

AUDIT REPORT



CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
BUREAU OF MANAGEMENT AUDIT
WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR., COMPTROLLER

Audit Report on the Operating Practices of the City University of New York College Discovery Program

MD02-067A

February 2, 2003

To the Citizens of the City of New York

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In accordance with the Comptroller's responsibilities contained in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter, my office has examined the operating practices of the College Discovery Program (CDP) of the City University of New York (CUNY). The six CUNY community colleges are required to administer the CDP on their campuses according to university guidelines.

The results of our audit, which are presented in this report, have been discussed with CUNY and CDP officials, and their comments have been considered in the preparation of this report.

Audits such as this provide a means of ensuring that City-funded special CUNY programs effectively meet their goals according to their guidelines.

I trust that this report contains information that is of interest to you. If you have any questions concerning this report, please e-mail my audit bureau at audit@comptroller.nyc.gov or telephone my office at 212-669-8945.

Very truly yours,

William C. Thompson, Jr.

Report: MD02-067A

Filed: February 10, 2003

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*The City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
Bureau of Management Audit*

**Audit Report on the
Operating Practices of the
City University of New York
College Discovery Program**

MD02-067A

AUDIT REPORT IN BRIEF

We performed an audit of the operating practices of the College Discovery Program (CDP) of the City University of New York (CUNY) to determine whether the six CUNY community colleges administered the CDP on their campuses in accordance with university guidelines. The program serves academically and economically disadvantaged students.

Audit Findings and Conclusions

The audit found that, in general, the individual colleges are administering the CDP program in accordance with CUNY guidelines. Specifically:

- The programs provide support services, such as orientation courses, counseling, and tutoring services to help students achieve a quality college education.
- All program directors submitted CDP Academic Plans, Financial Plans, and Final Reports to the CUNY chancellor.
- Students we interviewed expressed positive opinions about the program.
- Sampled students met the academic and financial requirements for enrollment in the program.

However, there is no comprehensive process to measure and report on the effectiveness—that is, student academic progress—of the six college CDPs. In addition, students do not fully use CDP counseling and tutoring services at the two sampled colleges, and counselors at these colleges did not monitor student progress adequately.

Audit Recommendations

To address these issues, the report makes 11 recommendations that include the following:

- CUNY should evaluate the CDPs at the individual colleges using uniform performance indicators, such as student retention rates and the academic progress of students who use program services, and should compare them to those of students (both CDP and non-CDP) who do not use program services.
- CDP counselors should contact students who do not come in for the required number of counseling sessions to determine why they do not come in and encourage them to do so.
- CDP officials at the CUNY level should consider standardizing individual college CDP counseling service requirements.
- CDP tutors should contact students who do not come in for tutoring services to determine why they do not come in and encourage them to do so.
- CDP officials should ensure that colleges track CDP student progress.
- CDP officials should consider standardizing the ways individual colleges track student progress.

CUNY and CDP Response

In their responses to our audit, CUNY officials and CDP officials from Hostos Community College and LaGuardia Community College did not acknowledge the problems discussed in the audit report. Their responses to our recommendations stated that the CDPs in general practice what the recommendations call for. The comments did not address the exceptions found during the audit.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The College Discovery Program (CDP) was created in 1964 as a special program for academically and economically disadvantaged students at the six community colleges of the City University of New York (CUNY).¹ CDP provides academic and financial support to students through remedial instruction, tutorial services, specialized counseling, and payment for book expenses.

According to § 6452 of the State Education Law, a CUNY student who meets the following criteria is considered eligible for admission to CDP:

- The student's family income and other available financial resources fall within guidelines established by the New York State Commissioner of Education.
- The student has earned a College Admissions Average of less than 80 percent or a rank in class at the 65th percentile or lower, or has received remedial or English language skills assistance in high school, or is an applicant to a specific program of study, but lacks the high school sequence in math or science required for such a program.
- The student is a graduate of an approved high school or has a New York State high school equivalency diploma.
- The student has not previously attended a college or university. The exceptions are students enrolled in another college educational opportunity program, or veterans.
- The student has resided in New York City for at least one year.

Students are subject to the individual college's retention and probation standards. Each college's CDP has its own policy regarding the frequency of counseling, tutoring, and other program services provided to the students. However, the CDPs must adhere to CUNY structure and operations guidelines.

Community college presidents are responsible for the administration of the CDP at their campuses. Each CDP has a director or administrator who is responsible for providing direction and focus to the program. CUNY's Office of Special Programs is responsible for the central coordination and oversight of CDP academic, personnel, and budget matters.

¹ CUNY's six community (two-year) colleges are: Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), Bronx Community College, Hostos Community College, Kingsborough Community College, LaGuardia Community College, and Queensborough Community College.

Each year, community college presidents must submit to the CUNY chancellor, via the Office for Special Programs, an Academic Plan that contains the specific goals of the program and how the goals will be achieved. The plan should also contain quantifiable indicators of student achievement to facilitate evaluation. College presidents must also submit an annual Fiscal Accountability Plan detailing the projected expenditures for the CDP. At the end of the year each CDP submits a Final Report to the Office of Special Programs that includes the services provided to students and actual program expenditures. Using the individual CDP Final Reports, the Office of Special Programs prepares an Annual Report, which includes a compilation of data from the colleges such as program expenditures, student characteristics, and number of graduates.

Table I below shows, by college, CDP enrollment figures, CDP graduation rates, and program costs for academic year 2000.

TABLE I
College Discovery Program Statistics
for Academic Year 2000

College	Number of Students Enrolled	Number of Students Who Graduated	CDP Expenses
BMCC	597	106	\$ 528,382
Bronx	372	31	\$ 574,985
LaGuardia	756	152	\$ 719,463
Hostos	211	18	\$ 307,624
Kingsborough	499	67	\$ 389,719
Queensborough	417	18	\$ 323,371
CUNY CDP expenses (financial aid, database manager salary, research and development)			\$1,830,127
Totals	2,852	392	\$4,673,671

Objective

The objective of this audit was to determine whether the six college CDPs are administered according to CUNY guidelines.

Scope and Methodology

The scope of our audit was the 1999–2000 academic year.

To meet our audit objective, we interviewed CUNY officials to understand their role in the operations of the CDPs. We also interviewed each CDP administrator or director to obtain an understanding of how they provided services to their students.

In addition, we obtained and reviewed the following documents from CUNY: *Guidelines for the Structure and Operation of the College Discovery Program of CUNY—June 1994*; *1998-2001 General Plan for the Special Programs of CUNY*; *2000-2001 Amendments to the 1998-2001 General Plan for Special Programs of CUNY*; College Discovery Program Budget Allocations for Academic Years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001; College Discovery Program Expenditure Reports for Academic Years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001; minutes of the meetings of College Discovery Program directors for academic years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001; 1999 summaries of College Discovery Program site visits, 1999-2000 Final Report for each CDP; the *1999-2000 Annual Report of the College Discovery Program*; and program assessment reports from the colleges.

We selected CDPs at two community colleges—Hostos and LaGuardia Community Colleges—for our detailed testing. To conduct audit tests on the CDP at Hostos Community College, we obtained a list of 54 students who enrolled in the program in Fall 1999 and returned in Spring 2000. Since the population was small, we decided to include all 54 students in our sample. To conduct audit tests on the CDP at LaGuardia Community College, we selected a random sample of 50 students from a population of 216 students who likewise enrolled in Fall 1999 and returned in Spring 2000.

We examined counseling logs, tutoring logs, and related documentation to determine whether the sampled students received adequate tutoring and counseling and whether tutors or counselors attempted to contact students who missed scheduled sessions. We determined whether the students met the program’s academic and financial requirements and whether they were paid the CDP stipend. We determined whether students who failed the CUNY Assessment Tests enrolled, as required by CDP guidelines, in the University Skills Immersion Program in the summer session prior to their Fall semester enrollment. We also reviewed the Fall 1999 transcripts of our sampled students to identify “at risk” students and determined whether these students were referred to or obtained counseling and tutoring in the following Spring 2000 semester.²

To assess student satisfaction with the CDP, we conducted a telephone survey of 34 randomly chosen students from a population of 170 students who graduated from Hostos and LaGuardia Community College CDPs between July 1, 1999, and June 30, 2000, according to the colleges’ 1999-2000 Final Reports. We also conducted a telephone survey of 21 Hostos and 17 LaGuardia Community College students who were considered “at risk” of failing, were on probation, were suspended, or were dismissed from the college.

This audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), and included tests of the records and other auditing procedures considered necessary. This audit was performed in accordance with the City Comptroller’s audit responsibilities as set forth in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter.

² “At risk” is a term used to identify students who received poor evaluations from professors, failed or are likely to fail a class or classes, have an “incomplete” grade, did not meet the minimum level of proficiency in their remedial classes, or whose cumulative GPA does not meet academic standards.

CUNY and CDP Response

The matters covered in this report were discussed with CUNY and CDP officials during and at the conclusion of this audit. A preliminary draft report was sent to them on September 30, 2002, and was discussed at an exit conference on October 18, 2002. We submitted a draft report to CUNY and CDP officials on November 26, 2002, with a request for comments. We received a written response from CUNY officials on December 20, 2002. The response included comments from CDP officials at Hostos Community College. On January 8, 2003, we received another written response from CUNY officials that included comments from CDP officials at LaGuardia Community College.

In their comments, CUNY officials did not acknowledge the problems discussed in the audit report. Their responses to our recommendations stated that the CDPs in general practice what the recommendations call for. The comments did not address the exceptions found during the audit. To determine the effectiveness of the CDP program and improve its success with its student population, CUNY officials should address the issues raised in the audit. The full text of the responses from CUNY and CDP officials are included as addenda to this report.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, the community colleges are administering the CDPs on their campuses in accordance with CUNY guidelines. Specifically:

- The programs provide support services, such as orientation courses, counseling, and tutoring services to help students achieve a quality college education.
- All program directors submitted program Academic Plans, Financial Plans, and Final Reports to the CUNY chancellor.
- Students we interviewed expressed positive opinions about the program.
- Sampled students met the academic and financial requirements for enrollment in the program.

However, there is no comprehensive process to measure and report on the effectiveness—that is, the academic progress of their students—of the six college CDPs. In addition, students do not fully use CDP counseling and tutoring services at the two sampled colleges, and counselors at the sampled colleges did not monitor student progress adequately.

These issues are discussed in the following sections of the report.

Lack of Measurable Objectives to Evaluate Program Effectiveness and Student Progress

There is no comprehensive process to measure and report on the effectiveness of the six college CDPs or the academic progress of their students.

According to *Guidelines for the Structure and Operation for the College Discovery Program of the City of New York*:

“Each campus College Discovery Program shall establish a research and collection unit, . . . to provide the data and research requirements of the University Office of Special Programs. . . .The College Discovery Director shall be generally responsible for monitoring and reporting to the President, the academic progress of all College Discovery students.”

The guidelines also state that a college’s Academic Plan should “contain provision for a sufficient number of quantifiable indicators of student achievement to facilitate evaluation.”

According to the community colleges’ Academic Plans, the main goals of CDP are student retention in the program, student graduation from college, and improvement in student

performance resulting from program services. For example, the Hostos Community College Academic Plan states, “A comprehensive set of goals . . . has as its main thrust to enhance retention and success rates in the Program.” The Bronx Community College’s Academic Plan states, “The general goal of the Program will be to improve retention and graduation rates.”

According to these plans, data for program evaluations are to be obtained from student evaluations, surveys, and student academic information from colleges or CDP databases.

CDP guidelines require colleges to monitor and report on student progress and to develop quantifiable indicators of student achievement for evaluation purposes. However, the guidelines do not state what these indicators should be, which would ensure that all colleges use uniform indicators to adequately measure the success of their programs according to CDP goals. The guidelines also do not discuss benchmarks defining what CDP considers to be satisfactory performance by the college programs.

According to *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*³, goals are abstract statements of desired outcomes. Goals, if they are to be realized, must be supported by specific objectives that can be measured; there must be procedures in place to reach the desired outcome; and there must be measurable criteria of success.

The presence of clearly stated goals and objectives enables a program to take appropriate steps when goals and objectives are not met. Conversely, the absence of goals and objectives prevents or weakens the link between understanding what a program is supposed to do and the ability to take action when expected outcomes are not achieved.

The CUNY Office of Special Programs prepares an annual report on the CDP. This report includes a compilation of data from the colleges, such as: student enrollment in the program, by college, for a five-year period, CDP student profiles, the number of CDP college graduates over a five-year period (reported as a total, not by individual college), and the number of CDP students, by college, who received academic honors during the year.

The CDP annual report includes a chart of “Student Progress” (reported by total student participants, not by individual college participants) that shows the number of semesters current program enrollees have been in the program and the number of degree credits they have earned. According to the chart, 70 percent of the current program enrollees have been in the program for four or fewer semesters. For these students, 63 percent have earned from 0 to 11 credits, 27 percent have earned from 12 to 23 credits, and 10 percent have earned over 23 credits.

The annual report also shows (as an aggregate total only), the number of semesters in attendance for program enrollees who graduated from college that year. According to the report, 112 (29%) of the 392 program graduates attended college for five or fewer semesters and 280 (71%) of the 392 program graduates attended college for six or more semesters.

³ Peter H. Rossi and Howard E. Freeman. *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (4th Edition), California: Sage Publications, pgs. 121 and 126.

Since the CDP annual report does not report the above factors for individual colleges, the success of the individual CDPs cannot be measured, nor can they be compared to each other. Furthermore, without benchmarks for what CDP considers to be satisfactory student progress or graduation rates, the above indicators cannot be used to evaluate the program's success as a whole.

In addition, the annual report does not demonstrate how CDP program services affect the academic performance of its participants by comparing the academic progress of those students who use program services with the progress of those who do not.

We requested that the CDP directors send us any other program performance assessment reports they had. Hostos Community College and BMCC had no such performance assessment reports. The performance assessment reports from the other colleges were all dissimilar and lacked comprehensive data on student retention, academic progress, and graduation rates, as follows:

- **Bronx Community College.** The program's 2000-2001 Academic Year Annual Assessment Report summarized major program accomplishments. For example, it stated that CDP enrollment had increased and that the CDP had moved to new quarters. However, the report did not discuss student retention, academic progress, or graduation rates.
- **Kingsborough Community College.** The program reported on a one-time study of freshmen who entered CDP in the Fall 1998 semester. The study examined graduation rates, program retention rates, academic dismissals, and the number of students "no longer in attendance" as of August 31, 2001. However, the report did not include a study of the impact academic support services may have had on student achievement, as measured by their grade point averages (GPAs). There were no other subsequent studies of this nature.
- **Queensborough Community College.** The program reported on student evaluations of tutorial services and reported on a study of the relationship between tutoring and GPAs, the average number of semesters that graduates attended, and the number of students on the Dean's List. However, the report did not discuss student retention, academic progress, or graduation rates.
- **LaGuardia Community College.** The program gave us a copy of a preliminary report on whether tutoring services had an impact on student achievement. However, according to the CDP director, the report was just one part of a divisional—not a CDP—assessment process that had stopped before completion. The program had no other subsequent studies.
- **Hostos Community College and BMCC.** These colleges' programs did not generate any reports on student retention, academic progress, or graduation rates.

At the exit conference, CDP officials stated that CUNY's Student Information Management System database (SIMS), maintains data on students enrollment, retention, graduation, and academic performance. CUNY's Office of Institutional Research and Analysis can use this data to assess the progress of CDP students.

As an example of how CUNY can report on student progress and the effectiveness of the CDP, CUNY officials provided us with a collection of data charts developed by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis for use during a planning retreat that took place in October 2000. These charts included a longitudinal analysis on a retention and graduation rate comparison between first-time CDP and SEEK⁴ students and the regular school population. However, the analysis combines CDP and SEEK student data and does not break out the data by sub-population (i.e., by program and individual college). Therefore, the data could not be used to assess the effectiveness of CDP either as a whole or at the individual college level.

For the two schools we visited, we were able to accumulate some information on student retention and the academic progress of students in our sample, as shown below on Table II:

⁴ The SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge) Program serves a similar student population at CUNY's senior (four year) colleges.

TABLE II

Counseling and Tutoring Services Provided to Sampled Students

Category	Hostos Community College	LaGuardia Community College
# of sampled students enrolled during Fall 1999	54	50
# of students still enrolled during Fall 2000	40	35
Enrollment Retention Rate Fall 1999-Fall 2000	74%	70%
Avg. GPA in Fall 1999 for students who had counseling services	2.8	2.3
Avg. GPA in Spring 2000 for students who had counseling services	2.6	2.1
Percentage increase or (decrease)	(7%)	(9%)
Avg. GPA in Fall 1999 for students who did not have counseling services	None	2.3
Avg. GPA in Spring 2000 for students who did not have counseling services		1.7
Percentage increase or (decrease)		(26%)
Avg. GPA in Fall 1999 for students who had tutoring during Fall 1999 and Spring 2000	3.2	2.0
Avg. GPA in Spring 2000 for students who had tutoring services	2.9	2.1
Percentage increase or (decrease)	(9%)	7%
Avg. GPA in Fall 1999 for students who did not have tutoring services	2.2	2.5
Average GPA in Spring 2000 for students who did not have tutoring services	2.2	2.5
Percentage Increase or (Decrease)	0%	0%
Number of students who met with their counselors and tutors the required number of times.	10	3
Number of the above students still active as of Fall 2001	8 (80%)	2 (67%)
Number of students who did not meet with their counselors and tutors the required number of times.	18	21
Number of the above students still active as of Fall 2001	7 (39%)	18 (86%)

As shown on Table II, the retention rate for our sampled students from both colleges averaged 72 percent from Fall 1999 to Fall 2000. At Hostos Community College, the students' GPA appears to have been unaffected by the tutoring services provided to them. The average GPAs for students who received tutoring services show basically the same increase or decrease as for those who did not receive these services. However, student participation in program services appears to have had an effect on college retention. Eighty percent of the students who met with counselors and tutors according to program requirements remained active in the college. This compares to 39 percent of 18 students (seven students) who did not meet with counselors and tutors as required and remained active.

At LaGuardia Community College, students who did not receive counseling services had GPAs that decreased by an average of 26 percent from Fall 1999 to Spring 2000; students who did receive counseling services had GPAs that decreased by an average of nine percent from Fall 1999 to Spring 2000. Furthermore, LaGuardia students who received tutoring services showed an average GPA increase of seven percent from Fall 1999 to Spring 2000. The average GPAs for students who did not receive tutoring services stayed the same for that period. Student participation in CDP program services did not appear to have had an effect on college retention, however. Two (67%) of the three students who met with counselors and tutors according to program requirements have remained active in the college. For the 21 students who did not meet with counselors and tutors as required, 18 (86%) remained active in the college.

Although the above results of our sample are not meant to be reflective of the effectiveness of the CDP, these indicators show that the program's effectiveness can be measured at the college level using uniform CDP performance standards. The results of such a process would be an effective management tool to help improve individual college program performance. Furthermore, the development of uniform assessment criteria for the colleges would enhance CUNY's ability to determine the overall effectiveness of the program and to improve the program's success with its student population.

Recommendation

1. CUNY should evaluate the CDPs at the individual colleges using uniform performance indicators, such as student retention rates and the academic progress of students who use program services, and should compare them to those of students (both CDP and non-CDP) who do not use program services.

CUNY Response: "All programs track the progress of students through standard, uniform measures of progress and pursuit determined by the State Office of Education (primarily for the purpose of administering the Tuition Assistance Program).

"As well, there is a comprehensive process to measure and report on program effectiveness. . . . Programs are asked to articulate goals and objectives and plans for measuring how effectively they have met these goals.

“Student retention rates, GPA, credit accumulation and graduation rates are produced by the Office of Institutional Research. Comparisons are routinely made with non-program students. The Central Office administration will continue to monitor student outcomes and review this data to make program improvements and comparisons with national data.”

Auditor Comment: The State Office of Education’s TAP eligibility standards has no relationship to CDP. Those standards, which require a minimum number of credits (6) and a minimum cumulative GPA (1.00) after two years of receiving TAP assistance, apply to all student aid recipients, whether or not they are enrolled in the CDP. We were never told by any of the CDP Directors that they considered the TAP requirements to be the measures of progress they expected for their students as a result of attending the program.

CDP guidelines require colleges to monitor and report on student progress and to develop quantifiable indicators of student achievement for evaluation purposes. However, as stated in our report, two community colleges had no performance assessment reports. The performance assessment reports from the other colleges were all dissimilar and lacked comprehensive data on student retention, academic progress, and graduation rates.

Moreover, although the Office of Institutional Research provides data on the enrollment and the demographics of CUNY students, it provides no meaningful reports that can be used to assess the effectiveness of the CDPs.

Students Do Not Fully Use Counseling Services

CDP students at our two sampled colleges (Hostos Community College and LaGuardia Community College) do not fully use CDP counseling services.

According to *Guidelines for the Structure and Operation for the College Discovery Program of the City of New York*:

“The counselors shall provide professional counseling in academic, career, personal, financial and social matters, with the major objective of furthering the student’s academic potential, performance and progress.”

Individual CDPs can define the specifics of their counseling services. CDPs at the community colleges have different counseling frequency requirements, as shown below:

- **Borough of Manhattan Community College.** Students must meet with counselors at least once per month.
- **Bronx Community College.** No frequency requirement for counseling services.

- **Hostos Community College.** Students must meet with their counselors at least twice each semester.
- **Queensborough Community College.** Students must meet with their counselors at least twice each semester.
- **LaGuardia Community College.** Students must meet with their counselors at least once during each semester.
- **Kingsborough Community College.** Students must meet with their counselors at least three times during their first semester and at least twice per semester thereafter.

Our review of the Hostos Community College CDP counseling logs and related documentation found that 19 (35%) of our 54 sampled students did not meet with their counselors at least twice during the Fall 1999 semester, and 11 (20%) of our 54 sampled students did not meet with their counselors at least twice during the Spring 2000 semester, as required by the Hostos CDP program.

Table III below shows the frequency of counseling services provided to the sampled students at Hostos Community College.

TABLE III

Counseling Services Provided to Sampled Hostos Students

Frequency of Meetings	Fall1999 Semester	Spring2000 Semester
# of students who did not meet with a counselor at least once per semester	6(11%)	7(13%)
# of students who met a counselor once per semester	13(24%)	4(9%)
# of students who met a counselor twice per semester	17(31%)	13(24%)
# of students who met a counselor more than twice per semester	18(33%)	30(54%)
Total # of sampled students	54 (100%)	54(100%)

Our review of LaGuardia Community College CDP counseling logs and related documentation for 50 sampled students disclosed that 24 (48%) of the 50 sampled students did not meet with their counselors at least once during the Fall 1999 semester, and 20 (40%) of our 50 sampled students did not meet with their counselors at least once during the Spring 2000 semester as required by the LaGuardia CDP program.

Table IV below shows the frequency of counseling services provided to the sampled students at LaGuardia Community College.

TABLE IV

Counseling Services Provided to Sampled LaGuardia Students

Frequencies of Meetings	Fall 1999 Semester	Spring 2000 Semester
# of students who did not meet a counselor at least once per semester	24(48%)	20(40%)
# of students who met a counselor once per semester	11(22%)	19(38%)
# of students who met a counselor more than once per semester	15(30%)	11(22%)
Total # of sampled students per semester	50(100%)	50(100%)

The CDP counselors at the two schools did not follow up enough to determine why students were not coming for counseling sessions or to encourage them to do so. At Hostos Community College, counselors attempted to contact only 7 (26%) of the 27⁵ students who did not receive the mandatory counseling during the Fall 1999 or Spring 2000 semesters to determine why they were not coming in for counseling. At LaGuardia Community College, we saw no evidence that a counselor attempted to contact any of the 31⁶ students who did not receive the mandatory counseling during the Fall 1999 or Spring 2000 semesters to determine why they were not coming in for counseling.

Counseling is one of the core academic support services offered by the program to its students. Although it is incumbent upon students to take advantage of this service, oversight by CDP counselors would help ensure that students do so. Students who use CDP counselor services may be more likely to remain in college.

At Hostos Community College, by the end of the Fall 2001 semester, nine (33%) of the 27 students who did not meet with a counselor the required number of times in the prior year were either dismissed or put on probation by the college. This compares to four (15%) of the 27 Hostos students who met with counselors the required number of times and was dismissed by the college.

At LaGuardia Community College, by the end of the Fall 2001 semester, nine (29%) of the 31 students who did not meet with a counselor the required number of times in the prior year

⁵ This number is not reflected in Table III because of the overlap of students who did not receive mandatory counseling during the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters.

⁶ This number is not reflected in Table IV because of the overlap of students who did not receive mandatory counseling during the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters.

were put on probation or suspended by the college. This compares to three (16%) of the 19 LaGuardia students who met with counselors the required number of times and were either put on probation or suspended by the college.

Recommendations

2. CDP counselors should contact students who do not come in for the required number of counseling sessions to determine why they do not come in and encourage them to do so.
3. CDP officials should ensure that counselors document their attempts to follow up with students who do not come in for counseling as required.

CUNY Response: “All programs monitor and document counselor contacts via logs. Students who do not attend required counseling sessions are contacted via follow-up calls and letters.”

LaGuardia Response: “A significantly greater number of students than the figures cited in the auditors Draft report met with their counselors frequently and received counseling through the New Student Seminar.

“During their first semester at LaGuardia, new students register for New Student Seminar which is designed to provide students with an orientation to LaGuardia and the information and skills they need to be successful in college.”

Auditor Comment: Despite CUNY’s contention that CDP counselors contact students who do not attend required counseling sessions, at Hostos Community College we saw no evidence of follow-up for 74 percent of the students who did not come in for the required counseling. At LaGuardia Community College we saw no evidence of follow-up for any of the students who did not come in for the required counseling.

LaGuardia’s New Student Seminar is a required first semester orientation course for all new students. According to LaGuardia’s written comments about the draft report, the program requires students to meet with their counselor individually at least once a semester. We note that meeting individually with a counselor each semester is a requirement of all but one of the CDPs (Bronx Community College). Individualized counseling—as opposed to counseling in a classroom setting—is a more effective way for counselors to identify and address each student’s needs and interests and to assist students with personal, family, or other issues that may affect their educational progress.

4. CDP officials at the CUNY level should consider standardizing individual college CDP counseling service requirements.

CUNY Response: “The overall mission and goals of the program are standard for each campus. However, implementation of the program goals is left to each campus so that

the unique populations might be best served. However, the Central Office will continue to closely monitor documentation of counseling contacts and explore new ways of using technology to improve this process.”

Auditor Comment: CUNY should evaluate the effectiveness of the various counseling approaches and consider developing standards to better meet students’ counseling needs.

Students Do Not Fully Use Tutoring Services

CDP students at the two sampled colleges do not fully use the program’s tutoring services.

According to *Guidelines for the Structure and Operation for the College Discovery Program of the City of New York*:

“Comprehensive tutoring as part of and coordinated with intensive remedial and developmental instruction shall be provided to CDP students.

“Tutoring shall be provided on a regular basis to College Discovery Program students with deficiencies in skills or those who lack the appropriate academic background for essential course work.”

Our review of Hostos Community College CDP tutoring logs and related documentation disclosed that 36 (67%) of the sampled students received no tutoring during the Fall 1999 or Spring 2000 semesters, or both. The need for tutoring services was especially evident for 14 of these students who failed one or more courses during the Fall 1999 semester.

Our review of LaGuardia Community College CDP tutoring logs and related documentation disclosed that 45 (90%) of the sampled students received no tutoring during either or both the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters. The need for tutoring services was especially evident for 13 of these students who failed one or more courses during the Fall 1999 semester.

LaGuardia Response: “We provided auditors with the folders for 22 students who had received individual tutoring through our Resource Center, almost half of the 50 students sampled.

“Furthermore, 12 students who did not have individual files at the Resource Center received tutoring in Express Classes.

“During the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters, 45 students received tutoring through Basic Skills courses. . . .The schedule for each course includes a ‘lab’ period which is the tutoring component for the course. Attendance is mandatory and attendance is taken each period of lab.”

Auditor Comment: LaGuardia provided us with student folders and counselors' intake logs for 45 (90%) of the sampled students. However, we found no evidence in these documents that showed the students met with their tutors during either or both Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters.

Tutoring received through Basic Skills and Express courses are college-provided services, not CDP-provided services. In addition, we found no evidence, such as attendance logs, to support LaGuardia's claim that students received tutoring at Express classes and "labs" attached to Basic Skills courses.

The CDP staff at the two colleges did not follow up enough to determine why students were not coming in for tutoring services or to encourage them to do so. At Hostos Community College, CDP staff attempted to contact only 10 (27%) of the 36 students who did not receive tutoring services during either or both the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters to determine why they were not coming in for tutoring. At LaGuardia Community College, we found no evidence that CDP staff attempted to contact the students who did not receive tutoring services during either or both the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters to determine why they were not coming in for tutoring.

Students who take advantage of tutoring services may perform better in their studies and may be more likely to remain in college. Although, it is incumbent upon students to use these services, oversight by CDP tutors would help ensure that students do so.

At Hostos Community College, by the end of the Fall 2001 semester, 12 (33%) of the 36 students who did not receive the required tutoring services for the prior year were either put on probation or were dismissed by the college. This compares to one (6%) of the 18 Hostos students who received the required tutoring services for the prior year and was put on probation by the college.

Tutoring services appeared to have less of an impact on retention at LaGuardia Community College. By the end of the Fall 2001 semester, 10 (22%) of 45 students who did not receive the required tutoring services were either put on probation or were dismissed by the college. This compares to two (40%) of the five LaGuardia students who received the required tutoring services and were either put on probation or dismissed by the college.

Recommendations

5. CDP tutors should contact students who do not come in for tutoring services to determine why they do not come in and encourage them to do so.
6. CDP officials should ensure that counselors document their attempts to follow up with students not receiving tutoring services.

CUNY Response: “Tutors do follow up on students who do not come in for tutoring. Counselors and tutors both record information in student files about missed sessions so tutors and counselors are aware of student participation.

“Students often experience tutoring in a group setting, as part of a regular class. In these cases, tutoring might not be separately listed in the student file, but embedded in the description of the particular course to which it is attached.

“The Central Office will continue to explore the use of technology to improve the process of documenting the many forms of tutoring a student might receive.”

Auditor Comment: Despite CUNY’s contention that tutors follow up on students who do not come in for tutoring, at Hostos Community College we saw no evidence that counselors or tutors contacted 73 percent of the students who did not have the required tutoring services during either or both the Fall 1999 or Spring 2000 semesters. At LaGuardia Community College we saw no evidence that counselors or tutors contacted any of the students who did not receive the required tutoring services during either or both the Fall 1999 or Spring 2000 semesters.

Tutoring received through college courses are not CDP-provided services. CDP has its own funds to provide tutoring to the students in its program.

“At Risk” Students Do Not Fully Use CDP Services

CDP officials at the two sampled colleges did not ensure that “at risk” students take part in program services.⁷ As a result, some of those students never received counseling or tutoring services and continued to perform poorly.

The CDPs at the community colleges handle “at risk” students differently. Some colleges require “at risk” students to meet with counselors or tutors or to attend workshops. Other colleges offer such specialized services but do not require “at risk” students to participate in them.

Table V below shows, by college, the different services required and offered to CDP “at risk” students.

⁷ “At risk” is a term used to identify students who received poor evaluations from professors, failed or are likely to fail a class or classes, have an “incomplete” grade, did not meet the minimum level of proficiency in their remedial classes, or whose cumulative GPA does not meet academic standards.

TABLE V

Services Provided to “At Risk” Students

College	“At Risk” Counseling Requirement	“At Risk” Tutoring Requirement
Borough of Manhattan Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A special Study Skills course offered for students on probation. • Mandatory Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory tutoring
Bronx Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to see a counselor more than three times a semester. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Special “Learning to Learn” class offered. • Individualized tutoring offered.
LaGuardia Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention services offered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD Workshop
Hostos Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual counseling offered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory tutoring
Kingsborough Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group counseling offered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized workshops offered.
Queensborough Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to see counselor once a month. • Special workshops offered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted tutoring program offered.

For the 54 sampled students from Hostos Community College, 27 (50%) were considered “at risk” at the end of the Fall 1999 semester, based on the criteria specified under the CDP “Early Warning Prevention Program.” Of these students, 12 did not meet with a counselor at least twice during the Fall 1999 semester, and four did not meet with a counselor at least twice during the Spring 2000 semester, as required by the Hostos CDP. In addition, 15 (56%) of the 27 “at risk” Hostos students did not receive tutoring services during the Fall semester, and 21 (78%) did not receive tutoring services during the Spring semester.

For the 50 sampled students from LaGuardia Community College, 32 (64%) were considered “at risk” at the end of the Fall 1999 semester. Of these students, 16 did not meet with a counselor at least once during the Fall semester, and six did not meet with a counselor at least once during the Spring semester, as required by the LaGuardia CDP. In addition, 18 (56%) of the 32 “at risk” LaGuardia students did not receive tutoring services during the Fall semester, and nine (28%) did not receive tutoring services during the Spring semester.

The CDP counselors at the two colleges did not do enough follow-up to determine why “at risk” students were not attending counseling or tutoring sessions or to encourage them to do so. Hostos counselors contacted only five (33%) of the 15 “at risk” students who did not come in for counseling the required number of times and four (19%) of the 21 “at risk” students who did not come in for tutoring to attempt to determine why they did not come in for services. At

LaGuardia, we found no evidence that counselors attempted to contact “at risk” students to determine why they did not come in for counseling or tutoring.

Providing services for “at risk” students is an essential part of the College Discovery Program. These students are the most likely to be put on probation, quit, or be dismissed by the college. At Hostos Community College, by the end of the following (Fall 2001) semester, five (38%) of the 13 “at risk” students who did not meet with a counselor and a tutor the required number of times in the prior year were either dismissed or put on probation by the college. None of the “at risk” students who met with a counselor and tutor the required number of times in the prior year was dismissed or put on probation.

Program services appeared to have less of an impact on retention at LaGuardia Community College. By the end of the following (Fall 2001) semester, two (40%) of the five “at risk” students who did not meet with a counselor and a tutor the required number of times in the prior year were either dismissed or put on probation by the college. This compares to one (33%) of the three “at risk” students who met with a counselor and tutor the required number of times in the prior year and was dismissed by the college.

Recommendations

7. CDP counselors or tutors should contact “at risk” students who do not come in for counseling or tutoring services to determine why they do not come in and to encourage them to do so.
8. CDP officials should ensure that counselors document their attempts to follow up with “at risk” students who do not receive counseling or tutoring services.

CUNY Response: “Counselors and tutors do contact ‘at risk’ students who do not come in for counseling or tutoring services. Records of these attempts are kept in student files. Often these services are provided in small group sessions. In these cases attendance records are kept.”

LaGuardia Response: “As soon as a student has earned a GPA of less than 2.00 we send them a ‘Probation’ letter as part of our ‘Early Warning System.’ The letters notify these students that they must see their counselors to discuss their academic status.

“The CDP at LaGuardia is presently exploring new avenues to contact and track those students who do not avail themselves of the services provided by the program. The CDP is exploring ways in which it can utilize the College’s New ‘Response Center’ to contact students who are not responding to letters sent by the program and are not seeing their assigned CD counselor as required, as early as possible during the course of the first semester.”

Auditor Comment: CDP counselors and tutors did not always document their attempts to contact “at risk” students for counseling and tutoring services. As we stated, Hostos counselors contacted only five (33%) of the 15 “at risk” students who did not come in for counseling the required number of times and four (19%) of the 21 “at risk” students who did not come in for tutoring. At LaGuardia, we found no evidence that counselors attempted to contact “at risk” students to determine why they did not come in for counseling or tutoring. LaGuardia officials provided us with sample copies of letters notifying “at risk” students that they must see their counselors to discuss their academic status. However, we found no evidence that LaGuardia counselors attempted to contact—via letters or telephone calls—the “at risk” students in our sample to determine why they did not come in for counseling or tutoring.

9. CDP officials should consider standardizing required individual college services for “at risk” students.

CUNY Response: “Interventions for students who are ‘at risk’ must be and are tailored to the individual situation and student. To the extent that each campus has a unique and diverse student population, the interventions developed to provide academic support must address the varying needs of the students. The Central Office will continue to explore additional means by which these students can be monitored and work to ensure that this monitoring is documented.”

Counselors Do Not Adequately Monitor Student Progress

CDP counselors at the two sampled colleges do not adequately monitor student progress.

According to *Guidelines for the Structure and Operation for the College Discovery Program of the City of New York*:

“Counselors shall consult and maintain liaison with classroom instructors, and shall be responsible for monitoring student progress and class attendance to the extent possible.”

Table VI details how the each college’s CDP states it monitors student progress.

TABLE VI

How Each College CDP Claims It Monitors Student Progress

College	Review Student Progress Reports	Track Tutoring	Track Counseling	Review Student GPA Averages	Review Student Probation/Dismissal Rosters	Review Monthly Attendance Reports
Borough of Manhattan Community College	X			X	X	
Bronx Community College	X			X		
Hostos Community College	X			X		X
Queensborough Community College		X	X			
LaGuardia Community College.				X		
Kingsborough Community College	X	X				

At the exit conference, CDP officials stated that the counselors also use the Student Information Management System (SIMS), a database that maintains student academic and personal history, to monitor student progress.

At the two colleges we visited (Hostos and LaGuardia), CDP counselors did not track student progress as they claimed. At Hostos Community College 21 (39%) of the 54 sampled students submitted no attendance sheets during the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters. Also, 31 (57%) of the students did not submit their Mid-Semester Progress Reports for counselors to review. At LaGuardia Community College, there was no evidence that counselors reviewed student GPAs to monitor student progress.

If counselors do not monitor student progress, they will be unable to identify and help students who are having problems before they are put on probation or are dismissed by the college.

Recommendations

10. CDP officials should ensure that the colleges track CDP student progress.
11. CDP officials should consider standardizing the ways individual colleges track student progress.

CUNY Response: “Student progress is tracked uniformly at each of the colleges. All CUNY units use the Student Information Management System (SIMS) to record data on individual students. The system is used to record student programs and generate student transcripts on students at each of the units. Moreover, the University Office of Institutional Research tracks students university-wide providing comparison data for program and non-program students. However the Central Office will continue to explore technology that might assist local programs with tracking their students.”

Auditor Comment: Despite information made available to the CDPs through SIMS and the Office of Institutional Research, at the two colleges we visited (Hostos and LaGuardia), CDP counselors did not track student progress as they claimed.