Clarification on Proposed QEP Topics

The Del Mar College QEP Team has reviewed the proposed QEP topics and is requesting that you provide further development of the idea by responding to these standardized questions. We thank you for your input and participation in assisting the College in developing a well-defined, meaningful QEP.

What is the specific problem or opportunity that this QEP topic addresses?

This QEP topic, "Engagement, Advising, and the English Major," proposes to examine and assess the impact of faculty involvement on student learning outcomes in relation to why so relatively few students complete their degree programs and graduate — and what various departments, offices, faculty, and staff could do to address this problem.

Specifically, it centers on an extended and renewed approach to advising and student support, something endorsed by SACS guidelines that state students should be "assigned" advisors who then meet with "their" students on a recurring and ongoing basis, implying the importance of a strong, continuing relationship in order to help students make the best possible choices for their individual learning needs. Further, in order to be successful, students need to feel a sense of belonging, of care and guidance, and of being provided with accurate information about scholarships, financial aid, support systems, and auxiliary services and opportunities — both within their department/major and from the broader community.

Faculty members as advisors/mentors can operate as a conduit, pivot, or "primary port" for establishing such links and bridges to achieve this goal and in the process assist minority and disadvantaged students overcome barriers wrought by institutional practices for which they are often poorly-equipped to navigate.

Which students or group of students would be the focus of this topic?

Declared English majors for three main reasons. First, there are relatively few students in this major, resulting in a manageable sample group for a 2-3 year study; second, seeking to find out why so relatively few students complete degrees applies to other majors/disciplines; third, to try to find out why this department, starting with 250 declared majors and an average of 85 registered each semester, graduates an average of only 8 students per year.

Which departments, offices or programs would be involved?

English, Philosophy, and Education department faculty and staff, Stone Writing Center, Advising, Counseling, and Financial Aid Offices, Freshman Seminar faculty and staff, Physical plant (for assistance with auxiliary services), Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, College Relations

What are the specific results that you expect to achieve from the implementation of the QEP?

* Increased (or maintained) student GPA and/or class results in English coursework AND across the curriculum.
* High levels of student satisfaction in their own learning outcomes gauged through surveys, interviews and/or portfolio assessment in other courses (or the English department's process of portfolio assessment)
* A 150 percent increase of students who graduate with an A.A. or A.A.T degree in English (over three years)
* Provide a model (or point of contrast/comparison) for other departments to follow
* More effective use of departmental, college, and community resources in relation to specific and measurable student learning outcomes
* Opportunity for faculty to directly know the strengths/weaknesses of individual students' work; provision to feed this knowledge back to the department for assessment purposes and program/curriculum review

Describe how this QEP affects student learning.

* Better informed faculty who sustain strong relationships with a small cadre of students and who actively contribute to the success and engagement of those students as they pursue a Del Mar degree
* Greater integration, bridging, and effective sharing of knowledge among disparate departments and offices — and the way it can be coordinated and applied to directly affect the learning outcomes of students
* Faculty better informed about the actual workings of support systems that can benefit student learning, and more specific knowledge about the barriers and obstacles that get in the way of students and their opportunities for learning.

These responses are due in the office of the VPI by April 2, 2007. Date Received in office of VPI: \(3/30/07\)