

From: Serro, Dr. Linda
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2011 12:04 PM
To: Rhea, Jessica; Cinoman, Andrew; Parker, Stacey; Fisher, Brian; Smith, Lori; Laviolette, Marc
Subject: REQUEST TO DEVELOP A QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN TOPIC PROPOSAL

Hello All,

We are writing to request that you work as a team to develop a topic proposal for the next FGCU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP is a component of our accrediting process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). SACS-COC tells us that,

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)... is a document developed by the institution that (1) includes a process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement (SACS-COC Principles of Accreditation, 2010, p. 7).

FGCU recently completed work on its first QEP, and the university institutionalized changes made with respect to ecological perspective and community awareness and involvement as a result of that QEP. It is now time to choose a topic for FGCU's second QEP (2015-2019).

Our committee recently reviewed all of the submissions for QEP topics. We have narrowed it down to four: technology and pedagogy; undergraduate research; writing, critical thinking, and literacy across the curriculum; and student success and engagement. We are now in the second phase, where we are requesting slightly more detailed proposals from groups of qualified FGCU faculty and staff. We are soliciting these four topic proposals, and our committee will forward the two proposals with the most promise as FGCU QEPs to the Provost for his selection of the final topic. At that point, a broad university team will be assembled to develop the Quality Enhancement Plan, a process that will take two years, from 2012-2014.

Several Quality Enhancement Plan topics called for more attention to be given to student success and engagement. One proposal nicely summarized the issue at hand in relation to graduation rates:

"I propose that the QEP deal with the issue of undergraduate graduation rates at FGCU. According to IPEDS data, currently we rank at or near the bottom of the list of SUS universities in graduation rate at the 4, 6 and 8 year timeframe for undergraduates. Among the 78 universities defined as peers for faculty and presidential salary comparisons, we rank 51/76 in 4 year rate, 63/76 in 6 year rate, and 66/76 in 8 year rate. 33rd, 17th and 13th percentile respectively. In comparison to the 9 aspirational peers, we rank 7th of ten in 4 year graduation rate, and last in 6 and 8 year rates."

In addition to data on persistence to graduation, FGCU has also tracked retention of First-Time-In-College (FTIC) students, which has ranged from 75-80% since 2003, when the university started the First Year Reading Project and First Year Convocation (both featuring James McBride and his book *The Color of Water*).

The QEP Student Success and Engagement topics highlighted several areas where FGCU could concentrate its efforts, either expanding ongoing activities or developing new approaches on the campus that have worked at other institutions. The areas suggested in the topic submissions include:

- Expand the work of the Center for Academic Achievement to emphasize innovation and FGCU's learning-centered spirit
- Expand the work of the First Year Resident Experience (FYRE), connecting this program to the General Education program and student learning
- Expand the work of Service Learning and Civic Engagement as strategies for student success and engagement
- Create an Undergraduate Space in the library
- Expand and improve academic programs relating to first year student retention, including:
 - expanding the teaching of our Effective Learning course
 - creating a strong peer mentoring program
 - starting workshops on retention that would build a community-wide culture around student success
 - expanding the Step Ahead program that focuses on math remediation and add a component for English and reading remediation
 - developing a Freshman Transition course that would assist students with academic acculturation (this might include intercultural engagement, preparation for civic engagement, and preparation for participation in a variety of communities)
 - expanding the work of key FTIC courses such as the Freshman Humanities Seminar.

Developing a comprehensive and interconnected student success and engagement initiative at FGCU that begins with our marketing and recruitment, moves through our admissions process, and then through all four years of undergraduate study would allow FGCU to advance student learning of university-wide student learning outcomes and to emphasize key attributes of our mission, including civic engagement/service learning and environmental sustainability.

We are hoping that you are willing to lead this effort, and include other faculty, staff or students, as you feel would be appropriate to develop a proposal for this topic. Successful proposals will demonstrate broad applicability and buy-in from across the university.

Your proposal must address the following criteria:

- Shows evidence of the use of institutional data/assessment in development of the proposal.
- Will make a significant contribution to student academic success and achievement of student learning outcomes.
- Resources needed to implement the project are reasonable for the proposed return on investment and can be supported by the University for the project's duration.
- The goals of the project can be achieved within four years of implementation.
- Clearly links to institutional mission and the goals of the university strategic plan.
- Has the ability to be readily assessed through quantitative and/or qualitative measures.
- Has broad-based support within the university community.

Your proposal is due to Linda Serro on January 20, 2012. It should be about four to five pages. Each writing team will be compensated \$1000.00 for their effort, to be divided among the writing team members.

We hope that you will accept this challenge. The QEP Selection Committee spent a great deal of time discussing team membership and feel all of you would be effective contributors to the development of this proposal. **Please respond to this e-mail by Wednesday, November 30, regarding your willingness to serve on this writing team.** If you have any questions about this process, please contact our committee chair, Linda Serro.

Sincerely,
QEP Selection Committee:

Linda Serro, Chair
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