

QEP Writing Team
Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 20, 2011

Attendees:

Lee Carter, Iain Clelland, Tim Filbert, Erin Webster Garrett, Laura Jacobsen, Joe King, Steve Lerch, Tony Ramsey, Ann Roberts, Suzie Roop, Monica Weinzapfel

Meeting was called to order and agenda distributed by Tim Filbert at 9:05 a.m.

Detailed Introduction of Team Members, Including Focused Responses to:

1. What skills and experiences do you feel you bring to the table that could help with its charge? Responses included:
 - a. Ability to go outside of office and discuss project with others that we want to work with us
 - b. Ability to engage with people
 - c. Ability to see the “big picture”
 - d. Years of experience with state education system
 - e. Detail orientation; ability to see the whole picture; knowledge of the history of the institution
 - f. Love of incoming new freshmen as they walk into something so different
 - g. Brutal honesty
 - h. Ability to take academic experiences outside the university and adapt them outside; i.e. internships and volunteer work
 - i. Enjoyment of measurement of progress
 - j. Good writing skills
 - k. Appreciation for structure and strengths as a project manager
 - l. Takes pleasure in working with students to facilitate their success
 - m. Experienced in rural communication
 - n. Background in strategic planning
 - o. Willingness to “beat the bushes” and explain the QEP theme to others on campus
 - p. Desire to want people to get excited about the theme
 - q. Passionate about the theme

2. What do you feel about the task and what concerns and/or excites you about this committee and our work? Responses included:
 - a. We need to know where we are going
 - b. We have the opportunity to transform students – they want an avenue to believe that transformation can happen—a transformation that can pull together various components of RU
 - c. We should be optimistic and hope for the best
 - d. It will be a challenge to keep an eye on the progress that we will be making
 - e. Concerned about [campus] cultural resistance and how we can overcome it
 - f. Must keep in mind how the institution works as a whole and keep the bigger picture in mind
 - g. Ideal is to produce something that features constituencies working together
 - h. Can enhance ongoing community service
 - i. Must keep the students’ excitement and not shut them down
 - j. Must figure out how to change attitudes across campus
 - k. Should take this opportunity to come together as a campus community
 - l. Must remain accountable to best principles in higher education
 - m. Strategies we implement must be attainable with available University resources

- n. QEP can enhance institutional effectiveness
- o. QEP can play a part in the retention of students, faculty and staff
- p. Concerned with an absence of communication across campus; i.e., the right hand often doesn't know what the left hand is doing
- q. Need to know what assessment tools are we using and how to improve them
- r. Concerned that we don't know what direction RU is heading
- s. Concerned that traditions seem to be lost at RU
- t. Concerned that we will be able to get people to buy into this project and be a part of it
- u. If we design the QEP right, it has the potential to cost minimal money, but will cost time, which is often in even shorter supply
- v. Faculty feel that they are overwhelmed already, so how do we explain this to them?
- w. We need to start a dialog that will continue

Team Roles:

Co-Captains (Erin and Tim): Schedule meetings, create meeting agendas, coordinate construction of QEP document, and serve as "faces" of QEP team.

Team Members:

- Laura wants to help with the writing of the document, and is willing to seek feedback from faculty.
- Discussion that we will hear concerns/complaints/etc. that are not relevant to the QEP. We don't want to raise expectations addressing those concerns in the QEP, but we should share them with the powers-that-be. Steve volunteered to create a report about unrelated but critical RU topics of concern and share that report with the administration at the end of the process.
- There was agreement that information should be sought from chairpersons, who are accessible during the summer.
- The mechanism through which faculty and/or chairs might be contacted was left undetermined.

Team Ethos:

Decisions were made to:

1. Use a "lite" version of Roberts Rules during QEP-WT meetings
2. Post meeting minutes, and eventually make them publicly accessible
3. Post materials for sharing to D2L and use D2L for discussion threads
4. Develop an outreach plan with a broad reach, both because we want to keep the campus informed and because SACS expects there to be ownership of the QEP across campus constituencies. No conclusions were reached about the best ways to keep the campus informed; at the appropriate time, we will likely seek the involvement of University Relations.

Review and discussion of SACS document:

- Tim distributed a handout entitled "the Context and Process of Strategic Change" for the team to review.
- Erin expressed her concerns following a detailed reading of the QEP section of the SACS Reaffirmation Handbook (<http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Handbook%20for%20Institutions%20seeking%20reaffirmation.pdf>; the QEP section is on pages 38-49.) Most notable among these concerns are the need to define key terms,

identify all stakeholders, and determine how the QEP will “fit” given the RU mission and the 7-17 strategic plan.

- Iain added his concern that we must recognize that we continue to operate in the context of an “expert” model, in which we [faculty] are the experts. It is likely that the goals we will develop for the QEP must allow for embracing the expertise of external “experts,” including community agencies and organizations and potential employers.
- Lee brought up the role of the QEP-WT in institutional development of the QEP, as noted on page 39 of the above-referenced document.
- Iain raised the resource issue: what funds being allocated for this plan? When do we bring Richard Alvarez on board for the SACS QEP-WT? QEP is an action plan and one that needs to be continued. Who will be responsible to keep this an ongoing project? Steve volunteered to contact Richard Alvarez and Lisa Ridpath about funding for the QEP: specifically, whether the QEP-WT should develop a plan and then adjust it given resources, or (the QEP-WT’s preference), the QEP-WT will be given a budget to work within at the outset.
- Iain suggested that we should soon inventory what we are already doing in an off-campus experiential learning settings, possibly including the learning outcomes for the courses and the strategies instructors are utilizing to realize them.
- Laura volunteered to create a survey and asked that members of the QEP-WT submit questions for the survey to her. She will post the prospectus to the D2L site under the “discussions” tab.

Possible agenda items for the next meeting:

- Discussion of student learning outcomes
- Discussion of survey possibilities, including
 - Obtaining information about current work involving external constituencies
 - Receiving perceptions of the topic
- Consideration of face-to-face meetings with deans and department chairs
- Identification and definition of key terms (can we use the D2L site)
- Identification of key internal and external stakeholders (also D2L site)
- Discussion of student learning outcomes and strategies to accomplish them
- Discussion of QEP budget
- Establishment of summer QEP timetable

Meeting adjourned at 12:10. Our next meeting will be June 3, 2011 in the I-lab in Walker Hall.

Minutes submitted by Suzie Roop.