Student Learning Enhancement Team

Friday, January 23, 2009

3:30 p.m., Peabody Boardroom, Administration Building


Those absent: Meg Amstutz, Paul Chambers, Cheryl Dozier, Art Dunning, Denise Gardner, Loch Johnson, David Knauft, Jerry Legge, Bill Potter, Robin Tricoli, Barb White

Rodney Mauricio called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 6 meeting. The motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Rodney then called on Leslie Atchley to present the results of the student survey. Leslie thanked Denise Gardner and Connor McCarthy for their help in compiling the survey results and in writing the summary. Four major themes emerged: In order of prevalence, those themes are: 1.) Relationship-building and increased accessibility to faculty, advisors, and upperclassmen mentors is critical to student learning. 2.) Students desire technology advances in academic and administrative support systems. 3.) Students seek increased academic assistance and accommodations such as tutoring and 24-hour study spaces. 4.) Students value interactive learning that involves hands-on experiences, real world applications, diversity education, research, internships, and international study. A copy of the entire summary is attached to the minutes.

There were 374 surveys submitted, primarily by undergraduate students. One team member noted that experiential learning and service learning are two themes that relate to some of the pre-proposals. Another commented that faculty involvement will be critical to whichever student learning initiative is chosen.

Irwin Bernstein pointed out that although the sample size is small and not statistically representative, the students who completed the survey were highly-motivated, and their views must be considered. David Lee added that we should integrate ideas from the student survey into the criteria we develop. Allan Aycock noted that the students’ ideas could also help us as we develop the selected topic into the full Student Learning Initiative.

Irwin asked if pre-proposals have to meet all the criteria to be considered, and a general discussion followed. There was some agreement that they would not, initially. The pre-proposals will be developed more fully, and successful pre-proposals will become proposals that do meet our criteria.

Joe Broder, chair of the criteria sub-committee, reminded the team that his group had used the SACS criteria for a Quality Enhancement Plan as their starting point. He then presented six criteria. There was a general discussion that involved comparing the sub-committee’s recommendations with a modified version that Rodney had proposed. One concern was how to indicate that we would like our final plan to become a model for other institutions—possibly an aspirational standard. Another was that our plan
should address UGA’s mission. Jere Morehead and Rodney pointed out that we should keep in mind that the criteria we select must aid us in our decision-making process.

Suggestions on how to employ the criteria were offered, including the use of a scale and the use of the National Institute of Health model.

Fran Teague voiced concern that we develop a means of advancing the ideas that are not ultimately selected. Pam Kleiber agreed and suggested that by grouping or combining some pre-proposals that they would become more robust and usable.

Allan re-worked the criteria, combining the sub-committee’s work with Rodney’s submission and other comments from the meeting discussion. There was agreement that although the discussion on criteria was helpful to our process that we should limit further discussion.

Paige Carmichael moved that the committee accept the revised criteria. Katy Bowers seconded the motion. Some additional discussion followed. Joe called for the question, and the team voted to approve the criteria as revised:

Criteria for Evaluating SLI Pre-Proposals

1. Learning-focused: Will the plan transform undergraduate learning at UGA?

2. UGA-centered: Will the plan advance the mission of UGA as a public land- and sea-grant university and set an aspirational standard?

3. Scope: Will the plan reach broadly across campus?

4. Adaptability: Is the plan flexible and scalable?

5. Evidence: Is there evidence that UGA needs the plan and that it will succeed?

6. Measurement: Can we devise specific, measurable learning outcomes for this plan?

Next, Bob Boehmer presented a draft of a time line and process for evaluating the pre-proposals. After some discussion and minor revising, Bob moved that the plan be accepted. Fran Teague seconded his motion.

A discussion about how to conduct the upcoming February 4 forum followed. Irwin and Luke Naeher suggested that we should prepare a short statement about each of the 30 pre-proposals and present those in a power-point format. This would be consistent with the short descriptions that we would use in our survey of alumni. Paige stated her concern about the one-hour limit on the forum.

There was additional discussion on the purpose of the forum and general agreement that the event would allow the pre-proposals to have exposure to the campus, would allow the team to publicly thank the pre-proposal authors, and would allow the team and the campus community to ask the authors questions. Katy pointed out that an additional reason for holding the forum was to demonstrate our effort to gather as much feedback as possible before making our final selections.
It was agreed that we would ask each author to give us a short synopsis of his or her pre-proposal. We will post those to the web site and Sakai, and we may also distribute them in a hand out at the forum.

Connor suggested that we appoint someone to lead the discussion at the forum and that we reserve a section in the front of the auditorium for the authors.

Katy suggested that Luke lead the discussion at the forum. Someone suggested that Katy lead the review of the pre-proposals that will take place at Monday’s meeting, and Katy agreed to do so.

Rodney adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Wheeler