

Date: July 7, 2003  
To: SACS / QEP committee  
From: Larry Anderson  
Subject: first of three provocations

In this email---and the two to follow---I synthesize information from the two booklets, *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (PA) and *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation* (HR) with the hope that I will provoke your thinking so that when we meet in the fall we can hit the ground running.

In preparation for our SACS visit in the spring of 2005, we will be reporting our compliance with the new principles of accreditation, which replace the former “must statements” of the *Criteria for Accreditation*. The first 12 of these new principles are labeled “Core Requirements,” which mandate policies and procedures.

The first seven of these Core Requirements specify that we be legally established and organized, that we are operating with students in degree programs, that these programs meet certain minimum standards, and that we engage in ongoing institutional planning and evaluation.

The next three Core Requirements specify the expectations regarding faculty, library collections, and student support services, while Core Requirement 11 concerns the financial operation of the institution.

The final Core Requirement is just one sentence long, which I quote in its entirety: “The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan and demonstrates the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process” (PA 12).

Our charge is to satisfy this Core Requirement, that is, to develop an acceptable QEP and demonstrate that it is part of our ongoing planning and evaluation process.

What is the QEP? Let me quote from the current draft of the Commission’s handbook: “Core Requirement Twelve requires an institution to have a plan for increasing the effectiveness of some aspect of its educational program relating to student learning” (HR 19). To meet this requirement, we must produce a document: “The QEP is a document describing a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) related to enhancing student learning” (HR 19).

With input from the entire campus, we must first settle on a well-defined topic or issue related to enhancing student learning. I am suggesting that we can accomplish this through a three-step process: 1) find three or four suitable topics/issues; 2) ask the campus for feedback on these possibilities; 3) consider the feedback and decide on a topic/issue to recommend to the Leadership Team.

Please contact me with your comments and suggestions regarding this plan.