Assessment: Key Issue for SACS

Del Mar College’s reaffirmation of accreditation project continues to play a prominent role on our campus. The 73 sections of the Compliance Certification Report, each a response to a standard or requirement from the SACS Commission on Colleges or the federal government, will continue to be written, reviewed, and edited throughout the fall. The Quality Enhancement Plan team continues to meet regularly.

An overwhelmingly important principle of modern accreditation is assessment, and a lot of what we do as part of our reaffirmation process involves assessment: how do we determine how effective our instruction is, and how do we use what we discover about our instruction to improve it?

Accordingly, two of the four sessions of the Summer Academy were devoted to assessment at our College, particularly as a response to SACS principles.

The first—The Assessment of Student Learning: Moving Forward—was developed by the Del Mar College Assessment Committee, which is chaired by Dr. Irma Woods. This day-long session brought together faculty and program chairs to consider assessment of student learning at Del Mar College in light of the College’s mission statement, SACS requirements, and other elements.

The second session was entitled Assessment of Programs and Services: The Basics. This session focused on administrative and educational support services with the goal of helping personnel in the service units gain a broader understanding of the reasons for assessment in all areas of the College. Participants worked on improving and editing their mission statements, program objectives, and measures of assessment.

A successful reaffirmation project requires considerable focus on the part of the entire College, and you can follow its development through this newsletter and through committee reports and minutes. The more involved the campus is, the better.

You can start by checking the back of this newsletter to learn the least that you should know about the Q.E.P.

Marjorie Villani
Interim Vice President of Instruction
SACS Liaison
What’s the Least You Should Know about the Q.E.P?

Individuals and committees have been working on Del Mar College’s Quality Enhancement Plan (Q.E.P.) for several years. But since the Q.E.P. will eventually involve nearly everyone on campus, the Southern Association wants the campus to have a broad understanding of its purpose and goals. What should YOU know about the Q.E.P.?

What is a Q.E.P.?

The Q.E.P. is a five-year plan of action based on a well-defined and focused topic related to improving student learning. The Q.E.P. is one leg of the two-legged stool that supports the reaffirmation of accreditation process that every member of the Commission on Colleges undergoes every ten years; the other leg is the Compliance Certification Report.

What is Del Mar College’s Q.E.P. about?

Del Mar’s Q.E.P. is focused on developmental math.

How was this topic chosen?

Del Mar’s topic is the result of a process of several years that involved the solicitation of white papers from faculty and staff, focus groups made up of faculty, staff, students, and community members, and the deliberations of the Q.E.P. Steering Committee. The committee analyzed a great deal of data, and the need for a focus on developmental math emerged.

Do I have any responsibilities?

The Q.E.P. Research and Design Committee has already asked the faculty to respond to a survey regarding math topics covered in their courses. Other questionnaires and surveys may be forthcoming as the Committee puts the plan together. Please respond as quickly and thoroughly as you can.

Anything else?

Watch for the draft of the Q.E.P. in December 2009, and be ready to comment on it in Spring 2010. Also, watch for updates and presentations about the plan in this newsletter and on the SACS 2011 website, linked from the Faculty Resource page.