Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Planning Committee  
Tuesday, October 20, 2009 – 2:00-4:00 p.m.


Updates on QEP Conversations & Outreach

- Presentation to Faculty Senate went well and folks were enthusiastic  
  - Will have a focus group in November
- All-faculty meeting for CVPA was a quick conversation, but faculty members were interested
- Mills spoke with CHSS in the Dean’s Office about preparing for the QEP  
  - The college has an annual undergraduate research symposium – this year, there were 30+ student presenters  
  - Has been a successful activity but would like to ramp it up  
  - They would like to inventory what is already happening in the college  
  - They are having conversations re: QEP now to have project ideas ready to go
- Mills also spoke with the psychology department who had helpful comments and feedback  
  - 40% of psych students have worked in a lab by the time they graduate  
  - 1/3 have engaged in scholarly activities, beyond helping in a lab  
  - There is concern that the QEP will only focus on undergraduates – they would like grad students to be involved as well  
  - Student scholarship works best when there is a vertical integration so that students progress up through academic ranks each year  
  - Interest in engaging students from underrepresented groups in student scholarship  
  - Concern about faculty capacity to become involved – hour incentives?  
    - How to design programs that provide a workload trade-off or that maximize time?  
    - Is the co-mentoring of students a possibility?
- Kathy spoke with COS Undergraduate Coordinators who were interested and sharing their ideas  
  - They wanted to hear more and look forward to updates  
  - Travel funds for students to attend conferences were voiced as being important  
  - Concern that some departments seem to have too many independent research students while others don’t have enough faculty to mentors interested student researchers  
    - How intensive do each of these models have to be?

NOTE: Faculty continue to think about research in more traditional ways; we need to bring models and definitions to students and faculty that broaden the conversation – let’s look to other institutions for ideas.

Others to Contact

- Rick and Craig are scheduled to speak with the Library Liaisons on 11/18 at 11:30 a.m.
- Minu will work on contacting RAs and student leaders
- Deirdre is compiling list of UAP mentors
- Fran Herrity in PW has a listserv for transfer students  
  - Co-director of transfer center (http://www2.gmu.edu/depts/saa/transfer/)  
  - There is a transfer student honor society
- There will be a University Life core group meeting on November 11th  
  - There is a substantial group of transfer students in Housing – Rose will talk with Jana
• Need to reach underrepresented students
  o Peer Empowerment Program through the Counseling Center
    (http://www2.gmu.edu/depts/unilife/peer/) – contact LaVonne Browne
    • The group has a regular set of discussion sessions and groups
• Should we use surveys through Student Voice as a supplement to focus groups?

Rewards & Incentives
• We need to look at other institutions’ resource-allocation models to explore what’s in place elsewhere for faculty workloads, rewards, and incentives
  o Student FTE budget models and rewarding individual departments
  o Whatever we come up with for the QEP should aim to revamp the resource-allocation model that we use at Mason
• Where will incentives come in for system-level change? Is it at the department- or college-level?
  o Whatever we propose has to be revenue-neutral or we will have difficulty with buy-in
• How can the QEP be built into the Faculty Handbook and P&T?
  o A question for Faculty Senate?
  o Wouldn’t become a requirement, but would be encouraged as teaching not service
  o Faculty Handbook can be amended at anytime – might develop language to include mentorship in undergraduate scholarship and creative activity
• Stipends and rewards for faculty can backfire and appear (to others in their departments) that they are doing something for themselves
• How can we make it so faculty and grad students view this as career-advancing?
  o Look to Indiana University, Duke, Michigan, and Brown – faculty are being promoted on the basis of teaching and learning in their disciplines
• Need to find models that other institutions have used before we take our ideas to the Deans
• Will want to open up our definitions of faculty lines to include term and adjunct faculty – will need incentives that will appeal to them

Brainstorming Ideas for QEP
• Independent mentorship model vs. mentorship taking place in a course
  o Each accomplishes many of the same goals
  o Pyramid model
• Idea from psych department: creation of a freshman course in research skills so that as they go on they will be better-prepared for more advanced work
  o Possibility of using curricular innovation grants for this?
  o Computational & Data Sciences is developing a course that will fulfill the IT gen ed requirement, but will focus also on building research skills → an effort to get more undergrads in the program
• We’ll need to think further about creating a curricular component for this and will need to decided what these courses will look like
• Might want to go back and visit exemplary QEPs before focus groups…
  o U of Houston
• What do we mean by scholarship and creative activity?
  o Having the skills to do inquiry
  o Scholarship of engagement
  o Applying critical thinking skills to an issue
  o Events around engagement (Ex: Cultural Fusion Field Day)
• Could Mason host a CAA Conference?
  o CAA is starting a new electronic journal where students may be able to submit their work
• Revisions of existing courses is easier than creating new courses
  o Can we target existing Independent Study courses to see how we can incorporate scholarship?
• Study abroad students currently have a designated day to present what they learned
  o Is this required?
• Have an installed exhibition of student projects that has permanent space for Family Weekend, Alumni Weekend, etc.
• How could we infuse support for scholarship and creative activity into existing courses (like synthesis or capstone) courses?

Focus Group Planning
• Order QEP business cards or something about the QEP that we can hand to people?
• Have copies of abbreviated executive summaries for focus groups along with an updated version of QEP Quick Facts!
• Updated version of QEP flyer will ask folks to visit the QEP Café
  o Will address the purpose of their contributions
  o Information about the blog should be prominent and not in a circle
  o Flyer will be distributed via a mass mailing to all campus mailboxes
• Prompts will be emailed to RSVP’s before the focus groups to give them time to reflect
• We’ll have 3-4 essential questions that need to be asked:
  o What does scholarship and creative activity mean to you? What could it mean? (Q1)
    ▪ Need to present a spiel of what we mean by this BEFORE asking the question with examples to get them thinking…
    ▪ This question will be phrased differently for students and faculty
  o What concrete activities can you see happening in the future that would create a culture of scholarship and creative activity? (Q3)
  o For faculty: ask directly about incentives
    ▪ What kind of rewards would you need in order to become involved with this?
  o For students: ask about incentives as well
    ▪ What will it take for you to have the ability to engage in scholarship if those opportunities are available?
    ▪ What do we need to do to allow you to have time for scholarship?
    ▪ These questions assume that scholarship and creative activities are something that happen outside of the classroom, but if the QEP is integrated into the curriculum, incentives for students will not be a problem

Questions for UH Site Visit
• What have they done in terms of faculty rewards and incentives to get folks involved?
  o Texas has a state-mandated counting system for student enrollment in courses
  o How did they finesse this system in trying to implement the QEP?

Next meeting:
• Peer Review article(s) on creativity and pieces on scholarship of engagement
• New learning outcomes for synthesis courses