

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Topic Proposal Guidelines

September 10, 2008

As part of our SACS Reaccreditation process we must create and implement a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for George Mason University. As SACS notes, “the QEP describes a carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning.” The QEP is a five-year plan for improving undergraduate student learning that will require significant involvement from our university community in the topic selection, development, implementation and assessment.

We are currently in the process of identifying the topic for our QEP. Both new proposals for topics and feedback on existing proposals (prepared by the QEP Planning Committee this summer) are currently being solicited by the QEP Planning Committee.

To submit a QEP topic proposal, please organize your brief proposal, *no more than three pages*, into the following four sections:

- **Title and Contact Information:** Think of a descriptive title that would generate excitement for your proposal. Please identify a primary person of contact and provide their contact information (email address and phone number).
- **Section 1: Vision**
Share your vision of how your proposed topic has the potential to transform an issue related to student learning at the institutional level. Consider your audience of the Mason community members – why should we embrace this topic and how will it enhance student learning at Mason?
- **Section 2: Congruence with Mission and Goals**
Demonstrate how your proposed topic is consistent with Mason’s mission and 2014 Strategic Plan.
- **Section 3: Student Learning Outcomes**
Identify at least four measurable student learning outcomes that your proposed topic expects to address. Specifically, if your plan were to be adopted, what would students know and be able to do as a result? For example:
 - Learners will be able to synthesize two or more points of view on a topic as evaluated by those knowledgeable in the content area.
 - Students will be able to identify and assess the validity of key assumptions and ethical dimensions of a research/creative project.
 - Students will be able to summarize global trends affecting and affected by their major field of study and be able to analyze how their major field of study reflects and contributes to processes of globalization.

Note: For additional examples of student learning outcomes, please see the resources posted on the QEP website.

- **Section 4: Possible Avenues for Implementation**

Describe how your proposed QEP topic relates to an issue where there is momentum building on campus or an issue that would be significantly strengthened through added attention and resources. Include your ideas about possible strategies for implementing this topic so that we could obtain meaningful results. Where possible, highlight opportunities to build on current institutional initiatives and resources.

As you develop your ideas for your QEP topic proposal, it might be useful to think about Mason's strengths and characteristics as an institution. For example, Mason generally supports and has interest in cross-curricular initiatives (e.g., WAC, TAC, CTAC); we have a diverse student body, including large numbers of international, transfer, and ESL students; we envision ourselves as a global community & institution; and our rapid growth and location in the Metropolitan DC area provide opportunities not available to other institutions.

Similarly, institutional assessment data highlight a number of challenges, areas for improvement, and issues for our future. These include a need to increase the level of academic challenge and opportunities for student/faculty engagement beyond the classroom; student reports of unsatisfactory academic advising; inconsistency across departmental synthesis/capstone offerings; a growing residential population; reliance on adjunct faculty; and a student population who work off-campus.

QEP Topic Evaluation Criteria: As you are writing your topic proposal, please keep the following criteria in mind:

1. The QEP project should build capacity to address a known issue with clear relevance to our institutional context. That is, an issue where there is momentum building on campus or an issue that would be significantly strengthened through added capacity and institutional and financial resources.
2. The QEP project should take demonstrated "best practices" – internal and national – into account.
3. The QEP project should have identified measurable student learning outcomes for the institution as a whole; we should also anticipate the intangibles. Academic units may wish to add unit-specific student learning outcomes that would enhance the project.
4. The QEP project should be consistent with and advance the Mission and Strategic Plan of GMU.
5. The QEP project should have a significant impact on student learning and success at GMU. That is, it should provide clear analysis of its importance for advancing the educational process and its outcomes for our students.
6. The QEP project should have an impact on the greater student body not just one or a few of its components; it should be transformative for the institution.
7. The QEP project should be of a scope that we can implement effectively and obtain meaningful results.

For more information about the QEP, please visit:

<http://qep.gmu.edu/>

<http://sacscoc.org/>