
Those absent: Meg Amstutz, Bob Boehmer, Denise Gardner, Kasee Laster, Jean Martin-Williams, Jere Morehead, Shannon Scott

Rodney called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and asked that the minutes from the September 14 and 21 meetings be approved. The committee approved the minutes.

Rodney then called on David Lee, chair of the Program Design working group, to present the group’s latest work. David distributed a handout that listed the consensus elements of the proposed first-year experience as of September 16.

David referred to the following elements of the first-year seminars as being the main points:

1. One credit hour
2. Tenured/tenure track faculty
3. $3,000 per semester compensation to faculty
4. Emphasis on consistency of seminar requirements—must be a level of uniformity, otherwise the program deteriorates. (This refers to a uniformity of rigor, not content.)
5. Required paper with at least one reviewed draft
6. Some flexibility preserved

David pointed out that the Program Design working group has moved away from the idea of podcasts and other ideas related to orientation to campus. The focus is now on academic content. Faculty may weave in orientation items.

There was a general discussion about the writing component, including the use of graduate assistants in grading and various types of writing assignment possibilities.

Bill Potter commented on the importance of students being guided in the use of learning resources.

Paige Carmichael distributed a list of goals for an “impactful” first-year experience, developed by the Learning Outcomes working group. The four goals are:

1. Enhanced academic achievement of our students
2. Students taking increased responsibility for their education
3. Increased engagement of our students in the UGA community
4. Increased social responsibility and awareness of our students.

David Lee stated that the goals his working group has developed are:

1. Engaging students academically
2. Engaging students in the research, public service/outreach, and international missions of UGA
3. Creating bonds between students and the faculty members teaching the seminars

The team returned to a discussion of the writing component of the seminars. Connor McCarthy stated that learning how to write research papers is important. Katie agreed with Connor and also acknowledged that other vehicles would be effective.

Rodney referred the team to David’s sample seminar topics. Rodney believes it is important that students understand what faculty do. Engaging with faculty members in the first year is powerful. Faculty should work with their students on writing.

Allan Aycock pointed out that research on student learning shows that peer-to-peer interaction also is very powerful in engaging students.

David responded that we do not have to eliminate the proposed peer mentors, but there have been reasons to eliminate them.

Connor pointed out that peer mentors would have more of a role in the two credit hour model.

A discussion about the number of credit hours associated with the seminar followed. Joe Broder emphasized that a one hour course is associated with three hours of student time outside class.

Rodney asked for clarification about Dr. Mace’s faculty teaching overload letter. David Knauft responded that he and Barb White, as members of the budget working group, will be meeting with Chris Miller soon and will report what they learn.

Returning to the subject of peer mentors, David Lee stated that we would have to develop clear roles for them. Connor said that peer mentors would attend classes and lead discussions on research, study abroad, and service learning.

There was a discussion about the kinds of things that Student Affairs could do to extend orientation, possibly outside the domain of the QEP.

Art Dunning commented that we should determine how we can use this program to improve academic rigor and also to explain to the students the complexities of a research institution. What we do as a research institution matters to the citizens of the state. Educating our students would lessen what he has seen at times as an almost antagonistic attitude toward higher education.

Rodney again referred to David Lee’s sample seminars. We can engage students through such classes.
Fran Teague asked if we could consider a one hour seminar with a one hour lab. Bill Potter suggested that the second hour could be produced by academic and student affairs professionals.

Marisa Pagnattaro expressed her concern that having an orientation portion in the seminars would dilute what we are trying to do.

David Lee returned to the idea of making podcasts, videos, etc. on mission and learning resources available, leaving it to the faculty how to teach those. Bill Potter added that practical experience is critical in learning.

Irwin Bernstein favors the two-hour model. Faculty would meet with the students for one hour and be compensated for one hour. There must be a way for this to work.

Paige offered examples of how faculty members could use peer mentors to escort classes to the library, writing center, etc., making a two hour model workable.

Cheryl Dozier suggested making those learning experiences part of outside class activities and assignments. Connor and Katie agreed.

Noting that it seemed difficult for the team to reach consensus, Jan Wheeler asked Rodney if we should consider forwarding the Program Design group’s most recent plan to the Leadership Team for their input. Rodney disagreed.

Rodney then asked how we could reach consensus. Irwin answered that the QEP Team should delegate the authority to develop a final plan to the Program Development group, trusting in their good judgment.

There was no dissent to this opinion.

Rodney stated that the reports from the other working groups would be tabled until our next meeting. A revised plan will be sent to the team via email.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Wheeler