I. Approval of minutes of October 19 meeting

Rodney called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and asked that the minutes from the October 19 meeting be approved. The committee approved the minutes.

II. Visit from SACS Vice President, Tom Benberg

Rodney then called on Bob Boehmer to discuss the visit from SACS Vice President, Tom Benberg, on January 20, 2010. He will be here the entire day. The purpose of the visit is to introduce him to the complexity of the campus, the committee’s work, and the people involved in the process. The QEP Team will meet with him at 1 p.m. that day. Send any questions you have for Tom Benberg’s visit to Bob in advance along with suggestions on particular offices or programs you feel Tom Benberg should visit.

Rodney distributed a handout that listed the final draft of the first-year seminar program design on behalf of David Lee. This plan came out of the Oct. 19 discussion and was informally discussed with senior leadership. The plan still needs to be approved by the leadership team.

III. Presentation of QEP Program Design

Rodney referred to the following elements of the first-year seminars as being modifications since the last meeting:

1. One credit hour was voted on and approved by the program design committee. If faculty want to voluntarily teach a two-hour course, they may, but they will only be compensated for one hour.

2. Three class periods will be set aside for information literacy, introduction to the research, service/outreach mission of UGA through use of a video, and inclusion of a portfolio.

3. $2,500 per semester compensation to faculty.

4. A substantial writing assignment with at least one reviewed draft should be included in the course.

5. Flexibility is emphasized with suggested practices for content, not requirements.
Marisa Pagnattaro expressed concern about the grading of the writing portion and suggested support for writing TAs and writing center. Fran Teague supported the idea.

Bill Potter supports the idea that the compensation for faculty be flexible so that it can be used for travel/research and not just supplemental pay since taxes will be taken out that reduce the amount awarded.

Rodney mentioned that there is still one item brought up in the leadership group that he would like the group to brainstorm: How do we build in intentional engagement of students with campus events and services?

Irwin Bernstein asked about how students find out about undergraduate research opportunities. Pam Kleiber replied through the CURO website faculty can list opportunities, but it is not comprehensive.

Ideas presented include: (1) portal page for instructors of the course that lists upcoming events, presentations, resources, etc.; (2) require attendance at a certain number of events with a reflective writing piece to ensure students complete the requirement.

Discussion by group on the need to explain in the QEP document why transfer students were excluded in the design.

Meg Amstutz expressed that the rationale for and recommendations on ways to include transfer students needs to be deliberately included.

Rodney replied that the scale of what we are trying to do is massive and we could just state that the focus is on incoming first-year students.

Bob stated that he does not have a concern with SACS as long as the goals are clearly defined with the intended results that illustrate why incoming first-year students must take the course.

A general conversation about concerns with the advising piece of program design was raised. Committee members feel that a student may be misadvised about a major or required courses if the faculty member serving as the instructor is not part of that department already. Fran mentioned that not all faculty members have access to the DARS system.

Allan Aycock asked if the next step was to take the develop the elements of the plan as presented to determine what is possible. Rodney replied, “Yes, we should move forward in identifying how feasible the ideas are.”

Bob Boehmer wanted to get a sense of where the QEP team is today in supporting the QEP design that has been proposed. He feels that it is an exciting plan, but doesn’t have a sense yet as to where the group is collectively on working on the specifics and supporting the plan. SACS is looking for a transformative experience and a highly participative process with significant financial investment from the University. He expressed concern that the debate has curbed the enthusiasm from the committee members, particularly if the elements they advocated for are not part of the plan any longer.

There was a general discussion by committee members who had proposed elements that were not included in the final plan. They responded that they see the value of this program and support it.
Cheryl Dozier said the challenge now is getting faculty buy-in and working with department chairs to sell the value of the program to their faculty (ideas were then shared on how to do this). Incoming students will not resist having to take the course because they have no prior knowledge of what is expected. We can pump up the seminars in Orientation as a way to emphasize the importance of the course.

Irwin stated that he likes the language of the proposal because it gives suggestions on how to structure the courses, not mandates, which should encourage faculty ownership.

Meg Amstutz stated that the value of the course is in the relationships faculty build with students, so the smaller class size can be used to sell the experience.

Barb White suggested the idea to design a promotional piece that highlights student success stories in current seminars and use this promotional piece with faculty recruitment.

Rodney reiterated the idea to build in other incentives like in the UC Berkley program, such as the ability to bring in faculty-selected speakers to support groups of seminars.

Jere stated that the number of students needs to be adjusted in the proposal to reflect 5,000; therefore, we need to plan for 350 seminars. He feels that the course should be capped at 18 students.

Denise Gardner raised concern about how to assess outcomes if there are no consistent measures or common elements between each course.

Jere Morehead responded that modules are used at a high rate with student athlete seminars now and if made available it would likely encourage consistency between courses. Furthermore, if some faculty do not incorporate any of the suggestions, they might not be invited back the following year.

Motion made by Paul Chambers to endorse the program design plan presented. Motion seconded. Unanimous vote in favor of supporting the QEP Program Design Proposal.

IV. Plan for Spring 2010 Semester

Rodney posed the question, “How quickly can working groups use the proposal to identify implementation issues with the program design and to complete their portions of the QEP draft?”

There was a general discussion which led to agreement that we will call a meeting for early January to review subcommittee elements. The draft of the QEP will be done by January.

Rodney stated that working groups should let Jan Wheeler know if they have a subcommittee meeting during the remainder of this semester. Rodney emphasized the importance of working groups completing their work before the holiday break.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Leming & Joelle Walls