

To: All Faculty

From: Victoria A. Farrar-Myers
QEP Coordinator

Re: QEP Theme, Approach and Next Steps

Date: November 21, 2005

Through the hard work of the many faculty members who participated in the strategic conversations with the President and Provost last fall, and the on-line faculty survey and focus groups this fall, we have reached a consensus on the theme and focus for the QEP. The theme that has emerged is “Active Learning.” The working definition of active learning we are starting with is:

Active learning is a process that employs a variety of pedagogical approaches to place the primary responsibility for creating and/or applying knowledge on the students themselves. It puts the student at the center of the learning process, making him/her a partner in discovery, not a passive receiver of information. Active learning requires students to interact with and integrate course material by reading, writing, discussing, problem-solving, investigating, reflecting, and engaging in such higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and critical thinking. An active learning approach draws upon such teaching and learning strategies as question-and-answer sessions, short in-class writing exercises, simulations, team learning, student research, internships and community service, clinical placements, and problem-based learning.

Through an RFP process developed by the QEP Steering Committee, each of the colleges and schools will be charged with identifying its own approach(es) to assessing student learning achievement under this thematic. Exemplars of the ones identified will be utilized as the basis of the QEP Plan as SACS has indicated they want focused approaches that are well-developed and identify specific assessment measures of student learning achievement outcomes. Other initiatives identified through this process can be utilized to formulate a plan to integrate this theme further throughout the student learning experience. Furthermore, it has been determined that the plan shall focus primarily on the undergraduate experience, although exemplars from programs serving the graduate level may be identified in the initial RFP process.

This theme, along with the approach identified, will be handed off to a QEP Steering Committee comprised of faculty representatives from the nine academic units plus Honors and the Graduate School, along with representatives from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Advising, the Library, the Faculty Senate, and the student body. The Steering Committee will be charged with drafting the outline to the QEP Plan in the spring of 2006. This outline will go back out to the faculty in April, 2006 for review and

comment. Once this feedback is received, the QEP Steering Committee will draft the plan over the summer of 2006. This draft will then be disseminated back out to the academic community for final review in mid-to late September, 2006. The final plan will then be submitted to SACS in January, 2007; six weeks prior to the on-site review (February 26-March 2, 2007).

The development of the QEP is a critical process, not only for our SACS reaffirmation, but for us as a faculty to articulate and define the kind of student learning we wish to foster at UTA. I encourage you to be involved through your college's or school's representative on the QEP Steering Committee or by sending feedback directly to me.