SACS 5th Year Interim Report Process and Issues

Georgia College & State University
Process

- Began work in March 2009
- Led by a Steering Committee
  - 80 faculty, staff, and administrators involved
  - 8 subcommittees divided into two groups
  - Academic areas and administrative areas
Process

- “Academic” committees
  - Led by the chair of the steering committee
  - Divided into three subcommittees
    - I: Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1 and Federal Requirements 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4 (Learning outcomes, student achievement, program length): chaired by the Arts and Sciences Dean
    - II CR 2.10 Student Support Services: Chaired by the director of the testing center
Process

- QEP impact response report subcommittee
  - Led by the chair of the steering committee
  - Two groups of participants
    - Responsible parties for original QEP initiatives
    - Broadly representative drafting committee
Process

- “Administrative” subcommittees
  - A facilitator: The University Registrar
  - 5 subcommittees, each with an individual chair
Process

- Report sent to expert external reviewers
Process

• See our university planning website for complete organizational details
  • http://www.gcsu.edu/planning/sacs2010/committees.htm
General Issues

- **Core Requirement 2.10**
  - The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students.
  - Connects to learning outcomes
  - Controversial in Student Affairs and rarely done
  - Reliance on indirect data, such as from NASPA surveys
  - Similar issue for facilities standard CS 3.11.3
General Issues

- Many standards, such as CR 2.10, require a demonstration of compliance that is linked to the institutional mission statement
  - Must derive and/or link learning goals from/to the mission statement
    - 2004 reaffirmation issues with mission statement
    - Leadership changes
    - Recent mission review retreat
General Issues

- **Federal Requirement 4.5** The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints.
  - Need to keep documentation of our actual application of policies
General Issues

- **CS 3.3.1.1**
  - *The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in the following area: 3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes.*
  - Leadership changes impacted continuity of practice
  - History of difficulties with assessment software
  - Need to close the loop
Early QEPs were typically unfocused and broad

- GCSU title: *Fostering Excellence and Challenging Students in the Classroom and Beyond and Across the Student’s Career: A Mission-Driven Plan for Quality Enhancement*
What have we learned?

- GCSU QEP had 6 initiatives
  - Multiple sub-initiatives
  - Multiple student learning outcomes under each initiative and sub-initiative
  - Initiatives were not clearly related to one another
Assessment Issues

- Learning outcomes were poorly formed
  - Many were not assessable
- Often the means of assessment did not directly relate to the stated learning outcome
Case Study

- **Initiative 1**: Enhance orientation programs for transfer students
- **Outcome 2**: Students will be prepared to learn and to be intellectually challenged. **Assessment**: Increase in number and retention of transfer students in good academic standing after their first semester.
- **Outcome 4**: Students will experience the benefits of the public liberal arts experience. **Assessment**: Average transfer student GPA is equivalent to or better than that of generic freshmen at graduation.
Other Issues

- Report on Changes Made to the QEP
  - SACS had recommended use of formative assessment to track progress and respond to issues
  - Implemented the QEP as initially drafted
  - Leadership changes: Formative assessments were not done on campus during the life of the QEP
    - Responsible parties were not alerted to the need to keep assessment data
Impact on Student Learning

• Limited success with Initiatives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6
  • Initiative 3 and general education

• Greater success with Initiative 5
  • Broadened as a result of the Strategic Focusing Initiative to include a wider array of LBTC activities
  • Helped to unite several QEP initiatives, such as Initiative 2 (Leadership) and Initiative 6 (success after graduation/internships, etc.)

• GCSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan

  • Six initiatives to help us better fulfill our mission to “foster excellence and challenge students in the classroom and beyond.”
  
  1) Enhance orientation programs for transfer students
  2) Enhance student leadership opportunities
  3) Enhance academic challenge within the curriculum to reflect the liberal arts mission
  4) Enhance recruitment and retention of students and faculty to increase diversity
  5) Enhance opportunities to engage student learning in the classroom and beyond
  6) Enhance preparation of students for success in post-graduate opportunities
QEP Initiative 5: Results

- **Enhance Opportunities to Engage Student Learning in the Classroom and Beyond**
  - **Outcome 5**: Students will interact with instructors outside of the classroom.
  - **Assessment**: Originally survey of faculty in learning communities, but joint research activities and survey results proved more informative.
    - 259 students gave joint professional presentations and/or publications with faculty.
QEP Initiative 5: Results

**Outcome 6:** Students will demonstrate crossover learning and apply learning to external situations. **Assessment:** Originally GPAs, retention rates, and graduation rates of students in learning communities, but increases in LBTC activities and survey results proved better measures.

- Student research conference presentations increased from 104 (2006) to 302 (2009).
- Service learning hours increased from 12,328 (2006) to 30,000 (2009).
- Study abroad participants increased by 168.87% since 2003, the largest increase among USG institutions.
QEP Initiative 5: Results

Outcome 2: Students will be involved in campus life.
Assessment: Increased participation in campus events and student organizations.

- Volunteer hours increased from 33,586 (2006) to 42,500 (2009).
- Recipients of the Presidential Service Award (recognizing a minimum of 100 volunteer hours in a year) increased from 4 (2004) to 146 (2009).
- 472 students participated in leadership activities since 2006.
Indirect Data on LBTC from Surveys

- NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) Student Voice Survey (2008-2009)
  - Student responses to the NASPA item, “As a result of campus activities, I have gained experience/skills relevant to my academic major,” were higher than the national average (p<.05)
Indirect Data on LBTC from Surveys

- NSSE 2008 (National Survey of Student Engagement)
  - Student satisfaction ratings are higher as compared to other benchmark institutions in areas 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
Responding to the QEP

- Recent QEP/Mission Review Stakeholder’s Conference
  - Intensive focus on learning beyond the classroom
  - Development of learning outcomes to guide the next five years as we look to the next QEP