

## Undergraduate Research and Scholarship Proposal

Writing Team: Anna Carlin, Nora Demers, Charles Gunnels

In our discussions of this QEP proposal, the committee identified some clear strengths and recognized several concerns, with some possible resolutions to some of the concerns:

### Strengths:

- Well written and well developed, and clearly tied to institutional data.
- Very detailed plan, which will no doubt be significantly modified by the coordination team if this topic is selected.
- The definition of scholarship in Section 3 seems broad enough to include disciplines not traditionally associated with 'research' at the undergraduate level.
- Clear ties, conceptually, to learning goals of critical thinking, information literacy, effective communication, and collaborative learning.

### Concerns:

- The cover page seems to indicate broad, but not universal, buy-in and participation in the development of the proposal. However, this seems to represent a list of people committed to acting as liaisons, not a list of co-authors. The greatest challenge appears to be whether undergraduate curricula across the university can embrace the idea of 'scholarship' at the undergraduate level. Some committee members felt it could be applied, when broadly defined, and would offer the opportunity to excel in an area that could help bring recognition to the university. Others doubt the applicability across the university, and are concerned the resulting QEP might be too narrowly focused.
- Specific goals of the program are clearly listed in section 1, but the ties to measurable impacts on the learning goals are less clear. Student learning outcomes (section 6) are too narrowly articulated toward a research-based approach to scholarship. These ideas would presumably be broadened with a more diverse coordination committee that would bring different views of the application of scholarship across disciplines.
- The well-developed plan may be too-resource intensive, particularly if the 'scholarship' process needs to be mentor-based. This perception may be driven by the current detailed plan, which would be expected to evolve and be adjusted to available resources.
- Although some standardized assessment instruments exist and are mentioned in the proposal, we would need to modify these tools and possibly develop new ones to adequately quantify the impact of this QEP.
- The proposal mentioned, but does not fully develop, possible connections to scholarship and community service and to developing curricula that meet regional needs. This tie could be more fully developed in the next stage of the process.

### University-wide Writing, Critical Thinking, and Literacy Initiative

Writing Team: Kevin Aho, Anna Carlin, Jackie Greene, Anna Haney-Withrow, Linda Rowland

In our discussions of this QEP proposal, the committee identified some clear strengths and recognized several concerns, with some possible resolutions to some of the concerns:

#### Strengths:

- Well written proposal that connects three important learning outcomes: writing, critical thinking, and information literacy.
- The first two outcomes are a part of the required areas for student learning mandated by the state in our Academic Learning Compacts; as such, this QEP initiative could affect the entire undergraduate student population.
- Current assessment processes in General Education are discussed, and some data is shared in areas where faculty members have worked to improve student learning.
- Analysis of assessments of writing and critical thinking in upper level programs suggests that we do not have a common way of thinking about these student learning goals, much less of assessing them.
- Clear goal is stated: to create a common language around these learning goals so that they can be taught in a way that provides coherence to the student's journey and so that they can be assessed in meaningful ways.
- Connected to the University mission and strategic plan.

#### Concerns:

- Discussion of resources needs to be more concretely spelled out and considered. This initiative would likely be time-intensive for a group of faculty and would require coordination and facilitation on the part of a support system (probably administration in Undergraduate Studies, Deans' offices, and the Department of Language and Literature).
- Process for creating a common language around these goals would need careful attention as this must be a faculty-driven, faculty-led process with administrative support. This initiative would have the potential for building a stronger community around learning goals and assessment if it is initiated and carried out properly. This is a great strength, but also a concern as this process is not indicated in the proposal.
- Process for assessing learning goals should be multi-varied and multi-dimensional. Several very strong assessments are mentioned in the proposal, including building on validated work, but there would need to be agreement across the faculty on definitions of these goals and on appropriate assessment strategies.
- While the initiative is one that clearly cuts across the entire university, it is not clear that there is university-wide support for this initiative; such support is crucial for the success of any QEP.

### First Year Experience Program

Writing Team: Andy Cinoman, Marc Laviolette, Jameson Moschella, Stacy Parker, Jessica Rhea, Lori Smith, Michele Yovanovich

In our discussions of this QEP proposal, the committee identified some clear strengths and recognized several concerns:

#### Strengths:

- Clear focus on specific population of students—those who are at-risk and thus who comprise a large part of our retention concerns at FGCU.
- Very detailed plan to address the at-risk students in assisting them to be more successful.
- Some discussion of an expansion of the focus on the at-risk students to consider the entire First Year population.

#### Concerns:

- A QEP initiative needs to address the undergraduate student population at large, rather than a narrow population of these students (the at-risk students comprise about 4% or 5% of the total student population).
- The discussion of the First Year Experience (where the proposal broadens out somewhat) is not as detailed and concrete and only mentions a few programs in the FYE.
- Many years ago, the FYE leaders recognized the need to integrate the “transition” year (sophomore year) into their work and have broadened their efforts to include this work; in the last few years, this has also included an awareness of the need to address how these first two years provides a foundation for the last two years; these efforts to broaden student success and engagement, which were at the heart of the proposal request, were not included in this proposal.

### Technology

Writing Team: Robert Kenny, Elspeth McCulloch

In our discussions of this QEP proposal, the committee identified some clear strengths and recognized several concerns:

#### Strengths:

- Provided a proposed pedagogical shift that could ultimately benefit the University on the whole.
- Despite the semantics of facing the educational needs of either “digital natives” or “digital consumers”, the University could strongly benefit by staying on the cusp of the developmental needs and skills that the technologically savvy students of today will need in their futures to remain competitive and relative.

## Discussion of QEP Proposals

By QEP Selection Committee

February 2012

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- The writers of the technology proposal suggested the creation of a Teaching Academy under the Teaching, Learning, & Assessment Initiative. The Academy could provide: regularly scheduled workshops and retreats addressing emerging trends in teaching & learning; technology integration support for colleges with dedicated staff; faculty fellowships/sabbaticals to develop integration support; and the creation of a “digital sandbox” where faculty & staff could experiment with new technologies for classroom application.
- Once our faculty has become better versed in the technology available for successful student orientation to a subject, and “updating” the current pedagogical structure of success in the classroom, the University will be prepared to offer streamlined, quality e-learning experiences to our students.
- If the University chooses to pursue this pedagogical shift, it could set FGCU apart from our fellow SUS institutions and further our distinction as an institution that has the ability to adapt to the changing needs of our stakeholders.

### Concerns:

- Since the proposal spoke to a philosophical shift in pedagogy, the FGCU community may not be ready to embrace (or even agree with) such a change.
- Little institutional data was submitted to support the QEP proposal.