

## **EXEMPT STAFF COUNCIL MEETING**

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

via Zoom

**Members attending:** Chris Sherbesman, Keith Bridges, Robert Mclean, Susan Lazenby, Alexa McClellan, Brenda Johnson, Theresa Liedtka, Laura Perryman, Angie Johnson, Lance Keatley, Terry Sanford, Christine Estoye, Rebecca Dragoo, Zach Ridder, Beth Luehrs, Tonia Martin

**Others in attendance:** Laure Pou, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources; Janice Michaels, HR/OEI Assistant

**Call to order:** Mr. Sherbesman called the meeting to order.

**Minutes:** The minutes for the May meeting were distributed and approved electronically.

**Blue Ribbon Award:** Chris Stokes, Assistant Director of Multicultural Affairs, was the recipient of the Chancellor's Blue-Ribbon Award for April 2021

**Guest: Theresa Liedtka, Dean UTC Library; Cindy Williamson, Director of Assessment and SACSCOC Liaison**

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. SACSCOC is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states.

To gain or maintain accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), an institution must comply with the standards contained in the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement and with the policies and procedures of the Commission. SACSCOC applies the requirements of its Principles to all applicant, candidate, and member institutions, regardless of type of institution (public, private for-profit, or private not-for-profit).

### **What is involved in Accreditation?**

The SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation requires institutions to demonstrate compliance with over 74 standards that focus on goals and outcomes as measures of institutional effectiveness. The Principles are based on six core values:

- Peer review/Self-regulation
- Integrity
- Continuous Quality Improvement

- Student Learning
- Accountability
- Transparency

In order to demonstrate compliance of the 74 required standards, we will submit a Compliance Certification Report (CCR). A Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will also be submitted, which provides a focused plan for enhancing an area at the University that will impact student learning. The CCR will be reviewed mainly by an off-site committee and an on-site committee. The QEP will be reviewed by the on-site committee only.

### **What is the Compliance Certification Report (CCR)?**

The CCR is a document prepared by members of The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga community that demonstrates compliance of each SACSCOC standard through narrative and supporting data. The narrative and supporting documentation provides a compelling argument that the University is compliant at the point it is written. Because the CCR requires a close examination of every aspect of the institution, the project involves many people and resources. Your cooperation and communication during this collaborative effort is critical to the success of our reaffirmation.

### **What is the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?**

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is an integral component of the reaffirmation of accreditation process and is derived from an institution's ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation processes. It reflects and affirms a commitment to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue the institution considers important to improving student learning outcomes and/or student success.

- A topic identified through ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes
- Broad-based support of institutional constituencies
- Focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success
- Commits resources to initiate, implement and complete the QEP
- Includes a plan to assess achievement

UTC's Quality Enhancement Planning Committee (QEP Committee) is comprised of students, faculty, staff, and community members (see QEP Representation). The Committee has a multi-step charge with distinct milestones (see QEP Timeline). To date, the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Institutional Research (OPEIR) reviewed UTC institutional data and recommended 7 topics for Executive Leadership Team consideration for QEP topics. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) reviewed and discussed the 7 potential topics and narrowed the themes to 3 broad topics for campus consideration.

The 3 potential QEP topics identified are: 1) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, 2) Cohorts and Collaborative Learning, and 3) Community Engagement. (see QEP Topic Summary below)

The QEP Committee is asked to engage with the UTC community and evaluate interest in the 3-broad potential QEP topics. Engagements could include surveys, focus groups, department visits, and other means of assessment. The findings from these engagements should guide the Committee in selecting one broad topic for UTC's QEP. The Committee is asked to recommend 1 topic to the Reaffirmation Leadership Team by June 1, 2021.

Upon approval of the QEP topic, the QEP Committee is asked to solicit campus-wide pre-proposals to narrow the QEP topic to a workable goal. The Committee will review received pre-proposals and recommend 2 or 3 proposals to the Reaffirmation Leadership Team by January 7, 2022.

Upon selection of a focused QEP topic, the Committee will oversee the development of a full, workable QEP plan to include student learning outcomes, program goals, plan to assess the QEP, and a budget, including identifying best practices necessary to address the topic. In order to efficiently perform the development duties and responsibilities, the Committee may wish to form several subcommittees such as branding and marketing, budget, course of action, curriculum and assessment, implementation, instructor certification, QEP outcomes, and student population. The draft of the final QEP is due to the Reaffirmation Leadership Team by September 15, 2022

### **What is our role in the QEP?**

The milestones which the Committee will meet are the following:

- Inform members of UTC community about the QEP development process
- Solicit feedback and facilitate input and discussion on potential QEP topics
- Select and recommend QEP topic to the Reaffirmation Leadership Team
- Upon topic confirmation, solicit pre-proposals ideas from UTC community
- Select and recommend focused QEP topics from pre-proposal ideas submitted
- Add a QEP Director and possible other members to the QEP Committee
- Research topic-related best practices
- Develop student learning outcomes and objectives
- Identify needed action items
- Determine who is responsible for implementing
- Determine how it will be assessed
- Determine who is responsible for assessing
- Estimate the needed costs
- Determine a timeline for implementation
- Submit nominations for QEP lead evaluator
- Prepare and submit a full Quality Enhancement Plan

## **Brief overview of potential QEP Topics**

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) has rapidly progressed from a culture of compliance to one of strategic import and action. Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is one of four pillars in the new UTC Strategic Plan, 2021-2025. The plan will have an EDI goal as well as infuse themes of EDI across other goals to promote educational and programmatic efforts that are consistent with UTC's commitment to EDI. A QEP focused on EDI would increase student engagement and learning by creating a climate that welcomes differences among people, resulting in an engaged, creative university community where people's differences contribute to furthering learning and advancements in all fields of study and all aspects of University life. Of note, diversity/global learning is a high impact practice, per the Association of American Colleges & Universities.

### **Cohorts or Collaborative Learning**

High impact teaching and learning practices are shown to be beneficial to student success and engagement in study after study. A high-level overview of the Association of American Colleges & Universities 11 high impact practices is found here. UTC has some experience with the majority of these practices, but of particular interest as potential QEP topics are cohort learning or learning communities, common intellectual experiences, and collaborative assignments and projects. A QEP focused cohort, learning communities, common intellectual experience, or collaborative assignments would enhance opportunities for student to work collaboratively thereby increasing the quality and quantity of student engagement, interactions, teamwork, and problem solving.

### **Community Engagement**

UTC has a strong and long-standing culture of community engagement and was awarded the distinction in 2015 of a "community engagement" classification from the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions in Higher Education. UTC embraces the Carnegie definition of community engagement as "the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good." A QEP focused community engagement would work to enhance opportunities for student community engagement by increasing the quality and quantity of student community engagement experiences and by creating tangible outputs of this engagement.

Additional information regarding the SACSCOC Accreditation and the QEP, as well as the QEP Roadshow Presentations, can be found at <https://new.utc.edu/sacscoc>.

### **Other Issues**

In an effort to streamline communications, effective June 8, 2021, Human Resources will discontinue use of the [Personnel@utc.edu](mailto:Personnel@utc.edu) email account. Moving forward, campus

colleagues may utilize [UTCHumanResources@utc.edu](mailto:UTCHumanResources@utc.edu) for general correspondence with HR.

### **Discontinuation of Paid Administrative Leave for Quarantine and Isolations**

Due to the improving COVID conditions and availability of COVID vaccines, as of July 1, 2021, the University will no longer provide paid administrative leave to employees directed to quarantine or isolate. As of July 1, any employee who is directed to quarantine or isolate, and is unable to work remotely successfully during that period, will be required to utilize their own sick leave or annual leave balances, if available, to remain in a paid status. All leave utilized should be recorded appropriately among bi-weekly and monthly timesheets. Please send inquires related to the information outlined above to [UTCHumanResources@utc.edu](mailto:UTCHumanResources@utc.edu).

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the next quarterly Employee Pulse survey will be emailed. This is a one question survey designed to measure the base line of how employees are feeling about the UT system as an employer.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at 10:30 a.m.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted,  
Janice Michaels  
HR/OEI Assistant