

SACS 5th Year Interim Report Summary
Presented to members of the Executive Committee of the University Senate
December 2, 2009

- *Institutions are required to report on 14 standards, including all of the federal requirements.
- *Institutions are required to submit their QEP impact response report, limited to ten pages including appendices.
- *GCSU report has been sent to external reviewers prior to submission to SACS.

The SACS Standards: Most Notable Issues/Results

- *9 faculty committees judged GCSU to be in compliance with all standards;
- *Need for student support services to assess learning outcomes in relation to the mission;
- *Need for degree programs to close the assessment loop consistently;
- *Assessment of learning outcomes is still weak on campus;
- *Need for facilities managers to conduct satisfaction surveys;
- *Need to have a clearer and more focused mission and to link all teaching, learning, and other activities and policies to the mission;
- *Need to keep records of all external accreditation, BOR, and institutional level approvals;
- *Need to demonstrate we apply our policies consistently through documentation.

The GCSU QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) Impact Response Report

Issues:

- *Lack of focus of the original QEP: multiple initiatives, each with sub-initiatives;
- *Some initiatives in original QEP lacked clear relationships to others;
- *Poorly drafted learning outcomes in original QEP, many of which were not assessable;
- *Means of assessment in original QEP often did not address the outcomes;
- *Some units kept track of QEP updates but others did not, and of those that did, often the data did not speak to the learning outcomes.

Strategies:

- *Use of the President's Strategic Focusing Initiative to focus our efforts on Initiatives 3 (review of learning outcomes and general education) and 5 (learning beyond the classroom);
- *Initiative 5 was broadened to include a wide array of LBTC activities.

Results:

Initiative 1 | Enhance Student Orientation Programs for Transfer Students

- *Increase in transfer student attendance at orientations, but no impact on retention;
- *Transfer student GPAs rose in sync with tiered admissions requirements implemented during the QEP period;
- *GCSU transfer students have the lowest mean time to graduation among state; universities and regional institutions, and compare very favorably with research institutions.

Initiative 2 | Enhance Leadership Opportunities

*GCSU significantly enhanced the LCP, participation increased, and mentors evaluated students positively.

Initiative 3 | Enhance Academic Challenge Within the Curriculum to Reflect the Liberal Arts Mission

*Efforts were made to revise the gen ed curriculum, but were halted by the USG.

*GCSU implemented a university-wide annual assessment program;

*There were six learning outcomes for this portion of the QEP. It was difficult to find evidence for technical skills. Quantitative skills have improved. GCSU students compare favorably to students at research institutions on reading and writing skills;

*GCSU compares favorably to benchmark institutions in the areas of academic challenge and enriching educational experience on the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), but without statistically significant differences. However, first-year scores generally increased in the level of academic challenge and active and collaborative learning (43.7 to 43.9) between the 2005 and 2008 surveys. Scores for seniors increased in these and all other areas except faculty-student interaction between 2005-2008.

Initiative 4 | Enhance the Recruitment and Retention of Students and Faculty to Increase Diversity

*There were modest gains in the diversity of faculty;

*There were increases in the numbers of Hispanic first-time freshmen, and GCSU has the highest rate of retention of these students in the USG;

*GCSU was able to provide some evidence of discipline-specific learning outcomes related to diversity;

*Student perceptions of value of diversity on the NASPA student voice survey were below the national average and need to be addressed.

Initiative 5 | Enhance Opportunities to Engage Student Learning in the Classroom and Beyond

*There were phenomenal increases in study abroad (186 % since 2003), service activities, and undergraduate research;

*Student satisfaction ratings are higher as compared to other benchmark institutions in areas of the NSSE (2008) related to learning outcomes 3 (progress towards degree), 4 (collaboration), and 5 (student-faculty interaction). *With the exception of faculty-student interaction, these ratings have increased since 2005, making this our strongest QEP initiative.*

Initiative 6 | Enhance Preparation of Students for Success in Post-Graduate Opportunities

*Increased use of career center services resulted in significant increases in internships and positive employer evaluations of related skills;

*GCSU has only recently begun to track job placement data;

*There was a slight increase in requests for transcripts to institutions or employers abroad.