

## QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN TOPIC SELECTION REPORT

Members of the Quality Enhancement Plan Subject Committee as appointed by Dr. Delbert W. Baker, President of Oakwood University:

Mbyirukira, James; Chair	Education - faculty
Prigg, Benson; Co-chair	English - faculty
Anderson, John	Academic Affairs - administrator
Bucknor, Wayne	Music - faculty
Bushner, Rupert	Spiritual Life - staff
Caldwell, Leah	West Oaks - staff
Eakins, Lewis	Public Safety - staff
Gullo, Safawo	Biology - faculty
Hannah, Isariah	Family & Consumer Sciences - faculty
Horne, Emory	Student
Miller, Victoria	WJOU Radio - staff
Newborn, Janis	Institutional Effectiveness - staff
Warren, Mervyn	Provost Office - administrator
Wilson, Paula	Student Accounts - staff
Wongk, Victor	USM Academic VP - student
Young, Andrew	Health & Physical Education – faculty

Oakwood University began its process of identifying a topic of study for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) of the institution during Spring Semester 2009. In the early part of Fall Semester 2009, the Academic Vice President called members individually to explain the task at hand. The principal writer of this report accepted the task of being a co-chair, which entailed writing this report in order to document the process of how the topic was selected.

**September 9, 2009:** The Academic VP set the agenda for the first meeting of the QEP Subject Committee: introductions, review of purpose, creation of a time table, and deciding on a regular time to convene. He also provided a secretary to take notes and provide the minutes. The first meeting of the QEP Subject Committee included:

1. Introductions of members and the institutional areas that each represented:
  - a. The members reflected all areas of the institution: student, faculty, staff, and administration. A few of these were also alumni. Thus, the group was well-rounded. The minutes of the meeting identifies the members and the areas represented.
2. A statement of purpose:
  - a. The Academic VP presented the purpose of the Committee: “To develop and implement a process that will culminate in the identification of a topic to be recommended to University administration as the topic for the QEP.”
  - b. He also provided an overview of the accreditation process, key elements of a QEP and an overview of the QEP process.

- c. The Committee was charged to create a broad-based process to select a subject that would enhance student learning and be a focal point of strategic planning at the institution for the next several years.
3. A decision to meet each week for at least an hour for each session.
4. The first assignment of the Committee to read the section on selection of a topic in the SACS/COC handbook “The Quality Enhancement Plan” as related to the Committee’s charge.

**September 16, 2009:** At the second meeting, the Committee began by deliberating about the process and a timetable for deciding a subject. The Chair reminded members of the Committee purpose; then he continued by outlining the guidelines for selecting a topic. The following assignments were agreed upon:

1. The co-chairs were tasked with creating a time line to be discussed and approved by the members at the next meeting.
2. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness was asked to provide committee members with data already in hand that might identify items that impact student learning, including:
  - a. The report of the environmental scan conducted by consultants from **Bermultinational Limited** which provides a summary of their findings and recommendations for future planning;
  - b. Results from the most recent Student Satisfaction Inventory; and
  - c. A draft of the University Strategic Plan for 2010-2015, even though it is still a work in progress.
3. The members were also asked to review the University’s mission statement, vision, goals, aim, and motto.

Before the next meeting, the chair emailed to members a proposed time table for their consideration. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness also provided the afore-named documents for review.

**September 23, 2009:** At the third meeting, the Committee deliberated over the time line. The Committee quickly realized from discussing the time table how much time we had lost by not convening this past spring. However, the time table seemed reasonable for a working committee that would meet weekly and complete assigned tasks in between meetings. The timeline was voted.

The Committee approved a two-tier approach to finding a subject: first get a list of all possible topics from (1) available data and (2) constituent groups (through surveys and focus group meetings).

The Committee brainstormed possible topics based on their review of available written data, with the following results:

**Possible topics taken from the Student Satisfaction Inventory include:**

1. Strengthening course content
2. Technology
3. Advising

4. Tutoring Services
5. Including real world career practices in the classroom early on
6. Diversity
7. Service Learning

**Possible topics taken from the Consultant's Report include:**

1. Advisement
2. Tutoring services
3. Diversity
4. Service learning
5. Student research opportunities
6. Interdisciplinary instruction
7. More student/faculty interaction
8. Strengthening curriculum
9. Including real world career practices in the classroom
10. Honors program
11. Technology

Individual tasks were assigned for the success of completing the topic selection process. Assigned tasks consisted of sub-committees for (1) generating a survey instrument and (2) data collection from faculty, staff, students, administration, board, and alumni.

In between meetings, a sub-committee led by the co-chair worked on creating a survey for written distribution and focus groups. The co-chair developed a draft, and then emailed it to subcommittee members for feedback. Almost all members gave constructive feedback resulting in a couple of good surveys that would be fine tuned at the next meeting. The chair, in consultation with co-chair, generated and disseminated a table listing the survey groups and deadlines for data collection.

**September 30, 2009:** At the fourth meeting, the Committee focused on other written data, including the Strategic Plan draft and the University mission and goals, to determine other viable QEP topics. The Committee discussed the survey instrument and approved a final version of it. The Committee was not scheduled to meet the following week, so that subcommittees could work on collecting data using the survey.

**October 13, 2009:** At the fifth meeting, the Committee focused on generating new topics and affirming previous topics based on faculty survey results. The response rate was very high, which pleased the Committee. The top five areas of greatest need identified by the **faculty**, in order of preference, included:

1. Critical Thinking
2. Writing Competency
3. Reading Competency.
4. Strengthening the curriculum
5. Early introduction to career practices

Faculty identified eleven additional areas of concern; the top three were:

1. Practical, hands-on courses (suggested by six faculty)

2. Enhanced library resources & facilities to support student/faculty research (suggested by four faculty)
3. Spiritual formation (suggested by three faculty).

The chair gave suggestions on conducting focus groups. The Committee would not meet the following week to allow for data collection.

**October 27, 2009:** At the sixth meeting, data from staff, students, alumni, administration, and Board of Trustees was analyzed to see what new topics could be generated as well as what previous topics would be reaffirmed. The Committee looked at the data for each constituent group, resulting in the following:

Top 5 areas of greatest need identified **by students:**

1. Early introduction to career practices
2. Strengthening curriculum
3. Critical thinking
4. Technology
5. Advising

Top 5 areas of greatest need identified by **administrators & staff**

1. Critical thinking
2. Early introduction
3. Writing competencies
4. Advising
5. Technology

Top 5 areas of greatest need identified by **Board of Trustees**

1. Critical thinking
2. Writing competency
3. Oral communication
4. Technology
5. Reading competency

Top 5 areas of greatest need according to **alumni**

1. Critical thinking
2. Writing competency
3. Technology
4. Strengthening curriculum
5. Oral communication

The Committee voted to accept the data from all the constituents. At the suggestion of the Academic VP, the Committee decided that the data that had been collected was adequate and that a second survey was unnecessary. The Committee had, in hand, enough data to move to deliberation on a topic and to come to a consensus.

The Committee generated suggestions to eliminate topics from the list and come up with a short list. The guidelines included:

- Eliminate topics that cannot be assessed

- Eliminate topics that do not affect student learning
- Fuse/combine related topics
- Define each topic so that we all agree on what it entails
- Determine what student learning outcomes might result from each topic

After eliminating and fusing topics, the Committee compiled the following short-list of possible topics:

1. **Critical thinking and related competencies**, including:
  - a. Critical Thinking,
  - b. Writing Competency,
  - c. Reading Competency,
  - d. Oral Communication
2. **Technology**
3. **Practical competencies**, including:
  - a. Practical, hands-on courses
  - b. Early introduction to career practices
4. **Enhanced library services**

The Committee was assigned the task of defining each topic, so that at the next meeting we could agree on the definition of each suggested topic.

**November 3, 2009:** At the next meeting, committee members shared definitions of the short list of possible QEP topics: (1) critical thinking competencies; (2) technology; (3) practical competencies; and (4) enhanced library services.

A lengthy discussion resulted in the following change:

- Change Enhanced Library Services topic to Information Literacy and fuse it with Critical Thinking Competencies

The resulting short list consisted of three topics: (1) critical thinking competencies; (2) technology; and (3) practical competencies.

**VOTED** to accept **Critical Thinking Competencies as the QEP Topic**.

After reaching consensus on the QEP topic, the co-chair was tasked with creating a report of the Committee's work.

**January 19, 2010:** At this final meeting the Committee reviewed a suggestion for Technology to be the QEP topic or directly associated with the QEP topic. After extensive discussion, the Committee decided to reaffirm the original topic selected – Critical Thinking Competencies. The Committee recognizes technology will play a critical role in the QEP Plan on Critical Thinking Competencies.

Faithfully Submitted,

Dr. B. W. Prigg