QEP Team Minutes
Tuesday, September 23, 2008, 8:30 a.m.
Carl Sanders Boardroom, Dean Rusk Hall


Those absent: Meg Amstutz, Art Dunning, David Knauft, Connor McCarthy, Jere Morehead, Marisa Pagnattaro, Bill Potter

(note: Since the first meeting, September 17, Loch Johnson and Marisa Pagnattaro have joined the team, and Pat Daugherty has left.)

Rodney Mauricio called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and asked that team members introduce themselves.

Rodney then presented a brief overview of the SACS process, particularly the Quality Enhancement Plan requirement. Rodney stated that the goal for this academic year is to choose a focus topic through the development of a deliberate process.

The QEP must be a campus-wide initiative. One of the team’s most important tasks is to decide how to decide on a focus topic. Ideas for the focus topic must come from faculty, students, and other UGA constituents. Rodney emphasized the last point about soliciting ideas from the campus community and asked for suggestions.

Alumni representative Paul Chambers suggested surveying recent UGA alumni about their educational experiences at UGA and what they felt they had or hadn’t learned.

Referring to the power point presentation from last week’s meeting, Rodney reviewed the five basic characteristics that SACS requires of QEPs. He recommended looking at the QEPs of other institutions. Several of these are on the Sakai site; others may be located through Google. Rodney believes the team’s main goal is to find a creative QEP that reflects UGA.

With regard to the scheduling of future meetings, the team agreed that alternating between early morning and late afternoon times should work well.

Rodney then asked for suggestions as to the name of the team, and reminded the group that Jere Morehead had recommended using the words “student learning” as part of the name. After some discussion, there was general agreement that the group’s name would be “Student Learning Enhancement Team.” The product the group will recommend to the Leadership Team will be a “Student Learning Initiative.”
Rodney then opened a discussion on how the team would solicit formal proposals on focus topics. Robin Tricoli stated that a set of objective criteria should be established. She further suggested that open forums and structured conversations be held to educate the campus to the team’s process. Denise Gardner said that after the campus becomes aware of the team and its goals the team could accept proposals for review and then invite presentations on proposals.

Bob Boehmer reminded the group that we need a topic by the end of the academic year. We should establish criteria for brief papers and request full proposals from some of those papers. This will take some time. While we are waiting for that process to unfold, we could invite presentations on the four topics which have emerged through the work of various task forces and working groups. By early February, we would have executed a thorough process and could begin narrowing the options.

Paige Carmichael emphasized the need to establish criteria and broadcast those before we begin soliciting ideas. Pam Kleiber added that in our various efforts to communicate the need for ideas that we should be clear about our timeline.

Joe Broder raised the question as to whether the QEP has to be related only to student learning outcomes. Rodney answered in the affirmative. Bob Boehmer added that the QEP must focus on improving student learning outcomes and how, in detail, UGA would accomplish that. David Lee pointed out that focusing on student learning could mean focusing on research. Rodney added that a focus on service learning would also be possible.

Fran Teague stated the team must synthesize ideas and use a network of learning experiences to accomplish its goals. We should make room for combinations of ideas.

Rodney suggested that the initial proposals, or pre-proposals, be one page in length and be posted on the team’s web site. Denise reminded everyone that proposals must be evidence based.

Katy Bowers remarked that students will not submit papers. The team will have to develop other ideas for gathering input from students.

Irwin Bernstein said that we must make clear from the beginning that the plan will be implemented and that funding and other resources will be made available.

Paul Chambers added that the alumni survey could come later in the process, once the team has established some options as to topics.

The team will have a web site, available to everyone on campus, where information about the Student Learning Initiative will be posted and where an exchange of ideas about the initiative can take place. Allan Aycock and Denise Gardner will work on the web site, and it should be available within the next two weeks.

Katy Bowers suggested sending an email to every student on their “arches” account. We should also schedule open forums and ask students what they would like the focus topic to be. Pam Kleiber suggested holding some forums in the residence halls. These forums could also be conducted as, or lead
to, focus groups. Allan added that the Office of Student Affairs will help us reach students to collect their input and feedback.

Rodney reminded the team that everything we do in this process must be documented.

In terms of a survey idea, Pam suggested that we ask students: “What were your expectations regarding your experience at UGA?” And: “How have those expectations been met and/or fallen short?” She also stated that anyone from the team who makes presentations must be equipped with appropriate talking points.

The discussion returned to financing the initiative, and Robin Tricoli said that we would have to be realistic about funding. Others added that funding shouldn’t limit people’s ideas and that an idea might have to be adjusted to a different scale in order to be affordable. The team would probably want to get an estimate of the cost of executing an idea before it got too far along in the review process.

David Lee suggested a two-stage proposal process. In the first phase, we would solicit brief proposals. Those would be screened, and the team would decide whether or not to request a full-fledged proposal. There was some concern about getting the same idea from many people, but this was seen as an advantage—an indication of general support for the idea.

The team will meet again in approximately two weeks. Rodney stated that we are not yet ready to “go public.” Homework for the next meeting will be to post ideas about surveys and a “preamble” to the team’s solicitation of proposals. Rodney, Pam, and Katy will work on a template for proposal criteria by the beginning of next week.

Rodney asked the team to seek out opportunities to address faculty groups. Team members, armed with talking points, would address those groups. Shannon Scott recommended having separate forums for staff and that someone from the team should address the Staff Council. Pam suggested using the Student Learning Center as a forum site.

Rodney stated that by the next meeting we would have talking points, and Bob Boehmer said those would be posted on Sakai.

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Wheeler