QEP STEERING COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 26, 2009

Attending: Mary Bantell, David Billeaux, Ann Degaish, David Grisé, Bridgette Hardin, Mark Hartlaub, J. Carlos Huerta, Frank Lucido, Gerry Moreno, Nancy Nelson, Chris Shupala, Blair Sterba-Boatwright, Sarah Sutton, Susan Wolff-Murphy

Meeting minutes from Feb. 26 were approved.

Revised Executive Summary Overview and Discussion

S. Murphy took Executive Summary to Provost’s Council, and it was endorsed on March 24. F. Lucido and S. Sutton are assisting S. Murphy with writing the Literature Review. A five-year plan of implementation and assessment is needed.

Discussion and Revisions to Collaborative Faculty Communities of Practice:

• N. Nelson and J. Needham sent feedback on the language on development reading and changed to “Faculty believe that student struggle with reading, and data demonstrates that students with poor reading ability are more likely to drop out that students who do not.” THEA liable was taken out to simplify the statement for those who don’t know what the acronym means.
• The phrase “Communities of Practice” was taken from B. Sterba-Boatwright’s original intervention proposal and implemented within this ‘improving teaching’ intervention and would be more supported by faculty. Acknowledgement to Lave and Wenger for the “Communities of Practice” term will be added per the request of N. Nelson.
• The Reading Task Force was included in the reading coordinator sentence as well as the word critically was replaced with the phrase “actively and strategically.” N. Nelson believes the literature review will support this statement better.

Discussion and Revisions to Curriculum Redesign:

• No comments or concerns.

Discussion and Revisions to Increased Supplemental Instruction for Math:

• No comments or concerns.

Discussion and Revisions to Basic Skills Learning Communities:

• S. Murphy, G. Moreno, and A. Degaish met earlier to discuss the proposed bridge experience. This program will include:
  o a welcome BBQ for families on Sunday
  o session with CASA
  o UCCP Co-Director presentation regarding expectations (Huerta & Murphy will trade off)
  o technology “check-up”- they get islander emails before orientation
  o Passport to the Island/Community Expo – student organization fair-already exists, include community booths, with door prizes
  o Safe Living discussion – will add ‘wellness’ or ‘healthy’
  o Peer-led discussion of personal responsibility – use upper level students
  o Money management/work – how to work and go to class and succeed, avoid credit card scams – use upper level students
  o Social/fun activities to build community (dive-in movie, crazy Olympics) – first year faculty with be a part of these events
  o FYI Convocation on Tuesday – finding location to hold this will be difficult. The Dugan Center holds 1,500 people, and that is the entire freshman class this past year. Discussions on mandating this for students in this bridge program and making it optional for all other students were made. Perhaps give tickets out and once they are gone, we cannot have any more students. Families may not attend since it is on a Tuesday.
• These are low-budget events but a budget will be allocated for a staff member to coordinate the bridge and convocation events.
• A. Degaish mentioned that Student Affairs is looking at mandating an alcohol awareness course for first year students. Stats show dramatic alcohol use in students.
• The “Basic Skills” term needs to be replaced – a new, catchy label. The Marketing Task Group can look into this, perhaps ask students their opinion. C. Huerta has notes from a recent learning communities conference he can research for ‘exciting’ names.

**QEP Introduction Power Point for Marketing**

A draft PowerPoint presentation was created and will be emailed to the committee members after the meeting, once changes have been made. Also, assessment and budget slides need to be created. S. Murphy will visit staff/faculty/student groups making presentations introducing the QEP.

**Mission Statement Discussion**

The shorter revised mission “The Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi **FYI Center/Program** will provide tailored academic challenge and centralized information and support of **First Year Islanders**” was suggested to be used as a vision statement. S. Murphy will work on this more so that the mission is not so vague.

**Student Learning Outcomes Discussion**

FYI faculty status, awards, rewards

- Past discussions on how FY instructors will be weighted in evaluation, special recognition for FY faculty (like a cord at convocation, graduation), or monetary rewards for excellent first year teaching was revisited.
- The Retention Task Force is also exploring this issue. M. Bantell expressed that if FY faculty will have some sort of status then it is the university’s responsibility to provide development opportunities.
- C. Huerta motioned to approve that the QEP Steering Committee endorse the Retention Action Plan to establish a formal status and designation plan for first year faculty. F. Lucido seconded and one opposed. B. Sterba-Boatwright is concerned about 1) math faculty will not be able to utilize this and 2) this will be a major cultural change for faculty. This development is not the top thing that the Promotion and Tenure committee is looking for right now.

**Reading and Writing Task Force**

- The rationale will not be having outside people telling faculty how to teach in their fields. The Task Force from all disciplines will have input on the reading demands in their disciplines.
- C. Huerta moved to approve, N. Nelson seconded, all in favor.

**Top 10% Seminars**

- New honors students don’t sign up for honor classes their first term because they are afraid it will ruin their GPA. Honors students have expressed that their learning community experience was disappointing. A proposal to offer faculty into seminar classes for honors students. It’s an opportunity for faculty to develop course and student choice their course and only have seminar in the spring, not the fall.
- D. Grisé would not recommend this in his discipline because honors students come into these courses in the spring and this is when the seminar classes teach them valuable researching experiences. B. Sterba-Boatwright would like to see something like this in the tetra/triad so Math can start participating with these honor students earlier, like Nursing and Ed do not have students until later.
- No data has been seen on honor students’ retention rate.
- Recruiting faculty will be difficult.
- Due to the mixed response from the committee, S. Murphy will leave this intervention off the current QEP and perhaps this is something that can be developed in the future.
Learning Objectives (M. Hartlaub)

Improving Teaching: handout
Discussion: Although curricular change in these classes is an intervention, we will need to use this as a measurement to assess the learning outcomes. D. Billeaux commented that SACS is very sensitive about using DFW rates as an assessment but perhaps this can be the diagnostics. He recommends that grades itself not be used as an independent assessment but as a supportive piece. B. Hardin mentioned that we can use an aggregate of an overall performance collective as a class and back up with samples of projects/papers that students worked on. Grades cannot be our only measure, but an average of how the class is doing as a whole can be used. Not all Math courses are in the Core curriculum and do not have “Exemplary Educational Objectives” (EEOs) from THECB policies, however could use departmental student learning outcomes. However, Math has its own assessment measures as its own structure.

QEP/FYI Flow Chart Overview
Draft handout was discussed. B. Hardin suggested placing a footnote referencing A. Astin’s theory.

Ideas from PIE Flow Chart Discussion
Risk Assessment and Placement:
- Developing a learning community based on residential location is not within our current scope of interventions but can be looked at in the future when new housing is developed on campus.

Curriculum Design:
- Communicating that university is not the 13th grade can be accomplished in the Faculty Communities of Practice and discuss with faculty on how to communicate expectations to students.
- Thematic communities are currently happening, but limited due to needs of students, lack resources and faculty time. Perhaps make themes more public and advertise a theme before summer, when students pick classes for the fall. This will not become an official intervention; however will explore new development for thematic communities.
- Professionalization of seminar classes can incorporate the academic success oriented skill development.

Curriculum Delivery:
- Faculty Renaissance Center: Dr. Billeaux mentioned that the FRC has to be separate from FYI. Perhaps FRC’s focus can be focusing on graduation rates.
- Provost has approved up to $105,000 toward elevating the role of the seminar instructor. Funds are being explored to support this.

Student Academic Support:
- Dr. Billeaux stated that the QEP is only be linked to one model of centralized advising. The issue on whether or not FYI wants to take over the centralized academic advising can be revisited after higher administration chooses a model of advising for the campus.

Next meeting: Thursday, April 9, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m., UC Tejas Room 106C
Approved by Susan Wolff Murphy for submission to Committee