QEP Update

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires its 800 member schools to reaffirm their accreditation every ten years by means of a two-phase process. The first is the certification of compliance with SACS standards and core requirements. The second is the development of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

Del Mar College’s QEP is focused on student success in mathematics. The QEP Research and Design Committee reviewed institutional data and discovered particular concerns with student achievement in developmental mathematics.

The committee identified several questions related to developmental math success: What are the barriers that prevent students from succeeding? What can the College do to increase student achievement? How can the College community support mathematical learning? As more data is collected and analyzed, there are sure to be more questions.

Recently, the committee began seeking answers to these questions by means of two initiatives:

**Faculty Survey:**
Sixty-eight randomly selected faculty members from various disciplines and programs were surveyed regarding ways in which elements of math are currently being used in non-math disciplines and ways in which they could potentially be used. The faculty members were encouraged to discuss the survey with their colleagues. So far, forty-two surveys have been returned and more are expected by the end of April, when committee members will begin analysis and discussion of the results.

**Student Focus Group:**
On Friday, April 17, thirty-one students who are currently enrolled in a developmental math course participated in a focus group in the Retama Room. Students were asked about their background knowledge, attitudes towards math, advising, placement, student services, and instruction.

The QEP committee has been working on a rough draft of a purpose statement for the committee, as well as a list of proposed objectives. The committee is also developing a set of measurable outcomes for the objectives. In addition, the committee has been reviewing the literature connected to math success and a draft of its findings should be ready for the committee’s June meeting.

At present, the QEP committee is making good progress toward its two-pronged goal: satisfaction of the SACS requirements for reaffirmation of accreditation and, more important, the development of a program that will genuinely enhance our students’ success with math.

Dr. Patricia Walter
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When colleges and universities in the South and Southwest talk about reaffirmation of their accreditation, they often refer to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or SACS.

But SACS is actually comprised of two separate entities. The first is the Council on Accreditation and School Improvement, or SACS CASI. CASI accredits some 13,000 schools and school districts throughout the United States and overseas. The schools in CCISD, for example, are accredited by SACS CASI.

The second unit of SACS is the Commission on Colleges, which awards and monitors accreditation for around 800 colleges and universities in eleven states in the South, Southwest, Latin America, and other international locations. Del Mar College has maintained its voluntary association with the Commission on Colleges continuously since 1946.

The mission of the Commission on Colleges has two parts:

1.) The enhancement of educational quality throughout the region and

2.) The improvement of the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that they meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students.

Or, to define the COC in another way, the Commission on Colleges calls itself the “common denominator of shared values and practices” of the 800 schools in its region that award associate, baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral degrees.

Newsletter Note:

Due to various gaps between the semesters, this month’s newsletter is a combined April/May edition. We’ll be back in June with a full report on all SACS activities.

See you then...