Wolff-Murphy asked for approval of minutes from last two meetings. Minutes approved by committee. Decision not to discuss Draft Mission Statement until smaller groups meet and come up with further edits, if necessary.

Bridge Task Force Report. Needham and Bantell met with Victor Davila and Gilda Ramirez concerning bridge programs and would like to invite them to a committee meeting to share ideas. A focus of the QEP could be communication and dissemination of resources that are available. Pipeline program has been successful, but resources are very limited. QEP could focus on similar programs that have shown success. Most of those programs are grant funded, but some may be institutionalized soon. Veronica Guerra has received a grant to support remodeling a building to aid Pipeline program. Specific needs were not discussed, but presentation could be made to committee directly by Davila and Ramirez.

Needham has researched other universities’ programs and many are offering financial support and doing much more with their bridge programs. TAMUCC needs to figure out how to support and sustain these programs and come up with an economic measure of retaining students; to show an economic justification for keeping the programs. Sterba-Boatwright is working on some of those calculations. Resources are not available to reach outside the local area for recruitment, and more staff is needed for outreach.

Moreno and Degaish are working on what is currently in place and enhancing and strengthening current programs. Moreno has a list of academic support programs now in existence on campus and will provide the information to the committee. It would be helpful to provide some sort of mentoring/counseling from the beginning to students to guide them into services that are available. Sorority and fraternity programs are beginning to provide access to support services, especially Pipeline. Student Affairs could get involved with Brenda Rodriguez and Stephanie Box to get information out to the organizations. Again, communication and visibility are the key issues to address.

Discussion of mentoring and why different groups are not coordinated due to funding structure or other reasons. Some groups are available to all students, others are working only with at risk, etc. Changes may be made to the process, and groups are beginning to work together to coordinate more as a united program with specific areas of need. Determine whether it is a social or academic problem and then decide what services are better suited. Peer mentors have shown to be more effective and process is also good for the mentor, as they can work on campus and enhance their own
preparation—can find new methods to apply to mentoring, which also improves their own work.

There is a need to pay mentors a minimum wage, and financial aid might be able to supplement departmental pay. Many student workers are underpaid on campus and jobs off-campus are not flexible. The university could work with community employers to encourage them to be more supportive of student workers, and identify employers willing to offer work that supports students’ schedules. Exploring such issues can give the task groups areas to be improved and assessed through benchmark indicators. Think about how programs can be expanded as part of the solution in QEP.

Improving Teaching Group Report. Group has started the process, and will continue discussions with each other via email. Grise, Huerta, Sterba-Boatwright, Lee, and Wooster are current members in group. Jan Haswell will be involved also.

Reading Subgroup. Nelson has added Buddy McDowell, and doctoral students who have worked with the basic reading program. Discussion of programs that are in place and what is being done elsewhere, such as summer reading, workshop series and summer programs for jump start. Group came up with recommendations for basic reading course, which is not only THEA liable, but also being restructured to include assessment. Handout regarding reading and learning strategies in the 21st century. Start offering basic reading in summer, combined ESL course, use of SLANT, which deals with behavioral issues in class (smile, listen, ask, nod, thank), and programs that include parent involvement.

Summer programs are only available for local students—how to reach students outside local area who cannot be here in the summer. These students would need to be identified earlier and possibly given access to early registration, which would lead them into bridge programs sooner. Admission policies would have to change and go through Undergraduate Admissions Committee for approval.

Diagnostics that are more reliable are needed to place students into bridge or reading support programs and track success rates. UT Austin-RASSL center, and all community colleges have centers for reading assistance. Online programs have not been as successful as face to face help. Integrating more reading into the learning community would be an idea to implement through professional development or linking sections of learning. Faculty development could be implemented at the department level. Stacey Lyle has written a program for dyslexics that converts downloaded text into speech, which allows students to listen instead of having to read. Assessment of how well students read is a challenge—to distinguish between not reading and reading poorly, and whether the problem is academic or social.

Hardin discussion of BSSE, a new survey indicating time spent studying, socializing, etc. and how grades are affected by students’ behavior. Outcomes are being compiled and will be clearer after grading completed. There was good participation in the survey and could show to be a helpful tool to assess learning issues.

Math Subcommittee. Sterba-Boatwright met with a lower division curriculum committee in Math Dept. and developed a reading list. Handout is available for those interested.
Will try to present a research-based recommendation as a starting point to classroom strategies that could improve learning. More will be revealed…

Engagement group. Will discuss at a later meeting.

Timeline. End of October is when marketing initiative and breakout groups to begin work—committee is on schedule. Bridge is ready to go and presentation can take place at beginning of next meeting in two weeks. Each task group needs to be thinking about assessment and plan to wait until January to address findings. There will be two meetings in November and December and should have literature review and introduction written in January. Initial budget estimates, specific goal definitions and assessment strategies and measures drafted by mid February. Reports from breakout groups at next meeting.

Marketing. Each element has potential marketability, but need clear goals and objectives to be productive. Adoption of the mission statement to tie components together would allow marketing of most clear programs. Bridge and Reading have a more clear market target at this time. Need to narrow ideas to focus on target. Marketing everything to everyone is a goal of the QEP; everybody on campus has to recognize and be aware of the QEP theme. When the team comes to assess, they want to see that the theme has become part of the culture.

Need an anchor point or center of understanding that demonstrates the theme. UT Dallas theme of GEMS created a successful marketing focus. The SACS team will pick random students and expect to find an awareness of what has been going on. Committee needs to determine what the features and benefits of the mission elements are. Bridge seems to be a likely theme—can be used in different ways such as “building bridges.”

“First year students” is a focus that could have marketability-- FYI as acronym. Student discussions can bring insight as to what is needed and which programs have more value. ADP from Kelly’s classes could be used as a model. Student committee members should meet with others (away from committee) and include diverse groups—not just Honors, different ages, majors, etc. Time is short to get students involved—aim for end of semester. Contact students through seminars. Offer incentive to students for participation. Byus will meet with students to develop ideas and give overview of QEP. Committee to bring clear ideas for theme that appeals to students to next meeting.

Next meeting: November 13, 2:30-4:30, location TBA.

Minutes submitted by: Ann Loberg
Approved by Susan Wolff-Murphy for submission to Committee