

Self-Study Overview

Process

The self-study process at the Urban College of Boston has allowed the College community to pause and focus on its mission, integrity and institutional effectiveness.

Within the context of a two-year, co-educational college, the Urban College of Boston serves a specific population of non-traditional students, including adult learners, students with family and job responsibilities, single parents and students for whom English is a second language. It is the only two-year college in Boston that offers bilingual certificates in Cantonese/English and Spanish/English in addition to English and the only college in New England that has received designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution. The Urban College enrolls more minority students (93 percent), as a percentage of enrollments, than any other college in Boston and a majority of UCB students are eligible for financial aid.

The goal of the self-study has been to determine the effectiveness of the Urban College of Boston in carrying out its mission of offering educational and professional mobility to members of the urban community who have been traditionally underserved by higher education institutions. In the orderly process of examining Urban College's institutional effectiveness, self-study participants remained mindful of UCB's commitment to the community, the most efficient use of resources to meet student needs, and ways in which the College can maintain its highly supportive environment while recognizing the growing demand for its services.

The Urban College of Boston took particular care to include the perspectives of all segments of the College community in drafting an approach to the self-study, addressing areas of inquiry and thinking about new initiatives to strengthen the institution.

The Board was actively involved in the self-study process through:

- Discussing the self-study agenda at Board Meetings;
- Having an active liaison on the Self-Study Steering Committee;
- Completing the *NEASC Standards Audit*;
- Developing the *2005 Strategic Plan*; and
- Reviewing Self-Study draft reports.

In June 2005, the President appointed the Self-Study Steering Committee. Members include:

- Mr. John Nucci – Chairman of the Board of Trustees (Ex-Officio)
- Dr. Linda Edmonds Turner – President of Urban College of Boston (Ex-Officio)
- Dr. Sheila Taylor-King – Academic Dean (Chair of the Committee)
- Dr. Grace Caines – Division Chair, Early Childhood Education
- Ms. Nancy Daniel – Division Chair, Human Services Administration/General Studies
- Dr. Eleanor Glaessel-Brown – Assistant to the Dean for NEASC Self-Study

- Mr. Josie Hatuëy – Director of Academic Support Services
- Dr. Henry Johnson – Dean of Enrollment Services and Registrar
- Mr. Thomas Neel – Dean of Administration
- Mr. Bruce Preston – Director of Institutional Advancement
- Mr. Charles Titus – Member, Board of Trustees
- Ms. Rosalia Diaz – Student Representative, Board of Trustees
- Ms. Noreen King – President, Alumni Association

Beginning fall 2004, progress on the self-study process was presented and discussed at the bi-weekly Leadership Team meetings. The Self-Study Steering Committee Chair and Assistant met bi-weekly from May through October 2005 and, during that time, drafted a list of supporting documents, conducted the *Standards Audit* and *Community Survey*, addressed specific standards, developed draft responses to the questions and assigned chapters to five individuals. At the end of October 2005, the full Self-Study Steering Committee began meeting to review the assembled data, discuss procedures, review chapter drafts and rewrite each chapter.

The first draft of the *Self-Study Report* was circulated to the UCB Leadership Team and the Self-Study Steering Committee for preliminary review on November 28, 2005. A revised draft was provided to the Self-Study Steering Committee, Board of Trustees and the entire UCB community for review and comment on December 12, 2005. The final draft was resubmitted to the UCB community on January 6, 2006, in preparation for submission to NEASC and the visiting team on January 20, 2006.

Led by the Self-Study Steering Committee, the UCB community including faculty, students, alumni and Board, administration and staff members have all contributed their perspectives on the state of the College. (See *Self-Study Timeline*, page xxxi.)

Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness

Urban College's self-study process involved multiple methods of inquiry, including summaries drawn from existing documents, special studies designed to elicit specific information and survey research involving UCB's various constituencies.

The College recognizes that the evaluation of institutional effectiveness involves continuously tracking and monitoring institutional data and trends, periodically surveying community members on their views about the state of the institution and having systematic assessment plans in place to measure outcomes on a continual basis.

In addition, to compiling data related to UCB's academic program, students and faculty, the Urban College of Boston conducted a survey research project in preparation for the 2006 NEASC reaccreditation visit. The project included two phases: the *NEASC Standards Audit* and a *Community Survey*.

NEASC Standards Audit – the first phase of UCB’s self-study survey project asked senior members of the Urban College community to evaluate the College’s effectiveness according to each question posed by NEASC. In March 2005, UCB’s Academic Dean and Chair of the Self-Study Steering Committee sent copies of the questions related to every evaluation standard to all Board members, administrators, division heads and staff and at a later date, to all faculty members who attended the spring faculty development seminar. To ensure that all faculty had an opportunity to contribute, the *Audit* was also placed in mailboxes for faculty members not attending the seminar. The request included rating each question under the eleven standards and listing activities the institution conducts that indicate compliance and the evidence that supports these activities. The purpose of the *Audit* was to get a general sense of UCB’s strengths and weaknesses as a baseline from which to more clearly focus the self-study inquiry.

Community Survey – A questionnaire for the *Community Survey*, based on the results of the *NEASC Standards Audit*, was developed in September 2005. The questions followed the line of inquiry provided by NEASC standards, but focused in particular on Urban College’s mission and purposes. The same questionnaire was used for all groups: alumni, current students, faculty and administration/staff. The questionnaire was first given in person to a group of alumni who attended UCB’s first Alumni gathering on September 24th and then sent out to a sample of alumni who did not attend the reunion. Current students in six upper level classes filled out the questionnaire during class time. Faculty members first received the questionnaire in their mailboxes and follow-up copies were later sent to their homes. Questionnaires were distributed to administration and staff members in their mailboxes.

The total sample for the lengthy *Audit* included 21 Board, administration and faculty members and the total sample for the *Community Survey* included 169 individuals. (See Exhibit 12.04: *Urban College of Boston Community Research Data*.) [Note: All exhibits are located in the Document Room.]

Finally and most importantly, the College has begun the process of developing a formal assessment plan for its academic programs and is the final preparation stages of the *2005 Strategic Plan*, which should be ready for implementation during spring 2006. (See Exhibit 12.05: *UCB Assessment Plan*.)

In the appraisal section of each chapter of the following report, institutional development trend data, notable results from the *Standards Audit* and *Community Survey* and the status of assessment plans are included under Institutional Effectiveness.

Changes

Urban College of Boston has reviewed and acted upon changes suggested by NEASC since its initial accreditation. After the 2001 self-study/accreditation evaluation, the Urban College addressed the following issues identified in an October 17, 2001 letter to then President, Dr. Lee Hines:

- Maintain financial stability through diversification of revenue streams;

- Ensure a stable and productive relationship with its ABCD partner; and
- Develop necessary faculty, staffing and support services.

Following submission of the 2003 progress report, NEASC suggested:

- Continued progress in maintaining financial stability through the diversification of revenue streams;
- Success in fund raising, student recruitment and retention; and
- Careful monitoring of operations.

After submitting the 2005 progress report, NEASC suggested:

- Further development of an effective system of collegiate governance, including a strong board of trustees;
- Providing appropriate academic oversight and integration of off-campus activities such as contract courses and other initiatives into governance and other institutional system; and
- Continuing development of the means by which student learning is assessed and the results are used for improvement.

The follow-up correspondence from NEASC in 2003 and 2005 indicates that Urban College has successfully addressed these items and has made continuing progress in assuring that the College continues to diversify its revenue stream to assure financial stability, continue its productive relationship with ABCD, and develop Board, faculty, staff and student support systems to meet the needs of the student body. (See Exhibits 3.10: *NEASC Progress Report 2000*; 3.11: *NEASC Progress Report 2005*; Exhibit 3.12: *NEASC Correspondence*.)

Urban College of Boston NEASC Self-Study Timeline	
October 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President and Academic Dean attend the NEASC Self-Study Workshop. • President appoints Academic Dean as the Self-Study Chair. • Board of Trustees Meetings – Academic Dean informs Board members of NEASC standard changes. • Faculty Development Seminars – Academic Dean informs faculty of NEASC standard changes.
December 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President and Academic Dean attend NEASC Annual Meeting. • Members of the UCB community (Board, administration, staff and faculty) receive copies of newly adopted standards.
January 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Study Chair prepares <i>NEASC Standards Audit</i>.
February 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Trustees receive and discuss the <i>NEASC Standards Audit</i> at quarterly meeting. • Leadership Team, staff and faculty receive <i>NEASC Standards Audit</i>.
March 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCB community responds to <i>NEASC Standards Audit</i>.

Urban College of Boston NEASC Self-Study Timeline (Continued)	
May 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Development Seminar – faculty continue discussions about NEASC and assessment. Time devoted to Strategic Planning – workshop conducted by consultant Cynthia Parker, Interaction Institute for Social Change. • Administration and staff reviews and revises Urban College publications.
June 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Study Chair, faculty member and staff member attend the NEAN Assessment Meeting in Keene, New Hampshire. • President appoints preliminary Self-Study Steering Committee. • Team develops <i>NEASC Standards Supporting Documents Matrix</i>.
July 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Committee team creates templates for each chapter of the Self-Study Report. • Team develops rough drafts of initial Self-Study report chapters.
August 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team distributes remaining Self-Study chapters to writers. • Team receives chapter input from members of the Self-Study Steering Committee. • Collection of supporting documents begins. • First draft of Introduction Chapter distributed to Leadership Team.
September 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team analyzes <i>NEASC Standards Audit</i>. • Team develops <i>Comprehensive Survey</i>; based on audit results. • Urban College community attends Strategic Planning retreat.
October 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team conducts <i>Comprehensive Survey</i> (administration, staff, faculty, alumni and current students). • Team analyzes data from <i>Community Survey</i>. • Self-Study Steering Committee members review Prefatory Material draft, <i>Community Survey</i> materials and supporting document matrix.
November 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Study Steering Committee reviews chapter drafts. • Team designates document room. • Team rewrites draft chapters.
December 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee distributes chapter drafts to entire UCB community. • Team rewrites Self-Study draft. • Review of Self-Study draft by entire UCB community • NEASC Visiting Team Chair visits UCB to discuss protocol, visit and document room.
January 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team revises Self-Study Report and distributes second draft to entire UCB community. • Team distributes draft three to the Steering Committee, Leadership Team and Board of Trustees. • Urban College of Boston submits <i>2006 Self-Study Report</i> to NEASC and visiting team members.
February 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban College prepares campus for NEASC visit.
March 5-8, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEASC Accreditation Team visits.

