Making Critical Connections

Quality Enhancement Plan

Board of Trustees -- University Affairs

September 21, 2011
Purpose

• The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is the accrediting agency for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

• UNC-Chapel Hill received a reaffirmation of accreditation in December 2006 after an exhaustive self-study, presentation and review of 80 compliance standards, development of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), and an on-site visit led by Dr. Michael Adams, President of the University of Georgia, in April 2006.

• The U.S. Department of Education has mandated that decennial reviews need to be augmented by a five-year interim review.

• The five-year report due on March 25, 2012, is comprised of 14 compliance standards and a final report of the implementation of the QEP.

• Status of the QEP (Making Critical Connections) is reported to Faculty Council and the Board of Trustees annually between 2006-2011.
QEP Goals

• Connecting the learning expected inside the classroom with what happens outside it – and enhancing the connections between and among courses;

• Making research a critical connection between the curriculum and the faculty and the students;

• Internationalizing the undergraduate experience.
Making Critical Connections

- The Quality Enhancement Plan, “Making Critical Connections,” was developed and adopted in April 2006 as part of the University’s decennial reaffirmation of accreditation process. It focuses on innovative educational programs, undergraduate research, and international activities. The full report is available at http://www.unc.edu/inst_res/SACS/sacs.html.

- The implementation committee is appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Since I last reported, it has met twice. It also maintains a listserv.
Implementation Committee

- Peter A. Coclanis, Albert Ray Newsome Distinguished Professor of History and Director of the Global Research Institute (as Director of the GRI)
- Winston Crisp, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs)
- Lydia Lewallen, undergraduate student, Women’s Studies and Sociology, Class of 2011 (student at large)
- Erika Lindemann, Adjunct Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Curricula (as Associate Dean)
- Bobbi Owen, Chair, Michael McVaugh Distinguished Professor of Dramatic Art and Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education (as Senior Associate Dean)
- Patricia Pukkila, Professor of Biology and Associate Dean and Director of the Office for Undergraduate Research (as Associate Dean and Director)
- J. Steven Reznick, Professor of Psychology (Academic Affairs faculty member-at-large)
- Lily Roberts, undergraduate student, Peace, War & Defense and English, Class of 2012 (student at large)
- Gwendolyn Sancar, Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics (Health Affairs faculty member-at-large)
- Lynn Williford, Assistant Provost for Institutional Research and Assessment (as Assistant Provost)
- Jan Yopp, Professor of JOMC and Dean of the Summer School (as Dean of the Summer School)
Leadership

- Dr. Peter Coclanis, Albert R. Newsome Professor of History and Director of the Global Research Institute, leads the internationalization implementation;
- Dr. Patricia Pukkila, Professor of Biology and Associate Dean and Director of the Office for Undergraduate Research, leads the research implementation;
- Dr. Erika Lindemann, Adjunct Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Curricula, has led the curricular innovation implementation;
- Professor Jan Yopp, Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication and Dean of the Summer School, is implementing Maymester;
- Dr. Lynn Williford, Assistant Provost for Institutional Research and Assessment, leads the assessment effort.
Accomplishments: Curricular Innovations

Maymester

- Maymester 2010 ran 24 courses (418 students) across 15 units; Maymester 2011 ran 34 courses (487 students) across 21 units; 25 courses satisfied Gen Ed requirements.

Interdisciplinary Cluster Program

- 12 clusters exist; among them are Border Crossings; Defining Difference; Evolution; Global Environmental Change; Human Rights; Knowledge at the Crossroads; Medicine and Culture; War, Revolution, and Culture;
- Obstacles remain.
Accomplishments: Undergraduate Research

• Four Distinguished Term Professors in Research and Undergraduate Education have been appointed. Dean of Arts and Sciences recently distributed a call for new nominations.

• GRC Program exceeds all projections:
  – Fall 2010 – Spring 2011: 161 courses with 4,500 students enrolled;
  – Fall 2006 – Spring 2011: 463 courses with over 13,000 students enrolled

• SURF grants: 80 grants awarded for Summer 2011

• CRSP: 40 students received the Carolina Research Scholar notation in 2010-2011 and 88 since the inception of the program in 2008. 493 students have registered for CRSP as of May 2011.
Accomplishments: Internationalization

- Embedding internationalization as deeply as possible in the curriculum is critical in our global society.
  - The improvements, via supporting people and programming, to UNC-Chapel Hill’s "international infrastructure" have proven useful although challenges remain including the recent cuts to our Title VI centers. And, the two ESL positions in the Writing Center struggle to meet campus-wide demand;
  - The recent implementation of the UNC Global Travel Registry is a valuable resource for tracking contact information on UNC personnel.
Assessing Outcomes of the QEP

• Goal -- To measure the effectiveness of the QEP initiatives in enhancing student learning outcomes, including:
  – Integrating and applying knowledge from various disciplines, and
  – Making connections between classroom learning and the outside world?
• Methods used:
  – Longitudinal study of the entering first-year class of 2006 and later cohorts, comparing outcomes to those of pre-2006 cohorts;
  – Tracking course-taking patterns and out-of-class activities;
  – Pre- and post-assessments of the impact of study abroad and research experiences;
  – Intensive interviews of sophomores and seniors; and,
  – Focus groups and surveys of faculty and students.
Evidence of Effectiveness: Maymester Experience

• Students reported:
  – High levels of satisfaction with:
    • Interactions with faculty - 96%
    • Quality of instruction – 95%
  – Enhanced ability to:
    • Integrate knowledge across disciplines – 86%
    • Connect knowledge and skills acquired in different courses - 87%
    • Explore subject areas outside their majors – 86%
    • Become actively and deeply engaged in a subject – 92%

“I really appreciated being able to focus, very intensively, on one topic…the three-week structure left me hungry for more and allowed me to pursue further reading after the course was over.”

• Faculty also highly satisfied - 95%

“…Among the peak teaching experiences of my 30-year career at UNC…enthusiastic participation by every student on a regular basis.”
Evidence of Effectiveness: Undergraduate Research

Typical student feedback:

“It’s so exciting to learn how the scientific process goes on from observing a problem to asking questions to finding ways to answer those questions. That’s something you only read about in BIOL 101 in a chapter. To live through that for a year is very instructive.”
Graduate Research Consultant (GRC) Program

• In 2009-2010 and 2010-2011:
  – Over 90% of graduate student consultants rated the program to be valuable or very valuable
  – Almost 95% of participating faculty indicated that they would use this model of instruction again.
GRC Program Outcomes

• From a faculty member: “Having a GRC allows me to turn over management of the mechanics of the research component of the course to a grad student who, in turn, brings fresh perspective to the project and suggests things to the students of which I might not be aware. This has both greatly facilitated the development of the student projects and enriched them.”

• From a GRC: “This experience has provided me with an exceptional growth opportunity. I have learned from the professor, had occasion to reflect on my own pedagogy, and participated in the students' research development.”

• From an undergraduate student: “Not only did our GRC help us with learning about these methods, but he also shared his personal experiences, gave us feedback and suggestions for ours, and helped us see how the methods we learned could be applied to a broad variety of subjects.”
Carolina Research Scholars

• 2010-2011 student feedback:
  – 90% rated their experience as valuable or very valuable.
  – Self-reported gains from participation:
    • More comprehensive understanding of the breadth of “research” as a field;
    • Increased ability to apply skills learned in classes to research;
    • Increased self-confidence in conducting research and interpreting that of others;
    • Improved critical thinking & writing skills;
    • Closer relationships with faculty; and,
    • Better preparation for graduate school.
Graduate Mentor Program

98% of the mentors reported positive mentor-mentee relationships and enhanced professional growth from participating in this program.

“It is really rewarding to work with another person so interested in science and to be able to teach someone who is excited to listen and learn. This mentoring experience has solidified my desire to teach and mentor others throughout my career in biology.”
Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program

• 100% of participants between 2007 and 2011 reported that their mentored research experiences had been positive.

• Reported gains:
  – Research knowledge and skills;
  – Development of new attitudes toward scientific research;
  – Increased commitment, dedication, flexibility, perseverance, and ability to work with others.

• 80% reported SURF experience confirmed or reconfirmed their future plans to continue their research, write an honor’s thesis, pursue graduate studies and a career in research.
**Study Abroad Experience**

- Administered the “Global Perspective Inventory” to three groups of students:
  - Pre-study abroad
  - Post-study abroad
  - Control group: students who did not study abroad.

- Findings indicated that students who participated in study abroad demonstrated increased international and intercultural competencies and a stronger sense of global citizenship.
Longitudinal Cohort Study

- 4-year study of over 400 students of the 2006 cohort
- 287 interviews were conducted with 247 students, including 40 students who were interviewed in both their sophomore and senior years in spring 2008, spring 2009, fall 2009, and spring 2010.
Findings from the Interviews

• Critical connections (moments in which students drew connections between academic experiences and the larger, “real” world) are *made* by:
  – Original research
  – Study abroad
  – First-year seminars
  – Service learning and community service
  – Interactive and hands-on learning experiences.
Questions?