



Middle States Commission on Higher Education
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Team Report to the Commission on Higher Education

Hunter College of the City of University of New York
Dates of Evaluation: *April 14-17, 2019*

**The Evaluation Team Representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

Section A: Team Members, Titles, and Institutional Affiliation

Mr. Brian T. Rose, Vice President for Student Affairs, Binghamton University (Chair)

Mr. Dennis Fotia, Assistant Director of the Center for Learning Design, Stockton University
(Team Member)

Ms. Shirley Lake-King, Vice President of Administration and Finance, University of the Virgin
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Dr. Andrew David Lloyd, Professor, Delaware State University (Team Member)

Dr. Heather D. Maldonado, Assistant Provost for Academic Success & Visiting Associate
Professor of Higher Education, SUNY Buffalo State (Team Member)

Dr. Anuradhaa Shastri, Professor, Coordinator for Assessment Activities, SUNY College at
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Dr. Carole V. Wells, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Kutztown University of
Pennsylvania (Team Member)

Dr. Vita C Rabinowitz, Interim Chancellor, City University of New York Central Administration
(System Representative)

Section B: Institutional Representatives at the Time of Visit

Officers of the Institution at the time of the visit:

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Section C: Team Findings

I. Institutional Overview: Context and Nature of the Visit

Hunter College is a public, four-year master's granting institution that is part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system. Its approved credential levels include:

- Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent Approval
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Approval
- Master's Degree or Equivalent Approval
- Post-Master's Certificate Approval
- Doctor's Degree - Professional Practice Approval
- Doctor's Degree- Research/Scholarship Approval (Approved to offer ONE program at this credential level)

Hunter College's main campus is located at Lexington Avenue and 68th Street in New York City. While there are not any branch campuses there are several residence hall and academic buildings placed strategically around the New York City area. During the campus visit, the bulk of the review team's meetings were held at the Main Campus with visits to the Roosevelt House, Belfer Research Center and East Harlem locations. Hunter College has one approved distance program (RN to BS in Nursing) and one pending New York State Educational Department approval.

Locations of Units Away from Main Hunter College Campus

Unit	Location
Silberman School of Social Work	119 th St. and Third Avenue
Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing/School of Health Professions	Brookdale Campus, 425 East 25 th St.
MFA in Studio Art, Program and Gallery	205 Hudson St.
Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute	47-49 East 65 th St.
Belfer Research Lab	413 East 69 th St.
Science and Health Professions Building— construction pending with Memorial Sloan- Kettering	74 th St and FDR Drive
Hunter College Campus Schools (Secondary and Primary)	East 94 th St., between Park and Madison Aves.
Manhattan Hunter Science High School	66 th St and Amsterdam Ave.
Casa Lally	132 East 65 th St.
"450 West"/Special Programs Building	450 West 41 st St.
92 nd St Residence Hall	1395 Lexington Ave.
97 th St Residence Hall	1760 Third Ave.
Brookdale Residence	425 East 25 th St.

The Self-Study was conducted by looking at the institution’s four strategic priorities through the lens of each of the Middle States Standards.

Strategic Priorities for the Self-Study
Enhance Hunter College’s academic identity as a research institution
Foster interdisciplinary learning and scholarship
Broaden opportunities for student success
Expand and deepen engagement with New York City neighborhoods and institutions

Each chapter in the Self-Study served to review each of the seven Standards and the criteria within those Standards as well as exploring progress on the strategic priorities via each relevant standard. In addition, the Self-Study sought to develop forward-looking recommendations around these objectives to be used in developing the next Strategic Plan.

II. Evaluation Overview

The Self-Study document prepared by Hunter College begins by noting that Hunter College occupies a distinctive place in American higher education as an engine of social mobility. In a national context of expanding inequities in the distribution of opportunity and wealth, access to affordable, quality higher education has never been more important. The visiting team commends the Hunter College administration, faculty and staff for its embrace of a mission to provide access to a rigorous education that prepares students from all backgrounds to.... care for the future. The team further commends the students and graduates we had the privilege of meeting for seizing the opportunities provided at Hunter College with such energy. You demonstrate that Hunter College’s investment in you is well-placed.

Cultivating the qualities necessary for graduates to thrive in their careers and be leaders in their communities require a college to have the capacity to continue to evolve in response to changes in the needs of students and changes in the external context. Building that capacity at full scale, while maintaining affordability and relying upon public funding has inherent challenges. The team commends Hunter College for accepting that challenge and we make particular note of the college’s extraordinary success in cultivating philanthropic support during President Raab’s tenure, which support has undergirded many Hunter College initiatives that serve its mission.

Affordable, urban, public higher education ideally leverages the advantages of an urban location while also mitigating the distinct challenges of an urban context. Hunter College’s efforts to expand experiential learning opportunities for its students through multifarious community engagement opportunities, to enhance its research profile, to provide access to the arts and create attractive spaces for students, faculty and staff to interact despite an older physical plant is evidence that Hunter College successfully does both.

There are also indelible institutional characteristics that flow from Hunter College’s context that should be understood, accepted and effectively managed. Hunter College will likely always have a predominantly commuter student profile, will continue to serve a large number of transfer students and will rely upon many part-time, adjunct faculty to maintain necessary teaching capacity. The site visit team has feedback tied to the standards of accreditation that aim to improve the student experience within the boundaries of what can reasonably change.

The Hunter College Self-Study provides a thorough and thoughtfully self-reflective appraisal of Hunter College's many remarkable accomplishments as well as its important opportunities for future improvement. The Hunter College community will recognize many of the visiting team's suggestions as amplifications of your own analysis and will also hopefully find our suggestions to be useful feedback in crafting your next strategic plan. In the team's judgment, the next several years offer Hunter College the opportunity to:

- a) sharpen the goals and more demonstrably unlock the value of the All in East Harlem initiative as a signature program embodying your commitments to engagement with New York City, interdisciplinary work and the development of future leaders.
- b) further enhance your commitment to educational opportunity and student success through focused attention upon improving outcomes for transfer students.
- c) engage in a comprehensive evaluation of opportunities to enhance support for part-time faculty and in so doing further improve teaching.
- d) maintain your resolve to further institutionalize a culture of assessment.

III. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Ten years ago during Hunter College's last Middle States Review, the visiting team noted the need to develop an updated strategic plan to guide Hunter College's fulfillment of its mission. Hunter College promptly and vigorously undertook that task and there is broad evidence of a clearly defined mission and institutional goals supportive of that mission throughout the Self-Study and supporting evidence. There is abundant evidence that Hunter College's mission and goals continue to guide decision-making, program development and resource allocation and that the strategic plan is relevant to and understood by institutional stakeholders. More particularly the team notes the following:

- The distinctive history of Hunter College, traced to its founding president Thomas Hunter, provides a source of institutional values related to equal opportunity, service to the needs of New York City and an education strongly rooted in the arts and sciences. The mission statement and current strategic plan clearly emanate from this history. Furthermore, there is evidence supporting the perpetuation of the institution's history and mission including:
 - A first-time student population that is 40% first generation and 44% Pell-eligible.
 - Attention to affordability both in a controlled approach to cost increases and increased scholarship support.
 - All In East Harlem as a prominent example of community engagement and interdisciplinary work.
 - Multiple initiatives that facilitate the recruitment of underrepresented populations into the sciences and into research opportunities.
- There is logical alignment across the institutional mission, Strategic Plan and institutional learning outcomes.

- Institutional goals pertaining to Hunter College’s identity as a research university are supported by appropriate investments in faculty capacity to pursue research.
- Appropriate programs and infrastructure also support institutional goals pertaining to student success. Of particular note are:
 - The exemplary investment in a student success center that brings together academic support and advising programs into the Leon and Toby Cooperman Library space.
 - The work product of the advising task force.
 - The Take 15 initiative.
- The goals of academic units at Hunter College are specifically linked to the institutional strategic plan through the annual reporting structure.

STANDARD I

In the team’s judgment, the institution **appears to meet** this standard.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

The team notes the following significant accomplishments, progress, exemplary and innovative practices:

- Hunter College’s high national ranking for helping graduates whose parents were in the lowest income quintile reach the top income quintile is a remarkable testament to the opportunity provided by Hunter College.
- The growth of Hunter College’s research activity through a combination of internal initiatives and strategic partnerships with external organizations such as those with Weill Cornell and Memorial Sloan Kettering, is noteworthy in a highly competitive environment and in the context of declining federal investment in research.
- The improvement in graduation and retention rates since the last review confirms the efficacy of the strategic plan directed investment in student success.

Suggestions:

The team provides the following non-binding Suggestions for improvement:

- The team endorses the suggestion made in the Self-Study that Hunter College strengthen coordination of the All In East Harlem initiative in order to maximize the benefits of interdisciplinary work, maintain meaningful community relationships and increase student placements and applied research. The team further encourages those leading the initiative to bring additional focus by setting achievable short-term goals with clear and measurable targets pertaining both to the nature and extent of Hunter College’s engagement and to tangible community impact generated from the partnerships thereby created.
- The team encourages Hunter College to promptly begin a formal process of strategic plan review and renewal and to be guided by the opportunities for improvement identified in the process of self-study.
- Related to the above suggestion, the team believes the development of some form of quick-reference guide or dashboard relative to the current strategic plan would be useful and allow internal and external audiences to more readily identify areas where goals have been met and where progress is still needed.

Recommendations: The Team has no recommendations relative to Standard I.

Requirements: The Team has no requirements relative to Standard I.

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Hunter College demonstrates Ethics and Integrity in activities that are periodically assessed through institutional policies, processes, practices, and implementation. Some policies and practices are operated and regulated through the College's affiliation with the City University of New York (CUNY) while others are Hunter-specific. Honoring the summative expression of its mission, *Mihi, Cura Futuri*, the college is faithful to its mission honoring its contracts and commitments and adhering to policies while representing itself truthfully and honestly. There is substantial evidence that Hunter College is committed to academic and intellectual freedoms of expression and intellectual rights as well as a fair and transparent tenure and promotion procedure for faculty. Hunter College practices fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, and separation of employees. Evidence is clear that Hunter College has aligned its mission with a strategic plan and appropriate financial resources to provide programming and physical structures to enhance and further a climate of respect amongst its community. Specifically, the team notes the following:

- Academic, intellectual, and expressional freedoms are affirmed, upheld and protected by the administration, faculty and college-wide senate, and professional staff congress. Faculty affirmation of this is clear in a 2015 COACHE (Faculty) Survey. Intellectual Property Rights are respected and addressed both by CUNY and Hunter College policy. Hunter's administration is cognizant that their Intellectual Property Rights agreement will need to be revisited as they move to expand their online program.
- A climate of diversity and respect is fostered amongst faculty, staff, and students. This is demonstrated from the Office of the President to the Student Senate. Diversity is evidenced in the gender, race, and ethnicity of the student body as well as faculty and staff. Respect and recognition of diverse perspectives are evidenced not only in curricula but also in institutional programming, resource utilization and space allocation. Respect for students is evidenced in various retention monitoring efforts and in the opportunities provided for students to communicate openly through easily accessed methods and/or technologies. Hunter College displays a commitment to diversity, tolerance, and inclusion through centers such as the *Multifaith Center*.
- Students have various avenues to communicate grievances and complaints. Staff and faculty are represented by bargaining units which represent their members with policies and procedures regarding terms and conditions of employment. Onboarding of employees through Human Resources and information provided via appropriate bargaining units also provide pathways to communicate policies regarding conflict and grievance resolution.
- Hunter College avoids the appearance of conflicts of interest and follows related CUNY policy and procedures.
- Hiring practices follow federal, state, and CUNY guidelines. Effective results of hiring practices are evident in female representation in full-time faculty with only a small number (1-2) of complaints received.

- Transparent practices are in place regarding recruiting, admissions, and internal information. Open web site data are periodically reviewed by the Provost as well as various institutional offices.
- Hunter College promotes affordability, through the promotion of Open Educational Resources (OER) to both faculty and staff. The Office of Financial Aid helps students make informed choices regarding student loans. Targeted electronic and web communication by the Financial Aid staff promotes application of the FAFSA for students to take advantage of possible external funding sources. The college's Foundation contributed \$9,670,273 towards educational programs and student scholarships. Student debt counseling is also made available through the Office of Admissions.
- Hunter College complies with all federal, state, and commission regulations and requirements regarding the disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates. Some of this data is also readily available to selected college personnel via protected authenticated reporting systems. Hunter College complies with applicable federal, state, and commission reporting policies as evidenced in MSCHE periodic review as well as CUNY affiliation.
- Evidence of periodic assessment of ethics and integrity are evidenced in institutional policies, processes, and practices that are reviewed and those that are updated or created.

STANDARD II

In the team's judgment, the institution **appears to meet** this standard.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

The team notes the following significant accomplishments, progress, exemplary and innovative practices:

- Hunter College is to be commended for its commitment to fostering a climate of respect in regards to diversity and inclusivity through its unique *Multifaith Center*. The *Center* represents not only a physical place for students of various faiths and faith organizations to convene but also provides a programmatic foundation for interfaith dialogue. For this affirmation of their mission in practice, Hunter College is to be commended.
- Hunter College is to be commended for its commitment to academic freedom as expressed in its support of faculty, their speech on matters of public concern and their role in developing curricula.

Suggestions:

The team provides the following non-binding suggestions for improvement:

- The team affirms the suggestion made in the Self-Study to develop and implement "Hunter 311". While a web site exists already to receive and respond to non-emergency needs, a centralized service center will expand existing services and make the process more transparent and efficient.
- The team suggests Hunter College implement strategies to further enhance the marketing of faculty job opportunities to under-represented populations in order to further advance faculty diversity.

Recommendations: The Team has no recommendations relative to Standard II.

Requirements: The Team has no requirements relative to Standard II.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The educational system at Hunter College promotes breadth of learning across multiple subject disciplines and depth of learning in specific subject areas. There are general education program requirements in place that provide depth and breadth for the educational experience. These requirements are divided between those required by the CUNY system and those specific to Hunter College.

Programs of study are described in detail in locations that can be accessed by students. The descriptions include information on meeting general education requirements as well as major and minor program requirements, though we note a lack of common format or presentation to the program requirements. Online course offerings have expanded in the past few years with enough course offerings available for a student to complete General Education requirements online if they so desire. Select complete programs are also being made available online as well. Hybrid courses are also being more widely offered. Another academic best practice that is in place at Hunter College are the options for learning communities offered to a limited number of entering first-year students.

Graduate programs provide opportunities for research, creativity and independent thinking. Most students are concentrated in Masters Programs in the professional schools. Offerings at the doctoral level have been expanding in recent years with all schools but one offering this level of degree program.

There is now an organized and established system of program assessment in place for most academic programs. Programs with established histories of practice are being used as exemplars. Nearly all programs have assessment processes implemented, with only graduate programs in the School of Arts and Sciences lacking full coverage. Key to this successful implementation has been establishing personnel and processes to make assessment integral and routine, with a system of program assessment and review that can influence curricular decisions.

Interdisciplinary programs are a recognized focus of academic instruction and these align with the strategic plan.

STANDARD III

In the team's judgment, the institution **appears to meet** this standard.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

The team notes the following significant accomplishments, progress, exemplary and innovative practices:

- There is a clear institutional commitment to the arts. This extends beyond academics to opportunities for community engagement and experiential learning for students, all of which align with institutional objectives. In particular, financial support for students to participate in unpaid internships is noteworthy.

- Community engagement is an institutional priority and the East Harlem facility is a cornerstone for this initiative. There are several individual programs that reside in this facility and it will undoubtedly provide opportunities for faculty and students to contribute to the community in meaningful ways.
- Support for tenure-track faculty is praiseworthy. Course release time is guaranteed for the first five years of the tenure track in order for the faculty member to establish a program of scholarly research. In addition, support and mentorship appears to be readily available and effective at promoting faculty success. Support continues after tenure is achieved and is focused on helping faculty achieve promotion to full professor.
- The designation of faculty within programs as assessment coordinators, with compensation and support for their work has been helpful in establishing effective assessment practices and should be maintained to engrain best practices as normal and routine within all academic areas.

Suggestions:

The team provides the following non-binding suggestions for improvement:

- The team identified multiple opportunities to make information about programs and services more accessible as follows:
 - Faculty would benefit from a single portal to link to all the diverse funding sources and opportunities available.
 - Students desire clear and simple access to all available funding, internships and experiential learning opportunities. Consideration should also be given to whether centralizing the program administration of scholarships, internships, and experiential learning opportunities would improve equity of participation and efficiency of program service delivery.
- A standard format for program maps and course sequences would help make curricular information more accessible. This could also extend into the departmental websites in general. Experiential learning, including undergraduate student involvement in faculty research and learning opportunities that engage with the community, is emphasized by the institution and creates pathways for students to move into the workforce. In order to maximize the impact of these best practices, existing assessment efforts should grow along with the programs to clearly measure the effect they have on student success.
- Graduate students have diverse life experiences and multiple paths of entry into graduate programs. The team suggests Hunter College extend its commitment to student success to consider in a structured way how support and services provided to graduate students could be enhanced to accommodate this breadth of experience.
- We endorse the following suggestions from the Self-Study:
 - the continued expansion of opportunities for experiential learning.
 - defining goals for interdisciplinarity.
 - the development of a strategic plan for online learning.
- When appropriate and reasonable opportunities for advocacy arise, Hunter College should work with the CUNY system to promote equitable compensation for adjunct faculty.

Recommendations:

- The team adopts from the Self-Study as its recommendation the call for a Presidential Task Force on part-time faculty. Through the Task Force, the college should develop specific strategies that will better support adjunct faculty with the additional related aim of improving student success.

Requirements: The team has no requirements relative to Standard III.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributed to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Hunter College has implemented multiple supports to enhance the student experience on their campus since the College's last Middle State Review in 2009. Initiatives have been significant in scope, institutionalized in practice, and normalized as part of campus culture. Additionally, Hunter College revised its organizational structure to create a leadership position (i.e., Senior Advisor to the President for Student Success and Strategic Initiatives) to orchestrate a campus-wide approach to student success and expanded staffing in key student support areas to improve the student experience and academic outcomes. Specifically, the team notes the following:

- The institution has clear policies and easily accessible processes for admission of first-year, transfer, and graduate students. These policies include information related to transfer credit evaluation. Additionally, Hunter College has clear policies on the secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records.
- Multiple student supports exist (e.g., special admit cohorts, orientation, Silverstein Student Success Center programs) to help develop students' intellectual and social competencies.
- The institution offers a breadth of athletic and student life activities to supplement the student experience and, per the Self-Study evidence file, these extracurricular activities are governed by the same fiscal and administrative regulations as other programs.
- The Self-Study notes that 75% of Hunter College students graduate from the college debt-free, and this is highly commendable especially given the mission of the institution and the financial need of the student body.
- Assessment of student support programs has expanded significantly since the last Middle States review, and there is a plan in place to further develop that assessment plan to enhance understanding of areas of strength and areas for improvement for student support.

All of these supports in the student experience have led to improved first-time full-time student retention rates (83% for the Fall 2016 cohort) and graduation rates (24% four-year and 52% six-year for the Fall 2011 cohort) which have been consistent rates in recent years. Transfer student retention and graduation rates are less strong (retention: 74% for the Fall 2016 cohort; graduation: 10% two-year and 43% four-year for the Fall 2011 cohort) which indicates opportunities for Hunter College to develop additional supports to better support transfer students in their pursuit of degree attainment. Graduate student retention and graduation data were not provided.

STANDARD IV

In the team's judgment, the institution **appears to meet** this standard.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

The team notes the following significant accomplishments, progress, exemplary and innovative practices:

- Undergraduate Advising – the robust improvements to undergraduate advising (e.g., proactive advising model, peer advisors and learning communities, professional advisors, advising syllabus) that occurred due to Hunter College's 2012-2020 Strategic Plan under the guidance of a Task Force have resulted in more opportunities for students to receive academic advisement and related support. Additionally, pre-professional advising supports students through the complicated paths to graduate school and licensure.
- The Silverstein Student Success Center and related library renovation and service realignment have substantially increased utilization of advising and academic support and improved academic outcomes.
- The creation of additional honors programs beyond Macaulay Honors College expands the number of honors opportunities for Hunter College students to connect to high-level learning experiences. The scholarships provided with these programs assist the college in fulfilling its mission of enrolling students from all backgrounds to engage in a rigorous educational experience.
- The summer scholarships Hunter College offers to assist students in making progress toward timely graduation is an exemplary practice.
- It was announced during the site visit that CUNY was purchasing the Educational Advisory Board (EAB) platform to assist campuses with assessment work. This is a positive step in helping Hunter College reach a more mature level of assessment practice.

Suggestions:

The team provides the following non-binding suggestions for improvement:

- Consider expanding the academic advisement peer advisor model to provide peer support for first-year transfer students and continued peer support (in addition to their professional advisor assignment) through the sophomore year.
- Consider the following as means to improve transfer student success:
 - Review all college policies and processes that may impact transfer students' progress toward degree.
 - Evaluate once more the overall efficacy of maintaining the bifurcated transfer credit grade acceptance policy from CUNY and non-CUNY schools, which appears to create structural inequity and negatively impacts financial aid eligibility and time to degree.
 - Assess the effectiveness of Transfer Achievement Scholarships and Summer Scholarships to help recruit high-achieving transfer students and to assist transfer students in achieving timely graduation.
- Consider implementing improvements to the onboarding experiences of graduate students through such mechanisms as peer mentors, online tutorials, and additional staffing where possible.

Recommendations:

- While Hunter College has created an attractive and well-located career services suite, it lacks sufficient career staff capacity to meet its own goals relative to supporting its students' career

preparation and placement. Hunter College should prioritize enhancing career services staff and programs.

- The achievement gap between Hunter College transfer students and first-time, full-time students is significant and the transfer population is substantial. Hunter College should leverage its well-established problem-solving culture to launch a task force that will undertake a comprehensive study of the transfer student experience and recommend and implement strategies to close the achievement gap. The team has previously provided non-binding suggestions that may help guide the initial work of such a task force.

Requirements: The team has no requirements relative to Standard IV.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- There is convincing evidence that demonstrates that Hunter College's current assessment efforts meet the criteria of Standard V.
- While the Self-Study acknowledges that this is an ongoing and evolving culture, a number of systemic processes are now in place to insure academic decision-making is linked with student learning outcome data.
- All significant units of Hunter College are involved with collecting and analyzing data points in support of overall goals and mission of the institution.
- Efforts to assess student learning outcomes include direct assessment of skills through writing, problem sets, exams, and portfolio evaluation as well as indirect measures such as survey results, grades, and measures of academic progress.
- A well-developed Academic Program Assessment process appears to be in place. Assessment of student learning is clearly faculty owned and faculty driven. Academic program reviews are performed by all departments on a 7-year cycle to ensure that all departments undergo at least one full review cycle between institutional accreditation events. This process allows departments to report their learning outcomes, resource utilization, and link those outcomes to departmental, divisional, and institutional goals. Existing models of assessment that are effective need to be emulated by other departments.

STANDARD V

In the team's judgment, the institution **appears to meet** this standard.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

The team notes the following significant accomplishments, progress, exemplary and innovative practices:

- The Assessment Fellows Program coordinated by the Office of Assessment supports the development of assessment practices across campus by creating a cohort of campus leaders with a strong foundation in assessment.
- Math and writing present exemplary cases of assessment of student learning outcomes, in terms of how assessment practice has developed as well as how data are used to inform

curriculum and professional development. The movement towards cross-disciplinary collaborations that has resulted among other things in a new course titled, ‘Calculus for the Life and Social Sciences’ is noteworthy

Suggestions:

- Hunter College should more consistently implement the practice of providing course release for Assessment Coordinators across academic departments wherever practicable.
- The team suggests Hunter College enhance and expand assessment-related professional development for faculty and staff institution-wide.

Recommendations: The Team has no recommendations relative to Standard V.

Requirements: The team has no requirements relative to Standard V.

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

As a public college that is part of a larger university system, Hunter College operates within the structures of the New York State and CUNY budgeting processes. Tuition levels are set annually by the CUNY Board of Trustees. Contracts that establish salary structure and fringe benefits are also negotiated system-wide. Hunter College produces an annual spending plan driven by the mission and Strategic Plan. Responsibility for all-funds management of the College’s budget were recently placed under a single vice president for finance and budget.

In response to state and city budget cuts, which have fluctuated, and reduced revenues, Hunter College has been aggressive about fundraising, entrepreneurial about revenue generation, and careful and strategic about how it uses public funding. These strategies have minimized the painful cuts in times of belt-tightening and allowed the institution to continue investing in transformative projects to achieve its vision. As one of the senior colleges in CUNY, Hunter College received a public funds budget reduction of 3% in FY2016, 2% in FY2017 and 1% in FY2018.

The current facilities Master Plan Framework was initiated in 2015, through a highly consultative process coordinated by the Master Plan Committee and a consultant, who has since joined the administration at the College. Many recommendations for facilities improvements emerged from a month-long community engagement process. The committee also developed a set of principles to guide decision making and resource allocation, which continue to guide the annual planning process.

Hunter College works with CUNY to conduct the annual independent audit. The CUNY Board of Trustees Committee on Fiscal Affairs deals with the fiscal aspects of CUNY, its operating and capital budgets, policies and procedures relating to all-funds, and their accounting, auditing and investment. In addition, all entities affiliated with Hunter College have their own, independent

audit processes, including the Hunter College Foundation, the CUNY Research Foundation and Hunter's Enterprise Corporation.

STANDARD VI

In the team's judgment, the institution **appears to meet** this standard.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

The team notes the following significant accomplishments, progress, exemplary and innovative practices:

- Hunter College's entrepreneurial approach to fundraising and revenue-generation has not only reduced its reliance on public funding, which enables it to weather periods of belt-tightening, but provided resources to strategically invest in facilities as noted below:
 - \$15 million to purchase and renovate a building that is now part of the main campus and used exclusively by the Department of Theatre.
 - \$30 million to construct a new East Harlem campus, now home to the Silberman School of Social Work and other Hunter College schools and programs.
 - \$25 million as naming gift to modernize what is now known as the Leon and Toby Cooperman Library, and a separate \$5 million gift to create the Silverstein Student Success Center, now occupying the library's seventh floor.
 - \$10 million to support the planned renovation of Assembly Hall.
 - A combined gift totaling \$11 million that included the donation of the Casa Lally townhouse on East 65th Street along with funds for its renovation.
- The support provided to faculty through the establishment of release time for research initiatives is evidence of the college's intentionality with respect to building a culture of research, which would also benefit its students.
- Shared governance in the facilities planning and development process enabled students and faculty to participate and contribute in the development of the Master Plan. This resulted in the College investing in spaces designed to help students succeed academically.
- A successful partnership with the Weill Cornell Medical College resulted in the creation of the Clinical and Translational Science Center which acts as a conduit to efficiently share essential resources, technological tools and education programs with community partners.

Suggestions:

The team provides the following non-binding suggestions for improvement:

- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes and availability of resources needs to be institutionalized.
- In order for Hunter College to make progress towards the realization of its strategic goal to enhance its academic identity as a research institution, it should make the development of a Technology Strategic Plan a priority. A vibrant technology infrastructure will aid in its ability to attract top faculty and research grants and provide cutting edge research in the furtherance of its strategic focus and the value research brings.
- We concur with Hunter College that it needs to promote a culture of evidence through the increase in capacity in the Office of Institutional Research. This would position it to make evidence-based decisions as well as monitor its key performance indicators and measures of success.

Recommendations: The Team has no recommendations relative to Standard VI.

Requirements: The Team has no requirements relative to Standard VI.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituents it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

There is a clearly defined system of governance at Hunter College and within the City University of New York (CUNY) System that articulates policies that are consistent and that provide guidance with respect to educational mission and fiscal and personnel management. The ultimate authority for the College rests with the Board of Trustees, an autonomous body who operates pursuant to its own bylaws and policies. The Board's duties include recommending the appointment and review of the Chief Executive Officer of Hunter College, developing and guiding the College's mission in all areas of operation through institutional policy and planning, supporting the quality of teaching and financial integrity and management, establishing and overseeing student-related regulations and fees, construction, the approval of new programs, and generating support for the College.

The President is the chief executive officer with authority specifically delegated by the Chancellor and Board of Trustees. During 18 years under the current President's leadership, the College has experienced improved graduation rates, increased faculty hiring despite budget cuts, funding increases for student scholarships and faculty research, and substantial philanthropic support.

The College administration consists of the President; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students; Senior Advisor to the President for Student Success and Strategic Initiatives; Vice President for Administration; Vice President for Institutional Advancement; and Vice President for Finance and Budget. Administrators bring appropriate preparation and experience to their jobs.

Within the institution, the Hunter College Senate, Faculty Personnel and Budget Committee, Undergraduate Student Government, and Graduate Student Association, along with the President and her leadership team, comprise a shared governance system. The Hunter College Senate, composed of students, faculty, and administrators, functions in a legislative capacity in the shared governance structure. By tradition a student is elected to the position of vice-chair of the Senate and Administrative Committee. Students hold 38% of the Senate seats, providing students with a voice and involvement in College decisions. The Senate has 19 standing committees and several ad hoc committees. Included among its responsibilities are academic standing requirements and guidelines, long-range planning, evaluation of teaching, curriculum development, and the formation of administrative position search committees. The Faculty Personnel and Budget Committee, comprised of the President, Provost, and department chairpersons, functions as the executive body of the College.

STANDARD VII

In the team's judgment, the institution **appears to meet** this standard.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

The Team notes the following significant accomplishments, progress, exemplary and innovative practices:

- Under Hunter College administrative leadership and shared governance, (a.) Institutional Learning Outcomes were successfully developed, (b.) a new Student Union was planned and will be opened in fall 2019; and, (c.) as mentioned in Standard IV, movement toward a 21st century Library, including a \$25 million naming gift, are becoming a reality.

Suggestions:

The Team provides the following non-binding suggestions for improvement:

- As mentioned in the Self-Study, developing strategies to increase the extent to which undergraduate and graduate students take advantage of the existing opportunities for involvement in College Senate would serve to enhance shared governance.
- Hunter College should more systematically assess the effectiveness of the shared governance structure(s). There are strong examples of success, but also examples of an apparent unevenness in the degree to which the existing structure(s) are understood or utilized.

Recommendations: The Team has no recommendations relative to Standard VII.

Requirements: The Team has no requirements relative to Standard VII.

Section D: Verification of Compliance

I. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation

The institution has carefully linked the Commission's requirements of affiliation with its standards, and has demonstrated throughout the Self-study analysis how it continues to comply with them. The following table depicts these connections as follows:

	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4	Standard 5	Standard 6	Standard 7	Compliance Verification
Requirement 1								X
Requirement 2								X
Requirement 3								X
Requirement 4								X
Requirement 5								X
Requirement 6								X
Requirement 7	X							
Requirement 8			X	X	X	X		
Requirement 9			X		X			
Requirement 10	X		X	X		X		
Requirement 11						X		
Requirement 12							X	
Requirement 13							X	
Requirement 14								X
Requirement 15			X					

After reviewing this analysis and supporting evidence, **the team affirms that Hunter College is in compliance with the Commission's fifteen requirements of affiliation.**

II. Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations

The team **affirms that the institution meets all accreditation-relevant federal regulations**, which is based upon the review of the Self-study report, accompanying materials, and the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations and the evaluation visit.

Additional review was needed to verify compliance with item “3.4. *Most recent USDE report on review of Title IV program, including institutional response*”. Evidence provided in the Federal Compliance report referenced the most recent agreement with USDE but did not include any information on the latest review. Upon request, documents were provided that showed a USDE review on 3/28/2017-4/10/2017. Hunter College received a report with the results from USDE on 12/29/2017. The report included 4 findings of which documentation was provided that shows corrective action/resolution of 3 of the findings. One finding is in process being contested by CUNY Central as it affects system-wide policy and practices. *Upon review of the documents, compliance was verified.*

Additional review was needed to verify compliance with item 1.1 “*Policies and/or procedures used to ensure student identity verification in distance or correspondence education courses*”. Evidence provided did not include any policy that explicitly stated that students could not share log-in information. Upon investigation into IT security policies, there is a CUNY policy that includes protection against sharing passwords. *Upon review of the website, compliance was verified.*

Additional review was needed to verify compliance with item 5.1 “*URLs, catalogs and student handbooks, and other public locations of any alternative institutional website documenting required disclosures of graduation, completion, licensure pass rate and other data required by Student Right to Know*, as well as policies on Student Academic Progress (SAP), withdrawal, leave of absence, and attendance*”. Evidence provided did not include Leave of Absence policies/procedures for undergraduate students (graduate student policies were found in catalog). Upon request it was clarified that undergraduate students who do not enroll for 1 semester (fall or spring) are considered withdrawn and must re-apply to get in. Therefore, no LOA policy is needed. The one exception to this is students who are in the military who follow the CUNY policy. Link to the CUNY policy was provided. *Upon review of the website and additional information provided, compliance was verified.*

Section E: Verification of Data and Student Achievement

I. Verification of Data and Self-Study Information

The team reviewed the document provided in the Hunter College Evidence Inventory 2019 which was electronically submitted by Hunter College. Other documents and data were also provided by Hunter College personnel in response to specific requests at the site visit. The Team also verified data through interviews with administrators, deans, managers, faculty, staff and students.

The team **confirms** that data and other information provided by the institution are reasonably valid and conform to higher education expectations.

II. Student Achievement

After interviewing institutional stakeholders and visiting the institution’s student achievement information available at its website, the team **confirms** that the institution’s approach to its student achievement goals is effective, consonant with higher education expectations, and consistent with the institution’s mission and that the student achievement information data available at its website is reasonably valid and accurate in light of other data and information reviewed by the team.

Section F: Third-Party Comments (if applicable)

There were no third-party comments relative to this institution.

Section G: Conclusion

The team again thanks the Hunter College community for its extensive efforts not only to complete a useful Self-study, but also to widely and openly engage with the visiting team

members. We hope that Hunter College will be open to the ideas contained in this report, all of which are being offered in the spirit of collegiality and peer review.

As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

1. Hunter College replies to the team report in a formal written Institutional Response addressed to the Commission.
2. The team Chair submits a Confidential Brief to the Commission, summarizing the team report and conveying the team's proposal for accreditation action.
3. The Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully reviews the institutional Self-study document, the evaluation team report, the institution's formal response, and the Chair's Confidential Brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission.
4. The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.