QEP STEERING COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 26, 2009

Attending: Adolfo Benavides, David Billeaux, Kent Byus, Margaret Dechant, Ann Degaish, David Grisé, Bridgette Hardin, Mark Hartlaub, J. Carlos Huerta, Yolanda Keys, Gerry Moreno, Robert Nelsen, Nancy Nelson, Chris Shupala, Blair Sterba-Boatwright, Sarah Sutton, Susan Wolff-Murphy, Robert Wooster

Meeting minutes from Feb. 12 were approved.

S. Murphy expressed that the primary purpose of this meeting is to approve interventions so we can move forward with the FY1 QEP. There is no guarantee budget, but proceed like we have the money within reason, but we’ll make changes once we know our final budget.

Basic Skills Learning Communities – S. Murphy
Overview:
This intervention is part of what we are already doing, a sub-sets of current structure. Placement tools will be needed; B. Sterba-Boatwright, B. Hardin and P. Orser are working on an assessment tool. The aspect of contracted behavior would need to be agreed upon. Bridge Experience is a modified, short experience at the beginning of semester, and not a full-blown bridge initiative.

Discussion:
Admission Criteria/Contracted Behavior
G. Moreno explained the current contract for students in developmental education that requires them to attend tutorials, go to the writing center, meet with a tutor, and meet with a retention specialist. The CASA staff talked about the proposal and questioned if the number of contracts can be managed with the current number of staff. Higher administration will have to decide on what type of action will be taken when a student does not comply with the contract. For students who choose to follow the contract, CASA can assist that student in an appeal situation. However, if the student chooses not to utilize services, CASA cannot support their appeals. “AA” students are alternative admits meaning they did not meet the regular admission criteria they go through a review process with points given for class rank, standardized test scores, additional courses, leadership, work experience, extenuating circumstances. Students who receive a low number of points, and in the bottom half of their class rank, are reviewed by the undergraduate admissions committee that chooses to admit as an “AV,” as a provisional admit. Students can be admitted as an “AS” or alternative special admit, when the undergraduate admissions committee does not accept the student and that student can appeal to the Provost. (The AS policy is being reviewed at the Faculty Senate right now.) All students admitted AV currently have a contract. AA are more at-risk and are not receiving interventions. Half the freshman class is admitted AA or AV and 30% go on probation within their first semester. CASA hires peer mentors that are assigned 50 students each to assist. S. Murphy concluded that the QEP committee is not forming a new policy on alternative admits, but offering to extended monitor system to AAs, in addition to the AVs. C. Huerta mentioned the need for full-time seminar instructors is critical; however the Provost can address this from a different angle.

Costs:
Professional Development - Seminar Instructor training
Bridge Program –electronically, partnership with Student Affairs at beginning of semester, orientation
1 Intervention Specialist and additional peer mentors for CASA (G. Moreno will get figure)

APPROVAL: S. Murphy moved, C. Huerta second, all in favor.
RESOLUTION: The QEP Steering Committee supports the proposal previously submitted by the Co-Directors of the Core Curriculum to hire full-time seminar instructors to support excellence in learning communities’ instruction.

Initiated by S. Murphy, seconded by A. Benavides, all in favor.

CASA Supplemental Instructors for Math – G. Moreno
Overview:
Supplemental instructors for math 0399.

Discussion:
C. Shupala commented that three SI leaders will not be enough. Three will cover 10 sections of math 0399. Students in these classes will receive the SIs in addition to the existing tutorials in CASA. B. Sterba-Boatwright commented that we don’t have enough qualified leaders to add more SIs, but math could use more. There needs to be more than just putting additional SIs in classes, there needs to be professional development of the adjunct instructors or even full-time faculty. R. Nelsen recommends that we increase the number to six SIs. SIs raise letter grades. D. Gricé mentioned that faculty members need to be actively involved in the SI program as well to be successful. Reasons for not having math SIs now is that the pay is too low and that not all “A” math students can be good instructors. B. Sterba-Boatwright suggested increasing the proposed hourly rate for the SIs to $10/hour.

Costs:
6 SIs x $10/hour x 10 hrs/week x 15 weeks = $9,000 x 2 semesters = $18,000

APPROVAL: B. Sterba-Boatwright moved, A. Benavides second, all in favor.

Math – B. Sterba-Boatwright
Overview:
Strategic placement, professional on-line development, pay stipends to instructors for professional development, update calculus curriculum but can’t stray from core math courses, CASA can supplement with academic support. There is an internet based ‘bridge on relearning’ program for math. Lacking instructors is crucial. We need to attract and keep qualified instructors. Proposal also includes an FYI Math Coordinator to oversee changes.

Discussion:
R. Nelsen mentioned that additional money may become available to the math department through the new Mechanical Engineering budget. The QEP cannot support the additional math instructor ($45,000/yr) because this action is something the university should be doing outside a quality enhancement plan. Drs. R. Nelsen and D. Billeaux will push this in the budgets.

Costs:
Calculus TA Training – may or may not be covered under the Mech. Eng. Program
Prof. Development – Core & Development Math
FYI Math Coordinator Position - $7500/year w/ Title V grant

APPROVAL: C. Huerta moved, N. Nelson second, all in favor.

RESOLUTION: The QEP Steering Committee recommends the university hire an additional math instructor to support excellence in first-year instruction.

Initiated by S. Murphy, seconded by B. Sterba-Boatwright, all in favor.

Improving Teaching – R. Wooster
Overview: (Wooster handed out a budget proposal)
Improve teaching in all disciplines (excluding MATH – due to separate proposal); to improve grades and retention rates. Faculty is reluctant to make this change alone. This proposal will allow faculty to travel, gain professional strategies, bring it back to the university and implement it. After talking with other faculty, discipline specific approach is the best model.

Discussion:
S. Murphy would like to take the English department out of this proposal because of existing support system. Do we want to give support to only those disciplines that show the need? Wooster does not want to ‘brand’ a discipline; excellence should be expected across the board. The “Project Coordinator” position would be someone who can informally share point disciplines to appropriate disciplines to someone who is doing something very useful, understanding of today’s students, credibility to be able to motivate faculty. B. Hardin questioned if this is something the FRC can facilitate, restructure the purpose of their mission. S. Murphy suggested that this job should be the QEP director. D. Billeaux mentioned that SACS expects to have this QEP director position, what are the duties? The QEP director needs to be a faculty member in good standing, someone who is respected, they are expected to work only half-time. R. Nelsen is concerned about how broad the QEP is. Maybe we need to narrow the cross-discipline approach. Let’s tackle the barrier courses. Those top-needs core courses are identified in Orser’s chart: biology, political science, and history. Math will be addressed in the above proposal, next is chemistry then next is social sciences (sociology and psychology). The professional development does not have to be limited to the direct discipline; it can be opened to all faculty.

Costs:
Research Assistants: $2,500/year x 3 years (include assessment year) = $7,500
Discipline Development: (3 courses) x $9,000 = $27,000
(stipend – check in the summer, and development money for travel, conferences, materials)

ARRPOVAL: C. Huerta moved, N. Nelson second, all in favor

**Strategic Reading & Learning – N. Nelson**

Overview:
Focus on learning communities and seminars and implement a set of reading and learning approaches, and professional development for seminar leaders and faculty. Could focus on same disciplines as the improving teaching proposal mentioned above. Doctoral students would collect data and conduct assessments. Students use LASSI as a self-assessment to learn how they study. A task force (made up of faculty of all disciplines) identifies specific challenges in reading. The Reading/Learning Coordinator would develop the program and implement.

Discussion:
The LASSI is simply diagnostic, no follow up. Should work together to gather information more effectively. The LASSI would be administered by seminar leaders. Students take and score themselves. R. Nelsen wonders if this proposal is a QEP in itself and waters down the rest of the proposals. It seems huge, very expensive and how can we narrow this down? Can we implement bits and pieces into the professional development or curricular development? Build this idea into the learning communities and professional development of seminar leaders. Also, revise the Writing Center to accommodate reading difficulties and help international students. A faculty member can be assigned to office hours in the Writing Center to assist students with reading issues. D. Billeaux also commented on how big this proposal is and perhaps if we can unveil small parts of it through this QEP, it could become a full program in the future. The next QEP will be in five years. G. Moreno mentioned that as the internationalization of campus grows, the dynamics will be changing and this need is great. This proposal needs to be relooked at in the near future. R. Wooster assumed that there would be some parallel assistance in terms of helping the disciplines understand how
students read and how to properly assign reading; which we currently are not doing. This aspect is critical to the professional development of faculty and to improve teaching. D. Billeaux suggested this should become part of the professional development budget within the basic skills learning communities and improving teaching proposals, within the disciplines.

Costs:
Reading/Learning Coordinator - $12,000
Expert Faculty Development - $2000

APPROVED: N. Nelson moved, S. Murphy second, all in favor

**FYI Family Network**
**“Student-Friendly” Employment Practices**

Discussion:
We need to recommend the university consider implementing these types of programs. Whereas these ideas are valuable, need to keep the QEP academic and assessable. K. Byus mentioned we could integrate into some of the plans. These are support mechanisms, and whatever the academic interventions, these can support retention, and is something the Retention Task Force should consider. Y. Keys asked if the issues of working too many hours effects the number of students attending tutorial sessions, this needs to be assessed. S. Murphy mentioned that this can be addressed in the orientation or beginning of the year recommending students to scale back work hours. The message can be conveyed.

**RESOLUTION:** The QEP Steering Committee recommends the university develop a family network to support first-year students.

*Initiated by S. Murphy, seconded by A. Benavides, all in favor*

**RESOLUTION:** The QEP Steering Committee recommends the university, perhaps the Community Outreach Office, develop a “student-friendly” environment by providing a list of student-friendly employers and a set of standards developed by the community for the students, and to integrate an element into the bridge program/basic skills learning communities.

*Initiated by S. Murphy, seconded by Huerta, all in favor*

Murphy urged all groups to start planning the assessment measurements: when, how, by semester, a WEAVE online plan. Consult with the Assessment Team (M. Hartlaub, A. Benavides) to assist the assessment plan.

The QEP is a core requirement of SACS and if the QEP fails, we will be on automatic probation.

*Next meeting: Thursday, March 26, 2009, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m., UC Islander Room 316*
*Approved by Susan Wolff-Murphy for submission to Committee*