

## Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

### Call for Papers

Every 10 years, as part of our reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), KSU has the opportunity to develop a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to improve an area of student learning or student success in a significant way through a university-wide, multi-year initiative.

As a member of our campus community, you are invited to participate in the topic selection process for our next QEP. The process will occur in multiple phases, the first being the selection of the topic. It is critically important that input from all University constituents is included to get a sense of the needs and opportunities that all members of the KSU community think are important. Therefore, the president has directed the QEP Selection Committee, to issue a call to all faculty, students, and staff to submit QEP topic proposals. Concept papers will be subject to a review process described at <http://qep.kennesaw.edu>.

The university's ability to focus on areas encompassed by the QEP has both intrinsic and practical rewards for faculty and staff whose research interests intersect with the QEP. Moreover, institutions often support and build upon concepts that are not chosen as the QEP but present opportunities to expand student learning.

### Guidelines

#### QEP Description

The QEP is the component of the accreditation process that reflects and affirms the commitment of SACSCOC to the enhancement of the quality of higher education and to the proposition that student learning is at the heart of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. By SACSCOC definition, the QEP describes a carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning or the environment supporting student learning. The QEP should be embedded within the institution's ongoing integrated institution-wide planning and evaluation process and may very well evolve from this existing process. The QEP is required under SACSCOC Core Requirement 2.12 and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2:

**2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.**

**3.3.2 The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and**

**proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.**

### **Selecting a topic**

Development of a QEP entails “a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment,” so an analysis of KSU’s culture, strategic planning, goals, mission, and assessment results is a good place to begin the search for an appropriate topic. Tapping into issues centered on student learning where shared interests, concerns, and aspirations have already surfaced or where data have already been collected and analyzed may be beneficial. The QEP is specific to our institution and our mission. It should be customized and designed to meet the needs of our students.

The topic for the QEP is not required to be a brand new idea. For example, an institution might develop a QEP that extends, modifies, redirects, or strengthens an improvement that is already underway. An institution might also develop a QEP that has been in the planning stages prior to the beginning of preparations for reaffirmation. An institution may not, however, submit a QEP that describes initiatives that are fully realized.

Institutions are encouraged to base their selection of the topic for the QEP on empirical data and an analysis of these data. The institution may wish to examine studies that have been done on best practices in higher education and other national and peer group data derived from carefully designed research. A QEP topic based on a needs assessment, for example, will have more validity and credibility than one that does not. Not only will recognized, substantive issues likely have a good chance of getting the institution’s stakeholders to support both the development and implementation of the plan, but they may also protect the institution from receiving a recommendation calling for clearer description of “the current status of the programs that are cited to be improved in order to better identify the need for the initiative. Data such as attendance figures, survey feedback, student satisfaction and nationally standardized measures are examples of information that can be used to justify the need for improvement.”

Whatever the source of inspiration, institutions should ensure that the QEP clearly establishes the importance of the topic so that peer evaluators can understand its value and appropriateness to the institution. The On-Site Review Committee will expect the institution to have selected an issue of substance and depth.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The QEP Selection Committee will evaluate concept papers using a framework (<http://qep.kennesaw.edu/rubric.php>) developed from rubrics (<http://tinyurl.com/o3ahhc6>) published by SACSCOC. The framework and rubrics encompass five evaluation criteria.

*An Institutional Process.*

*The institution uses an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment.*

*Focus of the Plan*

*The institution identifies a significant issue that (i) focuses on learning outcomes and/or environment supporting student learning and (ii) accomplishes the mission of the institution.*

*Institutional Capability for the Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan*

*The institution provides evidence that it has sufficient resources to initiate, implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.*

*Broad-Based Involvement of Institutional Constituencies*

*The institution demonstrates the involvement of its constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the Plan.*

*Assessment of the Plan*

*The institution identifies goals and a plan to assess the achievement of those goals.*

(July 2012) Retrieved from

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/Quality%20Enhancement%20Plan%20Guidelines.pdf>

**Scope.** A critical factor in the selection of the topic is the determination of the scope of the initiative. While the QEP is not expected to touch the life of every student at the institution, the topic does need to be sufficiently broad to be viewed as significant to the institution and as a major enhancement to student learning. On the other hand, it also needs to be focused enough to provide a manageable framework for development and implementation.

One might argue that an institution has the right to select a broad, complex issue for its QEP, and certainly it does. Doing so, however, demands that extra care be taken in demonstrating to the peer reviewers the institution's capacity for implementing and sustaining the initiative. Viable QEP topics include, but are not limited to, enhancing the academic climate for student learning, strengthening the general studies curriculum, developing creative approaches to experiential learning, enhancing critical thinking skills, introducing innovative teaching and learning strategies, increasing student engagement in learning, and exploring imaginative ways to use technology in the curriculum. In all cases, goals and evaluation strategies must be clearly and directly linked to improving the quality of student learning. For a list of sample titles of QEPs previously submitted for Commission review, see <http://www.sacscoc.org/QEPSummaries.asp> (note that KSU is a "Track B" institution).

### **Submitting a QEP Proposal**

The QEP proposal must be submitted by January 15, 2016 via <http://qep.kennesaw.edu>. The concept submissions should be clear and succinct, not to exceed 3-5 double spaced pages, excluding title page, appendices, and references. The concept paper should be in PDF format utilizing Times New Roman 12 point font size and 1 inch margins.

The submission should include:

- Title page that includes Title of Concept and Authors
  - Abstract
- Papers should address:
- Brief description of the concept
  - Statement of need
  - Explanation of impact on student learning and potential benefits to KSU
  - Goals and measurable outcomes of the concept
  - Assessment methods
  - Estimated timeline
  - Estimated financial & physical resources needed

The proposal will be rated on the following criteria:

- Is there a clear and concise description of a significant issue at KSU directly related to student learning?
- What are the goals of the QEP and how do they relate to student learning?
- What are the benefits of the QEP to students and to KSU?
- How does the QEP relate to the University mission, vision, and strategic plan?
- Are there empirical data/needs assessment supporting the need for the QEP?
- Is a list of references covering best practices relating to the QEP topic included?

### **The QEP Proposal Review Process**

Authors of top concept papers will be invited to present their submissions to the university community in a town hall style meeting. Presentations will be recorded and made available on the web. Surveys will be provided to garner feedback from the university community. The QEP selection committee will recommend the final QEP concept to the senior leadership.