Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Planning Committee  
Wednesday, September 23, 2009 – 3:00-5:00 p.m.


Discussion with Provost Stearns

- Need to keep budget realities in mind as we proceed
- We have to remember that many of the exemplar institutions that we may look to for ideas implemented their student scholarship programs prior to the budget crisis
- Re: graduate students → would be good to involve them (>1/3 of our students are grad students), but given resources and SACS’ emphasis on undergraduate student learning we may not be able to involve them as much as we would like
- Would like us to clarify how groups of faculty can begin to develop student scholarship programs that relate to QEP activities
  - How do various communities of interest (e.g., those interested in global, social innovators & entrepreneurs, etc.) have opportunities to get involved in QEP activities?
- Whatever we do should reach undergraduates who are not easy targets for student scholarship and creative activities
  - Going beyond students who don’t think of these kinds of projects as something they do
- Wants our QEP to be a signature effort — years down the road, other institutions should be looking to us as an example

Comments on Discussion

- Over 40% of last year’s UAP participants were transfer students, so we currently are hitting some nontraditional targets
- Institutional inhibitors to enacting what we want to change?
  - Concerns that bringing innovations into courses will cause course ratings to suffer
  - Will need to look at current institutional frameworks
  - Courses with higher enrollment targets will be more difficult to work with than smaller courses
- We have budget: want to think about organizational/departmental incentives and individual ones

QEP Conversations – What to say to others?

- Paula and Minu spoke briefly about the QEP to the University Scholars (about 80 people) during their last townhall meeting and passed out flyers for students to post on their floors
- What should we be sharing with colleagues and students?
  - A two-minute speech with a reminder of the QEP
    - General information about the QEP (background information, an overview of the process, our timeline, an update with where we are, and the website/blog address)
    - Is important to get past the SACS lingo when explaining this to others
  - Let’s be clear about the timeline:
    - Right now we are in the information-gathering stage
    - Let students and colleagues know that this is an ongoing conversation and that we are continuing to seek feedback
Wherever possible (e.g., dept/unit meetings, committees, classes), all committee members are encouraged to talk about the QEP to raise awareness.

- Committee goal: Have a significantly changed white paper by the middle of the spring semester
  - We’ll ask for feedback through the end of the spring and make changes over the summer
  - We may post iterations of the white paper on the blog for feedback as we revise

Gathering Information (prompt/question ideas in bold)

- Start with concrete discussion: **How do you define scholarship and creative activity in your discipline/field?**
  - Build up to the ideal: **What could this initiative look like?**
  - How can we take activities that are already taking place on campus to the next level to get them to qualify as scholarship or creative activities?
  - If something isn’t being defined as scholarship, it might be one step away from it—every unit is just one step away from promoting scholarship (e.g., global education)

- We may want to develop a matrix with the stakeholder groups on one side and the feedback we want from them on the other (see draft below)

  - **Possible questions:**
    - **What are you doing now?**
    - **How could the QEP help you meet your goals?**
    - **What could we do to address your challenges and goals?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>What are you doing now that we could build on?</th>
<th>Challenges?</th>
<th>Goals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Life</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Students</td>
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- When talking with others, the idea is to elicit as many ideas as possible and not to make promises and we’ll need to create specific events where we can have conversations to get at critical Qs
- Identify possible sites for transformation and determine if it would be possible to create a tailored forum out of these groups
  - A way of building a constituency and letting stakeholders know about the possibilities
    - Example: CGE, living/learning communities
  - Set a meeting and send invitations to specific individuals
- Identify target groups and ask for 30-45 minutes of their time
  - Ming Wan and faculty who have led study abroad trips
  - Social innovators and entrepreneurs interest group
- Which of the goals of our QEP would need to be accomplished within a minor course shift? Within curricular initiatives/tracks? And, which are completely unbound by courses?
- How do we support communities of interest?
  - Communities of interest might be reached through student organizations
- Concerns about integrating scholarship and creative activity into classes in every department
  - Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation
  - This can be used as an opportunity if we try to think about what people will want in order to get involved
    - **What will it take to get you involved?**
Defining Scholarship & Creative Activity

- What do we mean by scholarship? What does it mean to be creatively active? And, who decides what qualifies?
  - Something that’s original – a new way of thinking about something
  - There is a research component – a gathering of information, materials, or data (would need to give examples of info gathering)
  - Work is situated within a conversation of other people who have worked on a similar topic/project (includes a list of sources)
  - Work has been made public in some way – beyond the classroom
    - Builds on what others have done and is an accumulation of knowledge
    - Includes a different perspective on the contributions of others
  - This definition works for science, social science, humanities, but what about the arts?
    - Can change the descriptions above to match specific disciplines
  - Systematic inquiry, going beyond what you can get to by simple application of the rules, part of a conversation
    - Example: creating an art display of others’ work – you have to have a reason for doing what you did and you’re making it available to the public

- If students have participated in study abroad, how will their work be made public?
  - By writing about the experience
  - By turning it into a research trip rather than an academic tourism trip, which would also help make study abroad more focused
  - Could establish partners in other countries that students could work with on their projects
    - Projects and collaborators would be predefined and all that would need to happen is the research

- There are different levels of scholarship: examining data that has already been collected or reading the newspaper with a critical eye

- Concerns about the ways that faculty in the sciences will interpret “original”
  - What is original research?
  - Students can use techniques that have been used before and apply them to something new
  - Distinction between pure science/math and applied science/math
    - Doing the applied research will get more students interested in grad school
    - Testing ideas that are already out there
  - Might need to define “original” or remove it from our description of scholarship

- These kinds of concepts can be infused into the institution and change it in fundamental ways
- Possible selling point: we’ll create better writers through the process of scholarship
- Unmet need: co-curricular initiatives and community-research models
  - Incentives for faculty advisors of student organizations to oversee projects