

QUALITY FOCUS ESSAY – DRAFT FOR IPC COMMENT

Narrative: On March 27, the first full draft the ISER standards – having been twice circulated for comment and feedback, first to the original writing teams, and then to the College community as a whole – was approved by the Institutional Planning Committee (IPC).

The next day, a group familiar with the ISER met to discuss themes and projects for the Quality Focus Essay (QFE). This group included faculty and classified staff, the College President and Vice-Presidents, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinator, and the President and Vice-President of the Academic Senate; also present were the dean of Enrollment Services, the director of Guided Pathways, the coordinators for two student initiatives (Promise Scholars and Dual Enrollment), and others connected to ISER writing teams.

The group discussed a number of themes arising from the ISER: the potential offered by deeper data analysis, the new assessment process with its focus on grassroots experimentation, the need to keep exploring ways to strengthen communication and institutional planning. However, these themes either did not resolve themselves into immediate concrete plans, or are already part of our regular practice.

The question before this group was: Based on what the ISER described, which College programs or initiatives should be singled out as best expressing the direction of the College over the next five years?

Guided Pathways: Community colleges are living through something of a sea-change. Triggered by legislation as well as a national emphasis on the importance of purposeful, accessible post-secondary education, colleges are working to develop new models of student guidance and equity. The emphasis has decisively shifted towards outcomes, and colleges must now frame their activities and offerings around this principle: How best to ensure that students take away what they want, and need, from their education.

The umbrella initiative, then, that summarizes the College’s direction is surely Guided Pathways, which is dedicated to making sure that *all* students’ educational journeys (including those from underserved populations) are smooth, well-lit, straightforward, supported in a way that is tailored to the student’s needs, and culminate in meaningful outcomes – with implications for counseling, curriculum, academic and learning support programs, and interdisciplinary collaborations. The College is enthusiastic about the possibilities of this evolving direction for community college, while remaining committed to providing students with a rigorous, relevant, and high-quality education.

The College have a Guided Pathways Steering Committee, which is following a five-year plan. However, the QFE group chose to highlight two specific projects that are integral to the College’s future direction, and that speak to two of the College’s Strategic Priorities: first, connecting students to the academic community (“Supporting Our Students’ Aspirations”), and connecting students to satisfying and meaningful careers (“Building On A Tradition Of Service To The Community”).

QFE Action Project One: Promise Scholars / CUNY ASAP Replication Program

QFE Action Project Two: Improve Job Placement Success with the Workforce Hub