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


Reflecting on SACS Site Visit

- This institution did not have a section in their QEP about programs and activities that they were trying to enhance with their plan
  - We will want to be sure to include our current strengths
- We’ll want to collect baseline data for the activities that we are hoping to implement
  - We will do a department chair survey this summer
- This institution was very ambitious of student learning in their plan – faculty were trying to teach to 13-14 outcomes in their courses
  - They were not developing new courses, but were enhancing existing courses with their plan
- We’ll want to think more specifically and intentionally about roles for TAs, particularly in larger sections of courses
- This institution needed advisors onboard to get students into the enhanced courses
  - This serves as a reminder that we need to be doing the same with our advisors
- We need a visual record of our QEP process and will want to start taking pictures at various events and meetings
- They threw QEP t-shirts into the stands at basketball games
- Collected baseline data from students at orientation through a pretest
- We’ll want to have our QEP presentation on day one of our site visit – it is helpful for the review team to have this kind of background information about the process
- Our team will be staying at the Mason Inn for our site visit, which is **March 29-31, 2011** (QEP Committee members should block out these days and be available, if possible)
- There were 10 members on the team for this site visit, including a lead evaluator who was a content expert
  - Most QEP lead evaluators are not from SACS institutions
- The team did not give any recommendations, but provided a list of suggestions

Curricular Subcommittee Report-Out

- Curricular activities are the best way to touch almost everyone
- Possibilities for developing a first-year introductory course around scholarship and creative activity that is not necessarily discipline-specific
  - Would this be a new course?
    - We could work with departments to create new courses and provide them with the support to do it
    - Or, could we use existing courses?
      - We could present SLOs to departments to see if they offer courses where those SLOs already exist
      - Ways to use UNIV 100 courses and infuse them with more content?
        - In the past, the courses have been linked to others like ENGL 101
        - UNIV 100 is currently more of a transition course than one introducing students to scholarship and research skills
The new course would be more general and then we could use existing courses to build on what was learned in the intro course.

In general, students would have to complete an introduction to scholarship, which would have a variety of options that they could choose from, including an actual course, earning points on the scholarly landscape website, or a more one-on-one course with a specific/advanced focus.

- We’ll want to think about the Global Proficiency Certificate as a way to develop this idea of earning points on the website.
- Students could ultimately earn cords, certificates, or other recognition for graduation.

- Capstone courses
  - Possibilities for developing capstone courses where they do not exist – or expanding and adding to existing synthesis courses.
  - We could develop interdisciplinary capstone courses as a way of bringing students from different majors together.
    - The end result would be the development of an episode of “House” or “NCIS”.
    - This would be a way of getting different disciplines to collaborate with a final project in mind.

- The subcommittee supports the use of a common text in various courses, but this is not a priority.
- We’ll want to think about possibilities for using modules in courses.
- An alternative gen ed curriculum
  - We’ll want to have a streamlining process for any new or more developed courses that we propose.

- Internships for credit toward the student’s major
  - Work with departments that do not offer internships for credit and also with those that do to determine better ways to promote those opportunities.
  - Career Services can help us with this.

- Service-learning opportunities
- Encourage faculty to talk about scholarship – either in terms of their own work or about something they read in an academic journal.
  - Add an item addressing this to the university’s course evaluations.

- Colloquia (overlap with co-curricular)
  - These could be on “Conversations about Religion” or “Mathematics about Zombies” (which was created by a team of undergrads and overseen by a faculty member).
  - We’ll need to provide an incentive for faculty to participate in these colloquia and other activities (via P&T guidelines?)

Thoughts on Curricular Discussion

- Concerns that we will overwhelm faculty by requiring them to do another assessment
  - We should be creative about streamlining QEP assessment into what’s already happening so that it is not something in addition to what departments are currently doing.
    - Example: QEP assessment could be built into Academic Program Review (APR) so that it is not completely separate.

- Possibilities for creating a website where students move through different “levels” and earn rewards for their involvement in various opportunities.
  - They would move through the “scholarly landscape” with several different ways of accessing and satisfying the various outcomes for this.
This is not necessarily a set linear path – there will be a variety of paths that students can take

- We’ll want to bring the Registrar’s Office and Facilities into the conversation later for course scheduling and space purposes
  - We’ll need a cultural shift to get faculty more willing to teach on different days/times
  - 7% of classroom requests went unfilled by Facilities this semester because of the lack of space on Tuesday and Thursday evenings
- We’ll want to conduct a Department Chair tour to hear about folks’ willingness to participate in these kinds of activities and/or submit proposals for revamping their courses
- Look to first-year Honors 110 course as a model for some of these activities
  - Because these courses are very labor-intensive for faculty, it might not be easy to offer them to the broader student population
  - NCC has offered a new community-based research course (“Inquiry to Action: Facilitating Change”) this semester as part of their first-year Cornerstones program
  - Some components of both the Honors and NCC course could be blended into a course for the broader population

Co-Curricular Subcommittee Report-Out

- The subcommittee focused on two activities that might be easiest to start up
- Student Ambassador Program
  - This program would be designed to get students talking about research on campus
  - Student Ambassadors could talk to classes and seminars and attend fundraising events, orientations, and Welcome Week
  - Look to Cornell’s Undergraduate Research Board as a potential model for this program
  - Would serve to make research opportunities for students to work with faculty more visible and would also convey this to the general student population
  - A student-run and student-focused organization that could have funding from the Student Funding Board
  - How would this be organized within different academic units and how would these students be identified?
  - Faculty would be communicating with students and the students would be communicating with other students
  - Students can progress into these positions after doing other work on the scholarly landscape
- Joint Project Partnerships
  - Non-traditional service-learning hooked onto existing courses and offered for an additional credit
  - These opportunities do not have to be related to a course and could be separate
  - This doesn’t necessarily require a ton of external incentivizing, but may be more of a time issue
  - University Life is trying to compile a list of existing partnerships
  - Use Diversity Research Group (DRG) and student researchers as a model
    - Could find faculty leaders, provide them with stipends, and ask them to pull together groups of faculty and students similar to the DRG
    - Jim Witte and Center for Social Science Research – ideas about ways of taking advantage of the community around the institution
- How do we capture what students are learning from their work in a place where it can be disseminated to other students, faculty, and community members?
Not a formal assessment, but more of an information-gathering process

E-portfolios – we need an institutional structure/license for this

Mentoring Subcommittee Report-Out

- This subcommittee’s discussion focused on the role of mentoring, along with the structure of these activities
  - Brainstorming was based on the idea that the student will maintain some form of an e-portfolio or archive over the course of their time at Mason
  - Best pieces of work from these archives will potentially be published in OPUS
- The first year would focus on building students’ research skills through a first-year course
- The sophomore year would serve as more of a learning phase
  - After their first-year, students would be paired with an advanced senior or grad student
  - Students would go through this phase with their mentor and learn how to conduct library-based research, write a report, deliver a presentation, etc.
  - Students would be asked to attend two seminars in a series of seminars
    - These would be given once a month (possibly by grad students) and could be tied to the Vision Series
- The third year would be the investigative phase
  - Junior JUMP scholars would pursue research opportunities that were identified during the sophomore year
  - This would culminate with a presentation with monetary prizes
- The final year would be when students mentor sophomores or serve as a judge for the junior presentations
  - The QEP could build on senior design and capstone courses
  - Students’ finished papers/reports would be considered for publication in OPUS
    - Possibilities for having a permanent column about these activities in the Broadside
- Possibilities for offering students “tiered” scholarships that would be given in installments as they go through the scholarly landscape
  - If you reach a certain number of points on the website, you are offered a scholarship
- How can the Virtual Computing Lab (VCL) support this kind of work?
- How to redesign and revamp the current Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program (UAP)?
  - Concerns about losing the critical one-on-one attention if this program is expanded
  - This kind of support could be provided for a larger group, if we think about how to utilize seniors and grad students
  - Importance of thinking about scope and the impact that we want to have

Advertising Ideas

- QEP m&m’s for site visit
- Temporary QEP tattoos?
- We are working with Creative Services to develop methods of advertising before the site visit
  - Signs on the CUE buses, banners, etc.