
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE AT CORTLAND



**Physics Department Program Review
2019-2020**

A REPORT TO THE DEAN OF
THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Final Report

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the support of those people and offices who have made this project and the continual operation of the Physics Department successful endeavors.

While our students have not directly contributed to this report other than by filling out surveys, they are the reason we are here and in that sense their essence runs throughout these thoughts and words. This assessment presented us with a good opportunity to reflect on our mission of service. We have taken this effort seriously, not only because it was required of us, but because we believe that it is necessary to, every so often, stop and look back from whence we have come, and in these moments of reflection to look forward and gather our collective wisdom in creating a rich, productive, and intentional future. As we see our students progress and define themselves and their goals, we acknowledge the great efforts and courage required to undertake those transformations. Inspired by them, and being students of life, sharing our love for this great institution, we have embraced these moments as we reflect on our transformations as educators and as a department.

This report would be incomplete if we did not acknowledge our adjuncts who graciously teach many of our introductory courses and labs, and are a continual source of strength for the department. Their value far surpasses the credit they receive. Without their assistance, year after year, we would not be able to provide the high quality education that we do. While their voice is not explicitly represented as coauthors of this report, we have written this document with them in mind and have consulted with them in forming our assessment and would like to thank them for their insight and incredible dedication.

We also owe special gratitude to Ms. Haley Zurell, former Administrative Assistant for the Physics Department. While we may not have often stopped to acknowledge the uncountable number of inquiries and bureaucratic hurdles that she managed on our behalf, we felt the result of her work in the quiet that ensued and which allowed us to stay focused on our work and students. We look forward to working with Nicole Shipman and Zachary Sedor, and welcome them to the Physics Department.

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Our external reviewers, Professor Charlie Freeman of SUNY Geneseo and Professor Michael Faux of SUNY Oneonta, are an essential part of this review. We are certain that their experiences under similar governance in nearby SUNY schools, in physics programs that both offer 3+2 engineering degrees, will enable them to provide insights into our program. We thank them for their time and their dedication to the success of the SUNY system.

We would like to thank Dean Mattingly, Provost Prus, and President Bitterbaum for their stewardship of the School of Arts and Sciences and the College as a whole. We appreciate the many opportunities and programs that are brought to us by the College Administration which has allowed SUNY Cortland to be a leader in education in the SUNY system and which continues to thrive in difficult times. Their support for educational innovations, student success, and support for faculty through research and other creative endeavors is noteworthy. We believe that we are in good hands and welcome their reflections on our program evaluation.

Lastly, the faculty would like to acknowledge each other for our contributions to this review, and to the department generally. Education is an experiment, complete with observations, hypotheses, tests, and analysis. Like any scientific study of a sufficiently interesting system, answers are often not simple or obvious. In this, we are thankful to be part of a dedicated team whose creativity continually opens new doors and insights. The process of introspection is not easy, and often not comfortable. Governance and communication, in any walk of life, is difficult and inherently multi-dimensional, and those that manage to keep order and progress through difficult times are great assets to their institutions, and in this we would like to acknowledge Professor Moataz Emam for guiding the Physics Department throughout this process and over the years.

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