

SACS QEP Committee Meeting
5 November 2004

In attendance: Noreen Carrocci, Stephanie Girard, Lisa Hager, Chris Holcomb, Michael Johnson, Trey Mayhall, Theresa McGonagle Crider, Dan Mitsven, Josetta Mulloy, Christine Pierce, Jessica Tuite, and Jon Yellin

The meeting commenced with the distribution of QEP theme handouts from Stephanie Girard, Chris Holcomb, Michael Johnson, Lisa Hager, Theresa McGonagle Crider and Jessica Tuite, and the distribution of institutional data survey results from Michael Johnson.

Lisa Hager asked if, in the interest of time, those who prepared QEP themes would provide a synopsis of their ideas. [Note: Electronic copies of the QEP possible themes are available on ERes.]

Jessica Tuite: "Honor code; increased faculty number; and increased diversity in the student body." Jessica's work with the SGA has shown that students need an honor code, which would be a vehicle for fostering trust and building a stronger relationship between faculty and students. With more faculty, a greater diversity in the numbers and breadth of courses in each major or discipline could be realized. In terms of diversity (religious, ethnic) of the student body, Jessica believes that it is not only the diversity of the student body that is the issue, but more so that there is a need for connection with those who are different in some way from our students, so making connections between schools (using, perhaps, the distance education facilities in Burke) would enhance the student body perspective.

Chris Holcomb began his presentation of theme possibilities with an overview of student responses to the email he sent out soliciting student opinions of potential QEP topics dealing with student learning outcomes; 15 responses were received. Chris noted the following issues/potential topics for QEP:

- Raising the bar for programs that are perceived as more weak than some of our stronger programs;
- Increasing faculty numbers, especially in the face of the anticipated greater enrollment at SHC in the coming years;
- Adequate funding for programs needing specialized software (e.g., *Mathematica* for the math department) or equipment;
- Increasing role of technology on campus;
- Decrease the faculty/student ratio, especially in core classes of some disciplines (e.g., the sciences);
- Provide a forum for student academic concerns (e.g., addressing specific issues);
- Explore options for pre-med majors so that they have some varied experiences in the first two years of study;
- Expand options for study in specific majors;
- Make available early classes (e.g., 7:00 am) for lifelong learning students; and
- Present programs and events and explore mentoring programs and internships in varied fields of study;

Chris noted that some of these issues are not suitable for the QEP, but he wanted to present them as items of interest to be addressed, perhaps in another venue.

Trey Mayhall expressed his concern about the disconnect he has experienced as a mentor/internship provider between what the students learn at SHC and the work they will do, specifically in terms of not being able to find interns from SHC (in business related fields) who want to and are willing to work. He noted that he has considered that such a lack of interest might be because students are expecting to do their internships during the summer, rather than in the academic year. Lisa mentioned that this is the opposite problem that the psychology department experiences, wherein there are not enough internship opportunities available for all of the SHC students who want to participate in the program. Noreen Carrocci remarked that there has been some discussion about including a real-world component for graduation that might include internships, study abroad, research, or something else along those lines. Stephanie Girard also noted that we might consider that requirements for graduation include attendance at one major campus event (lecture, etc.) each term or each year.

Theresa McGonagle Crider: “To foster student success by enhancing effective, ethical and socially adaptive competencies in current and future technological issues and skills.” Theresa noted that we are already considering an information literacy component to our core and discipline courses, but that the issue of information literacy means different things to different institutions. She noted that if SHC is to prepare men and women in the service of others, then it must address not only the mechanics’ skills of application use and the evaluation component of information, but must all address social and ethical issues of technology usage, including the digital divide; issues of intellectual property and personal data; and the means by which we communicate with or isolate from one another through technology use. A comment was made that perhaps this might be the basis for an interdisciplinary program, which would first be based on common courses and then bring in other courses from other disciplines. Discussion ensued.

Stephanie Girard: “Enhance the academic and intellectual climate at SHC.” Stephanie noted that her draft proposal made use of many factors (i.e., COOL) that we are implementing already. She envisioned more pilot programs with other institutions; undergraduate research programs and opportunities; and supplementing out of class projects. To implement some of these initiatives, SHC would seek to use student groups as the vehicles for the out of class events. In addition, Stephanie thought that a more robust way to make an impact would be to bring in a visiting faculty member for an entire semester, who would present a major campus lecture; teach a course or two; and provide guest lectures in other courses. Lisa and Theresa pointed out the potential for links to both Chris’ and Jessica’s concerns, including diversity of faculty and increase of course offerings in some disciplines outside of what we currently offer. Mike Johnson pointed out that this particular QEP theme was very broad and might prove to be difficult to confine to the 100 page report SHC must submit. He noted, however, that some parts of Stephanie’s proposal (e.g., #2, #1D or #1E) might be viable as topics for proposal consideration, as they are more specific and measurable.

Lisa Hager: “...improve the written communication, oral communication, critical thinking, and information literacy skills of [SHC] students through the use of both independent and

collaborative projects.” Lisa began with the thought that students today have demands on them that are different than those in years past. In looking at information literacy, we find that oral communication skills are also required to be literate in this area. There is a practical aspect to this endeavor, as well. What do employers want? We find that there is a need for teamwork in the business and academic environment. Lisa noted that we already have some resources for this potential topic in place at SHC, including the writing across the curriculum program; library and ITS professional staff; and the Library/IT faculty committee. Noreen began the discussion with some thoughts on faculty involvement in these particular areas; the committee continued the conversation with comments about writing and technology issues at SHC. Stephanie submitted that pilot courses are a valuable endeavor, as they allow for the design and development of new courses; providing course release time to faculty to develop pilot courses would be one way to inject writing or technology intensive courses into the curriculum. Noreen said that a seminar or workshop style format might be a way to provide a work environment for those faculty members developing new courses. She envisioned that student/faculty partnerships might be formed, particularly for technology components. Also, it was thought that development could occur in one semester, with the course ready for teaching in the next semester.

Michael Johnson: “To fully integrate the central theme of the core curriculum—Education for the Common Good of the Global Human Community—more fully into the learning experiences of our students.” Students are exposed to a lot of diversity; they think that they are experiencing the global community. Michael remarked that SHC needs to use the linkages we have (e.g., Jesuit community and other Jesuit institutions) to build greater global awareness and participation in our student body.

Noreen asked committee members to read Fr. Kolvenbach’s SHC talks before the next meeting and to take to heart what Fr. Kolvenbach is calling us to do [NOTE: Links to all four conversations can be found at <http://www.shc.edu/kolvenbach/>.]

In preparation for the next meeting, Lisa asked all to read the topics presented during this meeting, along with the institutional data handouts, and to choose 1-2 top themes. All topic presenters were asked to email Lisa their electronic copies of their QEP proposals, so that she could post them to ERes.

The next meeting of the SACS QEP Planning Committee, which will be held within the next two weeks, will be announced to the committee via email.

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa McGonagle Crider