

Constituent Feedback and Executive Committee Responses Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE) Self-Study Drafts

INTRODUCTION

Over the two-year course of the Middle States self-study process, a committee of more than 75 people representing all areas of the college—students, faculty, staff, and administration—contributed to the report. The committee also visited faculty, staff, and Student Government Association meetings, held public feedback sessions, and posted the report on an Open Lab site to solicit comments. All contributions were carefully considered and many were used to improve the self-study. The role of the self-study in the accreditation process is primarily a retrospective demonstration of how the institution has met the MSCHE accreditation Standards.

The self-study is also intended to formulate in broad outlines the few most critical priorities for the next eight years. The feedback from the college community overwhelmingly confirmed the broad priorities that were proposed, while prompting useful clarification and adjustment to their expression in the form of the final versions of the four self-study recommendations. The most important role of the feedback provided by the college community, however, is in the many detailed suggestion for implementation of those broad recommendations, and for the rich array of additional specific concerns and suggestions that will most appropriately inform the next strategic planning cycle (beginning fall 2018). In the future, our strategic plans will be held to another level of accountability under the reporting requirement of the MSCHE. Beginning in fall 2018, MSCHE-accredited institutions will be initiating a new annual reporting process, the Annual Institutional Update (AIU). This new process will focus on metrics that show progress toward achieving institutional goals, including update reports not only on the self-study recommendations, but also on the goals of our strategic plan.

Following is a summary of the questions, comments, and critiques offered by the college community in response to the self-study drafts. A complete transcript of all feedback is (or will soon be) available on the AIR webpages. These materials will be referred to the strategic planning committee when it begins work this fall. We thank everyone who took the time to provide feedback.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

Drafts of the Middle States Self-Study were presented to major college constituencies for review, critique, and consensus by Professors Jay Deiner and Shelley Smith, Middle States Co-Chairs, in April 2017 and November 2017. Audiences included faculty from the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Professional Studies, and Technology and Design, administrative units from the Offices of Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, students, advisory boards, and alumni. The Middle States Executive Committee sought feedback in the form of written comments and discussion and online responses on the OpenLab Middle States reaccreditation site.

Feedback round one: April 2017

Student Focus Groups: April 3 and 6, 2017. Publicized via emails to all students from Student Affairs and SGA, and on the college and SGA social media feeds, and via the Alumni Relations email address list and social media feed.

Faculty Focus Groups: April 3 and 6, 2017. Publicized via emails to all faculty and staff.

Staff Focus Group: April 3, 2017. Publicized via emails to all faculty and staff.

Feedback round two: November 2017

Student Government Association: October 5, 2017

Student Focus Groups: November 29 and 30, 2017. Publicized via emails to all students from Student Affairs and SGA, and on the college and SGA social media feeds.

Student Feedback Period: Online comments solicited November 2 – December 1, 2017. Publicized by emails to all students from Student Affairs, and on the college and SGA social media feeds.

Faculty and Staff Feedback Period: November 2 – December 1, 2017 via Open Lab. Publicized by emails to all faculty and staff.

Faculty Presentations: Given to full meetings of the below units, set up and publicized by each unit.

School of Arts & Sciences, November 9, 2017

School Technology & Design, November 14, 2017

School of Professional Studies, November 16, 2017

Continuing Education, December 6, 2017

Staff Presentations: Given to full meetings of the below units, set up and publicized by each unit.

Finance and Administration, November 13, 2017

Academic Affairs, November 16, 2017

Enrollment Management, November 29, 2017

Method. Themes that are related to the seven Middle States standards were extracted from the hundreds of individual comments on the self-study drafts. The following themes and committee responses reflect the major concerns expressed by individuals from the units identified above:

1. Clarity of institutional identity, mission, and vision;
2. Increase retention and graduation by improving student success;
3. Improve transparency, communication, and dissemination of information about institutional processes and procedures;
4. Improve institutional climate with respect to diversity, inclusion, and community;
5. Use assessment to measure achievement of education goals, student success, and fiscal and managerial effectiveness;
6. Increase institutional support for faculty in terms of working conditions, research facilities, service obligations, and equitable personnel practices;
7. Improve physical plant to better facilitate teaching and learning;
8. Improve institutional planning and fiscal management; and
9. General comments.

THEME 1

Clarity of institutional identity, mission, and vision

Many of the questions and comments in this theme point to the possible utility of setting up a cross-institutional task force/study group/working group focused on the theme of rational, mission consistent, growth of programs and degrees. Some of the research topics this group could explore include the potential and best opportunities for online and hybrid degrees and the potential and best opportunities for graduate degrees. Some of the immediate projects of the task force could be evaluation of opportunities for and building of cross-disciplinary bachelor's degrees like STS, evaluation and possible re-configuring of LAA and LAS degree programs, and integration of industry certifications into degree program curricula.

THEME 1a: Expand degree programs and modalities

A number of people suggested expanding degree programs to include graduate degrees, fully online or hybrid degrees, and interdisciplinary bachelor's degrees aligned with City Tech's mission (e.g., urban studies, digital humanities, or science technology and society). Related comments focused on re-casting our liberal arts degrees for articulation and expanding our role in the CUNY BA program. The Middle States Executive Committee believes that all of these ideas are potentially promising directions for City Tech's continued growth. Over the next several years we will continue to develop high quality, mission-consistent degrees that are sustainable given financial and human resources constraints. This process could be guided by a task force charged with considering questions of rational degree program growth.

Other people raised the question of how associate degrees fit into City Tech's expanding portfolio of degree offerings. Associate degrees serve as a critical gateway for students who do not qualify for direct entry into the baccalaureate programs. City Tech is dedicated to remaining a comprehensive institution that continues to value and update its associate degrees as a way to achieve our mission of inclusive, workforce relevant education.

THEME 1b: Strengthen workforce integration

Some people commented that there should be closer alignment of our programs with industry. Mechanisms suggested included integrating industry certifications offered by CE with degree program curricula and strengthening our co-op and internship opportunities. These suggestions are in alignment with City Tech's mission of workforce relevant education. Further, as many of City Tech's new bachelor's degree programs include internship requirements, the need for a collegewide approach to industry integration with program curricula becomes more pressing. Is there a role for the Professional Development Center, the Office of Public Affairs and Partnerships, the Division of Continuing Education, or the CUNY Service Corps in collaborating with departments on curriculum development in the degree programs? How can these efforts be coordinated and encouraged across the college?

THEME 2

Increase retention and graduation rates by improving student success

“City Tech should commit to student success as a main driver of every action on campus.” This commitment is affirmed as City Tech’s fundamental priority, detailed in the self-study and set forth as *Recommendation 1: Implement a comprehensive, cross-institutional plan for student retention and success.*

THEME 2a: Resources

Resource limitations are apparently widely felt in areas of staffing, faculty hiring, student support, and services available for students in evening programs. This was one expression of a consistent theme, that staff hiring had not kept pace with faculty hiring and enrollment. Several people noted the need for a continuation of robust faculty hiring to increase course offerings and others suggested online course components to increase course accessibility to students. The unavailability of particular required course is a problem that impedes students’ timely graduation, if one required course is not available during the student’s final semester.

Theme 2bi: Suggested strategies for increasing retention & graduation rates — comprehensive

The CUNY Academic Momentum Campaign, the appointment of a new VP for Enrollment and Student Affairs, and the impressive retention outcomes yielded by ASAP are converging to provide a unique opportunity to create a flexible, adaptable system of interrelated services and support resources designed to accelerate degree attainment. The college is exploring ways to adapt comprehensive approaches to student support for baccalaureate students and has requested NSF funding to support a pilot project.

Theme 2bii: Suggested strategies for increasing retention & graduation — support programs & offices

Concerns were expressed around students’ ability to understand how the various support services are interrelated and what the points of access are. There is a recognized need to articulate academic support resources more closely with instruction and to communicate the specific function of each service and means of accessing it to the student body more effectively.

One commenter pointed out that, “Unless responsibility and authority for the student experience is assigned to a specific position or office we cannot expect services for students to improve.” Suggestions focused around marketing student support services aggressively to students and to faculty, more actively supporting students in developmental skills courses, expanding tutoring and support services for evening services, and expanding peer tutoring and math support.

Work is underway on a number of initiatives in pursuit of these goals. First Year Programs and the Mathematics Department are developing a new co-requisite model for Math (and English) (see Lauri

Aguirre and Sandie Han) that will significantly expand attention to these students. Math Start will also be a great support. “Make learning math a path to success” is a new comprehensive initiative. The Math Department is fully engaged and has taken first steps to coordinate with math needs as identified by other departments.

Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) in Math, CMCE, and ARCH continue to expand. Additional math tutoring is funded through Perkins and ASAP. *Opening Gateways in Math*, a Title V cooperative arrangement grant with BMCC, is also promising. The overall question of academic support needs a varied, flexible solution—much more than face-to-face tutoring itself can provide.

Existing and new technology will support efforts to increase success. A new system in Degree Works for the improved evaluation of transfer credits (“Transfer What Ifs?”) is to be launched in July. Students are encouraged to claim their associate degrees en route to the baccalaureate, in programs where this option exists. During the 2018-2019 academic year, CUNY senior colleges will start to implement EAB student success tools that use data analytics to identify important indicators of student and college performance, as well as supporting advisors and communicating with students.

Theme 2biii: Suggested strategies for increasing retention & graduation rates — mentorship & advisement

Students say they experience problems with academic advisement. While students in particular programs such as SEEK or ASAP receive a higher intensity of advisement and swift intervention if they encounter academic difficulty, many students, especially part-time and evening students, do not have access to the same level of support. The inauguration of Project Wayfinding, a new graphic tool for tracking academic progress, lays out entire degree programs and is significant step forward in providing transparent consistent messaging to students; it is designed to reinforce academic advisement. There was agreement that these degree maps are a great first step, but suggestions urged expansion of the Wayfinding tools to guide students through non-academic aspects of the student experience.

Other suggestions included increased guidance on choosing a major and understanding the employment possibilities that are enabled by particular degrees, training for faculty advisors, and designation of one or two faculty in each department responsible for transfer evaluation to improve consistency. The proposed new AS in Health Sciences would cover employment opportunities in its introductory course. Both the information and time to explore are needed. Proposed AS in Health Science and integrated first year in Engineering Technology are taking this approach to help students explore. Mentorship is often a critical success factor in students’ college careers. Additional mentors should be sought among alumni, industry representatives, college staff, and faculty. We have several robust mentoring models. Training and coordination of mentors requires staff and resources.

Theme 2biv: Suggested strategies for increasing retention & graduation rates — assorted

Respondents pointed to consistent and long-standing student complaints regarding the demeanor, courtesy, and professional skills of college employees who serve students in both academic and non-academic offices. Self-study *Recommendation 2* commits to expand assessment-driven institutional improvement from its focus on academics to other aspects of the student experience and institutional processes. Recent inclusion of Student Affairs and Finance and Administration areas in the college-wide

assessment committee will provide a formalized framework for planning and monitoring improvements in these areas.

One respondent asked why attendance has recently been de-emphasized. While attendance is important, CUNY guidelines preclude faculty from failing students on attendance alone if students can demonstrate that they meet the learning outcomes. The college administration asks faculty to take attendance, to emphasize the importance of active, engaged attendance participation, and to reward it.

Another respondent asked whether the college conducts exit interviews or otherwise surveys students who leave college about their reasons for leaving. Several surveys have been conducted with limited populations, which are corroborative around four main reasons for transfer or stopping out: poor academic performance, financial difficulties, family issues, or transfer for a major not available at City Tech. City Tech's AIRE office is currently planning a broader survey.

One respondent suggested an analysis of the differences between student experiences in departments with high vs. low retention rates. There are a number of known factors for some of the differences, such as the maturity of students that tend to be attracted by certain programs or the successes in programs that are heavily supported by ASAP. Clearly more can be done to address these differentials and the new "Student-Ready Departments" project, funded by Perkins, is underway to support department-level interventions that have proven effective.

Another commenter pointed to the level of support available to evening and weekend students; this is a concern that appears in student survey data as well. Self-study recommendation #1 prioritizes student success and this is a good reminder of the effort that will be required to include the needs of all demographics.

There was a question of whether class size has been studied as a variable in student success. This issue has been extensively studied in higher education generally, and in a few cases at City Tech, with varied results. Many factors impact student learning including the types of learning objectives and teaching methodology. If a faculty member or department has a particular concern, a targeted assessment plan might be considered in order to provide guidance for the specific case.

THEME 3

Improve transparency, communication, and dissemination of information about institutional processes and procedures

Improved communication is explicitly included as a core strategy in each of the four final self-study recommendations, including the use of assessment to improve the effectiveness of communication. Communication was a major cross-cutting theme that emerged in the research of each of the Middle States committee working groups. It was also an overriding theme of the student advisory group. A point of consensus in the Chairs' Colloquium discussion of the self-study draft was that truly effective communications would go a long way toward addressing the other priorities identified in the self-study.

A number of initiatives in recent years have resulted in improved communications or improved opportunity for communications: new student orientation, the curriculum wayfinding project, the posting of consolidated tutoring schedules each semester, intensive new communication protocols implemented by the registrar's office, the new college website—including pages for general education and for student grievance procedures, and the robust use of OpenLab. It is clear from the volume of feedback and concern throughout the self-study process that much remains to be done.

THEME 3a: Centralized communications

Many people had excellent suggestions for specific tools and strategies for creating more centralized, effective, and easily navigable communications systems, particularly in support of the student experience.¹ Communication might be another appropriate area of focus for a dedicated committee, possibly as part of, or in collaboration with the College Council Technology Committee.

What are the tools and processes used by peer institutions at CUNY and elsewhere that could provide models for successful communications with students?

THEME 3b: Clear communication of policies and procedures

How can we encourage and make the most of opportunities for communication and collaborations across academic and administrative departments and offices? The recent expansion of the City Tech Assessment Committee to include non-academic units is a promising example.

How do we foster a culture that promotes positive business etiquette in all communications?

THEME 3c: Effective projection of City Tech's identity, mission, and value

The evolution of a shared, cohesive institutional identity that is aligned with the significant institutional development of recent year is a part of goal IV of our 2014-2019 strategic plan and of Recommendation 4 of the self-study. The Office of Public Affairs and Partnerships and the Professional Development Center were created in recognition of this important priority. How can academic programs and other internal communications most effectively collaborate/coordinate with these and future initiatives?

¹ A detailed plan submitted by Anthony Ruvio is included here in full:

Digital Communication Hub with Students:

As discussed, e-mail is not the most effective means of digital communication with students for a variety of factors. I propose that the college invest consideration into the creation of a more robust “Digital Hub” of sorts, consisting of both web-presence and iOS and Android-based apps (phone and tablet variants). The system could:

- Effectively replace existing Registrar protocol.
- Make clear, in a pictorial manner, how a selected schedule can affect the length of a student’s academic career (i.e. adding another class this semester, could assist in graduating early).
- Communicate with students’ digital calendars and populate it with room locations.
- Update a students’ calendar with class cancellations, adjustments, and college closures.
- Provide social network-like features, wherein students would communicate with one another, in addition to their professors.
- Provide an indoor map of the college campus (or link to third party indoor maps like Google and iOS).
- Integrate with CUNY alerts for issues of emergency, inclement weather, or other matters of safety.
- Incorporate Blackboard-like features to promote class collaboration and remote learning.
- Present job-placement/internship opportunities as offered by the Professional Development Center.

A brief review of the iOS App Store will display many college-related apps, including some official CUNY variants. These apps, however, are very light in feature set, indirect in design language, and have poor reviews by users.

Eventually, such digital presence will become the standard in academia, and it makes sense for New York City College of Technology to be at the forefront of such development. There are many more possible features to discuss including services that would benefit faculty, staff, and administrators (i.e. smart watch “keys” to access classrooms/labs, validate WiFi logins, etc.). As mobile devices are nearly ubiquitous among the student base, it could possibly extend past language barriers, as well.

THEME 4

Improve institutional climate with respect to diversity, inclusion, and community

THEME 4a: Diversity and inclusion

The recently revised mission statement affirms the college's identity as a diverse educational community committed to "nurtur[ing] an atmosphere of inclusion, respect, and open-mindedness in which all members can flourish." These dimensions of institutional life constitute an irreducible tenet of our mission.

Several people urged focus on a comprehensive diversity and inclusion program at the College.

Diversity as a fundamental institutional value cannot be reduced to a checklist. A responsive institution might, for example, embed a diversity of cultural perspectives throughout the curriculum. Linguistic diversity might be valued highly and students might be encouraged to adapt their native language skills for professional applications.

We have some experience in digging deeper into issues of under-representation and climate from the NSF ADVANCE Catalyst grant and subsequent full proposal. The effort was enlightening. Perhaps a study group might revisit some of those ideas and generate others that would move us beyond the college's compliance with diversity and equity guidelines to fulfill a richer vision of who we are as a community.

THEME 4b: Enrich college culture, expand opportunities, create community

A number of comments urged more focus on fostering a shared sense of mission and pride, increasing participation in cultural activities, building networks to support expanded student opportunities, and similar activities to support a healthy collegiate culture reflective of City Tech's transformation from a 2-year to a majority 4-year college. Institutional culture and climate can best be understood in a holistic sense. Transformation to a predominantly baccalaureate institution is now defined primarily in terms of academic offerings. There should be a commensurate rethinking of how to deepen student life in a way that befits a four-year college. Perhaps climate and community also require a task force/study group that would consider City Tech's legacy as a vocationally oriented post-secondary institution that has provided relatively few models of extra-curricular collegiate life and civic participation. How now can we provide students with a rich and dynamic social infrastructure that connects them to the school and the city beyond?

THEME 5

Use assessment to measure attainment of education goals, student success, and fiscal and managerial effectiveness

THEME 5a: Assessment for institutional improvement, beyond student learning

A number of comments focused on expanding assessment beyond student learning outcomes to include all college processes. There was particular interest in expanding assessment to include college processes that have direct student interfaces.

The expansion of assessment to all college processes is a primary component of Recommendation 2 of the Middle States self-study, and hence is something the college commits to doing over the next eight years.

Additional comments emphasized that the focus of assessment must be improvement of institutional processes through concrete changes. Within the Middle State Commission for Higher Education, the process of assessment is defined to include not just measurement but also meaningful use of collected data. Thus, in order for the college to achieve the assessment recommendation, it must implement changes based on the data it collects.

THEME 5b: Assessment of online learning

Some people suggested that it is necessary to ensure that assessment efforts at the college include online and evening programs.

Assessing student learning across all modalities and in evening programs is part of comprehensive assessment. The standing school assessment committees are charged with the assessment of student learning outcomes, including online and evening courses.

THEME 6

Increase support for faculty in terms of working conditions, research facilities, service obligations, and equitable personnel practices

THEME 6a: Resources and working conditions

The adequacy of support for faculty research, office and research space, department climate, and heavy service responsibilities were topics of concern for a number of respondents; these are issues that have arisen in the COACHE surveys of faculty as well. Self-study Recommendation 1 points to the importance of support for faculty research, scholarship, and creative work, as a critical component in any comprehensive strategy for student success. Self-study Recommendation 4 highlights faculty and constituent participation in institutional planning as foundational to institutional excellence and to fostering a sense of collaborative agency in the creation of a positive work environment. These are challenging but important priorities in times of scarce resources. The Middle States Executive Committee urges a renewed focus on faculty support during the upcoming strategic planning cycle.

See Theme 4—Institutional Climate, above, for additional relevant analysis.

One respondent asked: is faculty responsibility for mentoring and advisement supported institutionally in a way that is comparable to support provided for faculty at other CUNY colleges?

THEME 6b: Administrative support

A number of respondents observed that administrative hiring has not kept pace with growth in faculty hiring and student enrollment, resulting in difficult working conditions, administrative backlogs, and heavy service responsibilities for faculty.

THEME 6c: Clarity of expectations

Clarity of expectations has been an area of concern reflected on the COACHE and other surveys of City Tech faculty. It has been an inevitable challenge given the wide a range of professional and technical fields represented, and in a period of significant institutional change. The Personnel Committee has recently made this issue a focus of its agenda. The detailed Guidelines for Faculty Personnel Process issued in 2010 were updated and approved by College Council this spring (2018). The Committee has also been investigating procedures at other CUNY colleges that might serve as models for updating our reappointment and promotion processes. The Provost continues to hold annual Q&A sessions open to all faculty, and annual training sessions for Appointments Committees and Peers to assure uniform understanding of criteria and policies.

Some people expressed concern over transparency in the promotion process. As per CUNY policy, the deliberations and actual vote counts of the P&B are confidential and advisory to the President, who takes the final decision on recommendations to the Board of Trustees. A description of CUNY confidentiality requirements and full details of the promotion process, including appeals, are compiled in the *Guide for Faculty Personnel Process* available on the OSFR web pages.

THEME 7

Improve physical plant to better facilitate teaching and learning

One of the current administration's top priorities when assuming leadership in 2006 was the updating of facilities and infrastructure, both in support of new and updated programs and to address decades of deferred maintenance. Focused and successful efforts at procuring capital over this period have supported more than \$615 million in capital projects. The new academic building is only the most obvious and dramatic outcome of this campaign; nearly one third of the total has been expended on a variety of other critical projects, including: \$70 million for a new central plant to serve the main campus complex and new building, and \$49 million for façade restorations at Namm and Voorhees; elevator replacements across campus; security and fire system upgrades; roofing replacements; HVAC systems and lighting; Namm restroom renovations; IT infrastructure, instructional technology, email system and website upgrades; new classroom conversions; new COMD facilities in the Pearl Building; and renovations of Voorhees student lounge/cafeteria and public spaces, Namm kitchen and cafeteria, college bookstore, welcome center, and Hospitality/Culinary facilities.

Indisputably, a great deal remains to be done. In spite of significant progress, survey responses from faculty, staff, and students have remained persistently low in satisfaction ratings regarding the physical environment at the college. In the conduct of research and feedback discussions with stakeholders as part of the self-study process it was clear that much dissatisfaction resulted from a lack of understanding about the issues, the priorities and how they are set, and processes by which decisions are made and projects move forward. These findings are reflected in *Recommendation 2*, which emphasizes goals of effective communication, and *Recommendation 4*, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement in planning.

THEME 7a: Specific facilities issues

A number of people called out specific facilities concerns. These included the physical condition of older classrooms and offices, space limitations, and health/safety issues of sanitation, air quality, and particularly of temperature control. The difficulty of finding spaces for both planned and ad hoc student gatherings was also noted.

THEME 7b: Facilities planning processes

Multiple respondents expressed a desire for better communications and more opportunities for input and collaboration in the priority-setting and decision-making processes. Questions included whether those who use the college spaces are consulted on facilities planning and requests that there be more transparency in space planning processes. One person recommended that we specifically cite student involvement in institutional planning (*Recommendation 4*).

THEME 8:

Improve Institutional planning and fiscal management

As the self-study discusses, the university is in a period of significant fiscal constraint and issues around the adequacy of resources was a recurring theme. In this context, the careful setting of priorities and husbanding of resources is particularly critical.

THEME 8a: Resource priorities

The most consistent priority expressed by respondents was the need for staff positions commensurate with the growth in faculty hiring, student enrollment, and program development. One commenter asked whether we could have a larger student affairs staff similar to that at other CUNY colleges. Another very reasonably asserted that, “Unless responsibility and authority for the student experience is assigned to a specific position or office we cannot expect services for students to improve.”

One person suggested lobbying for increased funding as an institutional goal, “since austerity and under-funding is an endemic factor in institutional problems.” City Tech cannot lobby as if we were a separate institution. As the self-study discusses, our fate depends on CUNY’s success in securing resources. We can, however, make sure that our successes are known, as well as our needs.

Questions from respondents included: how City Tech funding per student compares to that of other CUNY colleges, and the relationship between student satisfaction rankings and administrative costs per student as compared with other CUNY colleges. Data on funding per student is available at: www.xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Student satisfaction ratings tend to be higher at the community colleges, which operate on a different funding model, traditionally have more advisors, and have been running ASAP for a longer period of time.

GENERAL COMMENTS

A number of comments that did not fit into the identified subthemes are addressed below.

One person commented that Faculty Commons and OpenLab should be used as to address MS recommendations. These are strategies that have been implemented and will continue to be expanded. For example, professional development on pedagogy offered by Faculty Commons supports Recommendation 1: Implement a comprehensive, cross-institutional plan for student retention and success. Open Lab will be used for more effective communication as well.

Another general comment was the suggestion to emphasize research collaborations across CUNY and with institutions beyond CUNY. Support for research collaborations is most developed within CUNY. The Office of Sponsored Programs website links to CUNY internal funding sources, many promoting collaborative projects (<http://www2.cuny.edu/research/faculty-resources/internal-funding/>). This is a good area for future focus to help advance faculty scholarship.

Another commenter wondered if we were doing enough to bring STEM students together across schools and buildings. One program that already does this is undergraduate research where students take workshops together and participate in the biannual poster session. Another initiative to promote this is the interdisciplinary course requirement, although not restricted to STEM. Additional activities for interdisciplinary collaboration would be a positive direction for the college.

The comment that there is a need to include non-academic areas in grants and other projects reflects a focus that has become more of a college priority. Student Affairs and Finance and Administration areas have joined the college-wide assessment committee. Several grants and initiatives to support student success involve collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs. This focus is expected to continue to expand.

An area for concern that one commenter expressed was that they were not sure faculty/staff understand Gen Ed as practiced by the college. This concern is being addressed through planned advisement training and web dissemination of information: <http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/pathways/degree-reqs.aspx>, linked to the Faculty Commons website, as well as the work of the General Education Committee, which includes liaisons from each department.

Lastly, a commenter had concerns about the relationship between College Council and the Administration. Upper administration and the Executive Committee do meet regularly to exchange information. Efforts are continuing to increase participation of all college council members. Low meeting attendance continues to plague the organization.

It was also noted that support from IT has improved, especially responses to feedback and requests.