Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Planning Committee
Tuesday, April 27, 2010 – 9:30-11:30 a.m.


Summer Writing Process
- We need to remember that we are “advisory to ourselves”
- Over the summer, a small working group will look at the specifics, in terms of which programs are possible within our budget and assessment constraints
- This small working group will identify critical decision points that they can then bring back to the full committee for discussion and feedback
  - This interaction with the full committee will take place through the wiki, emails, and a few meetings
- By the time we meet as a full committee in the third week of August, we should all be comfortable with the document that we’re asking the university community to review
- What is the nature of the feedback that we’ll be looking for from the community?
  - We’ll be tweaking things and looking for the community’s response, but not making big changes at that point
  - We’ll need to be specific about the input that we’re requesting from the community
    - The response period will allow us to get additional buy-in from the community
  - One strategy would be to target folks who have shown interest in the QEP before – either through the blog, email, or our focus groups – for their feedback
    - We could have a two step roll-out: first to more targeted groups and second to the broader community as a final viewing in mid-fall
  - We’ll want to have conversations with big stakeholders over the summer while we are drafting the plan
    - Key groups to target: Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government, Deans and Directors, Department Chairs, Exec Council, and faculty meetings
  - Some ideas might require Faculty Senate or senior administrative action – we should over-communicate with these folks so that we don’t have to backtrack or experience any delays
  - Is this the time when we should distribute a QEP newsletter or summary?

Curricular Subcommittee
- High priority items:
  - The idea to develop a new required course for all students has been transformed into the idea to integrate modules into existing courses (gen ed?)
    - These modules would be developed around ideas of scholarship (some would be basic, while others would be advanced and more discipline-specific) and would need to be appropriately integrated into the courses
    - The modules would ideally be taught by the course instructor
    - We’ll want to have faculty involvement in the development of these before we can think about implementing them
    - We could also identify some gen ed courses with relatively small sections and designate those as scholarship sections
      - Students in these sections would be learning the same material as students in the other sections, but would have more of a scholarship-focus
Capstone and synthesis courses
- We could use these courses as a space to do discipline-specific and higher-level scholarship
- We could work with departments who currently have these courses and are interested in integrating them with the QEP
- The subcommittee also talked about identifying writing intensive research methods courses that could build students’ skills for these synthesis courses

Earning scholarship points
- Points would go toward a “distinction” on students’ diplomas
- Students could earn points from participating in curricular, co-curricular, or mentoring activities
- We’ll need to make sure that the outside community understands what this distinction means so that the students will feel motivated to participate
- We’ll want to be careful that the activities and programs we’re creating do not detract from existing activities

Committee Response to Curricular Ideas
- Possibilities for creating a one-credit scholarship-intensive (SI) add-on?
  - We could create a smaller section of larger classes for those students who are interested in participating in more hands-on activities
  - Students would receive an additional credit for enrolling in the smaller section of the course
  - These add-ons could have grad student support and help students earn points for the scholarly landscape
  - This add-on gives students the option of engaging in these activities, rather than requiring them to participate
- Ways for instructional designers to assist in the development of modules?
- E-portfolios can be used for tracking points earned in the scholarly landscape and can be shared with graduate schools or employers
- How can we give departments control over what is best for them and their students?
  - How do we figure out ways to support the myriad ways that this could get implemented?
- We need to get students thinking about their goals when they first come to Mason so that they can plan for the kinds of experiences they should be engaging in to meet those goals
  - We would encourage students to participate in these activities
  - This could also be a nice role for Career Services, in terms of helping students identify what needs to be on their diploma

Co-Curricular Subcommittee
- University Life has created a matrix of all existing activities that we could build on
- Student Ambassador Program
  - Student Ambassadors could go into gen ed courses and talk about their research – overlap with modules?
  - These students could give presentations to community colleges, high schools, and summer programs
    - A survey would be distributed to the audience after each presentation as a form of assessment
  - A prerequisite to becoming an Ambassador would be that students have to take a one-credit course on leadership and presentation skills
    - This course could be taught by a grad student
• We need to be sensitive to representing different disciplines in terms of both the instructors for this one-credit course and the Student Ambassadors themselves
  o Students could be self-nominated or nominated by a faculty member
  o What will the application process look like?
• Joint Project Partnerships
  o The subcommittee wanted to find a way to better connect curricular and co-curricular
  o “Joint” refers to faculty and non-faculty, curricular and non-curricular
  o The Diversity Research Group is an example of this
  o There wouldn’t necessarily have to be one pathway for these partnerships – they could be initiated by students or by faculty members
  o We could organize groups around themes like social entrepreneurship, global topics, or sustainability/climate change
  o UH’s eDiscovery portal is a great example for how these projects can be organized
• Possibilities for establishing/developing a co-curricular transcript?

Mentoring Subcommittee
• Note: please see the mentoring team’s handout with details on the Student Mentoring Program…
• 3 groups will be involved with this program: QEP scholars, student mentors, and a Faculty Advisory Board
• Students will acquire skills during their freshman year that they will need to succeed in the program
  o These skills include: conducting a lit review, defining a problem, writing a research paper, thinking in terms of different genres of scholarship, and gathering/managing/collecting information
  o Each student gets $250 per year for participating or $1,000 for participating over 4 years
• Student mentors will go through Peer Mentoring Workshops
• Each student mentor will be in charge of two student scholars
• Year 2: students will have the opportunity to attend the Scholarship Symposium, at which time they will actually apply to the program
  o Students continue to learn about different types of scholarship and skills during year two through a series of workshops
  o Workshops will focus on: writing a journal article, giving a presentation, dealing with ethical issues, writing an HSRB proposal, designing a survey, or organizing an article
• Year 3: students are engaging in their projects and conducting research
  o Scholars now have the opportunity to serve as mentors
• Year 4: students begin communicating their findings and mentoring other scholars
• Anticipated budget: $300K for the entire program over the 5-year duration of the QEP
  o $247,500 will be devoted to student funding/stipends for research
  o The additional $52,500 will go toward student travel and faculty stipends

Committee Response to Mentoring Ideas
• We’ll need to consider annual or recurring costs for this program instead of a total sum
• We may want to increase our monetary incentive for students who actually become mentors
• We would have to select 15 students to serve as mentors initially – possibilities for selecting these students from the UAP?
• We’ll need to make opportunities available so that transfer students can enter this program in years 2, 3, or 4
• We may want to extend the research activity phase into the senior year to create more opportunities for students to enter into the program after the 2nd year
• We also may want to directly tie the money to actual outcomes like conference travel or supplies, rather than handing the student a check for a flat stipend
• We’re assuming no attrition in this program from year to year
  o Students may decide that they’re in the wrong field and that this isn’t what they want to do
  o Students may also be more likely to stick with the program if there’s an incentive at the end for completing the program
• The Student Mentoring Program could be a direct route to the “distinction” designation at graduation, while other students would have to participate in several activities
• We will need a full-time staff member to run this program and may be able to submit a grant proposal to an external organization for the funding of this component of our QEP
• This program provides an opportunity for folks to continue their experiences over 4 years, which is something that the UAP doesn’t currently do
• Opportunities for using modules here?
  o If students enter the program during their junior year, they will do so with the understanding that they will be required to complete a series of modules to build their research/scholarly skills
• The Faculty Advisory Board should make connections with faculty members who are interested in becoming involved in the program
  o We could have staff members from University Life on this Board as well – and these folks could also serve as mentors

Final Thoughts
• How many students do we want to touch with the QEP? And, how are we going to count them?
  o What counts as scholarship?
  o Is it only through university-sponsored programs or through existing activities as well?
• There is interest in seeing specific budget numbers to determine how much money can be devoted to each component of our plan
• We don’t want to lose sight of cross-disciplinary opportunities
• If so many programs already exist on campus, why don’t we already have a culture of scholarship?
  o We need to connect these existing programs and maybe not focus on creating all of these new opportunities
  o There is a lack of structure for these existing activities, but there is surely a culture that could be enhanced