to provide students with academic advisement by offering valuable workshops, training opportunities, and IT support.
7. According to the Self-Study Faculty and Staff Survey, a substantial portion of the LaGuardia faculty often find it challenging to balance their teaching responsibilities with scholarship and service. Overall, faculty members believe that teaching is the core of LaGuardia’s mission as a community college.
8. The College adheres to the principles of academic freedom, has taken steps to inform the faculty of its policy on academic freedom, and surveys indicate that faculty members feel that their academic freedom is protected.
Recommendations for Standard 10
1. The College should support the faculty’s ability to participate fully in service, scholarship, and professional development programs by encouraging and supporting, wherever possible, that these activities come with reassigned time for full-time faculty and funding for part-time faculty.
2. The College should reconsider the SIRs and investigate alternative methods of student evaluation of teaching, and, if a preferable alternative is found, implement a change to this alternative.
3. The College should develop a more efficient procedure for gathering accurate information about faculty professional activity, and it should improve communication with faculty so they understand the importance of reporting this activity to CUNY.
Chapter 6  
Standard 11: Educational Offerings

Standard 11: Educational Offerings
“The institution’s educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings” (Characteristics of Excellence 40).

Introductory Overview of Standard 11: Educational Offerings
LaGuardia Community College follows a well-defined faculty-led process for developing and enhancing degree programs. The CUNY Basic Guidelines for New Programs (11.3.89 Basic Guidelines for New Programs-CUNY 2010), prepared by the CUNY Office of Program Review, Articulation and Transfer, guides collaboration among LaGuardia faculty and administration, the CUNY Board of Trustees, and the New York State Education Department. The CUNY Guidelines stipulate how new programs must be planned, developed, and approved. To facilitate new program development, in September 2004 the College created the position of Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs for Program Development and Evaluation. The Assistant Dean plays a critical role in enhancing curricula and ensuring the smooth implementation of new programs. The current Assistant Dean has noted that the program development and revision process is becoming more uniform throughout CUNY, with increasing emphasis on using existing facilities, and on divisional and CUNY-wide collaboration.

New programs in the liberal arts and sciences have enhanced LaGuardia’s distinctive identity as a community college that challenges national preconceptions. Following the restructuring in 2009 of the Natural and Applied Sciences Department into two departments—Health Sciences and Natural Sciences—the College has strengthened its science offerings by launching new programs in Biology and Environmental Science; programs in Chemistry and Forensic Sciences are currently in development. These programs have a strong component of undergraduate research and are supported by a faculty research lab that engages students. In the humanities, the new Philosophy program, which was featured in a 2011 National Public Radio story (11.2.21 NPR on Philosophy Program) and has the distinction of being the largest in the country of comparably-sized two-year and four-year colleges, serves 4,500 students a year, 60 majors, and is staffed by eight full-time and 20 part-time faculty members (11.2.13 Philosophy Program Description). The new Theater program features a partnership between the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center and the Humanities Department, providing students with the opportunity to learn from accomplished theatre professionals. Another example of the College’s breadth of offerings is the recent expansion of Modern Language/Literature courses offered by the Education and Language Acquisition Department. Since 2007, 16 new courses have been created, including Chinese, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian. Enrollment in these courses has increased dramatically, rising from 362 in spring 2006 to a high of 1105 in fall 2009, in part as a result of recently launched weekend institutes (11.2.14 Enrollment Trends in Modern Language/Literature and Course Offerings).

In addition, the College offers an extensive range of basic skills courses, which play a key role in LaGuardia’s curriculum. The basic skills curricula are discussed under Standard 13 in Chapter 7.
It should be noted that the CUNY-wide “Pathways to Degree Completion Initiative,” currently scheduled for full implementation in fall 2013, will have an impact on curricula across the CUNY system, including significant revisions in the curricular structure of LaGuardia degree programs. In June 2011, The CUNY Board of Trustees approved a resolution establishing the Pathways Initiative “to create a curricular structure that will streamline transfers and enhance the quality of general education across the University” (11.2.17 Pathways Website). All CUNY colleges were asked to submit a campus-wide response to the draft Pathways proposal by November 15, 2011. LaGuardia’s official response, coordinated by an ad hoc committee, praises the effort to create “a more seamless, less cumbersome transfer system” while also voicing concern about “process issues, flexibility, and implications for degree programs” (11.2.18 LaGuardia Pathways Response 11-15-11). In addition, the University Faculty Senate and most of the CUNY faculty governance bodies have passed resolutions opposing the Pathways Initiative, in part based on concerns that it undermines the governance role of elected faculty bodies (11.2.19 UFS Pathways Resolutions). Nevertheless, in December 2011, the Chancellor approved the recommendations of the CUNY-wide Pathways Task Force to create a 30-credit Common Core of general education, the details of which are available on the Pathways website (11.2.20 Common Core Structure Final Recommendation).

Further, the Library’s instruction program touches virtually every student at the College through one-hour classes mandated for all English 101 (Composition) and English 103 (Research Paper) classes. The Library also promotes information literacy though credit instruction (including online sections), mandated input into the curriculum development process, consultations with faculty who bring classes to the Library, participation in learning communities and professional development seminars, an annual Research Review competition for student essays, and speaker programs to publicize the importance of information literacy instruction.

To assess the quality of its educational offerings, the Library collects many kinds of data beyond traditional measures of library service (collection size, gate counts, satisfaction surveys), including web usability studies, observation studies of reference desk transactions, semiannual statistics samplings, and pilot studies. Library faculty and staff are heavily invested in the implementation of new technologies (ebooks, streaming video, online interlibrary loan, email reference, online courses) but also work to preserve the benefits of traditional library resources (print textbooks on reserve, reference desk service, and face-to-face instruction, citation clinics, and research consultations).

Supporting the pursuit of LaGuardia’s educational offerings, the College accepts more than 2,500 new transfer students every year. More than half are international, most are above traditional college age, and one-third does not transfer from community colleges. The College’s Office of Transfer Credit Evaluation reviews records of all incoming transfer students to ensure that course equivalencies and expected learning outcomes are comparable to LaGuardia’s curricula and standards. The College provides transfer students with information and step-by-step guidance pertaining to transferring their educational credits.

The Standard 11 Working Group examined how the process for developing new programs strengthens the quality and rigor of program curricula and ensures that educational offerings are consistent with the college mission. The group also investigated whether graduates are well-prepared for transfer to baccalaureate programs or for employment, whether data about graduates
has been used to change the curriculum, what resources are available to support students in achieving learning goals, and how the college communicates policies and procedures regarding transfer credit.

The Standard 14 Working Group addressed several of the fundamental elements listed under Standard 11: the extent to which student learning outcomes are incorporated into program goals and course syllabi (FE 11.3, 11.12), and the assessment of student learning and program outcomes relative to the goals and objectives of the undergraduate programs and the use of the results to improve student learning and program effectiveness (FE 11.13). (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) The Standard 12 Working Group investigated the incorporation of general education core competencies into the curriculum, assuring appropriate breadth of programs (FE 11.1). Please see Chapter 8.

**Findings for Standard 11: Educational Offerings**

New program development has accelerated in recent years, reflecting a renewed sense of purpose at the College and providing an increasing range of educational opportunities. Since 2007, the College has created 11 new degree programs. As of fall 2011, the College offered 57 programs and options. These educational offerings include significant additions in the liberal arts and sciences, including new majors in Biology, Communication Studies, Environmental Science, Philosophy, Spanish Translation, Theater, and Writing and Literature. New programs in Accounting (AS), Aviation Management, Criminal Justice, and Radiologic Technology (AAS) have also been launched. A full list is available in Appendix 6.1. In addition, the curriculum has been substantially enriched by an expansion of the College’s Honors Program, which was revised in 2007 to provide a more structured path for students to complete the Honors Concentration. Since 2007, Honors courses have grown from seven to 17 per semester, while participating students increased from 100 to 278 per semester (11.2.15 Overview of Honors Program and 11.2.16 LAGCC Honors Courses-Students 07-11).

Our research confirmed that the process by which LaGuardia’s programs are developed, implemented, and modified is designed to ensure that the College’s curriculum is academically rigorous and consistent with its mission (FE 11.1). As required by CUNY, all of the College’s new AA and AS programs are articulated with senior CUNY colleges (see 11.4.07 Articulation Agreements). This policy guarantees the integrity of curriculum development by involving faculty at senior colleges in determining the rigor and breadth of the curriculum. The College also offers three dual/joint programs articulated with senior CUNY colleges: Criminal Justice AA (John Jay), Accounting AS (John Jay), Engineering Science AS (City). Two additional joint/dual programs are currently under development: Science for Forensics (John Jay) and Nursing (Lehman). Among the AAS programs, eight are subject to the rigorous standards established by national accrediting bodies (14.7.05 Accredited Programs); the Practical Nursing program is evaluated by the New York State Education Department; the Business Administration and Business Management programs follow the standards of the National Business Education Association; and the Paralegal program follows the accreditation standards of the American Bar Association. Moreover, all courses and programs, including learning objectives, are developed within departmental curriculum committees through peer review among LaGuardia faculty with relevant expertise. Appendix 6.2 explains the new program development process in more detail, including required internal evaluation procedures that specify desired student outcomes and
assessment measures, thus ensuring that new programs contain appropriate learning objectives (11.3.89 Basic Guidelines for New Programs-CUNY 2010).

Based on its review of Letters of Intent, program proposals, and other Curriculum Committee documents, the Standard 11 Working Group found that all new programs and recent curricular revisions have been consistent with the College mission, and most curricular proposals include explicit references to either departmental missions or the College mission. The CUNY Basic Guidelines require explicit reference to the college mission, but only in formal program proposals, not in Letters of Intent (11.3.89 Basic Guidelines for New Programs-CUNY 2010). The Working Group therefore concluded that it may be advisable to require all Letters of Intent to include a short reflection on how the proposed effort is aligned with the College mission.

In addition to developing new programs, the Curriculum Committee is responsible for overseeing curricular revisions, which often emerge from the Periodic Program Review (PPR) process. Appendix 6.3 provides details about curricular revisions, and Chapter 8 describes how recent enhancements to the PPR process, including more guidance on assessment, ensure that the College’s curriculum is academically rigorous (FE 11.1) and that degree programs are designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning (FE 11.2).

At LaGuardia, capstone courses play a key role in advancing coherence and synthesis in the educational experience (FE 11.2), and since 2007 the College has worked toward strengthening capstone learning across the curriculum. In 2007-08, a faculty research team studied the theory of capstone learning, assessed capstone practices at LaGuardia, and examined practices at other colleges. The research team’s recommendations laid the foundation for a faculty development process, supported by a Title V grant, in which faculty study capstone literature; rethink capstone courses in their disciplines; and develop new strategies for strengthening integrative elements, including ePortfolio. Since fall 2008, 60 faculty from nine academic departments have taken part in this process. Evidence suggests that their courses strengthen student engagement (as measured by the CCSSE) and encourage progress towards the degree. Student portfolios from capstone courses demonstrate high degrees of integration. In 2011-12, many programs plan to bring their revised capstone courses to College Wide Curriculum Committee to formalize the restructured curriculum and pedagogy (11.1.05 2010 APR Report).

One measure of the success of the College’s new programs is the increasing numbers of degree-seeking students enrolling in these programs (11.1.03 2011 Institutional Profile). Of particular note are four examples: (a) enrollment in the Accounting (AS) program rose from 698 in fall 2010 to 746 students in fall 2010; (b) the Criminal Justice (AA) program grew from 241 students in fall 2009 to 650 in fall 2010; (c) the Writing and Literature (AA) program grew from 40 majors in its initial year (fall 2008) to 123 in fall 2010; (d) the Communication Studies (AA) program initially enrolled 20 students (fall 2009), growing to 86 as of fall 2010. Although some portion of these increases may be attributable to the rise in enrollment, they also demonstrate the College’s success in developing new degree programs that respond to educational and employment needs.

Enrollment in the College’s Associate in Arts and Associate in Sciences degree programs increased 58% between fall 2005 and fall 2010 (Appendix 6.4). The growth of this population
has placed extra emphasis on transferability in curriculum deliberations, since most of these students intend to transfer to baccalaureate programs at four-year institutions.

Based on recent outcomes, there is substantial evidence that LaGuardia graduates are well prepared academically for transfer to baccalaureate programs. In fall 2009, the average first term GPA of LaGuardia AA/AS graduates who transferred to CUNY senior college was 2.72, the highest among community colleges, and exceeding all other CUNY community colleges. (07.4.08 LaGCC Year-End PMP 09-10). Moreover, LaGuardia significantly exceeds the national five-year transfer rate to senior colleges by 32%. LaGuardia graduates transfer at the rate of 55%, far above the national rate of 23% (11.1.02 2010 Institutional Profile). See Appendix 6.5 for additional data.

The College is in the process of improving its ability to gather information about the transfer and employment experiences of graduates. According to the Director of Development, since 2008 the College has increased efforts to establish regular relationships with graduates. The College hosted several informal alumni gatherings, new student orientation activities have included alumni, and five newsletters have been e-mailed to alumni on a quarterly basis since September 2009. Most recently, discussions have begun with program coordinators and department chairs about ways to help the College maintain contact with alumni so as to utilize information about transfer and employment experiences as the basis for making revisions to program curricula.

Although most AA and AS degree programs focus primarily on preparing students for transfer, a fundamental aspect of the College’s original mission has been the responsibility to provide degree programs of sufficient academic rigor that will enable students to enter the workforce upon completion of a terminal degree. According to current data, the College’s vocational programs are achieving considerable success. Based on a survey of graduates, the six-month job placement rate for LaGuardia’s vocational AAS programs is 75.4%, slightly above the CUNY average of 74.9% (02.1.11 PMP 2010-11 Final 7-11-2011, p.85).

Allied health programs constitute one of the largest curricula areas focused on preparing students for employment. These programs, which are subject to educational standards established by accrediting bodies, have become increasingly rigorous about using student success data on state and national licensure, certification, and registration exams to assess program effectiveness. Curricular revisions are also based on recommendations stemming from the PPR process. Recent pass rates on state and national certification exams in allied health clearly indicate that these programs are effective at preparing students for employment (See Appendix 6.6). In addition to how test performance may influence curricular revision, the systems involved in organizing and evaluating clinical placement sites provide a conduit for information about health care innovations and policy changes that are subsequently incorporated into curricular revisions. Appendix 6.7 provides examples of how recent changes in allied health program curricula are based on assessment linked to employability of graduates.

In addition to vocational programs, the College helps students transition into the workplace by requiring certain cohorts of students to complete an internship before graduation. Internships are arranged by either the Cooperative Education Department or specific degree programs (14.1.01 COOP PPR May 2010). See Chapter 7 for a discussion of the Co-op Department’s efforts to improve assessment of its program offerings.
The Co-op Department has recently entered a period of change, although cooperative education itself remains a curricular staple at LaGuardia. The 2002 report of the College’s Task Force on Redesigning Cooperative Education (co-chaired by Co-op and Natural Sciences faculty members) recommended the development of “new Co-op Program delivery models” in order to create stronger connections between experiential learning and discipline-specific curricula. These “delivery models” were to emerge from a collaborative “Program-Major Review Process” involving faculty from Co-op and other departments (13.5.19 Final Report Coop TF). Since this time, four faculty members of the Co-op Department requested and were granted transfer to the Business and Technology Department. In addition, in an interview with the Chair of the Self-Study Steering Committee, Vice President Katopes explained that in the last few years several programs have requested more control over the internships for their students and as a result were allowed to assume responsibility for those internships, ideally with the assistance of Co-op faculty.

In May 2010, two meetings of the College Senate included informational items regarding the Co-op department. Several faculty and staff expressed concern about the department’s future, including the Senate Chairperson and the senator representing Co-op, who felt that the internship program would be “endangered” if the department became “decentralized” (13.5.2.02 Minutes of May 12 Senate Meeting 2010). At one meeting, President Mellow and Vice President Katopes sought to address what they viewed as a misunderstanding about the changes to Co-op. President Mellow explained that encouraging departments to take more ownership over their internships is “designed to strengthen the presence of Co-op rather than eliminate it,” and Vice President Katopes assured the audience that he is “committed to the Cooperative Education Department,” which “remains as a department, with a chairperson and a P&B” (13.5.2.01 Minutes of May 26 Senate Meeting 2010).

The most recent change in cooperative education occurred in spring 2011 when the College Senate approved revisions to the curriculum of the Liberal Arts Social Sciences and Humanities: AA Degree that make a co-op experience optional for day students. In his interview with the Self-Study Chair, Vice President Katopes pointed out that this proposal was an initiative put forward by the Liberal Arts chairs after polling their respective faculties, illustrating that the recent changes affecting Co-op were being driven by faculty. Chapter 3 discusses how the repeated votes taken on this curricular revision demonstrate the difficulty the College sometimes encounters in balancing two of its core values: full participation in governance by all constituencies versus the imperative to maintain faculty control over the curriculum.

Learning Resources
We determined that LaGuardia’s library services and professional library staff provide excellent support for the College’s educational programs (FE 11.5). The Library provides a circulating collection of print and electronic books and serials, electronic databases, interlibrary loan, reference support, credit courses on information literacy, laptop loans for students, media equipment, and audio and video taping. Appendix 6.8 provides more details about these services and the Library’s collections. While visits to the Library have risen only modestly since 2007, visits to the Library’s website and use of its databases have skyrocketed. Between fall 2005 and fall 2009, FTE enrollment rose 29% (11.1.02 2010 Institutional Profile). Use of the Media Lab, which contains equipment for viewing or listening to the media collections, as well as computers and printers, rose by 40.7%, while visits to the library’s website increased by 125.5%. The use of
the reserve collection has also gone up by 34.7%, reflecting increased use of the electronic reserve system implemented in 2004. In 2009 LaGuardia students made more use of full-text databases than students at any other CUNY community college (and some four-year colleges with larger enrollments) (07.1.01 CCWeek Article and 07.1.02 CUNY database usage 09).

In spring 2011, the College secured funding for a major expansion of the Library that will add 12,400 square feet, as envisioned in the Faculties Master Plan. The Library Expansion Committee is in the process of designing these additions.

The spring and fall 2010 User Satisfaction Surveys (11.6.18 Library User Satisfaction Results Sp10 and 11.6.21 Library User Satisfaction Results Fa10) indicate that most students feel that Library services are being well-maintained. The fall 2010 report “shows evidence that the satisfaction rate remains at a very good level while accommodating the growing number of users at the college.” The 2010 CUNY Student Experience Survey also demonstrates high levels of satisfaction at LaGuardia with Library facilities (73% satisfied or very satisfied), services (71%), and collections (72%) (07.3.11 CUNY Experience Survey). The open-ended responses on the User Satisfaction Surveys include complaints or recommendations for change focused on the need for more space, more computers and photocopy machines, and longer hours, all of which are subject to physical or budgetary constraints, largely out of the hands of Library faculty and staff. However, the planned expansion of the Library should alleviate many of these concerns.

Enrollment increases, coupled with a rise in the number of degree programs and the recent CUNY hiring freeze, have placed pressures on the Library’s resources. Although the Library has received three infusions of funds since 2004, these were one-time windfalls that have not been renewed. In 2004-2005, $100,000 was received from the Community College Investment Program (CCIP); in 2007-2008, $100,000 in COMPACT money was allocated; and in 2009-2010, the CUNY textbook initiative provided $110,000, which enabled the Library to increase the number of textbooks on reserve and to expand the ebook collection. Since 2002, the Library’s total operating expenditures have fluctuated greatly, ranging from $1,928,308 to $2,801,544 for 2009-2010. From 2005 to 2007, there was a substantial increase from $1,848,372 to $2,774,754, but since 2007 the budget has increased only slightly (See Appendix 6.9).

To meet the needs of 18,000 matriculating students, the Library fields a professional staff of 16 librarians, four College Lab Technicians (CLTs), and a support staff of 23. These numbers remained unchanged from 2005-2006 to 2008-2009 (11.1.02 2010 Institutional Profile), and they decreased during the 2010-2011 academic year due to retirements and the CUNY job freeze. The Library now has 18 professional staff and 19 support staff.

The number of degree programs offered at LaGuardia have increased, but the Library has not been allocated additional funds to support these programs. The Working Group found that this may be result of a gap in the strategic planning and budget allocation processes, since the implementation of new programs does not entail additional funding to purchase resources recommended to support the program. In fact, the number of volumes per student in the Library’s collections has declined from 8.8 in 2005-2006 to 7.7 in 2008-2009 (Appendix 6.10), a problem partially offset by the availability of electronic books.

Further, we found that the College offers programs that promote student use of a variety of information and learning resources, and the professional library staff, faculty, and
administrators collaborate to foster information literacy across the curriculum (FE 11.6, 11.7). In addition to information literacy instruction and promotion, Library faculty serve on the College-wide Curriculum Committee, discuss information literacy issues with proposers of all new courses, act as liaisons to departments and programs for collection development, and help with re-accreditation of licensed programs. The structure of the Library’s Information Literacy program remains largely unchanged from the description in the Periodic Program Review of 2007 (07.5.01 Library PPR May 2007, p. 4). New developments are noted in Appendix 6.11.

One-hour classes: Classes are mandatory for all ENG 101 (Composition) and ENG 103 (Research Paper) courses and optional for all others. All Library faculty teach one-hour classes. The Library is working on a pilot to improve communication between Library and English faculty in order to minimize scheduling problems and improve content of mandatory ENG101 instruction sessions, using a checklist dubbed the “instruction menu” (11.6.11).

Drop-in or sign-up workshops on Web basics, selected databases, citation styles, and other topics, as needed. Citation clinics at the end of semester are especially popular (11.6.01 Library Stats Sp10, p. 5).

Mandatory sign-off on the Information Literacy component of all new course proposals: Course proposers are asked how these competencies will be transmitted.

Research Review Competition: Annually awards three term papers that best demonstrate library research and the use of information resources (website, 11.6.10).

The Library has experimented with multiple methods of assessment and has applied findings to improve services. Standardized collection of statistics takes place during “Statistics Week” each semester, resulting in a rich cumulative report of comparative data. Successful innovations include observation and analysis of reference desk transactions; Web usability studies; and rubric assessment of web evaluation skills instruction in Library courses. Partially successful experiments included the iSkills test, the SAILS test, and rubric assessment of a broad range of information literacy skills. Changes made in response to assessment include purchase of more e-books and fewer reference books; better analysis of staffing needs at the Reference desk; and changes in Library spaces including more chairs and quieter study spaces. Appendix 6.12 provides details of these assessment measures, including the Library’s ongoing efforts to improve the assessment of the information literacy of LaGuardia students.

We also confirmed that the College’s learning resources include extensive tutoring services that provide support for educational programs (FE 11.5). LaGuardia supports students with a variety of tutoring centers and programs designed to address a wide array of academic endeavors. There are several special programs, such as Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, College Discovery, and Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, which offer tutoring as part of a set of internal programs available to a designated population. However, the majority of tutorial services at LaGuardia are linked to academic departments, dedicated to particular areas, and available to all matriculated students at the college. Although these programs vary in structure, size, and systems of operation, together they form a college-wide effort to address the academic support needs of the overall LaGuardia student population. Appendix 6.13 provides details about the following tutoring programs, including assessment measures and challenges in meeting student demand during peak periods in the Academic ESL
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Lab, the Math Lab, and the Writing Center: Academic ESL Lab, Academic Peer Instruction, Computer Tutoring, Mathematics Tutoring Center, Reading Lab, Writing Center, CSTEP Science Lab, Science Study Hall, Business Academic Resource Center/Accounting Lab, Speech Lab, and Student Services/Student Government Study Hall.

Transfer Credit

Finally, we found that the College policies and procedures regarding transfer credit are fair, consistently applied, and publicly communicated. Rather than being determined solely on the basis of the accreditation of the sending institution or the mode of delivery, credit is granted based on course equivalencies and the College’s expected learning outcomes (FE 11.9), as expected by Middle States. The College has a dedicated Office of Transfer Credit Evaluation within the Admissions Office with two full-time staff members and one office assistant to evaluate transfer credit and to communicate and advise incoming students about the procedures and policies regarding transfer credit. Transfer credits are evaluated by this office prior to the student’s invitation to register and the first semester of attendance in a degree program at LaGuardia. The office conducts re-evaluations every semester for students who are readmitted to the College with new transfer credit. Continuing students who change their curriculum are instructed when completing the Change of Major Form in the Registrar's Office to seek re-evaluation in the Admissions Office. The office offers workshops to transfer students to explain the transfer credit process. The maximum number of transfer credits to be granted toward a degree is 30 (10 toward a certificate). Students who transfer science credits for sequential courses must transfer both parts to receive the full science credit (11.7.06 Catalog Transfer Eval Policies). All credit is granted at the discretion of the individual academic departments in conjunction with the Transfer Credit Office.

The Coordinator of Transfer Services places transfer information in the College Catalog (11.7.06 Catalog Transfer Eval Policies), the College’s Web-page (11.7.07 Transfer Credit Eval Website), printed brochures (11.7.03 How Does Credit Transfer, 2010 Bulletin, 11.7.04 Transcripts Request, and 11.7.05 Transfer Evaluation 9-10), and individual letters to incoming transfer students (11.7.12 Letter to Student). The newly-designed website (11.7.07 Transfer Credit Eval Website) was launched in November 2010 with a dedicated e-mail address CreditEvaluation@lagcc.cuny.edu for transfer-credit inquiries.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 11

1. LaGuardia’s process for developing, implementing, and modifying new programs is designed to ensure that the College’s curriculum is academically rigorous and consistent with its mission.
2. All new programs and curricular revisions since 2007 have been consistent with the College’s Mission Statement.
3. Substantial enrollment growth in the College’s Associate in Arts and Associate in Sciences degree programs has exerted extra pressure on transferability in curriculum deliberations.
4. In fall 2009, the average first term GPA of LaGuardia AA/AS graduates who transferred to CUNY senior colleges was the highest among CUNY community colleges, and the five-year transfer rate to senior colleges for LaGuardia graduates is far above the national rate.
5. The College helps prepare students for employment through internship experiences arranged by either the Cooperative Education Department or specific degree programs. The College’s six-month job placement rate for AAS programs and pass rates on certification exams
indicate that the allied health programs are very effective at preparing students for employment.

6. Although the College has taken steps since 2007 to improve outreach to alumni, it is still in the process of improving its information gathering ability regarding transfer and employment experiences of graduates. Allied health programs provide a model that other applied programs might emulate in revising curricula based on assessment linked to employability of graduates.

7. The Cooperative Education Department has recently entered a period of change, although cooperative education itself, including internship programs, remains a curricular staple at LaGuardia. Consistent with recommendations of a 2002 college Task Force, the Co-op Department works closely with other departments to better serve students, and several programs have requested and been granted more control over internships for their students.

8. The College has secured funding for a major expansion of the Library that will add 12,400 square feet and will alleviate the increasing space demands concomitant with recent enrollment growth. Surveys indicate that most students are very satisfied with Library services. Growth in enrollment, an increased number of degree programs, and the recent CUNY hiring freeze have put pressure on the Library’s resources. When new programs are implemented, the Library is not necessarily allocated additional funds to purchase resources that have been recommended to support the program.

9. The Library promotes information literacy through credit instruction, mandated input into the curriculum development process, consultations with faculty who bring classes to the Library, participation in learning communities and professional development seminars, annual student essay competitions, and speaker programs.

10. The College supports students with an extensive array of tutoring centers and programs. Most of these services are linked to academic departments, dedicated to particular areas, and available to all matriculated students. In addition, special programs offer tutoring as part of a set of services available to a designated population. The Academic ESL Lab, the Math Lab, and the Writing Center face challenges in meeting student demand during peak periods.

11. Since 2007, the number of transfer students evaluated each semester by the College’s Office of Transfer Credit Evaluation has more than doubled. Credit is granted based on course equivalencies and expected learning outcomes. College policies and procedures regarding transfer credit are disseminated widely.

Recommendations for Standard 11: Educational Offerings

1. The College should systematically collect and use information on the success of its transfer students and working graduates to improve curriculum and future employment prospects for its current students.

2. The College should strive to address the funding and staffing issues affecting the efforts of the tutorial programs and the Library to better serve our students. In particular, the College should explore ways of ensuring that the implementation of new programs is accompanied by budget allocations to fund library resources recommended to support the program.

3. New course and program proposals and proposals for revisions should require a short reflection on how the proposed effort is aligned with the College mission.
Chapter 7
Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities
“The institution’s programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards” (Characteristics of Excellence 51).

Within separate sections of this chapter, we examine the following areas of the College: basic skills, non-credit offerings, certificate programs and contractual relationships, experiential learning, and distance learning. We conclude by discussing LaGuardia’s high school programs and the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. (Parenthetical references to the Fundamental Elements follow the order of sections listed under Standard 13 in Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education. For example, FE 13.1.1 refers to section one (Basic Skills), first Fundamental Element.)

Introductory Overview of Basic Skills
LaGuardia Community College participates in CUNY’s systematic entrance testing systems and placement policies. Every entering CUNY student is assessed for college-level proficiency and, if needed, is required to enroll in appropriate basic skills courses. LaGuardia as a whole, and departments that teach basic skills in particular, adapt to our students’ needs by developing targeted programs based on strong research, including evaluation of students’ progress following their transition into college-level skill courses.

LaGuardia has pioneered at the University and national levels innovative strategies for improved student success in each of the four core basic skills areas (English, Reading, ESL, and Mathematics) and is committed to increasing the rate at which its basic skills students achieve proficiency, progress to credit-bearing courses, graduate, and transfer to senior colleges.

Within this section of Standard 13, we examined how the College identifies students not fully prepared for college level study and refers them to relevant courses, how the basic skills programs and related support services in writing, mathematics, reading, and ESL help students transition to credit bearing courses and graduate, and how the College’s innovations since 2007 have improved student progress from basic skills to gateway courses.

Findings for Basic Skills
Our research confirmed that the College employs systematic procedures for identifying incoming students who are not fully prepared for college level study (FE 13.1.1), as expected by Middle States. Moreover, these students are referred into an extensive program of basic skills courses and have access to college-wide academic support services (FE 13.1.2). (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) Readiness for college-level work is assessed when students apply to the College and they may demonstrate proficiency by attaining benchmark scores in Reading, Writing, and Math on external assessments such as the New York State Regents, ACT, or the SAT I. Students who have never taken these tests or who have failed to attain identified threshold scores for proficiency are required to take CUNY’s comprehensive Assessment Tests in Reading, Writing, and Math before they can enroll in credit-bearing courses (Appendix 7.1). Transfer students from another CUNY school must prove proficiency by having passed CUNY
assessments or by using an external assessment. Transfers from other colleges must either have proven proficiency through prior college-level coursework or externally administered exams, such as the Regents, ACT, or SAT I (13.1.16 CUNY Testing Website). The College does outreach to ensure that all students are aware of and comply with these policies (13.1.11 Admissions Letter Testing Handout Spring 2011). In addition, the departments, college, and university work together to provide clear information on student placement protocols and profiles (13.1.16 CUNY Testing Website, 13.1.12 ESL Placement Profiles, 13.1.13 Testing Placement Guide 12-2010, 13.1.14 Writing Program Placement Profiles 11-2010).

Students who transfer into LaGuardia from CUNY or non-CUNY colleges and have not passed the CUNY writing test are referred for ESL testing. If ESL coursework is needed, students are placed into either a traditional ESL or skilled ESL reader track. The ELA Department also offers an ESL alternative (ESA 099) to the English department’s basic writing course that develops students’ composition skills and prepares them to take the CAT-W writing exam (14.1.07 ESL PPR). Appendix 7.1 provides complete ESL placement information.

Entering students who have not placed out of basic skills mathematics in some other fashion take the comprehensive COMPASS (a commercially developed and nationally normed ACT product), which tests individually for pre-algebra (M1) and algebra skills (M2). Students may test as proficient, or be placed into either the lowest-level basic skills course (MAT 095) or the next basic skills course (MAT 096).

A LaGuardia study of new students for fall terms in 2006-2008 determined that 27% of new students needed reading basic skills, 45% needed math basic skills, and 50% needed writing basic skills. Within the cohort requiring writing basic skills, 36% were found to need ESL preparation (13.1.10 AtD Intro 2009 Basic Skill-Gateway Analysis).

We also determined that the College provides an extensive array of pre-collegiate level courses that do not carry academic degree credit (FE 13.1.3), as detailed in Appendix 7.1. Students who succeed in basic skills courses perform nearly as well as those who were initially found proficient, suggesting that the College’s developmental curricula are effective at helping students transition to credit bearing courses (13.1.10 AtD Intro 2009 Basic Skill-Gateway Analysis).

The English Department supports success in basic skills with a rigorous diagnostic test to evaluate which students are fully prepared to move from pre-collegiate coursework into gateway courses. As part of a CUNY-wide effort, the department helped evaluate and eventually replace the former CUNY/ACT Writing Sample with the new CUNY Aligned Test in Writing (CAT-W). This process began with the 2005 Task Force on Reading and Writing, continued through 2009 with the Task Force on Writing Assessment, and culminated in the creation of a writing test better suited to determine “whether students were ready for the demands of college-level writing at the conclusion of their developmental or top-level” ESL writing courses. (13.1.08 Task Force on Writing 6-2009). The new test, inaugurated in fall 2010, is now used “to assess reading, thinking and writing skills in a manner consistent with the curricular goals of developmental writing courses, and to accurately and appropriately assess student readiness for introductory level courses” (13.1.04 Faculty Handbook CAAW). Early results are positive, reflecting improved pass rates in ENG099 and ENZ099 courses (13.1.21 Preliminary Report on Spring 1 CAT).
In fall 2011, the English department introduced two pilots in an effort to improve basic skills pass rates. In the current configuration of Basic Writing 099 classes, faculty teach four classroom hours and a writing tutor instructs a fifth lab hour. The first pilot calls for the faculty teaching the classroom hours to also teach the labs (rather than a tutor). A preliminary iteration of this pilot, covering 13 sections, ran in fall 2008. Across those sections, 53.2% of students passed, compared to 42.7% in all sections (13.1.20 Email from Sandra Hanson 2011, 05.1.25 Performance Indicators Exec Council). The fall 2011 pilot was conducted in 13 sections. In addition, the department launched the “Accelerated Learning Project.” Based on a successful program at Baltimore Community College, this pilot combines small, select cohorts of students who pass the CAT-W and place into ENG101 with students who would normally place into ENG099 in a seven-hour, three-credit course. Both groups of students meet together for four hours per week in a small-enrollment capped ENG101 course; the students in the developmental section (ENA101) meet with the instructor for an extra three hours per week to receive support in completing their assignments and in preparing to retake the CAT-W, which they do at midterm and, for those who do not pass, at the end of the term (CCRC ALP Project Description, 13.1.20 Email from Dr. Hanson 2011).

In the Department of Math, Engineering, & Computer Science, the most visible effort to serve Basic Skills students has been Project Quantum Leap (PQL), a federal grant-funded initiative that applies the nationally-recognized Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities (SENCER) approach to teaching mathematics in context. SENCER links the study of math to complex, unsolved social issues in an effort to make math more meaningful and engaging for students. Begun in 2007, PQL provides rigorous professional development for math faculty to support new approaches to teaching math and re-thinking classroom pedagogies. In fall 2010, the PQL seminar developed a modularized PQL curriculum to better integrate assignments and emphasize student centered pedagogy. The modular approach was piloted in spring 2011. Although grant funding ceased on September 30, 2011, the department continues to use PQL techniques in MAT095, MAT096, and MAT115. Most of the full-time faculty have been trained in the methodology and continue to use it in their classes. The MAT095 and MAT096 curricula were re-written to incorporate PQL projects, and are now standard, having been approved by the curriculum committee.

Students enrolled in PQL courses have higher levels of student engagement and confidence, decreased course attrition rates, and higher course and COMPASS pass rates. See Appendix 7.2 for survey data. PQL courses have also achieved substantially reduced attrition rates, as noted in the Evaluator’s Report. PQL also addresses the most important measure of developmental math success: exit from basic skills math courses. By fall 2010, the exit rate for students in PQL sections of MAT095 was 48.7%, compared to 40.4% for non-PQL sections. In MAT096 the exit rate in PQL sections was 46.7%, compared to 36.8% for non-PQL sections (13.1.02 CTL Report Summary 2-1-10).

To best serve LaGuardia’s ESL students, the Department of Education and Language Acquisition (ELA) emphasizes a learning community model. The College’s Six-Year Graduation Rate Study found that “the more credits attempted in the first semester, the higher the proportion of students graduating in six years or less” (06.2.03 Six-Year Graduation Rate Study Overview). Accordingly, ELA collaborates with other departments to offer paired courses and learning
communities that allow ESL students “to earn credits while completing their [non-credit] ESL requirements,” because “pairing or linking an ESL class with a basic skill, or an elective or an introductory level course in a discipline, produces higher pass rates for students than for those enrolled in stand-alone courses.” ELA recommends pursuing “new partnerships” with emerging programs and departments, such as Engineering and Business, to maximize student success. Appendix 7.3 shows significantly improved outcomes for basic skills students enrolled in learning community structures over stand-alone courses. Like the English Department, ELA is piloting new classes based on the “Accelerated Learning Model,” which identifies students with high reading scores to take accelerated writing courses (ESR 097 and ESC 099). Findings from ESC 099 show a pass rate of 78.9%  (14.1.07 ESL PPR 2009).

Beginning in spring 2009, however, an increasing number of ESL learning communities have been cancelled due to low enrollment, including ones that play critical roles in the Liberal Arts and Childhood and Bilingual Education programs (see Appendix 7.4). Believing that the fragmentation of student advisement may be a contributing factor, ESL coordinators and faculty have attempted to resolve this issue with Student Affairs. The ELA Chair has urged more proactive academic advisement to foster student participation in ESL pairs and clusters.

The Communication Skills Department has enhanced its efforts to prepare students for college level study and for passing high stakes exams through a custom publishing partnership with Pearson Learning Solutions. The department has introduced several new custom textbooks, including College Knowledge and Reading Strategy, ACT Reading Preparation Manual, and InterAct with ACT: A Methodical Approach to the COMPASS/ACT Exam (13.1.3.05 Lau - Communication Skills Innovations - 12-20-10). The department also revamped its Reading Lab website to include more current practice materials for students preparing for the exit COMPASS/ACT (13.1.3.07 Communication Skills Department Reading Lab Website).

Pass rates for reading basic skills courses from spring 2004 to spring 2006 were 80% for CSE095 and 76% CSE099. See 14.1.08 Communication Skills PPR June 07 for more data.

LaGuardia has also participated in university-wide innovations to assist its basic skills population. For example, LaGuardia’s CUNY Start Program, funded by CUNY’s Office of Academic Affairs, is an intensive, post-secondary preparatory program that aims “to minimize or eliminate the need for basic skills coursework and further prepare students to succeed in college” (08.6.01 Collaboration Award). CUNY Start offers both a full-time and part-time option and targets students whose CUNY assessment scores indicate a need for basic skills in one or more areas: math (pre-algebra and algebra) and/or reading/writing. These students are able to spend less time in basic skills courses and make a stronger transition to credit-bearing courses (13.1.3.10 CTI Website). Outcomes data are available at 08.6.01 Collaboration Award and 13.2.78 CUNY Start Outcomes.

LaGuardia’s innovative approach to student success in basic skills also extends to two major national initiatives. From 2009 to 2011, LaGuardia participated in Achieving the Dream (AtD), a multiyear, collaborative project that aims to build success rates for community college students nationwide (13.1.3.08 AtD Website). (See also Chapters 2 and 4). The College declined the invitation to continue because of the higher cost for continuation, as well as concerns about the AtD tendency to advocate fragmented projects when the College wished to undertake more systemic initiatives, which it is currently pursuing with its “Destination Graduation” project.
Institutional Research (IR&A) conducted a study of 11,725 new students between 2006 and 2008 that provides data on developmental climb, success in credit-bearing gateway courses, and graduation rates of students who begin in developmental English and Math. This study also surveyed success by initial placement. Students who took Basic Writing succeeded in Composition I at 70%, similar to the 74% pass rate of those who initially tested as proficient. Students who took basic math performed less well in gateway courses, though those who took MAT 096 had success rates of 62% in comparison to 67% of those who initially tested as proficient (13.1.10 Dream Intro 2009-Basic Skill-Gateway Analysis).

LaGuardia is also participating in the Global Skills for College Completion (GSCC), an ongoing 28-month project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which seeks to improve the historically low pass rates of basic skills students in U.S. colleges. President Mellow is serving as Co-Principal Investigator (13.1.5 Gates Summary).

Introductory Overview of Non-Credit Offerings
Since LaGuardia’s inception in 1971, the Division of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) has carried out the College’s mission with non-credit educational offerings designed, administered and evaluated by qualified professionals. ACE is the largest such division in CUNY (13.2.4.02 2009-10 Annual Enrollment 10-4-10) and has a reputation for innovation, entrepreneurship, and diversification. Careful planning has allowed the division to grow, including environmental scans of community needs, fostering internal and external partnerships, and remaining knowledgeable about business trends, educational opportunities, and community needs. ACE has become expert in program development and has created discrete revenue strands, including grant-based, tuition-based, tax levy, and contract-based offerings (13.2.79 Slides for Retreat 1-24-11). Appendix 7.5 gives more detail on the success and operation of the division.

ACE is a leader in workforce development. In 2009, the Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center was created to respond to New York City’s growing demand for healthcare industry workers. In 2009-10, the Center placed 229 individuals into jobs; 475 are projected for 2010-11 (13.2.50 Department Overview). ACE created New York’s first Design Incubator, NYDesigns, and in 2010 LaGuardia was the first community college to pilot the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, a national initiative to grow small businesses. As of June 2011, 101 new employees have been hired by 51 participating businesses and $4,769,504 has been awarded in new contracts (13.2.4.05 Goldman Sachs Interview, 13.2.4.01 10kSB Cohort).

Within this section of Standard 13, we examined how non-credit offerings are aligned with the College’s mission and goals, how non-credit courses are created and evaluated to ensure clear student learning objectives, the compatibility and transferability of non-credit courses to degree programs, and how the increasing integration of the non-credit and credit areas has affected the College’s ability to evaluate the impact of non-credit offerings on institutional resources.

Findings for Non-Credit Offerings
We confirmed that LaGuardia’s 2000 mission statement is clearly reflected in ACE’s non-credit offerings (FE 13.4.1). ACE courses are consistent with the College’s 2000 mission statement that it provides “opportunities for the needs of a highly diverse population,” cultivates partnerships with the Western Queens community that enhance its development, and responds “creatively to changes in student population, technology and the global economy” (Appendix 1.0). Appendix 7.6 illustrates the correlation between the College’s mission and ACE
departments. However, the Working Group found that there is no explicit mention of the mission on the ACE Curriculum Committee application for new courses, although this relationship is implicit in the approval process through Curriculum Committee discussions.

In addition, our research established that **ACE programs have clearly articulated course goals, objectives, and expectations of student learning that are designed, approved, administered, and periodically evaluated under established institutional procedures** (FE 13.4.2). Systems that monitor program development, program outcomes, and program improvement are in place through nine ACE committees (Appendix 7.5). Grant-funded programs are reviewed and evaluated on a continuing basis both externally and internally. There are internal and external procedures for the creation and approval of curricula, guided by transparent objectives across ACE programs. In 2011, ACE began reviewing instruction, curriculum, and customer service standards as part of the CUNY Program Quality Working Group of the Continuing Education 2010 Task Force. Appendix 7.7 provides the rubric created by this Task Force, as well as procedures for developing and evaluating grant-funded and tuition-based programs ([13.2.81 QWG UsersManual 5-13-11](#)).

Three programs in ACE provide coursework in which credit is transferable to degree programs: EMT/Paramedic, the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to Registered Nurse (RN) transition program, and the ASL-English Interpretation Program. Appendix 7.8 describes the **academic oversight to assure the comparability and transferability of these courses** (FE 13.4.3).

While the majority of ACE students do not earn college credit for their coursework, ACE is a leader in providing students with basic skills, contextualized knowledge, and ESL training in preparation for college studies. A recent example is ACE’s groundbreaking curriculum to align GED completion with college preparedness. Since 2007, LaGuardia garnered support from the MetLife and Robin Hood Foundations to go beyond traditional GED classes and provide contextualized GED classes with career guidance and support services including financial aid workshops and college application advisement ([13.2.80 GED Article](#)).

Further, we found that **the College periodically assesses the impact of non-credit programs on the institution’s resources and its ability to fulfill its mission** (FE 13.4.4). In 2010, ACE served approximately 40,000 adults and children. Its 2010 revenue was approximately $20 million from a variety of sources that included tax levy programs, grants, contracts, and tuition ([13.2.38 ACE Facts, 8-10 Latest](#)). ACE also prepares students for credit studies. In spring 2010 nearly 20% of LaGuardia’s incoming new students entered credit studies through ACE, principally from pre-academic programs such as ESL, GED, and certificate classes ([13.2.43 ACE To LaGCC Mega Rec](#)).

Since 2009, the ACE Partnership Committee has overseen the transition of non-credit students into credit studies. Ongoing studies indicate that the partnership has helped increase the number of non-credit students who enter degree studies, up 25% from 2008-09 to 2009-10 ([13.2.43 ACE To LaGCC Mega Rec](#), also see Appendix 7.9). Moreover, since 2007 IR&A has begun to review the performance of former ACE students in their degree studies ([13.2.57 Studies Cohort](#) and [13.2.58 Cohort Study Tables](#)).
LaGuardia offers three certificate programs in the Division of Academic Affairs, thirteen allied health certificates in ACE, and 32 industry and trade certificates in ACE. Program oversight is detailed in Appendix 7.10; the 13 non-credit allied health certificates are shown in Appendix 7.11; and the 32 ACE certificate programs providing practical training and license preparation are detailed in Appendix 7.12.

The College maintains contractual relationships with a variety of service providers, as well as with outside entities that use our educational workshop and training services. These contracts support the educational objectives of the allied health programs, ACE, and the Center for Corporate Education and are clearly a manifestation of LaGuardia’s institutional mission (FE 13.7.2).

In this section of Standard 13, we examined how certificate programs align with the College’s mission; how these programs are administered and evaluated to ensure clear objectives, expectations of student learning, and curricular sequences; whether these programs are comparable and transferable to degree programs and consistent with national criteria; whether student support services are available; and how student competency is measured. We also investigated how programs and services offered through contractual relationships are aligned with the College’s mission, and how proper oversight and the College’s integrity are ensured.

Findings for Certificate Programs and Contractual Relationships
Through a wide range of credit and non-credit certificate programs, LaGuardia provides learning opportunities in career preparation, personal growth, and academic development. These certificate programs are clearly a manifestation of LaGuardia's institutional mission (FE 13.2.1) to offer “career and continuing education classes” in order to prepare “students to become full participants in the economic and civic life of the city” (Appendix 1.0). Many programs are developed in collaboration with community partners, tying LaGuardia and its students directly to the populations, commerce, and needs of the city.

We found that the College’s certificate programs have clearly articulated program goals, objectives, and expectations of student learning, and are designed, approved, administered, and periodically evaluated (FE 13.2.1). LaGuardia certificate programs, as indicated in Appendices 7.8, 7.9 and 7.10, measure student skills, knowledge, and competency levels through written exams or the practical evaluation of competencies.

In addition to clinical evaluations and practical exams, the Practical Nursing certificate program uses an assessment and review program created by the Assessment Technologies Institute to receive immediate self-directed remediation assistance (13.3.3.04 LPN Handbook). The Commercial Photography certificate program evaluates students in the Intermediate Photography class in oral communication and quantitative reasoning (13.3.3.01 Commercial Photography email).

The Digital Media Arts Certificate program measures the skills, knowledge, and competency levels of students according to the performance objectives and evaluation methods and standards articulated in the course proposals for individual program courses (13.3.3.02 New Media Certificate Assessment).
Further, we determined that the College’s certificate programs possess published program objectives, requirements, and curricular sequence (FE 13.2.2). Moreover, program learning goals are consistent with national criteria (FE 13.2.3). Industry-specific curriculum is provided by a number of agencies. Appendix 7.12 provides information on curriculum development, oversight, instructor review, and qualifying exams. ACE certificate programs that do not follow any industry-specific curriculum require review and approval by the ACE Curriculum Committee (13.3.1.02 Certificate Program-Curriculum Survey 2-14-2011, 13.3.1.07 Directors’ answers-Certification, Fall 2010).

Each allied health program has written goals and objectives and has a standard curriculum on file with the curriculum committee and/or the department. Public and private agencies fund these allied health programs (13.2.50 Department Overview), initiated not only to meet the high demand for jobs in the health care sector but also to serve low-income and educationally disadvantaged populations (13.3.06 Certificate program check list, 13.3.1.02 Certificate Program-Curriculum Survey 2-14-2011, 13.3.1.04 Dietary Managers Self-study 10-16-08).

We found as well that the College provides a range of services that offer academic, career, and personal support to students enrolled in both ACE and Academic Affairs certificate programs (FE 13.2.4). All certificate students are required to attend advisement sessions in which they learn about the curriculum sequence of a program, certification requirements, and licensing/certification exam procedures. Information about degree programs, complementary continuing education programs, and other College resources is also distributed (13.3.3.03 Certificate Programs-Outcome Survey 2-14-11).

The Career Development Center (CDC) provides support services for students in ACE certificate programs (13.3.12 Track EMT.MOCT Fa09 Enrollment). The CDC has also created generic materials for the intake and vestibule phases of several programs, such as EMT, HC, Telecommunications, and Electronic Health Records (13.3.09 Interview CDC).

In the Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center, students who participate in training programs funded by New York City’s Small Business Services are mandated to participate in comprehensive and intensive support services delivered in the same CDC-developed phases: intake, vestibule, training, and placement (13.3.10 Sample Spreadsheet on Mandatory Services for SBS Funded Programs). Students who have participated in 2010-11 SBS-funded training programs have an 89% retention rate (13.3.10 Sample Spreadsheet on Mandatory Services for SBS Funded Programs).

Additional support services available to credit and non-credit certificate students are described in Appendix 7.13. The Career Development Center, Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center, and the Construction certificate program have documented the effectiveness of their support services. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that other support services for these students are effective, these services should implement formal data-based assessment.

The majority of LaGuardia’s continuing education (ACE) certificate programs are not transferable to any of its degree programs. In those offered by or in cooperation with degree programs, however, academic oversight assures the comparability and appropriate transferability of coursework (FE 13.2.5). Commercial Photography students may apply their 33 credits toward the AAS degree in Commercial Photography. Students completing the Media
Arts Certificate Program courses with a grade of "C" or better may apply for admission to the Media Studies AA or New Media Technology AAS degree programs, applying those courses to fulfill graduation requirements. Practical Nursing Certificate recipients may apply for LaGuardia’s Pathway Program that leads into the final year of the Nursing Program for the AAS degree (13.3.03 ACE Interviews).

Our research also confirmed that the College’s contractual relationships protect its integrity and assure that the College has appropriate oversight of and responsibility for all activities carried out on its behalf (FE 13.7.1). Contracts with healthcare providers for the allied health programs are constructed to facilitate a maximum learning experience for the intern within an authentic, legally licensed clinical setting. Regular forms of assessment are conducted, as mandated, to protect the College’s and clinical institution’s integrity and legal accountability. Appendix 7.14 provides an overview of the College’s contractual relationships.

The College provides regular oversight of all on-site clinical activities of interns placed by allied health programs. Fieldwork assessment reports in the form of surveys, workbooks, and manuals indicate student compliance with the terms of the contracts. All course syllabi spell out the terms of contract performance and assessment. Moreover, the College reviews and approves work performed by contracted parties (FE 13.7.3). Programs that place students in outside institutions have devised workbooks and manuals to guide student interns through an effective learning experience that is conducted according to the legal agreements detailed in the contracts.

The College follows procedures refined over the years to guarantee timely enactment of contracts and attention to detail in revising contracts. The CUNY Office of General Counsel manages the creation of the legal document and must approve all contracts. (13.4.09 Contractual Relationships and Affiliated Providers, 13.4.10 Memo of Understanding, 13.4.11 ACE Contract-MTA, 13.4.12 ACE Agreement Harvard Club, 13.4.13 ACE Contract Insurance).

Overview and Findings for Experiential Learning
Within this section of Standard 13, we examined how the College grants credit for experiential learning and determines whether students given experiential credit have achieved the learning goals of their programs. We also investigated how assessment of student learning has been used to improve Cooperative Education curricula.

Our research established that the College awards credit for experiential learning based on evaluations of the level, quality, and quantity of that learning (FE 13.3.1). The Cooperative Education Department (Co-op) helps students apply their classroom learning by offering a work experience over the course of a semester that is guided and monitored by a department counselor and an appointed mentor/supervisor at the workplace location. Additionally, students are required to participate in a seminar class, concurrent to their internship experience, where they reflect on the skills, knowledge, and overall experience of the internship.

In its 2010 Periodic Program Review (PPR) (13.5.06 Co-op Dept PPR 2010), the Co-op Department commits itself to improving the use of data on progress made toward career goals among students placed in its internships. The PPR includes a plan to collect and examine data on students who have taken Fundamentals of Professional Development (CEP 121). As a prerequisite to internships, CEP 121 is designed “to help students evaluate career and educational
plans, develop professional literacy, and synthesize connections between coursework and professional opportunities” (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, p. 102). Appendix 7.15 provides information on the department’s current methods of assessing the FPA course, which is done principally by gauging student awareness of experiential learning acquired through FPA coursework and advisement, plus analysis of student ePortfolios, which have recently been added to the FPA curriculum. The 2010 External Consultant Review of Co-op recommended that it should “conduct ongoing reviews of assessment data to identify ways to improve” the program and “evaluate all of the methods of assessment being used to better determine which ones will be most effective.” Although this report commended the department for doing “a great deal more” assessment “than other co-op departments nationally,” it also urged the department to develop “specific proof or evidence other than numbers of participants” so as to “document program effectiveness” (13.5.18 Co-op External Consult 2010). In a follow-up to the PPR, the Co-op Chair reported that the department has developed a new research course for Liberal Arts students and is in the process of resolving technical problems with new software to improve data collection (13.5.1.01 Francine White Interview).

Many students also enter LaGuardia with prior learning experiences that may be applicable to college-equivalent education, including students with military backgrounds, adults with accredited certifications and corporate experience, students fluent in foreign languages, and individuals already in established professions such as Emergency Medical Technicians. The College has therefore established a Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) team that assesses student knowledge and skills acquired from work and life experiences to determine whether college credit may be applicable to a particular course (FE 13.3.1). Two LaGuardia faculty provide academic advisement to these students and decide whether to grant credit based on the standards of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (13.5.17 Credit for Prior Learning Website).

We also found that the College’s policies and procedures for awarding credit for prior learning are based on its curricula and standards (FE 13.3.3), credit is awarded appropriate to the subject and degree context (FE 13.3.5), and procedures for recording evaluated prior learning are published and implemented (FE 13.3.4). Experiential credit is granted for individual courses (not programs) on a case by case review. Students present documentation to a faculty member who compares it to course learning goals. If experiential credit is recommended, the department chair must grant approval. Policies for granting exemption credit are published in the college catalogue (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, p. 11). Appendix 7.16 provides a breakdown of CPL credit for 2009-10.

In addition, we determined that the College’s policies and procedures define the methods by which prior learning can be evaluated and the level and amount of credit available by evaluation (FE 13.3.2). To assess prior learning, the CPL team uses national standardized tests, including the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), published guides (see Appendix 7.17), or challenge examinations offered by academic departments. Minimum acceptable scores on the CLEP are based on the American Council on Education recommendations (13.5.05 College Level Examination Program-Courses). Students may also submit a portfolio of prior learning experience to a CPL coordinator and a faculty member. For assistance with the portfolio, students may register for a one credit 13-week course (IND100) that helps students reflect critically on their prior learning experiences, gather relevant data, and develop an ePortfolio.
In May 2006, an ePortfolio course was approved by college governance that helps students develop an online portfolio of work/life experiences and learning accomplishments as they relate to college course learning goals (13.5.13 Interim Report May 2006). The ePortfolio requires students to reflect on their experience and provide evidence of their learning that justifies the granting of experiential credit (13.5.08 Course Proposal-Portfolio Development 5-12).

Finally, we found that the College’s evaluators of experiential learning are knowledgeable about the subject matter and about the College’s criteria for granting college credit (FE 13.3.6). While some standards for awarding credit are programmed, such as test scores, most decisions are made by faculty and approved by department chairs, ensuring that credit is granted by those who have developed and taught the courses in question.

Overview and Findings for Distance Learning
CUNY has identified online education as a strategic direction, and the College has appointed a coordinator to help guide it toward supporting distance learning. To date, the College offers no online degree programs and fewer than 1% of its fall 2010 student credit hours are offered partially or totally online (01.2.16 2010-11 Final PMP Report, p. 1). In 2010-11, the College developed a strategy for increasing support for faculty and students teaching and learning in online and hybrid classes. Five initiatives have been successfully implemented including a year-long faculty development seminar, workshops for faculty, a Blackboard site with resources for faculty and a website for communicating with and supporting students (13.5.20 Hybrid Initiative 2010-11 Progress Report).

LaGuardia faculty who wish to teach an online or hybrid class must participate either as leaders, mentors, or students in professional development activities focused on online learning. The year-long seminar for faculty new to online/hybrid teaching includes mentoring by faculty experienced in the modality. We also insure that faculty teaching these courses will do so in smart classrooms. Students are given an assessment questionnaire to measure their ability or readiness to successfully participate in online courses and the College carefully monitors pass/fail rates in these courses. The College has also established procedures to verify that the student who registers in a distance education course is the same student who participates and completes the program.

Additional Related Educational Activities
The LaGuardia and Wagner Archives was established in 1982 to collect, preserve, and make available primary materials documenting the social and political history of New York City (13.6.06 LaGuardia and Wagner Archives). The Archives serves a broad array of researchers including journalists, students, scholars, exhibit planners and policy makers examining the history of Greater New York. The Archives also collaborates with faculty from four departments to develop thematic courses and assignments that integrate primary documents from their collection, coupled with class visits to the Archives. In 2009-10, 24 faculty members worked with the Archives, involving more than 2,500 students in research. In 2010 more than 900,000 documents and 40,000 photos became searchable on the Archive website, and online use of the Archives has increased dramatically (Appendix 7.18, 13.6.03 Archives 2010 Report and 13.6.04 Archives Addendum to 2010 Report). Funding for the Archives is provided through tax levy allocations and funds from the Mayor’s Office and the City Council. Archives activities and publications are reviewed annually by the College President, the CUNY Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations, the Mayor’s Office, and the City Council.
LaGuardia High School Programs provide the opportunity to attend either of two high schools run by the New York City Department of Education on a college campus. The International High School, a multicultural alternative educational environment for recent arrivals, serves students with varying degrees of limited English proficiency and offers a high school/college curriculum with intensive study of English. In 2008-09, 59% of the graduating class earned 12 or more college credits upon graduation. Middle College High School accepts 125 ninth and tenth graders from middle schools. All students graduating from Middle College High School are guaranteed admission to LaGuardia and are expected to graduate with a minimum of 24 college credits (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, p. 197). In addition, the LaGuardia Youth Center for Engineering Excellence is an after school program that helps high school students develop their interest in engineering and science (13.6.05 LYCEE website). Appendix 7.19 describes other school-college collaborative programs, including College Now!, College Connection, the Liberty Partnership, and Project Upward Bound.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standard 13

Basic Skills
1. LaGuardia effectively identifies incoming students who need pre-college level coursework and offers them a broad range of basic skills classes in English, Reading, ESL, and Mathematics as well as appropriate support services. In later credit-bearing courses, students who have passed basic skills courses tend to perform comparably to those entering college-level courses directly, suggesting that these programs do an excellent job of preparing students for credit-bearing college coursework.
2. Rather than target these students from a single angle or with a one-size-fits-all approach, the College offers multi-faceted, dynamic support. Recent initiatives like Achieving the Dream, Project Quantum Leap, and Global Skills for College Completion have propelled LaGuardia into national discussions about basic skills education. Regular assessment shows quantifiable gains in basic skills instruction at the College.

Non-Credit Offerings
3. The programs offered by the Division of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) are consistent with the College’s mission. Many assessment methods are used to evaluate these offerings, and in 2011, ACE began reviewing instruction, curriculum, and customer service standards as part of the CUNY Program Quality Working Group of the Continuing Education 2010 Task Force. There are internal and external procedures for the creation and approval of curricula, guided by transparent objectives across ACE programs.
4. While the majority of ACE students do not earn college credit for their coursework, ACE is a leader in providing students with basic skills, contextualized knowledge, and ESL training in preparation for college studies.
5. The College’s non-credit programs have had a positive impact on the institution’s resources and its ability to fulfill its mission. The ACE Partnership Committee has helped increase the number of non-credit students who enter degree studies.

Certificate Programs and Contractual Relationships
6. Each certificate program maintains clear and published goals, objectives, expectations of student learning, and curricular sequences to insure consistency with the College’s mission.
7. The College provides support services to address the needs of certificate students and prepare them for professional success. The Career Development Center, Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center, and the Construction certificate program have documented the effectiveness of these services. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that other support services for these students are effective, these services should implement formal data-based assessment.

8. The College follows best practices to ensure that it has appropriate oversight and responsibility regarding interns, students placed in contractual relationships with health care providers, and other contracts with outside institutions. Records are readily available and provide an orderly history of the College’s legal relationships with outside agencies.

Experiential Learning
9. The College has established procedures for awarding credit for experiential and prior learning through the Cooperative Education Department (Co-op) and the Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) team.

Recommendations for Standard 13

Basic Skills
1. In order to facilitate enrollment in ESL Learning Communities, the College should provide targeted advisement for ESL students who have declared specific majors.

Non-Credit Offerings
2. The ACE Curriculum Committee should add a preamble or more explicit mission-related criteria to its application documentation for new courses.

Certificate Programs and Contractual Relationships
3. The College should establish periodic assessment procedures for certificate program student support services.
Chapter 8

Standards 12 and 14: Assessment of Student Learning and General Education

Standard 12: General Education
“The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency” (Characteristics of Excellence 47).

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning
“Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals” (Characteristics of Excellence 63).

Introductory Overview of Standards 12 and 14
LaGuardia Community College’s primary mechanism for conducting student outcomes assessment is the Periodic Program Review (PPR). As mandated by CUNY, approximately every five years each program undergoes a PPR. This review includes an analysis of student learning, course assessment, program assessment, and assessment of both programmatic and selected general education competencies. In 2001-02, the College’s governance bodies approved a new Outcomes Assessment Plan to enhance the existing PPR process. While PPRs were retained, the new plan increased focus on collecting and assessing direct evidence of student learning via evaluation of work collected in their ePortfolios (14.7.01 Outcomes Assessment Plan).

The Outcomes Assessment Plan strengthened general education by instituting the seven core competencies required in the curriculum at key benchmark points, thus ensuring that the College’s program of general education is of sufficient scope to enhance students’ intellectual growth (FE 12.1), as expected by Middle States. (Sentences and phrases that have been bolded have been taken directly from Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education.) The plan’s emphasis on core competencies and ePortfolios emerged from three fundamental goals: to improve student learning; to define common outcomes across all programs; and to look systematically at actual student work so as to measure learning and development beyond graduation rates and standardized tests. Using ePortfolios for assessment enables the College to capture “a rich, longitudinal picture of student development and learning through systematic examination of student work” (12.3.06 Reclaiming the Public University). All programs include designated “ePortfolio courses” where student work is placed into ePortfolios: “basic skills and introductory courses to capture baseline data; the urban studies course (a requirement in all majors) as a mid-point; and a capstone course as the end-point.” These digital collections are used to assess student mastery of both programmatic and general education competencies. Faculty conducting program reviews can thus draw on “a record of student learning from the first semester through graduation. Assessing an actual body of student work against the faculty-developed rubrics for each core competency tells a program whether or not students are achieving the required levels and if not, where improvement is needed.” (12.3.06 Reclaiming the Public University).

LaGuardia’s work on assessment has changed substantially over the last ten years from the incorporation of general education core competencies, the creation of rubrics, and the
implementation of ePortfolios, to a systematized, periodic review of authentic student work in the core and programmatic competencies that is used to inform curricular changes in our programs and majors. The years 2001 to 2005 made up the foundational period during which the College crafted the key elements of its assessment plan. In these years, LaGuardia first piloted ePortfolio, developed rubrics around the core competencies, began helping faculty consider how the core competencies factored into their courses as part of the professional development work, established a vocabulary around assessment, and created its vision of assessment. Since 2007, the College has focused on increasing institutional support for assessment. The evolution of these systems is illustrated in Appendix 8.1.

Additionally, LaGuardia has established itself as a national leader on assessment by sharing its assessment and ePortfolio work at conferences, serving as a case study for national assessment efforts, and providing leadership for such organizations as AAC&U and CHEA. Appendix 8.2 provides more details of LaGuardia’s leadership work on assessment.

Since 2003, in many programs such as nursing, physical therapy, and fine arts, LaGuardia students have begun developing longitudinal, “integrative” ePortfolios, working in multiple courses across semesters and disciplines. They collect their work and reflect on their learning, creating narratives that connect academic content to lived experience. Reviewing their growth, students link their work to General Education and programmatic competencies. Thousands of students share ePortfolios with their families, potential employers and transfer institutions. In 2009-10, more than 12,000 LaGuardia students were active in their portfolios. LaGuardia’s work with ePortfolio is guided by pedagogical practices that support integrative learning and help students make connections among courses and develop new identities as learners.

In this chapter, we treat Standards 12 and 14 together because assessment of student learning is closely integrated into LaGuardia’s approach to general education. Under Standard 12, we examined how the College developed its general education core competencies, how these competencies are integrated into the curriculum, how the College ensures that students are proficient in these competencies, how the goals of general education are communicated to students, and how the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives is incorporated into the curriculum. Under Standard 14, we investigated how the College measures student achievement of core and programmatic competencies, how effectively the college communicates each program’s learning objectives and the College’s core competencies, how the ePortfolio process facilitates outcomes assessment, how student assessment information is shared with appropriate constituencies, how faculty are involved in the outcomes assessment process, including closing the loop, and how academic assessment affects curriculum development and revision, pedagogical strategies, and student learning. Addressing two fundamental elements listed under Standard 11, we also examined how student learning outcomes are incorporated into program goals and course syllabi.

Findings for Standards 12 and 14

Overview of LaGuardia’s Assessment Plan
1. What do we expect our students to learn? Our research confirmed that the plan has clearly articulated statements of expected learning outcomes at the institutional, program, and course level (FE 14.1).
Institutional General Education Core Competencies. We found that the College’s requirements assure that, upon degree completion, students are proficient in oral and written communication, quantitative reasoning, and technological competency (FE 12.4). General education goals are assessed by seven core competencies (14.7.02 General Education Core Competencies): Critical Literacy (a comprehensive category for three competencies: reading, writing, and critical thinking), Quantitative Reasoning, Oral Communication, Technological Literacy, and Research and Information Literacy.

Programmatic Competencies. We also determined that each program at the College establishes programmatic competencies with discipline-specific learning goals and outcomes (FE 11.3) (14.7.06 Program Competencies).

Course Competencies. Finally, we established that the official syllabus for every course in all degree programs lists student learning objectives (FE 11.12).

2. How do we know they are learning it? The plan constitutes a documented, organized and sustained assessment process (FE 14.2) designed to examine institutional effectiveness in terms of learning and teaching and provides sufficient, convincing evidence (FE 14.3) of the degree to which students are achieving learning outcomes.

3. How are assessment results used to improve teaching and learning? LaGuardia’s assessment process “closes the assessment loop” by sharing data with appropriate constituents and using that data to improve our pedagogies and academic programs (FE 14.4). In line with our commitment to the academic, career, and personal growth and development of every student, the assessment process uses a variety of tools to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

1. Clearly Articulated Learning Outcomes: What do we expect our students to learn?

We found that General Education Core Competencies are required of all students across all majors and are the collective responsibility of the entire faculty (FE 12.2). After the core competencies were adopted in 2001, faculty teams developed standardized rubrics for assessing them. The core competency descriptions and rubrics are available to the entire college on the Assessment website (14.7.03 Core Competency Rubrics: critical literacy, oral communication, research/info literacy, quantitative).

The College’s seven general education competencies do not explicitly address the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives. Instead, LaGuardia incorporates the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives into each degree program (FE 12.3) through individual courses in each major and the Urban Studies requirement. The Standard 12 working group found that the curricula for every degree program has at least one required course that addresses these issues (see Appendix 8.3). The curriculum also incorporates values, ethics, and diverse perspectives through the Urban Studies program. Since its founding, the College has required an Urban Studies course for every degree candidate (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, p. 172). In spring 2009, 1,478 students were enrolled in 64 sections of Urban Studies courses (12.4.01 Urban Studies Task Force Report). Urban Studies courses can be offered on any subject by any department as long as they focuses on the dynamics of an urban environment and students participate in two out-of-classroom experiences that use the city as a research laboratory (12.4.02 Urban Studies Program Review). Since these courses often examine social interactions among
different cultural and ethnic groups, their curriculum encompasses a range of issues related to values and diversity.

Thus, even though the College’s seven general education competencies do not explicitly address values, ethics, or diverse perspectives, the curriculum is designed so that all LaGuardia students engage in a study of these issues. This is corroborated by results from the 2010 CCSSE, in which LaGuardia scored above the national mean on questions dealing with values and diversity (see Appendix 8.3).

A central feature of LaGuardia’s assessment plan is that the required core competencies are advanced and assessed across all disciplines at several points in a student’s academic career, thus emphasizing the interdisciplinary development of key academic skills.

In collaboration with faculty, Program Directors have developed Core Competency Grids for all programs that identify the courses in each major where core competencies are reinforced, and where faculty require students to upload relevant work into the ePortfolio Assessment Database for purposes of outcomes assessment (14.7.04 General Education Competency Grids).

These grids appear on the College’s Assessment Website and represent a clear statement of student learning outcomes (FE 14.1) showing how the general education core competencies integrate into each program’s curriculum. Below is a sample grid for the Education Associate: The Bilingual Child Major. All grids can be accessed at 14.7.04 General Education Competency Grids. The sample grid illustrates how the assessment of the competencies provides a developmental look at student skill achievement. Critical literacy assessment begins in developmental writing (ENG099) and/or freshman composition (ENG101), occurs again at a midpoint in study in the major (ELN101, the Urban Studies writing intensive course), and at the capstone level (ELE203).

We also determined that Programmatic Competencies, specific to the discipline, are specified, addressed, and assessed by the faculty teaching in each program (FE 14.1). To
ensure that these competencies are **consonant with the standards of higher education and the relevant discipline** (FE 14.1), wherever appropriate, programmatic competencies reflect accrediting bodies or national standards (**14.7.05 National Accreditations**). The assessment of programmatic competencies is a central feature of the plan and builds on assessment conducted through the PPR process. Programmatic competencies for each major are publically available on the College’s assessment website (**14.7.06 Program Competencies**). Some programs have created websites explaining the programmatic competencies so that students understand assessment (see **screenshot**).

In a faculty-driven assessment process, the relationship between programmatic and core competencies is key. The Physical Therapist Assistant Program, for instance, has established clear relationships among the competencies, student work, and assessment in a way that is properly sequenced and builds across the entire curriculum. Other Allied Health programs, along with Business programs, have also made progress in this regard (for details, see Appendix 8.4 and **14.7.20 SOTL PT Presentation**). The College needs to continue to work with programs to improve the way they use the core competencies in concert with programmatic competencies. For instance, as students master the research core competency, they should simultaneously be mastering programmatic competencies defined within the program’s disciplinary area.

Course competencies are required in each course (FE 14.1) and are the responsibility of individual faculty teaching and assessing the course. Since the 1970s the College Curriculum Committee and College Senate have required that **all official course syllabi list specific student learning objectives** (FE 11.12); there are no exceptions to this policy. A course cannot begin the process of college-wide approval without student learning outcomes. The College-wide Curriculum Committee has a SharePoint site containing electronic versions of all course proposals since 2007 with proposing departments having paper copies prior to 2007. See Appendix 8.5 for a course proposal indicating learning objectives, as well as an example showing how the English Department ensures that students receive a common set of course goals across multiple sections of a course. The College is currently in the process of posting student learning objectives for each course online, as part of the web-based course listings on the college website, which will provide students with access to a comprehensive archive of learning objectives for all courses. (See instructions for logging in to the Curriculum Committee SharePoint site and accessing the online course listings.)

2. **An Organized and Sustained Assessment Process: How do we know students are learning what we expect them to learn?**

The Assessment Leadership Team (ALT) includes representation from faculty, administration, and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and meets bi-weekly, demonstrating the **support and collaboration of faculty and administration** (FE 14.2). This team guides and communicates the College’s assessment work, trains faculty on the College’s Assessment Rubrics, liaises with the CTL, and advises on the selection and adaptation of a new ePortfolio system to support the assessment process. The ALT also guides departments through their PPRs by providing outside readers for core competency readings. Each spring the team reviews the year’s progress and creates a work plan and goals for the next year.

Since 2007 PPRs have included readings of student work from the ePortfolio assessment area. Faculty and staff conducting PPRs have evaluated student work against programmatic and core
competencies, as appropriate. Embedded in PPRs are evaluations of student work, reports on student progress in core competencies, and recommendations for program improvement.

The core competencies, rubrics, and the process of assessment were the focus of several Instructional Staff meetings (held once every semester for full-time faculty and other instructional staff), including sessions at which faculty worked with the rubrics. The Academic Dean and the Director of Outcomes Assessment visited each department on several occasions to outline the assessment plan, explain the rubrics, and describe the artifact collection processes. This departmental approach has been replaced by regular semester meetings with all Program Directors who are then asked to report back to their departments. This new approach has been a concerted effort to engage and educate large numbers of faculty who are not members of the Assessment Leadership and Rubric Development teams, allowing the development of and inclusion of rubrics in the PPR process.

Initially, most programs chose to use the Critical Literacy rubric and evaluate only that competency in their PPRs using the College’s rubric. In part due to the College’s widespread professional development of WID courses, most faculty were comfortable discussing the role of writing, critical thinking, and reading in student work. Over time, the integration of other competencies has become more common. Some programs have also used the Oral Communications rubric and the Quantitative Literacy rubric. As our assessment plan becomes more robust, these readings and data are increasingly reflected in the PPR reports. The growth of outcomes assessment at LaGuardia has been incremental but persistent and intentional, building on its strengths and successes. For example, the recent 2011 PPR for Liberal Arts included a reading on all of the core competencies for the first time. By asking faculty to look at student work in all competency areas, not just selected areas, the Liberal Arts PPR serves as a model for future PPRs (14.1.12 Liberal Arts PPR).

Although there has been steady progress in understanding and using the college-wide rubrics, as well as their relationship to programmatic competencies, this process has not progressed as quickly as desired. Accordingly, the 2011 college-wide Benchmark Assessment Readings (described below) on all seven of the core competencies represents a concentrated effort to push this process along more quickly and to engage the faculty in considerations of all seven core competencies.

Assessing the Degree to Which Students are Learning General Education Core Competencies: Three Case Studies and Benchmark Readings:

Our research confirmed that the College assesses general education outcomes within its overall plan for assessing student learning, and that these assessment results are utilized for curricular improvement (FE 12.6). From 2007 to the present, LaGuardia has made significant gains in reading student work against the core competency rubrics. This is a significant change from the previously established PPR assessment process that read work only against programmatic competencies. Now, all PPR readings involve a review of student work for both sets of competencies. Appendix 8.6 reviews three case studies that demonstrate how LaGuardia has progressed quickly from the large-scale collection of student work to including the assessment of this work within the PPR process. Over the course of four years, the college has moved from reading student work for PPRs in one competency area with 32 pieces of student work to reading in six areas with 418 pieces of work. These assessments are a rich source of data.
about the College’s approach to general education; they also point out significant areas where the College needs to address gaps revealed by the Benchmark Readings and reflected in the PPR recommendations. The College should assist programs to close the assessment feedback loop by providing support through such incentives as the CTL mini-grant projects, especially where large numbers of artifacts could not be scored, indicating a lack of consonance between assignments and rubrics.

**Benchmark Assessment of General Education Core Competencies**

To assess general education core competencies, LaGuardia has instituted twice-yearly Benchmark Assessment Readings to augment the findings from PPRs and create additional direct evidence of student learning (FE 14.2) on a yearly basis. These new readings ensure that we are using student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment (FE 14.5) beyond the PPR process. This new process occurred for the first time in January and June 2011. Twenty-nine faculty from 13 different areas were formed into interdisciplinary teams to read student artifacts across six core competencies: critical thinking, writing, and reading (critical literacy); quantitative literacy; research and information literacy; and oral communication. The readings encompassed beginning and capstone level work, looking at students’ progress throughout the curriculum. The study compared the work of students with 25 and fewer credits with student work deposited at 45 credits or more to evaluate student progress through the curriculum and to measure core competency skill gains.

Each competency-specific team was trained on its rubric and then read materials deposited into the assessment segment of student ePortfolios. Teams received extensive training through discussion, norming, and practice scoring (14.7.13 Benchmark Assessment Reading Training Materials, January-February 2011. Hard copy in document room only). Teams scored 3,087 live samples. Each team scored samples from both credit categories to assess student progress through the core competencies. Each artifact was scored on a 1-6 scale by two readers, yielding a combined score for each student ranging from 2-12. Ideally, students at or near completion of their academic careers at the college should receive a score of 10 (a 5 from each of the two readers).

**Benchmark Assessment Findings**

As a result of this process, LaGuardia now has an overall “snapshot” of student learning outcomes in general education competencies across all majors in the institution. This is a significant accomplishment, particularly when contrasted with survey results reported this year by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) showing that “most assessment approaches were used at the departmental or individual unit level. Few respondents reported using these approaches with samples to represent the entire institution” (14.4.01 Learning Outcomes Assessment in Community Colleges). LaGuardia’s work in this regard has resulted in the College being selected by the Community College Futures Assembly as a finalist for the 2012 Bellwether Award in Instructional Programs and Services.

Overall, the results showed that students are making progress (an average increase across all rubrics of .87), though the College should strive to improve scores for students with over 45 credits so that on average they reached a score of 10. The results are summarized in Figure 8.4.
A complete discussion of the findings can be found in 14.7.16 Benchmark Assessment Report and Appendix 8.7.

Figure 8.4

Critical Literacy (Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing). The 1,072 samples demonstrated a gain of 0.88 across the curriculum between lower and higher credit students.

Oral Communication. The 875 samples demonstrated a gain of only 0.14 across the curriculum between lower and higher credit students. Unfortunately, 39% of the samples were not related to the rubric. Samples exhibited a wide range of quality and other technological limitations.

Quantitative Reasoning. These 322 samples demonstrated a gain of 0.97 on a 12-point scale across the curriculum between lower and higher credit students. The interdisciplinary scoring team found that 30% of the samples were not related to the rubric, largely because the rubric was too narrow to encompass the range of assignments from courses across the curriculum.

Research and Information Literacy. These 318 samples demonstrated a gain of 1.49 across the curriculum between lower and higher credit students. In this category, the interdisciplinary scoring team found that programmatic definitions and practices around citation of researched information varied widely, making it difficult to consistently score for plagiarism.

Technological Literacy. This competency does not have a rubric. When the College’s assessment plan was originally conceived ten years ago, much of the national conversation focused on the digital divide and basic technology skills. Today, the conversation has shifted to a higher level of skill. In the coming year, the College will undertake a reconsideration of technological literacy as part of its assessment plan. We will explore if Technological Literacy is still a key competency for our students or if we should move toward new competencies like Integrative Learning.
Benchmark Assessment Recommendations
Faculty reading teams made a number of recommendations based on the Benchmark Readings. After being reviewed by the Standard 14 working group, the following recommendations were immediately implemented in March 2011.

- Benchmark Assessment readings should become a regular part of the LaGuardia assessment process twice a year (in January and June), using faculty volunteers who are paid a small stipend. The College should rotate teams and volunteers to widen understanding of the assessment process.
- Additional educational efforts—through program directors and department meetings—need to emphasize the relationship between the rubrics and the assessment scores.
- A clear work plan and calendar of responsibilities between LaGuardia and the vendor of the new ePortfolio system, Digication, needs to be created.
- Based on the ease of the system use and irregular reader speed, a modified schedule of readings should be created that will allow faculty to read at home or in their offices at their own speed once norming and training have been completed.

Assessing the Degree to Which Students are Learning Programmatic Competencies
Our research determined that the College assesses student learning and program outcomes relative to the goals of the undergraduate programs and uses the results to improve student learning and program effectiveness (FE 11.13). While programs have always had programmatic competencies, they were in various formats, not always easily located; some were well-articulated, others were implicit. Programs were therefore asked to systematically articulate (and revise if needed) their programmatic competencies and how they mapped to the curriculum, spell out the assessment methods and criteria for each (with illustrative examples of student work), and collect related data more routinely. This information, initially collected in binder form, is currently in the process of being converted to a Programmatic Competency Institutional ePortfolio to allow for greater accessibility for faculty within programs. (See instructions for logging into Digication for access to 14.7.07 Programmatic Competencies ePortfolio for materials currently available in digital form).

Beginning in 2010, each program thus began programmatic data collection more routinely each semester, identifying an initial set of data they wanted to collect. Data are collected throughout the academic year at the end of each semester in fall I, fall II, spring I, and spring II. Each program collects data in accordance with student learning outcomes for courses in the major. Not all courses run each semester, so each program provides data for the courses that run in that particular term. LaGuardia is in the second year of this routinized data collection; the goal is to create a continuous data stream, providing programs with a much stronger data set available when they come up for a PPR (rather than having to scramble to collect outcomes data just before the PPR commences).

It should be noted that ePortfolio-based assessment for programmatic competencies is not nearly as advanced as it is for the core competencies, as to date the College has put greater emphasis on using ePortfolio to assess its across-the-curriculum approach to general education. With assessment of general education core competencies now firmly in place, the use of ePortfolio for programmatic competency assessment will increase. In the meantime, programs have been
encouraged to place greater emphasis on tangible examples of student learning, which are now being collected in the Programmatic Competency Institutional ePortfolio (see Digication login instructions); these completed tests, assignments, projects, etc. are direct evidence of student learning (FE 14.2). To transform grades from indirect evidence to direct evidence, programs are now being asked to place clear evaluation criteria for grades into the Programmatic Competency Institutional ePortfolio; this is currently in progress, though much work remains as many programs still do not have evaluation criteria clearly spelled out for all their programmatic competencies.

For example, the Paralegal Studies Program reported that it would “Enable the student to write proper English. To write with the clarity, accuracy and organization expected of a paralegal.” To assess this, the program looked at grade distribution reports for Introduction to Paralegal Studies (BTP 101) and Legal Research and Writing (BTP 204) (the courses that emphasize this competency) to see how many students achieved a benchmark of 73% (2.0 or C); in BTP 101, 51.8% of students achieved this or higher, and in BTP 204, 88% of students achieved this or higher. Now that programs have taken the large step of routinely collecting and reporting this kind of data, assessment methodologies such as this will need to be refined and revised to strengthen the consistent use of direct assessment measures and to implement targeted revisions based on the data. For example, collecting data like “80% of the students will achieve a passing final grade” would be more useful if accompanied by published criteria (such as a rubric) showing how students are doing on the specific learning objectives that comprise the grade, thus indicating areas that students are weak on that would benefit from curricular or pedagogical changes. This is the direction that the Assessment Leadership Team is now guiding program faculty.

Assessing What Students Are Learning: The Role and Evolution of the ePortfolio Assessment Database

The Center for Teaching and Learning has provided key support for the collection of data in the ePortfolio Assessment Database since 2004. The CTL’s leadership has guided a substantial investment of institutional resources (FE 14.2) through grant writing and management of institutional resources. Faculty development on the use of ePortfolio to enhance learning has also supported outcomes assessment. Hundreds of faculty have become familiar with ePortfolio through CTL programs, including seminars exploring advances in assessment such as the ePortfolio in the Professions seminar (2006-09).

LaGuardia’s ePortfolio system is unique in that it combines an assessment tool with a pedagogical tool. Faculty and students regularly use ePortfolio as a course element to post work, compose online, and feature multimodal endeavors. The focus on competencies, combined with the reflective and expressive elements of the ePortfolio, builds student engagement and improves student outcomes. ePortfolios and ePortfolio assignments are created and graded by faculty. At the same time, the ePortfolio system works as an assessment tool, allowing the College to collect student artifacts for assessment against programmatic and core competencies. Students enrolled in benchmark courses deposit their work into the ePortfolio Assessment Database. This student work is the basis for the College’s direct evidence of student learning (FE 14.2).

The ease of ePortfolio use has recently taken a major leap forward in fall 2010 with the new Digication ePortfolio system. Digication allows the College to create assessment groups
composed of faculty from the same or different departments to read and score student work online. This work appears digitally along with the scoring mechanism connected to the rubric for the core competency (and eventually the programmatic competencies). The College’s investment in a new system was in response to faculty requirements for a better ePortfolio to support teaching, learning, and assessment. This significant shift of resources demonstrates a substantial investment of institutional resources and support and collaboration of faculty and administration (FE 14.2).

Since September 2003, 40,255 artifacts have been deposited in the system. As shown in Appendix 8.8, the College has experienced exponential growth in depositing concomitant with the increasing college-wide emphasis on systematic collection of assessment data. While in 2007-08, 3,465 artifacts were collected, in 2010-11, this had grown to 21,226. Widespread depositing in all programs and majors provides sufficient artifacts to run longitudinal and historical studies of student data. Artifacts can also be sampled from current or past semesters depending on the objectives of different studies. However, in part because of the recent emphasis on depositing in programs and majors, the college has not emphasized the collection of baseline data. When preparing the Benchmark Assessment Readings, the team discovered that we did not have a sufficient sample size to draw from at under 12 credits. Accordingly, the ALT determined that using 25 credits as the initial starting point would yield a larger sample size. This is a significant deficiency in our current structure because the college’s assessment plan depends on the careful collection of longitudinal data.

Continuing Development and Communication of the College’s Assessment Plan

As the Assessment Leadership Team has guided assessment at the College, it has also worked to raise awareness about assessment college-wide. Doing so acknowledges productive assessment work being done by faculty and helps foster a culture of assessment at the College (14.7.19 SOTL Business Presentation, 14.7.20 SOTL PT Presentation). To make the process more explicit for students and faculty, the ALT developed an Outcomes Assessment website that provides a transparent source of information about LaGuardia’s approach to assessment, the PPR process, and the general education competencies and rubrics (14.7.12 Assessment Website). Since 2007, the ALT has been modifying the original Assessment Plan so that it is more faculty and student friendly and works to both assess student work and provide feedback to departments about their programs and student core competency progress. Beginning in 2011, the ALT has begun to disseminate the results of the Benchmark Assessment readings to the college community with a further plan to provide individual results to each program/major in future reporting. The College has sought to engage in continued evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the student learning assessment process (FE 14.2) to ensure that the program evolves with the college’s incremental expertise in using assessment of student learning to inform the classroom, our programs, and the institution as a whole. Changes in the college’s Assessment Plan also seek to ensure that the plan has sufficient simplicity, detail, and ownership to be sustainable (FE 14.2). The overall cycle is illustrated in Appendix 8.9.

In fall 2009, the ALT harnessed the power of the Program Directors to function as assessment liaisons for their departments, ensuring that the work of assessment is faculty-driven, focused on the goals and outcomes of programs and majors, and regularly reported and discussed in department meetings. Program Directors were charged with identifying courses and the types of
assignments most appropriate for assessing student learning of core and programmatic competencies. To do so, they created the Program Grids for General Education Core Competencies described earlier. Now, years before they come up for PPR, programs have clearly designated the courses and assignments where they would like to capture student work for both core and programmatic competencies.

Additionally, the ALT created and shared with faculty a PPR Schedule (14.1.001 PPR Schedule81211) that identifies a three-stage PPR Process: Preparing for PPR (P), Undergoing PPR (AR), and Implementing PPR Recommendations (I). This calendar has increased communication to programs by helping faculty understand that PPR and assessment should happen regularly and cyclically (14.7.11 PPR Calendar). Extending the formal PPR from a one-year process to a three-year staged process also made assessment more continuous and thus integral to a program’s core responsibilities, rather than something executed only once every five or six years. The ALT also created a timeline (14.7.14 PPR Timeline) for each program, giving due dates for draft reports so that faculty receive better guidance throughout the PPR process. These enhancements of the PPR process reflect a college-wide effort to provide clear, realistic guidelines and timetable supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources (FE 14.2).

3. Closing the Assessment Loop: How are assessment results used to improve teaching and learning?

Sharing Information with Faculty and Students

Our research confirmed that LaGuardia’s assessment plan takes into account the need to share outcomes data with appropriate constituents and, most importantly, the need to use that data to improve our pedagogies and academic programs (FE 14.4). Accordingly, the Outcomes Assessment website communicates each college core competency with rubrics for assessing each competency. There is a complete timeline through 2015 of the five year assessment cycle. For newer faculty, the website also outlines the history of the assessment plan and the overall process at the College. Special emphasis is placed on closing the feedback loop. The website serves as a comprehensive site for both internal and external audiences about the assessment processes at the college.

In 2010, the ALT added a password protected portion of the site, accessible to all faculty, to archive specific assignments created by faculty to assess core competencies in various programs. This Sharepoint site is a rich addition to the college’s assessment work, providing faculty with concrete examples of the kinds of assignments they might develop to assess student work.

At LaGuardia, PPRs are considered internal documents, so they are shared specifically with the departments conducting the studies and with the ALT, the Dean for Academic Affairs, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and the President. In departments, student learning assessment information is shared and discussed and is used to improve teaching and learning (FE 14.4).

We found that general education requirements are clearly and accurately described in the College’s official publications (FE 12.5) and as part of the outcomes assessment process. Currently, students learn about general education and assessment in four ways: 1) each entering
LaGuardia student receives a flash drive with orientation information, including an explanatory piece on assessment and its role in a student’s education; 2) in the classroom, when faculty create assignments in response to general education and programmatic competencies, which students are asked to deposit in their ePortfolios; 3) in the ePortfolio system when students deposit work; and 4) for students taking an ePortfolio Studio Hour to support specific classes such as the Capstone or Fundamentals of Professional Advancement, students learn more about the assessment process as part of the class and their work with ePortfolio Consultants and Student Technology Mentors. In addition, the general education core competencies are explained in the college catalogue (09.2.68 College Catalog-2011-12, p. 170) and in Student News (12.3.04 Value of General Education), a publication distributed by Student Affairs.

Evidence of success is seen in Figure 8.5 from the Self-Study Student Survey (01.3.03 Student Survey Results). This table shows the high percentage of students who reported awareness of the core competencies. Moreover, according to the same survey, a high percentage of students believe they have developed their skills in the core competencies (see Appendix 8.11, which also indicates students’ source of information about the competencies).

![Figure 8.5](image)

Although students are well-informed about the College’s learning expectations, and thus about what the College assesses, assessment results have not been shared with students. To help the ALT develop strategies for communicating assessment results to students during 2010-11, the ALT invited a student to join the team.

**Closing the Assessment Loop: Using Assessment to Design Change**

Since 2007, LaGuardia has made a significant effort to close the Assessment Loop both in using data from the Benchmark Readings to help programs work towards effective General Education outcomes and in using data from the 14 Periodic Program Reviews conducted during this period to make and sustain change within programs.

To begin the work of closing the loop from the Benchmark Assessment findings, the Assessment Leadership Team disseminated results from the 2010-2011 Benchmark Assessment readings by sharing the written report with all departments and presenting to the faculty at the 12 October 2011 Instructional Staff meeting. Members of the Assessment Leadership Team have also met with key groups such as the Academic Chairs and the Academic Integrity Committee to follow up on targeted issues. The 2010-2011 Benchmark Assessment Data was compiled cumulatively,
but can be made available to individual programs with a programmatic look at the data upon request. In the future, cumulative data reporting and individualized (by program/major) will be a key feature of the report. Based on the Benchmark Assessment Data, some initial reforms are currently being enacted, specifically through two grants given to faculty this year to work on strengthening the general education core competencies within their programs.

Substantial work in closing the loop follows a program’s PPR. After conducting a PPR, programs make recommendations for changing courses, curricula, and programs. The following snapshot from the **Closing the Assessment Loop Chart (14.7.15)** documents the program, year of PPR, assessment results (findings), recommendations, implementation, and outcomes for each program that has conducted a PPR since 2007.

![Figure 8.16](image)

Each PPR identifies recommendations for its program based on assessment results: curriculum reviews, external evaluators’ recommendations (where applicable), board results (where applicable), evidence of students’ achieving learning outcomes (that is, core competency results and programmatic competency results), and institutional data (e.g., graduation, persistence, pass rates, course attrition). This chart demonstrates the College’s **key assessment findings and shows how assessment results provide sufficient, convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes** (FE 14.3). Where this evidence is weak, programs make specific recommendations to address the findings. This is evidenced through the recommendations and implementations of a number of programs, for example:

- The Accounting program identified that the Core Competencies were not thoroughly incorporated into the accounting classes. Therefore, the accounting faculty created staged research projects and included the completion of these projects as a capstone requirement.
within the program. Additionally, the faculty designed quantitative reasoning assignments to reinforce this core competency in the Principles of Accounting class. Furthermore, assignments incorporating core competencies were created and distributed to faculty teaching courses that had been earmarked for Assessment depositing.

- Based on the Business PPR recommendation, the program developed a new computer course. The department has offered 51 sections of this course since 2009, serving approximately 1,785 students.

- Within the Business program, the PPR team discovered a weakness in assessing work for Oral Communication; as a result, there is now a mandated oral presentation in BTM 110.

- The computer programs also realized during their PPR that they had a deficiency in the articulation of their programs to four-year CUNY colleges. To correct this, the faculty established and approved a new Computer Science curriculum and developed new syllabi for four classes.

- In the Liberal Arts PPR in 2010, the faculty team discovered that the inclusion of all seven core competencies in the Capstone Course (LIB 200) placed a burden on faculty teaching that course. Since then the Liberal Arts Chairs have met and redistributed the competencies more evenly across the curriculum.

- Also in 2010, the Veterinary Technology program discovered that they were not successful capturing work for assessment within the ePortfolio. The faculty have completely restructured how the ePortfolio is being integrated into the program across seven key courses in the major, which demonstrate both program and core competencies.

The College has been providing institutional support to facilitate programs’ efforts to “close the loop,” some of which are coordinated by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). For example, individual programs have received mini-grants that support program assessment and the integration of competencies throughout a program’s curriculum. The mini-grant initiative, described in more detail in Appendix 8.10, is designed to help disciplinary programs “close the loop” and implement changes related to the PPR, most often in relation to the core competencies. For instance, the development of a mandated oral presentation in the Business program (listed above) was supported by a 2008-09 CTL mini-grant project exploring the possibility of video-recording student assignments.

These examples—where information gained through the assessment process is analyzed, the College provides support to develop innovations, and then innovations are implemented (ultimately to be assessed again)—are evidence of the ways in which LaGuardia uses assessment data in the effort to improve student learning.

Moving forward, the College will continue to foster the culture of assessment by ensuring that all programs are able to design and implement changes based on an analysis of outcomes. The College seeks to move away from results that are not well supported by data, such as an example from the 2008 Writing Program PPR which includes this recommendation: “Faculty want more opportunities to discuss basic writing.” This example is characteristic of many of the College’s older PPR reports from earlier in the assessment cycle. As the College has grown more
sophisticated in its assessment measures, we seek to have each program correlate recommendations with the data analyzed during the PPR assessment process. All programs will need to include recommendations like those in the Business Administration PPR and the most recent Liberal Arts PPR, which includes an “Action Plan” with data correlated to recommendations. As part of the PPR preparation process, the ALT now plans to assist programs in strengthening their assessment methodologies and to ensure that PPR action plans are correlated to the data collected during the PPR process.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions for Standards 12 and 14
1. LaGuardia has developed a systematic, sustained, and thorough use of multiple qualitative and quantitative measures to document and improve student learning. The Assessment Leadership Team has created a body of work that facilitates sustained developmental assessment and made major improvements in the Periodic Program Review (PPR) process.
2. The College has developed clearly articulated, written statements of key learning outcomes and has designed courses, programs, and educational experiences to achieve those outcomes.
3. The Center for Teaching and Learning has been essential to expanding ePortfolio assessment, to educating faculty and staff about assessment, and to supporting programs in implementing curricular and programmatic changes based on their PPR findings.
4. Since 2007, 14 programs have completed PPRs. The Closing the Assessment Loop Chart (14.7.15) documents the cycle of assessment results, recommendations, implementation, and outcomes contained in each PPR report.
5. The College has made significant gains in many assessment areas, most specifically in the use of student ePortfolios to document student achievement and in assessment efforts spearheaded by Program Directors. The PPR process, coupled with Benchmark Assessment Readings, provide the College with valuable data that supplements course pass rates, retention data, information from standardized examinations, and course grades. There has been a steady growth in authentic student assessment, the routine inclusion of student work in PPRs, establishing clear and sustainable collection methods for student work, and using data to inform program changes and improve student performance as measured by both general education core competencies and programmatic competencies.
6. LaGuardia employs an across-the-curriculum approach to general education based on a core set of seven competencies—Critical Literacy (a comprehensive category for three competencies: reading, writing, and critical thinking), Quantitative Reasoning, Oral Communication, Technological Literacy, and Research and Information Literacy—that are woven into course work in all the majors. The Self-Study Student Survey indicates that students are well-informed about general education core competencies and believe they are making significant progress in improving their performance in these competencies.
7. The College’s general education competencies do not explicitly address the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives. Instead, LaGuardia incorporates the study of these issues into each program through individual courses in each major and the Urban Studies requirement.
8. For general education core competencies, LaGuardia has instituted twice-yearly Benchmark Assessment Readings to augment the findings from PPRs and create additional direct evidence of student learning on a yearly basis. This new Benchmark Assessment Process will ensure that the College uses student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment beyond the PPR process. The 2011 Benchmark Assessment readings documented gains in student achievement, while also indicating that several rubrics should be revised.
9. The 2011 Benchmark Assessment Readings demonstrated that the College should place greater emphasis on the collection of baseline data so there is a sufficient sample size to draw from students having under 12 credits, enabling better longitudinal measurement of student growth.

10. The faculty of each academic major have established programmatic competencies with discipline-specific learning goals and outcomes which are publically available on the College’s assessment website (14.7.06 Program Competencies). Many programs are still in the process of specifying evaluation criteria for their programmatic competencies, refining assessment methodologies, and implementing changes based on assessment data.

11. To receive college governance approval, all official course proposals are required to list specific student learning outcomes as part of the syllabus.

Recommendations for Standards 12 and 14

1. **Institute a faculty process to regularly review and update the College’s core competencies to better reflect changing standards in higher education.** In particular, the faculty team may want to consider including new core competencies such as diversity and integrative learning and devising a process for developing new rubrics for any new competencies. The faculty team will need to assess what technological literacy means in 2012 and moving forward. The team will need to develop a process for revising the College’s rubrics in conjunction with the recommendations made by the Benchmark Assessment faculty reading teams.

2. **Pilot ePortfolio assessment using the entire ePortfolio rather than individual pieces in a student’s ePortfolio.** In order to gain the richest picture of student development at the college, the College should consider how the PPRs and the Benchmark Assessment Teams might regularly review entire ePortfolios, not just selected artifacts from student ePortfolios deposited in the ePortfolio assessment database. Additionally, when possible, these should be evaluated in terms of a cohort of students who have both beginning and capstone ePortfolios to document growth and change over time in the same students.

3. **Reinforce the beginning point for collecting entry-level data in the ePortfolio assessment database.** While the College has done significant work over the past five years with capstone and advanced level ePortfolios, the beginning point of ePortfolios (in First Year Academies) has not continued as a robust collection site. The College needs to return its attention to the first year and the vital role it plays in collecting a baseline for student work to be assessed.

4. **Programs should continue their efforts regarding the assessment of programmatic competencies.** Programs should clearly spell out the evaluation criteria for all of their programmatic competencies; refine and revise assessment methodologies to strengthen the consistent use of direct assessment measures for programmatic competencies; and implement changes and revisions based on assessment data.

5. **Strengthen faculty’s ability to work with data.** The PPR process demonstrates that while faculty teams are able to assess programs and make recommendations for strengthening programs, sometimes this process happens anecdotally. Instead each of the recommendations should be correlated to the data provided in the PPR report. The PPR process can be strengthened significantly by working with faculty to use data to support recommendations and conclusions about core, programmatic, and course competencies.
6. **Improve communication about assessment and its role at the college.** Building on the Program Director’s meetings, the Benchmark Assessment reading, the student flyer, the website, and college-wide presentations, the Assessment Leadership Team needs to continue to improve communication about assessment.