Harnessing the QEP for Student Success in Gateway Courses

Two Institutions’ First-Year Experiences

Dr. Julie Howdeshell, The University of Southern Mississippi
Dr. Anna Dunlap Higgins-Harrell, Gordon State College

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This Session

1. What is a gateway course?
2. Is the QEP a good fit for addressing gateway courses?
3. How do institutions identify which gateway classes to address and how many?
4. What factors should institutions consider in identifying strategies to strengthen learning in gateway courses?
5. What about academic rigor?
6. What has happened so far?
7. Your questions!
What is a gateway course?

- High enrollment
- High rates of Ds, Fs, withdrawals, or incompletes
- Foundational to the general education curriculum or to a major
Why Address Gateways through the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?

- Critical issue at many institutions
- Clear focus on student learning
- Measurable results
- Investment of human and financial resources
- Positive weight of accreditation
- Opportunity for significant impact and transferability
Why Address Gateways through the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?

- Core Requirement 2.12:
  - The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.
Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2

The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.
How Do Institutions Identify Which Courses to Address?

- Gordon State College
  - Area A English (Composition I) and Math (College Algebra) were identified early in institution-wide topic selection process.

- Research and Development Phase
How Do Institutions Identify Which Courses to Address?

- The University of Southern Mississippi
  - Topic identified through multi-phase process
  - List of Courses with High DFWI rates
  - Evolved through the Research and Design Phase
    - High enrollment, student learning outcome data, and interest of faculty
  - Five courses:
    - BSC 110: Principles of Biological Sciences
    - BSC 250: Anatomy and Physiology
    - CHE 106: Introductory Chemistry
    - HIS 101: World Civilization I
    - MAT 99: Intermediate Algebra
How Do Institutions Decide on the Number of Courses to Address?

- Institutional Context
- Financial Resources
- Assessment Data
- Sense of community
- Ability to address similar concerns at institutional level
What are some of the strategies to support learning in gateway courses?

- Active learning
- Course redesign
- Early alert programs
- Faculty development
- Learning communities
- Supplemental instruction
Research: Combination of Elements

- Faculty leadership
- Institutional support
- Evidence-based structure

“In order to improve teaching and learning, higher education institutions need to foster linkages between institution-wide change initiatives and local, grassroots innovations (Kezar & Lester, pp. 36-37).
“In contrast to large-scale initiatives, starting at the level of individual courses may be a more productive route to pedagogical improvement. Faculty teams can guide the course redesign process, identify practices to foster student engagement, and build active learning environments that promote higher levels of achievement...” (Dee, Henkin, and Hearne, 2011, p. 57).
“Faculty innovators...report that they frequently struggle to find institutional support for their new ideas (Dee and Daly, 2009). They may experiment with new pedagogical approaches but find that institutional resources remain unavailable to extend their initial efforts. Faculty-initiated pedagogical reforms, consequently, tend to remain peripheral to the institution and seldom result in institutional-wide improvements in student learning...” (Kezar & Lester, 2009, pp. 36-37).
An Evidence-Based Structure

- Gateways to Completion (G2C®) Process
  - Structured course analysis and redesign process
  - Developed with insight by a national advisory committee.
  - Each course has a course committee that examines DFWI rates by variables through an online platform and works through 52 key performance indicators organized around six key principles.
  - A steering committee addresses cross-course needs.
What is the John N. Gardner Institute?

- John N. Gardner Institute
  - Non-profit
  - Faculty scholars
  - National Advisory Board
  - 30+ year history with student success (FYE)
  - Social justice

www.jngi.org
Garnering Faculty Buy-In

- Gordon State College
- Addressing different disciplines with one approach
- System-wide effort in Georgia
Garnering Faculty Buy-In

- The University of Southern Mississippi
- Recognizing disciplinary differences
- Invitations for travel grants
- Strong support by gateway faculty
- Follow-up meetings with deans and chairs
- Financial incentives
What about academic rigor?

- Inevitable, and critical, question
- Faculty are the drivers of the effort.
- Continuous reinforcement on student learning, not just grades
- Student learning outcome assessment data
- Standardized testing data
Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (Direct Measures; Embedded)

- The University of Southern Mississippi
  - Student learning outcome assessment
    - General education student learning outcomes
  - Direct Measure
  - Baseline data
  - Reporting: Annual and Periodic
Assessment of Student Learning: National Standardized Testing

- Gordon State College
  - Writing and Math
  - ETS Proficiency Profile
  - National Comparisons
  - External Validity
  - Student Buy-In
  - Faculty Buy-In
  - Costs
What’s happened so far?

- Gordon State College
  - Spring 2016: Writing QEP!
  - Fall 2016
    - Student Success Summit
    - SACSCOC On-Site Visit
    - Course Committees reviewed 52 Key Performance Indicators and began development of action plans to be implemented Fall 2017 (QEP schedule)
What’s happened so far?

The University of Southern Mississippi

- Spring 2016: All five course committees reviewed 52 key performance indicators and developed focused action plans for the year.
- Summer and Fall 2016: Implementation began!
  - A few highlights:
    - Faculty Development Institute
    - HIS 101: Active learning and discussion group sections
    - BSC 110, BSC 250, and CHE 106: Flipped classes and tutorial center improvements
    - MAT 99: Pilot of Supplemental Instruction; Partnership with CHE 106
Two QEPs on Gateway Courses

FIRSTthingsFIRST
Increasing Mastery in Quantitative and Communicative Skills

Gordon State College
Quality Enhancement Plan
Dates of On-Site Visit: October 24-27, 2016

Eagles Engaged
ENHANCING GATEWAY AND PATHWAY EXPERIENCES

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN
Revised July 20, 2016
Related Upcoming Session and Your Questions

- Update on a University System Effort to Improve Teaching, Learning and Success in Gateway Courses
  - CS-146; Monday, Dec. 5 from 3 – 4:30 p.m.

- Your Questions
Sources

