

**Provost's Council**  
**October 21, 2014**  
**3:00 – 5:00 pm**  
**Regents' Room (MB 3.106)**

**AGENDA**

**QLP UPDATE**

Dr. Raj Boppana, Professor and Director for the QLP provided an update on the project which was implemented as part of UTSA's SACS reaccreditation. The original goal of the QLP was to incorporate quantitative skills in our undergraduate courses by redesigning them to add quantitative elements to the core courses in order to teach our students how to think critically and interpret and use data in the subject area. Dr. Boppana stated that although it is a graduation requirement for students to complete one or more Q-courses, we haven't been successful in capturing all of our students, especially transfer students. In order to solve this problem, Q-courses have been expanded to major-required upper division courses. In addition, the QLP offers a 2 – 3 hour workshop that students can take in lieu of a formal class to satisfy the graduation requirement.

Dr. Boppana also mentioned other changes the QLP staff would like to implement are improved/streamline assessments and to offer supplemental TA/grader funds to incentivize faculty teaching Q-courses. He further mentioned that the university needs to have a deeper conversation on transforming the environment at UTSA to one where quantitative reasoning skills are ingrained in the curriculum and the culture. It was pointed out that it takes time to redesign a class, so there is a question of the current model being sustainable. Also, it was pointed out that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has now instituted a requirement that all core courses taught at Texas universities include quantitative literacy as part of the syllabus. It is unknown how this requirement will affect the QLP project. Dr. Boppana is hoping to schedule more conversations regarding the QLP with faculty and administrators.

**BLACKBOARD & EARN UPDATE**

Dr. Sandy Welch, Sr. Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, distributed data to each of the Deans that contained information on who had and had not entered grades into Blackboard and EARN. Overall, 60% of the faculty had entered grades. Of the 40% that did not enter grades, it was unclear as to whether or not the faculty were tenured/tenure-track or nontenure-track. Dr. Welch encouraged the Deans to speak to their faculty about the importance of using the tools for student success and said that she would be meeting with each of them to discuss ways to get faculty on board with using the new tools. Dr. Frederick suggested that an approach to use would be one where the faculty would change their way of thinking from "this is one more thing I have to do" to a mindset of "how can I help my students succeed?" He believes that once you change the mindset, then using Blackboard and EARN

become automatic. He further emphasized that the Deans and the Department Chairs are critical in conveying the message to the faculty that the success of students is everyone's responsibility. Dr. Larry Williams, Vice Provost and Dean of the University College mentioned that 85% of faculty had entered mid-term grades into ASAP.

## **WHAT DOES EXCELLENCE MEAN FOR UTSA?**

Dr. Frederick mentioned that he recently read a book entitled, "The Smartest Kids in the World," by Amanda Ripley. Dr. Frederick said that the United States spends the most money on education and posed the question—so are our students better prepared and better educated than other students in the world. If not, what is the difference? Do we hold our students accountable for their learning? He also posed the question, "what does excellence mean for UTSA?"

Can we differentiate between excellence and non-excellence?

Is excellence found in the ways we interact in the community? Is it in research and discovery?

Do we have high expectations for ourselves and our students?

Is challenging our students a definition of excellence?

What part do our students play in the definition of excellence? Do they, or should they, influence others to achieve excellence? Do they raise the bar?

How do we provide the infrastructure to sustain excellence?

Some of the answers/commentary that was provided includes:

Excellence may be difficult to define, as one department may define the number of articles published as a metric for excellence while another department values receiving grant funding more highly than publishing an article. So, one may have to look at certain metrics by discipline in order to define excellence.

Who's the audience? Is it internal to our faculty and students? Or, is to an external audience who may define excellence differently than we do or who may measure excellence in other ways, such as a diploma and a job.

One Council member mentioned that some of our degree programs/colleges are accredited by their respective disciplines (e.g., College of Business—AACSB; College of Engineering—ABET). The accrediting agencies have certain metrics that we must meet in order to qualify for/renew the accreditation. If we meet the criteria for accreditation, is that the definition of excellence?

Another Council member mentioned that the big 4 CPA firms want to hire our students, so we must be doing something right for these firms to recruit our students as interns and then as employees once they complete their studies.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Dr. Frederick mentioned that the CMO are in continued preliminary discussions regarding updating the university's strategic plan. He said that Dr. Romo has asked each vice president to give a presentation at CMO on the following:

- 1. What has your VP division done well over the past 5 years?**
- 2. What were the missed opportunities?**
- 3. What are your plans for your VP division for the next 5 years?**
- 4. In what ways do you partner with other VP divisions and what expectations do you have of each of them?**

Dr. Frederick asked the Deans and Vice Provosts to provide him with suggestions from each of their areas by Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> which will assist him in developing his presentation.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Honors College Commencement Ceremony:  
Thursday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>; 4:30; UC Ballroom**

**Commencement Ceremonies (all held at Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center):**

**Friday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00: COE, COLFA and University College**

**Saturday, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00: COEHD and COS**

**Saturday, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:00: COA, COB AND COPP**