Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Planning Committee
Tuesday, March 16, 2010 – 9:30-11:30 a.m.


Reflecting on SACS Site Visit
• We need to think about methods for advertising
  o This institution created and distributed tote bags
  o Are there ways for us to utilize YouTube videos to advertise about the QEP?
• We need to think about how many student learning outcomes we’ll want to include in our plan
  o The recommendation from SACS is to have 4-6 SLOs
  o You can have program outcomes in addition to the SLOs to address things like graduation rates and student retention
• There were issues about the focus that this school had and concerns that they were trying to do too much
  o This was a reminder that our QEP must have a focus that we can realistically accomplish
• We’ll need to make sure that we build in faculty development as a major component of our QEP
  o The QEP will not happen unless a framework for faculty development is laid out in advance
• The sustainability of this institution’s QEP came up as a concern for the review team
  o We must be able to sustain the university community’s enthusiasm
    • This can happen through the faculty development
  o Will the initiative become part of the university’s mission and for how long? Will it be for the long-term or just for the duration of the QEP?
  o The consensus was that we need to be thinking beyond the five year duration

Matt’s Modeling Presentation
Note: Please see handout with slides that was distributed during the meeting for more information…
• We need to be able to clearly articulate our goals for the QEP
  o We’re often too optimistic in areas like student involvement – the engaged students will be easy to connect with, but what about those who tend to be more disengaged?
• Faculty want students to be like them and students want to be mentored by faculty
• What do administrators want from students? – we’ll want to make this connection
• Scholarship is about the knowledge-creation process
• Questions about why administrative faculty are left off of the “What is Scholarship?” slide
  o They can be included in this as well
• Student socialization is about breaking the habits that students acquired in high school (e.g., looking for answers rather than asking questions)
• How to leverage expertise among individuals on the Committee and around the university?
  o How do we identify the faculty members around campus who are able to stand in front of 100-200 students and build enthusiasm and interest?
    • What are the “hooks” that we’ll need to grab these folks?
    • People generally don’t step forward because they don’t think that what they’re doing is so great – these folks need to be identified by others in their department (we may want to have this as an item on the department chair survey)
• The portfolio model has a lot of different ways of accomplishing the same goals and will help with faculty buy-in and allow for greater flexibility
The Honors College operates in this way

• We want to get students moving through the “scholarly landscape”
• We need to continue thinking about how things will be different as a result of the QEP – what does change look like both inside and outside of the classroom?

Themes from Focus Group Discussions

• Transfers and adult learners are in the liminal stage and have different views and constraints than more traditional students
• Both groups heard the word “scholarship” and thought that our event would be about ways for them to receive money
• Students were generally eager to participate in these kinds of opportunities (for credit or for pay)
• All were interested in the idea of developing a database and would most like to have opportunities for credit that are offered at all times of day
  o Faculty must offer their projects on a flexible schedule so that students can do their work on different days each week and during different times of the day (mornings or evenings)
• Need to think about ways of building flexibility into the system, otherwise the same subset of students who already take advantage of these opportunities will be the only ones participating
  o If we make it mandatory, we have to make it possible
• The key is not making mentorship feel like an overload to faculty
• There is a hunger for one-credit courses because students often end up with an odd number of credits and need them to graduate

Example of Subcmte Assignment: Celebrations & Research Journals

• Departmental and university-wide celebrations:
  o Undergraduate Research Symposium (CHSS), Juried Undergraduate Exhibition, Chemistry Research Symposium, Math (grad students and faculty in fall/undergrads in spring), Theater (10 minute play - spring), ICAR Undergraduate Conference (spring), Innovations (in the past), Celebration of Achievement, 24-hour arts marathon (sponsored by CVPA in the spring), Conference on Undergraduate Research & Computational Math (sponsored by Math department and William & Mary on April 17th)
• Regional Conferences:
  o Colonial Academic Alliance (CAA), Virginia Collegiate Honors Conference (VCHC), National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), Posters on the Hill (by CUR)
• Journals that currently feature undergraduate work at Mason:
  o Volition, George Mason Review, Hispanic Culture Review, Mosaic (from MRRC), Diversity at Mason (from the Diversity Research Group)
  o Do the Broadside, Connect2Mason, and VoxPop count as examples of student scholarship?
  o CUR’s list of undergraduate research journals: http://cur.org/ugjournal.html
• What kinds of activities do we want to make visible on campus?
  o Course assignments, service-learning, and community projects will not look the same as those done under the traditional mentorship model. How do we capture these?
• We’ll want to think about the advantages to having a journal with complex academic papers for a smaller audience vs. a publication of student project profiles for a broader audience
  o We could present something that is layered with quick descriptions about the importance of various projects as well as the thick details
  o The Mason Archive of Repository Service (MARS) through the Library includes clips and pdfs of articles
• We’ll want to create a medium for this that is tailored to students’ interests
  o Think about Mills’ example of his cousin’s gaming website with karma points
  o We could do something similar to this around roll-out by creating a blog that asks students
    and faculty to share about the projects that they’re participating in. Those who post could
    accumulate points for something...
• Kansas State’s “Lost Kansas” project for undergraduates
  o Incentive for students is that select projects are highlighted on the website
  o Could also highlight faculty for their participation (or send letters to their chairs) as a way of
    getting their buy-in
• We could establish an interdisciplinary journal where the theme rotates for each issue
  o What kind of editorial board will we want/need for this? Faculty and undergraduates? Could
    this be a way to involve grad students?
  o It could be interesting to throw different disciplines into one issue so folks see that all are
    systematic inquiry into a particular topic
    ▪ We need to add a multimedia component to our online journal so that performance
      and art majors can share their work
  o Our journal doesn’t necessarily need to only include academic papers, but could also be a
    compilation of profiles to make visible the broad range of activities that are taking place
    ▪ Our journal needs to have “depth of accessibility”
• Instead of dictating the format of a journal now, the QEP could establish a framework for an editorial
  board that will establish the framework in the future
  o An editorial board of students and faculty advisors

Summary Comments
• What do we want every student to get out of this initiative? And, what do we want a subset of
  students to get out of it?
  o Concerns that we need a conceptual framework for this before moving into the particulars
  o Each subcommittee will have discussions about this in terms of each particular activity
• Need more concreteness on activities from subcommittees (particularly in reference to scope and
  learning outcomes) before we can move into the conceptual framework

Subcommittee Assignment (Due March 30th)
• Look at what other institutions have done so that we can get more clarity on what our scope needs to
  be, the way we want to prioritize our goals, our timeline, and the impact that various activities will
  have on student learning outcomes
  o Take your ideas and the URSCA chart and make them Mason’s – we do not have to stick to
    what other programs are doing
• For each of your subcommittee’s activities, think about the following:
  o What resources will it take to be able to do this in the right way?
  o What are the goals of creating this activity?
  o What are the learning outcomes that are related to this?
  o How will it be assessed?
  o Rank in your activities terms of high priority and impact
    ▪ Which could be done right away vs. which are for the long-term
    ▪ Broad impact vs. high impact
• Subcommittees can meet in person and discuss ideas over our wiki (http://masonqep.pbworks.com)