Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Planning Committee
Wednesday, August 26, 2009 – 1:00-3:00 p.m.


For next meeting:
- Review QEP Handbook
- Read white paper, “Fostering a Culture of Student Scholarship,” paying particular attention to the preliminary student learning outcomes
- Start reviewing: Reinventing Undergraduate Education

Ideas mentioned/questions asked during introductions
- Ideas for reframing the Innovations showcase to address student scholarship and creative activity in a different/more effective manner
- Department of Social Work requires students to engage in experiential learning projects
- CVPA has natural affinity for out-of-the-classroom mentoring
- Honors College now houses the Undergraduate Apprenticeship Program (UAP)
  - UAP funds 60 undergrads each year to conduct research – connects apprenticeships to courses and makes students more competitive for grad school
- Distinction we are making between research and scholarship?
- How is knowledge created?

Review of the process
- The QEP is a component of SACS reaffirmation of accreditation – we are in the class of 2011
- QEP will start after our site visit and after the approval of our plan
  - Site visit: March 29-31, 2011
- The QEP topic must transform Mason and be rooted in our strategic plan and institutional mission
  - SACS does not define what transformative means
- Previous QEP Committee developed four topic proposals of their own, solicited proposals from the university community, and asked for initial feedback via the QEP Café and email
  - Pushed information out in a variety of ways (attended university meetings, wrote newspaper articles, etc.)
  - Eight additional proposals were submitted by the campus community
  - The QEP Committee then narrowed the pool of twelve topics down to three
    - Formed three different white paper subcommittees that were comprised of members of the Committee and key members of the Mason community
  - Electronic survey received over 2,000 responses from university community
- Topic: Fostering a culture of student scholarship and creative activity
  - Need to bring in components of social innovators/entrepreneurs & global white papers

Our timeline
- Over the next year, we should develop a good outline of the plan
- In fall 2010, we should be editing and finalizing our plan
  - A lot of the writing should be completed by this time
  - Enough details in place to begin promoting the QEP to the university community
- QEP must be submitted to SACS in January 2011 (at least 6 weeks before our site visit)
• SACS is coming to campus for the site visit on March 29-31, 2011
  o Want to see that we have support for plan and baseline data, but not started plan yet
  o We can choose who will oversee the review of our QEP
    ▪ Cannot be someone we’ve consulted with
    ▪ Can be someone from a program we’ve looked to

Thoughts for moving forward
• As we move forward in this process, we will need to:
  o Think about scope — how many students would we like to reach and how will they be touched by this QEP?
    ▪ Not everyone needs to be touched in the same way — some contact will be less intensive
    ▪ University of Houston’s QEP — triangle graphic with college-wide initiatives at the base of the triangle (touching the largest amount of students and mentored research at the top (touching the smallest amount of students)
  • Link to UH’s QEP Executive Summary: [http://uh.edu/discovery/QEP_ExecSummary.pdf](http://uh.edu/discovery/QEP_ExecSummary.pdf)
  o Look to other institutions that have developed similar programs/initiatives
  o Make site visits
  o Make an inventory of scholarly and creative activities that are already taking place on campus
  o Finalize student learning outcomes and determine methods of assessment
  o Write the plan
• Please do not refer to our QEP topic (Fostering a Culture of Student Scholarship) as “student research” — we need to think more broadly and be inclusive of students across the university
• SACS’ intention is that the QEP is focused primarily on undergraduates
  o We can think creatively and consider creating vertical research teams in order to include grad students in this, which would also allow us to impact more students
• Internal conversation vs. external conversation
  o Allowing student learning outcomes to drive this process and determining the language we will need to use as we sell this to the university community
• Concerns about pushback from department chairs and the increasing research pressures on their junior faculty
• This is exactly where the institution needs to go and it is a huge opportunity
  o There is real excitement and buy-in from deans and others in the community
  o Our topic is not in conflict with faculty goals and missions
  o We can find ways to repurpose existing money in addition to our new money
• Have been working with the Development Office to include the QEP on their website and in the capital campaign
• Possibility of including students on grant applications through the Office of Research Development
• Initially, we may choose to transform existing research courses
  o Curricular innovation grants to enhance the focus on scholarship and creative activity?

Discussions for future meetings
• What is already in place at the university in terms of student scholarship and creative activity?
• Promising practices from other institutions
• How to get input from Mason community – what faculty, staff, and students would like to see
• The difference between research and scholarship